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ON THE TERM „GER—ÜN KÖ 'ÜD AS APPEARED IN THE" YUAN CH'AO PI SHI

In the great transitional period from the 12th to the 13th century, a number of various Turkic-Mongolian tribes has formed themselves into a single Mongol nation and founded a World Empire. All these Turkic-Mongolian peoples, nobles and commoners, princes and plebians, had to go through these dramatic social changes in so short a length of time. In such a drastically changing society, one of the most challenging historical problems seems to be the transfiguration of the old social class system into the new one that could lead to the building of the empire.

In the "Youn Ch'ao Pi Shi" the major historical source of the Mongols, we come across many special Mongol terms, expressing various social classes or standings of the age, such as „Qa'an Qaračus, Noyan-haren, Emčü-Bo'ol, Bo'ol-Nekun Qaraču-Bo'ol, Gergen Tudgar, Ger-ün Kö'üd" etc. Also we find in the Persian document Jami 'al-Tawārīkh" by Rašīd al-Dīn some such specific terms as Bande-i-ūrūgh Ötegü-Boghol EV-Oghlānān etc. In addition to these, we can mention so many Chinese terms in the „Yuan Shi", the Annals of the Yuan Dynasty and other important Chinese or Korean materials that could be regarded as equivalents to the above-mentioned terms.

Among these terms indicating various social classes of the age as appeared in 3 or 4 different kinds of primary historical sources, the term „Ger-ün Kö'üd in the Yuan Chào Pi Shi seems to be yet unclarified, but the most fascinating one. In reference to this problem, Prof. Yanai, Prof. Ikeuchi, Prof. emeritus Shiratori of Tokyo University and other Japanese scholars had revealed as far back as 1920 more or less the same view that the Chinese term „Chi'eh-Lin-kou (k'elin K'ou in the Yuan Shi and other sources) could be an equivalent to the Mongol term" Ger-ün Kö'üd, only differing in its interpretation in the social context. To these predecessors 'views we must add the fact that this Mongol term is also an equivalent for the Turco-Persian term "EV-Oghlānān" as found in Rašīd al-Dīn 's Jami' al-Tawārīkh.

Now I would like to avail of this opportunity to introduce here some Japanese scholars 'views and make a critical comment of my own. Japanese scholars 'views are:

1. The „Ger-ün Kö'üd are subject-people belonging to the domain owned by the Mongol princes and nobles.

2. A class of commoners, serving among the emperor's bodyguard troops called „Kešikten".

3. A class of followers brought in by the empresses or the princesses of the blood as a dowry.

4. Household slaves of the royal court of the feudal lords. And it seems to me that any of these theories points to only one aspect of the whole truth. According to my view, the „Ordu-yin ger-ün Kö'üd" as appeared in the „Yuan Ch'ao Pi Shi" were obviously the special kind of classes serving under the 4 great Ordus of Chingis-khan. But at the same time, they did not look like standing on the same level with the adu' uci, hükerci, morici., qorci of the other honoured members of the emperial household called „Keśikten". And EV-Oghlānān as found in Rašīd al-Dīn looks more like a kind of subject people belonging to the empresses or the princesses of the blood which dominated over the household („Ordu") of the succeeding emperors of the Mongols. In the Yüan Shi, the most abundant historical document of the age, we find quite a few references to this word, „Kelin Ku'o". The chapter on the official organization of this Annal refers to the existence of the "Chung cheng yüan" the secretariat the empresses' household (Ordu) which had many small offices under its Supervision. Of these, the largest and most important one was the secretariat supervising "Ke-lin-Kuo" people in their own domains and the commoners, artisans, hunters, falconers in their fiefs scattered all over the country and ruling over 29000 families of the "Kelin-kuo" with their arable land of about 5000 "ching" area and collected taxes and levies them. From these important comments on this Secretariat of the empresses 'household, we can conclude the "Ger-ün Kö'üd" of the Yüan Ch'ao Pi-Shi, the Kelin Ku'o of the Yüan Shi of the Ev-Oghlānān of Rašīd al-Dīn were the subject people residing in the private domains of the empress and the princes of the blood which were at that time called „Wei-Sia" or "Tung-Sia" in Chinese term of "Ingu" in Perso-Turkish term: Father A. Mostaert quotes in his famous „Dictionnaire Ordos" a Mongol proverb, saying „Kö'üd geǰ albatbīh albatu, bōl-īn bōl". It is probable that the „Kö'üd" in the "Gerün-Kö'üd of the Yüan Ch'ao Pi Shi had more or less the same meaning. Therefore, I would rather conclude that the „Ger-ün Kö'üd" constituted a backbone of the Mongol seigneurial economy in capacity of the serf classes who were under the obligation of paying taxes-in-kind and services for their lords, as cattle-breeders, cultivaters of the agricultural land of even growers of the cotton plants in the occupied territories of China, Central Asia and Persia.