CHAPTER ONE

LEGACY OF THE STEPPE EMPIRES IN XINJIANG

1.1 Geographical Location

Xinjiang or Sinkiang is situated at the northwest of China and is the largest province in China, covering about 617,800 square miles (1,600,000 square km) or 1/6 of the total Chinese territory.\(^1\) It is situated about 4000 km from the national capital, Beijing. Despite being one of the most isolated regions of the world, Xinjiang is also of strategic importance to China because it borders eight countries namely People’s Republic of Mongolia to the northwest, Russia to the north, Kazakstan to the northwest, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikstan to the west, as well as Afghanistan, India and Pakistan (Jammu Kashmir) to the southwest.\(^2\) Apart from that, Xinjiang also borders the Chinese province of Qinghai and Kansu to the east whilst the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is located to the southeast of Xinjiang. In fact, no other Chinese province has so many international borders as Xinjiang, the only Chinese province situated in Central Asia. Hence, its importance to Chinese security is undeniable.

Xinjiang is also located on the ancient ‘Silk Road’, which was a popular route used by traders and travellers between East and West, among whom was Marco Polo. Xinjiang or ‘New Borders’ in Chinese was formerly known as Hsi-yu. Since becoming a Chinese territory in 1756, it was administered by the Chinese military and with its eventual

\(^1\) http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=127771&sctn=6
\(^2\) Ibid.
incorporation into China, it was declared a Chinese province in 1884. Western explorers such as Sir Aurel Stain and Sven Hedin referred to the area as ‘Chinese Turkestan’. However, today the region is known as Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

Urumqi, the provincial capital of Xinjiang is connected to other important cities in the province such as Kashgar, Turfan, Yarland and Ili. Kashgar is the largest oases city in Xinjiang and also the commercial centre for western Xinjiang. Xinjiang is a province rich with natural resources. The extraction of Xinjiang’s rich mineral resources began in the early 1950s with co-operation from the Soviet Union (USSR). At present, petroleum is found in the western Dzungarian Basin near the city of Karamai, coal in Urumqi and Hami and gold in the Altai Mountains. With its natural resources Xinjiang is not only important geo-strategically, but economically as well to China.

1.2 Ethnicity and the Influence of Central Asia

Ethnically, Xinjiang can be divided into two major categories namely the Turks who are natives of Xinjiang and the non-Turkic people such as the Han Chinese, Manchus, Russians and Indians. The Turkics are further divided into the Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Uzbeks and Tajiks and majority of them are Muslims. The Tajiks, speak Iranian in addition to Turkic. The Uighurs are the largest ethnic group in Xinjiang followed by the Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Tajiks and Uzbeks. However, the Turkic people are not just confined to Xinjiang alone as they are scattered throughout Central Asia in

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countries like Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and parts of Russia. Although the Turkics may be divided politically and physically, they are the same ethnically. The respective background and characteristics of the various sub-groups of the Turkic people living in Xinjiang is elaborated below.

i) **Uighur**

In 1990, the Uighurs numbered approximately 7,214,431 in the XUAR, in addition to those residing in Russia and Kazakhstan. The Uighurs originated from Salenga Valley (now modern Mongolia) and managed to establish their own empire, known as the Orkhon Empire (745-840). In 840, the Uighur empire was destroyed by the Kirghizs from the north, resulting in many of them to immigrate south to the Tarim Basin (present day Xinjiang). The Uighurs eventually managed to establish themselves as rulers of the indigenous people belonging to the Saka civilisation in the Tarim Basin. This kingdom was known as the Qocho Kingdom. In 1209, the Qocho Kingdom was absorbed into the Mongol Empire established by Genghis Khan and the Mongol khans continued to rule over the Uighurs even after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty in China in 1368. The reign of the Mongols only ended when Emperor Qian Long of the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911) invaded Xinjiang in 1756. The Mongol conquest of 1209 caused the term ‘Uighur’ to vanish due to political fragmentation in the area and the term only reappeared in 1922, after the establishment of the Republic

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6 [http://www.uyghur.org/human_rights.htm](http://www.uyghur.org/human_rights.htm)
of China (ROC). The main objective for the reappearance of the term was for the purpose of reintegration of the Turkics in Xinjiang.

At present, the Uighurs live in the Tarim Basin in the oases cities of Kashgar and Tunhuang, with some living at the northern slopes at the Kun-lun ranges. The Uighurs have transformed their way of life from being nomads to settled agriculturists and many live in urban areas now. Almost all them who live in Xinjiang and Russia today are Muslims but prior to their conversion to Islam in the 10th century, they were either Buddhists or believers of Manicheism. In fact, most Central Asia political entities such as Afghanistan were once centres of Buddhism about 2000 years ago. The Uighurs converted to Islam in 955, following the footsteps of Satuk Bughara Khan who became the first Turkic ruler in the Central Asia to embrace Islam. With the emergence of Islam, more mosques were built, among them the Azna Mosque built in the 12th century and the Iqgah Mosque in the 15th century such that the city of Kashgar was transformed into a centre of Islamic studies for the Central Asia region during the 15th century. In fact, the Mesudi Library built during the same century had a collection of almost 200,000 books. The Uighurs are Sunni Muslims and are strongly influenced by Sufism.

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10 Ibid.
ii) The Kazakhs

The Kazakhs are the second largest Turkic population living in Xinjiang and majority of the Kazakhs of Central Asia live in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In 1990, the Kazakh population in Xinjiang was 1,111,718. In addition, the Kazakhs are also found in other parts of Central Asia such as Afghanistan, Mongolia and Russia.

The Kazakhs are tribal people who once lived in the steppe of Central Asia and traditionally, there were three main tribes known as *ordas* among the Kazakhs. Each *orda* consisted of various clans and families and the number of *ordas* increased as the Kazakh population started to grow. A chieftain known as *aksakal* headed each *orda*. The Kazakhs were fine horsemen and hunters. However, in the late 19th century, many Kazakhs started to relocate to the valleys and were involved in agricultural activities and farming. The Kazakhs who lived in Xinjiang were under the Mongol rule from the 13th century until 1756, when Xinjiang was annexed by the Ching Dynasty. Of all the Turkics in Central Asia, the Kazakhs are the least influenced by the Arabs or Persians and they use Cyrillic script instead of Arabic.

The areas dominated by the Kazakhs are the northwest and northeast areas of Xinjiang especially the Altai Mountains. During the Ching Dynasty, the Kazakhs did not cause any major rebellion and in fact offered their allegiance to the imperial court in

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15 Ibid.
Beijing. However, in 1943 the political situation underwent change when the Kazakhs played a major role in the separatist movement and the formation of the Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR). Although Islam only became their religion in the 17th century, the Kazakhs however remain the least Islamized among the other Turkic peoples of Central Asia. Even today neologism cults are still practised among the Kazakhs and the mullahs often double as shamans (neologism priests). As in the past, Kazakh women today do not wear veils in contrast to the other Turkic women living in Central Asia. Like the Uighurs, the Kazakhs are also Sunni Muslims.

iii) Kirghiz

The Kirghizs are the third largest Turkic people living in Xinjiang, numbering to 141,549 in 1990. The areas that are at present populated by the Kirghizs in Xinjiang are the mountains of the Tarim and Dzungarian basins. However, majority of the Central Asian Kirghizs live in the Republic of Kirghzstan, while a small number are found in the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan, and the republics of Tajikstan and Kazakhstan.

Like the Kazakhs, the Kirghizs too were pastoral nomads but of alpine nature who lived in the highlands while the Kazakhs were steppe nomads. At present, many Kirghizs have abandoned their traditional nomadic way of life to concentrate on agricultural activities. Since the formation of XUAR in 1955, many Kirghizs were encouraged to

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16 Aitchen, Turkistan Tumult, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 46.
cultivate industrial crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugar beet. Very often the name Kirghiz has caused confusion among the Russians who lived in Central Asia because its pronunciation is very much similar to Cossacks. Due to this, the Russians called the Kirghizs, Kirghiz-Kara and the Kazakhs, Kirghiz-Kaisak. The Kirghizs are Sunni Muslims and like the Kazakhs, many of them still practice pagan rituals, which are forbidden in Islam.

iv) The Tajiks

The Tajiks are the only group of people living in Xinjiang who speak both the Iranian and Turkic languages. The majority of the Tajiks in Central Asia live in the Republic of Tajikistan. They are also present throughout the Central Asian region such as in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan. The Tajiks who live in Xinjiang occupy the area of Sarikol or Tashkugan valley. In 1990, there were 33,538 Tajiks living in Xinjiang.

The Tajiks are also known as Sarjkolis or Sats in Xinjiang, a term introduced by General Sheng Shih-tsai, the Chinese warlord who ruled Xinjiang during the 1930s. The Sarikol Valley is located at the Chinese-Afghan border. The term Tajik probably originated from the Arabic word ‘taj’, which was used by the Arab invaders to refer to Central Asians who spoke Persian. Most Tajiks are mountaineers, farmers and herders and cultivate wheat and barley on the highlands of Sarikol. Most Tajiks are Hanafi Sunni

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19 Ibid.
20 The Cambridge Encyclopedia of China, p. 78.
Muslims although there are also Tajiks who are Ismaili or Shi’a Muslims who live in Wakhan at the Chinese-Afghan border.\textsuperscript{23}

v) The Uzbeks

The Uzbeks form the minority group among the Turkic people living in Xinjiang and in 1990, there were only 14,502 Uzbeks living in West Xinjiang. The majority of the Uzbeks in Central Asia live in the Republic of Uzbekistan and can be divided into two sub-groups namely the Iranian Uzbeks and Turkic Uzbeks.\textsuperscript{24} The Uzbeks got their name from Uzbek Khan, the ruler of the Mongol Empire of Golden Horde from 1313 to 1340. The Uzbeks succeeded in establishing their own empires during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, known as the Kokand, Bukhara and Khiva empires. These were located in modern-day Republic of Uzbekistan.

In the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Russians conquered most of the territories of the Uzbeks and hence provoked constant rebellions from Uzbeks. Uzbeks who lived in Xinjiang were mainly merchants and traders who were descendants of anti-Russian refugees.\textsuperscript{25} They also participated in the rebellion against the Chinese authorities in Xinjiang and supported the establishment of ETR in the 1940s. Today, most of the Uzbeks live in the cities of Kashgar, Kulga and Chuguchak in the Tarim Basin. The Uzbeks are Hanafi

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Raphael Isreali, "Is There Shi’s in Chinese Islam?," \textit{Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs}, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1988, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{25} Lattimore Owen, \textit{Pivot of Asia}, p. 149.
vi) The Turkics in General

Ethnic and linguistic ties among the Turkic people both in Xinjiang and Central Asia are very strong. The Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Tajiks and Uzbeks are united because they speak the same language -- Turkic. They also share the same heritage with the Huns who later invaded Europe. They are nomadic people who live in the steppe of Central Asia. The Turkic people are scattered throughout Central Asia with some of living in modern-day Turkey. Despite being scattered throughout Central Asia and some parts of modern-day Turkey, they still share strong ties with one another, mainly due to three factors. The first is language -- Turkic, the second being religion -- Islam, and the third is the way of life as most of them were nomadic people who lived in the steppe of Central Asia.

Today, apart from the Turkics, Xinjiang is also inhabited by the Han Chinese who emigrated to the province after the establishment of XUAR in 1955. In addition, other nomadic tribes such as Manchus, Tatars and Tibetans also live in Xinjiang. The Manchus are basically the descendants of government officials who emigrated to Xinjiang since the Ching Dynasty. There are also the Huis who are descendants of the Arab and Persian Muslims who inter-married with the Han Chinese. The Hui people speak Chinese despite maintaining significant elements of Arabic and Persian vocabulary in their language.

## Table 1

Table Showing the Turkic and Non-Turkic Population in Xinjiang in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uighurs</td>
<td>7,214,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Uighurs</td>
<td>12,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhs</td>
<td>1,111,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirghz</td>
<td>141,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajiks</td>
<td>33,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbeks</td>
<td>14,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui (Chinese Muslims)</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han (Non-Muslims Chinese)</td>
<td>6,885,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchu</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongxiang</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>4,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salar</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/6807/UIGHUR.html

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1.3 Political Evolution of Xinjiang Prior to 1756

Xinjiang was formerly known as East Turkestan or commonly known as ‘the land of the Turkic people in the east’. However, it was renamed Chinese Turkestan by the ruling Chinese authorities in 1756. The Turkics managed to establish their empires such as the Hsiung-nu or Hun Empire (210 B.C-36 A.D), the Bumin Tu’ Cheuh Empire (552-583), the Qutluq Elterish Tu’ Cheuh Empire (684-740) and the Orkhon Empire (745-840). The Hsiung-nu Empire was one of the earliest Turkic empires in Xinjiang. Archaeologists have discovered graves of the Hsiung-nu rulers in Niya, north of Xinjiang, that were well preserved. In fact during the peak of the Turkic empires, they were able to extend their influence into China and colonise the border areas. Similarly, the Chinese seized opportunities to invade East Turkestan when these empires were weak. Two Chinese dynasties that were able to invade East Turkestan were the Han Dynasty (206 B.C-220 A.D) in 140 B.C and the Tang Dynasty (581-907) in 639 AD. Nevertheless, the Chinese were unable to impose complete control over East Turkestan because of continued resistance by the Turkics.

The Turkics perceived the Chinese as a threat to their survival and feared that the Chinese would colonise their land and destroy their heritage as well as enslave them. The Turkics were able to liberate East Turkestan during the decline of the Chinese dynasties. The Chinese were finally defeated in 751 in the Battle of Talas River by the Turkics, with the assistance of the Arabs. Thus, the survival of the Turkic empires prior to 1756

depended very much on their military and political strength vis-à-vis the Chinese dynasties.

1.3.1 **Uighur Empires and the Islamisation of East Turkestan**

The Uighurs originated from the region around the Selenga River (present day north of Mongolia)\(^{29}\) and under the leadership of K'o-li-pei-lo, they began to consolidate their position in the eastern steppe of Central Asia.\(^{30}\) In 745, K'o-li-pei-lo successfully established the Orkhon Empire and made Karabalgasun as the capital of his empire. K'o-li-pei-lo was installed as the *qaghan* (paramount ruler) and his imperial title was Qutluq Bilge Kul Qaghan. The Uighurs adopted the Chinese political philosophy that considered the *qaghan* as the ‘Son of Heaven’. It is probable that this similarity motivated the Chinese to recognise the existence of the Orkhon Empire. In 745, the Tang Dynasty awarded K'o-li-pei-lo the title *Huai-jen qaghan* or ‘the Ruler of Goodness’. The Orkhon Empire reached its peak during the reign of I-ti-chien, who was also known as Mu-yu Qaghan.

Unlike the previous steppe empires that were weak when compared to the Chinese dynasties, the Orkhon Empire was significantly different because it was never colonised by the Chinese. In fact, the survival of the Tang Dynasty very much depended on military assistance from Orkhon Empire. For example, the Chinese sought help from the Uighurs and Arabs who offered military assistance to suppress the An-Lu-shan rebellion in China.

\(^{29}\) Ibid. p. 50. 
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
(755-763). As a result, Changan, the capital of the Tang Dynasty, was successfully liberated by the Uighur forces from the rebels. The Orkhon Empire was able to control the Tarim Basin, Bashbaliq (present day Xinjiang). With this, the Orkhon Empire enjoyed the monopoly of the lucrative silk trade between China and the Byzantine Empire.

By the 9th century, the Uighurs emerged as one of the dominant Turkic tribes in Central Asia and were able to expand their language and culture to other Turkic tribes. Diplomatic and trade relations were established between the Orkhon Empire and the Samarqand and Bukhara empires in Persia, resulting in drastic transformation to the lives of the Uighurs. The people of Samarqand and Bukhara were known as Sogdians and were believers of the Manicheism religion. Mu-yu Qaghan, the ruler of the Orkhon Empire, who was influenced by this religion converted to Manicheism in 763 and subsequently, declared Manicheism as the official religion. The Uighurs also started using Sogdian script instead of Runic script that were used since the Hsiung-nu Empire. The Sogdian script was eventually replaced by the Arabic script upon the conversion of the Uighurs to Islam in the 10th century. The Uighurs learned from the Sogdians agricultural techniques, irrigation and desert cultivation. As a result, the Uighurs were transformed from being a mere nomadic tribe to one that was sedentary, quickly learning the techniques of building city walls.

The Orkhon Empire was a very well structured and organised empire. Headed by the *qaghan* or the absolute ruler of the empire, he was assisted by a chancellor whose function was similar to that of a prime minister. Officials known as ‘beg’ and ‘elchi’ were given the responsibility of financial and secretarial affairs of the empire. According to Rene Grousset, the Uighurs are better deserved to be known as ‘teachers of civilisation’ when compared with the other tribes living in the eastern steppe.\(^{32}\)

Although the assimilation of the Sogdian culture brought many positive aspects, it also caused the Uighurs to abandon their nomadic lifestyle such that the love of urban lifestyle was instilled among the younger generation. However, the Uighurs control over the eastern steppe slipped away as they faced challenges from the other Turkic tribes. In 840, the Orkhon Empire was attacked by the Kirghizs who destroyed the capital of Karabalghasin and killed the *qaghan*. After the fall of the Orkhon Empire, the Uighurs migrated south to Xinjiang and established the Qocho Kingdom (840-1209), located in the Tarim Basin with the oasis city of Turfan as its new capital. The fall of the Orkhon Empire was a watershed in the history of the Uighurs because after 840, Turfan and the Tarim Basin replaced the Selenga region as the centre of Uighur civilisation.

The Uighurs who settled in the Tarim Basin were introduced to the Islamic faith in the late 9th century. In fact, Islam had reached Central Asia as early as mid 7th century through Arabic merchants and Islamic teachers who used the Silk Road to travel to China.

\(^{32}\) Rene Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1970, p. 120.
Saad ibn Abi Waqqas, one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad visited China in 650. In fact his visit as an official envoy of Khalifa Uthman Affan is considered by many Islamic scholars as the date of arrival of Islam to China.\textsuperscript{33} Many Central Asian tribes were converted by the Arabic merchants who were on their way to China via the Silk Road.\textsuperscript{34} The defeat of the Tang Dynasty at the hands of the Tashkent-Arabs (led by Ziyad bin Salih, the prince of Tashkent with the aid of the Abbasiid Empire) in 751 at the Battle of Talas River was a watershed in the history of Central Asia. This is because the defeat not only prevented the Chinese from expanding their influence to the western steppe but more importantly, it enabled the Arabs to spread their influence to Central Asia without facing any obstacles from the Chinese.

The first Turkic ruler to embrace Islam was Bughra Khan Satuq of the Karakhanid in 955. The capital of the Karakhanid was Kashgar. The Karakhanid sent missionaries to neighbouring kingdoms, especially the Qocho Kingdom. The Uighurs were attracted to the missionary zeal of the Sufis. In the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, Islam had penetrated deep into the oases of the Tarim Basin and subsequently, majority of the Uighurs converted to Islam. Sufism became very influential and among the prominent Sufi groups were the Nasqshbandiyah, Qadariyah and Kubrawiyah.\textsuperscript{35} The major Islamic centres in the eastern steppe were Turfan and Kashgar – the latter being named after Muhammad Kashgharli who compiled the first Turkic dictionary in the 11\textsuperscript{th} century.

At beginning of the 13th century, the Qocho Kingdom was faced with the onslaught from the Naimans -- one of the many Mongol tribes and rivals of Genghis Khan who found them to be an obstacle in his attempt to establish a united Mongol Empire. In 1204, the Naimans defeated the Uighurs thereby forcing them to pay annual tribute. Since the Uighurs and Genghis Khan had a common enemy and a similar desire to defeat the Naimans, both parties made a pact. As a result, in 1209, not only were the Naimans defeated by the Uighur-Genghis Khan alliance but the Qocho Kingdom was also absorbed into the Mongol Empire until 1756.

1.3.2 Mongol Changhatai Khanate, Kashgaria Khanate and the Khoja Khanate

Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol Empire divided his empire among his sons. Changhatai Khan, the second son inherited the eastern steppe of the Mongol Empire upon the death of Genghis Khan in 1227. Changhatai Khan was the first ruler of the Changhatai Khanate (1227-1334) -- khanate being a Mongol term for a kingdom ruled by a Khan. The Mongols continued to rule the region of the Tarim Basin for more than four centuries until the Manchu invasion in the 18th century. During Mongol rule over the eastern steppe, the Turkics were able to influence the Mongol culturally and as such it was considered a period of ‘Turkicization’ of the Mongols.\(^\text{36}\) The Mongols who lived in the Tarim Basin merged their language with the language used by the Turkics, creating a new language known as ‘Changhatai Turkish’.\(^\text{37}\) Although the Turkics were colonised by


\(^{37}\) Ibid.
the Mongols, they did not rebel against them because in reality, the Mongols were assimilated into the Turkic culture.

One of the greatest impact of Mongol rule in the eastern steppe was the spread of Islam. Tarmashirin who reigned from 1326 to 1334 was the first Changhatai ruler to embrace Islam and declared Islam as the official religion. As a result, more Turkics embraced Islam. After the death of Tarmashirin in 1334, a civil war broke out between the various Mongol tribes, eventually resulting in the collapse of Changhatai Khanate. Nevertheless, the Changhatai royal household managed to retain their positions in the Kashgar region and eventually managed to establish another empire known as the Kashgaria Khanate (1334-1678), although it was still unable to restore the previous glory of the Changhatai Khanate. The rulers of the Kashgaria Khanate continued to be the patrons of Islamic movements in the eastern steppe whereby in 1442, the Id Gah Mosque, the spiritual centre of the Uighurs was built in Kashgar.

In the 16th century, Maktum Asyam, a learned Islamic theologian from Arabia arrived in Kashgar and was able to convert many Uighurs to Islam and win the trust of Said Khan who was then ruler of the Kashgaria Khanate. Maktum Asyam adopted the title ‘Khoja’ which originated from the Persian term khvajah meaning preacher or teacher. Maktum Asyam’s two sons, Kalyan and Issak Vali, were founders of the Ak

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38 Ibid., p. 174.
Tagh (White Mountaineers) and the Khara Tagh clans (Black Mountaineers). The popularity of the khojas rose and in 1678, Khoja Appak, the leader of the White Mountaineers overthrew Ismail Khan, the last ruler of the Kashgaria Khanate with the help of Western Mongols and established the Khoja Khanate (1678-1756). The collapse of the Kashgaria Khanate also marked the end of the Changhatai royal household, many of whom were descendants of Genghis Khan.

Khoja Appak was appointed by the Western Mongols as ruler of Kashgar but upon his death, a power struggle erupted between the White Mountaineers and Black Mountaineers. The White Mountaineers were against the Western Mongols and harboured ambitions of establishing an independent Islamic khanate in Kashgar. The Black Mountaineers on the other hand wanted Western Mongol suzerainty to continue to achieve their goal of forming an independent Islamic state. The leaders of the White Mountaineers, Khoja Ahmet and his sons, Boor Khan Eddin and Khoja Khan, were even willing to co-operate with the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911) to overthrow the Western Mongols. They had assumed that the Manchus would assist them to liberate Kashgar from the Western Mongols and establish an Islamic khanate. In 1756, the Ching Dynasty invaded Drungaria and Kashgar and subsequently overthrew the Western Mongols with the powers of the khojas transferred to the Chiang Chun or Military Commander in the city of Ili. Boor Khan Eddin and Khoja Khan felt betrayed by the Ching Dynasty and in 1757, rebelled against the Ching Dynasty and established an Islamic khanate in Kashgar. In retaliation, Emperor Qian Long of the Ching Dynasty sent his troops to crush the

rebellion in 1758 and Boor Khan Eddin, Khoja Khan and their entire families were executed, with the exception for Sarwin Sak, the eldest son of Boor Khan Eddin. The invasion by the Ching Dynasty and the subsequent collapse of the Khoja Khanate is historically significant because Xinjiang succumbed to Chinese rule from 1756 till present day.