

International University of Kyrgyzstan  
International School of Medicine  
Anthropology Department  
American University of Central Asia



Cholpon Chotaeva  
**HISTORY**  
**OF KYRGYZSTAN**  
Lecture book



**International University of Kyrgyzstan  
International School of Medicine  
American University of Central Asia**

**Cholpon Chotaeva**

**HISTORY  
OF KYRGYZSTAN**

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**Lecture book**

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This *History of Kyrgyzstan* Lecture book aims to help students studying in higher educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic. They can use this book to revise the lectures on the History of Kyrgyzstan course as well as to prepare for the state exam on the History of Kyrgyzstan and pass it after the second year of their study.

The book can be interesting not only for students and historians but for all those who wants to know more on the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. It attempts to provide the basic information on the topic and facilitate the task of learning history.

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## **PREFACE**

The idea to publish such a book came in 2009 when I was asked to teach the History of Kyrgyzstan course to the students of the American University of Central Asia. Unfortunately, all textbooks available in both Russian and English such as those of Svat Soucek, David Christian, Oskon Osmonov and Vladimir Ploskikh were not good enough to teach the course and prepare for the state exam. They appeared to be too sophisticated for the average student of a non-historical department instructed in the English language.

History of Kyrgyzstan is a mandatory course that each student is obliged to take in order to get a diploma of the Kyrgyz Republic and an accredited degree of Bard College. The course is part of both general educational requirements in Kyrgyzstan and the USA liberal arts education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education in Kyrgyzstan requires students to pass the state exam on the History of Kyrgyzstan after the second year of their study.

This lecture book aims to help students meet those requirements and to fill in the gap emerged. Students may use this book to revise the lectures of the course as well as to prepare for the state exam on the History of Kyrgyzstan. It attempts to simplify the information available in other more fundamental textbooks and facilitate the task of learning history.

The book is chronologically organized according to the main time periods in the history of Kyrgyzstan. It provides students with the basic information on the course and the most important historical facts from Kyrgyzstani history. There are eight time periods presented in the book, each one as a separate chapter. A brief description of a time period is offered in the beginning of each chapter. The introduction defines the term and the field

of history as well as the approaches to the study of history, functions it performs, sources that the history of Kyrgyzstan is based on and time periods that might be distinguished within it. The book is supplemented with maps. Some maps were adopted from Svat Soucek's *A History of Inner Asia*, others were taken from the Internet sites.

I would like to express my gratitude to all professors and students who offered me their generous moral and physical support, in particular Aida Abdykanova, an Associate Professor of Anthropology Department, for her comments on the earlier drafts of the book, Basira Mir Makhamad, a junior student of Anthropology Department at the American University of Central Asia, for encouraging and motivating me during my writing, and Ruziali Ruzimatov, a junior student of Applied Mathematics and Informatics Department at the American University of Central Asia, who skillfully drew most of the maps in this book.

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## INTRODUCTION

History occupies an important place among other humanities and social sciences. Arts, literature, anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science and many others are incomplete without history. History helps each of them to be aware of its origins, to come to the essence of things and matters. At the same time, history relies on the achievements of such fields as archaeology, ethnography, paleography, numismatics, epigraphy and others that considerably contribute to the study of history and can be regarded as its supplementary fields.

History of Kyrgyzstan is an integral part of the World History and the History of Central Asia. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Central Asia was a single region not separated into Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Turkmen states. All of them were Central Asians, although different states emerged and developed in the region since ancient times. Following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, the region split into five Soviet republics with national borders that in 1991 became the borders of independent Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

The meaning of the term “history” was not the same in the course of centuries. It changed as the perception of people about the world around changed. The term had different meanings in ancient, medieval and modern times. As many terms we use today, it came to the English vocabulary from the ancient Greek language.

The word *history* derived from the Greek word *historia* that originally meant “inquiry”, “knowledge acquired by investigation”. When it entered the English language in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, its meaning changed to become “relation of incidents, story”. Finally, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the term received its current meaning such as “the record of past events”.



As an academic discipline, history emerged as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Greek historian Herodotus who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century is considered to be “the father of history”. He wrote his famous *The Histories* and believed that what he wrote was an inquiry or investigation on the origins of the Greco-Persian Wars. Herodotus was the first known historian who collected his information systematically and critically and then organized it in a chronological way.

Most of contemporary historians agree that **history is the field of study that records and analyzes past events**. This definition of history includes two parts. First, history is the chronological record of past events, the events that happened many centuries ago or took place just recently. Second, history is the analysis or interpretation of those events. These are historians who analyze and interpret history. Although the same historical facts are available to historians, the analysis or interpretation each historian suggests is often different. The interpretation of a historian can be affected by a number of factors, for example, the time period he lived, a social class he belonged to, religious views he had, a state ideology, and the like. That is, history is an attempt of a historian to interpret the past rather than the past itself.

The famous historian Edward Carr in his work “What is History?” defined history as “a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past” [Carr 30]. His definition implies two points. First, the understanding of history is never static. It changes depending on the personalities of historians who analyze and interpret historical facts. As it was mentioned earlier, historical facts are never “pure”. They are interpreted by historians who are under the pressure of many different factors. Second, historians are always contemporaries. Though they interpret things that happened many centuries ago, they live at present and look at the past through the eyes of present-day people. Therefore, our understanding of history is not the same

at different times. It changes as often as other historians come and provide their interpretations of history.

The interpretation of history can depend on an approach followed by historians. Many different approaches are available to historians. Each approach helps looking at history and historical events from a different point of view.

The approach followed by Soviet historians, including those from Kyrgyzstan, was called the **formation approach**. The formation approach considered economy to be the basis of political and cultural development of human society and, therefore, devoted much attention to the development of socio-economic relations. According to it, human society evolved progressively from ancient to modern times. In the course of its evolution, it passed five sequent stages (formations) such as primitive society, slaveholding society, feudalism, capitalism and finally socialism. That is, a more progressive stage of human organization replaced a more primitive one. Since the first one who suggested the approach was Marx, the approach was also called the Marxist approach.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist system, historians attempted to move away from the formation approach and find an alternative to it. The alternative was found and called the **civilization approach**. The civilization approach refused a progressive and lineal development of human society and argued for the simultaneous development and coexistence of different civilizations. Each civilization was considered to be unique. The Russian biologist Danilevsky is regarded to be the first one who turned to the civilization approach. He was the one who attempted to apply the laws of nature to the development of human society. Later on, he was followed by the German philosopher Spengler and the British historian Toynbee. Each of them distinguished at least three life cycles in the development of civilizations: the birth, the prosperity and the decline. While Danilevsky and Spengler distinguished thirteen civilizations, Toynbee found twenty six.

History is important for people and the society as it performs a number of functions [Osmonov 5–6]. The first is **educational**. History educates people, especially the younger generation. It teaches what is the good and what is the bad; lays the foundation of moral and cultural values. Another function of history is **informational**. The informational function considers history to be the source of knowledge that enriches individuals, especially young people. The third function is **world viewing**. Various historical sources contribute to the formation of the individual world view, especially concerning the peoples and cultures around. The last but not the least function is **politico-practical**. History teaches lessons. The study of history is mandatory not only as a source of new knowledge but also to achieve practical aims at present and in the future. Knowing history helps avoid making the same mistakes and set out priorities for the future. However, history can be manipulated by politicians to get benefits and pursue personal goals.

Humans have been always interested in their history and the history of peoples around them. They carefully studied and recorded it. Those records provided valuable information on the history of Kyrgyzstan. Chinese, Greek, Arabic, Persian and other historical sources mentioned different tribes and states on the territory of Kyrgyzstan in ancient, medieval and modern times. That is, there are three main groups of historical sources available on the history of Kyrgyzstan.

The first group is the group of **written sources**. Various written sources are available on the ancient, medieval and early modern periods of Kyrgyzstan: Chinese, Greek, Arabic, Persian, Turkic, European, and Russian. All those written sources can be called **primary** historical sources, as they were written by the eyewitnesses of historical events, or those people that received the “first-hand” information on those events from others and then carefully recorded it.

The second group is **oral sources**. When the Kyrgyz lost their Runic script and became illiterate, their history was preserved in

an oral form. Legends, epics, genealogies, songs were important sources on the history of Kyrgyzstan during that period. One of the most valuable oral sources on the history of Kyrgyzstan is the Manas Epic that contains a lot of interesting facts not only on the history but also on the lifestyle, traditions, customs, language and religion of the Kyrgyz people.

The third group can be **material sources**. Material sources can refer to archaeological findings, architectural remains, stone inscriptions, etc. Material sources are the only historical sources that can provide the information about the life of humans during **prehistory**, the very first time period before the first written record was made. Prehistory is mainly studied by **archeology**, the field that deals with the study of material objects such as burials and settlements.

To facilitate the study of history, historians divide it into shorter time periods. **Eight time periods** can be distinguished in the history of Kyrgyzstan. Each period follows a previous one in the chronological order. On the one hand, the periodization of Kyrgyzstan history resembles the periodization of the world history with five main time periods distinguished such as Prehistory (2.5 million years ago — 4 000 BC), Ancient History (4 000 BC — 4<sup>th</sup> century), Middle Ages (4<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries), Early Modern Period (16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries) and Modern Period (18<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>th</sup> centuries). On the other, it has its own particularities.

**Prehistory** (1 million years ago — 1 000 BC) is the very first time period in the World History and the History of Kyrgyzstan. It was the time of so-called primitive community and primitive culture when no states and civilizations yet emerged.

**Ancient History** (1 000 BC — 300 AD) refers to the time period when the first states and civilizations were established on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. It was the time when the written records of Chinese, Greeks, Persians became available on the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia.

**Turkic Era** (500–1200) is marked by the migration of Turkic-speaking tribes from the Altai Mountains to the Central Asian region and the establishment of various Turkic states there. Turks assimilated the earlier Caucasoid and Iranian speaking population of Central Asia, so that Mongoloid racial features and Turkic languages began to dominate.

**Mongol Rule** (1200–1500) is one of the most tragic pages in the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. The Mongol army of Genghis Khan invaded the territory of Central Asia and destroyed the developed Turkic culture. The large Mongol Empire along with smaller Mongol dynasties were established by Genghis Khan and his descendants.

**Kyrgyz Consolidation** (1500–1800) is characterized by the lack of Kyrgyz statehood. Kyrgyz leaders were attempting to unite Kyrgyz tribes and create the Kyrgyz state but unsuccessfully. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kyrgyz appeared to be ruled by the Koqand Khanate.

**Russian Colonization** (1876–1917) is the period of the annexation of Kyrgyz territories by the Russian Empire. Intensified intertribal fights among the Kyrgyz themselves as well as the external threats coming from China, Koqand and Kazakh forced northern Kyrgyz tribes to seek the protection of Russia. While northern Kyrgyz joined Russia mostly voluntarily, southern Kyrgyzstan was taken by force as a result of the colonization policy of the Russian Empire.

**Soviet Rule** (1920s–1991) began with the advent of the Bolsheviks to power in 1917. The idea of building a socialist society where there was no exploitation and people were equal was supported by the peoples of Central Asia that for a long time were oppressed by the Koqand Khanate and the Russian Empire. The elimination of illiteracy and the creation of the system of

elementary, secondary and higher education, the development of professional literature, theatre, art, cinema, science and the establishment of a large-scale heavy metal processing industry and machinery were unprecedented in the history of the region.

**Independent Kyrgyzstan** (1991 — present) is the period that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent Kyrgyz Republic. Independent Kyrgyzstan faced a number of political, economic and social problems. The revolutions of 2005 and 2010 resulted in the overthrow of two presidents. As a result of the 2010 referendum, the state shifted from a presidential to a parliamentary system.

# Chapter I

## PREHISTORY

(1 million years ago — 1000 BC)

The term *prehistory* means “before history” and refers to the period before the first written record became available to historians, and the time when history was mainly based on archaeological artifacts. Sometimes prehistory is not seen as a full-fledged historical period but the time prior to the “real history” based on written historical sources. It was the time of so-called primitive community and primitive culture when no states and civilizations yet emerged.

The prehistory of Kyrgyzstan includes the Stone and Bronze Ages. It is the time period which begins with the appearance of the very first humans on the territory of Kyrgyzstan and ends with the advent of the Iron Age. The remains of the most ancient humans were found in the *Sel Unkur Cave* located in the south of Kyrgyzstan and dated back to one million years ago.

### 1.1. Stone Age (1 million years ago — 4000 BC)

The tradition of calling archaeological eras by the material (stone, copper, bronze, iron) used to produce tools goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when archaeologists did not have modern dating techniques and could offer only relative dates based on the types of objects found in corresponding archeological layers [Christian 99].

The Stone Age is the longest period of human history. It is called the Stone Age because humans made their first tools from stone. Its beginning dates back to 2.5 million years ago when the remains of the most ancient human was found in Eastern Africa (Tanzania). The most ancient humans were called **Homo habilis** meaning “handyman” because they were able to make first primitive tools from stone to hunt small and large animals



[Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1:78]. The end of the Stone Age goes back to 6,000 years ago when the first metal such as copper was discovered.

The Stone Age of Kyrgyzstan is divided into three main subperiods: **Paleolith** (Ancient Stone Age) from 1 million to 11,000 years ago, **Mesolith** (Middle Stone Age) from 11,000 to 7,000 years BC and **Neolith** (New Stone Age) from 7,000 to 4,000 years BC.

The very first humans appeared on the territory of Kyrgyzstan about one million years ago. Their remains such as teeth and bone fragments were found in the **Sel Unkur Cave** (Haid-arkan, the south of Kyrgyzstan). For a long time, the date of those remains was the subject of many disputes. Uzbek scholars dated them to 1.5 million years ago, while Kyrgyz archeologists argued for 600,000 years ago. Anyway, the archeological finds of Sel Unkur testified that the most ancient humans appeared on the territory of Kyrgyzstan about one million years ago. Analyzing the teeth, scholars concluded that they belonged to **Pithecanthropus** who was an Asian species of **Homo erectus** populated the world about 1.9 million years ago. This period that began one million years ago and lasted till 100,000 years ago when the first humans came to the territory of Kyrgyzstan was called **Early Paleolith**.



Moreover, there were archeological sites where the most ancient stone tools were discovered. There were two such sites on the territory of Kyrgyzstan: ***On Archa*** (Naryn province) and ***Kojo Bakyrghan Sai*** (Batken province). Both sites dated to approximately 300,000–200,000 years ago. The stone tools found there were the most primitive such as choppers and choppings [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 78–80].

The main economic activities of ancient humans were hunting and gathering. Hunting was the dominant economy of ancient humans on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. Fishing was also practiced by those living along rivers. It is worthy of note that ancient humans often settled on river banks and next to water springs, since water was an important source of life. In Early Paleolith, humans learnt to produce fire that warmed them, provided light and protected from wild animals.

Hunters and gatherers lived in groups called human bands. The number of people in the group was not stable. As a rule, each group included 5–15 people but the number increased to 40–70 people during hunting seasons [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 83]. Those humans mainly lived in caves or open areas.

***Middle Paleolith*** (100,000–40,000 years ago) was marked by a technological progress. The techniques used to make stone tools became more complicated. Therefore, the tools produced became more developed too. A variety of tools were made. The most popular tools were tips that served as spearheads and strickles to process animal skins and fells. Skins and fells were used as the materials for making clothing. While most of humans still lived in caves, some of them learnt how to build artificial houses of a dugout or a semi-dugout type.

In Mesolith, Central Asia had been inhabited by another species of humans — ***Neanderthals***. In 1938, Professor Okladnikov found the burial of a Neanderthal child in ***Teshik Tash*** (Uzbekistan) that dates to 40,000 years ago. The size of Neanderthal brain increased to 1,200–1,600 cubic centimeters but it was still smaller than the brain of present-day humans.

Moreover, the structure of the brain was not yet so developed [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 84].

The body of the Neanderthal child had an embryonic position and was surrounded by goat horns. It demonstrated that the humans of Middle Paleolith developed the earliest religious beliefs such as magic and totemism. Humans worshipped goats and other animals. Animals were the main objects of hunting.

The archaeological sites of Middle Paleolith are **Tosor** (Issyk-Kul province), **Georgievskiy Bugor** (on the border with Kazakhstan), **Sasyk Unkur** (Osh province) and **Ak Olon** (Balykchy, Issyk-Kul province).

**Tosor** is located on the right bank of the Tosor River. It represents a terrace-type ledge, 1,800 meters above the sea level. It was an ancient settlement destroyed by a torrent. More than 3,000 stone items were found on the site. Most of them were made of shale, jasper and other sorts of stone. However, the number of stone tools discovered there was not so many [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 85–6].

Another site is **Georgievskiy Bugor**. It represents a hill located on the left bank of the Chu River close to Bishkek city. Its height is 30 meters. About 4,000 stone items were found there, most of them were discovered on its western slope. Tools were made from river pebble [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 87–8].

Many tools were found in the so-called stone workshops of Neanderthals located on the border territory of Kyrgyzstan with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The richest one is **Kapchigai** (Osh province). It is a rocky mountain in the center of a large valley surrounded by snowy mountains. Many stone pieces were found at the bottom of the mountain. Most of them were processed by ancient humans. Flint of a very good quality was the main stone used. Kapchigai workshop is not the only workshop of ancient people in the Fergana Valley [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 89–90]. More workshops were found around other rocky mountains.

Different types of settlements were established. There were temporary settlements where humans lived for a shorter period, workshops where they used to come to take the stone and process it, and basic settlements where communities stayed for a longer time.

More changes could be observed during *Late Paleolith* (40,000–11,000 years ago). The stone tools made by humans became more specific. Around 100 different types of tools were produced. Compound tools became very popular. Very small items (microlites) were made from stone and used as tips in compound tools. Apart from stone, bones and horns were used to make awls, needles, spearheads, harpoons. Many tools were supplemented by wooden and bone handles.

The changes in the production of tools brought to the changes in the organization of humans. Human bands developed into a more progressive form of blood-related groups where people were united on the basis of common blood, common origin and common economic activities. Matriarchy was the main form of social organization. Females dominated and had absolute authority in the community because they had a reproductive function and gave birth to the new generation of humans.

In Late Paleolith, Neanderthals were replaced by *Homo sapiens*. *Homo sapiens* were not very different from present-day humans according to their main characteristics such as height, facial features, and size of brain. They built roomy houses and domesticated dogs. They were able to make weapons such as daggers and tips that implied a considerable progress in the methods of hunting.

*Mesolith* is characterized by the development of complex and microlithic tools and the invention of the bow and arrows. Wooden arrows with the heads made from microlites significantly facilitated hunting [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 94]. Some scholars assume that the development of the tribe as a distinctive form of social organization can be traced back to Mesolith. That is, blood-related groups of Paleolith united into

larger groups such as clans and tribes. However, the Mesolith of Kyrgyzstan is not well researched and mainly represented by a number of sites such as **Obshir I-V** (Obshir River, south of Kyrgyzstan) and **Ak Sai** (Naryn).

Most of Obshir grottoes served as temporary shelters for ancient humans but Obshir V grotto was used by ancient hunters for a longer period. Three cultural layers were discovered there with numerous layers of ashes and pieces of coals. The width of the grotto is 30 meters, the height is 20 meters and the depth is 9 meters. Among the tools found in Obshir V, there were a lot of microlites but fewer scrapers. Other tools of the site were made from wood and bone such as wooden and bone handles. Bone tools as awls and piercings were discovered there [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 97–8].

**Neolith** was the period that put an end to the Stone Age. It was characterized by the innovations in the methods of stone processing such as polishing and drilling. Addices and axes became very popular. Pottery developed.

During Neolith, the so-called Neolithic Revolution took place. The **Neolithic Revolution** signified a shift from hunting and gathering to producing economies such as agriculture and pastoralism. While domestication of plants brought to the rise of agriculture, the domestication of animals resulted in pastoralism. The shift in the economies led to the changes in the lifestyle of ancient humans: clay houses, clay ware, clay adornments and figurines appeared. At the same time, in some regions agricultural and pastoralist communities coexisted with the communities of hunters and gatherers who still retained their old economies and lifestyle.

Social changes also took place. Matriarchy was replaced but patriarchy characterized by the domination of males. The shift in the economies promoted the position of men and made their role more important compared to women's. Patriarchy became the main form of social organization in the Bronze Age.

Neolith sites are *Semetei Grotto* (Chatyr-Kul Lake, Naryn), *Maitor* (Kumtor), *Terek I-VI* (Ak Sai, Naryn), *Teke Sekirik Cave* (Kochkor, Naryn), *Ak Chunkur Cave* (Issyk Kul province).

Ak Chunkur Cave is located on the Sary Jaz River 3,500 meters above the sea level. The length of the cave is 45 meters, the width is 1.5–7.5 meters and the height is 12 meters at the entrance and 1.5 meters inside. It was used as a shelter for ancient humans. Apart from tools, archaeologists found the most ancient images of goats, bulls, snakes and humans there drawn on the walls. The images were made with the red paint and may serve as good evidence of the spiritual life of ancient people on the territory of Kyrgyzstan [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 104].

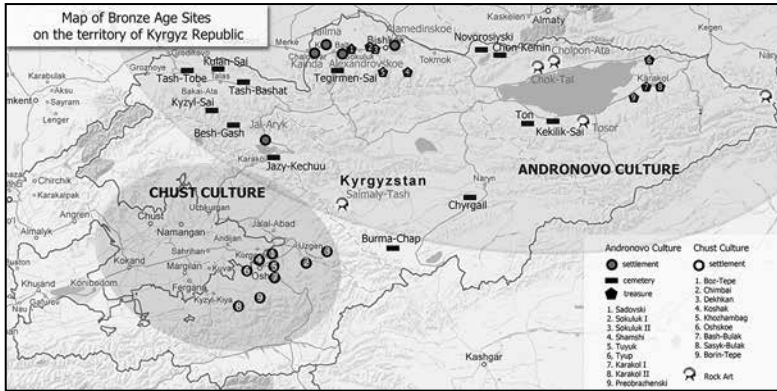
### **1.2. Bronze Age (2000 BC - 1000 BC)**

The Neolithic Revolution marked a significant change in the development of human society. The switch from hunting and gathering to agriculture and pastoralism gave a stimulus to economic development and advanced the conditions of life.

Metals replaced stone as the main material in the production of tools. The copper was the first metal discovered. It gave rise to the Copper Age that didn't last long: one-two thousand years. Copper was a soft metal. Therefore, stone tools were still widely used. The invention of bronze (the alloy of copper with tin, arsenic, lead, antimony and some others) in Central Asia in 2000 BC brought the Copper Age to an end. Bronze tools were hard and durable.

During the Bronze Age, the climate on the Earth changed: first from warm to cold and then from cold to warm and wet. The climatic changes caused the migration of people southwards and eastwards [Christian 99]. As a result, two Bronze cultures emerged on the territory of Kyrgyzstan: Andronovo and Chust cultures.

*Andronovo Culture* was named like this after the village in Siberia that had the same name. Andronovo Culture developed in the northern part of Kyrgyzstan: Chui, Issyk-Kul, Talas valleys,



Central Tien Shan (Naryn province). The people who migrated to the territory of Kyrgyzstan in the second millennium BC were of Caucasoid (Europoid) race and spoke Eastern Iranian languages. They reached as far as the northwestern regions of China. More than 100 Caucasoid corpses dated as early as 2000 BC were found in Sinkiang, or present-day Western China [Christian 105].

Andronovo people were pastoralists. They cultivated various animals: cows, sheep, goats, horses, camels. A mountainous landscape, large pasturelands, scarce snow favored the development of pastoralism.

Originally, Andronovo people led a sedentary lifestyle. A clear sign of sedentarism was an increasing number of settlements in northern Kyrgyzstan. However, in the second half of the second millennium a nomadic way of life started prevailing. In Kyrgyzstan, the mountainous landscape caused vertical pastoralism that allowed people moving up to the top of the mountains during spring and summer and down to the valleys in fall and winter. People led a semi-nomadic lifestyle. When pastoralists shifted to a nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle, small animals such as sheep and horses began to dominate.

Andronovo people also practiced agriculture that was an important source of food. However, agriculture was more

primitive and secondary in relation to pastoralism [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 111]. Milk and meat was the main diet. Andronovo people were the first people who produced kymys from the mare's milk.

Settlements were established next to wells. They were small in size consisting of 10–20 houses. Houses were built of wood and stone. In the earlier period, Andronovo houses were rectangular and sunk 1–1.5 meters deep into the ground. Houses had storage pits and were large enough to keep the livestock inside in winter. Settlements were often located on flood and grazing lands and surrounded by walls and a ditch. As for the later period, houses became of more round and oval shape and were located in steppes and semideserts. The similarities between those round houses and later yurts may suggest a certain change in the lifestyle of Andronovo people and their switch to a more nomadic way of life [Christian 104].

There are clear signs of social inequality in Andronovo Culture. Some burials are of impressive size that suggests that important chiefs or war leaders were buried there [Christian 104].

Andronovo people developed crafts. Metallurgy was the main source of technological progress. In the second half of the second millennium BC, Andronovo people widely used bronze tools. Bronze masters knew various techniques to cast bronze: moulding, smithery, coining, engraving and so on. A great number of objects were made from bronze, including jewelry. In the production of jewelry, some other metals such as silver, gold and antimony were also used [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 113].

The development of ceramics was very important. Clay mixed with sand, shells and other materials were carefully processed to produce different types of vessels. Vessels were ornamented with geometrical patterns such as zigzag, meander, and triangles. Women wove wool and produced clothing from it. Leather was used to make shoes and caps [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 114].

The cultivation of animals, mining and producing bronze tools required physical strength of males. Moreover, warfare for pasturelands between tribes in which males had to participate broke out. That is, in the Bronze Age, patriarchy finally replaced matriarchy and men become dominant in the community.

Andronovo people worshipped the forces of nature: the sun and the fire. An especial attitude toward the fire was reflected in the cremation of the dead people. According to Andronovo people, the fire cleansed the body, protected from evil spirits and helped reviving. The cremation was popular in Chui, Talas and Issyk-Kul valleys of Kyrgyzstan.

Along with cremation, the burial when a dead body was put into the grave with bent legs and arms was practiced. The body placed on the left side repeating the position of the embryo inside the woman's womb was believed to help reviving.

The belief in the life after death is manifested in the construction and decoration of the grave. The grave looked similar to the house. It contained food, vessels, jewelry, tools and weaponry. The grave was surrounded by a fence made of stones that served as the border line between the world of the living and the world of the dead [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 118].

In the second and first millennium BC, agricultural communities settled the south of Kyrgyzstan. The coexistence of both pastoralist and agricultural communities was not only a specific feature of Central Asia but also common for the history of many Eastern countries [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 119]. In a similar manner, those agricultural communities were of Caucasoid race and spoke Eastern Iranian languages.

Chust settlements were located in the valleys and deltas of small rivers in the Fergana Valley. They were named **Chust Culture** after the Chust village located in Uzbekistan.

The dominant economy of Chust Culture was agriculture. Agriculture became possible thanks to the artificially constructed irrigation system. However, no remains of that system were discovered yet. Wheat, barley, and millet were the main crops



cultivated. Besides, Chust people grew legumes and some fruit plants [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 125].

Another economy was pastoralism. Chust people bred various animals but the main were large animals such as cows, horses and others. Cattle provided them with meat and milk and were used as draft animals. In some regions of Chust Culture, small animals such as sheep and goats prevailed due to geographical factors. The economy of Chust Culture was complex, since both pastoralism and agriculture played important roles [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 126].

Osh settlement is the most ancient and unique settlement of Chust Culture. 400–500 people lived in average settlements, more people lived in larger settlements. Just a few settlements had fortified walls. The construction of citadels refers to the second and first millenniums BC and became a remarkable sign of transforming settlements into cities. Cities became the centers of economic and cultural life [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 129–30].

Chust people lived in dugout and ground houses made of clay. A typical Chust house was of a rectangular shape. The house had thick walls and many rooms occupying from 4 to 30 square meters. Crops were stored in pits inside houses. As for dugout houses, most of them were found in Osh settlement. Each one occupied the area of 50–70 squared meters. 25–40 people could stay in each house [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 128].

Chust Culture had the division of labor. Various crafts developed such as construction, metallurgy, stone and bone processing, weaving and pottery. During the construction of houses, mud bricks were used. The construction of houses was not only the problem faced by builders but also the community members that took an active part in it. Metallurgists produced tools, horse harness, weaponry and jewelry. Weaving was practiced using a weaver's loom. Pottery was widely spread. Ancient masters made various types of ceramics: to keep and to cook food. Different techniques were used for both. Vessels

were decorated with geometrical patterns [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 127–8].

Social inequality emerged. The society of Chust Culture could be divided into three main groups: warriors, priests and farmers or cattle-breeders. It was patriarchal too [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 1: 130].

During the Bronze Age, two lifestyles, nomadism and sedentarism, and two economies, pastoralism and agriculture, developed in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, the Bronze Age was marked by the division of labor when the development of metallurgy marked the separation of crafts from agriculture. The development of agriculture and pastoralism, an increasing exchange between two cultures, Andronovo and Chust, resulted in the struggle of different tribes for resources and the development of weaponry.

The appearance of humans marked the development of culture and art. One of the brightest examples of it is Saimaly Tash Rock Art Gallery.

**Saimaly Tash** is one of the largest art galleries in Central Asia. It is located in Djalal-Abad province of Kyrgyzstan 3000–3500 meters above the sea level. For the first time, the gallery was found by topographer and painter Khludov about 100 years ago and then it was researched by Soviet scholars such as Zimma, Bernshtam, Sher and post-Soviet archaeologist Tashbaeva.

During the Bronze Age, Saimaly Tash served as a spiritual center and was visited by ancient humans during seasonal holidays. The walls and ceilings of Saimaly Tash Gallery are covered with various images. There are about 100,000 images carved on 10,000 stones and rocks. They are referred as petroglyphs that represent the combination of two Greek words: *petra* meaning “stone” and *glyphein* meaning “to carve”.

Those petroglyphs reflect various animals such as goats, bulls, horses, deers, camels, dogs and others as well as human beings and anthropomorphic creatures. There are not only

individual images of animals and human beings but also the compositions of hunting, plowing, ritual dancing, animals with carts, labyrinths, erotic and other scenes. They depict the everyday life of ancient humans as well as their economic, religious and cultural practices.

# Chapter 2

## **ANCIENT HISTORY (1000 BC – 300 AD)**

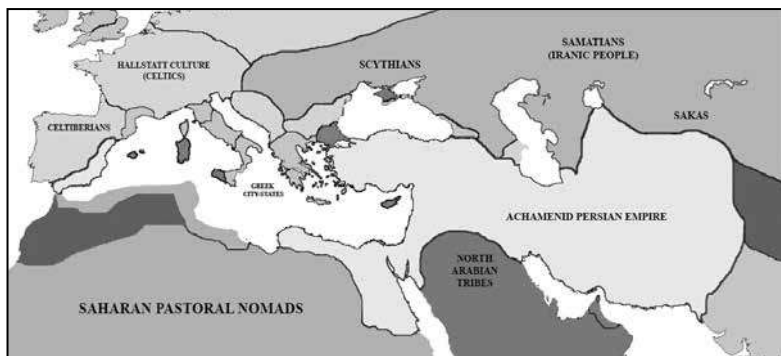
Ancient time period is characterized by increasing social inequality and the establishment of first states. Ancient history was the time when the first written records of Chinese, Greeks, Persians became available on the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. It also coincided with the invention of iron and the beginning of the Iron Age.

The invention of iron resulted in the revolution of technology and lifestyle. The tools made from iron became more solid and flexible. Iron was a good metal to produce weaponry. The tribes in Central Asia learnt how to ride horse and, therefore, became more mobile. Nomads managed to create well-organized and well-equipped armies.

The first state established on the territory of Kyrgyzstan was Saka Tribal Confederation. The reason why it was called Saka Tribal Confederation was that the state was still based on tribes and clans and lacked bureaucracy. The disintegration of Saka State was followed by the appearance of two other states on the territory of Kyrgyzstan: Wusun State in the north and Davan State in the south. Those states had more developed state institutions of three levels: the ruler, the Council of Elders and state officials. While Wusuns were predominantly pastoralists, Davan people were engaged in agriculture.

### **2.1. Saka Tribal Confederation (1000 BC – 100 BC)**

In the first millennium BC, the history of Central Asia was not any more based on archaeological artifacts but also on the written sources of those peoples who developed their writing systems and provided the earliest information on the nomads of Central Asia. They were Persian, Greek, Chinese and Indian



historical sources. Different sources named those nomads differently. Greek sources, in particular Herodotus “The Histories”, called them *Scythians*, Persian called them *Saka*, Chinese sources *Se* and Indian *Tur* [Osmonov 52]. While the Greek term *Scythians* referred to the tribes populating the vast territories of Eurasia from the Black Sea to Siberia, the Persian term *Saka* was more specific referring to those who lived on the territory of present-day Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan. As for the origin of the Persian term *Saka*, most of scholars agree that it meant “strong, powerful, skillful” [Osmonov 52].

According to Persian sources, there were three main confederation of tribes: Tigrahauda, Haumavarga and Paradaraya. *Tigrahauda* (literally “wearing pointed caps”) populated the regions of Semirechye and the Tien Shan Mountains or northern Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. *Haumavarga* (literally “favoring the holy drink *haum*”) lived in the south of Kyrgyzstan — the Fergana Valley. And *Paradaraya* or Water Saka were those who lived to the north from the Syr Darya River and the Aral Sea (Tabaldiev, Khudyakov). Each confederation consisted of various tribes, for example, Tigrahauda included Massagetas, one of the largest tribes, and the latter was often associated with it.

Sakas of Central Asia spoke Eastern Iranian languages and belonged to the Caucasoid race. However, some scholars assume that Sakas were Mongoloid, especially those who lived in Tien

Shan and Semirechye [Osmonov 52]. They were of combined Mongoloid-Caucasoid type because of their assimilation to the earliest Mongoloid population in Eurasia. The evidence of their Mongoloid origin was the images of Sakas on the walls of Persepolis, the capital city of the Acaemenid Empire.

Saka State cannot be considered a true state. Like many early states, Saka state did not represent a very stable political formation. It was the confederation of various tribes ruled by ruling dynasties. Such groupings as family, clan and tribe laid the foundation for the state. Then the traditional system was supplemented with the supra-tribal structure that was to control and distribute the economic and military resources of the state. Bureaucracy was not developed. Facing external threats like wars could enforce the state formation, while peaceful periods resulted in its decentralization. All tribes were quite autonomous in their decisions and did not depend on the central power, so the latter did not interfere in the internal affairs of tribes and clans. All those became the main reasons why Saka state was not called the state but the tribal confederation [Christian 150–1].

Saka State was ruled by the King or Queen who enjoyed a lot of power. He decided on the external issues such as peace and war as well as the intertribal relations. He probably appointed the religious leader during religious festivals and the military commander for military campaigns. His power was hereditary and was passed on to his younger brother or son. The king was assisted by the Council of Elders that represented the main body in the state consisting of the chieftains of Saka tribes.

Sakas were nomadic pastoralists. The climate and landscape in Kyrgyzstan didn't favor a sedentary lifestyle [Osmonov 53]. It was hard to find enough forage for animals staying in one place. Sakas have to move seeking for better grasslands. Sheep, goats, cattle and horses were cultivated by Sakas. The most valued by Sakas were horses. Horses were their transport, food and the best friends in the war. The horses of Saka were short

but hardy and tough. The Sakas who lived in Fergana led a sedentary and semi-nomadic lifestyle and practiced agriculture too. Nevertheless, agriculture was a secondary economy for them compared to pastoralism. Sakas were very skillful hunters. Hunting was both a source of military exercise and a source of food. The main diet of Sakas was meat and milk.

The archeological excavations of many Saka tombs proved the existence of social hierarchy in Saka society. Different size and especially the contents of Saka tombs suggested the development of various social groups such as nobility, warriors, and commoners. The tombs of the kings were the largest reaching 50–100 meters in diameter and 9–15 meters of height. Those tombs were also the richest in contents including golden articles, weaponry, metal tools, bones of animals and humans. Nobility were buried in smaller tombs of 30–45 meters in diameter and 7 meters of height. The tombs of warriors were much smaller not to say about the tombs of common people which could be hardly distinguished [Osmonov 53].

The Saka society was patriarchal. However, some elements of matriarchy were preserved. The role of women was high enough to compare to agricultural societies. There were many women-warriors who could fight at wars as good as men [Christian 143]. Women were powerful queens in Saka state.

Nomadic Saka lived in four-wheeled or six-wheeled wagons, while sedentary and semi-nomadic Sakas built houses of dug-out and yurt types. The clothing of Saka was different from that of their agricultural neighbors. They used to wear narrow trousers and long kaftans fixed by belts.

Sakas practiced shamanism and polytheism. They worshipped sun, fire, deer and other natural objects and gods. They didn't build temples but had sacred places they visited during religious festivals. According to Herodotus, the most respected God of Sakas was the God of War. The sword was the symbol of it. Sakas sacrificed horses and sometimes humans for their God. A lot of sacrificial altars and trays were discovered by

archeologists. Later written sources mentioned Zoroastrianism as a religion practiced by Sakas [Christian 138, 148].

The style Sakas developed in art was called the *animal style*. Animals were the main objects of art. The economic activity of Sakas such as pastoralism was the reason. They cultivated animals and worshipped them. Therefore, weaponry, jewelry, and pottery were decorated with animals predominantly. Animals were made from bronze, gold, sometimes from iron and bone.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, founder of the Great Persian Empire of the Achaemenids **Cyrus II** decided to occupy the territory of northern Kyrgyzstan. At that time, northern Sakas Tigranada were ruled by Queen **Tomiris**. In 530 BC, Cyrus II invaded Sakas and the first military campaign of Persians took place. The first battle was disastrous. The army dispatched by Tomiris and led by her son was completely destroyed by Persians. Persians attacked Sakas at night when all soldiers were sleeping. Sakas didn't expect their attack and couldn't adequately respond. The son of Tomiris was killed in the battle. The second battle was more successful. Persians lost in the battle. Their king was killed and his head was cut. In 519, the second military campaign against Sakas was led by another Persian ruler **Darius I**. Darius managed to defeat Sakas and forced them to pay a tribute. The victory was mentioned in the Behistun Inscription recorded by the order of Darius I in the Zagros Mountains of present-day Iran. The inscription was supplemented with the scene of conquering tribes by Darius, including Sakas.

Little information is available about Sakas during later times. It is known that Sakas established good and peaceful relations with Persians and even fought on the side of Persians in the Greco-Persian Wars in 500–449 BC. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the territories of Sakas were invaded by the army of **Alexander the Great**. In 329 BC, Sakas were defeated by them and their territories were included into this empire, the Empire of Alexander the Great.

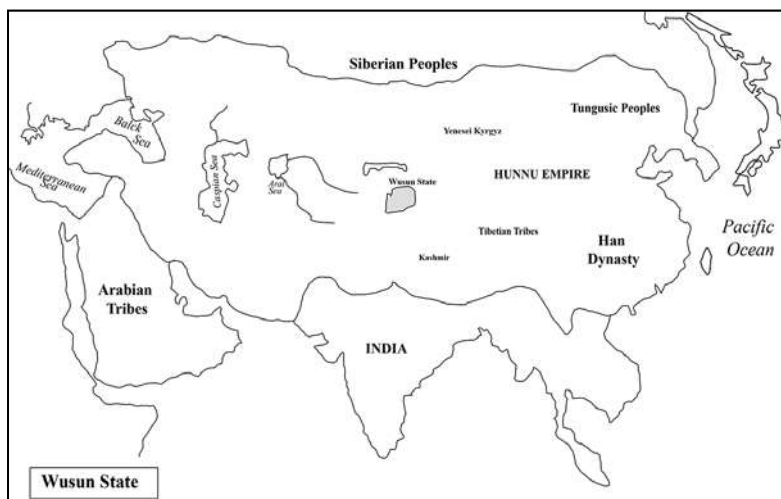


## 2.2. Wusun State (100 BC – 300 AD)

The name **wusun** is known from Chinese sources. Various Chinese chronicles, including *Shi-ji* of Syma Tan, provided detailed information about them and their state.

The word *wusun* is translated as “people of ten tribes”. The origin of Wusuns is still under question. Many historians consider Wusun people Iranian speakers because of their cultural similarity to Iranian-speaking Sakas. At the same time, some historians believe that Wusun were Turkic speakers because they came to the territory of northern Kyrgyzstan from Eastern Turkestan where they lived beside Turkic-speaking Hunnu. Chinese sources also described Wusun as red-haired and blue-eyed. Based on this, Russian ethnographer Aristov considered Wusuns the ancestors of the Yenisei Kyrgyz [Osmonov 58].

Wusun State is referred as a nomadic state in Chinese sources. In 160 BC, defeated by Hunnu, Wusun moved to the west and established their state on the territory of Tien Shan and Semirechye. It bordered on Hunnu to the east, Eastern Turkestan to the south and Fergana to the south-west [Zadneprovskiy 459].



The administrative and political center of the Wusun State was **Chigu-chen** (“the city of the red valley”). According to some calculations, the city was located on the southern shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake.

Compared to Saka State, Wusun State had more developed state structure. The state was ruled by **kunbag** or **kunmo**. The power of kunbag was hereditary and limited by the Council of Elders, the main decision-making body. The state employed 16,000 state officials. Wusuns had a regular army of more than 630,000 soldiers. In fact, each man was considered a warrior and served in the army. Two sons of kunbag were the rulers of the right and left domains and commanded a personal army of 10,000 soldiers. Wars were the main sources of income. Goods, cattle, prisoners were the trophies of wars that the ruling elite and privileged warriors enjoyed [Zadneprovskiy 460].

Wusuns were engaged in pastoralism. Wusuns bred horses, cattle, sheep and goats. They constantly moved with their livestock seeking for pastures and water. That is, their lifestyle was nomadic. However, the landscape and climate of Tien Shan and Semirechye didn't allow constant moving, so there their lifestyle became semi-nomadic when the people moved vertically through spring to summer and came back for winter. Nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralism was combined with agriculture, especially in valleys. Crops were mainly cultivated.

The unequal distribution of power and economic wealth resulted in the development of social inequality. Historical sources and archeological finds provided a lot of evidence. Different social groups such as nobility, warriors, slaves and others developed in the Wusun society. The society was patriarchal. The custom of levirate was practiced by Wusuns. According to it, a widow was obliged to marry a brother of her dead husband or another male relative if her husband didn't have brothers and stay in the family [Osmonov 60–1].

On the international arena, Wusun State served as a buffer state between the Hunnu and Chinese states. In 125 BC,

Wusuns were visited by famous Chinese traveler Chang Tan. He was dispatched to Wusuns by the Chinese emperor of Han dynasty *Wu-ti* to establish good relations with them and to propose a coalition against Hunnu. The main reasons of the Chinese embassy were to control the Central Asian routes of the Great Silk Road and to eliminate their enemy Hunnu. In 115 BC, kunbag was offered the hand of a Chinese princess. In their turn, Hunnu too provided their princess to kunbag. Kunbag married both princesses and declared the Hunnu princess a senior wife, while the Chinese princess became a junior one. Geographical proximity to Hunnu was the main consideration taken into account by Wusuns.

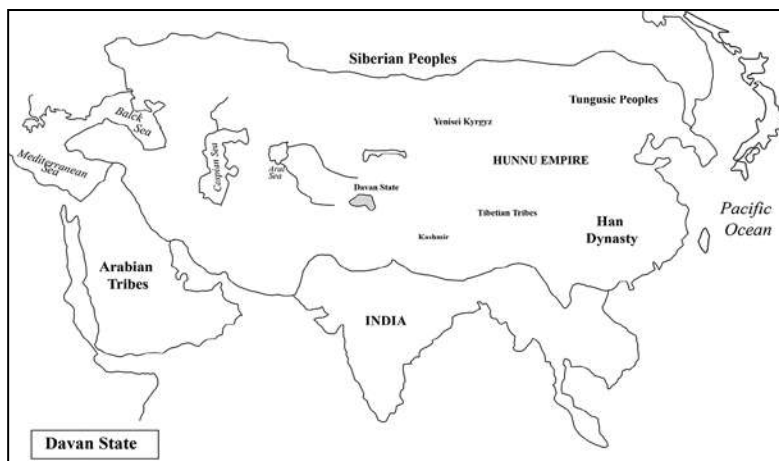
In 80 BC, Wusuns were attacked and defeated by Hunnu. Kunbag turned to the Chinese emperor for help. In 72 BC, the joint forces of Wusuns and Chinese destroyed Hunnu. Captives, animals and other trophies strengthened the political influence of Wusuns in the region [Zadneprovsky 459, 460].

Not much information is available about Wusuns during the first centuries AD. Wusuns were oppressed by Juan Juans and later came under the domination of Hephtalites.

In general, the culture of Wusuns was very similar to the culture of Sakas. Wusun burials, art and the way of life resembled Sakas'. Therefore, the time period of both Sakas and Wusuns is often referred as the period of Saka-Wusun culture [Osmonov 65].

### **2.3. Davan State (100 BC – 300 AD)**

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, Fergana attracted Chinese rulers. It was the period when China was ruled by the Han dynasty that brought most of the Chinese territory under one ruler. The famous Chinese emperor *Wu-ti* decided to send Chang Tan to Central Asia to form an alliance against Hunnu. Chang Tan spent more than a decade traveling, once being captured and escaped later. The mission marked a new stage in the history of Central Asian and Chinese relations and opened the Great



Silk Road. His reports became the main source on the history of Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan during that time.

In the first millennium BC, a new state emerged on the territory of the Fergana Valley. Its name was Davan. The state bordered on Hunnu to the west and Wusun to the south-west. The inhabitants of the Davan State were of Caucasoid origin and spoke Eastern Iranian languages.

Davan State consisted of 70 large and small cities with the total population of 300,000–500,000 people [Osmonov 66]. Each city was ruled by the ruler and the Council of Elders. The Council included the nobles of the city that made decisions on the most important political and economic issues of the state. The Council of Elders in Davan was more powerful compared to the Council of Elders in Wusun State. In case of emergence, the Council could displace or even kill the ruler [Tashbaeva 157]. That is, Davan State represented a union of city-states ruled by local dynasties. The army of Davan State consisted of 60,000 warriors armed with bows, arrows and spears. Soldiers were skillful in shooting from the horse back. Women had quite high status [Bernshtam 10–11].

Davan had a developed agriculture that was the main basis of its economy. People led a sedentary lifestyle and planted wheat, rice, and grape. Grape was used to produce wine. Pastoralism was practiced too. Different animals were cultivated on the pastures outside cities. As for winter season, those horses were stored in special rooms inside houses. Davan was very famous for its beautiful horses, so-called “heaven horses”. The breeding of those horses played a very important role in its economy. Those horses were reflected in the petroglyphs. Horses were sold to nomads who valued them a lot. Trade developed significantly within the Central Asian region between nomads and the settled people [Bernshtam 10–11].

Various crafts developed in Davan such as pottery, weaving, and jewelry. Hemispherical cups were dominant in ceramics. Big jugs (*khum*) were discovered too. They were used to store various products and crops. Davan people brought silver and gold from China in order to produce jewelry.

The capital of the state was *Ershi city*. It was one of the largest fortified cities in Davan. It had two walls: the external and the internal. It was the city where “heaven horses” were also kept [Tashbaeva 158].

In order to control the Great Silk Road routes of Central Asia and have “heaven horses”, the Chinese emperor organized a special embassy to Davan. The ambassador proposed the Council of Elders to sell heaven horses but was refused. Moreover, the Council ordered to kill the ambassador who appeared to be arrogant and impudent. This appeared to be a good pretext for Chinese to start a war against Davan [Tashbaeva 156].

Two military campaigns were launched against Davan during four years. Chinese commander *Li Guanli* was put in charge of both. The first one that took place in 104–102 BC failed. As a result, the most eastern Yu city was occupied but the Chinese army was so weak, so it couldn't penetrate further to the territory of Davan State and had to leave. The second campaign of 101–99 BC was more successful. During

the second campaign, the capital Ershi city was besieged by Chinese for 40 days. They cut the supply of water to the city and destroyed the external walls but couldn't get through the internal walls to subdue it. Finally, they negotiated with the nobility of Davan who agreed to kill their ruler **Mugua** and give his head to Chinese. However, the Chinese army was exhausted. They appointed another ruler **Motsai** who was loyal to them, took 3,000 heaven horses and left. As soon as Chinese left, the Council of Elders killed Motsai and appointed a brother of killed Mugua the new ruler. That is, the Davan State was not completely subdued by China and became independent very soon [Osmonov 68–9].

#### 2.4. Ancient Kyrgyz State (200 — 100 BC)

Prominent Russian historian academician Barthold called the Kyrgyz “the most ancient people of Central Asia, specifying that among the peoples of Central Asia there were no other people whose name was found in history so early” [Kyrgyzy 68].

The very first record of the name **Kyrgyz** dates back to 201 BC. It was made by Chinese historian Sima Tan in the chronicle **Shi-ji** (translated as **Historical notes**). Among the five peoples, conquered by the Hunnu the author mentioned **Gegun (Gyagun)**, the Chinese transcription of the name **Kyrgyz**. The story didn't tell anything about the location of the Kyrgyz but mentioned the name of another people **Dinling** conquered by the Hunnu. Dinling was the people of Europoid origin on the Middle Yenisei River.

The next record of the Kyrgyz dated back to the 1st century BC and was found in another Chinese chronicle **Han-shu (History of Han)** written by Ban Gu. Moreover, the source gave a description of the location of the Kyrgyz state. It was mentioned that the Kyrgyz state was at some particular distance from the headquarters of the Hunnu ruler. Modern calculations made based on the Chinese document pointed to the area of Eastern Turkestan. That is, the ancient Kyrgyz state in the

1<sup>st</sup> century BC was located somewhere to the east from the territory of present Kyrgyzstan [Vvedenie v istoriyu kyrgyzskoy gosudarstvennosti 26].

According to the source, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the Hunnu recruited soldiers from among the Yenisei Kyrgyz and having Kyrgyz soldiers in the army attacked Dinling on the Middle Yenisei River. As a result, in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, first Kyrgyz penetrated their new land on Yenisei. The final migration of the Kyrgyz to the Middle Yenisei River could probably take place under the pressure of Juan Juans and Hephthalites in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the Chinese army invaded the Hunnu territory but was defeated. One of the Chinese military leaders **Li Lin** was captured. He agreed to serve Hunnu. Hunnu appointed Li Lin to be the ruler of the Yenisei Kyrgyz State. According to historical sources, the successors of Li Lin ruled the Kyrgyz till the invasion of Genghis Khan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century [Vvedenie v istoriyu kyrgyzskoy gosudarstvennosti 27–8].

# Chapter 3

## **TURKIC ERA (500–1200)**

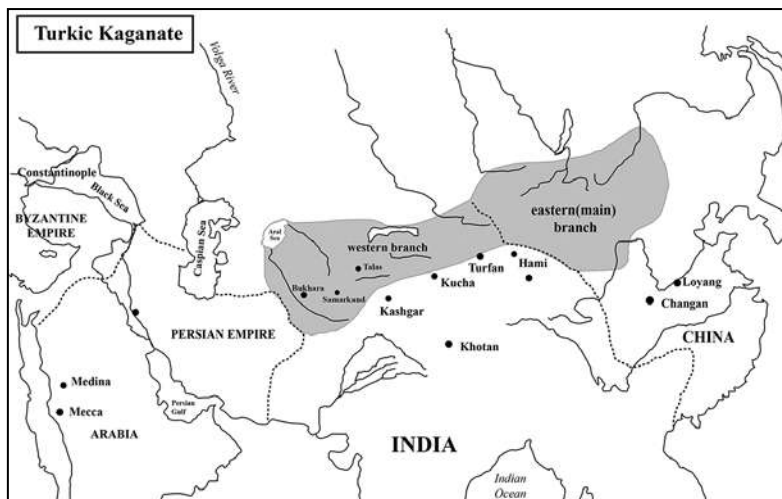
The period of the early Middle Ages from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries can be also referred as the Turkic era in the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia because it was marked by the migration of Turkic-speaking tribes from the Altai Mountains to the Central Asian region and the establishment of first Turkic dynasties and states there. Turks assimilated the earlier Caucasoid and Iranian-speaking population of Central Asia, so that Mongoloid racial features and Turkic languages began to dominate.

The first state established by Turks in the 6<sup>th</sup> century was the Great Turkic Kaganate. Its territory occupied the regions of Central Asia, Mongolia and Southern Siberia and was the largest Turkic state in Eurasia that reached the Aral Sea in the west and the Baykal Lake in the east. Turks were nomads by their lifestyle and cattle-breeders by economic activity. In 603, the state split into two: the Western Turkic Kaganate and the Eastern Turkic Kaganate. When the Western Turkic Kaganate in Central Asia was destroyed by Chinese, other Turkic dynasties such as Turgesh, Karluk and finally Qarakhanid were established in Central Asia. During the Qarakhanid dynasty, the political, economic and cultural life of Turks prospered significantly.

### **3.1. Turkic Kaganate (552–744)**

The first record of the name *Turk* was found in Chinese sources and dated to 546. The name was used by Sogdians, Persians and Byzantians for the new nomads of the steppes. It meant “strong”, “stable”, and “courageous”. Initially, the name had a social rather than an ethnic meaning. It was used exceptionally for the military nobility. Later it became the ethnic term for the tribal confederation and people that were brought





under the rule of Turks [Osmonov 100]. The information about Turks could be also received from Turkic inscriptions, which became a valuable source on the history of Turks since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, Arab writers reported on the location of Turks, their tribes, customs and beliefs.

The origin of Turks could be traced back to Hunnu, a Mongoloid people living to the north from the Great Chinese Wall. There was a legend that explained the origin of Turks from Ashina, a mythic son of the she-wolf. According to the legend, the ancestors of Turks lived in Mongolian Altai. In one of the wars, all Turks were killed, and the only one remained was a maimed boy. The she-wolf saved and fed the boy. Later she gave birth to ten sons whose father was the maimed boy [Christian 248–9]. One of those ten sons was Ashina — the forefather of Turks who ruled on the Altai Mountains. Another one was Kyrgyz who became the ancestor of the Yenisei Kyrgyz.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Turks were subordinated by Juan Juans who dominated in Central Asia. The Altai Mountains were rich in iron ore. Turks smelted iron ore and produced various tools and weapons from it. They also paid their tribute to Juan Juans

in iron. Within a hundred of years Turks managed to establish a large army with well-trained and well-armed soldiers. By the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, all tribes populating Altai were subjected to Turks. In 552, Turks under the leadership of *Bumin* defeated Juan Juans and established the first Turkic State [Osmonov 100].

Victorious Bumin announced himself *kagan* following the example of Juan Juan's ruler. The headquarters of Bumin and the capital of the Turkic Kaganate became *Orkhon* city in northern Mongolia [Osmonov 101]. In 553, Bumin died and his son *Muqan* succeeded him on the throne. Muqan tried to expand the territory of the state to the east bringing the regions of Southern Siberia and Northern China under his rule [Christian 251].

While *Muqan* controlled the eastern part of the empire, the younger brother of Bumin *Istemi* ruled in the western part and prepared himself to occupy the territories to the west. Istemi was interested in conquering Central Asia. Even before the death of Bumin, he managed to invade the territory of Semirechye and the Central and Western Tien Shan Mountains [Osmonov 101].

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Central Asia was under the rule of Hephthalites. The Hephthalite State was very powerful, even Iran had to pay a tribute to it. In order to crush Hephthalites, Istemi approached the Persian shah *Khosraw Annushirvan*. Turks and Persians formed a military alliance, according to which each ally had to support the other in the case of war. The alliance was strengthened by the marriage of Istemi to the daughter of the Iranian shah.

In 565, the armies of Iran and Turks attacked the enemy from both sides, the west and the east. The Hephthalites were totally defeated and their lands to the north from the Amudarya River were passed to the Turkic state. The border between the two allies became Amudarya. Istemi moved his capital to *Suyab* (near present-day Tokmok city) which had a favorable geographical location for trade.

However, very soon after the defeat of the Hephtalites, a conflict broke out between the two former allies. The pretext was the refusal of the Iranian shah to pay a tribute to Turks, once paid to Hephtalites. At the same time, the true reason of the conflict could be the willingness of former allies to control the trade routes going through the Central Asian region. The war was inevitable.

In 568, Istemi signed an agreement with the old enemy of Iran Byzantine. The embassy of Western Turks to Byzantine was led by Sogdian ruler **Maniach**. The Byzantine emperor responded positively by agreeing to create a military coalition against Iran and sending the Byzantine embassy back to Turks. The embassy led by famous military general of Byzantine **Zemarch** successfully reached Turks. However, when Turks attacked Iran, Byzantine didn't support them. The Iranian shah was scared by the attack and hurried to conclude a peace treaty with Turks, according to which he agreed to pay the tribute to Turks [Osmonov 101-3].

That is, in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, Turks created the first Eurasian empire that included the territories of Southern Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Established in 552, the empire existed almost two centuries till 744. Turkic state included various regions inhabited by different peoples and tribes, for example Sogdians, an Iranian-speaking people of Transoxania (Mawarannahr) who were forced to accept Turkic suzerainty. However, Turks retained their lifestyle and culture but obliged local rulers to pay a tribute to them.

Constant wars for new territories caused numerous conflicts of Turkic elite for power. In 603, the Turkic empire finally split into two states: Eastern Turkic Kaganate located to the east from the Altai Mountains, southern Siberia and Mongolia, and Western Turkic Kaganate located to the west from the Altai Mountains, in Central Asia. The capital of the Western Turkic Kaganate became Suyab city located in the Chui valley, while the capital of the Eastern Turkic state remained in Orkhon.

The most prominent ruler of Western Turkic State was **Ton Jabgu Kagan**. He carried out a number of reforms in both domestic and foreign domains. He was a clever politician and military leader. In the foreign policy, Ton Jabgu formed an alliance with Byzantine against its main enemy Iran and successfully participated in the anti-Iranian military campaign. He was able to occupy the former Iranian territories of Toharistan, Afghanistan, Transcaucasia.

In the domestic policy, he implemented an administrative reform and established a very strict political control on subjected territories. He granted local rulers the rights equal to Turkic nobility. However, many Turks did not like those reforms and opposed his rule. He was killed by his uncle who assumed power after him. The political crisis broke out. It was marked by the continuing wars between different Turkic tribes [Osmonov 104–5].

In 630, the Chinese army conquered Eastern Turks and in 656, they defeated Western Turks on the Ili River. In 704, Turgesh killed the last Turkic kagan in Central Asia and put an end to the Western Turkic Kaganate [Osmonov 105–6].

In 679, Eastern Turks rebelled against the Tang Empire and could restore the Second Turkic state for a while. It became a powerful state under the rule of Kapagan Kagan who initiated few military campaigns to restore the Great Turkic Kaganate. In 744, the Second Turkic Kaganate was crashed by the unified forces of Uighurs, Qarluks and Basmyls [Osmonov 107, 110].

Politically, the Turkic state represented the confederation of tribes, the largest of which were two: **dulu** and **nushibi** [Osmonov 104]. Kagan was the title of the ruler. He had an assistant **jabgu** who usually was a brother or a close male relative to kagan. The third level in the political hierarchy was occupied by **tarkans**, **buiruks** and **tutuks** who executed the orders of kagan. **Beks** were the leaders of tribes and clans [Djumanaliev 90–1].

By economy, the Turks were nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists. They cultivated large and small animals. Hunting

was an important source of food and military exercise for Turks. They improved their military skills and trained their young soldiers at hunting. However, the territory of Turks also included settled peoples such as Sogdians who practiced agriculture and were the main traders on the Central Asian routes of the Great Silk Road. Following the example of Sogdians, many Turks too turned to a more sedentary lifestyle and became farmers.

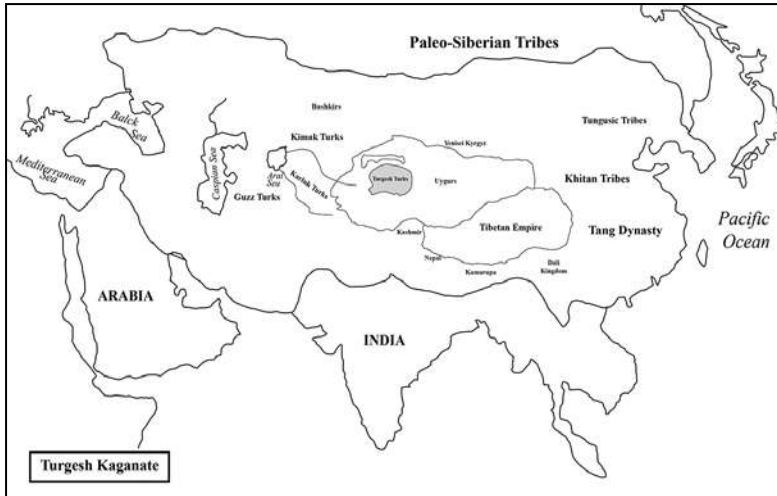
The lifestyle and economy Turks were reflected in their material culture. **Yurt** represented the predominant portable house of Turkic nomads. The materials used in the construction of yurts were wood, leather and felt. The wooden core of the yurt was covered with **chiy** (straw mats) and felt. The inside yurt could be divided into sections: **bosogo** (threshold), male and female sections (left and right sides of the yurt respectively), **tyor** (the most respected place for guests opposite to the entrance) and **kolomto** (hearth in the centre of the yurt).

The traditional clothing of Turks was hand-made from the imported fabrics. The clothing had different types and forms displaying the social and marital status of the person, his age and gender. **Chepken, ton, kementai** represented the clothing of Turks. The traditional headdresses were **kalkpak, topu, tebetei, elechek** [Osmonov 234–40].

### 3.2. Turgesh Kaganate (700–740)

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, on the territory of former Western Turkic state, Turgesh tribes established the Turgesh State that also recognized Chinese suzerainty. Turgesh were also Turkic speakers. The new state represented the tribal confederation where the Yellow and the Black Turgesh always rivaled for power. Their capital of Turgesh state remained in the previous Turkic capital **Suyab** city.

The founder of the ruling dynasty was the ruler of the Yellow Turgesh **Uch Ilig Kagan**. He assumed the traditional for Western Turks title of kagan and ordered to coin Turgesh money with Sogdian inscriptions [Osmonov 106]. His successor



was his son **Sakal Kagan** who had to face the opposition of his younger brother.

At that time, the situation on the international arena became very complicated. Turgesh were threatened by Chinese in the south, Second Turkic Kaganate in the east and Arabs in the west. However, the main threat was represented by the Second Turkic Kaganate.

In 710, the Tripartite alliance of Turgesh, China and the Yenisei Kyrgyz was formed against the Second Turkic Kaganate. However, the ruler of Turks Kapagan Kagan managed to defeat each one separately. First he crossed the Sayan Mountains and destroyed the Yenisei Kyrgyz, then Turgesh and finally Chinese. Both Sakal Kagan and his brother were killed.

The next ruler was **Chabysh Chor Suluk**. He had to fight against Arabs. When he was killed, his son came to power. His reign was marked by a continuous rivalry of the Yellow and Black Turgesh. Finally, the Black Turgesh took over but Karluks who came to Central Asia destroyed them and established their state [Osmonov 107–8].

### **3.3. Karluk Kaganate (700–900)**

Karluks were the Turks who migrated to the territory of Central Asia pressured by Uighurs. Originally, Karluks roamed in Mongolia and Southern Siberia.

In 744, the unified forces of Karluks, Uighurs and Basmyls crashed the Second Turkic Kaganate. The new dominant state emerged on the territory of present-day Mongolia became the Uighur Kaganate (744–840). It dominated on the territory from Altai Mountains to Manchuria [Osmonov 110].

In 746, Karluks oppressed by Uighurs had to migrate to Semirechye where they played a decisive role in the struggle against Chinese. The Chinese army invaded the territory of Chui Valley, occupied Suyab city and destroyed it. The Arabs who were attempting to spread their influence in the region tried to prevent Chinese interference.

Two armies met in 751 on the Talas River. None could attack first. During the fifth day, Karluks who initially were on the side of Chinese suddenly attacked them from behind. Arabs immediately supported them and attacked Chinese from the front. The Chinese army was completely destroyed. 50,000 Chinese died and 20,000 were captured [Osmonov 110–1].

The Arabs' victory had lasting and far-reaching consequences. China did not appear on the territory of Central Asia for more than 1000 years. The region became the center of Islamic culture. Turks became the third people after Arabs and Persians who converted to Islam and contributed significantly to the development of the Islamic culture in the 9–12<sup>th</sup> centuries and later during the Ottomans. Turkic became the third main language of the Islamic civilization [Soucek 68].

In 893, the first Muslim dynasty in Central Asia, the Samanids, conquered the territory of Karluks and extended its power over them [Osmonov 112].

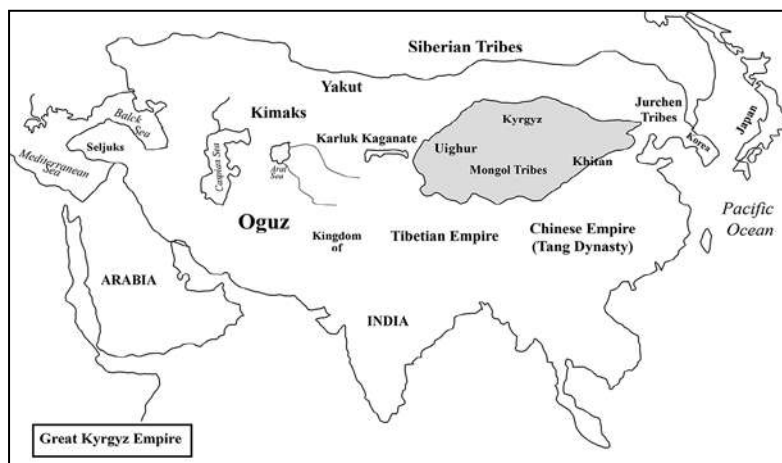
### 3.4. Yenisei Kyrgyz Kaganate (600–1200)

Within the first six centuries AD there is no record of the Kyrgyz in Chinese sources, so their destiny within this period is unknown. Beginning from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the information about the Kyrgyz can be received not only from Chinese but also from Greek, Arab, Persian, Turk, Uighur, Sogdian historical documents. Besides, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Kyrgyz adopted Turkic Runic script and developed their own written system [Istoriya kyrgyzzov 70–1, 72].

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Kyrgyz established the Kyrgyz Kaganate on the middle Yenisei River. During this time, the state was ruled by **Barsbek** with the official title **ajo** [Osmonov 114].

As for Turks, they managed to defeat Chinese and restore their state the Second Eastern Kaganate and became the most powerful state in the region. In the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Yenisei Kyrgyz decided to send their missions to China and Turgesh in order to establish the anti-Turkic coalition [Osmonov 116].

However, Turks did not wait until their enemies attack them first. In the winter of 710, Turks crossed the Sayan Mountains and destroyed the Yenisei Kyrgyz army. The attack was so sudden that most of the Kyrgyz soldiers were not ready. Barsbek





with the remaining forces attempted to resist but was killed. Then Turks destroyed Turgesh and finally Chinese. After the defeat, the Yenisei Kyrgyz did not participate in Central Asian military campaigns for more than 40 years [Osmonov 116–8].

The first scholar who put the term *Great Kyrgyz Empire* into a wide use was the prominent Russian and Soviet historian Barthold. He did so referring to the period of the 9–10<sup>th</sup> centuries when the Yenisei Kyrgyz could build the empire that stretched from the Irtysh River in the west to the Big Khingan range in the east, from the Angara and Selenga Rivers in the north to the Gobi Desert in the south.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the new hegemon of Central Asia was the Uighurs who in coalition with Karluks and Basmyls defeated the Eastern Turkic Kaganate. In the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Uighur Kaganate lost its former might because of permanent internal strifes and the famine that broke out because of the poor harvest. In 820, Kyrgyz ajo used the situation and challenged Uighurs announcing himself kagan [Osmonov 119–20].

In 840, after 20 years of struggle, the Yenisei Kyrgyz crushed the Uighur Kaganate. Uighurs chased by Kyrgyz fled to Eastern Turkestan. It was the time when Kyrgyz could reach the Tien Shan Mountains and Semirechye. They initiated a number of successful military campaigns to Eastern Mongolia and Jungaria and established the Great Kyrgyz Empire on the newly conquered territories. During the era of the Great Kyrgyz Empire, its population significantly increased and included various non-Kyrgyz tribes who adopted the name Kyrgyz. That is, the name Kyrgyz became not only of ethnic but of political meaning as well [Osmonov 121–2].

However, the era of their empire didn't last long. In the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of the Kyrgyz returned to Yenisei because both geographically and climatically the new territory was very different from the Yenisei region. At the same time, a number of small Kyrgyz kingdoms emerged on the territory of the former Kyrgyz Empire. One of them was established

in the Altai Mountains. Within a few centuries, the Altai Kyrgyz underwent considerable cultural and ethnic changes. Following the assimilation of the Kyrgyz by the local population, their appearance, language and culture changed. At the same time, they had lost many achievements of their Yenisei ancestors, including the Runic script. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Kyrgyz of Altai and Jungaria moved to Central Tien Shan pressed by Mongols. There they assimilated local tribes and gave rise to the modern Kyrgyz ethnicity.

That is, the period of the Great Kyrgyz Empire is very important from a historical point of view. It became the time the Kyrgyz could establish their state on the whole territory of Eurasia and create favorable conditions for the rise and formation of the modern Kyrgyz ethnicity.

The organization of the Yenisei state was quite similar to other Turkic states. The ruler of the Yenisei state had the title *ajo*, later *kagan*. The second person in the state was advisor *buiruk*. The third level was occupied by *boyla* who announced the decisions of the ruler and *yargan* who put them into effect. Kagan appointed *tutuks*, *tarkans*, *biys* and *tyutyuns* to rule in regions and tribes [Osmonov 123–4].

Kyrgyz had a combined economy. They were engaged in cattle breeding (horses, camels, cows and sheep), agriculture (wheat, millet, oats, artificial irrigation), metallurgy (daggers, hatchets, spears, arrows, harness), hunting (deer, goats, fur-bearing animals, goose, ducks), and fishing [Osmonov 125]. At the same time, the dominant economy was cattle-breeding.

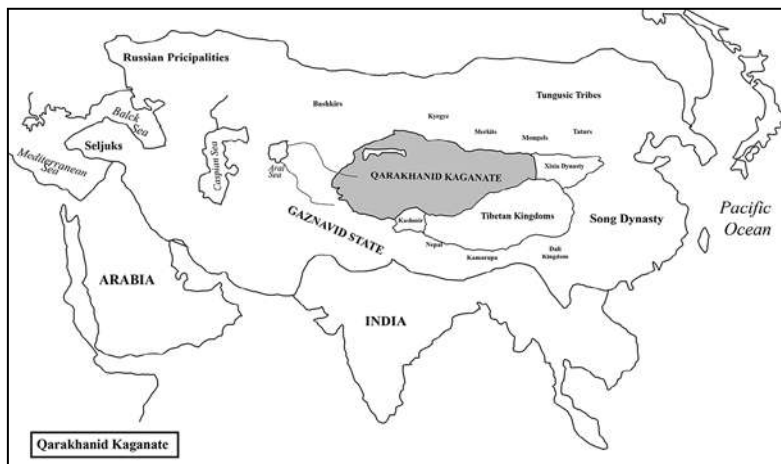
Trade developed. A branch of the Great Silk Road named the Kyrgyz Way led to the Yenisei River from Turfan in Eastern Turkestan. There merchants could exchange their goods for horses, furs, musk (a strong-smelling glandular secretion of the male musk deer used in perfumery), mammoth tusk and bones, wood, silver kitchenware. The main currency was the fur of squirrel (*tyyin chichkan* in Kyrgyz). Probably the modern word *tyyin* for Kyrgyz money derived from it [Osmonov 125].

In terms of religion, Kyrgyz were shamanists and believed in Tengri and Umai. They worshiped and sacrificed to natural objects such as mountains, lakes, trees and springs. Kyrgyz cremated their deceased, collected bones and buried them a year later. High mounds were constructed on the burials of rulers and nobility and surrounded by stone fences [Osmonov 129].

Their written language was based on the common Runic script spread since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Kyrgyz made inscriptions on stone, wood, metal and wrote from the right to the left. More than 120 monuments written in ancient Kyrgyz script have been discovered on the Yenisei River [Osmonov 127–8, Istoriya kyrgyzov 72].

### 3.5. Qarakhanid Kaganate (900–1200)

The beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in Central Asia was marked by the decline of the Samanids and the rise of the Qarakhanids. Unlike the Samanids who were Iranian, the Qarakhanids were Turks. Qarakhanid rulers adopted Islam and announced it the official religion of their state. The period of Qarakhanids was the most prosperous in the history of Turks. It was the time when economy and culture prospered significantly.



The name **Qarakhanids** was introduced by European and Russian scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century instead of previously applied **Afrasiyab**. It derived from the term **Qarakhan** that meant Great Khan and was the title of the Qarakhanid ruler [Soucek 83].

The founder of Qarakhanid dynasty was **Satuk Bughra Khan**. Satuk Qarakhan converted to Islam under the influence of a Sufi missionary and his son Musa declared Islam the official religion of the Qarakhanid state.

The Qarakhanids were of Karluk origin. The fact that the grandfather of the dynasty founder, Satuk Qarakhan, was a Karluk could serve as the evidence of Karluk roots of Qarakhanids [Osmonov 134].

The capital of Qarakhanids was Balasagun city (near Tokmok) with Burana Tower still remained there since the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

As a result of the war between Qarakhanids and Samanids, the Samanids were defeated and their state was divided between Qarakhanids and the newly established Gaznavid State. The territory of the Qarakhanid Kaganate enlarged and included Semirechye, Tien Shan, Fergana, and Eastern Turkestan, or the territories to the north from Amudarya River, while the territories to the south were given to Gaznavids [Osmonov 134–5].

The state flourished during the reign of **Ibrahim Tamgach Khan**. He was a good ruler and Muslim. He built many mosques, madrasas, hospitals. He tried to stop intestine wars between two main branches of the Qarakhanids, Hasanids and Alids. It was during his rule that the state split into Eastern and Western parts. The capitals of Eastern part were **Balasagun** city in Chui valley and later **Kashgar** in Eastern Turkestan, while the capitals of the Western were **Uzgen** and later **Samarkand** [Osmonov 136].

In the late 11<sup>th</sup> — early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the Qarakhanid Kaganate was undergoing a serious crisis. The Seljuks subordinated the Qarakhanids but did not interfere in their domestic

affairs. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Seljuks were defeated by Qarakhitay, nomads of a Mongolian origin. In 1210, the Qarakhitay were overthrown by another Mongolian tribe of Naymans [Osmonov 137–40].

Under Qarakhanids, various forms of land ownership developed such as *divani* (state lands) and *iqta* (private lands), and the land taxes such as *kharaj* and *zakat* were imposed on the people of the state. There were other taxes to be paid as well including *khashar*, or the rent paid by working for the construction of roads, mosques, palaces and other public buildings [Djumanaliev 142–3].

During the time of Qarakhanids, the trade over the Great Silk Road flourished. The Great Silk Road represented a historical network of overland trade routes that connected Asian states with the Mediterranean and European world. The term *Silk Road* is attributed to the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen who made seven expeditions to China from 1868 to 1872. The Silk Road was named this way after Chinese silk that was the main good exchanged. *Chang Tan* is considered to be the founder of the Great Silk Road. The length of the road was 4,000 miles (6,500 km).

Three branches of the Silk Road crossed the territory of Kyrgyzstan: the most popular Chui route went through the Chui and Issyk-Kul valleys, the Fergana route passed the Fergana Valley including Osh and Uzgen cities, and finally the Pamir-Alai route that went through the Alai Mountains. Initially, it was predominantly natural exchange but later money was introduced. Sasanian, Greek, Chinese, Arabic, Turgesh and finally Qarakhanid coins were used. Various goods were exchanged along the Silk Road. China provided silk, tea, porcelain, fabrics. Spices, ivory, textiles, precious stones came from India. Glassware, gold, silver, wine, and jewels were delivered from Byzantine [Mokrynin, Ploskikh 111–2, 114–5]. Sogdians were the traders in Central Asia responsible for sending their caravans to China and bringing Chinese goods to Central Asia. The spread

of different religions such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam to Central Asia took place thanks to the Silk Road.

The cultural renaissance that began under the Samanids continued under the Qarakhanids. Architecture, literature, art and science flourished. Many beautiful Islamic buildings such as mosques, medreses, minarets, mausoleums were constructed. Famous Persian and Turkic poets and writers such as Firdawsi, Kashgari, Balasaguni created their masterpieces. Prominent scholars like Ibn Sina, Biruni, Farabi and others made their contributions to the development of science.

**Ferdowsi** was a famous Persian poet. He was the author of the national epic of Iran and Tajik people **Shahnameh**. The poem consisted of many legends and myths. It described the legendary history of the pre-Islamic kings in Iran and Turan (the land of Turks) and the rivalry of Iranians and Turks for the dominance in Central Asia in the 10–11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Ibn Sina**, commonly known in Europe as Avicenna, was a famous Persian scholar and doctor. He wrote 450 treatises on medicine, astronomy, philosophy, geology, psychology, Islamic theology, logic, and other subjects. 150 of his surviving books focused on philosophy and 40 on medicine. His most famous works were **The Book of Healing**, a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopaedia, and **The Canon of Medicine**, a standard medical text used at medieval universities of Europe [Soucek 86–7].

Although the Arabic language became the official language of the state, Persian played a significant role in the development of literature and science. At the same time, Turkic was promoted and became the third language of the Qarakhanid State.

The first literary works in Turkic were **Divan Lugat at-Turk** (Dictionary of Turkic Languages) of Mahmud Kashgari and the **Qutadghu Bilig** (Blessed Knowledge) by Yusuf Balasaguni, both written in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

**Yusuf Balasaguni** was born in Balasagun city, the capital and the most developed city in the Qarakhanid Kaganate. He studied

in cultural and scientific centers of that time such as Farab, Kashgar, Bukhara. He was fluent in Arabic and Persian and was interested in philosophy, science, poetry, politics. During 18 months, he completed his philosophical and didactical poetry *Blessed Knowledge* and presented it to a Qarakhanid ruler. The ruler awarded him with the title *Hass Hajib* (chamberlain). The poetry was written in Turkic and represented a philosophical piece about a perfect society and state [Soucek 92].

The famous philologist and traveler *Mahmud Kashgari* was born in Barskon city on the southern shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake. He spent most of his life in Kashgar but had to escape and reached Baghdad, the capital of the Arab Caliphate where he wrote his famous *Divan Lugat at-Turk*. The dictionary was the Turkic-Arabic dictionary that contained a lot of information on the dialects of various Turkic tribes, their customs and traditions, geographical locations as well as a unique round map [Soucek 87–91].

# Chapter 4

## **MONGOL RULE (1200–1500)**

The 13<sup>th</sup> century marked one of the most tragic pages in the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. It was the destructive Mongol invasion. The Mongol army created by Genghis Khan conquered the territory of Central Asia and destroyed the developed Turkic culture. The prospering cities were ruined and turned into pastures. Instead of Turkic states, a large Mongol Empire along with smaller Mongol states such as Qaidu State and Mogolistan were established on the territory of Central Asia by Genghis Khan and his descendants.

However, one hundred and fifty years later, the new ruler of Central Asia Amir Timur was able to revive the destroyed economy and culture of the region and create the empire almost equal to the Mongol one in size and power. The time of Timur is known as the most prosperous in the history of post-Mongolian Central Asia.

The Mongol invasion had a significant impact on the population and culture of Central Asia. In the ethnic composition of the region, the Mongol element began dominating. Ruling dynasties were gradually Turkicised and Islam became the dominant religion of those states.

### **4.1. Mongol Empire (1200–1300)**

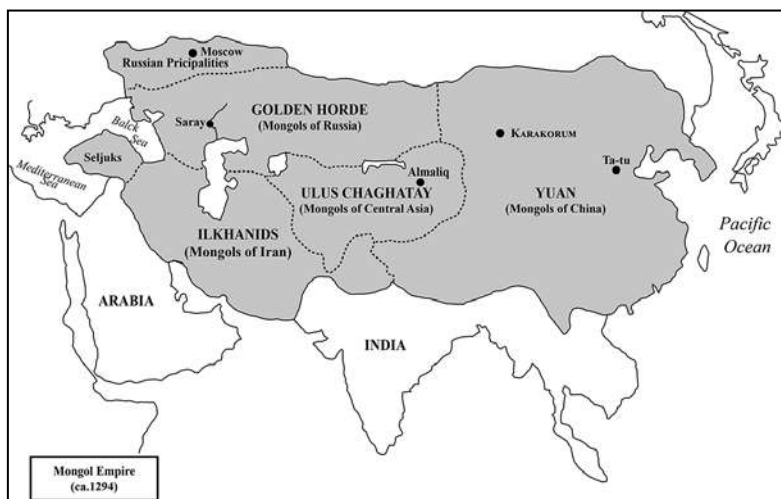
In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Mongolia represented the country of nomads grouped into tribes. Those tribes were often in conflict to each other driving away animals and kidnapping women. The eastern part from the Khingan Mountains was occupied by Mongolian-speaking tribes, while the western and central parts of Mongolia used to be predominantly Turkic. Those living in Eastern Mongolia called themselves Tatars and Mongols



[Soucek 104]. That was the reason why Mongols were often called Tatars or Tataro-Mongols by Chinese and other subordinate peoples. On the other hand, Tatars were one of the Mongol tribes that didn't submit voluntarily to Genghis Khan and usually stood in the forefront of the Mongol army [Osmonov 146].

The 1162 (1167) was the year when the leader of Borjigin clan in Mongol tribe *Yesugei* got a son **Temujin**. Later Yesugei was killed by Tatars and his wife Hoelun and children were abandoned by the members of the tribe. Temujin and his family had to go through many obstacles and hardships to survive before he finally managed to bring all Mongol tribes under his control and unite them [Osmonov 142].

In 1206, Temujin was announced **Genghis Khan** (Universal Khan) at the all-Mongolian kurultai (meeting) and became the only ruler of the Mongol Empire [Osmonov 143]. Genghis Khan was able to create an absolutely loyal, disciplined and strong army. The main force of the army was its well-trained cavalry. His soldiers and commanders were often from the ordinary people. Genghis Khan didn't distinguish his soldiers and com-



manders by their origin but by their talents and skills. Therefore, there were many commanders in the army from the common people who were promoted due to their personal merits (the system of meritocracy).

Genghis Khan divided his army and state into tens, hundreds, thousands and ten thousands (tumens). Each one had its leader whose position was hereditary. The leaders of tumens assumed state and military functions [Osmonov 145]. They had to control people on their territory, distribute pastures, collect taxes, lead the army during wars, and take care of the weaponry and armor.

After he was able to subordinate and unite all Mongolian tribes, he decided to launch campaigns beyond Mongolia. Three campaigns were initiated. The first was organized to the north against the Yenisei Kyrgyz, the second was to the south-west against Tanguts and the third was to the south-east against the Chin dynasty established in northern China [Soucek 104].

Genghiz Khan was a flexible and pragmatic politician. In case of a peaceful surrender, he kept an enemy a throne and his life. Resistance meant extermination and devastation.

In 1207, the Yenisei Kyrgyz submitted themselves to Genghiz Khan. But in 1218, they rebelled against Mongols. Genghiz Khan sent his eldest son Juchi to suppress the rebellion [Osmonov 143]. After suppression, the disobedient Kyrgyz were resettled in different regions of the Mongol Empire.

Tanguts, a people of Tibeto-Burman origin also submitted to Genghis Khan in 1209 but later they rebelled and paid for this with extinction [Soucek 105].

In 1215, Beijing fell. However, after the conquest of Beijing, Mongols turned their attention to the west — the Central Asian region [Soucek 105].

During that period, the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia was under the rule of Kuchlug from a Nayman tribe. He conquered Qarakhitays who subordinated the Qarakhanids in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In 1218, Mongols easily defeated Naymans

with the help of local dynasties who hated them for being intolerant and imposing their religion Buddhism. Therefore, local people welcomed Mongols as their liberators. Genghis Khan conquered Semirechye and Tien Shan. All cities of the Chui and Talas valleys were destroyed. The urban culture was substituted for nomadic [Osmonov 148–9]. By 1223, all Central Asia was under the control of Mongols [Soucek 107]. Then Genghis Khan returned to Mongolia where he died in 1227.

Genghis Khan had four sons from his main wife Borte: Juchi, Chaghatay, Ugedey and Toluy. They all helped him in his conquests. Juchi was sent to subordinate the Yenisei Kyrgyz, Chaghatay and Ugedey were sent to fight against Khorezmian Shakh in Urgench, Toluy conquered Marv. He divided all conquered territories among them according to the nomadic tradition.

**Juchi**, the eldest son, received the Kipchak steppe. Because of his early death, his territory was divided among his sons: **Ordu** established the White Horde from the Irtysh River to the Ural River, **Batu** created the Golden Horde on the Volga River, **Sheybani** ruled the Blue Horde from Tyumen to Aral [Soucek 108, Osmonov 149]. However, the territory of Juchi was to be conquered. **Chaghatay**, the second son, received Central Asia (Transoxania, Semirechye, Western Sinkiang). **Ugedey**, the third son, received Central Siberia and Eastern Sinkiang. **Toluy**, the youngest son, received the home territory of Mongolia with the capital in **Karakorum**. But this did not mean that he received the title of Great Khan. Ugedey was designated by Genghis Khan as his successor [Soucek 107–8].

As soon as Ugedey became the Great Khan in 1230, he initiated the second wave of military campaigns against China (Chin dynasty) and Russia. Only in 1238–1240, Batu could conquer Russia and Ukraine and receive his portion of lands where he established the Golden Horde. The Mongol conquest put an end to Kievan Russia and promoted the rise of Moscow [Soucek 108–9].

After the death of Ugedey and Chaghatay and later the son of Ugedey **Guyuk**, the son of Toluy **Mongke** was proclaimed the Great Khan. Under Mongke, the third final wave of conquests was launched. It was the conquest of Iran and Iraq. The brother of Mongke **Hulagu** conquered both but was stopped by Mamluks of Egypt. The myth about the Mongol army as invincible was crashed. On the conquered territory of Iran and Iraq he established the new dynasty of **Ilkhans** (il — a khan subordinated to the main khan). The conquest of China was continued by **Qubilay**, another son of Toluy, who became the new Mongol khan in 1264. He moved his capital to Beijing and in 1271 established the new Chinese dynasty there, **Yuan dynasty**, and declared Buddhism the state religion [Soucek 110–11].

#### 4.2. Chaghatay Ulus (1200–1300)

Chaghatay received the lands of Transoxania, Semirechye and Western Sinkiang. The capital of Chaghatay Ulus became **Almaliq city** on the territory of present-day southern Kazakhstan [Soucek 112].

With the death of Chaghatay, a new period in the history of Chaghatay Ulus started. It was the time of Chaghatayid dynasty. Most of Chaghatayids lived in steppes retaining their nomadic life style. Their religion was paganism. The political and moral norms remained **Yasa** — the traditional Mongol code of behavior formulated under Genghis Khan [Soucek 113].

Most of the conquered territories were occupied by Muslims whose governors enjoyed considerable autonomy. Mongols didn't interfere with their lifestyle based on the Islamic law Shariat. They were also tolerant or indifferent towards other religions, for example Christianity. Local rulers were obliged to pay tributes to Mongols and soon became very prosperous. However, their prosperity began to decrease at the time of Qubilay [Soucek 113].

About a century after the Mongol invasion of Central Asia, some Chaghatayid khans began converting to Islam. Islam played

a fundamental role in the development of local identity during the Mongol rule thanks to the contribution of Sufi brotherhoods: Kubrawiya and Yasawiya [Soucek 117–20].

### 4.3. Qaidu State (1200–1300)

The main rival of the last Mongol khan Qubilay was Qaidu, the founder of the newly established Qaidu State. In 1269, **Qaidu**, a grandson of Ugedey, managed to hold a kurultay (a meeting) in Talas valley where the chieftains of Chaghatay and Ugedey uluses met and recognized him as the ruler of both uluses [Soucek 112]. The new state emerged became independent from the Mongolian State with the center in Karakorum city. It stretched from the Altai Mountains to the Amudarya River and included the territories of present-day Kyrgyzstan and Eastern Turkestan. The capital was **Tarsakent city** located near present-day Bishkek [Osmonov 150].

Qaidu initiated several military campaigns to Karakorum against the Mongol ruler Qubilay but they were unsuccessful. After the final defeat he died in 1303 [Soucek 112].

Qaidu was a good and just ruler. He refused to lead aggressive wars aimed at the invasion and conquest of other territories. He unified his state and realized well that the stability of the state depended on its economic development. He undertook a number of reforms to improve economy, develop trade and crafts. He successfully implemented the money reform, introducing golden and silver coins. He organized a strict tax control and limited the number of taxes paid by people to the state. He also passed the law advocating the rights of agriculturalists and restricted the use of agricultural lands by cattle breeders. Violators were severely punished [Osmonov 151].

Qaidu made numerous attempts to help Altai and Yenisei Kyrgyz rebelling against the Mongolian rule. In 1293, he sent his army to support Yenisei Kyrgyz struggle but was defeated by Qubilay. Qubilay destroyed the Yenisei Kyrgyz state. However, Qaidu was able to help those Kyrgyz who already lived in

the Altai Mountains by moving them from Altai to Tien Shan [Osmonov 151]. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Qaidu territory was split into two states: Mavarannahr (the western part of Central Asia) and Mogolistan (the eastern part of Central Asia).

#### 4.4. Mogolistan (1300–1500)

In the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a new state **Mogolistan** (the state of Mogols) emerged in the east of the Central Asian region. Turks of Central Asia called the descendants of Mongols **Mogols**, therefore, the state was called Mogolistan. Mogols were Mongol tribes who came to Central Asia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and were Turkicised by the Turks of Central Asia. These tribes remained Mongol in their names but were Turkic in contents. They spoke Turkic, followed Turkic traditions and practiced Islam. They considered Tien Shan but not Mongolia as their motherland. Later many of those tribes entered the Kyrgyz ethnic group. The largest tribes were Duglats, Barlas, Baarins and others [Osmonov 153].

The territory of Mogols reached Syr Darya in the west, Irtys River in the east, Balkhash Lake in the north and Eastern Turkestan in the south.

In the north of the state the ruler was Puladchi from Duglat tribe. In the east, his younger brother Kamar ad-Din ruled. The capital was Ak Suu city in the Ili Valley [Osmonov 153].

**Puladchi** was not a Genghizid and, therefore, he could not be a khan. He made an 18-year old descendant of Chaghatay **Toghluk Timur** the formal ruler of Mogolistan and took the highest post at him **ulusbek**. However, Toghluk Timur grew a talented leader. He adopted Islam and made it the official religion of the state. He started spreading Islam among his citizens by force. The latter allowed him raising claims to the whole Central Asian region [Osmonov 153–4].

In 1360–1361, Toghluk Timur undertook a military campaign to Mavarannahr. He did not meet a strong resistance there and easily reached Samarkand. At that time, Mavarannahr didn't rep-

resent a unified state but consisted of many small kingdoms that often rivaled with each other. He returned to Mogolistan full of booty and loot. His son Ilyas Khodja continued his aggressive policy towards Mavarannahr. In 1365, so-called “Mud Battle” between Mavarannahr and Mogolistan near Tashkent took place. As a result, the army of Mavarannahr was destroyed and about ten thousands from both sides were killed. Mogols approached and seized Samarkand but its citizens managed to defend the city and didn't let the enemy in. Mogols came back to Mogolistan ashamed of their defeat [Osmonov 154–5].

However, after the rise of Timur the situation changed. Timur undertook several military campaigns to Mogolistan but was not able to conquer Mogolistan because each time he penetrated the region nomadic Mogols retreated from their territories high to the mountains where they were not reachable. Therefore, the main aim of Timur was not the conquest but a complete devastation and loot. Timur destroyed Mogolistan's cities and moved many people to Mavarannahr. Formally, Mogolistan became part of the Empire of Timur and his grandson Ulugh Beg was appointed the nominal ruler of the region [Osmonov 156–8].

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kyrgyz also made their appearance in Central Asia. They occupied the eastern part of Mogolistan and were different from Mogols. They were still pagans but not Muslims, spoke a different from Mogols Turkic dialect, and were warlike people [Osmonov 158–9].

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Kyrgyz occupied the northern territories of Mogolistan and assimilated the remaining Mogol tribes there. The leader of the Kyrgyz **Muhammad Kyrgyz** was able to unite Kyrgyz tribes and suppress the attempts of Mogols to conquer Northern Kyrgyzstan. Along with Kazakhs, Kyrgyz successfully attacked Mogols and Sheybanids [Osmonov 175–7].

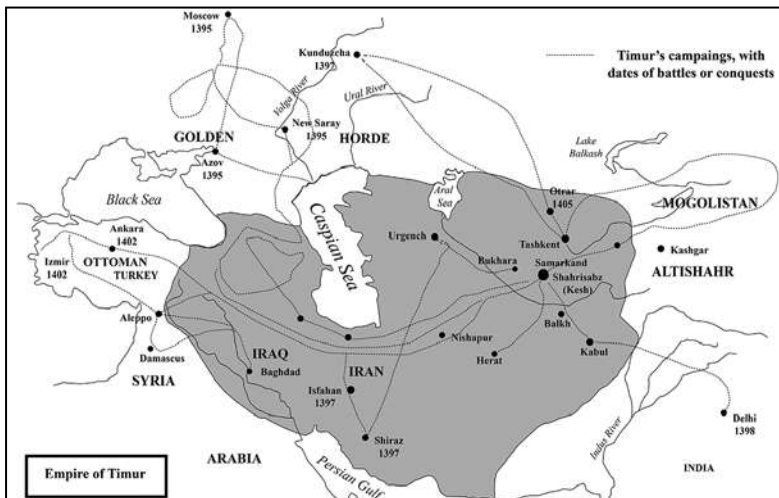
### 4.5. Empire of Timur (1300–1500)

If the Mongol period was a traumatic experience in the history of Central Asia, the Timurid period was viewed as the most glorious. Although Timur spent his life engaged in continuous military campaigns, his successors were less interested in conquests but encouraged the development of art and science [Soucek 123].

**Timur** was born in 1336 in Shahrissabz. He was a Turk of Barlas tribe. Although this tribe had a Mongol name, it was practically Turkic. He spoke Turkic and probably Persian but not Mongolian. He received his name Tamerlane (lame Timur) for being lame in one leg.

However, the legacy of the Genghis Khan in Central Asia was still very profound. Therefore, the rise of Timur and seizing power was rather difficult because he was not a direct descendant of Genghis Khan [Soucek 124–5].

When Toghluk Timur invaded Mawarannahr, Timur joined Mogols and received Kesh region to rule. Then he united with Hussein, the ruler of Mawarannahr, but in 1370 killed him and took power [Osmonov 155]. He never assumed the title of khan





but only *amir* (prince, ruler). Another his title was *gurgan* (son-in-law) because he married a princess of the Genghisid line to legitimize his rule. On the other hand, he placed a puppet (formal) khan from Genghisids who was a convenient tool in Timur's hands [Soucek 125].

He defeated *Tokhtamysh Khan*, the ruler of the Golden Horde, in 1395, the sultan of Delhi in 1398, and *Bayesid I*, the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, in 1402. However, the empire he founded was not comparable to the Empire of Genghis Khan in size and structure [Soucek 125]. The state he created was smaller, not as solid and genuine as that of Genghis Khan, though Timur tried to divide the territory between his successors following the example of Genghis Khan. Timur died in 1405 and was buried in Gur Emir Mausoleum.

The territory that was inherited by his son *Shahrukh* included Transoxania, Khoresm, Fergana, Khurasan and Iran. Timur made the capital of his empire *Samarkand* city. However, Shahrukh moved the capital to *Herat*, the city in Khurasan region that became the political center of the empire except for the short reign of Ulugh Beg. Shahrukh did not feel any need in puppet khans and assumed the new title of *sultan* started ruling directly on his own behalf [Soucek 126].

While Shahrukh was in Herat, Transoxania was ruled by his son *Ulugh Beg*. He was born in Iran and received excellent classical Muslim education, including the fluency in Arabic and Persian. By the time he was 10, Timur had provided him with *soyurghal* [portion of land] in the north-east of the empire, including the territories of Tashkent and Mogolistan [Soucek 127].

However, the main interests of Ulugh Beg were not politics but science, mathematics and astronomy. He built three madrasas (schools) in Bukhara, Gijduvan and Samarkand where he invited the most prominent scholars. The madrasa in Samarkand became the center of learning with a real astronomical observatory, a mosque, a students' dormitory, a bath [Soucek 128–9].

Ulugh Beg had to succeed his father's throne after his death in 1447. He won a military battle against his nephew but failed to give credits to his elder son for the help. He preferred his youngest son to the elder to inherit the throne. That is, when he returned to Samarkand, his elder son marched from Herat with his army against his father and defeated him. The highest religious authorities of Samarkand issued a decision to depose and execute Ulugh Beg, and in 1449 while on his journey to Mecca he was beheaded [Soucek 131].

While Ulugh Beg was the initiator of scientific prosperity in Samarkand, in Herat his younger brother **Baysunghur** demonstrated the talent for arts and literature. He sponsored the development of Persian literature. During his reign, the heritage of Firdawsi (Shahname) was revived. At the same time, another Timurid ruler **Bayqara** supported the development of both Turkic and Persian poetry and literature. While there were new Persian masterpieces created by **Jami**, the Turkic poet **Navai** greatly contributed to the establishment of the Turkic literary culture and language [Soucek 131–4].

The last of Timuids was **Babur** who succeeded to his father's soyurghal in the Fergana Valley. He was the next candidate to Timur's throne but his dream never came true. He was defeated by Muhammad Sheybani who was a direct descendant of Juchi. Babur had to flee to Kabul with his troops where he was able to defeat the sultan of Delhi and establish the new state in 1526, the Empire of Great Mogols that collapsed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [Osmonov 174–5].

A great role in the consolidation of sultan's position was played by **Naqshbandi Sufi order** established by Baha al-Din Naqshband. He was born near Bukhara in 1318, was a Persian by origin and spent most of his life in his native city. His adepts played a central role in the Islamization of local people during the Timurid and Shaybanid Empires. It is largely because of the Naqshbandiyya that Sufism has been institutionalized and

become an integral part of the political, social and cultural life of Central Asia.

Baha al-Din did not leave any written documents of himself. However, his teaching reached us in the writings of the Persian poet Jami. One of the main principles of his teaching was the idea that a Sufi can live the life of an ordinary person but his internal life should be fully devoted to God. Another innovation was *a silent zikr* (repeating the name of Allah) that could be practiced by the person individually. Before him Sufis were engaged in laud zikr, or recitals performed in groups. These innovations brought far-reaching consequences to Sufi methods and techniques that later developed into the new Sufi system. The new Naqshbandi order later absorbed the earliest Kubrawiya and partially Yasawiya orders and became the most popular Sufi order in Central Asia [Soucek 137–9, 143].

# Chapter 5

## **KYRGYZ CONSOLIDATION (1400–1800)**

The period of the 15–19<sup>th</sup> centuries is characterized by the absence of Kyrgyz statehood. Kyrgyz leaders were fighting to unite Kyrgyz tribes and create the Kyrgyz state. However, this struggle was not successful. Therefore, the formation of the Kyrgyz people as well as the following history of the Kyrgyz in the 15–19<sup>th</sup> centuries took place in terms of no Kyrgyz state. Instead of this, Kyrgyz created the dual ethno-political system of two wings that for four centuries maintained its ethno-political and cultural integrity.

External enemies played an important part in the unification of the Kyrgyz. A joint struggle of the Kyrgyz against Jungars, Chinese and Koqand brought various Kyrgyz tribes together. During the 15–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Kyrgyz were under the domination of Jungars who in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century were destroyed by Chinese. After Chinese destroyed Jungar Khanate, it ceased to exist and its population was massacred. Later Chinese began claiming the territory of the Kyrgyz and only decisive resistance of Kyrgyz put an end to the expansionist policy of Chinese.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kyrgyz appeared under the domination of another state of Central Asia — the Koqand Khanate. Thanks to its expansionist policy, Koqand became the most powerful and large state of Central Asia. The hegemony of Koqand over the Kyrgyz lasted till the 1880s when as a result of the Pulat Khan Rebellion in 1873–76, the ruler of Koqand Khudoyar Khan escaped to seek the protection of Russians, while the rebellion was suppressed by Russian troops and the Koqand Khanate was abolished.

### 5.1. Formation of the Kyrgyz (1400–1500)

Ethnogenesis is the history of ethnic group formation. The ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz people is a very complicated and disputable issue. One of the reasons is that historical sources recorded two ethnic communities under the name Kyrgyz. The first community of the earlier historical period up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century was found in Southern Siberia on the Yenisei River, and the second one populated the eastern part of Central Asia, the Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai Mountains since the 15–16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since the Kyrgyz had no written language of their own until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and didn't play a significant political role after the defeat of the Yenisei Kyrgyz state in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Mongols, their ethnic history is not always discernible and even known.

There was no unanimous opinion regarding the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz in the historiography of Soviet and post-Soviet years. Three main groups of theories developed [Osmonov 165–6]:

- The modern Kyrgyz ethnic group migrated from the Yenisei River to Tien Shan. The first scholar who mentioned that theory was Miller. However, Bernshtam considered that migration not a one-stage but a many-staged process;
- The modern Kyrgyz ethnic group was formed on the basis of indigenous tribes which inhabited the Tien Shan territory since the ancient times. This view was supported by Valikhanov, Bichurin, Aristov;
- The modern Kyrgyz ethnic group developed as a result of the combination of two elements: the local and the migrated (Yenisei Kyrgyz).

The name Kyrgyz is the most ancient name in Central Asia. It dates back to the 3rd century BC when the very first record of name **Kyrgyz** was made. It was mentioned by Chinese historian Sima Tan in the chronicle **Shi-ji** (Historical records). Among the five peoples conquered by the Hunnu, the author

mentioned ***Gegun (Gyagun)***, which was a Chinese transcription of the name Kyrgyz.

There are many legends about the origin of the name Kyrgyz: Kyrk + Kyz = 40 girls, Kyrk + Yz = 40 tribes, Kyryg + Yz = Red People, and others.

That is, in the 15<sup>th</sup> — early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the Kyrgyz ethnic group completed to be formed in the Tien Shan Mountains. The Kyrgyz didn't have their own state. A basic form of political organization was the tribal confederation built around the family. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, all Kyrgyz tribes were divided into two wings: ***on*** (right) and ***sol*** (left). Later on, the third group of tribes was separated from the right wing and became an independent group ***ichkilik*** (middle).

The right wing, the most numerous, included *sarybagysh*, *bugu*, *sayak*, *solto*, *jediger*, *tynynseit*, *mongoldor*, *bagysh*, *baaryn*, *basyz*, *cherik*, *joru*, *boru*, *bargy*, *karabagysh* and other tribes that inhabited Northern Kyrgyzstan. *Kushchu*, *saru*, *munduz*, *jetagen*, *kytai*, *chonbagysh*, *basyg*, *toboi* of the left wing occupied the Talas valley. Ichkilik represented by *kypchak*, *naiman*, *teyit*, *kesek*, *jookesek*, *kagdy*, *boston*, *noigut*, *doolos*, *avat* populated the south of Kyrgyzstan.

Ideological factors played a great role in the consolidation of Kyrgyz tribes: the adoption of Islam and the Manas Epic that finally formed in Tien Shan. Islam helped Kyrgyz integrating into the larger Muslim community providing Kyrgyz with the new script based on the Arabic alphabet, while the Manas Epic played a positive role in the consolidation of the Kyrgyz people bringing different tribes together in the face of a common threat.

## 5.2. Jungars and Chinese (1400–1700)

In the 15–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Kyrgyz who lived in the eastern part of Mogolistan and Altai Mountains were migrating to the Tianshan Mountains, or the present territory of Kyrgyzstan. Here they participated in the military campaigns against Mogols and Sheybanids. Beginning with the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kyrgyz

along with Kazakhs and Uzbeks resisted the attacks of the new enemy Kalmaks.

Kalmaks were Mongolian-speaking tribes but different from those of Genghis Khan's Mongols according to the dialects spoken and the territories inhabited. They were from Western Mongolia, while Genghis Khan's Mongols were from Eastern Mongolia [Soucek 145].

Kalmaks were called differently in historical sources: Oirats, Jungars, Kalmaks (Kalmyks). The name **Kalmaks** usually refers to those tribes that penetrated southern Russia and established the Kalmak Khanate in southern Russia, while those who remained in the east were called **Oirats**. They established the Jungar Khanate in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Sinkiang. The literal meaning of **Jungar** is "left hand" opposed to **Barungar** ("right hand") that appeared to be two main divisions in the tribal confederation of Mongols. The place where Jungars established their state is called Jungaria, an area in present-day Sinkiang of China [Soucek 169].

The Oirats began to play an important political role in Mongolia after the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China was replaced by the native Chinese Ming dynasty in 1368. Although their rise resembled the rise of Genghis Khan, their military conquests were a pale shadow of Genghis Khan's conquests. They were just ordinary nomadic conquests for the purpose of loot, while the conquests of Genghis Khan were well-organized, large-scale military campaigns in order to dominate and rule on the conquered territories. At the same time, both were shamanists that later converted to Buddhism [Soucek 146].

The Jungar State had two stages in its evolution: the unification of Oirat tribes in Jungaria and the extension of their rule over adjacent territories. Four main tribes gave rise to the state: **Choro**, **Dorbot**, **Torghut** and **Koshot**. Oirats pursued an expansive policy towards Mongolia, China, and westward to Mokolistan and Kipchak Steppe (present-day Kazakhstan).

Three main waves of conquests were undertaken to Central Asia: in the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17–18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Numerous battles took place between Kyrgyz and Kalmaks (1643, 1652, 1658, 1681–83, 1727, 1748–49). As a result of Kalmak conquests, many Kyrgyz tribes were forced to migrate to the southwest of Kyrgyzstan — the Fergana Valley.

Since 1644, Kalmaks had to defend themselves from Chinese conquests. In 1644, the Manchu dynasty was established in China. In 1757–58, the Jungar Khanate was completely crushed by Manchu dynasty of China and its population (about 70%) was exterminated. The remaining fled to Russia and Central Asia. The descendants of Kalmaks live today in Kyrgyzstan, near Karakol city known under the name *sart kalmaks* [Osmonov 183].

Chinese also advanced their claims on Eastern Turkestan. After the abolition of the Jungar State, Chinese renamed the new conquered territory *Sinkiang* (“new region”). Since then the new object of Chinese expansion became Central Asia. In 1758, few battles took place between Kyrgyz and Chinese in the Issyk-Kul Valley, in which Chinese were defeated. Those victories forced Chinese to begin negotiations with Kyrgyz. In 1758, Kyrgyz organized their embassy to China requesting to return lands occupied by Jungars. However, in fact Kyrgyz tribes had been already roaming there [Osmonov 183–5]. That struggle of Kyrgyz against Jungars and later Chinese were well depicted in the Manas Epic.

### 5.3. Koqand Khanate (1710–1876)

In 1710, a chieftain of one of the tribes in the central part of the Fergana Valley, *Shahrukh Biy* from Ming tribe with the support of other tribal chieftains was announced the ruler of the new state. He established the Ming dynasty. The name of the dynasty had nothing in common with the Ming dynasty of China. It is a Turkic word meaning a “thousand”. Some



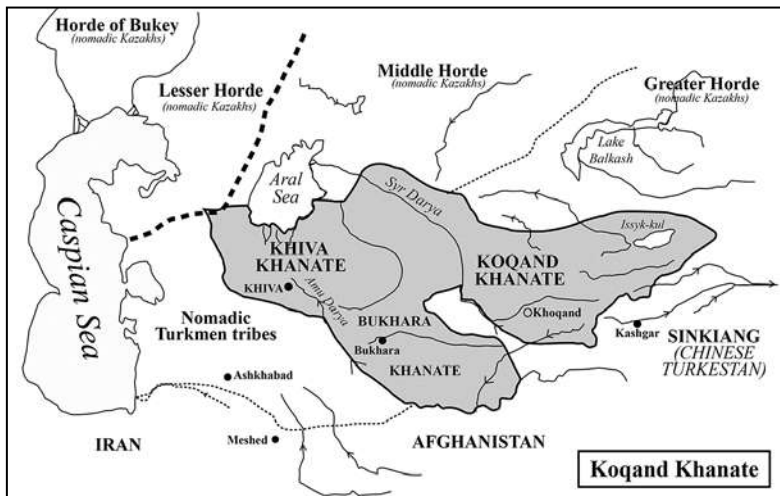
sources considered the founder of the state as belonging to one of Uzbek tribes, while others regarded him as a descendant of Timurids [Osmonov 196]. Although the ruling dynasty was most probably of Uzbek origin, Koqand was a multiethnic state with various ethnic groups living on its territory: Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Kypchaks, Sarts, Tajiks and others.

The capital of the new state was Koqand, a city that was grown up of a fortified palace. The new capital was located in the western part of the state, different from the former capital Andijan, partly because it was less exposed to the raids of nomadic Kyrgyz and Kalmyks. On the other hand, the capital was close to Bukhara Khanate [Soucek 189].

The main territory of the Koqand Khanate was the Fergana Valley. However, within almost two centuries the territory of the khanate was expanded to Semirechye in the north and the Pamir Mountains in the south.

The history of the Koqand state can be divided into three main stages [Osmonov 196–8]:

1. The growth of Koqand state (1709–1800) was the period when the political-administrative system and socio-eco-



conomic relations in the state were established. The state received its solid structure under the rule of **Irdana Biy** (the title **biy** originated from the Turkic word **beg**). During his reign, Koqand became an independent state.

2. The prosperity of Koqand state (1800–1840) was the period of the state highest development and expansion of its territory. Koqand competed with Bukhara for primacy in Central Asia. Kokand rulers also assumed the title **khan** instead of biy. During the reign of **Madali Khan** the state reached its greatest extent and power. Its territory stretched from the Kipchak Steppe that included Turkestan, Tashkent, Chui and Ili valleys to the Pamir Mountains and southern Kyrgyzstan [Soucek 190].

The khanate also experienced the flourishing of art and literature, the rise in agricultural production through the construction of the irrigation system. Silk and cotton became increasingly important, especially cotton exported to Russia. Urban architecture, both the religious and civic, flourished. Poetry in the Turkic language flourished. A very famous poetess was Nadira, the mother of Madali Khan [Soucek 190–1].

3. The decline of the Koqand state (1840–1876) was the period of social contradictions, internal strives, the weakening of the state system, the political crisis, popular uprisings and finally the abolishment of the state by Russians. During this period, the tensions between the settled population (**Sarts** who spoke Turkic and **Tajiks** who spoke Persian) and Kipchak and Kyrgyz nomads intensified. Numerous rebellions took place in this period, particularly those of Kyrgyz. The last ruler **Khudayar Khan** was forced to seek a refuge at the Russian mission as a result of the 1873 Rebellion led by Iskhaq Hasan uulu. In 1876, Russians occupied the whole territory of khanate, annexed it and abolished establishing the new Fergana Oblast [Soucek 192–3].

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, southern Kyrgyzstan was annexed by the Koqand Khanate. The conquest of northern Kyrgyzstan began in the 1820s. In 1825, after the invasion of the Chui Valley, **Bishkek** fortress was built [Osmonov 203]. The purpose of the fortress was both military and economical: to garrison Koqandi troops and to control trade routes going through northern Kyrgyzstan to Russia [Soucek 190]. Later Issyk-Kul and Naryn territories were conquered. Many other fortified settlements were established by Koqand on the territory of northern Kyrgyzstan such as **Tokmak, Ak Suu, Chaldavar, Kara Balta, Merke, At Bashi, Kurtka, Toguz Toro, Kochkor, Jumgal, Karakol, Barskon** and others. The factor that facilitated the conquest of Kyrgyz tribes was their intertribal fights, so that some chieftains helped Koqandis in their expansion [Osmonov 202–3].

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Kyrgyz was more than 800,000 people [Osmonov 210]. While the rule of Koqand Khanate was more stable and firm in the south of Kyrgyzstan, in the north it was more formal and superficial.

Kyrgyz tribes in the Fergana valley began to settle and lead a more sedentary lifestyle. The annexation of Kyrgyz by the Koqand Khanate brought new forms of land ownership: **ashlaq** (state lands), **mulq** (private lands), **waqf** (Islamic lands to support medreses and mosques). However, traditional for Kyrgyz forms of land ownership also remained such as tribal lands and livestock that was controlled by Kyrgyz biys and manaps [Osmonov 210–1].

Various taxes were imposed on Kyrgyz: **zeket** (a tax on livestock), **tunduk zeket** (a tax on a yurt — one sheep), **kharaj** (a tax on land — 1/10 of harvest), **military tax** (3 sheep or 1 golden coin). Later on, more other taxes were introduced. During the reign of Khudayar Khan there were more than 20 taxes paid [Osmonov 212–3].

Kyrgyz leaders played a significant role in the political life of the Koqand Khanate. They participated in the intestine struggle of Koqand khans by supporting one candidate for the throne

or another. One of them was the ruler of Alai region **Alymbek**. He was invited to serve by **Madali Khan** and appointed the ruler of Andijan vilayet (province) in the khanate. Alymbek moved the center of the province from Andijan to Osh city that became his main headquarters. For his good service he was awarded the title of *datka*, a commander in the Koqand army. Under **Mallya Khan** Alymbek was appointed a vizier, or a minister. At the same time, he never forgot about the true interests of Kyrgyz. In 1860, he led the rebellion of Kyrgyz against Koqand rulers. The aim was to consolidate Kyrgyz tribes and create a unified Kyrgyz state. However, his attempts were not successful. He was killed in one of the Koqand coups [Osmonov 290–1].

The political instability in the Koqand Khanate, the tax policy of Koqand and many other problems contributed to the Rebellion of 1873–6 led by Pulat Khan. **Pulat Khan** (Iskhak Hasan Uluu) was born in Margelan city in the family of a teacher. He gave up his study in medrese and settled among the Kyrgyz of Boston tribe. When the grandson of **Alim Khan** refused to lead rebels, he pretended to be the royal grandson and joined the rebellion. There were some other leaders who led rebel groups in different parts of the Fergana Valley but Pulat Khan was the most charismatic and popular. Although the Kyrgyz started the rebellion, many other ethnic groups such as Kypchaks, Uzbeks, Tajiks joined it later. So during the first stage of the rebellion, it became a popular, anti-Koqand, national-liberation movement of the suppressed people of Koqand. During the second stage when the Russian army joined Koqand to suppress the rebellion, it assumed an anti-Russian and anti-colonial character. The Koqand army led by the famous Kypchak commander **Abdyrakhman Abtobachi** took the side of rebels and tried to resist the invasion of Russian troops but unsuccessfully. The rebellion was suppressed by Russia, Koqand Khanate was annexed and abolished. Pulat Khan was hanged on the main square of Margelan city [Osmonov 293–9].

# Chapter 6

## **RUSSIAN RULE (1860–1917)**

With the abolition of the Koqand Khanate, the new era began in the history of Kyrgyzstan – the development of Kyrgyzstan inside the Russian Empire. The annexation of Kyrgyzstan by Russia was preceded by the period of Kyrgyz embassies sent by northern Kyrgyz leaders to join Russia and be protected from both external and internal threats. Intensified intertribal hostilities among the Kyrgyz themselves as well as the external threats coming from China, Koqand and Kazakhs became the factors that forced northern Kyrgyz tribes to seek the protection of Russia. While the northern Kyrgyz joined Russia voluntarily, southern Kyrgyzstan was taken by force as a result of colonization policy and military campaigns of the Russian Empire.

The arrival of Russians in Central Asia significantly changed the traditional life style of the local population. The new administrative and economic relations introduced in the region were characterized by the new land ownership and tax policies of Russian authorities. Growing Russian migration to the region and granting them the best lands became the main reason of the Kyrgyz and other Central Asian uprisings against the Russian rule.

At the same time, the Russian colonization was accompanied by the cultural development of the region. Such a development was explained by better conditions of life that were provided and the political stability in the region that were established with the advent of Russians to Central Asia.

### **6.1. Russian Colonization of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia**

The period from 1813 to 1907 was characterized by the *Great Game*, or the rivalry between two superpowers of the

19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Empire and the Great Britain for supremacy in Central Asia. The term **Great Game** is attributed to the officer of the British army Arthur Connoly who introduced it. However, it was famous writer Kipling who popularized that term in his novel in 1900. Great Game was accompanied by a smaller-scale rivalry of Koqand and China who also wanted to gain control of Central Asia. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Central Asia, or Turkestan, became an important geopolitical and geostrategic region, where the interests of many countries met.

The rise of Russia as a new power began under the rule of Ivan IV (1547–84) and his conquest of the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates and was quickened by Peter the Great (1682–1725) and the annexation of the Khanate of Crimea in 1783 by Catherine the Great [Soucek 196].

The Russian colonization of Central Asia in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century was stimulated by the undertaken attempts of neighboring Britain, Koqand, China to control the region. Understanding the geostrategic importance of Turkestan, Russia directed its efforts to establish itself in the region. The primary reason of Russian expansion was political: to gain a new territory and



region of political influence, and the secondary was economic: to receive a source of cheap labor and raw materials including cotton and land as well a new market for Russian goods and products [Osmonov 272]. The Russian colonization of Central Asia was a typical colonization, since it was motivated by the desire to receive cheap labor and natural resources and a privileged position for Russian commerce.

At the same time, a number of factors caused the annexation of Kyrgyzstan to the Russian Empire [Osmonov 276–7]. All those factors can be divided into two groups, the internal and external:

- Intertribal conflicts of Kyrgyz (for example, the ongoing conflict between the *sarybagysh* and *bugu* tribes);
- The lack of Kyrgyz statehood that could control the situation on Kyrgyz territories and provide stability and peace for its people;
- The invasion of Kazakhs (the campaign of Ablay Khan in 1775–1776 against Chui and Talas Kyrgyz, the campaign of Kenensary in 1846 against *solto* and *sarybagysh* Kyrgyz when they refused to join Kazakhs to prevent Russian expansion);
- Chinese attempts to invade the territory of northern Kyrgyzstan;
- The Koqand rule of the Kyrgyz.

On account of those factors, northern Kyrgyz tribes decided to send their embassies to the Russian Empire. In 1785, the first embassy was dispatched by *Atake Baatyr*, a chieftain of *sarybagysh* tribe, to Catherine II in Saint Petersburg. The embassy was led by *Abdyrakhman Kuchakov* who spent a lot of years trading in Astrakhan city of Russia and *Shergazy*, an authorized representative of Atake Baatyr. The Russian Empress received the embassy. It was the first step in the establishment of diplomatic relations of the Kyrgyz with the Russian Empire [Osmonov 277–9].

In 1813, the second embassy to Russia was dispatched by **bugu** tribe (Issyk-Kul region) to Semipalatinsk. The embassy was led by **Kachibek** and **Jakypbek**. The embassy established permanent political and trade-economic Kyrgyz-Russian relations [Osmonov 280–1]. Following that embassy, many other embassies were organized and dispatched by Bugu.

In the fall of 1825, the kurultai of bugu tribe was held where Kyrgyz manaps and biys discussed the main issue on the agenda: which state, Russia or Koqand, to join. Most of the delegates decided to join Russia. Firstly, because it was much more politically and economically developed compared to Koqand and, therefore, could give more opportunities to Kyrgyz to develop. Secondly, the geographical remoteness of Russia from Kyrgyzstan also was quite important. Kyrgyz hoped that Russia would not interfere often with the situation in the region. Therefore, the decision was made in favor of Russia [Osmonov 281].

The Russian conquest of Central Asia can be divided into two stages: the conquest of Kazakhstan in 1730–1848 except for its southern segments, and the conquest of present-day Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan from 1864 to 1884 [Soucek 195].

At first, Russians accepted the vassaldom of Kazakh leaders without imposing direct military and administrative control over their territories. During that period, Kazakhstan did not represent a unified khanate but steppe sultans claiming Genghisid origin: the **Lesser Horde** or **Juz** (a hundred) in the west, the **Middle Juz** in the central part, and the **Greater Juz** in the southeast. There was also the fourth small horde — Burkey's Horde to the west of the Lesser Horde between the Ural and Volga Rivers. By 1848, all four were abolished. Their abolishment removed any ambivalence about Russia's intention in the region.

The short break in the 1850s before the second stage of the conquest was caused by the engagement of Russia in the Crimean War and the suppression of the uprising led by Shamil



in the Caucasus. In the 1860s, Russia came back to Central Asia conquering Chimkent, Aulie Ata (Jambul) and Tashkent. In 1868, Russians annexed a substantial part of Bukhara and announced **Bukhara Khanate** a Russian protectorate. In 1873, they defeated **Khiva** and made it a protectorate. In 1876, they annexed the territory of **Koqand** suppressing Pulat Khan Rebellion. The Russian conquest of the Central Asian region was completed in 1884 with the conquest of Merv.

The fall of Merv city and the drive of Russia to the Afghan and India's Kashmir border brought Britain and Russia close to a war in the 1890s. Finally, none of two sides could start the war and a peaceful agreement was concluded. Further, the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention was signed, according to which both sides obliged themselves to respect each other's zones of influence and create the buffer zones such as Afghanistan [Soucek 197–9].

The annexation of Kyrgyzstani territory can be divided into two stages: the incorporation of the north and the conquest of the south. While the incorporation of the north was generally peaceful and voluntary, the annexation of the south was violent and forced.

The annexation of northern Kyrgyz tribes and territory took place between 1855 and 1868. The struggle between sarybagysh and bugu in the 1850s and the death of sarybagysh ruler, **Ormon Khan**, made bugu Kyrgyz to seek the protectorate of the Russian Empire. In 1855, the embassy of **bugu** tribe (Issyk-Kul region) was dispatched to Omsk, and Russia agreed to admit it [Osmonov 282–3].

In 1862–65, Russia admitted Chui (**sarybagysh, solto**) and Talas (**saruu, kushchu**) Kyrgyz. In 1864–65, Naryn (**cherik, sayak**) Kyrgyz became Russian citizens. That is, by 1868, almost all territory of northern Kyrgyz was incorporated into the Russian Empire [Osmonov 283–8]. Not all northern tribes submitted themselves voluntarily to Russians. Some, for example, the sarybagysh tribe led by **Umetaaly Ormon uulu** resisted till 1867 [Osmonov 287, 289].

The conquest of southern Kyrgyzstan took place in 1865–1876. In 1865, Tashkent was occupied by Russian troops and became the starting point to advance to the south of Kyrgyzstan. After that the Russian army was able to occupy Fergana and Alai.

In 1873–1876, the rebellion of Pulat Khan broke out. The rebellion was led by Pulat Khan and had an anti-Koqand and later anti-Russian character. The last Koqand Khan Khudayar escaped to Russians and asked for their help. Russians suppressed the rebellion and executed Pulat Khan.

In 1875–1876, the Alai military expedition was launched by **General Skobelev**. Alai was ruled by **Kurmanjan Datkha**. Kurmanjan did not want to submit to Russians and escaped to Kashgar. But she was not welcomed there and had to come back. Then she decided to go to Afghanistan and on the way there she was caught and brought to General Skobelev. Skobelev received her with high respect. During the meeting, Kurmanjan expressed her obedience to Russians and promised to stop resisting if her sons and people would not be persecuted [Osmonov 299–300].

That is, the southern part of Kyrgyzstan was annexed through direct conquest. After the suppression of the Pulat Khan Rebellion and Alai expedition, southern Kyrgyzstan was finally incorporated into the territory of the Russian Empire.

## 6.2. Turkestan Governorate General

On the newly annexed territories of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, a new administrative-territorial system was established. That system was semi-military in its character because most of the positions in the region were occupied by Russian military officers.

In 1867, Turkestan Governorate General was established in Central Asia. It consisted of five oblasts: **Syrdarya** (center Tashkent), **Semirechye** (center Vernyi), **Fergana** (center Skobelev), **Samarkand** (center Samarkand) and **Transcaspia**

(center Ashgabad) and two protectorates of *Bukhara* and *Khiva emirates* [Soucek 201]. Oblasts were divided into uezds, uezds into volosts and volosts into ayils [Osmonov 304]. Kyrgyz lived in three oblasts: Syrdarya, Semirechye and Fergana. As for the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, another Steppe Governorate General was formed there.

The heads of oblasts and uezds were appointed from among the military, while heads of volosts were elected out of local people and were not hereditary as before. When Russians came to the region, they initiated elections for volosts and ayils authorities. However, most often tribal leaders and chieftains were elected to those positions [Osmonov 305].

Tashkent became the seat of the Russian governor in Turkestan. First of all, the climate in the city was moderate. Second, the location was favorable, right between the Kipchak Steppe and Transoxania, between nomads and sedentary peoples, so strategically it was convenient for Russia to control both. The sedentary people were Sarts who spoke Turkic and nomads who were Kazakhs and spoke Kipchak Turkic [Soucek 202].

One of the most prominent governors of Turkestan Governorate General was *General Konstantin von Kaufman* who stayed in the office from 1867 to 1882 and did much to put the colonial administration on a solid basis [Soucek 203].

The economy of Central Asia followed the classical colonial pattern. Central Asia region was mainly a supplier of raw materials for Russian industry and a consumer of Russian goods. Cotton became the most important commodity exported to Russia. So its cultivation increased, that is the side effect was a decrease in the growing of cereals that made Central Asia dependent on Russian wheat.

The other important aspect was the economic colonization of the region, especially northern Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, by agricultural settlers of Russian and Ukrainian origin. The most fertile lands were seized by them affecting seasonal migrations of nomads and their pasture lands [Soucek 203].

When Russia colonized the region of Central Asia, it faced with some difficulties and complexities of taxation. It was impossible to follow the Russian tax policy in the region. Therefore, initially the taxes collected by Russians remained the same as before. However, later some changes were introduced. That is, all lands were announced the state property, so that the state was the only owner of land and had the right to expropriate it from locals. Locals were divided into two main categories: the settled and nomads. All nomads had to pay **kibitka tax** (a tax on each yurt). After the number of yurts in a village was estimated, the amount of kibitka tax was redistributed among the yurt owners. While nomads were also supposed to pay the **cattle tax**, the settled had to pay **kharaj** (a tax on grain lands paid by grain) and **tanap** (a tax on garden and vegetable products paid in money). Moreover, there were many extra taxes and duties to be paid by the people, for example on the construction of roads, the irrigation system and the like. As for Russian settlers, they had to pay the **land tax** [Osmonov 308–9]

At the cultural and religious level, Russians were tolerant colonizers. They preserved the traditional faith of the region such as Islam, traditional institutions and practices such as religious courts based on Shariat and **Adat** (the customary law), and religious schools and religious lands (**waqfs**). Most of Central Asians continued to live as before the Russian colonization [Soucek 204].

Moreover, since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the scientific study of the region by Russian scholars and travellers began. The Russian ethnographer **Radlov**, Russian travelers and geographers **Przhevalskiy** and **Semenov-Tienschanskiy**, the historian **Barthold** contributed significantly to the study of Kyrgyzstan [Osmonov 339–41]. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, two histories written by the first Kyrgyz historians **Osmonaly Sydyk uulu** and **Belek Soltonoev** were published in Kazan city in the Arabic script [Osmonov 334–5]. Enriched by the achievements

of Russian and other cultures, the material and spiritual cultures of the Kyrgyz developed. The epic genre and the poetry of akyns were revived.

At the same time, Russians opened *Russo-native schools* where Russian and local children was taught in the Russian language. On the other hand, new Muslim schools were established by Muslim reformers inspired by the ideology of *Jadidism* (*usul jadid* means “new method” in Arabic) [Soucek 206]. *Jadidism* signified the cultural and educational reformist movement among the Muslims of the Russian Empire that aimed to advance Islamic education and teach religious subjects along with other secular disciplines such as math, geography, science.

### 6.3. Kyrgyz Rebellions against Russian Colonization

A lot of uprisings marked the period of the Russian rule in Central Asia. However, the most powerful uprisings during that time were two: the 1898 Andijan Rebellion and the 1916 Rebellion. The main reasons of both rebellions were the colonial policy of the Russian Empire, especially land seizure by Russian and Ukrainian peasants.

The Andijan Rebellion took place in 1898. The rebellion was led by religious person *Madali Dukchi* who performed a pilgrimage to Mecca and was very popular in the Fergana Valley.

The rebellion broke out on May 17 when more than 1,500 people attacked the Russian military garrison. Various ethnic groups jointed the rebellion soon: Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Tajiks. It rapidly spread to the whole Fergana Valley. The rebellion assumed an anti-Russian, national-liberation character. Since it broke out in the Fergana valley and was led by a religious person, it took the form of a holy war of local Muslims against Russian colonizers.

However, the rebellion was severely suppressed by the Russian army. 18 people were executed and 356 were sent to

Siberia. Among those sent to Siberia was famous Kyrgyz akyn ***Toktogul Satylganov*** [Osmonov 314–6].

Along with the colonial policy such as heavy taxation, land seizure by Russian settlers, the 1916 Rebellion was also caused by the 1916 Tsar's Degree on the mobilization of Turkestanian males aged 19–43 for military-defensive works. A lot of males from Central Asia were dispatched to the front to dig trenches for the Russian army.

The rebellion broke out in July in Khodjent city and very soon spread to all Central Asia. Although the protests and demonstrations in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan took place, they were quite weak and didn't cause many victims. However, in Semirechye, especially northern Kyrgyzstan, the situation was much more complicated. A number of objective and subjective factors contributed to it.

Following the colonization of the region by the Russian Empire, Russian and Ukrainian landless peasants were resettled in Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan where climatic conditions were very similar to Russian's. That caused more severe forms of the rebellion in northern Kyrgyzstan. Northern Kyrgyz in their majority still practiced a nomadic lifestyle and they used their collective tribal property land as pasture lands for their animals. Russian authorities regarded that collective land as vacant and turned it over to Russian peasants for cultivation.

In 1916, Russian peasants constituted 6% of the local population but possessed almost 58% of the cultivated land, while locals were 94% and possessed 42% of the land [Osmonov 317].

Rebels attacked Russian villages, burned their houses, took cattle away. Most of males were absent fighting on the front, so mainly women, children and elders remained and were affected.

The rebellion was brutally suppressed by the Russian army and resulted in the killing of many Kyrgyz. According to some

estimations, about 200,000 Kyrgyz died, or the population in northern Kyrgyzstan decreased by 41% [Osmonov 323]. The remained fled to China and died on the way there or back home because of the cold weather, diseases and starvation. The rebellion was anti-colonial, anti-Russian, since all Russians were associated with Russian colonial authorities, as well as national-liberation movement of the Kyrgyz and other Central Asian peoples.

Summarizing this chapter, it is worthy of note that the period of Russian colonization had both positive and negative consequences. All of them have been grouped in three main categories: political, economic and cultural.

#### **POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES OF RUSSIAN RULE**

##### *Political:*

- the threat of the conquest by neighboring states (China, Khoqand, Britain) was eliminated;
- the intertribal struggle of Kyrgyz that negatively affected their economic and cultural development was put an end;
- the institution of slavery was abolished and slave trade was banned;
- the new administrative-territorial system, for example the elections to local authorities, was introduced.

##### *Economic:*

- Central Asia was involved in the new capitalist economy and more developed market relations were introduced;
- the switch of the nomadic lifestyle to the settled one and agricultural economy took place.

##### *Cultural:*

- the research study of Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan: its territory, landscape, flora and fauna, was initiated by Russian scholars;
- the first records of folklore, history and language were made.

**NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF RUSSIAN RULE**

*Political:*

- Central Asia was a colony of the Russian Empire;
- Central Asians didn't not have their independent state or autonomy;
- As a result of the 1916 Rebellion suppression, thousands of local people were killed.

*Economic:*

- Following the migration of Russian and Ukrainian peasants, Central Asian land was expropriated from locals;
- Due to the increasing cultivation of cotton, the region was short in the production of grain.

*Cultural:*

- During the later period of the Russian rule, a gradual elimination of religious institutions and practices took place.



# Chapter 7

## **SOVIET RULE (1918–1991)**

With the advent of the Bolsheviks to power in 1917, a new page opened in the history of Kyrgyzstan. The idea of building a socialist society where no exploitation and people were equal was supported by the peoples of Central Asia. However, the establishment of the Soviet rule and the building of the new socialist society were accompanied by the persecution of religious figures, national leaders and the wealthy. Atheization, Collectivization and Cultural Revolution led to mass killings of many innocent people.

At the same time, the Soviet period appeared to be the most fruitful for the political, economic and cultural development of Central Asia. The elimination of illiteracy and the creation of the system of elementary, secondary and higher education, the development of professional literature, theatre, painting, cinema, science and the establishment of a large-scale heavy metal processing industry and machinery were unprecedented in the history of the region. Moreover, the creation of Kyrgyz statehood in the form of an autonomous region and then an autonomous republic and a union republic became possible only thanks to the policy of Bolsheviks.

A big trial for the Soviet people was the Great Patriotic War. More than 30 million people died on the front and the territories occupied by fascists. Destroyed cities and villages, factories and plants, burned fields and others were the calamities that the Soviet people went through. After the war, a bipolar world with two superpowers such as the USSR and the USA was established.

Perestroika of the 1980s uncovered many contradictions and misbalances of the Soviet policy that for a long time implicitly

existed in the state and society. The Communist ideology and extensive methods of the development did not any more justify themselves. With the policy of publicity, many problems came to the surface. The universal political, economic and social crisis that broke out in the late 1980s brought to the dissolution of the USSR.

### 7.1. Revolutions and Civil War (1917–1920)

**FEBRUARY REVOLUTION** The *February Revolution* was a bourgeois democratic revolution aimed to overthrow monarchy and provide political freedoms to its people such as the freedom of speech, the freedom of press, the freedom of associations and others [Osmonov 342].

The participation of the Russian Empire in World War I as well as the unresolved land issue, the oppression of minorities, the lack of freedoms and other problems provoked a revolution on February 27, 1917, that resulted in the collapse of the Tsarist regime and the establishment of a democratic government.

As a result of the February Revolution, so-called dual authority was established: the *Provisional Government* under *Alexander Kerensky and the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies*. The Provisional Government represented a coalition government comprised of different political parties such as Constitutional Democratic Party, Socialist Revolutionary Party, Octobrist party, and Social Democratic Party (Mensheviks) with the only exception of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks) who refused to join. In 1912, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party formed in 1899 in Minsk split into two: the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks) and the Social Democratic Labor Party (Mensheviks). Bolshevik Party under the leadership of *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin* created its own bodies: the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

The news about the success of the February Revolution reached Kyrgyzstan in early March 1917. Mass demonstrations

demanding to overthrow Tsarism, to introduce 8 hours working day, to put an end to World War I, to release political prisoners, took place [Osmonov 342]. Following the example of Russia, new authorities were established in Kyrgyzstan too.

The February Revolution first succeeded in the south of Kyrgyzstan where mining and industrial centers such as *Kyzyk Kiya*, *Sulyukta* and others were located and many workers were employed, and then in the northern cities of *Tokmok*, *Naryn*, *Przhevalsk* [Istoriya kyrgyzov 181] that represented traditional nomadic zones of the Kyrgyz with animal husbandry as the main economy.

However in Kyrgyzstan, the February Revolution resulted in the creation of three but not two authorities. The Provisional Government established its Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government. Bolsheviks created their Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants'. The third authority was set up by local political parties that were quite weak initially and often took the side of the first or the second authority [Istoriya kyrgyzov 182].

The February revolution withdrew the ban on political activities. So many political parties stopped being underground and began to operate openly and legally as well as new political parties emerged. In Kyrgyzstan, the following local political parties, organizations and movements appeared in Kyrgyzstan [Osmonov 346–8]:

- ***Alash*** composed of Kazakh and Kyrgyz intellectuals, capitalists, workers, peasants. The Kyrgyz affiliation was led by Sydykov, Arabaev, Tynystanov. The aim was to create an independent Kazakh and Kyrgyz state;
- ***Shura-Islami*** (Islamic Council) composed of Uzbek and Kyrgyz intellectuals, peasants, Muslim clergy. The Kyrgyz affiliation was led by Kudaibergenov. The aim was to create an Islamic autonomy in Turkestan;
- **Turan**, the only political party composed of Kyrgyz intellectuals. The aim was to create a unified Turkic state;

- **Bukara Union**, a professional union, composed of the poorest and peasants of Pishpek uezd (7,000 members). It was led by Sarykulakov and Kobekov. The aim was to advocate the interests of workers and other poorest classes;
- Other professional unions that advocated the interests of other social and professional groups.

Although many different demands were made, the most burning issue for minorities was the national issue. However, the Provisional Government didn't resolve that problem and didn't give minorities with any freedoms. Moreover, it protected the colonial regime and continued to follow the regulations adopted by Tsarist authorities [Istoriya kyrgyzov 183].

That situation was especially critical for Kyrgyz refugees who fled to China after the suppression of the 1916 rebellion and attempted to come back. They were not allowed returning to their houses and places they escaped from, their lands were confiscated by kulaks. Moreover, the new law of the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government prescribed to resettle those from Pishpek and Przhivalsk uezds in the mountainous regions of Naryn region [Istoriya kyrgyzov 184].

The Provisional Government didn't bring any freedom to the Kyrgyz and other minorities of Russia, didn't resolve the national and land issues, didn't put an end to the war but, on the contrary, aggravated the political and socio-economic crisis and resulted in the failure of crops and famine [Osmonov 344–5].

**BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION** On October 25, 1917, as a result of the armed insurrection, the Provisional Government was overthrown and power passed to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies led by the Bolsheviks. They elected the first government of workers and peasants — the **Council of People's Commissars** chaired by **Lenin** [Osmonov 350].

Two documents were issued by the new government: the ***Decree on Peace*** that brought to signing a peace treaty with Germany at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 and the withdrawal of Russia from the war, and the ***Decree on Land*** that meant the elimination of private property and nationalization of land [Osmonov 350].

The Bolshevik rule was established on the territory of Kyrgyzstan soon. First, it was established in the south of Kyrgyzstan (Kyzyk Kiya, Sulyukta, Osh), then in the north (Talas, Pishpek, Tokmok, Przhevalsk, Naryn, Issyk-Kul) [Istoriya kyrgyzov 184, 185].

The establishment of the Bolshevik rule had some particularities in Kyrgyzstan. It was initially established in industrial and mining centers of the southern and western regions of Kyrgyzstan with a largest percentage of Russian and Ukrainian workers. The number of workers among the local people, particularly Kyrgyz, was very small and, therefore, the influence of Bolshevism were quite weak among them. Very often locals didn't grasp the ideas of equality and nationalization that were perceived as alien. They didn't distinguish between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, on the one hand, and Bolsheviks and Social Revolutionaries, on the other. Moreover, following the 1916 rebellion and its suppression, the relations between Russians and Kyrgyz remained hostile [Osmonov 350].

The most severe struggle took place in Pishpek and Przhevalsk uyezds of Kyrgyzstan. In these regions, the influence of kulaks was very strong. They dominated in local authorities and affected their decision-making. Numerous meetings and demonstrations took place there. One of them was the meeting organized by the Bolsheviks in the Oak Park of Bishkek city on December 31, 1917, where 1000 people, mainly from Bukhara Union, took part. As a result, the new chair for the local Soviets and people's militia were elected from Bolsheviks [Istoriya kyrgyzov 185–6].

However, by the summer of 1918, the Bolshevik rule was established on the whole territory of Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz supported Bolsheviks or turned to be very loyal to them because of the freedoms that Bolsheviks gave them [Istoriya kyrgyzov 186].

**CIVIL WAR** As soon as the Bolsheviks came to power in Central Asia, the *Civil War* (1918–1922) broke out. It was the war between the Bolshevik Red Army (in alliance with other leftist pro-revolutionary groups) and the White Army represented by anti-Bolshevik forces. The Civil War was accompanied by the foreign intervention of Britain, France, USA and Japan which attempted to eliminate the first and the only socialist state in the world [Osmonov 353]. They supplied the White Army with weaponry and funds.

In the summer of 1918, the Civil War reached Kyrgyzstan. The White Army occupied Semirechye. To repulse it, the Bolsheviks created the Northern Semirechye Front. Almost all Bolshevik party members were mobilized to fight on the front. Among the first commanders of the Red Army were *Logvinenko, Dubovitsky, Pavlov* and others. However, not only Russians but Kyrgyzstanis too volunteered to join the Red Army: *Saadaev, Kamchibekov* and others [Istoriya kyrgyzov 188–9].

In Kyrgyzstan, the Civil War took the forms of kulak revolts in the north of Kyrgyzstan and Basmachi movement in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Kulaks were rich Russian and Ukrainian peasants who did not welcome the Bolshevik rule because they expropriated their land property and redistributed it among the local population. Such rebellions took place in *Talas city, Belovodsk village, Przhevalsk and Naryn uezds*. However, all those rebellions were suppressed by the Red Army.

In August 1918, a kulak revolt broke out in Talas city. In December of 1918, it was followed by another one in Belovodsk village. Rebels reached Pishpek but were destroyed by Pishpek

regiment that came from Semirechye Front. In July of 1919, a kulak revolt took place in Przhevalsk uezd. In September of 1919, kulaks occupied Osh, Djalal-Abad, Andijan but were defeated. The last revolt broke out in November of 1919 in Naryn uezd but also failed to achieve its goals [Istoirya kyrgyzov 189–90]. The reason for the failure was that fact that kulaks didn't enjoy a mass support among other social groups and ethnicities such as the poor people and the Kyrgyz and, therefore, were suppressed quickly and easily.

As for the south of Kyrgyzstan, the Fergana Valley, the anti-Soviet struggle there took the form of the **Basmachi movement** that broke out in 1918 and lasted till 1924. The word *basmach* means "bandit". Started as a narrow bandit movement, it developed into a genuine national liberation movement of Central Asian peoples. Some historians consider the 1916 rebellion against the Russian rule to be the starting point of the Basmachi movement. However, the majority of Kyrgyzstani historians regard 1918 as the year when it began.

The aim of the Basmachi movement was to establish an independent Islamic state in Central Asia. Therefore, it was mainly Muslim clergy and intellectuals who led the movement. Others such as traders and peasants joined it later. Among the factors that contributed to the development of the Basmachi movement were the anti-religious policy of Bolsheviks when all religions practiced were not allowed as well as the economic policy when the land and other property were nationalized by the state. The ideologies that inspired the members of the movement to fight against Soviets were **pan-Turkism** (the unity of all Turkic-speaking peoples based on the common Turkic culture) and **pan-Islamism** (the unity of all Muslims based on their common Islamic religion). A complete defeat of the Koqand autonomy served as a good pretext for the movement to start, as many leaders of the destroyed autonomy turned to take an active part in it.

It was very difficult to defeat Basmachis because they led a partisan war. In order to destroy Basmachis, Bolsheviks

opened the Turkestan Front led by **Mikhail Frunze**, a prominent Bolshevik commander. Moreover, they made advances to Basmachis by offering their leaders high positions in the Soviet government and reopening Muslim courts and schools. In the 1920s, the main forces of Basmachis were destroyed. However, it was not before the 1930s that the movement was completely suppressed by the Red Army.

## 7.2. Socio-Economic Reforms in the 1920–30s

**NEW ECONOMIC POLICY** In 1920, the Civil War ended. The White Army was destroyed and the Bolshevik rule was reestablished on the whole territory of the country. However, the policy of War Communism when the surplus of agriculture was withdrawn by the state and peasants starved continued. It resulted in the breakout of a severe socioeconomic and political crisis.

In 1921, at the meeting of the Communist Party, Lenin decided to introduce the **New Economic Policy** (NEP). The New Policy aimed to replace *prodrazverstka* (a surplus-appropriation system of the state) by *prodnalog* (20% tax), to introduce market relations, and to implement a money reform. The New Economic Policy was seen as a temporary measure by the Bolsheviks to overcome the socioeconomic crisis, restore the economy damaged by World War I and the Civil War and stabilize the political situation in the country [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 267–8].

Prodnalog had to be paid in money equivalent. In agriculture, prodnalog was estimated differently for different groups of peasants depending on their income. That is, the highest tax was paid by kulaks. The less was paid by peasants of average means. The poorest were exempt from paying the tax [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 269]. The state also encouraged peasants to unite into various cooperatives. However, they didn't hurry to join them.

In the industrial sector, the state still kept all large-scale and medium-scale industries in its hands. As for small enterprises,



most of them were denationalized and returned to their previous owners. Concessions were granted to large-scale foreign and native capitals.

The development of the commodity-money relations required strengthening the Soviet ruble. In order to do it, state expenses were cut. A number of state enterprises were switched to self-financing. Educational and cultural institutions were funded from local budgets, defense expenses were reduced. At the same time, various direct and indirect taxes, fees for transportation, public services and utilities were introduced to increase the state budget [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 283–4].

As a result of the New Economic Policy, in 1926, the economy achieved the pre-war level and laid the foundation for further economic development and growth.

**LAND-WATER REFORMS IN KYRGYZSTAN** In Kyrgyzstan, the New Economic Policy took the form of the *land-water reforms* that aimed at the redistribution of land and water equally among Kyrgyz and Russians. According to the new policy, the Russian kulaks who had more land than required were withdrawn the surplus and then passed it to the landless and land-poor Kyrgyz peasants. The Kyrgyz who fled to China after the suppression of the 1916 rebellion were encouraged to come back and provided with land plots [Osmonov 362].

The land-water reform was initially implemented in the north of Kyrgyzstan where the land issue was the most urgent. It began in 1920–21 with the resettlement of Russian kulaks to their previous places of living. Their land and other property was confiscated and distributed among landless Kyrgyz. Kulaks resisted. Such a resistance took place in Naryn but was soon suppressed by the Soviet Army. Kyrgyz didn't only receive land plots but were also provided with free tools of land cultivation, seeds, and cattle. They were exempted from paying tax

for five initial years and given a choice to join collective farms [Osmonov 363–4].

A very important part of the reforms was the water issue. Water was vital for local farming. However, most of water springs were in the hands of Russian kulaks. The sources of water were also taken away from kulaks and an equal access to water was provided to all.

Because of the Basmachi movement in the Fergana Valley, the land-water reform in the south was implemented in 1927–28. In the south of Kyrgyzstan, the Soviet rule was weak and the influence of the Muslim clergy was strong. Therefore, it took almost ten years to implement the reform in the south [Istoriya kyrgyzov 196].

The New Economic Policy in Kyrgyzstan had very positive consequences. It brought to the transformation of the Kyrgyz traditional economy and a switch of Kyrgyz nomads to a sedentary lifestyle that eventually had a good impact on the demographic growth of the Kyrgyz population.

**INDUSTRIALIZATION** The New Economic Policy stabilized the situation and restored the economy destroyed by the war. Nevertheless, the first success was followed by new difficulties that arose in the mid 1920s. The international situation of the Soviet state was still very complicated. It remained internationally isolated. In order to develop as an independent country, it had to give priority to the creation of industry, especially a large-scale heavy industry. The state income received from agriculture was passed to the development of industries [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 371–4]. For this, the state reduced the prices for agricultural production but raised the prices for industrial goods.

Peasants refused to sell their grain so cheap or exchanged it for very expensive and not very qualitative industrial goods. The food crisis broke out. To overcome the crisis, the economy

was centralized, the independence of enterprises was restrained, prices and taxes were increased. The New Economic Policy was put an end. Industrialization and agricultural cooperation became the new priorities in the economic development in the country.

After the death of Lenin, the Chair of the Council of People's Commissars became **Rykov**. However, real power was concentrated in the hands of the General Secretary of the Communist Party **Stalin**.

**Industrialization** meant a switch to a large-scale industry and machinery. In 1920s, the Soviet Union remained an agrarian country. Light industry dominated heavy industry that lacked a number of important sectors. In 1925, the course towards industrialization was taken. There was a need to develop large industry, metallurgy, fuel industry, railway transportation, local industries and to train specialists in those fields. The first five-year plan was worked out [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 374].

During the first years of industrialization, old plants and factories were renovated and modernized. Simultaneously, the construction of new plants and hydroelectric stations began. A special attention was paid to the development of the energetic basis of the country, the production of coal and oil [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 375; Dmytryshyn 161]. As a result, in 1937, the USSR turned from an agrarian country into a leading industrial state that became the second in the world after the USA according to its industrial input.

At the same time, industrialization was accompanied by the crisis. Most of the state revenues were passed to support heavy industry often at the expense of light industry that produced consumer goods. Private business and property were heavily taxed and later abolished. The state took loans from the population [Istoriya Kirgizskoy SSR 3: 371–2].

As for the industrialization in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, it was not as successful. The prioritized sectors were mining and processing. Central Asia was seen as a supplier of raw

materials to Russia. The first five-year plan failed to achieve its goals. The same happened to the second and third five-year plans. That is, in the pre-war period, the industrial development of the republic was very low and slow and couldn't lay the foundation for the further industrial development in Kyrgyzstan [Istoriya kyrgyzov 206–8].

**COLLECTIVIZATION** While industrialization provided for a stable increase in its production, the agricultural sector experienced a steady decline. All funds released from agriculture were directed to heavy industry but not to the construction of plants producing consumer goods. Peasants refused to sell their grain for low prices to the state or exchange them for the goods they didn't need. In 1927–28, the agrarian crisis broke out.

To cope with the crisis, *collectivization*, or forced integration of peasants' individual farms into collective farms, was announced to be a very important task of the state. Collectivization aimed to support industrialization. The 1928 new land law gave a lot of privileges to poor and middle peasants to receive land plots within collective farms. They were also provided with the best and more convenient for cultivation land plots near water springs and roads. However, the law refused kulaks to lease land [Dmytryshyn 168–70].

In 1930, complete and speedy collectivization was announced. It was planned to be complete by 1933. *Raskulachivanie*, or the liquidation of kulaks as a social class, took more severe forms. Kulaks' property was confiscated and they with their families were deported to the most remote regions of the country such as Western Siberia and Kazakhstan where they were employed in building, forest industry and mining. In 1933, as a result of collectivization, the famine burst out in Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and other regions of the USSR [Dmytryshyn 170–1].

Since Russian kulaks were already abolished as a class in Kyrgyzstan during the period of land-water reforms,

raskulachivanie affected the property of Kyrgyz bays, manaps, tribal leaders, influential Muslim clerics. Their property and cattle were confiscated. Some of them were moved to other regions of the Soviet Union, while the remaining was resettled on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The creation of collective farms in Kyrgyzstan resulted in the extermination of cattle and the decline in the level of crop yield [Istoriya kyrgyzov 202–4].

Under such conditions, the Chair of the Council of People Commissars in Kyrgyzstan **Abdrakhmanov** decided to ruin the state plan of grain but help and feed starving people. As a result, he was dismissed from his positions of the chair and the member of the Communist Party [Istoriya kyrgyzov 204].

**REPRESSIONS** The term *repression* was officially used in reference to the prosecution of individuals considered as anti-revolutionaries and enemies of the Soviet people. The mass-scale purges were motivated by the desire of Stalin to remove dissidents and opposition from the Bolshevik party and to consolidate his authority.

The repressions were initiated by Stalin to eliminate potential opposition groups led by **Trotsky** (so-called left opposition) on the issue of industrialization, and later on **Bukharin** (so-called right opposition) on the issue of collectivization. Following the Civil War and the reconstruction of the Soviet economy in the late 1920s, a temporary dictatorship by Stalin seemed no longer required. Soviet leaders disagreed on the further economic development of the country. While Stalin insisted on state planning and collectivization policy, his opponents found his rule undemocratic. This resulted in mass repressions when Stalin eliminated all those whose opinions were different from his own [Istoriya kyrgyzov 229]. The NKVD (People's Commissars for Internal Affairs) chaired by **Yezhov** and then **Beria** was equally merciless towards the supporters, friends and families of the so-called "enemies of the people".

If before 1934 the repressions resulted in the expulsion from the Communist Party and the position, after 1934 those people were arrested and executed. Kirov's murder in 1934 was used as a very good pretext to start more violent repressions that brought to about a million of victims [Osmonov 402]. Some historians believed that it was Stalin himself who ordered to kill Kirov enjoying a wide popularity among the ordinary people.

Additional campaigns were undertaken against social and ethnic groups. Social groups such as kulaks (rich peasants) were accused of acting against the Soviet state. They were expropriated land, cattle, property and sent to far-away regions. 6,000 families from Kyrgyzstan were resettled in Ukraine and Northern Caucasus in August-September of 1931. The result was a large-scale famine in Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

A number of purges were carried out against ethnic groups on the grounds of their sabotage and espionage on the eve of the expected war with Germany. Kurds of Armenia and Azerbaijan and Koreans of the Far East, Volga Germans, the peoples of the newly incorporated territories of Bessarabia, Western Ukraine, Baltic republics as well as Ingush, Karachais, Chechen, Balkars, Mesketian Turks of Northern Caucasia, Kalmyks, Crimean Tatars were deported to Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia [Chotaeva 46–7].

During the period between 1928 and 1938, many Kyrgyz leaders were repressed in Kyrgyzstan as well. Such political figures as *Sydykov*, *Abdyrakhmanov*, *Aidarbekov*, *Aitmatov* and others were accused of being the members of *Social Turan Party* and shot in 1938 in Chon Tash Village. Clergymen too were arrested and imprisoned on the account of their collaboration with nationalist leaders. That is, more than 40,000 people were repressed in Kyrgyzstan that had the population of 1.4 million people [Osmonov 402–3].

### 7.3. Kyrgyz Soviet Statehood (1924–1936)

During the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, one of the major issues on the agenda was the national issue. Unlike their political opponents, who spoke of “one and indivisible Russia”, the Bolsheviks came out in favor of the policy of self-determination of nations and supported national movements among minorities of the empire. As soon as they achieved power, they issued the ***Declaration to all Muslim Workers of Russia and the Orient*** that revoked national and national-religious privileges and announced free and equal development of minorities in Russia. Within the first Soviet government, a special body — ***National Commissariat on Nationalities*** — was set up. Stalin was put in charge of it.

At the same time, the policy of self-determination of nations was a tool to forge an alliance among the forces working against Tsarism. As soon as the world proletariat came to power and united under the leadership of the Communist party, nationalism and nationalities would disappear, giving place to the new order, which would be rather based on class than nationality [Chotaeva 23].

Following the February Revolution of 1917, the Provisional Government and the Bolshevik-dominated Soviets were established in Tashkent. The Tsarist and Bolshevik authorities were competing to each other, and the lack of Muslim representation in either of these two forced the indigenous population to organize their own government. In November of 1917, the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Extraordinary all-Muslim Conference was held in Tashkent. The main issue raised was the creation of a Muslim government and autonomy in Turkestan. The newly established authority was called the ***Provisional Government of Autonomous Turkestan (Koqand Government)*** and was chaired by ***Mustafa Chokayev***.

The Koqand government was seen as a threat by the Tashkent Soviets that acted independently from the Bolshevik leadership in Petrograd and Moscow. In January of 1918, the Tashkent

Soviets declared the Koqand government counter-revolutionary and on January 30 the troops of the Tashkent Soviets crashed the Koqand government and massacred at least 5,000 people. The Koqand government fell. Muslims in the Fergana Valley revolted in response. That initial revolt in the Fergana Valley marked the beginning of the Basmachi movement.

The Bolsheviks in Moscow soon realized its mistake and attempted to meet the need of local people in its own statehood by creating the ***Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic*** in 1918 within the Russian Federation.

As for the Kyrgyz, they were dispersed among three oblasts of Turkestan: Syrdarya, Semirechye and Fergana, and represented a minority in each. Therefore, their development and interests were not considered enough. Under such conditions, Kyrgyz intellectuals such as ***Abdyrakhmanov, Arabaev*** and ***Sydykov*** raised the issue of creating the ***Mountainous Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast*** in 1921. However, the attempt failed. In 1922, the issue was raised again. It failed again because of the rivalry of Sydykov's group supporting the idea of Kyrgyz statehood and the group of Khudaikulov that was against it [U istokov 18–20].

In 1922, the ***Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics*** was created out of four republics: the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. In 1924, the first Constitution of the USSR was adopted [Osmonov 385].

In 1924, Kyrgyz delegates at the Turkestan Soviets Congress addressed the Central Committee of the Communist Party again asking to create the Kyrgyz oblast. They pointed out that although Kyrgyz live in Central Asia along with Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kazaks, their existence is still unknown. The delegates asked to recognize Kyrgyz as an ethnic group in Central Asia, to employ them in state institutions and to educate them in their native Kyrgyz language [Istoriya kyrgyzov 214].



As a result of the 1924 national territorial delimitation of Central Asia, Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, Tajik Autonomous Oblast, Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast, Kara-Kalpak Autonomous Oblast were created [Osmonov 385]. Kazakh Autonomous Republic was created earlier in 1920. The ***Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast*** became part of the RSFSR. For the first time in their history, the Kyrgyz received their own statehood, although in the form of autonomy within the USSR [Osmonov 386].

The Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast with the territory of almost 200,000 kilometers and the population of 828,300 people (63.5% Kyrgyz, 17% Russians, 15% Uzbeks, 4% others) included Semirechye oblast (Przhevalsk, Naryn, Pishpek uezds), Fergana oblast (10 volosts of Namangan uezd, 2 oblasts of Kokand uezd) and Syrdarya oblast (14 volosts of Aulie-Ata uezd, or present-day Talas province) [Osmonov 386].

In 1925, the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast was renamed the ***Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast***. In 1926, it was reorganized and named the ***Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic***. Orozbekov was appointed the Chair of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee. In 1929, the first Constitution of Kyrgyz ASSR was adopted. In 1936, the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic became the full-fledged ***Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic*** [Osmonov 388–91].

**LANGUAGE AND RELIGIOUS POLICY** An important part of the national policy of the Bolsheviks was language policy. Since only few languages in the Soviet state had their written forms, the first step in this direction was the creation of writing systems. Out of 130 languages, spoken by the country's population, only twenty had more or less developed written systems. Only Russians, Georgians and Armenians used their own alphabets [Chotaeva 79].

The national delimitation of Turkestan in 1924 aimed to blockade the tendency towards the consolidation of Turkic-

speaking peoples, and to protect them from the growing influence of Turkey. These aims were achieved through the language reforms of 1920–40s, which resulted in the disconnection of common Turkic cultural traditions. In 1924, the **modified Arabic script** was adopted for Kyrgyz. In 1927, the Kyrgyz language switched from Arabic to **Latin**, and in 1941, the **Cyrillic alphabet** replaced Latin. If the first reform brought to the simplification of the Arabic script adjusting it to the Turkic languages of Central Asia, the second reform cut off the Islamic tradition in the region, and the third provided a good ground for Russification [Chotaeva 74–5].

Political and linguistic motives caused the second reform. The Arabic alphabet, even in its modified version, was difficult to learn. In contrast to Arabic, Latin was seen as more neutral and compromising. It was a universal alphabet, which could be and actually was more effective in combating illiteracy. Latin would facilitate the learning of Central Asian languages. Moscow also assumed that it could be easier to control publications printed in local languages and create a barrier between the new national literatures of Central Asian republics and its common Muslim heritage. On the other hand, the introduction of Latin was profoundly affected by Turkey that at that time also switched from Arabic to Latin.

The last language reform was caused by solely political considerations. After the introduction of the Latin alphabet, the task to prevent the consolidation of Turkic-speaking peoples was undertaken. The third reform also laid the foundation for their further Russification. The Latin alphabet complicated the study of Russian as Kyrgyz students had to study two different alphabets: Latin for Kyrgyz and Cyrillic for Russian. Both alphabets had a number of letters, which were similar in writing but different in pronunciation. The latter created linguistic confusion and put many obstacles on the way of learning Russian. The introduction of Cyrillic for both languages

would resolve the problem and facilitate the study of Russian by local nationalities [Chotaeva 80].

In the course of their rule, the Bolsheviks treated Islam very pragmatically using it as an instrument to achieve their ends. In 1918–20, the antireligious campaign took place. By the Decree of 1917, civil marriage became obligatory; marriage and divorce contracted according to Shariat was announced illegal. Following the Decree “On separation of church from state” of 1918, the teaching of Islamic disciplines and the functioning of Islamic schools were banned. Traditional Muslim courts were replaced by a uniform people’s court. **Waqfs** (the lands of Muslim clergy) were confiscated. The persecution of Islam resulted in the closing of thousands of mosques and the elimination of the most educated Muslim clerics [Chotaeva 124–5].

However, since 1941, the period of more tolerant attitude towards Islam took place. The main stimulus for the change in the Soviet policy was the Great Patriotic War. The shift was motivated by the need for military manpower to win the war.

In 1941, Stalin made a decision to create **Central Asian Spiritual Board of Muslims** (SADUM), an official Islamic body that would take a centralized control of the religious situation in the region. In 1946, it was permitted to publish quarterly **Journal of the Religious Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan**.

In 1944, Muslims were officially allowed to perform pilgrimage to Mecca. In 1945, the *Miri-l-Arab Madrasa* in Bukhara was reopened. It provided the Islamic training to 100 students enrolled in a five-year program. As for mosques, their number gradually increased. The best students of *Miri-l-Arab Madrasa* were dispatched to Muslim universities abroad, primarily to Al-Azhar in Egypt. The official Muslim clergy was sent abroad to spread the Communist propaganda as well as Muslim officials from foreign countries were received [Chotaeva 126–7].

#### 7.4. Great Patriotic War (1941–1945)

The *Great Patriotic War* was an integral part of World War II. *WWII* was a global military conflict which involved most of the world's nations (62–72 states), including great powers of that time organized into two opposing military alliances: the *Allies* and the *Axis*. Over 70 million (the majority were civilians) were killed or died from starvation.

A number of reasons led to the war. In the aftermath of World War I defeated Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles. This caused Germany to lose around 13% of its territory, along with its colonies, prohibited German annexation of other states, imposed massive reparations and limited the size and makeup of Germany's armed forces.

The war started on September 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland and subsequent declarations of war on Germany by the British Empire and France. The Soviet Union invaded Poland from the eastern side. Many states that were not initially involved joined the war later as a result the German invasion of the USSR and the attack on Pearl Harbor in the USA by Japan.

As soon as the war ended in 1945 with the victory of the Allies, the Soviet Union and the United States emerged as the world's superpowers setting the stage for the Cold War that lasted for the following 46 years. The United Nations was formed in 1945 in order to prevent the world from another military conflict. The promotion of the principle of self-determination of nations by UN resulted in the decolonization movements in Asia and Africa.

The invasion of the USSR on June 22, 1941, by Germany marked the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. Kyrgyzstan contributed to the victory of the USSR over fascist Germany on the war front and the home front.

Since the first days of the war many young males in Kyrgyzstan volunteered for the army. All-state mobilization was announced. During the mobilization, 385<sup>th</sup> rifle division, 40<sup>th</sup> and

153<sup>th</sup> rifle divisions and 2nd national cavalry division were formed in Kyrgyzstan.

The most famous were 385<sup>th</sup> rifle division named after **General Panfilov**. It was formed of Kyrgyzstani and Kazakhstani citizens. In 1941, that division defended Moscow and within a whole month held its positions. For this, the division was awarded with the Order of Red Star. General Panfilov was killed and awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously. 28 legendary heroes of the Panfilov division were Kyrgyzstanis such as **Shopokov, Ananyev, Shemyakin, Konkin, Moskalenko, Petrenko** and others. They also were awarded the Heroes of the Soviet Union posthumously [Osmonov 405–6].

The first Hero of the Soviet Union was **Dmitriev** who defended the Brest fortress during the first days of the war. Another Hero of the Soviet Union was the son of the famous commander Michael Frunze — **Timur Frunze** [Osmonov 404, 406].

Many other Kyrgyzstanis performed immortal heroic deeds. **Cholponbai Tuleberdiev** shut the pillbox with his breast and was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously.

The artillery man **Daiyr Asanov** during 4 hours of battle destroyed 8 tanks, 6 armoured vehicles and 40 fascists. He was posthumously awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union.

**Akun Sadyrbaev** could catch and throw back 16 grenades. The 17<sup>th</sup> exploded and killed him.

Pilot **Ismailbek Taranchiev** directed his plane to the enemy's tanks at the petrol station. The explosion destroyed 6 tanks and several cars. Only in 1991, he was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union.

The Kyrgyzstani who was awarded the hero of the SU twice was pilot **Begeldinov** who remained alive after the war and moved to Kazakhstan after independence.

Overall, 380,000 Kyrgyzstanis fought on the war fronts, more than 90,000 were killed, more than 150,000 were awarded with orders and medals. Among them, 73 were awarded with the highest award, the Hero of the Soviet Union [Osmonov 408–13].

In order to meet the needs of the war, many factories and plants were moved from the European part of the Soviet Union to Ural, Siberia and Central Asia. More than 30 large industrial enterprises were evacuated to Kyrgyzstan: the machinery plant, the mercuric complex, the tannery and glue plants, the sugar mill, textile factories and others. Most of them were relocated in Chui province.

By December of 1942, more than 138,000 people were evacuated from Moscow, Moscow and Leningrad oblasts, Ukraine, Belorussia, Baltic region, Poland. Most of them were famous scholars and artists. Following the war, many of them remained in Kyrgyzstan and significantly contributed to the development of science and art in the republic.

People of Central Asia were donating to the front not only products and clothing but also their salaries, money, jewelry and cattle. A special account was opened at the State Bank where money from people was transferred. During the war, Kyrgyzstan collected 189 million rubles and sent 195 wagons of food [Osmonov 415–9].

### 7.5. Khrushchev Period (1953–1964)

The period from 1953 to 1964 is known as the period of **Khrushchev Thaw** in the history of the USSR and is characterized by the liberalization of domestic and international policies in the USSR. The period of 1953–64 was the time when many changes in the political, cultural and economic life of the Soviet Union took place.

After the death of Stalin, **Malenkov** became the Chair of the Council of Ministers, while **Khrushchev** was elected the General Secretary of the Communist Party. When Malenkov proposed his plan of economic reforms that prioritized the development of light industry, Khrushchev accused him of betraying the interests of heavy industry. Malenkov resigned and **Khrushchev** took power into his hands [Khrushchev 14–5].

In the political aspect, Khrushchev era was marked by **de-Stalinization**, or denouncing Stalin's dictatorial rule and cult of personality. In 1956, at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party, Khrushchev made the report "About the cult of personality and its consequences" where he presented the documents concerning the repressions of the prominent party and political leaders of the country. It was stated that they were not the "enemies of the people" but honest people and patriots. Later on, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued the Decree "About overcoming the cult of personality and its consequences" where it was attempted to analyze the objective and subjective factors of the cult of personality. Stalin was charged with those crimes, mistakes made in the development of national economy and the leadership, and the abuse of power.

After the congress, a large-scale rehabilitation of the repressed began in the 1930–50s. Many people were rehabilitated posthumously. Deported ethnic groups were allowed returning to their homelands. However, that process was interrupted in the late 1960s.

In the economic aspect, Khrushchev initiated a number of agricultural reforms. The food crisis took place. Therefore, the agricultural sector required urgent changes. He raised the prices for agricultural production, while cancelled the debts of collective farms. The taxes on cattle were abolished and the agricultural production from personal plots was not any more required to be turned over to the state. All those measures appeared to be effective and very soon agriculture became profitable.

Another problem was the grain issue. Khrushchev decided to resolve it by cultivating virgin lands. In 1954, the **Virgin Land Campaign** started. Many young volunteers from Russia, Ukraine and other republics of the USSR were dispatched to cultivate the virgin lands of Kazakhstan, Sothern Siberia and Ural. Living in very harsh conditions, often in tents, without elementary conveniences, they remained very enthusiastic.

However, due to some reasons the Virgin Land Campaign failed [Khrushchev 103–17].

In 1959, Khrushchev visited the corn fields of the USA. He was charmed by the most popular in the USA crop and decided to cultivate corn instead of the grassland agriculture. He assumed that the cultivation of the corn would help resolve the grain and forage problems together. He began to introduce its cultivation everywhere on the territory of the state not taking into account that that crop likes the mild climate and requires a lot of labor. That is, the cultivation of the corn failed too.

In the early 1960s, the food problem emerged again. Milk, butter, bread were not produced enough. People stood in long lines to purchase them. For the first time in the history, it was decided to import food to the USSR.

In the industrial sector, the program of economic reforms to develop light and food industries proposed by Malenkov was rejected. The main role was still played by heavy industry. Construction building, machinery, metalworking, chemical industry, oil industry, energy industry developed. A number of new hydroelectric stations were put into operation. A new industry of nuclear power engineering emerged. In 1961, first human **Yuri Gagarin** flew to the space [Khrushchev 63–7].

As for foreign relations, they were marked by the confrontation between the USA and USSR in 1962 (**Caribbean Crisis**). In 1962, the USSR decided to deploy its missiles on the territory of Cuba, the only socialist state in Latin America. The US administration was alarmed when its spy plane took their photo. The USA demanded to withdraw missiles and return them to the USSR. The tension lasted for 13 days when the Soviet Union finally agreed to dismantle them in exchange of the US declaration not to invade Cuba [Khrushchev 103–17, 205].

In 1964, Khrushchev was accused of his mistakes and failures and deposed from the position of the General Secretary of the Communist Party.



**RAZZAKOV** In 1945, *Razzakov* was appointed the Chair of the Council of Ministers in the Kyrgyz SSR. It was the time when post-war Kyrgyzstan faced a lot of difficulties. The task of Razzakov was to restore the economy ruined by the war within the five-year 1946–50 plan. The five-year plan prescribed to increase the economic output, to build and put into operation new plants, mines, electric stations, irrigation systems, schools and houses. In terms of agriculture, it was required not only to restore but to increase the areas under crops, raise harvest production of cereals and technical crops, increase livestock and its productivity [U istokov 323].

Under the direct leadership of Razzakov, the industrial sector of Kyrgyzstan was reconstructed. A large-scale work was made on the development of mining and energy industries, machinery, construction building, and transportation. During 1946–60, more than 20 large-scale industrial enterprises were constructed. During the 1951–55 five-year plan, about 30 enterprises were put into operation. In 1955, about 1,500 industrial enterprises functioned. In 1950, the economic output increased twice compared to 1940 and in 5.6 times in 1958 compared to 1940. The new instrument-making industry was introduced with the establishment of *“Fizpribory” Factory* in Bishkek city in 1958 [U istokov 323–4].

In the agricultural sector, new technologies and funds were introduced. Razzakov realized how important agriculture was for the economy. For 1956–60, the production of grain increased by 48.6%, sugar beet 2.4 times, potato and vegetables twice, milk almost twice, wool more than twice. For the achievements in the production of sugar beet, cotton and cattle breeding and for successful implementation of the state plan in 1956, the Kyrgyz SSR was awarded with the Order of Lenin along with 45 people who became the Heroes of Socialist Labor for their contribution to the development of agriculture [U isokov 326–7].

Significant achievements were made in the cultural development. Both secondary and higher education developed. The universal 7-year and then in 1959, 8-year secondary educational system was introduced. Children of cattle-breeders were placed in special boarding schools. In 1957, free hot breakfasts were provided at schools. As for higher and secondary special educational institutions, the *Kyrgyz State University*, *Osh Institute*, *Przhevalsk Institute*, *Polytechnic Institute*, *Women's Pedagogical Institute*, *Physical Labor Institute* were opened. Local students got the opportunity to study at Moscow, Leningrad and other large cities of the Soviet Union [U istokov 327–8].

In 1954, the *Academy of Sciences* of Kyrgyzstan was opened. It included 14 research institutes, 4 independent departments, 2 museums and 3 experiment stations. By the initiative of Razzakov, the Kyrgyz complex archaeological-ethnographic expedition was organized. During 4 years, they collected the data on the Kyrgyz ethnogenesis. Razzakov initiated the all-union and republican conferences on the *Manas Epic in 1952*, *the 1916 Rebellion in 1953*, *the Ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz people and the Cultural Heritage of Moldo Kylych* in 1956. As a result of those conferences, the *Manas Epic* was recognized as people's epic, the 1916 rebellion was admitted the national-liberation rebellion, the formation of the Kyrgyz people was seen as the combination of two ethnic elements: the local Central Asian and Southern Siberian, *Moldo Kylych* was considered the reactionary poet and for 30 years his poems were banned. In 1955, ***Opera and Ballet Theatre*** was opened [U istokov 329–31].

In 1961, Razzakov was charged with nationalism and dismissed from the position of the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Kyrgyzstan.

### **7.6. Brezhnev Period (1964–1982)**

More than half of the century the country lived under emergency conditions. New leaders came to the conclusion that the country needed stability. Stability was achieved by the

denial of political upheavals of the recent years, the policy of de-Stalinization and reforms.

The period of 1964–85 is known as the *period of stagnation*, or officially referred as the period of *developed socialism*, because during that period the country lacked radical political, economic and cultural changes and was characterized by political and economic stability. The 1977 Constitution of the USSR stated that “developed socialist society” characterized by strong productive forces, advanced science and culture was built in the USSR.

*Brezhnev* was appointed the General Secretary of the Communist Party, while the Chair of the Council of Ministers became *Kosygin*.

In 1965, it was decided to implement an economic reform. The reform was developed by Kosygin and aimed to switch state enterprises to partial self-financing. The profit received after the realization of the planned production could be used by the enterprise for its own development or to raise the salaries of its personnel. Therefore, the transition from administrative to economic methods in the management proved to be more effective. In 1966–70, the economy experienced a significant growth [Osmonov 441–2]. The most successful in the Soviet economy were electric power engineering, machinery, instrument engineering, radio electronics and oil industry.

Nevertheless, since the early 1970s, the growth rate slowed down and by the 1980s it completely stopped. The main problem consisted in the disconnection between the Soviet economy and its scientific-technical progress. The economy developed extensionally by introducing more human and material resources but not intensively. The resources of the country were running out. The economy was monopolized and centralized by the state. The majority of enterprises were militarily and industrially oriented. Enterprises were predominantly large-sized. In the 1970–80s, serious disproportions were observed in the development and structure of the USSR industries when

heavy industries dominated. The attempts to switch to intensive methods of development failed [Dmytryshyn 340–7].

The agricultural sector experienced a serious crisis. The attempts of reforms undertaken by the administration didn't help. To stimulate agricultural producers, the state prices for agricultural production were raised. The agricultural overproduction was paid 50% more. The integrated farms were established. Those integrated farms included collective farms, state farms, processing, transportation and trade companies. To facilitate the management of agriculture, the State Agro-Industrial Committee was created. However, all those measures failed and the gross agricultural output decreased [Dmytryshyn 336, 343–5].

**USUBALIYEV** In 1961, *Usubaliyev* was appointed the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Kyrgyz SSR.

The leading economic sector in Kyrgyzstan became industry. Electrotechnical engineering, instrument making, electronics developed rapidly. One of the most automated enterprises was Mailisai electric bulb plant. Construction building industry developed. Kyrgyzstan produced cement, reinforced concrete plates and wall construction blocks. Processing industry was represented by cotton and wool processing, coal processing, agricultural products processing. In energetics, the largest *Toktogul Hydropower Station* was put into operation. Overall, 150 large industrial objects were constructed during his time.

At the same time, light industry with such sectors as clothing manufactures, knitted goods factories, tanning was not paid as much attention as heavy industry and didn't develop as rapidly as it could be. Food industry experienced the same problem. Both produced low quality goods and, therefore, were not demanded by the population [Osmonov 442–4].

In agriculture, the leading part was played by sheep breeding. The new breed of sheep was raised. It was the Tien Shan

breed, the bread of a very high meat and wool productivity, well adapted to the climatic and other conditions of Kyrgyzstan.

The cultivation of sugar beet was another important sector of agriculture. It was the basic culture in the Chui Valley. In 1970s, Kyrgyzstan was the first in the USSR by the production of sugar beet. The main export of the republic was cotton. At the same time, most of those industries and economic sectors used extensive methods of development that proved to be not so effective.

Bishkek capital was given a new image during Usubaliyev. He was in charge of the so-called “marble city”. Under his leadership, *the Manas Airport, the National Library, the Academy of Sciences, the White House* and other architectural ensembles on the Ala-Too and Pobeda Squires were built in Bishkek. Mass housing construction was launched as well.

In 1985, Usubaliyev was charged with corruption and replaced by Masaliyev.

### 7.7. Perestroika (1985–1991)

In the late 1980s, the stagnation in economy, politics and social life of the country became inevitable. Social instability and corruption increased. A great demand for cardinal changes in the economy and political system of the country surfaced.

After the death of Brezhnev, **Andropov** came to power. He attempted to revise the party and state system but died after 15 months of rule. Andropov was replaced by **Chernenko** that symbolized the return of Brezhnev times. However, Chernenko died soon too [Osmonov 453].

In 1985, **Gorbachev** was appointed to the position of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He took the course of reforms that later spread to all aspects of life. The policy of Gorbachev was called perestroika [White 23].

**Perestroika** was associated with a number of political and economic reforms undertaken in 1985–1991. The aim of pere-

stroika was to improve the economy but within the frames of socialist system. That is, perestroika did not aim to switch to capitalism. However, it resulted in the escalation of the crisis, the elimination of the Communist Party domination and the dissolution of the USSR.

Perestroika was initiated under the slogans of uskorenje, democratization and glasnost. **Uskorenje** (acceleration) meant the reorganization of the economy, the switch from the extensive methods of economic development to the intensive. It was decided to start by reforming a large-scale industry, especially machinery, and bring the economy up to the international standards in the 1990s. However, large investments directed to economy did not result in any improvement but in the waste of money and goods shortage. **Democratization** that initially aimed at the democratization of intra-party relations later went far beyond it and laid the foundation for the multi-party system in the country. **Glasnost** (publicity) meant the abolition of censorship in mass media [White 23–6, 57–60].

In order to fight corruption among the state and party leadership, Gorbachev initiated his cadre policy and replaced all leaders of the union republics and secretaries of local party organizations. Usubaliyev, the First Secretary of Kyrgyzstan who ruled the republic for 24 years, was replaced by **Masaliyev**. The Second Secretary **Kiselev** was appointed by Moscow [Osmonov 453–4].

In the late 1980s, various political clubs discussing political and social issues appeared in Kyrgyzstan: *Demos*, *Zamandash* (Kyrgyz National University), *Koz Karash* (the Institute of Economy, the Committee of State Planning).

With the elections to the Supreme Soviet of Kyrgyzstan, different political associations, unions and organizations were established. Most of them aimed to revive the language, culture and history of the Kyrgyz people. Later many of them were reorganized into political parties [Osmonov 456–7].

- **Ashar** was the organization of Kyrgyz unauthorized housing constructors who seized land plots around Bishkek city.
- **Osh Aimagy** was the organization of Kyrgyz unauthorized housing constructors who seized land plots around Osh city.
- **Adolat** was the organization of the Uzbek youth of Osh city.
- **Asaba** was first Kyrgyz national-democratic party.
- **Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan** became the largest political movement that united most of the existing political parties and later gave rise to such political parties as Asaba, Erkin Kyrgyzstan and others.

In 1990, the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyz SSR were carried out under the new law on elections. The elections were alternative, free and democratic. As a result of elections, 10% of the deputies elected were not Communists. That is, the elections finally put an end to the dictatorship of the Communist Party. Masaliyev was appointed the **Chairman** (speaker) of the Supreme Soviet [Osmonov 458].

In 1990, the new institution of **presidency** was introduced in the USSR and Kyrgyzstan. The Supreme Soviet elected **Akayev** the first president of the republic.

The introduction of presidency in Kyrgyzstan put an end to the one-party system in which the Communist Party dominated the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of power. It laid the foundation for a popular vote and the election of leaders filling the vacuum emerged with the elimination of the domination of the Communist party [Osmonov 506].

On December 15, 1990, **the Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan** was adopted. The declaration signified the supreme authority of the republic on its territory and independent foreign relations. The republic introduced its own banking, financial and tax systems.

In August of 1991, some Communist and military leaders organized the coup to restore the previous regime. The attempt

failed. However, it resulted in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and creation of 15 independent states.

In economic terms, the aim of perestroika was to switch from a centralized and planned economy to a market-oriented economy. Many enterprises were introduced the principles of self-financing and self-management when they were not any more funded from the state budget and had to administer their enterprises by themselves. If prior to 1990 there was some increase in the economic development, it declined after 1990. Nevertheless, only in 1991 the *Denationalization and privatization law* was adopted [Osmonov 459–62]. That is, the market economy could not effectively function in terms of socialism.

As for agriculture, peasants were given a free hand. Cooperatives and farms were encouraged. By 1990, the livestock increased. However, after 1990 the number of pastures suddenly decreased that caused the decline in productivity [Osmonov 463].

The contradictions of the Soviet language policy surfaced during Gorbachev's perestroika. Growing ethnic self-consciousness in the late 1980s and early 1990s promoted the Kyrgyz ethnic and cultural revival that had the language issue in the core.

In the late of the 1980s, all union republics initiated a number of measures to increase the functions of their titular languages. The first was Moldova that in 1987 passed the law to extend the functions of the Moldavian language and in 1989 switched to the Latin alphabet. The legislations on titular languages came next.

By May of 1990, all union republics except for the Russian Federation passed the laws on state languages. It is worthy of note that prior to the 1980s, neither the Soviet Union nor its union republics had any comprehensive language laws of such kind except for the corresponding paragraphs in their constitutions [Chotaeva 86–7].



In the second half of the 1980s, linguistic russification carried out by the Soviet state met a strong resistance from national intelligentsia of Kyrgyzstan. Public demands of granting Kyrgyz a higher status brought to the adoption of the 1989 Law ***“On the state language of the Kirgiz SSR”*** recognizing Kyrgyz as the only state language of Kyrgyzstan. The declaration of Kyrgyz the state language aimed at:

- the elimination of a great disparity between the use of Russian and Kyrgyz;
- the promotion of the status and prestige of Kyrgyz;
- decentralization of power from Moscow;
- nation and state building.

The adoption of the 1989 law was accompanied by the Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz SSR, according to which beginning from January 1999 the official correspondence in state bodies, enterprises and organizations was to be switched to Kyrgyz [Chotaeva 87].

From 1959 to 1989 Kyrgyz was not taught in non-Kyrgyz secondary schools. The capital of the republic had the only school where Kyrgyz was the language of instruction. 42% of Kyrgyz school children did not study Kyrgyz and knew it only at the level of spoken language. The functioning of Kyrgyz was reduced to the secondary and higher humanities and social sciences education [Chotaeva 86].

In June of 1990, there were the clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh province. Osh Aimagy and Adolat were two informal organizations responsible for the conflict. The main source of the conflict was the land issue. The needy Kyrgyz living in Lenin collective farm (in the suburbs of Osh city) were promised to have land plots. Uzbeks did not welcome that decision of the local administration.

On June 4, two groups of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks began moving in opposing directions in Osh city crashing everything on their way and beating up and killing people of the opposite ethnicity.

On June 5, the clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks broke out in Uzgen city. There were many Kyrgyz in those cities that lived in rented Uzbek houses. On these days, Uzbeks expelled many Kyrgyz families from their houses. In response, many Kyrgyz from neighboring villages came to take revenge.

The sources of the conflict were social problems (land issue, housing problem), economic situation (Uzbeks were urban dwellers and economically better compared to Kyrgyz), political factors (with independence political power was in the hands of Kyrgyz), demographic problems (Uzbeks were the majority in cities, while Kyrgyz were minorities and mainly lived in rural and mountainous regions), cultural problems (Kyrgyz was declared the only state language in Kyrgyzstan).

The conflict stopped only on the third day June 6 when the Soviet Army entered Osh province. As a result of the conflict, about 300 people were killed (by official estimations), or more than 1000 people (by unofficial sources).

During perestroika, alcoholism became a mass problem. That problem first surfaced during the period of stagnation under Brezhnev. Gorbachev initiated so-called “dry law”. Alcoholic drinks were not any more sold in shops. People turned to produce home-made vodka, drink technical spirits, or to substitute alcohol with drugs. According to the data of the World Health Organization, there were 40 million alcoholics in 1980 in the USSR, or every seventh citizen of the USSR was an alcoholic [Osmonov 465].

In the 1980s, drug abuse became another social problem. One of the factors consisted in the fact that Kyrgyzstan had many fields of wild hemp. Another factor was its geographical proximity to Afghanistan, the region of drugs and drug trafficking.

As a result of alcoholism and drug abuse, criminality increased. Kyrgyzstan became one of the four most criminal republics in the USSR along with Moldavia, Uzbekistan and Lithuania. In 1980, 11.7 thousand, in 1985, 14.4 thousand,

in 1989, 25.5 thousand crimes were committed. In 1980, more than 40% of crimes were not opened. The number of serious crimes increased [Osmonov 468].

## Chapter 8

# INDEPENDENT KYRGYZSTAN (1991–2015)

The dissolution of the Soviet Union marked the new period — the period of independent Kyrgyzstan. For the first time in history, the Kyrgyz enjoyed their independent and sovereign state. The attributes of a national state such as national flag, emblem and anthem were adopted. In 1993, the first Constitution of Kyrgyzstan was passed by the parliament.

However, soon the euphoria of the first years of independence had gone. The standard of living declined and mass-scale unemployment surfaced. The newly established independent republic had faced a deep political, economic and social crisis. Kyrgyzstan was not any more referred as an “island of democracy” but an “island of instability” in Central Asia. The revolutions of 2005 and 2010 resulted in the overthrow of two presidents. The 2010 revolution brought to more than 80 victims and provoked the 2010 interethnic conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

The recent development in Kyrgyzstan has been characterized by political stabilization. As a result of the 2010 referendum, the state switched from a presidential to a parliamentary system. In 2012, a peaceful transition of power from a president to another took place.

### 8.1. Akaev Regime (1991–2005)

*Akayev* became the first president of Kyrgyzstan. He was elected as soon as the presidency was introduced in 1990. In October of 1991, Akaev was elected the president again as a result of a popular referendum receiving 95% of the votes [Osmonov 510].



In December 1990, the Supreme Soviet voted to change the republic's name to *the Republic of Kyrgyzstan*. However, with the Constitution in 1993, the new name was adopted — *the Kyrgyz Republic*. In February 1991, the capital of the republic, Frunze city, was renamed *Bishkek*. The major streets of the capital city were also given Kyrgyz names. During the referendum on March 21, 1991, 76% of the voters in the USSR agreed to remain part of the Soviet Union but of the “renewed federation” [Osmonov 508].

On August 19, 1991, when the State Emergency Committee (*GKCHP*) assumed power in Moscow, there was an attempt to depose Akayev from presidency. The coup failed. Akayev announced his resignation from the Communist Party and banned it for a while. On August 31, 1991, the Supreme Soviet proclaimed the independence of Kyrgyzstan by passing *the Declaration on the State Independence of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan* was adopted. On December 21, 1991, Akayev along with the presidents of other 10 newly independent states signed the agreement in Almaty city on the creation of the Commonwealth

of Independent States (CIS) that eventually put an end to the Soviet Union [Osmonov 511].

On May 5, 1993, the draft of the new Constitution was passed by the parliament. It took two years since 1991 before it was finally approved [Osmonov 512]. The Constitution declared:

- *Kyrgyzstan is a sovereign unitary democratic republic built on the basis of legal secular state;*
- *Sovereignty is extended to the whole territory of Kyrgyzstan;*
- *The people of Kyrgyzstan is the only source of state power;*
- *The people exercise its power through the system of state agencies on the basis of the Constitution.*

According to the constitution, the state power was divided into three branches: executive, legislative and judicial.

The President ensured the unity of all branches of power. He was elected by a popular vote for a five-year term. The presidential candidate was prescribed to be 35–65 years old, should speak Kyrgyz and live in Kyrgyzstan not less than 15 years prior to his nomination. The same person could not be the President more than twice in a row. The Prime Minister was nominated by the President and confirmed by the Parliament. The Cabinet of Ministers was appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister [Osmonov 513].

The Executive branch was administered by the Prime Minister who also served as the chair in the Cabinet of Ministers. The branch included ministries, state committees, state agencies and local administration. Local administration was represented by the governors in provinces, akims in rayons and cities, ayl okmots in villages.

The Legislative branch of power was represented by the Parliament *Jogorku Kenesh*. Prior to 1995, Kyrgyzstan had a unicameral legislature. In 1995, it was replaced by a bicameral one. The bicameral Parliament consisted of the Legislative Assembly (35 seats elected by popular vote) and the Assembly

of People's Representatives (70 seats elected by popular vote). The legislative term was five years. In 2005, the Parliament became unicameral again.

The Judicial branch included the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, Supreme Arbitration Court, local courts and judges. Although the Constitution assumed an independent judiciary, Kyrgyzstan's court system had always been under the influence of the prosecutor's office. Low salaries made bribes of judges common. As a rule, most cases originated in local courts. They then moved through the appeals process to municipal or regional courts finally reaching the Supreme Court, or the ultimate court of appeals.

In 1994, the parliament failed to produce a quorum. Akayev scheduled a referendum in October 1994 that approved two amendments to the Constitution: the first was to allow the Constitution to be amended by means of a referendum, and the other one was to create a new bicameral parliament.

In 1995, the elections for both chambers, the 35-seat full-time Legislative Assembly and the 70-seat part-time Assembly of People's Representatives, took place. Independent candidates won most of the seats. The new parliament convened its initial session in March 1995.

Since 1995, many observers began speaking about authoritarianism gaining ground in Kyrgyzstan. In 1996, another referendum was scheduled. In violation of the Constitution and the law on referendums, it approved the amendments and gave President Akayev more power, for example the power to dissolve the parliament.

After independence, the program of economic reforms was adopted. The most significant of economic reforms was denationalization and privatization. The reform aimed to establish new private enterprises with effective management systems. In 1993, the new national currency *som* was introduced.

The economic reform began in 1991 with the adoption of the ***Denationalization and Privatization Law*** and the creation

of the State Property Fund as the main agency to design and implement the program. By the end of 1993, about 4,450 state enterprises, or 33%, were fully or partially privatized. By mid 1994, nearly all services and 82% of trade enterprises, 40% of industries, and 68% of construction assets were in private hands. However, the result was not so positive. Privatization was accompanied by the creation of joint stock companies and transferring enterprise shares to labor groups within them. Almost no public bidding for enterprise shares was organized.

The second stage of reform took place in 1994. The 1994 Law on Privatization prescribed competitive shares bidding in small enterprises (with fewer than 100 employees) as well as long-term privatization of medium-size (with 100 to 1,000 employees) and large-size enterprises through competitive cash bidding. The new law also spoke for auctioning all enterprise shares. By the end of 1994, 65% of industrial output came from non-state enterprises.

In 1991, the agrarian reform was undertaken. The aim of the reform was to dissolve collective farms and pass land to peasants, thus creating peasant farms. By the end of 1993, 172 collective farms were dissolved and 17.5 thousand peasant farms created. In 1995, the number of peasant farms increased to 21 thousand. The state had to purchase their production by market prices.

In 1994, the president issued the decree on deepening the agrarian reform. By 1998, 55 thousand peasant farms were created as well as agricultural cooperatives, collective peasant farms and joint enterprises. In 1995, the land tax was introduced. In 1998, the private ownership of land was permitted. In 2000, the law that allowed buying and selling land passed.

On December 24, 1995, President Akayev was reelected for another 5-year term (75% of vote). In 1996, new amendments to the Constitution to increase the power of the president were introduced. In 2000, Akayev was reelected for the third term in violation of the Constitution based on the decision made



by the Constitutional Court. In 2003, new amendments to the Constitution were adopted through referendum.

In 2005, as part of the elections process and in accordance with the 2003 referendum, the Parliament became unicameral again. The 2005 parliamentary elections failed to be free and fair. Sporadic protests against perceived manipulation and fraud during the elections erupted into widespread calls for the government to resign. Mass demonstrations took place in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

On March 24, 15,000 pro-opposition demonstrators in Bishkek demanded the resignation of the president and his regime. Protesters seized the White House, and Akayev had to flee the country, first to neighboring Kazakhstan and then to Moscow. Initially refusing to resign and denouncing the events as a coup, he subsequently signed his resignation on April 4, 2005.

A number of factors brought to the revolution of 2005: the rule of Akayev and his family for 15 years, growing authoritarianism of his regime, an economic crisis and accompanying it corruption and unemployment, regionalism and tribalism when most of those high state officials were chosen according to the regional and tribal principles.

## **8.2. Bakiyev Regime (2005–2010)**

Following the revolution of 2005, the opposition leader **Bakiyev** was appointed interim President and Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan. He scheduled presidential elections for July of 2005. In order to win the elections, Bakiyev decided to form a political tandem with another opposition leader Kulov. Both agreed that if Bakiyev was elected the president, Kulov would be appointed the Prime Minister. This political tandem also represented the union of two Kyrgyzstani regions, the north and the south. While Bakiyev was from the south, Kulov was a popular northern political leader. Kulov was the opposition leader who was responsible for reestablishing the order in Bishkek on March 24 during the night of loot. The main question on the political agenda was

the constitutional reform. Bakiyev promised that he would implement the reform and limit presidential power by giving more authority to the parliament and the cabinet. On July 10, 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiyev won the presidential elections and became the second president of independent Kyrgyzstan.

In 2006, Bakiyev faced a political crisis, as thousands of people demonstrated their anger in a series of protests in Bishkek. They accused him of inaction and not implementing the constitutional reform. They also blamed him for failing to eradicate corruption, crime, and poverty. Bakiyev in turn accused the opposition of plotting a coup against him.

In 2007, the new amendments to the Constitution were introduced. The new Constitution, on the contrary, increased the power of the president. Authoritarianism was gaining ground. The same 2007 year, the new electoral system was approved. According to it, parliamentary elections were to be organized based on the political parties list voting, a proportional system of voting in which candidates are selected from the central party list rather than are locally elected.

In 2009, Bakiyev was reelected for the second term of presidency. Presidential elections, originally expected in 2010, were rescheduled for July 23, 2009. Bakiev won the elections with 83.8% of the vote. However, on polling day *Atambayev* from Social Democratic Party withdrew his candidacy claiming widespread fraud. Independent candidate *Nazaraliev* also withdrew his candidacy on the elections day.

Moreover, in 2007 Bakiyev introduced changes in the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan defining it as “multi-vectored, balanced and pragmatic policy based on the national interests, natural resources and possibilities of the country”. He didn’t remove US military base *Gansy* from the territory of Kyrgyzstan as he promised to Russia but prolonged its term and renamed it the Manas Transit Center.

In 2009, Bakiyev established the *Central Agency on Development, Investments and Innovations* and made his younger

son in charge of it. In 2010, he initiated the denationalization of important state objects as *Kyrgyztelecom*, *Severelectro* and others. In 2009–10, the social-economic situation in the country was unfavorable. The energy crisis took place. Electricity was cut on a regular basis in Bishkek as well as electricity and hitting fees were raised. Mobile phones holders had to pay an extra tax for using them. Mass protests began in the north: Naryn in February and Talas in April of 2010. On April 7, 2010, the second revolution broke out. The same factors as in the previous revolution of 2005 such as the rule of Bakiyev family and his authoritarianism, a deepening economic crisis, a large-scale corruption, poverty and unemployment, regionalism when southerners were appointed to top positions, caused it, since none of those problems was resolved when Bakiyev was in power. The 2009 fraud and unfair presidential elections served as the pretext for it. However, the second revolution was bloodier compared to the first one because it resulted in more than 80 people killed.

The April revolution overthrown the government of Bakiyev and provoked the interethnic clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh and Djalal-Abad provinces in June of 2010 that left about 500 dead according to the official data. A number of factors such as political instability, the economic crisis and social problems brought to the interethnic clashes.

### 8.3. Kyrgyzstan in 2010–2015

The revolution on April 7, 2010, resulted in the deposition of Bakiyev regime. The Provisional Government chaired by *Otumbayeva* was formed on April 8, 2010. Bakiyev himself fled to the south and tried to destabilize the political situation from there.

As soon as the new government was established, it drafted the new Constitution. The new Constitution was put forward to be approved by the people of Kyrgyzstan at the referendum on June 27. The majority of votes agreed to the changes, and the switch from the presidential to parliamentary system was completed. Otumbayeva was appointed the President of Tran-

sitional Period. The next presidential elections were scheduled for October of 2011.

The same year, the parliamentary elections took place. They were held according to parties' list. As a result, four parties received their seats in the new parliament: **Social Democrats, Ar Namys, Respublica, Ata Jurt and Ata Meken**. Three of them formed a coalition government: *Social Democrats, Respublica, and Ata Jurt*. **Atambayev** was appointed the Prime Minister. Soon he resigned to nominate himself for the coming presidential elections.

On October 30, 2011, **Atambayev** was elected the President. For the first time in the history of independent Kyrgyzstan, a peaceful transition of power from President Otumbayeva to President Atambayev took place.

The new coalition government was formed out of four political parties: *Social Democrats, Respublica, Ata Meken* and *Ar Namys*. The Prime Minister became *Babanov*. In 2012, the coalition collapsed and the cabinet resigned.

In 2012, the new coalition was formed of three political parties: *Social Democrats, Ata Meken* and *Ar Namys*. *Satybalдиеv* was appointed the Prime Minister. In 2014, the coalition collapsed and the cabinet resigned.

In 2014, the new coalition was formed based on the same political parties: *Social Democrats, Ata Meken* and *Ar Namys*. **Otorbaev** was appointed the Prime Minister. In May of 2015, **Sariev** became the Prime Minister of the Cabinet.

In 2014, Manas Transit Center stopped operating on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan was characterized by the course towards strategic partnership with Russia, Turkey, China. In 2015, Kyrgyzstan became a member of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In the fall of 2015, the new parliamentary elections were held and six parties were elected to the parliament: **Social Democrats, Respublica-Ata Jurt, Onuguu-Progress, Kyrgyzstan, Bir Bol** and **Ata Meken**.

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