

NOMADIC CIVILIZATION OF CENTRAL ASIA: (Origin, Development, Decline and Globalization)

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The nomadic civilization has played an important role to the historical development of human life. As a fact of lifestyle, nomadism has distinguished from other civilizations with its overall characteristics and developed under the internal and external effects. In some historical periods, many people all around the world were living in the nomadic lifestyle. It was related to the certain factors such as an ecological condition of this region, tradition, materialistic, intellectual and cultural inheritance etc. In certain period of human development, the nomadic civilization was playing an important role to establish favorable environment to encourage relation between nature and society. This was belongs to the vast steppes of Central Asia, West Siberia, Arabic peninsula and Sahara.

Even though, nomadic civilization has faced the danger of being disappeared time to time, there are nomads who are maintaining their nomadic lifestyle without any harm to the nature and eco-system, in globalized world. Studies on nomadism have a historical and cognitive importance which will be useful to develop theories and concepts for better and safer world.

There are many scientific researches and studies on nomadic civilization which was made by scholars from many states. On the basis of these researches and studies, we can review a origin of nomadic civilization and its development periods, social and political structure, main characteristic of intellectual culture, domination and globalization, at the end its destiny.

CENTRAL ASIA AS A GEOGRAPHICAL DEFINITION

The Central Asian inhabitants might have named the territories of this region not by entirely but by the areas which they have been lived. Firdousi has named the territory from China to Amu Dariya as “Turan” in his book entitled “Shahname”. During the process of world geographical development, the definitions of Asia and Central Asia has been emerged, respectively.

In 1800s, the idea of Central Asia as a distinct region of the world was introduced in 1843 by the geographer Alexander von Humboldt in his book.

In the encyclopedia published in Russia, says “The Central Asia is the geographic region that encompasses 6 million.km² of territory including China and Mongolia”. In 1959, Russian scientist B.M.Sinitsin defined that

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the Central Asia is territory of 4360 thousands of km which compromises 1/3 of Asia. According to some scientists, 2/3 of total territory is belongs to China and remaining part is belongs to Mongolia.

The Central Asia is the inner side of the continent which has separated by Altai, Sayan, Himalayan mountains. Tarim and Gobi deserts are located at the geographical center of region, in 1000-1500 m high. The plateau and mountainous areas broadly sweep across Asia and climaxing in the high Tibetan Plateau. There are high passes and mountains such as Kunlun, Karakum, Hindkush, Altai mountains.

Due to its landlocked location which is surrounded by high mountains, this region has an extreme climate, too dry and water supply is in low level.

The Russian scientists, namely, N.M.Prezewalski, P.Kozlow, V.I.Roborovski, V.A.Obruchev, G.E.Grumm-Grijimailo, G.N.Potanin, M.V.Pevtsov has an important roles to the study of Inner Asia.¹

There is another area also known as a Middle Asia, within the scope of Inner Asia. Inner Asia consists of states like Uzbekistan, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Turkmenistan and 6 provinces of Kazakhstan. The total of the territory is 2400 km², which starts from the Caspian Sea, Pamir, Altai, rising to the Dzungars.

Middle Asia is a large region of varied geography, including high passes, but same as Inner Asia, it has a geographical feature that is treeless, grassy steppes. Due to its distance from sea, it also has an extreme climate condition, much of the land of Inner Asia is also too dry or too rugged for farming, water is an extremely valuable resource in this area. However, the most important characteristic of this region is the grass and ground which is very suitable for the livestock's. Scientists from Former Soviet Union, such as I.V.Lushketov, P.P.Semenov had played an important role to the Middle Asian study².

Inner Asia or Central Asia is not only geographical definitions but it started primarily to be determined by its historic, ethnographic and cultural characteristics. During the process of historical development, the social and political range of Central Asia has been affected by various factors.

During the historical development, migration of nomads had a vital importance on this area's geo-culture. Since, the presence of Altai language speaking nomads, this region started to be expanded and current territory of Central Asia, which consists of Mongolia, east coast of Black Sea, Siberian and Iranian Plateau. The Central Asia has been changed and expanded geographically in many times and determined by various definitions.

Despite the presence of various definitions and boundaries of Central Asia, this study will examine the nomadic lifestyle, social and cultural development of nomads, reasons for fall of nomadic civilization and general trends of transformation of this civilization in globalized world.

This study will also examine the main characteristics of livestock farm, climate and geographical changes, historic and cultural features of Central Asia. Out of total territory of Central Asia, 12 percent is belongs to Mongolia, 31 percent to Kazakhstan, 42 percent to People's Republic of China and 12 percents belongs to Russia.³

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL STUDY ON NOMADIC STYLE OF CENTRAL ASIAN CIVILIZATION

From the ancient time, many researches and studies on Central Asia have been made. First of all, those studies are main tools of literary and oral culture, intellectual dedication and archaeological heritage. At the same time, tourists, geographers, merchants, ambassadors and religious missionary from western countries has made an important notes which has been made by their own observations. European famous tourists such as Marco Polo, Plano Carpini, Wilhelm Rubruk, Arabian tourist, namely Rukneddin Beybers, Ibi Battut, Ali Omari, Persian tourists such as Rashid Ad din has played an important role on Central Asian Studies. On the other hand, research works of historians such as Herodat , Strabon, Gipokret, Polineni, including I.Y.Bichurin's 3 volumes of research work on Chinese resource document related to the lifestyle of Central Asian nomads 2000 years ago, has vital importance on Central Asian study.

In recent years, researches aimed at periodic study /ancient, middle age and current situation of Central Asia/ made by the scientists from the USA, Russia, People's Republic of China, People's Republic of Kazakhstan, People's Republic of Ozbekistan, People's Republic of Kyrgyzistan, Mongolia, Japan, Korea, Germany and Turkey are playing important role to the development of field study.

According to the historians, anthropologists and archeologists, the conglomeration of Turkic-Mongols-Hamnigans as ancestors of Central Asian inhabitants were emerged in pre-pottery Neolithic period.

By 1000 BCE, in accordance with the Turkic language development, separate nations have been emerged on the basis of ancient Turkic community.

Ancient Turkish ontogenesis basically related to the Mongols and Hamnigans.

According to Yarichev, Alpispaeв, Medeov, Akishev, the Paleolithic has started in Central Asia one million years ago, in Kazakhstan 700 thousands years ago and the Neolithic has started approximately 15-10 thousands of years ago.⁴

Recent genetic studies have concluded that humans "Homo Sapiens" arrived in the region 40,000 years ago, started to develop social laws of

their own lifestyle. After the arrival of Homo sapiens, social laws, anthropology and ethnological issues has become a basis of its history.

In Neolithic period, the small communities had developed permanent settlements and began to learn languages. Most of the research works are confirming that quality changes have been made in human life in this period. It was getting harder and more complex to earn living in Neolithic period. Actually, according to British scholar G. Child, it was the Neolithic revolution of accomplishing the process of cultural and lifestyle development. Central Asian habitants had begun to engage in hunting, agricultural practices and livestock husbandry as well as herding.

Nomadic groups in Central Asia included the ancestors of Indo-Europeans, and a number of Mongol groups. One of them was ancestors of European race, who has been lived through Kazakhstan, west side of Altai and Minusinsk cavity. First inhabitants came to south of Central Asia has reached to Ordos, Mongolia, Manchu, East Turkistan, Siberia and located in East Kazakhstan, Kulind steppe. Their outer appearance was similar to Mongolians. According to O.Beder's study, arrival of the Mongols in this region, was earlier than this time period, could be in mid-Paleolithic. According to some scholars such as Talitski, Gramov, Bader, B.Larichev, habitants who has located in Altai, East Turkistan, south Siberia has migrated to the Kama river basin through the Ural mountains.⁵

In Neolithic period, in vast land of Central Asia which starts from East Turkistan, to West Manchuria through Erchis, Altai mountains, Altaic language speaking inhabitants have been posited and developed the Uralic and Altaic cultures as well as Neolithic culture. In this vast land, in the west side of the region Turko-Mongols group have been settled, in the east side of the region, Hamnigan-Manchurians have been settled, respectively. According to the research works of some scholars such as Ch.Cherneshev, V.Larichov, L.Hlobistin, L.Viktorova, the ethnic conglomeration which consists of ancestors of Turkic, Mongols and Manchurian was emerged in Neolithic period.

In this context, civilization, history and culture of Altaic language nations had integrated origin of development and had similar evolution tendencies. In the last decade of Neolithic period, hunting and fishing has lost its importance by time and inhabitants began to engage in agricultural facilities and livestock husbandry. According to the archeological studies, from end of Mesolithic and beginning of Neolithic, some of these communities began to domesticate horses and animals. Those communities had borders between their own territories which was suitable for herding, agricultural practices and livestock. Once inhabitants began to engage in agriculture and livestock they started to develop communication between groups and tribes.

According to the British scholar and historian A. Toynbee who has an important role to the nomadic studies, stockbreeding facilities had began in 4000-3000 BCE.⁶ However, by 2000 BCE, inhabitants who lived in Inner Mongolia, Gansu, one side of Tibet, Khuh Nuur, East Turkistan, Yunchua, Sima Xian who was not Chinese, were called “Juu`s with felt clothes”.⁷ However, in Neolithic period, inhabitants who lived in Central Asia and Siberia were not totally engaged in stockbreeding facilities but were engaged in hunting and fishing at the same time.

Changes and developments that have been made in Neolithic period has encouraged the interests of nomads to communicate with remoted tribes and ethnic groups. Despite these ethnic and linguistic differences, the steppe lifestyle led to the adoption of very similar culture across the region. However, archeological and ancient cemetery excavation which was found in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Siberia proves that there was some conflicts and struggles between tribes and ethnic groups.

Archeological excavations found in Neolithic period reflects to the vast land of this region and they shows the interrelation between customs belongs to different groups and tribes such as hunting, clothing, dwelling, cemetery tradition, pattern etc.

In Neolithic period there were almost no free land left, due to crowd of fishers, hunters and gatherers. This situation is related to the ice-melting, population growth and improving methods of stockbreeding facilities.

Inhabitants engaged in livestock and herding has affected to the lifestyle of fishers and they also began to engage in above mentioned facilities. Once nomads began to engage in livestock and agricultural practices, they have witnessed natural phenomenon and started to feel themselves powerless against it.

In Neolithic period, inhabitants were planting every kind of seeds, practicing farming of wheat and barley, fruits and vegetables and domesticating all kind of livestock. Around this time, some of these habitants began the domestication of the horse and it was the main component of “Neolithic Revolution” as well as end of the period.

According to the archeological classification, inhabitants of this region have started to use bronze and copper at Anyomith period. In this period climate condition was very suitable for growth of livestock especially horses and mammals due to enough water supply.

In 2000 BCE, stockbreeding and agricultural facilities in this region have developed rapidly and prepared the basis for metallurgic. Industrial development in Central Asia had important impact on the every field of society. In this vast land, nomads began to use irons and metals to make weapons for the purpose of using them in conflicts and struggles occurred

between tribes. Once nomadic people started to produce weapons, the iron industry was emerging, deliberately.

It was human society law to domesticate wild animals for the purpose of their feed, for their security. Due to growth of livestock nomads needed to move from one place to another and this movement was impulsive to the development of nomadic livestock farming. Around this time, the ratio between horses, goats, sheep, cattle and camel was changed.

At the ancient time, it was required to extent pasture lands and domesticate good breed which is tolerant against harsh climate condition. In Central Asia, at the end of Bronze Age, nomadic pastoralism seems to have developed as a part of the stockbreeding, that had used animals for their secondary products, for example, meat, milk and its associated dairy products. It was a significant progress, the domestication of livestock for benefits.

New working tools and industrial equipments provided nomads with an opportunity to stock wealth. By the beginning of 2000 BCE, historic and cultural developments are faced to an extreme climate changes.

An extreme climate change had an inadequate impact on nomads who lives in steppes as well as in forests.

In 4000-3000 BCE, nomadic pastoralism in Central Asia had an extensive feature which is suitable for harsh climate condition and industrial development. As a territory of nomads it was expanding by conquering new pastures for their livestock. Central Asian territory was belongs to different climate, due to this reason there was not any special method or way for nomadic groups to breed livestock. However, they had special technology to use meat, milk, wool etc. Furthermore, veterinary was developed. In Central Asia, the climate change and drought had an extremely negative impact on nomadic pastoralism. By the end of 2000 BCE and beginning of 1000 BCE, drought was very common natural disaster in this region. Natural water resource was descending and lakes and rivers were in danger of arid. The only possible way to pass over this condition was to expand territory. There were significant changes and development on life of nomadic people, because they were started to produce products of meat, milk and wool not only for their own consumption but also for trade. In this situation, between the steppe nomads and agricultural people, trade relation has been emerged. By the beginning of the 1000 BCE, once the utility of the horse as a means of transportation became clear the horses began being bred for strength, and transportation purpose to establish relation and communication between other tribes and states.

In history, there are three kinds of nomads, namely, nomadic hunter-gatherers, pastoralists and peripatetic. Nomadic hunter-gatherers follow seasonally available wild plants and game. Nomadic hunter-gatherers move from one place to another following game /prey/ and wild fruits and vegetables.

Pastoralists raise herds and move with them so as not to deplete pasture beyond recovery in any one area. The pastoralists are sedentary to a certain area as they move between the permanent spring, summer, autumn and winter pastures for their livestock.

Scattered nomadic groups maintained herds of sheep, goats, horses, and camels, and conducted annual migrations to find new pastures. Peripatetic nomads are more common in industrialized nations, traveling from one territory to another territory which is rich for good pasture and water irrigation system. These three kinds of nomads do not differ from each other in generally, but has an interrelation.

Nomadic people were paying sincere attention to breed sheep. Because, its meat and milk can be used for nomads food consumption at the same its wool can be used for their dwelling named “yurt” or “ger” as a main material and for clothes. It was very common to find sheep bones while digging archeological excavation. Horses were the main transportation utility for all kind of nomads, at the same time its meat and milk was also used for food consumption. Especially, there was a tradition in Sak aimagm to bury heroes with their horses, due to its importance at battlefield. There are many pictures and illustration of livestock in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, East Turkistan.

The climate condition and natural features of “7 water” had a positive impact on development of nomadic pastoralism in Usun Aimag. Inhabitants of this Aimag were nomads and they were domesticated sheep and horses more than other animals. There were cemetery and hibernation places which makes it clear that there were certain paths to move from one place to another. Usuns were very rich nomads, some of them had more than 5000 horses and some Chunmo`s had troops more than 30000. According to ancient tradition, Chunmos were used to send thousands of horses as gift when marrying with Chinese princesses.

A comprehensive study on Hun`s livestock has developed in Sima Zian. This study says: “In northern China, there were many nomads living with their livestock and moving from one place to another for new pasture for their livestock. They were breeding sheep, horse, cattle, goat and sometimes donkey. Of course, Huns were using meat and milk of livestock for their food consumption and using horses for military purpose.

Kang Yu state had an extreme climate conditions. In this state nomadic lifestyle has developed too, and they were building fences for their livestock. In states such as East Turkic and Turkish states in Middle Age, livestock was the main part of the farming. It was still important to breed animals like goat, sheep, cattle and camel by moving from one place to another.

Nomads of Karahanid were paying sincere attention to breed horses. Josep Balasaguni made special note on this matter. Naiman, Kerei, Jalair, Hamag Mongol were also engaged in livestock farming. After no longer, they have started to be organized in military manner. They were also using meat and milk of livestock for their food consumption and using horses for military purpose.

Central Asian nomadic civilization and lifestyle had existed almost for 4000 years and largely unchanged. Even though nomadic civilization includes some conflicts in itself, many cultures have been traditionally nomadic. Agriculture based civilization was also useful for mankind for their every need to earn living.

Feature of nomadic civilization was not the main reason of all conflicts and struggles occurred between groups which is belongs to different culture and ethnicity but it was related to the better and free development of intellectual and economic field of nomadic civilization. Highly developed community or society can not be expected from nomadic civilization because nomadic pastoralism is dependent on climate changes which limit higher social development. Nomadic civilization has special feature that opens and develops human intelligence in many different ways, teaches ways to earn life condition in very low cost and the most important feature is provide with an opportunity to learn natural phenomenon's such as ecological, geological fact by practicing themselves. Inhabitants of Central Asia were developed and introduced technologies which were well suited for nomadic civilization, at the same time they were talented and trained to earn living by low cost.

Some historians says that life of Central Asian nomads has reached to 20th century almost without any changes and tends to examine nomads social structure by many different theories.

Nomads of Central Asia quickly came to power to establish Euro-Asian Empires by conquering European States and began to communicate rest of the world and introduced new technologies, military strategies and tactics began to facilitate hospital and veterinary. El Jahuri, El Farabi, El Birunu Ulugbek, Myangad, Yusuf Balasaguni, Avitsenney, El Horezm Firdousi were the descendents of Central Asian inhabitants.

Generally, nomads of Central Asia have reached at its highest point of materialistic and intellectual development in V-XVII century and conquered many states from the Pacific Ocean, Adriats to the East Egypt, from Siberia to the Ind River. On the other word, Hun's, Sianbi, Usun, Gokturk, Oguz, Kimak, Kipchak, Uygur, Kyrgyz, Naiman, Kerey and Mongol empire was the most spectacular period of this region. Nomads of Central Asia were begun to communicate with traders of the Silk Road. The nomadic lifestyle that had existed largely unchanged until its highest

point of development, it began to lose its importance due to significant change in the world economy and ocean trade routes were pioneered by the Europeans. Despite these changes, nomads of this region were maintaining their traditional farming.

Most of the nomads were changed their lifestyle into the settled life

The domain of the nomads began to shrink as, beginning in the fifteenth century, the settled and industrialized powers gradually began to conquer Central Asia.

In 20th century, nomadic civilization of Central Asia was influenced by Soviet Russia and Chinese dominions and its various political movements stretched into the heart of Central Asia and almost destroyed under the name of “Backward”. There was propaganda advertising settled lifestyle instead of nomadic lifestyle, however there are an estimated 30 million nomads in the world.⁸ In some countries, some people prefer to live freely by nomadic lifestyle because they are tired to live in urbanized societies. Due to the requirement of organic food consumption, it was necessary to replace nomadic livestock production. However, in the globalizing world, the nomadic civilization of Central Asia has faced new challenges conflict such as growth of livestock, lack of required herders, transformation to the farmer, and psychology of herders, pasture land climate change etc.

As conclusion, many cultures and states were traditionally nomadic, however during the historical process, some of them started to live in settled lifestyle.

Even though there was both nomadic and urbanized lifestyle in Central Asia, nomadic lifestyle was dominated and the most spectacular lifestyle in this region.

Many scholars have made significant studies and research work on history, culture and ethnicity of Central Asia and keep up their studies. In an era of globalization, nomadic civilization has faced the danger of being disappeared. Actually, protection and replacement of nomadic civilization will have a significant contribution to the future of mankind. Because, nomadic culture and lifestyle is well suited to the ecological characteristics of Central Asia and there are many nomads who are able to bear nomadic culture and tradition in the future, experienced people for livestock farming technology. Nomadic livestock was providing mankind with an opportunity to earn their lives.

Furthermore, nomads of Central Asia will not change their lifestyle and not leave resource of ecological products, tradition and culture of livestock farming which is the most important wealth that succeeded to our generation from ancestors.

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