

GILGIT IN ANCIENT TIMES

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Gilgit is the name given to the western frontier districts of Kashmir which are now under the occupation of Pakistan. It corresponds to the region called Dardistan. Its subdivisions are Astor, Bunji, Chilas, Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, Punial, Yasin and Chitral. Adjacent to it is the territory of Baltistan consisting of the subdivisions of Kharmang, Kaplu, Shigar Skardu and Rondu¹. More strictly Gilgit signifies the lower valleys of the Gilgit river joining the Indus at its acute bend north of Nanga Parbat. This whole area is extremely mountainous exceeding 20,000 feet on the north and west, but the lower valley is about 5000 feet and grows maize, millet, temperate cereals and even some cotton and rice. The total area of the region is 12,355 square miles². Along river valleys and mountain passes run routes connecting this region with the outside world. One route passing through the Tragbal and Burzil passes joins Gilgit to Srinagar 223 miles south of it³. Another route connects Gilgit with the Abbottabad frontier of the Panjab along the Bahusar Pass. In the north, narrow sterile mountain valleys, measuring some 100 to 150 miles in width, separate the province from the Chinese frontier beyond the Muztagh and Karakoram ranges.

The region of Gilgit and Baltistan is known as Daradadesa in old texts like the *Rajatarangini*. Its people, the Daradas, are said to have played an important part in the history of Kashmir. According to the Tibetan historian Taranatha, the route between it and Kashmir was opened by Buddhist pilgrims and missionaries who reached Kashmir with and following Madhyantika the emissary of Moggaliputta Tissa at the time of Asoka⁴. Since then it became a resort of Buddhist monks and preachers who made it an important centre of their religion. Hence, in the beginning of the fifth century, when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien passed through it, he found Buddhism in a flourishing condition there. From Khotan Fa-hien and his party travelled for twentyfive days to reach Tsze-hoh which Watters identifies with Tashkurgan in Sirikul. "Its king was a strenuous follower of our Law and had around him more than a thousand monks, mostly students of Mahayana"⁵. Here the travellers stayed for fifteen days. Then they went south for four days and reached Yu-hwny, Aktasch according to Watters, in the Ts'ung-ling (Onion) mountains. There they passed

their retreat. Then they moved among the hills and, travelling for twenty-five days, reached K'eeh-ch'a which Klaproth and Watters take to be Skardo in Baltistan. It was a great centre of Buddhism. At that time the king was holding the Pancha Parishad and had invited monks from all quarters to attend it. The function was marked by great pomp and show and the venue of the assembly was gaily decorated. "Silken streamers and canopies are hung out in it and water-lilies in gold and silver are made and fixed up behind the places where the chiefs of them are to sit"⁶. At the conclusion the king and his ministers distributed gifts and charities among the monks, uttering vows all the time. A spittoon of Buddha and also his tooth was believed to be there. The monks were followers of Hinayana and observed numerous remarkable rules. From there the pilgrims travelled for one month to reach T'o-leih (Darada) where they found many Hinayanist monks. There they found a eighty cubits high wooden image of Maitreya which was believed to be a true copy of him as he lived in the Tushita heaven. People of the neighbouring countries vied with each other in making offerings to it. From there Fa-hien and his party crossed the Indus. "In former times men had chiselled paths along the rocks and distributed ladders on the face of them, to the number altogether of 700, at the bottom of which there was a suspension bridge of ropes, by which the river was crossed, its banks being there 80 paces apart"⁷. It took the travellers fifteen days to negotiate this difficult and dangerous path. People informed Fa-hien that in old times the Sramanas of India had crossed this river carrying with them Sutra and Vinaya scriptures. From that place he and his men reached the kingdom of Woo-chang (Udyana) where the diet, dress and dialect of the people are said to be like those in 'Central India'. The region was studded with monasteries (sangharamas), their number being no less than 500, where the newcomers were provided with all necessities for three days. The Buddha was believed to have visited that region and left his foot imprint there which was highly venerated. Passing through Soo-ho-to (Swastene) the pilgrims reached Gandhara and were at Takshasila.

This account of Fa-hien's itinerary shows that a route lay from Khoten via Tashkurgan, Aktasch, Skardo and Darel (Darada), across the Indus, to Udyana Swat and Gandhara and that it took one 99 days, say one hundred days to complete the Journey from Khotan to Udyana along it. It is also clear from it that this route was made and used by Buddhist pilgrims, monks and missionaries and by it they carried their faith to the Central Asian and eastern world. Darada and Skardo were flourishing Buddhist centres radiating their influence in all directions. Further it is patent that the region to the south of the Onion Range was

considered part of India, for, as Fa-hien says, "When the travellers had got through them (the Onion Mountains) they were in North India"⁸. Sometime after Fa-hien another Chinese monk, Che-mong, crossed the Pamirs and travelling through Gilgit, entered into Kashmir, probably through the Burzil Pass route. A little after, the Chinese monk, Fa-yong, took the same route for reaching Kashmir from the Pamirs. In the next century Sung-yun travelled from Tsiu-mo (Tash-kurghan), through Pa-ho (Wakhan) to She-mi (Chitral), but, instead of advancing through Gilgit on the way to Kashmir, he journeyed on the road to Udyana and thence to Gandhara⁹. In the latter part of the eighth century the pilgrim and envoy Wu-k'ong followed this route of Yasin and Gilgit to reach the Indus region and thence to Udyana and Kapisa¹⁰. Thus it is clear that the Gilgit route was an important link between India and the oasis-states of the southern part of the Tarim Basin lining the passage to China. The flourishing of Buddhist centres along it invested it with a singular significance in an age when the intensity of faith belittled the difficulties of travelling and eclipsed the risks of life which it presented.

However, the people of Gilgit region, the Daradas, were somewhat different in customs and manners from those of the Kashmir valley. In a verse, found in the Calcutta and Paris manuscripts of the *Rajatarangini*, there is a reference to their custom of having illicit relations with their daughters-in-law¹¹. At another place their custom of continual wine-drinking is pointedly mentioned¹². They are also said to be adepts in the washing of gold which was found in the beds of rivers like the Kishanganga¹³. According to Jonaraja, Sultan Zain-al-abidin (1420-70) imposed a levy of one-sixth of the produce on the gold washed by these people¹⁴. More than once the rulers of these regions are said to have invaded the Kashmir valley. Similarly the kings of Kashmir are reported to have marched into the Darada country and chastised its people and even converted them to their culture and religion. For example, Mihirakula is said to have "reestablished pious observances in this land which, overrun by the impure Daradas, Bhauttas and Mlecehas, had fallen off from the sacred law (Brahmanism)"¹⁵. This shows that at that time the valley was overrun and dominated by the Daradas and others, who had swooped down upon it in the confusion caused by Hephthalite invasions, and that Mihirakula put an end to their menace and drove them off and rehabilitated the Aryas there.

The early history of Gilgit, the Darada country, in relation to the Kashmir valley, consists of the activities of Buddhist monks and missionaries, on the one hand, and the frequent raids and counterraid, incursions

and intrusions, an instance of which at the time of Mihirakula is given above, on the other. Detailed information of this process becomes available from the end of the sixth century onwards when the interplay of tribal movements and imperialist adventures determined the trends of history in Asia and affected those regions through which the routes of travel and communication passed.

The Chinese text *Pei-She*, based on the accounts of the mission of Sung-yun in 519, states that the regions of Tchu-kiu (Kongiar), K'o-p'-an-t'o (Tashkurgan), Po-ho (Wakhan), Po-tche (Zebak), She-mi (Chitral) and Kan-t'o (Gandhara) formed part of more than thirty kingdoms which were included in the empire of the Hephthalites. This shows that Gilgit, particularly the route between it and Gandhara, on which Sung-yun travelled, was under the Hephthalites. We may equate this fact with the account of the conquest of the Daradas by Mihirakula given in the *Rajatarangini*, cited above. But in the second half of the sixth century, between 563 and 567, the Khan of the Western Turks (Tou-kiue), Istami, called She-tie-mi in Chinese texts and Silzibone or Dilzibone in Byzantine records, with the collaboration of the Sassanid monarch Khusrau Anushirvan, destroyed the Hephthalite empire. According to Dinawari, Tha'alibi and Mirkhund, the Sassanids occupied Tukharistan, Zabulistan, Kabulistan and Jaghanian, whereas the Turks wrested the regions of Tashkand, Ferghanah, Samarkand Bukhara, Kish and Nasaf¹⁶. Tahari, however, states that Khusrau sent an army in Transoxiana and encamped at Farghanah and that his authority extended upto Kashmir and Ceylon (Sarandib)¹⁷. Chavannes thinks that the Oxus was the boundary between the empires of the Sassanids and the Turks with the Iron Gates to the north of that river as the main divide¹⁸. Thus it appears that, with the dismemberment of the Hephthalite empire, the Sassanids became the overlords of the region upto the Indus including Kashmir.

Soon the aforesaid political pattern changed. The Turks broke off with the Sassanid about the sale of Chinese silk. They began to negotiate with the Byzantines on this subject along the northern route which circumvented the Sassanid empire¹⁹. In 567 they sent an envoy, named Maniakh, to Constantinople by the route of the Lower Volga and the Caucasus and the emperor, Justinus II, reciprocated the gesture by sending an ambassador, named Zemarchos, to the court of Istami in 568. As a result of these diplomatic exchanges, an alliance was formed between the Turks and the Byzantines against the Sassanids. In accordance with it, the Turk ruler turned the cold shoulder to the envoy of the Sassanids and soon afterwards declared war against them. From the west the Byzantines also marched against Persia. Though,

with the accession of Istamis' son Tardu as the Khan of the western Turks, the relations between him and the Byzantines became strained on the score of the help which the latter extended to the Avars and the Hephthalites, who had taken refuge in South Russia they continued their opposition to the Sassanids and in 588-89 attacked it from the east and the west respectively. Tahari says that the Turk chief Shaba marched with 300,000 soldiers against the Persians but the general Bahram Shubin defeated him and put an end to his life. It appears that this Turk chief was some feudatory of the Great Khan Tardu. Just after this victory Bahram was sent to fight with the Byzantines but was defeated. This led to his disgrace and eventual revolt, which resulted in the deposition of Hormizd IV and the accession of Khusran Parwez. However, Bahram chased him out of Persia and drove him into the arms of the Byzantines. With their support he returned to fight with Bahram and vanquished him. In this battle the Turks also played an important part having sided with Bahram. So, after his defeat, Bahram sought refuge among them but Khusran encompassed his assassination by suborning the Khatun. About that time the Turks conquered Tukharistan and appointed the local Hephthalite and Kushan rulers to administer it, for in 597-98 we find Khusran Parwez sending his general Smbat Bagratuni to oust them. Yet the authority of the Sassanids could not extend beyond Meru.

As the seventh century dawned, war again flared up between the Sassanids and the Byzantines. The third of these wars lasted till the end of the reign of Khusran in 628. In those fretful times the Turks extended their rule to the west and south of the Oxus with the result that by 630, when Hiuen-tsang toured through that region, the sway of the Turks reached the Indus²⁰. Thus the suzerainty of the Sassanids over the region from the Oxus to the Indus was replaced by that of the Turkine or the Turks.

Buddhist traditions refer to the rule of the Turushkas or Turks over wide regions including Kashmir. Taranatha says that King Turushka ruled for 100 years as a Dharmaraja in Kashmir and his son Mahasammata brought the kingdoms of Kashmir, Tukhara and Ghazni under one administration and spread Mahayana Buddhism there²¹. The *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa* mentions a king Turushka, who ruled over the Uttarapatha upto Kashmir and under whom the Mahayana doctrine, specially that of the *Prajnaparamita* spread in the north, and his successor, Mahaturushka, who erected numerous Buddhist shrines and monasteries and propagated the mantra and the worship of Taradevi. In this text Turushka is called Gomi or Gomimukhya and Mahaturushka Buddhapaksha²². It is clear that Turushka and

Mahasammata of Taranatha are the same as Turushka and Mahaturushka or Gominukhya and Buddhapaksha of the *Aryamanjushrimulakalpa*. N. Dutt has proposed to identify Turushka with Mihirakula and Mahaturushka or Mahasammata with his son Baka mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*.²³ But this view is manifestly wrong because Mihirakula is represented as the persecutor of Buddhism rather than its preserver or propagator and Baka is shown to have founded the shrine of Bakesha (Shiva) and not built any Buddhist establishment, while Turushka and Mahaturushka are known as zealous Buddhists. It appears that Turushka of these traditions stands for the king called Meghavahana by Kalhana. The grounds of this identification are that Meghavahana is said to have been invited by the people and ministers of Kashmir from Gandhara, which was, as we have seen above, under the rule of the Ton-Kine, he is depicted as a great patron and protector of Buddhism and the builder of many viharas, he is represented as undertaking a conquest of the world (digvijaya) to promote the observance of the sacred law, particularly, to enforce the prohibition against the killing of living beings, for which reason he is said to have acted like a jina,²⁴ and one of his queens is named as Khadana, whose name is preserved in the locality called Khadaniya, about 4 miles below Varahamula (Baramulla), containing a monastery built by her, seen by Wu-k'ong, and reminds us of the title Khatun borne by the queens of the Turks. As I propose to show in another study, Meghavahana and his successors were Tu-kine or Turk rulers some of whom had their rule in Gandhara but whom Kalhana jumbled in the lines of the kings of Kashmir. Thus it is clear that the Turks created a mighty empire including Gandhara and Kashmir and even extensive parts of North India. But sometime, between 627 and 649, the founder of the Karkota dynasty Durlabhavardhana, called Tu-lo-pa in Chinese texts,²⁵ established his rule in the Kashmir valley obviously driving the Turk rulers in the neighbouring regions. It appears that some of the Turks set up their rule in Gilgit to the north-west of the valley and founded a strong state there which played a very significant part in history.

That the state of Gilgit became a great power in the seventh and eighth centuries is known from an inscription found one mile south of Hatun on the right bank of the Ishkuman river in the Gilgit Agency. It refers to the reign of Paramabhattacharaka Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Patoladeva Shahi Sri Navasurendradityanandideva belonging to the family of Bhagadatta,²⁶ and records that, in the 47th year of his reign, his chief minister, Makarasimha, who bore the titles of 'great lord of the elephants' (Mahagajapati), 'great lord of the feudatories' (Mahasamantadhipati) and 'chief of the army at Gilgitta or Gilgit' (Gilgittasaram-

gha) and belonged to the Kanchudi clan, founded a city called New Makarapura after putting a dam in the stream which is probably the Ishkuman river²⁷. This inscription shows that the reigning King Navasurendradityanandideva had acquired the status of paramountcy and assumed the full imperial titles. He ruled over the whole of Baltistan and Gilgit, his title *patoladeva* meaning the lord of Patola, a name which forms the basis of the Chinese designation Pou-lu and survives in the modern name Balt or Baltistan. His chief minister had his seat at Gilgit (Gilgitta) and was the head of its military establishment. Under him were a number of local chiefs and feudarories. He was the founder of a city and for that purpose dammed a river. The king traced his descent from Bhagadatta of epic fame, associated with Pragiyotisa or Assam, for which reason, perhaps, Baltistan also came to be designated by this name²⁸. But he continued to assume the title of *shahi* which was borne by the Sakas, Kushans, Hephthalites and the Turks.

The king Navasurendradityanandideva, mentioned in the Hatun inscription, is obviously identical with Shahanushahi Patolashahi Sri Navasurendradityanandideva, mentioned in a manuscript of the *Mahamayuri*, discovered in a stupa, three miles to the north of Gilgit, along with his queen Anangadevi²⁹. He is said to have caused the manuscript to be written to ensure his longevity. Further it may be possible to identify him with Srideva Shahi Surendra Vikramaditya Narada, who, along with one Shamidevi Trailokadevi Bhattarika, probably his wife, is mentioned in the colophon of another manuscript as its donor³⁰. Another king of the same line Patoladeva Shahi Vajradityanandi is known from the colophon of another manuscript³¹.

King Surendradityanandideva of the Hatun inscription and colophons of Gilgit manuscripts is undoubtedly Sou-lin-t'o-i-tche, ruler of Great Pou-lu, who sent a mission to China with the products of his country in the period K'ai-yuen (713-741), according to the *T'ang shu* (chapter CCXXI, b)³². From the Chinese Encyclopaedia *Tch'e fu yuen koei* we learn that in the year 720 the Chinese emperor sent ambassadors to the court of this Sou-lin-t'o-i-tche conferring on him the title of the king of Pou-lu³³. The *T'ang shu* further states that his predecessor was Sou-fou-sho-li-tche-li-ni and that he also sent an envoy to the Chinese court and that it sent a letter of investiture to him in 717. This king reigned upto 719 and, the following year, Sou-lin-t'o-i-tche came to the throne.

The *Tchi fu yuen koei* states that in 728 a dignitary of the kingdom of Pou-lu, named T'u-mao-tan (yen)- mo-she went to China to render

homage and received the present of a violet robe and a golden belt. In 735 another dignitary of that kingdom visited the Chinese court. His name is given as Pa-han-k'ia. He got the title of *lang-tsiang* and fifty pieces of silk as gifts from the court.

In the letter, which the Chinese emperor sent to Sou-fou-sho-li-tche-li-ni in 717, he stated that the predecessors of the latter had been ruling and showing respect for the T'angs for the last many generations which shows that they were in diplomatic contact with the T'ang emperors at least from the latter part of the seventh century.

We have seen above that Navasurendradityanandi was called Patolashahi showing that he was the king of the region known as Baltistan but his sway extended over Gilgit also and its governor, Makarasimha, acted as his subordinate. However, Chinese sources treat Baltistan, called Great Pou-lu, and Gilgit, called Small Pou-lu, as separate units and the *T'ang shu* mentions Sou-lin-t'o-i-t-he as the ruler of the former and Mockin-mang as the ruler of the latter during the same period. If Sou-lin-t'o-i-t-he is identical with Navasurendradityanandi of Baltistan (Patola), Mo-kin-mang would be the same as Makarasimha, the military chief of Gilgit (Giligitta Saramgha). The *T'ang shu* states that Mo-kin-mang went to China to render homage to the court and was treated by the emperor Hiuen-tsong like his son. This he is said to have done to seek succour from China against the Tibetans who were forcing their way through his territory to attack and occupy the Four Garrisons of Kucha, Kashghar, Khoten and Karashahr or Tokmak. In 722, in accordance with the arrangement between China and Gilgit, the commissioner of Pei-t'ing (Gutchen), Tchang-Hiao-sung, ordered the prefect of Sou-le (Kashghar), TchangSe-li, to march with 4000 troops for the help of Mo-kin-mang, strengthened by this succour, Mo-kin-mang, moved against the Tibetans (T'on-po) and inflicted a crushing defeat on them killing many of their men and siezing nine of their cities. Following these events, the T'ang emperor issued a decree conferring the title of king of small Pou-lu (Gilgit) on Mo-kin-mang and the latter also sent his envoy, Tch'a-tcho-na-se-mo mo-cheng, to express his gratitude to the Chinese court. In 733 Mo-kin-mang is said to have sent another envoy to China, on his death his son Nan-ni assumed power. He also died soon and in 641 his elder brother Mo-lai-hi ascended the throne and was confirmed by the Chinese through a letter. He too passed away shortly and Sou-che-li-tche became the ruler. He changed the policy of his predecessors and befriended the Tibetans in preference to the Chinese. Hence in 747 the Chinese general Kao-Sien-tche invaded Gilgit. As a result, the ruler

of Gilgit returned to the policy of friendship with China and in 748 sent an ambassador to China offering golden flowers. Again in 752 an ambassador from Gilgit reached the Chinese court. Thus it is clear that the chiefs of Gilgit, Makarasimha and his successors, behaved as autonomous rulers and were treated by the Chinese as such in the disturbed conditions created by the incursions of the Chinese. Not only they, but also some chiefs under them, like the chief of Chitral (*Kiuwei*), were sometime considered autonomous as in 720 when a letter of investiture was addressed to him by the T'ang court³⁵.

It has been observed above that the kings of Baltistan were called Shahi, a title borne by the Sakas, Kushans, Hephthalites and Turks. But the days of the Sakas and Kushans were over in the fourth century and the Hephthalites had been cornered and eclipsed by the Turks and the Sassanids in the last quarter of the sixth. In the first quarter of the seventh century the Turks had even ousted the influence of the Sassanids from the region between the Oxus and the Indus and emerged as the paramount sovereigns of it. We have seen that the tradition of Turushka and Mahaturushka, referred to in the *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa*, the history of Taranatha, and that of Buston, is based on the supremacy of the Tu-kine or Turks in that period³⁶. It is, therefore, quite likely that they conquered Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan also at that time. From Kashmir they were driven out by the Karkotas, but in Gilgit and Baltistan they continued to rule and flourish and, in all probability, the Shahi rulers of Baltistan, tracing their lineage from Bhagadatta, represented one of their stocks. This view is strengthened by the tradition of the rule of the Turks over this region reported by Al-Biruni. He writes on this subject as follows:

“The river Sindh rises in the mountains Unang in the territory of the Turks, which you can reach in the following way: leaving the ravine by which you enter Kashmir and entering the plateau, then you have for a march of two more days on your left the mountains of Bolor and Shamilan, Turkish tribes who are called *Bhattavaryan*. Their king has the title Bhattashah. Their towns are Gilgit, Aswira and Shiltas and their language is the Turkish. Kashmir suffers much from their inroads”³⁷.

The Shins of this region say that they are of the same race as the Moghuls of India. According to tradition Gilgit was ruled by the rajas of a family called Trakane³⁸.

It appears that the tradition of Turkish rule over this region goes back to the early seventh century when the Tu-kine dominated the vast area upto Gandhara and Kashmir. Thus the Shahis of Baltistan, Navasurendradityanandi and others, were a branch of the Tu-kine or Turks. They set up a strong state there and made it a flourishing centre of Buddhism. The Gilgit manuscripts, revealing the names of a number of devotees like Sulkhina, Sulivajra, Mamtoti, Mangalasure, Aryadevendrabhuta, Aryasthirabuddhi and others, are lasting contributions of that age³⁹.

However, the supremacy of the Tu-kine or the Turks, established in the first part of the seventh century, was challenged by imperialist movements from China and Tibet and also the campaigns of conquest launched by the Arabs and later by the Karkotas of Kashmir. As Baltistan and Gilgit commanded the strategic routes connecting Kashmir, Gandhara, Udyana, Tibet, the Tarim Basin and China, they became the cockpit of all these struggles and encounters.

In the seventh century the rulers of T'ang dynasty, particularly T'ai-tsung (626-649), adopted an aggressive policy towards the Turks in Central Asia. In 630 he gave a crushing blow to the Turks, in 640 occupied Turfan (Kao tch'ang), in 644 attacked Karashahr (Yen k'i) and imprisoned its king, in 646 demanded the principal cities of eastern Turkestan, Kucha, Khoten, Kashghar, Kugiar and Tashkurgan, from the Khan of the western Tu-kine, She-koei, in return for the hand of a Chinese princess for which the latter was solicitous. Soon afterwards, as these negotiations broke down, he advanced on Kucha and took its king captive in 648 A.D.

T'ai-tsung's work was completed by his successor Kao-tsung (650-683). In 652, with the help of the Uighurs, he annihilated the Tch'ou-yue, who lived in the neighbourhood of Goutchen, and captured the chief of the Tch'on-mi who inhabited the banks of the river Manas. In 656 he fought with the Karluk chiefs and the Tch'ou-yue whereas one of his generals plunged into the Tarhagatai, where the Tch'ou-mou lived, and occupied their city Yen, while a third army passed to the south of the T'ien-shan and attacked the Shou-ni-she in the valley of Yulduz. Lastly, in 657 the Chinese, accompanied by the Uighurs, marched against Ho-lou, the Khan of the western Tou-kine, defeated him to the north of the Ili and compelled to pass that river and flee towards the west beyond the Talas. At the same time another Chinese army won a victory over a lieutenant of Ho-lou at Shoang-ho

near the Ebi-nor and a third force defeated the chief of Kucha who made common cause with Ho-lou. The finishing touch to this campaign was given in 659 when the Tou-kine chief, Tchen-tchou-she-hou, was vanquished. Henceforth the Chinese were the masters of all the territory under the suzerainty of the Tou-kine. They established their own administration over that vast region. For administrative purposes they divided the erstwhile T'ou-kine empire into two parts, one comprising Transoxiana and the other the territory to the south of the Iron Gates from the Oxus to the Indus. The *T'ang shu* states that the second part was organized into 16 provinces, the latter into 80 districts, 110 subdivisions and 126 military commands. The 16 provinces were *Yue-tche* (Tukharistan with Kunduz as its administrative centre), *Ta-han* (the region of Herat and Badghis formerly under the Hephthalites), *T'iao-tche* (the territory of Arokhaj, Arachosia of the Greeks and Zabulistan of the Arabs, with Ghazna as its administrative centre), *T'ien-ma* (the country of Shuman and Kharun to the north of the Oxus on the upper course of the river Kafirnagan where, at the time of Hiuen-tsang, a Turk of the tribe of Hi-su ruled), *Kao-fu* (Khuttal with its administrative centre at U-sha or Wakhsh, or Lewakand on the river Wakhshah or Surkhah), *Sieou-sien* (Kapisha with Lan-kien (Lamghan) and *Pan-tehe* (Panjshir) as its main cities, *Sie-fong* (Bamyan towards the northern side of Hindukusha near the sources of the river Kunduz), *Yue-pan* (Jaghanian, a dependency of Tukharistan or better Kuran on the upper course of the river Koksha), *K'i-sha* (Juzjan or the territory between Balkh and Meru), *Ta-mo* (Tirmiz on the Oxus), *On-la-ho* (to the west of the Oxus and 200 li to the southeast of Mu, modern Charjui), *To-le-kien* (Talekan, a part of upper Tukharistan, to the east of Kunduz), *Tche-pa* (Karategin), *Niao-fei* (Wakhan), *Kieou-yue-to-kien* (Kawadhijan on the lower course of the river Kafirnagan), and *Tsi-ling* (Sejestan with its administrative seat at Zereng where the claimant to the Sassanid throne, Piruz, had taken refuge). This was the height of Chinese power in the 'Western' regions symbolized in the assemblage of envoys from Udyana to Korea in the imperial entourage in 665. But soon afterwards the Chinese were challenged in that area by the Tibetans and the Arabs.

The Tibetans emerged into the limelight of history under Srong-btsan-sgam-po (630-698). He subjugated the provinces of Dbus and Gtsang and unified the whole of Tibet under his rule. He had matrimonial relations with Nepal, on the one hand, and China, on the other. At first he was quite friendly towards the T'ang emperors of China. From 643 to 645 he let the Chinese envoys Li-l-piao and Wang Hiuen-ts'e pass through his territory on their way to the court of Harsa and in 647

helped the latter to conquer Kanauj and capture the king O-la-no-shoen⁴⁰. But from 663 the relations between Tibet and China began to worsen. In that year Srong-btsan-sgam-po destroyed the Tongu tribe of T'ou-yu-hoen on the banks of the Kokonor. The defeated king took refuge at Leang tcheou. In 670 the Chinese emperor tried to restore him in his kingdom and for that purpose sent an army. It, however, sustained a heavy defeat in the valley of the Ta-fei (Bukhain gol, a tributary of the Kokonor). Following it, the Tibetans siezed the Four Garrisons, i.e., Kashgharia. The Chinese tried to win the favour of a Turk chief A-she-na-Tou-tche and made him governor of Fu-yen in the territory of Tch'ou-mou-koen. But soon the Tibetans won him over to their side. In 677 the Chinese officer P'ei Hing-kien, marching under the pretext of restoring the Sassanid pretender, who had sought Chinese help, surprised that Turk chief near Tokmak and made him captive. Following this success Wang Fang-i strengthened the fortifications of Tokmak and in 682 defeated the Turk rebel A-she-na-kin-pou-tchour near the Ili and, soon afterwards, triumphed over Ken-mien and his allies on the banks of the Issyk-kul. In 692 the Chinese regained the Four Garrisons of Kashgharia and vanquished the Turk Kaghan A-she-na T'oei-tse, who was a nominee and stooge of the Tibetans. Thus the Chinese acquired what they had lost in 670.

To put an end to hostilities the Tibetans proposed an arrangement whereby the Chinese would evacuate the Four Garrisons or Kashgharia and give them the region of Issyk-kul and the basins of the rivers Tchou and Talas, where the five Turk tribes called Nou-she-pi lived, and in exchange, the Tibetans would let the Chinese rule over the valley of the Ili and the region to the north of the T'ien shan, which was the home of the Five Turk tribes called Tou-lou. But the Chinese court declined this offer following the advice of Kono yuen-tchen, who addressed an eloquent memorial to the throne expatiating on the great military importance of the Four Garrisons⁴¹. Rather the Chinese followed a policy of sowing dissension among the Tibetans and their nominees. In 700, after Srong-btsan-sgam-po had died and his son, Mang-srong-mang-btsan (699-712), came to the throne, they sent a general to restore their nominee Hou-she-lo on the throne at Tokmak and killed by treachery a chief of the tribe of Nou-she-pi. But this success was shortlived since the successor of Hou-she-lo was a nonentity and mostly lived in China. The real power was passing into the hands of the Northern Turks who were witnessing a renaissance under their chiefs Kutluk (682-691) and his brother Kapaghan Kagan (691-716) and had brought the Ten Tribes, constitu-

ting the western Turks, under their suzerainty. However, the Chinese successfully intervened in the affairs of the Turks in 714-715. After the death of Kapaghan Kagan, a chief of the Turgesh tribe, proclaimed his independence and, with the help of the Arabs and the Tibetans, attacked the towns of Yaka-aryk and Aqsu in Kashgharia in 717. The Chinese offered the carrot with the stick to him. On the one hand, they conferred on him titles in 718 and 719 and gave him the hand of the daughter of A-she-na-Hoai-tao in 722, and, on the other, sent A-she-na-Hien to take the help of the three Karluk tribes to fight with him. In 738 he was assassinated by a chief of Yellow tribes. Henceforth the scene was dominated by the squabbles of the Yellow tribes and the Black tribes as a result of which the Uighurs emerged as the paramount power occupying Tokmak and Talas in 766.

After regaining their control over Kashgharia in 692, the Chinese asserted their supremacy in the Pamirs and Gilgit and Baltistan through which lay routes connecting Tibet with Central Asia. To face the might of China, the Tibetans tried to form a league with the Arabs who were pressing into Central Asia from the West in the opening decades of the eighth century. They combined in 715 with the Arabs in naming a certain A-leao-ta the king of Ferghanah driving the legitimate sovereign to seek refuge at Kucha. That refugee king sought the help of the Chinese, who rushed an army in the West which drove the stooge of the Tibetans and the Arabs from Ferghanah into the mountains. This increased their prestige so much that eight kingdoms, including those of the Arabs, Tashkend, Samarkand and Kapisha, sent envoys to China offering their submission.

Just as the Tibetans helped the Arabs in the valley of the Jaxartes, the Arabs also assisted them in Kashgharia. In 717 they collaborated in assisting the Turgesh in an attack on the Four Garrisons and laid siege to Yaka-aryk and Akshu, as a report of the Chinese commissioner, posted at Kucha, indicated. In that situation the Chinese tried to block the routes of Baltistan and Gilgit to the Tibetans and, for that purpose, win over their ruler who was the predecessor of Navasurendradityanandi. The letter addressed to him reads as follows:

“Those who resemble the sages and those who follow the paths of virtue are not found in China only. When it comes to founding a dynasty and continuing a hereditary house, there is no difference among the peoples of diverse manners. You, therefore, the great dignitary, Sou-fou-sho-li-tche-li-ni, king of the kingdom of Pou-lu since many genera-

tions, (you and your ancestors) have been the chiefs who have conserved in your heart fidelity and respect; at distance you display your sincerity, you know to discharge your duty and bring your tribute. Sie-Tche-sin has been able to put into execution his distant plans and it is because of you that Kono-K'ien-kan could get sufficient soldiers. We call upon the king of Yeou-tch'eng to deliver his head, how can we limit ourselves to cut the wing of the Hiung-nu? This is why I order that you be king of the kingdom of Pou-lu. Let you commence in an excellent manner and finish in a perfect one, observe for a long time the Chinese calender (a sign of Chinese suzerainty), give peace to your people and security to your kingdom and let happiness extend to your descendants. Come and respect it. You will commence by receiving this official missive and respect the investiture which I do the favour of giving you. How you can be otherwise than attentive." 42

While this document is couched in the traditional imperialist terminology, characteristic of Chinese diplomacy, it reminds the king of Pou-lu- of the help that he gave the Chinese earlier and expresses the hope that he would continue to do so in future.

In 719 the king of Ngan (Bukhara), Tou-sa-po-t'i, the king of Kiu-mi (Kumedh), Na-lo-yen (Narayana) and the king of K'ang (Samarkand) On-le-kia (Ghourek) sought the aid of China against the Arabs. The same year the ambassador of the king of Jaghanian and Jabghu of Tukharistan, Ti-she (Tesh) went to China to appeal for help. He was accompanied by the Manichean priest Ta-mou -she who introduced this religion in China. But the Chinese emperor could not intervene in favour of these applicants. He only encouraged them to continue the struggle and sent emissaries to the kings of Ou-tch'ang (Udyana), Kou-ton (Khuttal), Kin-wei (Yasin) conferring on them the title of kings in recognition and recompense of the resistance they put up against the Arabs. The same year they give the title of king to the ruler of Hou-mi (Wakhan), recognized the king of Zabulistan or Arokhaj as the suzerain of Kapisha and conveyed the acknowledgement of royal status to king Candrapida of Kashmir. Thus it is clear that all these kingdoms and states joined to solicit help from China which shows their antipathy both to the Tibetans and the Arabs.

To counter these alliances and alignments the Tibetans launched an invasion against Gilgit in 722. Its ruler Mo-kin-mang (Makarasimha) sought the help of China. The commissioner of Pei-t'ing, Tchang-Hiao-song, ordered the prefect of Sou-le (Kashghar), Tchang Se-li,

to go to the help of Mo-kin-mang. At the head of 4000 soldiers he reached Gilgit by forced marches. Mo-kin-mang also moved his army which inflicted a crushing defeat on the Tibetans killing many of their men and seizing nine of their cities.

At that time a curious incident occurred. Fifteen years earlier the Tibetan monarch Dung-srong (712-730) had married a Chinese princess, Kin-tch'eng. In the atmosphere of hostility between Tibet and China her position became uneasy. She wanted to take refuge in Kashmir. The king of Kashmir was ready to receive her, but, to repel the Tibetans in that event, he sought the assistance of the king of Zabulistan. This brought the king of Kashmir and that of Zabulistan together but the Chinese princess continued to live in Tibet and died there in 741.

From the west the pressure of the Arabs was constantly mounting. In 727 the Jabghu of Tukharistan, who claimed a paramount position from the Oxus to the Indus, bitterly complained to the Chinese emperor that the Arabs had captured his father and bled his people white by their exactions so that he had nothing to present to the court. About the same time, in 726, the younger brother of the king of Bukhara reached the Chinese court, in 727, the king of Kesh sent an envoy there, in 728, the kings of Wakhan and Maimargh, in 729, those of Wakhan and Khuttal, in 730, that of Maimargh, in 731, that of Samarkand, in 732, that, calling himself the king of Persia, sent embassies to China—all supplicating for help. In 733 Lalitaditya Muktapida of Kashmir sent his envoy to China stating that if the emperor were to send an army to Gilgit and also Baltistan, he would arrange food supply for two lakh soldiers. These preparations show the intense commotion round the Pamirs at that time.

The assassination of Su-lu, the chief of the Northern Turks, in 738 gave an opportunity to the Chinese to march again in Central Asia. In 739 one of their generals cooperated with the kings of Kesh and Samarkand to imprison Su-lu's son T'ou-ho-sien near Tokmak whereas another army joined hands with the king of Ferghanah for suppressing the Kagan of the Black tribes or Kara Turgesh on the Talas. Following these campaigns China again asserted her supremacy in Transoxiana and the emperor conferred titles on the kings of that region, on the king of Tashkend in 740, on that of Ferghanah in 739, on that of Ishtikhan in 742. The king of Kesh gave the Chinese name of *Lai wei kou* (kingdom which moves towards glory) to his kingdom and that of

Ferghanah began to call his kingdom by the Chinese name of *Ning yuen* (peaceful distant land) by way of acknowledgement of Chinese influence. In 744 a Chinese princess was even given in marriage to the king of Ferghanah Arslan Taskan. Chinese influence even reached the south of the Caspian Sea in the region called Taharistan as is clear from the titles conferred by the emperor on its kings in 744 and 747.

To the south of the Oxus and the Pamirs the Chinese kept vigilance and maintained their influence by recognizing Jon-mo-fon-ta as the legitimate successor of his father in Zabulistan in 738 and conferring investiture on Pou-fou-tchoen, king of Kapisa and Udyana, the two kingdoms having become united, in 745. They also tried their best to keep their hold on the route of Wakhan and Gilgit in order to conserve their relations with Kashmir, Udyana, Kapisa and Zabulistan, since from 670, as I-Tsing reported, the route of Bamyana and Balkh had been closed to the Chinese on account of the incursions of the Arabs. As the Wakhan-Gilgit route was the only artery of communication between China, Kashgharia and the 'west', the Chinese were very keen to preserve it and keep it from falling into the hands of the Tibetans. We have seen how they rendered military aid to Gilgit in 722 and helped in ousting the Tibetans from there. In 736 the Tibetans, under their new monarch Khri-lde-gtsung-brtsan (730-802) made a show of submission to China, but, side by side, soon afterwards, intensified their pressure on Gilgit. Hence, in 737, the Chinese attacked the Tibetans near Kokonor for diverting the latter to that side and thereby relieving the king of Gilgit. Again, in 741, the Chinese nominated or recognized Ma-hao-lai as the king of Gilgit and, in 742, felicitated the king of Wakhan for breaking away with Tibet.

The situation changed with the death of Ma-hao-lai. We have said above that, just after making a show of submission in 736, the Tibetans launched an attack on Baltistan and Gilgit. They succeeded in reducing Baltistan and in 738 totally defeated a Chinese army stationed there⁴³. But Gilgit was saved for the time being by the Chinese. However, after the death of the Chinese ally, Ma-hao-lai, the Tibetans brought round his successor, Sou-she-li-tche, to their side and married a Tibetan princess to him. With Gilgit under their influence, the Tibetans were supreme in the whole of that area. From 744 to 747 they had a firm hold from Ladakh to Gilgit. As a result, as the *T'ang shu* says, more than twenty kingdoms of the northwest became subject to the Tibetans, none of them sending presents or having communication with the Chinese court. The commander of Kucha (Ngan-si) undertook three expeditions against Gilgit but

failed. At last, in 747, the Chinese emperor ordered General Kao Sien-tche to attack. He sent an officer Si Yuen-k'ing with one thousand horsemen to Gilgit in advance to tell its king Sou-she-li-tche "we ask you to lend us your route for reaching Baltistan (Great Pu-lu)". But in the capital of Gilgit five or six of the big chiefs were devoted to the Tibetans. Hence the mission of Si Yuen-k'ing fell through. However, he acted as he was briefed by Kao Sien-tche. He published an imperial edict reassuring the people and giving them presents of silks. Thus winning their support, he attacked the places of those chiefs who favoured the Tibetans. This course met with a signal success. Even the king Sou-she-li-tche fled with his Tibetan wife and nobody could find where he had gone. Kao Sien-tche dominated the scene. He executed all those who were in favour of the Tibetans. He also destroyed the bridge on the river So-i (Yasin) to check the movement of the Tibetans. Hence, when, the same evening, the Tibetans arrived they could not find a passage nor their allies. Kao Sien-tche promised peace to the Kingdom of Gilgit if its king surrendered to the Chinese. This success of the Chinese arms created a stir in the neighbouring regions, rather the whole 'West', for the Arabs (Ta-che) and the sixtytwo kingdoms, including that of Fou-lin (Syria), are said to have submitted to China. Kao Sien-tche returned to China with the king of Gilgit, Sou-she-li-tche, and his Tibetan queen as prisoners ⁴⁴. Gilgit became a Chinese territory; its name was changed to Koei-jen; a military establishment was set up there and one thousand men were enrolled to garrison it. The emperor, Hiuen-tsong, however, pardoned Sou-she-li-tche, gave him a violet robe and golden belt and the title of the General of the Right Guard.

In spite of the aforesaid success, stirring though it was, the Tibetan resistance was not entirely broken, for, in 749, we find the Jabghu of Tukharistan She-li-mang-kia-lo (Srimangala?) seeking the aid of Chinese troops against the king of Kie-she, a small mountain prince who was in alliance with the Tibetans and had intercepted the communications between Gilgit and Kashmir. She-li-mang-kia-lo formulated the grand strategy of forming an invulnerable bulwark against the Tibetans from Tukharistan across the Pamirs and Kashgharia to China. In 750 the Chinese court responded to his suggestion and sent Kao Sien-tche again to the west. He defeated and imprisoned the king of Kie-she, Pou-t'o-mo, and put on the throne his elder brother, Sou-kia. This success of Chinese arms again sent a shudder in the West. Hence the ambassador of Samarkand, Mo-ye-men, envoy of Kapisa, Sa-po tarkan, and representatives of Ferghanah, Kumedh, Khwarizm, Bukhara

refugee court of Persia visited the Chinese court. On his return Sa-potarkan was accompanied by the Buddhist pilgrim Ou-k'ong in 751.

However, the success of Kao Sien-tche turned his head. In 750 he intervened in the affairs of Tashkend. The king of that kingdom offered his submission. But, false to his word, Kao Sien-tche captured and executed him and appropriated his wealth. His son fled to the Arabs. The people were also enraged by the treachery of the Chinese. Taking this opportunity, the Arab general Abu Muslim sent an army under Ziyad-bin-salih to fight with the Chinese and reinstate the son of the chief of Tashkend. Kao Sien-tche united his troops with those of the king of Ferghanah and marched against the Arabs. Just then the Karluk tribes revolted and attacked his rear. Thus Kao Sien-tche was sandwiched between the Arabs in the front and the Karluk in the rear and was completely defeated in the great battle at Athlash, near the river Talas, in July 751. Most of his men perished and he had great difficulty in finding his way home with his bedraggled and battered staff. This decisive battle put an end to the domination of the Chinese in the western regions and ensured the success of the Arabs there. The troubles in Yunnan and Ta-li and the revolt of Ngan Lou-shan diverted the attention of the Chinese from the west and prevented them from retrieving the disaster of the Talas. Thus ended the role of China in Turkestan for the time being.

But at that time the Arab world was also in a crisis. In 749 Abu Muslim had done away with the Umayyad Caliphs. This gave the signal for revolt and uprising in the whole Islamic world. Neither the Arabs nor the Persians were satisfied. At Nishapur the Magian Bih Afarid raised his head and at Bukhara the Arabs, led by Sharik-bin-shaykh al-Mahri, unfurled the banner of revolt. Abu Muslim's deputy Ziyad-bin-salih had to crush them with a hard hand. But soon the tide turned against Abu Muslim himself. The Abbasids, whom he had brought to the Caliphal throne, became his enemies. In 752-53 they instigated Siba-bin-an-Numan and Ziyad-bin-salih, whom Abu Muslim had appointed governors of Transoxiana, to rebel against him. But this revolt fizzled out. Siba-bin-an-Numan was executed at Anul and Ziyad-bin-salih, abandoned by his armies, fled to the dihqan of Barkath who got him killed and sent his head to Abu Muslim. Another supporter of Abu Muslim, named Abu Dawud, was also won over by the Abbasids and eventually Abu Muslim himself was assassinated in 755. But the party of Abu Muslim did not die out. It carried on the struggle against the Abbasids in Khurasan and Transoxiana under a new white standard which

gave the insurgents the name of White Clothes (*Sapid Jamagan* Arabic *al-mubayyiza*)⁴⁵. This created so much fright among the Abbasids as to force them to seek the assistance of China. It is significant that Chinese records repeatedly refer to the tribute-bearing missions of the Ta-che wearing Black Clothes, meaning the Abbasids, to the T'ang court in and after 753, as we shall presently see.

Evidently in this state of affairs a vacuum appeared in the politics of Central Asia which was filled by another power, namely Kashmir. The *Rajatarangini* states that the Karkota ruler of Kashmir Lalitaditya Muktapida launched an expedition in the northern regions (Uttarapatha) and is said to have defeated the Kambojas (of Badakhshan), Tukkharas (of Tukharistan) or Bukkharas (of Bukhara), Bhauttas (of Tibet), Daradas (of Gilgit), Pragiyotisa (probably Baltistan) and fought against Mummuni (representing the Momins or Muslims) inflicting three reverses on him⁴⁶. He is also reported to have plunged into the 'sea of sand' (Valukambudhi), which signifies the desert of Taklamakan, and reduced the mythical Uttarakurus, meaning the people of the oases-states of the Tarim basin or Kashgharia⁴⁷. That he completely crippled the Turks is clear from the remark that "it is by his command, to display the mask of their bondage, that the Turushkas carry their arms at their back and shave half their head"⁴⁸.

Some writers think that Muktapida undertook his northern campaigns at the instance of and as the instrument of the Chinese. One of them goes to the extent of saying that "the expansion of Karkota Kashmir was not merely an expansion of an Indian kingdom, it seems to have been, in reality, the extension of the supremacy of China in the Himalayan regions"⁴⁹. He adds that "Lalitaditya's expeditions against the Tukharas and the Daradas probably had the same objective in view, namely, to assist in the establishment of T'ang supremacy in those regions"⁵⁰. But Chinese records, which give fulsome details about the happenings of this period and do not omit to mention those who undertook campaigns on their behalf, for example, the king of Pu-lu in 722, are entirely silent about the expeditions of Muktapida. There is also nothing in the account of Kalhana to indicate that he received or utilised Chinese assistance in his campaigns. Hence the theory of Chinese hand in the campaigns of Muktapida is gratuitous. What appears likely is that, when the Chinese suffered a setback in the battle on the Talas and lost their interests in Central Asia and when the Arabs also were embroiled in their own struggles, Muktapida stepped on the scene to extend his influence in the region around the Pamirs from the Tarim basin to Tukharistan. Ob-

viously this happened after 751 and made the king of Kashmir the master of Baltistan and Gilgit which gave him the control of the routes to Central Asia. That he succeeded in worsting the Turk rulers of Baltistan and Gilgit and the states of Central Asia from the Tarim basin to Tukharistan is indicated by the tradition that the victory of Muttai (Muktapida) over the Turks was celebrated in a festival held on the second day of the month of Caitra in Kashmir, reported by Albiruni⁵¹. One can presume that it was Muktapida who put an end to the imperial house of Navasurendradityanandi in Baltistan and that of Makarasimha, who had become subservient to China, in Gilgit and who gave the *coup de grace* to the Western Turks in Central Asia.

The astounding success of Muktapida made not only the Turk houses but also the Arabs nervous. This is clear from the fact that even after the disaster of the Chinese on the bank of the Talas and their own difficulties at home which made them disinterested in the affairs of the "West" they hugged them as their props and supports and repeatedly sent them ambassadors to seek their aid. The *Tche'-fou-yuen-koei* states that in 752 the king of Khuttal, Lo-ts'iu'en-tsie, contacted the Chinese court and received the letter of investiture and that, in the same year, the ruler of Gilgit (Koei-jen) sent an envoy there and even Sie-to-homi, the chief of the *Ta-che* (Arabs) with Black Clothes, the Abbasids, despatched a mission to China. In 753, the rulers of Kashghar (Sou-le) Kapisa (Ki-pin), Zabulistan (Sie-yu), Gilgit (Koei-jen) and of the Abbasids (Ta-tche with Black Clothes) sent their envoys with presents to the Chinese court. In the seventh month of that year the kings of Ferghanah (Ning-yuen), Bukhara (Ngan) and Tukharistan (T'ou-ho-lo) also sent ambassadors. It is remarkable that in that year the Abbasids sent four missions in the third, fourth, seventh and twelfth month respectively. Last time they presented thirty horses to the emperor. In 754 the kings of Ferghanah, Maimargh, Turgesh, Ouighurs, Tukharistan, Chitral (Kiu-wei), Samarkand (K'ang), Bukhara and the Abbasids again sent envoys. In 755 the kings of Taharistan (T'o-pa), Samarkand, Tashkand, Khwarizm (Ho-siun), Kabuzan (T'sao), Turgesh, Ferghanah and Gilgit sent fresh ambassadors. In 756 the Abbasids sent two missions, one in the seventh month, which consisted of twentyfive great chiefs, and the other a bit later. In 758 the kings of Wakhan (Hou-mi), Gandhara (Kan-t'o-lo), Tukharistan, Samarkand, Kapisa, as well as the Abbasids sent their missions, the last consisting of six Arab chiefs who raised a dispute regarding protocol each claiming priority in reception which was resolved by making them enter the court simultaneously in one line. In 759 the kings of Ferghanah, Bukhara, Turgesh offered tribute⁵². Thus

throughout the seven fifties the kingdoms of Central Asia were keen on having diplomatic contacts with China and, in particular, the Abbasids were very solicitous of their alliance. The question arises, why these kingdoms were banking so much on the help of China and why, particularly, the Abbasids were sending envoy after envoy, mission after mission, almost every year, to the Chinese court. It is true that the Abbasids were faced with the revolts of the followers and partisans of Abu Muslim, as we have seen above, but it should also not be ignored that, according to the *Rajatarangini*, Muktapida had inflicted three defeats on the Arabs (*Mummuni*) and established his supremacy from the Tarim basin to Tukharistan which must have made the Abbasids feel shaky. If everything should have gone well with them there was no cause for them to be so keenly and persistently desirous of the alliance and friendship of China. It was some deeper danger which inclined them so much towards China and it appears that it was no other than that of the rapid advance of Muktapida. Not only they, but all the other states and kingdoms of Central Asia, realized the intensity of the menace of Muktapida and sent unending trains of envoys and ambassadors to China in the hope of assistance.

Lalituditya Muktapida ruled for 36 years, 7 months and 11 days⁵³. His reign must have ended about 760 or a little later. He died fighting in some obscure northern region. His successor Kuvalayapida is said to have maintained his hold over his empire 'extending over the disc of the earth'⁵⁴. However, his rule was very short lasting for one year and fifteen days only. Then another son of Lalituditya ruled for seven years. During his reign the Mlecchas, possibly meaning the Arabs, became assertive for he is said to have sold many men to them and introduced many of their practices into his kingdom⁵⁵. Here we find a reference to the raid of Hisham-bin-Amur-al-Taghlibi, governor of Sind, into Kashmir, as a result of which he carried many men as prisoners and slaves, reported by Balazuri⁵⁶. The next two rulers Prthivyapida and Sangramapida were also weak and cruel rulers and the kingdom seems to have suffered under them. But the next ruler Jayapida was again, like his grandfather, a man of parts and is said to have set out for the conquest of the world⁵⁷. His campaigns in the Himalayan region seem to underlay the reference to the defeat of the king of Nepal at his hands. It may be conjectured that he asserted his power in Baltistan and Gilgit also. But after him his dynasty declined and its hold over the neighbouring regions became loose.

After the eighth century the Tibetans again seem to have become dominant in Baltistan and Gilgit. This appears from the fact that Al-

Biruni refers to the rule of one Bhattashah in Gilgit, a title which bears the echo of the Tibetans. Besides this the *Rajatarangini* of Srivara (III, 445) mentions Gilgit and Baltistan as *Sukshmbhuttadesha* and *Bhathbhuttadesha* respectively⁵⁸. This means that these regions had come to be considered as parts of Bhuttadesha or Tibet.

Kalbana occasionally refers to the invasions of the Daradas in Kashmir, for example under Viddasiha, and also the attacks from Kashmir on them, as under Harsha, showing that the Gilgit region continued to play some part in the history of Kashmir.

The aforesaid study shows how important Baltistan and Gilgit have been in the political, diplomatic and military history of Tibet, China, Kashgharia, Tukharistan, Kapisa, Gandhara, Kashmir and North India in ancient times. This importance of these regions has been mainly due to the routes which pass through them. It was for the possession of these routes that the various imperialist powers wanted to keep their hold over these regions. Therefore, the authorities of Tibet told the king of Gilgit in the eighth century: "It is not against your country that we plot, rather we take your route for attacking the Four Garrisons (Kucha, Kashghar, Khoten and Karashahr or Tokmak)"⁵⁹ Likewise, from the Chinese, side, Tchang song, the imperial commissioner of Tei-t'ing, observed: "Pou-lu is the western gate of the T'ang (that is to say of China); if Pou-lu is lost (to us) then the countries of the West will all become Tibetan"⁶⁰. All the powers, in all the ages, had this point of view in regard to this region.

NOTES

1. G.L. Kaul, *Kashmir Through the Ages* (Srinagar, 1967) p.93
2. *Chamber's Encyclopaedia*, Vol. VI, p.351; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. X pp. 352-353
3. James P. Ferguson, *Kashmir: An Historical Introduction* (London 1961) pp. 134-35
4. Anton Schiefner, *Taranatha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien an dem Tibetischen Ubersetzt*, p. 23
5. James Legge, *The Travels of Fa-hien* (Oxford, 1886) p. 21
6. *Ibid*, p. 22

7. Ibid, p. 26
8. bid, p. 24
9. P.C. Bagchi, *India and Central Asia* (Calcutta, 1955) p. 17
10. S. Levi and E. Chavannes, 'L'itineraire d'ou k'ong (751-790)', *Journal Asiatique* (1895) pp. 341-384
11. M.A. Stein, *Kalhanas Rajatarangini, A Chronicle of the kings of Kashmir*, Vol I, p. 46 F.N.
12. *Kalhana's Rajatarangini* (Text) ed. M.A. Stein, IV, 169, p.50; *Rajatarangini of Kalhana*, ed. Vishva Bandhu (Hoshiarpur, 1963)p. 133
तस्य प्रतापो दरदां न सहेऽनारतं मधु ।
दरीणामोषधिऽयोतिः प्रत्यूषेऽर्क इवोदितः ॥
13. Bunbury, *History of Ancient Geography*, I, p. 229
14. Jonaraja's *Rajatarangini*, verse, 885
15. *Kalhana's Rajatarangini* (Text), I, 312-313 ed. Stein, p. 14
आक्रान्ते दरदं भौट्टं लच्छेरशुषिकर्मभिः ।
विनष्टधर्मो देशोऽस्मिन् पुण्याचारप्रवर्तनम् ॥
वार्यदेश्यान्स संस्थाप्य व्यतनोद् दारुणं तपः ॥
16. Theodore Noldeke, *Geschichte der Pesser und Araber*, p. 159; Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, p 615; Mirkhund, *Histoire des Sassanids* tr. by de Sacy p. 364-365
17. Th. Noldeke, op cit. p. 167
18. E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kine Occidentaux*, p. 229
19. Rene Grousset, *L'empire des steppes*, p. 129
20. E. Chavannes, op cit. pp. 258-259
21. A. Schiefner, op cit. pp 64, 94, 103
22. *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa*, ed. T. Ganapati Sastri, pp. 619-620

23. N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol I, Introduction, pp. 25-26

24. *Kalhana's Rajatarangini* (Text), III, 27-28, p. 25

अथ ग्राहयितुं भूपानाज्ञां हिंसानिवृत्तये ।
स दिग्जयाय निर्व्याजधर्मचर्यो विनिर्ययौ ॥
अभूदभीतजनतावेक्षणश्लाघ्यविक्रमः ।
स्पृहणीयो जनस्यापि तदीयविजयोद्यमः ॥

Vishva Bandhu's edition (p. 65) reads *जनस्यापि* instead of *जनस्यापि*
25. A Remusat, *Nouvelles Melanges Asiatiques* Vol I, pp. 196 ff

26. N.P. Chakravarti, 'Hatun Rock Inscription of Patoladeva',
Epigraphia Indica, Vol XXX (1953-54) pp. 226-231, lines 1-2

ओउम् स्वस्ति संवत्सरे (स) प्तचत्वा (रिं) श (ति) तमे ४७ पोष्य (पौष)
शुक्लपौ (द) श्यां १३ श्रीभगदत्तवंशसंभूतपरमभट्टारकमहाराजाधिराजपरमेश्वरपटोल-
देवशाहि श्रीनवमुरेन्द्रादित्यनन्दिदेवप्रवर्धमानराज्ये

27. *Ibid*, lines 3-4.

निरन्तर श्रीशाहिदेवपादभक्त का (उचु) दीय महागजपतिमहामात्यवर-
महासामन्ताधिपति गिलगित्तसरांघ मकरसिंहेन हाणेशराविषये हातूनग्राममध्ये
मकरवाहिनी नाम कुल्यामपत्तस्य अभिनवमकरपुरारूपं पट्टणं कृतम्

28. In this connection it is significant that according to the *Kishkindha Kanda* (42, 31) of the *Ramayana* there was a Pragjyotisha in the western direction. The *Mahabharata* (II, 42, 7; II, 31, 9-10; II, 33, 17; II 13, 13-14) also suggests the existence of Pargjyotisha in the western region. In the *Rajatarangini* (II, 146) the marriage of king Meghavahana with Amrtaprabha daughter of the king of Pragjyotisha who had a Tibetan Guru also suggests the existence of this region near Kashmir and Tibet. It appears that Baltistan somehow acquired the name of Pragjyotisha.

29. M.S. Kaul, *Gilgit Excavation Report*, 1839

30. N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, I, p. 40

31. N.P. Chakravarti, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol XXX (1953-54) p. 229

32. E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kine Occidentaux*, p. 150
33. E. Chavannes, *Notes additionnelles sur les Tou-kine Occidentaux*, p. 44
34. do „ „ „ p. 199
35. „ „ „ „ p. 43
36. Buston, *Chos-hbyung* tr. E. Obermiller, *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (Heidelberg, 1932) II, p. 119
37. Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India* Vol I, P. 207
38. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol X p. 353
39. N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*. Vol I. pp. 40-41
40. Buddha Prakash, 'Tibet, Kashmir and North India 647-747', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Vol VI, No. 2 pp. 39-48
41. The text of this report is translated by Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kine Occidentaux*, pp. 180-182
42. Translated from the Fernch rendering of E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Occidentaux*, pp-199-200
43. S.W. Bushell, 'The Early History of Tibet : From Chinese Sources', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (New Series) Vol XII, pp 469-471
44. The detailed biography of Kao Sien-tche is given in *Kieou T'ang shu* ch. CIV) and *T'ang shu* (ch CXXXV) and has been retold by Chavannes in *Documents sur les Ton-kine Occidentaux*, p 152 foot note 1.
45. W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (third edition of C.E. Bosworth) London 1968, pp. 196-197
46. *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, IV, 163-171
47. *Ibid*, IV, 172-175
48. *Ibid*, IV, 179

बन्धमुद्राभिधानाय पश्चाद्वाहू तदाज्ञया ।
 तुरुष्का दधते व्यक्तं मूर्धानं चार्धमुण्डितम् ॥

49. S.C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir* (Calcutta 1957) p. 45
 50. *Ibid*, p. 46
 51. E.C. Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, Vol II p. 178
 52. The texts pertaining to these diplomatic missions have been translated by E. Chavannes, *Notes additionnelles sur les Ton-kine Occidentaux* pp. 83-96
 53. *Rajatarangini*, IV, 366
 54. *Ibid*, IV, 372
 55. *Ibid*, IV, 397
 56. Baladhuri, *Kitah Futuh al-Buldan* tr. by Hitti and Murgotten, Vol II pp. 230-231
 57. *Rajatarangini*, IV, 403
 58. In modern Kashmiri language these regions are called *Lukh Butun* and *Bud Butun* or Little Tibet and Great Tibet. See M.A. Stein *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Vol II, p 435
 59. E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Ton-kine Occidentaux*, p. 150
 60. *Ibid* p. 150 foot note 5.
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