Chapter 13

Inner Asian Muslim Merchants at the Closure of the Silk Routes in the Seventeenth Century

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The decline of the overland Silk Routes is in general associated with developments that shifted the greater part of the transcontinental trade to the sea routes.[1] While this shift indeed involved an increase in the volume of trade between East and West, trade along the old routes continued nevertheless in a different form. It is this change in the nature of the organization of such trade and traders that we mostly perceive as the decline of the Silk Routes. The aim of this chapter is to bring a further qualification to the decline of the Routes by demonstrating that the trade and traders did not cease to function, and that instead, state formations that were playing the role of intermediaries along the Routes were eliminated. That elimination was due to the expansion of sedentary empires of the early modern age. It was at the moment when two of those empires, the Chinese and the Russian, came into direct contact with each other, starting with the treaties of Nerchinsk (1698), that the "intermediaries" were curbed in their activities and lost their function.[2] As a result the merchants—in this case the Muslim merchants of the Silk Routes—became merchants of the empires who were involved much more with intracontinental than with transcontinental trade, as had formerly been the case.

Intermediary political structures had existed in Inner Asia since ancient times and had been of nomadic or sedentary origin. Their main characteristic was the fact that they relied heavily on trading activities along the transcontinental trade routes. Such formations were not indigenous to Inner Asia. But in the Inner Asian context they should be

regarded as quite distinct from the so-called conquest dynasties.[3] States that played the role of intermediaries were not conquest dynasties; instead they thrived by making the best of their own strategic location within trade routes. The Wusun in the Han times, the Kushan or the later Uighur Kingdoms of Kocho and Gansu, as well as the Tangut State in East Asia, and the Ghaznevids and Khwarezmshahs in West Asia, are examples of such states thriving especially on the overland trade between West and East Asia. The Persian epic *Shahnama*[4] provides us with an episode of the historical dilemmas faced by such political formations playing the role of "intermediaries." When news reached the Hephthalite Kingdom that the ruler of Northern China was sending an envoy to the Persian ruler because he "desired to win the friendship of the King," the reaction was as follows

> Ill has befallen us from the stars. If now
> the monarch of Iran and Khan of Chin
> negotiate and thus become good friends,
> that friendship will hold menace for ourselves.
> And this our state be wasted on two sides,
> we must make a foray and deprive
> the envoy of his life.[5]

The envoy was accordingly killed and the Khwarezmshahs of Transoxania acted in like fashion when the Mongols sent their first merchant caravan.[6] In these polities, thriving as they did on merchant activities, political and merchant power were interdependent. This interdependence found in the Islamic age an ideological framework in the form of the Islamic law (*shari'a*) that was everywhere in force for Muslim merchants. From the eighth century on, Muslim merchants gradually extended their sphere of influence eastward towards China. By the thirteenth century Muslim merchants had become the masters of the Silk Routes of Inner Asia, especially as members of Muslim Merchant Companies called *ortak* (partner).[7]

From the early days of Islam, this spirit of interdependence between political and merchant power contributed in some measure to development—Muslim merchants would either precede or accompany new "Islamic" governments along the trade routes. As a rule they acted as "intermediaries" along the overland trade routes, i.e., the Silk Routes. Muslim merchants, however, did not penetrate the China trade. Their eventual infiltration of the China trade did not lead to the establishment of an Islamic government, on the contrary, it was in cooperation with the Mongols in the Mongolian World Empire. This took the form of a partnership between Muslim merchants and the Mongols.[8] This trans-

lation for Muslim merchants and political formations from interdependence to partnership did not develop to the advantage of the Muslim merchants operating in the overland trade.[9] Under the Mongolian Empire, this partnership evolved within half a century to take the form of patronage of the merchants. Muslim merchants who were partners in the state became merchants with privileges in the service of the state. Those who were not privileged were stripped of their special rights and were compelled to pay taxes.[10]

From then on, the majority of the Muslim merchants operating in the overland trade mostly held a subordinate position described by Hodgson as being "under the military patronage state."[11] By the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries these military patronage states had become regional empires, such as those of the Ottomans, Safawids, and Timurids in India (the Mughals). This regionalization of Asia under major empires meant that Muslim merchants had to face political formations that could not be manipulated by Muslim merchant associations.

Concomitant with these changes, a new phenomenon appeared in Inner Asia, i.e., a tendency among Muslim merchant groups to wrest their autonomy from political formations by associating themselves with Islamic Sufi orders (*tarikahs*), among which the Nakshbandiyya were to take the lead. From the fifteenth century onwards, we observe in Inner Asia not so much the formation of regional empires as the expansion of Nakshbandi networks in which traders played a major role. It was also during this time that the Muslim merchants in Inner Asia became known generally as "Bukharans." Most of these Bukharan merchants were associated with various *khankahs* or *takiyas* (hostels) that were known as "Bukhari" or "Bukharliyya." For the most part these Bukhari strongholds were of Nakshbandi denomination, although some of them belonged to the Kadiriyya.[12] The merchants and Sufis associated with these hostels were not all from Bukhara. Khokandis in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for instance were called Bukharans because they were associated with Bukhari *meshayikh* (spiritual leaders). Likewise a merchant from Turfan (in present Xinjiang, People's Republic of China) was also known as the "Bukharan from Turfan." It would seem that this appellation was influenced by the role Bukhara played as a pilgrimage site where the tomb of the founder of the Nakshbandiyya *tarikah* was located.[13] It would also appear that, because of the importance of the khojas from Kashgar and within the Nakshbandiyya networks, Tarim Basin—where these cities are located—was called "Little Bukhara" even in the nineteenth century. In other words this appellation concerns the cities south of the Tianshan in present Xinjiang, also known as Eastern Turkestan. In fact, a German observer taking issue with the term "Little Bukhara" says the following in 1863:

> Little Bukhara. The plateau between Thian schan and Kuen luen is so-called. It is also known as Upper Tatarei or Eastern Turkestan. However, the term 'Little Bukara' as A. Erman points out, is meaningless and should no longer be used. In fact Eastern Turkestan is not small, nor has it any links with the State of Bukhara—which is part of (independent) Turkestan—other than the fact that its caravans passed that way.[14]

The survival of this appellation into the nineteenth century indicates the intensity of Nakshbandi networks in the seventeenth century. Thus, in the regions where these networks functioned—especially in the Tarim Basin where neither the Mongols nor Temür had been able to patronize the merchants of the oasis cities—the interdependence between merchants and political formations of the earlier Islamic age continued.

In the seventeenth century, as the relationship between Muslim merchants, intermediary governments, empires, and Sufi orders crystallized, the formation of modern empires and their subsequent domination over Asian affairs left little room either for "intermediary governments" or for Muslim merchants functioning in interdependence with them. As a result, Muslim merchants became localized under the cloak of Sufi orders and at the same time transformed themselves into dependent elements of the empires. It is in the context of this transformation that seventeenth century "Uighur"[15] merchants will be examined below. To illustrate the situation I will focus on the second half of the seventeenth century when the Uighur merchants had to operate under the Western Mongol Zunghar banner. At the same time, as a result of their Nakshbandi affiliations, they also experimented with an Islamic State, leading to the formation of the Khoja Rule in 1679 under Appak Khoja. But both the Zunghars and Appak Khoja's Islamic State were only intermediaries. However, the days of "intermediary" formations were gone for both nomadic and sedentary polities. The seventeenth century saw the rise of early modern empires.

The first quarter of the seventeenth century witnessed the rise of the Manchu State which, in the second quarter, allied itself to the eastern Mongols as subordinate partners, conquered China and established the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). On the other hand the Russian Empire was expanding rapidly towards the Pacific. In India the Timurids under Babur had established their territorial empire that came to be known as the Mughal Empire (1526-1707). With the Ottomans in the west (1290-1920) and the Safawids (1503-1722) in Iran, the peripheries of Asia had accordingly been marked out.

In Inner Asia on the other hand, both the Özbeg Khanate in Transoxania and the Sa'idiyya State in the Tarim Basin were political for-

mations that depended on precarious power balances.[16] Unlike the regionalization of empires, here in Inner Asia we witness a tendency towards a dissolution of centralized regimes and a development of many smaller nodal points. It is a process that developed as the Ozbeg Khanate and the Sa'idiyya State converted from being political structures based on nomadic and sedentary constituents to states with more purely sedentary interests. The political and economic vacuum that resulted from this shift both in the north of Transoxania and north of the Tarim Basin was then utilized by nomadic groups, i.e., the Lamaistic Buddhist Western Mongols known as the Zunghars in the seventeenth century and the Muslim Turkic-speaking Kazakhs or Mongols later on in the eighteenth century.

The Western Mongols, on the one hand, were descendants of the Oyirad (Oirat) Mongols and, on the other, owed their political existence to the population movements of the beginning of the seventeenth century following the formation of the Manchu State. Thus, as a result of population shifts and the ensuing warfare in Mongolia, the Western Mongols had moved westward by 1616: some into Tarbaghatai, some towards the Irtysh and the Volga region, and others to Eastern Tibet, the Qinghai province of the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile an independent extension of the Kökenor (Qinghai) branch was nomadizing between Lakes Balkash and Zaysan, and gradually extending its presence to the summer pasture grounds in the north of Turfan. In central Tianshan and to the east of it, the Khoyid under their leaders Yeldeng Taishi, his brother Sumur, and their sons, Chuchkin and Yalpu, began to exert their influence in the Tarim Basin from the late 1640s on. Their activities concentrated mainly around Karashahr or Chalish, the passway to the Tarim Basin from the north near present Korla. Some of these Khoyid leaders bore Muslim names, such as Ebu Shah or Sultan Taishi, indicating that the Mongolian- and Turkic-speaking populations were not as divided by religious fervor as was destined to be the case in the nineteenth century. Sultan Taishi is known in Russian records for the envoys he sent to Russia in 1657.[17] By 1655 the Tarim Basin was practically encircled by different Western Mongol groups, whether by the Zunghars in the north or the Kökenor branch in the south and southeast.

In these circumstances, envoys or tribute missions sent from Sa'idiyya State to China (see below) were under threat from Western Mongols. In one such case, an envoy from Yarkand was threatened on his return trip by a Mongol prince who was nomadizing between Hami and the Jiayuguan.[18] It is also no wonder that the Western Mongol princes were not alone in being interested in the affairs of the Tarim Basin; the Chinggisid princes of the Tarim Basin would try to use Mon-

gol power for their own ends, allying themselves from time to time with the Zunghars in particular.

The rulers of the Tarim Basin were descendants of Chinggis Khan and of the leaders of the Dughlat, a Mongolian tribe. Earlier they were known as the Later or Eastern Chaghataids (c. 1347-1570)[19] as they were established on the remnants of the Chaghatai Ulus, the patrimony of Chinggis Khan's second son. As Later Chaghataids, under the leadership of Tughluk Temür (1347-1363), a descendant of Chinggis Khan from a minor line, they had also adopted Islam. Their Muslim identity became so important that the sixteenth century author Mirza Mehemmed Haidar Dughlat finds it appropriate to speak of them only as Muslim Mongols, who in Western scholarship have generally been known as Moghuls. The relationship of these later Chaghataids or the Muslim Mongols (Moghuls) to the earlier Chaghataids is also recognized by the early Qing authorities. A decree dated 19 July 1646 and addressed to the Khan of Turfan reads: "According to my recollections, your country, the Turfan region, is the land that was previously granted to Chaghadai, the second son of the Yuan ruler Chinggis Khan."[20] The Muslim identity of the inhabitants of the Tarim Basin also finds expression in another early Qing entry from 16 August 1645 where the Khanate is referred to as *Huihui guo*, meaning literally "the Muslim country,"[21] probably because it was the Muslim country closest to China.

The Later Chaghatai Khanate was a political structure in which the Islamic, Mongolian, and Turkish traditions had merged—as such it was rooted both in nomadic and in sedentary interests. Already by the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, its rulers became more firmly established in the agricultural domains to the south of the Tianshan and slowly lost the support of the nomadic populations.[22] It was also during this time that the Islamic Sufi orders began to penetrate Tarim Basin politics.[23] Since both trends—sedentarization and affiliation with Sufi orders—started with the reign of Sultan Sa'id Khan (1514-1533), the rule of Chinggisid princes from 1514 until their elimination from rule by Appak Khoja in 1679 was referred to by present Uighur scholars either as the Sa'idiyya State or, from their capital in Yarkand, as the Yarkand Khanate.[24] The Sa'idiyya State presented a curious picture. Population-wise it had a sedentary basis, yet its political ideology was still very much influenced by steppe traditions and as such lacked a centralized rule. The state was based on the principles of power-sharing, mostly among brothers. Power was not always shared on peaceful terms, it allowed for military as well as political maneuvering depending upon the circumstances. Thus we see Chinggisid princes ruling in the different cities of Tarim Basin, generally regarding one or two of their number as "seniors." At first the rulers of Yarkand and Turfan played the role of seniors. By the middle of

the seventeenth century, 'Abdullah Khan (1636-1668) had been successful in getting his own rule recognized as "primus inter pares."[25]

In the year 1655 the situation was such that according to all appearances there was only one ruler, i.e., 'Abdullah Khan governing in Yarkand. However, his envoy to the Qing court, a certain Kebeg, was at pains to convince the authorities that the Tarim Basin was not governed by one person but by seven brothers each ruling from a city under his jurisdiction and recognizing the ruler of Yarkand as senior. He says:

> The rulers of Hami, Turfan and Yarkand are all brothers. Their father's name was Abdurrahim. He ruled in Yarkand. He died a long time ago. He had nine sons. The eldest is 'Abdullah Khan and he rules in Yarkand. The second son is Ebul Mehemmed Khan. He used to rule in Turfan, but died two years ago. He was succeeded by the next son in order, Sultan Sa'id Khan. The next son in order was Babai Khan; he used to rule in Hami. Because he was found guilty by the 'Heavenly Court' [i.e., China], the ruler of Yarkand arrested him and had Ebul Mehemmed Khan's son succeed him. The next son in order is Mehemmed Sultan and he rules in Pali. The next son, Shah Khan, rules in Kucha [Kuqa]. The next one died quite young. The next one, Ismail, rules in Aksu. The next one rules in Khotan [Yutian]. Previously, whenever the ruler of Yarkand asked his brother to send a tribute mission from Turfan, the mission documents carried the name of the Khan of Turfan. At present the ruler of Yarkand is recognized as senior by his brothers, so that the documents carry the name of the Khan of Yarkand.[26]

As if to substantiate his picture of harmony and account for the fact that circumstances in his homeland were different, Kebeg adds: "We little countries do not know the Great Rites and Decorum (*dali*)." When the Qing authorities inquired as to why different names were used in different documents, it seems that the simplest solution was for Kebeg to assume a condescending attitude, thereby indicating the existence of many rulers in his country.[27] The above words were expressed in relation to these facts which would explain why different tribute caravans appeared to be commissioned by different rulers. If it were not in the interest of the Sa'idiyya rulers and princes to send different tribute caravans, the envoy Kebeg could content himself with speaking of the rule of 'Abdullah Khan alone, as contemporaneous local historical sources do.[28] Accordingly his attempt to paint a rosy picture of seven brothers ruling in harmony should be presented with some reservations.[29]

In fact, the "little countries" mentioned by Kebeg were facing severe problems at this juncture. They were situated in the oasis cities which were both centers of agricultural production and halting places in the overland trade. All the rulers and princes were eager therefore to retain

their position as intermediaries between China and the West. This enabled them to establish quite effective networks with which to squeeze profits out of the caravan merchants. The fact that there were seven rulers meant repeated pressure on the caravan merchants. By the turn of the seventeenth century the Chinggisids ruling in the Tarim Basin had lost control of the north of Tianshan.[30] Loss of control of the north also meant loss of military power;[31] thus, the ruling Chinggisids found themselves ruling the old cities in the Tarim Basin in much the same way as the earlier city states played the role of intermediaries in the overland trade. However, they found the situation extremely difficult as they were surrounded on almost every side by different Western Mongol groups. The rulers attempted to collect transit fees besides initiating caravans of their own.

Benedict de Goes' account gives us detailed information on the circumstances prevailing in Yarkand at the start of the seventeenth century. He arrived in Yarkand in 1603 on his way to China; the caravan of merchants he had accompanied there from Kabul dispersed so that he had to wait for another one to form. Mehemmed Khan, the ruler of the western domains, sold the right to put together a caravan in his name for 200 sacks of musk. The caravan leader thus acquired the right to act as the leader of a diplomatic mission. This was common practice. The sixteenth century Ottoman traveler, 'Ali Akbar, mentions this too, saying: "Merchants coming from Islamic countries use the overland caravan route. They have to use the title 'envoy.'"[32] Goes then tells us that the ruler also confirmed that all the people joining the caravan were under the command of the caravan leader. The latter in addition secured the right to act as "envoys" for four more persons. For this he had to pay a lot of money and present valuable gifts. The members of the caravan had all purchased their "seats" in the caravan. Here we see in great detail how a caravan heading towards China took on the role of a diplomatic mission, which in Chinese parlance would be referred to as a tribute mission. "There was no other way for them to enter that country," says 'Ali Akbar.[33] Once the caravan had started out, the documents were examined at a place called "Yolchi,"[34] meaning a checkpoint for caravans. This is where exit dues were paid. Goes further tells us that the merchants would be informed as to when they could leave, since their arrival time was determined by the Ming Court. They could not go there every year, and were obliged to arrive at determined intervals.[35] Such circumstances explain why each city would try to send a caravan in the name of its ruler. In the case of Kebeg's 1655 mission, we even see that a separate mission from the small town of Bai near Kucha also arrived in China.[36] Although these city caravans would be profitable for the merchants involved, it seems that the costs involved were too high

so that we see merchants gradually turning for protection elsewhere. This was facilitated by the changing balance of power among new actors on the Inner Asian scene. With the turn of events and competing nodes of power, they were going to associate themselves with the Zunghar Mongols who were establishing their empire in Inner Asia (1640-1759). It was the emergence of the Zunghars that led to the weakening of the Sa'idiyya Khans.

As a consequence, notwithstanding Kebeg's reassurances about the "harmonious alliance" that ruled his country, there occurred a good deal of internal strife among the cities of the Tarim Basin as well as between the Western Mongols and the Chinggisid princes, who were the rulers of the Tarim Basin. The "security" of the trade routes leading through the cities of the Tarim Basin came under threat. The local historian Shah Mahmud ibn Mirza Fazil Choras reported in 1633 that the stretch of the road connecting Kucha to the Turfan road was no longer safe.[37] As this stretch covers the central portion of the northern edges of the Tarim Basin, the information indicates that Yarkand was cut off from trade with China. We see 'Abdullah Khan conducting various campaigns into the Ferghane area in an effort to increase his sphere of influence and bargaining power in relation to outlets. But he was defeated most of the time by the Kirghiz or by the Zunghars whose forces were better disciplined than his.[38] The eastern part of the domains came entirely under Zunghar domination after 1659.[39]

The problems of the Tarim Basin routes had certain repercussions in the western provinces of China. It appears that many people were moving into Western China so that they could carry on private trading with Tarim Basin cities and Hami. In this way, apparently, the merchants tried to overcome the squeeze of the so-called official "tributary" missions. The volume of this official trade, however, was not insignificant; Ming quotas established the minimum "official" quantities for such trade and give some idea of its volume. Those quotas remained operative even after the downfall of the dynasty and were in fact adopted by the Qing later in 1646:

> We have examined the old regulations. When Turfan came to present tribute, what they could purchase in the capital is shown below on a per capita basis: 15 *jin* [7.5 kg] of tea, 50 sets of chinaware; 5 copper jugs, 15 bolts of *sha, lo* silk and satin of diverse colours, 30 bolts of *juan,* 30 bolts of grey-blue striped cotton, 30 bolts of white linen, 30 *jin* of quilting cotton, 2 rugs with flower designs, 300 sheets of paper for ritual purposes, 5 *jin* of paint of diverse colours, 30 *jin* each of sweetmeats, dried fruits and ginger, 30 *jin* of medicine, 30 *jin* of black prunes and 10 *jin* of white and black alum.

> After departure from the capital, when they arrive at Lintaofu and Lanzhou, they can acquire oxen, sheep, ploughs, shovels and iron pots from the members of the garrison troops stationed there ... But it is forbidden for them to purchase iron or military weapons.[40]

In addition to this official trade, there was a great deal of private trade going on, which was always a cause of concern to Chinese bureaucracy. By 1656 an immigrant population of Muslim Uighurs had joined the already large Muslim population (the present Hui) in the area of Suzhou (the present Jiuquan) and Ganzhou (the present Zhangye) area. Speaking of the Muslim population in Suzhou, Matteo Ricci says that they resided here in large numbers because of the trade with Kashgar and other places in the west. In fact the Muslims were so numerous that they lived in a separate part of the city.[41]

The Governor-General of Sichuan Shaanxi also submitted a memorial in 1656 in relation to these issues:

> While the earlier Ming Dynasty was using the loose-rein (*jimi*) policy against the people in the outer frontiers, these people had acquired some very bad habits. Because the people of Turfan are avaricious, they used to bring along four or five hundred people when they came to present tribute. They called them 'hostages' and, instead of taking them back with them when they returned, they left them in Inland [i.e., China] in order to pursue their profit-making. These people in turn then carried on their [commercial] relations secretly with Hami. Therefore in the five counties of Ganzhou (present Zhangye) the number of Muslims is increasing every day. It was such people who contributed to the earlier rebellion. Now they have repented and are presenting tribute. But they begin by bringing along men and women and then request food and similar items. If we permit them to stay in the Interior [China], they will shortly cause a calamity.[42]

The above-mentioned revolt had taken place in conjunction with the establishment of the Qing Dynasty. Different groups of Muslims established an administration within the city of Suzhou and acknowledged the leadership of a Chinggisid prince, Torumtai, son of Sultan Sa'id Babai Khan from Turfan. The issues in this revolt appear to have been quite complex.[43] On the one hand Chinggisid princes were involved, on the other, the Turfan ruler abducted about 150 people from this region. If he had come in support of the rebels, he need not have abducted people from the same place. Later when the Qing authorities asked for these people to be returned, the request was not granted on the pretext that they had been taken away by the Zunghars.[44]

This problem was still not solved in 1686 when the ruler of Turfan once again requested the return of these people:

> Now I am specially sending our local products as a present. Many of the people who were taken along by the chieftains in their tribute missions remained in the Gansu area. Later on they gradually started to live in the Xining area. Please see to it that they return in order to assist our tribute envoys in their journeys back and forth.[45]

I am inclined to interpret these repeated requests about people who had made their homes in China as so many attempts by the Tarim Basin princes to regain control of merchants who were slipping away from their sphere of influence.

Two independent developments seem to have been at the root of this disenchantment with the Tarim Basin princes. In the first place, the seventeenth century marked the start of the influence of the *khojas* of the Nakshbandi order in the politics of the Tarim Basin and also among merchant groups. And secondly, we also know that during this century the *khojas* were active in the Gansu region.[46] These *khoja* networks were also quite effective in establishing alliances with the Zunghars. As a result, Muslim caravan traders became increasingly closely affiliated with the Nakshbandi order and trade network, on the one hand, and made use of the larger networks of the Zunghars by serving as their traders and envoys on the other. This accounts for the fact that there were fewer and fewer tribute missions from the Tarim Basin to China.[47] Muslim caravan leaders were making use of three centers in particular outside the Tarim Basin. The first of such centers operated in the Gansu region within the Nakshbandi networks, the second in Bukhara in Transoxania, while the third operated in Ili as part of the Zunghar networks. Mention has already been made of the fact that these merchants were known universally as Bukharans, probably because of their connections with the Nakshbandi groups center in Bukhara.

The center in the Gansu region was connected not only to the China trade but also to Russia and Tibet. Cities such as Ganzhou (Zhangye), Lanzhou, Suzhou (Jiuquan), Tankar, and Xining were all situated in this region. At this time they were all under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General in Shaanxi. Ysbrands Ides, a Danish merchant who traveled as an envoy from Russia to Beijing in 1693, speaks of this trade as follows:

> This Province [Shaanxi] also borders on the Upper Principality of Tibet which extends to the Territories of the great Mongol, from whose Dominions great numbers of Merchants come to the vast trading city of Zunning, in the Kingdom of Xiensi [Shaanxi]: and the door of commerce being for some time opened here and liberty granted to them as well as Muscovites and Tartars to trade here; they have with their wares and trade introduced the Mahometan Religion which, as weeds grow apace, is spread all over

> China, to that degree that there appears more of that accursed seed than the true Doctrine of Jesus Christ.[48]

The Transoxanian centre was also connected to the Indian, Near Eastern, and Russian trades. In the Near East we know of Bukharan traders in Aleppo.[49] These connections were later cultivated by the Khokand Khanate. We also know that Kashgari merchants had strong connections with Mecca, a connection used both for pilgrimage and trade. Both merchants and rulers who encountered political problems would customarily take the route which led through Badakhshan, Kashmir, and India. The Indian trade was also connected to the Khotan-Kashmir route in the Tarim Basin, mostly frequented by Uighur merchants, the so-called Bukharans. But the Transoxanian route was also inhabited by Indian trading colonies, involved principally in usury and banking rather than in carrying goods.[50]

The third center developed in the seventeenth century as a result of the rise of the Zunghars. Camping grounds and tiny "towns" consisting of a few mud-brick houses grouped around a lamasery as in the region of Qobogh Sari and Ili are frequently mentioned by Russian envoys on their way to China.[51] The records of yet another embassy (Sparthary Milescu) mention that by 1676 the trade routes through the Tarim Basin had been replaced by new routes through Zunghar territory:

> The 5th July [1676], a Bukharan, a citizen of Turfan came to see the Ambassador [i.e., Sparthary Milescu] who had been last year to China; but had not gone back to Tobolsk on account of the war. He said there were seventy-two of them, and they arrived with the Tarkhan Lama, who was sent by the Kalmuk Khan Ochirtu, to trade, having with him horses, and slaves, and a few ermines, which they had sold cheap - 25 *lans* per hundred; and good horses at 70 and 80 *lans*, poor ones at 30 and even 20; good slaves went for 100 *lans*, others for 70 or less. As to the war, he said that there was fighting still going on between Galdan and Ochirtu, so that they knew not whether the caravan could get through to Tobolsk or not. He was questioned closely as to the road from China to Asterkhan, how one could go. He answered that from the last Chinese town, from Kokotana [the present Hohhot], to the Bukharan town of Trufan [i.e., Turfan], where Baba Khan lives, who has often sent his envoys to the Great Tsar, it is a 40 days' journey with pack animals as the caravans go, and from Trufan they go to the Bukharan town Samarcand, also by caravan, in 60 days. And from Samarcand to Asterkhan by caravan is 20 days or less, according to the pace, with a certain small danger from the Kalmuks and their natives up to Trufan, *but none from Trufan to Asterkhan* and the way lay through Ochirtu's Kalmuks.[52]

The activities of the Bukharan merchants (among whom the Uighur merchants played an important role) are described in Russian sources.[53] These merchants brought Chinese, Central Asian, and other goods to the autumn fairs at Lake Yamush on the right bank of the Irtish River. Here they did business with Mongolian, Russian, and Siberian merchants. The salt deposits around Lake Yamush had come under Zunghar control so that salt supplies for Tobolsk were dependent on the whims of Zunghar princes.[54] The Zunghars in fact used every possible means to establish themselves as an indispensable element of the Inner Asian trade routes. They were not in a position to conquer China, neither did they entertain any such objective. Their objective was to become the indispensable intermediary in the Sino-Russian trade. To this end they spread rumours in the manner of many other intermediaries in the past. In one of their early encounters with the Russians they tried to create the impression that China was at a distance of three years.

The Uighur merchants, whom local sources call after the cities of their origin and non-local ones call either Bukharans or Muslims,[55] associated themselves with the Zunghars as a means of getting away from the strife and pressures of the Tarim Basin, but also because the Zunghars in all probability did not tax them. The Zunghars taxed the local population of Tarim Basin after 1679 when they began to intervene in Tarim Basin politics on behalf of Appak Khoja whom they installed as the ruler of the country in their name. From that time on, the names of Uighur merchants occur frequently in the Zunghar embassies to the Qing court. The Uighur (Bukharan) merchants whom Sparthary quotes had also come in a Zunghar caravan. Such caravans, which the Qing court sought to limit to approximately 200 persons,[56] expanded to contain as many as 2,000 or 3,000 people at a time. Erke Beg, Ibrahim, Kör Mahmud, Kurban, Kurbanbay, Mahmud, Noyan Khoja, Pulad Khoja, Said, Seyfeddin, Shah Huseyin, Shah Khoja, and Tashlan Khoja are some of the mission leaders mentioned in the sources. Their names tell us that they were Muslims. Disconcerted by the fact that there were large numbers of Muslims among the Zunghar envoys, the Qing court raised certain objections but were assured that the envoys of the *tayishis* (Zunghar princes) had always been Muslims.[57] This kind of large tribute mission consisting of at least 2,000 people continued at least up to 1694.[58] It should be noted, however, that the Turfani merchant whom Sparthary met in 1676 spoke of their participation in the Zunghar trade before the Zunghar occupation of the Tarim Basin.

By joining the ranks of Zunghar tribute missions, the Uighur merchants of the Tarim Basin confined their movements mainly to routes north of the Tianshan. The Zunghars had rendered the major routes leading south of the Tianshan inhospitable, thereby diverting them to pass

through their own territory. The new routes extended from Turfan to Samarkand over the Tianshan (sixty days) and led to Astrakhan (twenty days). The Samarkand route was also connected to the routes connecting Kabul to Iran and Kashmir to India. Further the Tobolsk-Tara-Yamush Lake route led along the Irtish to Turfan and from there to Köke Khota in twenty days (present Hohhot). From Turfan they also extended to Suzhou (present Jiuquan) and from there to Xining and Tibet.

It is also noteworthy that the so-called White Mountain or, to be more exact, the "White Cap" faction of Appak Khoja's followers were located in such cities as Kashgar, Aksu, and Kucha along the southern slopes of the Tianshan. Appak Khoja was instrumental in bringing Zunghar domination to the Tarim Basin in 1679. Yet the inhabitants of the oasis cities did not yield to this domination—more than 74,000 people were killed in the struggles against the Zunghars and Appak Khoja.[59] The sources make it clear, nevertheless, that Appak Khoja was assisted by the notables of these oasis cities, along with his followers who numbered 300,000. In the eighteenth century the notables of these cities decided that the days of the Zunghar were over. They were guided in this above all else by their White Cap (or Mountain) Nakshbandi affiliations.[60]

In conclusion I wish to emphasize that the general developments affecting the closure of the Silk Routes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may be considered as part of the crisis of the seventeenth century as a whole. More specifically, however, it was caused by the fact that the rulers of the Tarim Basin were confronted with grave difficulties as intermediaries. Their merchants sought outlets in alliance with the Zunghars who were yet another intermediary formation. Developments on the Asian continent left no room for intermediaries, while merchants continued to trade as members of modern empires. Their affiliation with the Nakshbandi networks compensated for the weaknesses of the political structures of the Tarim Basin. The close spiritual ties among the merchants enabled them to carry on their commercial activities at a specific level without being too disturbed by political changes at a general level.

Notes

1. A.G. Frank, "The Centrality of Central Asia" (Urumqi Seminar Paper, 1990).
2. Adopting a slightly different approach, Morris Rossabi sees here the exclusion of Muslim merchants from the tea trade of China (M. Rossabi, "Muslim and Central Asian Revolts," in *From Ming to Ch'ing*, edited by J.D. Spence and J.E. Wills, Jr. [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979], p. 91) whereas my emphasis here is on the continuation of trade with different trading patterns. In a later study Rossabi states that short-distance caravan-trade did not diminish. In his opinion internal political disturbances around the Tarim Basin contributed to the decline of long-distance trade. He further maintains that commerce between pastoral and sedentary societies continued uninterrupted even after the sixteenth century (M. Rossabi, "The 'Decline' of the Central Asian Caravan Trade," in *Ecology and Empire*, edited by G. Seaman [Los Angeles: Ethnographics/USC, 1989], pp. 81-102). A recent study by Stephen Dale (S. Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994]) shows, on the other hand, that Central Asian trade was still an important factor in Asian commerce.
3. T. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 164-84.
4. Names and terms in Eastern Turki, Persian, Arabic, and Modern Uighur have been transcribed according to the system developed by Janos Eckmann in his Chaghatai Manual with the following changes: c is j, cis is ch, g is gh, h is kh, q is k (to differentiate it from the *pinyin* q), and s is sh.

   In phonetic reconstructions from Chinese texts I have not used diacritical marks because, in such cases, names were not necessarily written on the basis of texts. The oral tradition played an important role in most cases.
5. Firdawsi, *The Shah nama of Firdausi*, translated by A.G. Warner and E. Warner, vol. 7 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1905-1915), p. 329.
6. Barthold,1968, p. 399.
7. I. Togan, "The Mongols' Trade Partners: A Study of Chinese Trade under Mongol Rule," in *Toplum ve Bilim* (in Turkish with an English Summary), vols. 25/26 (1984), pp. 71-90.
8. T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners, 1200-1600," in *Asia Major*, 3d series, vol 2, pt. 2 (1989).
9. In the sea trade the earlier trend continued well into the later Middle Ages and the early modern period up to European expansion into the Southern Seas. Marshall D. Hodgson states to this effect: "Trade in the Southern Seas was largely in the hands of numerous more or less independent Muslim trader cities, over which the inland powers had relatively little control in many cases. In an area like Malaysia, for instance, the chief figure in the town, the 'sultan,' was likely to be essentially a merchant, who might even monopolize the trade of a given port, and sometimes was also able to control other ports at a distance." (M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 3 [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974], p. 19).
10. Togan, "The Mongols' Trade Partner;" Endicott-West, 1989.
11. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, pp. 400-10.
12. de Jong, 1978, pp. 78-81.
13. A. Vambery, *Travels in Central Asia* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), p. 211.
14. An anonymous note appearing in the German geographical journal, *Globus* vol. 4 (1863): p. 64.
15. The name Uighur has been in use in this region for more than a millennium, but with more restricted meanings than is the case today (D.C. Gladney, "The Ethno-

genesis of the Uighur," in *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 9, no. 1 [1990]: pp. 1-28; Geng Shimin, "On the Fusion of Nationalities in the Tarim Basin and the Formation of the Modern Uighur Nationality," in *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 3, no. 4 [1984]: pp. 1-14). I use it here to indicate the seventeenth-century ancestors of the present Uighurs in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, PRC.

16. *UKT. Uyghurlarning Kiskecha Tarikhi* (A Short History of the Uygurs), by 'Aziz Yusup and Tursun Palta. Urumchi, Shinjang Khalk Nashriyati (Title in Chinese: *Weiwur lishi*) (Xinjiang, PRC, 1990), pp. 304-38.
17. I. Ya Zlatkin, *Istoriya Zhunkarskogo Khanstva (1935-1758)* (Moscow, 1964), p. 207.
18. MHWB = Qinding waifan menggu huibu wanggong biaozhuan. 1802. Beijing, This Palace edition *of Wuyingdian* is available at Collège de France, Paris (no. 90-92), 4r. For the different edited versions of the work, see I. Togan, "On the Compilation of the Multilingual Ch'ing Work: The *Iledkel Sastir* or the *Piao Chuan*," in: Niguca Bicig. An Anniversary Volume in honor of Francis Woodman Cleaves, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 9 (1985): pp. 1-5; I. Togan, "Eastern Turkestan in the Seventeenth Century with an Emphasis on the Turfan Chapter of Ch'in-ting waifan meng-ku hui-pu wang-kung piao chüan" (completed manuscript in Turkish), in *Sources of Language: Oriental Ages and Literatures Series* (forthcoming), p. 98.
19. KT, pp. 302-3; Ho-dong Kim, "Succession Struggle and Tribal Politics in the former Moghul Khanate," in *Journal of Oriental History* (In Korean with an English summary) vol. 33 (1990): pp. 63-100.
20. QSL = *Daqing Lichao Shilu* (Veritable Records of the great Qing Dynasty) vol. 4 (Taibei, 1964): p. 312; *Shun* 26: 16v-17r.
21. QSL, vol. 4, p. 220; *Shun* 18: 24r; Togan, "Eastern Turkestan in the Seventeenth Century," p. 78-79.
22. I. Togan, "Islam as a State Power in a Changing Society: The Khojas of Eastern Turkestan," in *Identity in the Muslim Societies of Central Asia*, edited by J. Gross, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, forthcoming).
23. I. Niyaz, *Tarikhtin Kiskecha Bayanlar* (Short Notes on History) (Kashkar: Kashkar Uyghur Nashriyati, 1988), pp. 269-75. Title in Chinese: *Jian ming lishi.*
24. Here I have adopted the terminology used by Uighur scholars in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, PRC. I have argued elsewhere that any wish to create a category of *Moghul* as distinct from Mongol is not realistic as our sources do not permit us to make such a distinction on the basis of the Arabic alphabet as used for Persian or Chaghatai Turkish. See Togan, "Islam as a State Power." I think therefore that the local terminology of Sa'idiyya State is quite useful.
25. Togan, "Islam as a State Power."
26. MHWB, 3r-3v
27. We do not have to take Kebeg's words literally as they appear in the QSL: such Chinese versions of his words were intended mainly for home consumption.
28. O.F. Akimushkin, *Shah Mahmud ibn Mirza Fadil Churas: Khronika*, translation with critical text, commentary and study (Moscow, 1976). (Pamiatniki pis'mennosti Vostoka, 45).
29. Kebeg's information about the nine sons and seven rulers contains certain inaccuracies, but this seems to have been deliberate. As he was trying to avoid mentioning any unpleasant personalities, he appears to have provided some additional fictitious information, i.e., in the references to Sultan Sa'id Baba Khan. Otherwise the account may be regarded as accurate.
30. Togan, "Islam as a State Power."

31. It seems that 'Abdullah Khan was alone in being able to muster armies of any size, but he was unable to keep them under control; in the western campaign to Ferghane Valley there was a lot of looting and the soldiers could not be restrained.
32. Yih-min Lin, *Ali Ekber'in Hitayname adli eserinin Çin kaynaklari ile mukayese ve tenkidi* (Tai-pei, 1967), p. 156.
33. Lin, *Ali Ekber'in*, p. 156.
34. A place still known today as being located at the junction of the mountain roads where they meet between Artush and Beshkerem. Personal communication by Memet Sabit, curator in the Office of Antiquities, Kashgar, Xinjiang.
35. M. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia* (The Hague, 1924), p. 25.
36. MHWB, 3r; Togan, "Islam as a State Power."
37. Akimushkin, *Shah Mahmud*, p. 75a.
38. UKT, p. 318.
39. I. Niyaz, *Tarikhtin Kiskecha Bayanlar* (Short Notes on History) (Kashkar: Kashkar Uyghur Nashriyati, 1988), p. 224. Title in Chinese: *Jian ming lishi.*
40. QSL, 4: p. 310; *Shun* 26: 11r-12r.
41. L. Gallagher, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610* (New York, 1953), p. 513-15.
42. MHWB, 4r-4v.
43. Rossabi, "Muslim and Central Asian Revolts," p. 192.
44. MHWB, 3r. Only fifteen of the captives were returned.
45. MHWB, 6v.
46. Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia."
47. Rossabi, "The 'Decline' of the Central Asian Caravan Trade."
48. E.Y. Ides, *Three Years Travels from Moscow Over-land to China: thro' Great Ustiga, Siriania, Permia, Sibiria, Daur, Great Tartary, etc. to Peking* (London, 1706), pp. 126-27.
49. I am indebted to Professor Bruce Masters for this personal communication.
50. Paper delivered by Professor Stephen Dale at Washington University in St Louis.
51. J.F. Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia and China* vol. 2 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919), pp. 123-26, 139.
52. Baddeley, *Russia*, vol.1, p. 379 [My emphasis]
53. J. Fletcher, "V.A. Alexandrov on Russo-Ch'ing Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Critique and Résumé," in *Kritika* vol. 7.3 (1971): pp. 138-70.
54. Baddeley, *Russia*, vol. 2, p. 90
55. This is a case where appellations from different sources fail to overlap. All of them have a subjective relativity. For local sources—i.e., Central Asian Muslim ones—the city of origin is important, as they primarily address a local audience; local sources therefore are precise in detail. Such precision does not necessarily indicate a lack of common identity. It is quite clear that the local Central Asian sources speak from the vantage point of a Muslim population whose primary language is Turki but among whom Persian also plays an important role. Non-local sources, on the other hand, are inclined to overgeneralize. Islamic sources from the Middle East and Russian sources speak of Bukharans or Bukhariots whereas Chinese ones speak of Muslims.
56. QSL, 9, pp. 1492-93; *Kang*, p. 116: 24r; SMFL 1, pp. 267-70; 2.33r-34v.
57. SMFL, 1, p. 196; 1: 34v.
58. SMFL, 3, pp. 1155-58; 14: 5r-6v.
59. Niyaz, *Tarikhtin Kiskecha Bayanlar*, p. 236.
60. Here I am using Ibrahim Niyaz's term, i.e., "White Cap" (*ak takiya*) in preference to White Mountain (*ak taghiya* or *ak taghlik*). See Niyaz, *Tarikhtin Kiskecha Bayanlar*, pp. 275-79.