

CENTRAL ASIA: A TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT ON WORLD HISTORY

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Abstract

The world's ancient history can be found in Central Asia the outstanding Aryan civilization period brought forth many novel characteristics of civil society, such as the art of warfare, civilized social interactions, and the art of cities and towns in a planned fashion. They spread out from Central Asia in all directions and established their dominance throughout the world, East, West, and South. The geographical elements had a big impact on how the subcontinent's economic and political history developed. The whole of Asia has been affected by the political upheavals brought about by the rise and fall of the chiefs, emperors, and dynasties in Central Asia. This research paper aims to study how the Central Asian people expanded and stretched out from an inaccessible land to an outer world and established themselves as strong political rulers in the peripheral region. It also analyses why the scattered steppe and nomadic people conquered the world and left their footprints on the world's culture. It is a historical and analytical research study that purposes to revive the cultural prominence of nomadic Central Asia in the world culture of today's, 21st century.

Keywords: Central Asia, Nomadic people, Invasions, World rulers, World History

Introduction

In terms of population features, Central Asia is distinguished by two kinds of people from primitive times, the nomadic and settled people. The history of central Asia revolves around the conflict between the steppes' nomadic and settled people in and around Central Asia.¹ The nomadic lifestyle made the people well-trained in warfare and they became the great conquered rulers of the world because of their horses' devastating techniques and abilities. . The political system of Central Asia was composed of different tribes that organized themselves into a unified military force and then went on the campaign¹ to

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¹ Spengler III, Robert N., Alicia Ventresca Miller, Tekla Schmaus, Giedrė Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė, Bryan K. Miller Shevonan Wilkin, William Timothy Trear Taylor, Yuqi Li, Patrick Roberts, and Nicole Boivin. "An Imagined Past? Nomadic Narratives in Central Asian Archaeology" *Current Anthropology* 62, no. 3 (2021): 251-286.

conquest different parts of the world, especially the more civilized areas.² The tribal coalition who invaded the other parts of the world are the Hans invasion of Europe, Turkic migrations into Transoxiana, the Wu Hu attacks on China, and most remarkably the Mongol conquest of much of Eurasia. Though Central Asia was poor in economic resources, it appeared as a strong political power that conquered the world. The settlement population took control of the area due to their expertise with firearms in the sixteenth century, ending the nomads' hegemony. The Russian Empire and the Qing Dynasty of China both gained control over the majority of Central Asia by the end of the nineteenth century³

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the bulk of Central Asia was under Soviet Union rule following the 1917 Russian Revolution. ; Only Afghanistan and Mongolia maintained a de facto separate status. Five Central Asian states—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—emerged as sovereign states with the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, though the former members of the communist party continued to hold strongman positions in these states. All five states of Central Asia have heterogeneous society as after merging in Soviet Union, Stalin deliberately demarcated these states as no one was having a majority ethnic group or tribe in order to avoid revolt.⁴

The problem is that in the research papers, there hasn't been much material written on the Central Asian region for two reasons. Firstly, before the beginning of the 1990s, there wasn't a country in the region that could be named. In Asian studies, the majority of experts choose to concentrate on one particular nation. However, this is not the case for Central Asia.

² Esenova, Saulesh. "Soviet Nationality, Identity, And Ethnicity In central Asia: Historic Narratives And Kazakh Ethnic Identity", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2002), 11-38.

³ Adshead, Samuel Adrian Miles, "*Central Asia in World History*", Springer, (2016), 3-53.

⁴ Jones, Pauline, "*The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*", Cornell University Press, (2004), 27-79.

Secondly, until recently this region was prohibited to outsiders because of the Soviet Union's control over the western portion of Central Asia and China's ownership of the eastern portion.

**There are five nations in Central Asia that were formerly a part of the Soviet Union. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan are four of them, and one of them speaks Persian (Tajikistan). The autonomous territory of Xinjiang is located on the eastern edge of Central Asia. Afghanistan is sometimes regarded as being a part of Central Asia. This region is frequently referred to as Inner Asia. However, this phrase has a wider range and also refers to Mongolia, Manchuria, and portions of Iran. There have been a lot of historical occurrences in this area. It is a culturally diverse region and history indicates that every major religion, including Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, etc., has traversed this region.

Discussion

Historical Perspective

The population features of Central Asia is one of the oldest known regions of human habitation as recent genetics studies has concluded that humans arrived in the region 40,000 to 50,000 years ago⁵. This region is also a source of population who later inhabited the Europe, Siberia and North America⁶. According to Kurgan Hypothesis the northwest of the region is the source of the root of the Indo-European language. Around 4500 BC, small communities started to develop permanent settlements and adopted agricultural practice for living. Some of the communities started to breed horses as a source of meat and food for domestic purpose. By the 3000 BC the horses began to use as a means of transportation to pull chariots and by 2000 BC they were strong enough to be used, as war chariots and

⁵ Skoglund, Pontus, and Iain Mathieson. "Ancient Genomics of Modern Humans: The First Decade." *Annu. Rev. Genomics Hum. Genet* 19 (2018), 381-404.

⁶ Fiedel, Stuart J, "Prehistory of the Americas" Cambridge University Press, (1992), 4-89.

dominated the battlefield. This growing use of horse appeared as the dominance of pastoral nomads, a way of life that dominated the region for a number of millennia.⁷

Politically the society was not ruled by one strong ruler and was composed of different groups of nomadic people and settled population. The nomadic groups were scattered with herds of sheep, goats, horses, and camels, and they travelled from place to place in search of new pastures. The people lived in tents that could be dissembled and transported easily. The nomads live in the semi-arid plains of Central Asia, while the more humid areas were populated by sedentary people who gave rise to the small city-states and sedentary agrarian society's arose.⁸

Early in the second millennium BC, the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex represented the earliest sedentary civilization of the area. They most likely interacted with the Adronovo civilization, modern-day descendants of the Bronze Age people who invented the spoke-wheeled chariot. These northern people existed until the first millennium BC in western Siberia, Russia, and Kazakhstan. These civilizations stand in for the Aryan culture, which is related to the Indo-Iranians. Culturally diverse nomadic populations from Central Asia, such as the Huns, Turks, Tocharians, Persians, Scythians, r Indo-Europeans, and Mongol groups, inhabited the steppe. Despite the region's linguistic and cultural diversity, a shared culture emerged in the region.⁹

⁷ Harper, Thomas K., Aleksandr Diachenko, Yuri Ya Rassamakin, and Douglas J. Kennett. "Ecological Dimensions of Population Dynamics and Subsistence in Neo-Eneolithic Eastern Europe" *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 53 (2019), 92-101.

⁸ Cosmo, Nicola Di. "Ancient Xinjiang Between Central Asia and China; The Nomadic Factor" *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia* 34, no. 4 (1996), 87-101.

⁹ Damgaard, Peter de Barros, Nina Marchi, Simon Rasmussen, Michaël Peyrot, Gabriel Renaud, Thorfinn Korneliussen, J. Víctor Moreno-Mayar et al. "137 Ancient Human Genomes from Across the Eurasian Steppes." *Nature* 557, no. 7705 (2018), 369-374.

Economically, the history of Central Asia is distinguished by its climate and geography. Due to arid climate there is lack of vegetation preventing the growth and development of plant and animal. So agriculture was difficult in the region and trade was not possible as the region was cut off from the sea. As a result, only a few significant towns emerged in Central Asia¹⁰ and for millennia, the area was inhabited mostly by nomadic steppe tribes. The strongest of the Fargana Valley's Sogdian city states rose to prominence after the first century BC, serving as a hub for Silk Road trade and becoming wealthy as a result. The steppe nomads lacked a stable economy as well¹¹and were reliant on the settlers for variety of merchandises that they were unable to provide. As the nomads usually did not manufacture the commodities required by the sedentary people, so they carry out the raids.

Ancient era

In different periods of ancient era, the Central Asia has been colonized by many kingdoms. Prior to the Muslim conquest of Central Asia, the region has been conquered and colonized by Achaemenidies, the Aryans, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Khushan, the Che, the Sassanid, the Turks, the Sarmathians, the Parthian, and the Huns . The Persian and Macedonian empires entered the Central Asia and got control of the trading centers. Alexander the Great's conquest of what is now Tajikistan in 329 BC led to the expansion of the Hellenistic civilization throughout Central Asia. A section of the Central Asian Empire (Bactria) was supplanted in 250 BC and became the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, which maintained relations with India and China up until 125 BC. Greco-Buddhism started to grow

¹⁰ Frye, Richard N. *"The Fall of the Graeco-Bactrians, Sakas and Indo-Parthians."* History of Humanity: from the Seventh Century BC to the Seventh century AD 3 (1996), 454.

¹¹ Rezakhani, Khodadad. "The Road That Never Was: The Silk Road and Trans-Eurasian Exchange" *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30, no. 3 (2010), 420-433.

during the Indo-Greek Kingdom. The Punjab region served as the base for the Indo-Greek Kingdom, which ruled over various areas of Afghanistan.¹²

From 115 to 60 BC, Chinese rule appeared in the eastern Central Asia as Chinese Imperial power Hans Dynasty and this imperial power clashed with Xiongnu and conquered the Tarim Basin. After the Chinese rule in the Tarim Basin, Kushans and Hephthalites came into power.¹³ Although they belonged to Central Asia, the Sassanid Empire and Parthian Empire (an ancient Iranian political and cultural power) adopted Persian cultural customs. Hellenistic and Buddhist culture were spread during the Kushan Kingdom's passage through the area in the second to fourth centuries AD. These states became rich and wealthy because they controlled the Silk Road connecting China with Europe.¹⁴

Culturally, the nomads of Central Asian conquered surrounding empires and kingdoms but they were absorbed into the culture of the conquered people. Central Asia was a diverse region with a blend of cultures, beliefs, and faiths. Buddhism was the largest and most powerful religion in the east. Manichaeism, which gained more followers than Zoroastrianism and eventually surpassed Christianity as the third-largest religion, was a minority religion. Multiple faiths were practiced in Central Asia, and local customs were infused with local religions.¹⁵

Between the sixth and eleventh centuries AD, Turkic peoples also moved into Europe and the Middle East (the Early Middle Ages). The Proto-Turkic regions of the Far East,

¹² Roy, Olivier, "*The new Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*" nyu Press, (2007), v-25.

¹³ Liu, Xinru, "*The Silk Road in World History*", Oxford University Press, (2010), 13-87.

¹⁴ Canepa, Matthew P, "*The Parthian and Sasanian Empires.*" *The Oxford World History of Empire: Volume Two: The History of Empires* (2020), 290-380.

¹⁵ C. E. Bosworth, "*History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Development of Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations, 700 BC to A*", Vol. 2. UNESCO, 1994. 17-67.

which included North China and Inner Mongolia, were the origins of the Turkic people in prehistoric times. The Huns are also the ancestors of the early Turkic tribes. Turfan, which was under Tang Dynasty authority in China, was the entry point for the diverse cultural groupings of Turkic-speaking Uyghur.¹⁶

Medieval Period

During the Medieval era, the steppe soon became a dominant military force in the world by using their bows from horseback. Political system of Central Asia was consisted of scattered city states and kingdoms, each having its own ruler. So it became easy for the steppe people to conquer different tribes. The political structure was lacking in the tribes and they united as a confederation of various groups under a leader recognized as Khan. Though the nomads were devastating when acted united but quickly weakened due to division of conquered territory among Khan's descendants. In Central Asia, a number of indigenous dynasties developed, with the Hephthalites emerging as the most powerful nomad tribe throughout the 6th and 7th centuries. Several strong nations, including the Samanid dynasty, Seljuk Turks, and Khawarzemid Empire, ruled the area in the 10th and 11th centuries.¹⁷

By the Middle Ages, the Turkic nomads rose to prominence as a significant ethnic group in Central Asia. As China was enlarging into Central Asia during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, it had to contend with Turkic nomads to the north and west. Turkic generals were used by the Sui and Tang dynasties in their armies, and they eventually constituted the majority of Chinese dynasties. Similar to the previous Hans Dynasty, the Tang Dynasty conquered and dominated Central Asia between the years 640 and 650 with the aid of Turkic

¹⁶ Gladney, Dru C. "The Ethnogenesis of The Uighur." *Central Asian Survey* 9, no. 1 (1990): 1-28.

¹⁷ Kurbanov, A. Y. D. O. G. D. Y. "Hephthalites." *An Archaeological and Historical Analysis*, Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin (2010). 104-7.

allies like the Uyghur. The Turks put an end to the Tang's rule in modern-day Tajikistan and Afghanistan beyond the Pamir Mountain.¹⁸

Central Asia appeared as a spectacular political power under Genghis Khan Rule who combined the tribes of Mongolia. The Mongol Empire extended across the Central Asia, China and various portions of Russia and the Middle East. In 1227, Genghis Khan was perished and his successor was Chagatai Khanate who ruled very shortly and in 1369, the region was conquered by Timur (1336-1405), who was a Turkic top leader in the Mongol army. During Timur reign, the culture of Iran and Central Asia was merged. After Timur's death his large empire soon collapsed and region again became divided among smaller Khanates as the Khanate of Khiva, the Khanate of Bukhara, the Khanate of Kokand, and the Khanate of Kashgar. Thus unified political power and structure of Central Asia again became scattered into diverse tribes and groups.¹⁹

The steppe peoples of Central Asia conquered lands outside the region easily but it was difficult for them to govern the settled communities. Besides this the armies of the nomads were consisted of large number of horses and required vast grass land which were not present outside the steppe. So they could not remain away from homeland for a long period. The steppe peoples have to rely on the local bureaucracy to govern the settled peoples and this factor lead to the absorption of the nomads' culture into the society of conquered-settled society.

The steppe people's empire dominated the settled people and ruled over them till 14th century. Then the invention of gunpowder enabled the settled people to conquest the steppe

¹⁸ Kageyama, Etsuko, "The Winged Crown and The Triple-crescent Crown in The Sogdian Funerary Monuments from China: Their Relation to the Hephthalite Occupation of Central Asia" *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 2 (2007), 11-22.

¹⁹ Golden, Peter B, "*Central Asia in World History*", Oxford University Press, (2011), 50-91.

riders in combat. Due to lack of organization and money, nomadic people could not produce the gunpowder. And consequently, in the beginning of fifteenth century, the power of nomads underwent to decrease and the settled power began to increase. Their last kingdom was Dzungars who occupied East Turkestan and Mongolia. But they could not compete against Chinese and were conquered by the Qing Dynasty, who originally belongs to the remote eastern steppe. During eighteenth century, the Qing emperors spread towards west and defeated the Qianlong Emperor in Mongolia and conquered Xinjiang in 1758, and Inner Mongolia was annexed to China and Mongol threat was ended. Outer Mongolia and Xinjiang did not become provinces of the Chinese kingdom and were directly controlled by the Qing dynasty. During the 17th and 18th centuries the Qing dynasty conquered the Mongol and incorporated large parts of Central Asia into Chinese Empire. The Chinese expansion was stopped in 19th century due to internal turmoil in China. Instead Persia and Russia expanded into the region. Under the rule of Nadir Shah, Persia also expanded towards north and after his death Persian Empire was annexed by Britain and Russia.²⁰

Inclusion of South Asia

The Central Asian invasion of South Asia began in 200 BC from north India. From 78 BC to 200 CE, a dynasty was established in north India as a result of invasions by Central Asian Tribes, Bactrian Greeks, Shaka, and Kushans. The Gupta Empire in South Asia was destroyed in 455 CE when Huns and other Central Asian tribes invaded India. They ruled until the year 528 CE.

On the bank of the Indus River, around three millennia BC, the Indus River Civilization was the earliest civilization in the Indian subcontinent to be discovered.

²⁰ Barisitz, Stephan, "*Some Lessons and Findings of this Study*", Central Asia and the Silk Road, Springer, Cham, (2017). 271-80

Approximately 500,000 years ago, humans hunted and collected food in the Indian subcontinent. They adopted agriculture and created small-town culture. Soon after people developed cultivation approximately ten thousand years ago, the village cultures of the northwestern subcontinent evolved into the Indus civilization. This development took place around nine thousand years ago. Better circumstances for the first village culture's formation were supplied by the natural environment. After a few thousand years, the Indus valley produced cities and civilizations as their settlements grew in size. The first village culture was better able to form thanks to the biological context. After a few thousand years, the Indus valley produced cities and civilizations as their settlements grew in size. With time, the Indian subcontinent developed into a settled, wealthy region, whereas the Central Asian plateau, because of its climate and geography, remained a nomadic, impoverished region.²¹

Comparatively, the two areas' economic structures were very unlike. The Indus River Civilization's economy was built on farming, agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce. Cotton, melons, peas, dates, and palm fruit were all grown there. Cotton was used by weavers to make a textile that was shipped to nations like Egypt and Sumer. There were additional mines for gold, tin, and copper. Barley was their primary crop, however, they also grew other kinds of cereals. Kings, academics, and priests of Brahmin Indo-Iranian heritage were the priests and rulers of the Indus Valley. Agriculture was the principal form of employment for most people, while commerce accounted for the majority of the economy. Its rich grasslands were mostly due to the Indus River and its tributaries. The Indus River civilization had rich economic resources as compared to Central Asia, which was endowed with a weak economy, because of the climate and geography of the area. The obvious disparity in wealth and poverty between the two areas served as the impetus for the subsequent history of the South

²¹ Akbar, Nabeela, "Socio-Cultural and Economic Impact of Central Asian Muslim Rulers in Sub-Continent (India)." *Journal of Indian Studies* 1, no. 2 (2015), 57-68.

Asian subcontinent, which saw the Central Asians lust after its riches. As time went on, the economic disparity between Central and South Asia widened. The nomadic people of Central and West Asia, especially the Aryans, entered the continent to trade or plunder its resources. Entry into the subcontinent was only possible from the comparatively flat west due to the mountainous barrier to the north. Years later, though, a more daring and desperate Central Asian king conquered the steep boundaries and established their authority in South Asia. The development of the economic and political history of the subcontinent had been significantly influenced by the geographical factors. The original Aryans had arrived in South Asia from the northwest direction (Central Asia).²²

Aryan Migration 1750-1000 BC.

The Aryans are the people who lived in the ancient Iran and they crossed the barriers of the Caucasus and entered the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea –Central Asia and South-Asia .The nomadic herding tribes migrated from Iranian plateau to North-West India who was speaking Indo-European language. The agriculturists of the Indus Civilization (in Herapa and Mojudhoro in Pakistan) were triumphed over and displaced by the pastoral Aryans who entered the South Asia for about four thousand years ago, in the beginning of the second millennium BC, from Central Asia (identified as the steppes of Eurasia, stretching from south-eastern Europe through Central Asia to the border of China).²³

The Scythians

The nomad empires, Scythians (Shakas) had permanent settlements with different settlements. The settlements of Kamenka on the Dnieper River, settled since the end of the

²² Pittman, Holly, and Edith Porada, “*Art of the Bronze Age: Southeastern Iran, Western Central Asia, and the Indus Valley*”, Metropolitan Museum of Art, (1984), 8-13.

²³ Panhwar, mh. "Pre-Harappan chronology of Sindh." 1-14

5th century BC, became the center of the Scythian kingdom ruled by Ateas. The Scythians tribes were settled north of the Syr Darya. From 700 to 800 BC Scythians moved southward and conquered Central Asia, India and Syria. The Scythians became the main rivals of the Persian kings. The Persian Empire was founded by the Cyrus the Great in 550 BC and he ruled the Central Asia for 200 years till the arrival of Greeks.²⁴ Shakas originally belonged to Central Asian and had been displaced by the Yueh-chih, one of the Central Asian nomadic tribes who used to plunder the Chinese Empire in the north-east. Due to the completion of Great Wall in 214 BC, to protect China from their invasions by nomadic hordes from Central Asia, Yueh-Chi were moved westward and attacked upon Shakas in their original dwelling the in Aral Sea region. Up rooted by them, Shakas in turn moved south ward and attacked upon Bactria and Parthia (Iran). Bactria was defeated by Shakas but Parthia had resisted the Shakas. Shakas moved further to the south and established their kingdom into the Central region of the Indian subcontinent and settled down into the Indus valley. Shakas kingdom was extended from lower Indus valley down to modern Gujarat into western region of India. Shaka kingdom lasted for about four centuries and was ended by Guptas in 320 AD, who became the unquestioned Imperial power in India in the fourth century.²⁵

Hellenistic civilization in Central Asia

The Persian and Macedonian empires entered Central Asia and got control of the trading centers. The Hellenistic civilization spread in Central Asia with the conquest of Alexander the Great established in 329 BC in modern Tajikistan. In 250 BC, some portion of Central Asian Empire (Bactria included much of present day Uzbekistan) was replaced as

²⁴ Gnecci-Ruscione, Guido Alberto, Elmira Khussainova, Nurzhibek Kahbatkyzy, Lyazzat Musralina, Maria A. Spyrou, Raffaella A. Bianco, Rita Radzeviciute et al. "Ancient Genomic Time Transect From the Central Asian Steppe Unravels the History Of the Scythians", *Science Advances* 7, no. 13 (2021), 1-14.

²⁵ Akbar, Nabeela. "Socio-cultural and Economic impact of Central Asian Muslim rulers in Sub-Continent (India)," 57-68.

Greek-Bactrian Kingdom, having its contacts with India and China till 125 BC. The Indo-Greek Kingdom established the development of Greco-Buddhism. One of Alexander's successors, General Seleucos, founded the Seleucid dynasty which ruled Bactria and large part of Sagdiana. General Seleucos also ruled India and Bactria. In 239 BC Greece-Bactria kingdom was founded in the Central Asia region which ruled from the Afghanistan city of Balkan. The Indo-Greek Kingdom was based in the north India (Punjab) region controlling some parts of Afghanistan.²⁶ Western region of Central Asia, present day Turkmenistan, were to be ruled by the Parthia dynasty, which was consisted of Saka tribes. In the last century BC Central Asia was invaded by successive waves of Sakas who moved south to Afghanistan and India. After these invasions, Buddhism also entered in Central Asia and China to the East and India to the South.²⁷

In 159-139 BC Scythians conquered the Greco-Bactria kingdom and for a hundred years Scythians and Parthian ruled the Central Asia. In the first century AD a union of nomadic tribes organized them under the Kushan tribes. The Kushan rulers established their rule in Bactria, Eastern Turkistan, Sagdians, Afghanistan and North-western part of India (present day Pakistan). Kushan rule became destabilized at the end of second century AD²⁸ and in the middle of 5th century AD Ephtalites, a nomadic tribe who belongs to white Huns – the forefathers of Mongol, defeated Bactria and ended Kushan rule in Central Asia. The Ephtalites or white Huns conquered Eastern Europe and part of north India.²⁹

²⁶ Ray, Himanshu Prabha. "Alexander's Campaign (327-326 BC): A Chronological Marker in the Archaeology of India." *Memory as History: The Legacy of Alexander in Asia* (2007), 105-121.

²⁷ Abetekov, A., and H. Yusupov. "Ancient Iranian nomads in Western Central Asia." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia. The Development of Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations 700* (1994): 23-33.

²⁸ Liu, Xinru. "Ancient India and Ancient China." *Trade and Religious Exchanges AD* (1988), 04-200.

²⁹ Dupree, Louis. "Afghanistan Between East and West: Second Century BC TO 1222 AD", *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 43, no. 1 (1956), 52-60.

After the departure of the Alexander the great from the Indus valley, the Mauryan Empire was founded by Chandra Gupta from 323-185 BC. The Mauryan Empire was the most extensive empire stretching from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. As the Mauryan Empire flourished in the sub-continent, the Greek Seleucid Empire established by Seleucid I, one of Alexander's generals I, began to decline. Thereafter the weakened Greek Seleucid empire lost its eastern possessions: Parthia (modern Iran) and Bactria (modern Afghanistan), who declared themselves independent. During the decay of the Mauryan Empire, the newly independent Bactrian Greeks (modern Afghanistan) began to desire for the Indus valley once again. Demetrius, a Bactrian king (190-167), invaded the Indus valley and brought the entire valley under its control very easily. While he was busy in conquering the Indus valley, one of Demetrius general named Eucratides usurped the control of Bactria. King Demetrius could not manage to return to Bactria and established his kingdom in the newly conquered Indus valley. That event led to the rise of Indo-Greek dynasty in that region (modern Pakistan) which lasted for almost the rest of the second century.

The Central Asian Muslims had their own racial and cultural relationship with the Bactrian, the Indo-Greeks and the Kushanas. After their settlement and rule for about eight centuries in India, they consolidated their racial association with the local inhabitants that the Indo-Greek had started. Muslim political power and cultural interaction with the inhabitants remained strong in the north. The cultural affiliation of the Greek and Central Asian in the north differentiated the inhabitants of South India from the inhabitants of the northern Indus valley which is now included in Pakistan.

The Indo-Greek kingdom weakened further after the death of Mlianda in 130 BC. The successors of Eucratides began to covet the Indus valley that was ruled by the successors of Demetrius. By the late second century BC the Central Asian Bactrian got control of Kamboja (modern Kabul) and Ghandara (modern Taxila) and the entire Indo-Greek kingdom in the

Indus valley withered away. During the latter half of the first century BC, the Bactrians were defeated by Scythians, also called Shakas. The defeat of Bactrians at the hand of Shakas ended a two hundred years old Indo-Greek presence into the northern-western subcontinent.³⁰

The Kushans

In the north of Indian subcontinent, the Greek rule in Bactria (Afghanistan) was brought to an end by the Kushans. The Kushans were another group of the Yueh-chih who were pushed out of the Chinese side of the Central Asia by the Chinese empire towards the end of the second century BC. In the latter half of the first century, Yueh-chih attacked the Bactrians (Afghanistan) and established Kushanas Empire in the north-west of India.

The north-central Asian Shakas and the north-eastern Kushans ruled the entire north western India as well as a part of north central India. The Shakas ruled much longer than the Kushanas and are often called Indo-Scythians. Kushanas ruled into north and Shakas ruled into south and are often called 'foreign dynasties' by the historians. Kushans ruled on both sides of the Silk Road. The prosperous took place between China and Indian sub-continent and Indian merchant entered into Central Asia for trade. Some of them settled down on the trade route. The Kushanas kingdom ended in about three centuries AD.³¹

Islam in Central Asia

Prior to the spread of Islam, Buddhism dominated Central Asia. Through the Silk Road, Buddhism was introduced to China and continues to be the predominant religion in Tibet, Mongolia, Ladakh, and the southern Russian area of Siberia. Prior to the coming of

³⁰ Lipovsky, Igor. "The Awakening of Central Asian Islam" *Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 3 (1996), 1-21.

³¹ Thorley, John. "The Roman Empire and the Kushans." *Greece & Rome* 26, no. 2 (1979), 181-190.

Islam, Zoroastrianism and Vedic Hinduism were the two main religions in Central Asia.

Zoroastrianism originated in Afghanistan, and it is still honoured today in all five Central Asian countries as Nowruz. In past ages, Confucianism, Judaism, and Christianity were also the three predominant religions.

In the eighth century, Islam spread over Central Asia. An army was dispatched to quell the uprisings receiving support from the Persian Empire under the reign of the second Caliph, Hazarat Umar Farooq. The Muslim conquest of Central Asia began with the battles of Qadesia in 636 AD and Nehmanid in 642. The all of modern Iran, Bactria, a sizable portion of modern Central Asia, Iraq, and Mesopotamia were all under the jurisdiction of the Persian Empire. The Muslims overthrew the strong Byzantine and Persian emperors in the seventh century. By 651, they had taken over all of Khorasan, and in the latter four decades of the seventh century, they began to advance into Central Asia.

During its early years, the Arab Empire conquered most of Central Asia. Qutayba ibne-Muslim was in charge of this invasion (705-715). Arab troops invaded Central Asia in the seventh century, crossing the Amu Darya in 673, capturing Bukhara in 676, and defeating the Chinese army in 751, on the banks of the Talas River. After Nasyr ibn Sayyar's victory in 738 AD, Muslim rule could once again be imposed in Central Asia. By defeating the Tang Dynasty troops in the Battle of Talas in 751, the Arab invasion drove out the Chinese influence from Central Asia, and for centuries, Middle Eastern influences predominated in the area. However, under the governmental control of the Abbasid dynasty and local Iranian and Arab populations, Islam did not truly expand until the ninth century. But it wasn't until the 9th century, when the Abbasid dynasty and regional Iranian and Turkic dynasties like the Samanids ruled politically, that Islam began to expand in its truest sense. Islam overtook

other religions in Central Asia in the tenth century, and the region developed into one of Darul Islam's most important cultural hubs.³²

Central Asian Muslim Rulers in South Asia (997-1027)

Beginning with the Aryans in the second millennium BC, the Indo-Greeks, the Sassanians, the Shakas, the Kuskanas, and the Huns, the northwestern portion of South Asia has been involved in Central Asian politics and commercial economy ever since the sixth century BC. The political changes brought about by the ascent and fall of the chiefs, monarchs, and dynasties in Central Asia have had an impact on South Asia.

As a result, historically speaking, the Central Asian invasion of South Asia was not a recent occurrence. At the end of the seventh century, a fresh incident—the immigration of Muslims from Central Asia—began. Their attacks were to be known as Muslim invasions once Islam spread over Central Asia. When their fortunes forced them from their own lands or they want to increase their territory's size for economic reasons, Central Asian conquerors had always turned their attention to the South Asian continent.³³

Summand Dynasty

In the last decade of nineteenth century, Ismail-Ibn-Ahmed, a strong Abbasid governor laid the foundation of Summand dynasty. Summand was a powerful state and it carried on a continuous effort against the nomad tribes who were constantly attacking the fertile oases of Central Asia. He crushed all mutiny in the district of Bukhara and made the town his capital. Summand established widespread trade links with Europe and China and

³² Peyrouse, Sébastien, "Islam in Central Asia: National Specificities and Postsoviet Globalisation", *Religion, State & Society* 35, no. 3 (2007), 245-260.

³³ Rezakhani, Khodadad, "From the Kushans to the Western Turks" In *King of the Seven Climes*, Brill, (2021), 199-214.

regulated the Silk Route. By the mid of 10th century Summand dynasty became weak and lost some important towns of the dynasty and by the end of 10th century, Summand rule was defeated by Turk tribe man, Alaptigine, a Turk officer of slave origin working in the Summand army. Alaptigin brought the end of Summand dynasty. The Turk tribes established the Ghaznivi dynasty at Ghazni in Afghanistan and ruled over Central Asia. After the death of Alaptegin, Sabuktegin ruled the Central Asia for two decades. The dynasty established by Alaptegin reached its zenith during the era of Mehmud Ghaznavi and cultural links of Central Asia were enhanced through their foreign enterprises.

Mehmud of Ghazni's entrance into India from Afghanistan in 1018 AD marked the beginning of the Indian subcontinent's transformation into Muslim India. He established Muslim power over the Indian subcontinent after capturing the Punjab and the north-central kingdom of India. After the passing of the last and greatest Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, Central Asian Muslims dominated India for seven centuries until 1707 AD. They were mainly restricted to north India but also extended into south India. The Muslims from Central Asia made India their permanent home, subdued the locals, and intermarried with them. Following the two centuries of Mughal monarchs from Central Asia and the five centuries of Turkish sultan rule, central Asia and India combined their social, cultural, and religious beliefs.

The Muslims entered as a trader in the lower Sindh and as military troops in Punjab and then became one-fourth in a number of the total population in the Indian subcontinent. The Turk-Afghan rulers from Central Asia introduced Persian cultural influences and Islamic values into northwest India in the 11th century. Soldiers as individuals or as clans in the invading Turkish (Central-Asian) armies settled down to live in India. Large-scale conversion of the local people to Islam took place mainly in the Punjab area because of its proximity and long historical conquest to the Afghan and Central-Asian Islamic kingdom. Islam was mainly

polarized between east and west in north India. Indian Muslims were essentially Indians but they were Muslims.³⁴

Conclusion

The world culture has been affected by the political upheavals brought about by the rise and fall of dynasties in Central Asia and had laid a significant impact on world history during the past 5,000 years. The people of Central Asia are the proud inheritors of a great and distinguished heritage. It is the birthplace of great warrior tribes, great monarchs, great physicians, mathematicians, poets, distinguished Sufis, and Muhadisines who transformed much of the history of the globe. The geographical features of Central Asia were the cause of invasion to other parts of the world. The geography of this region made it weak in economic resources but made the native tribes and nomads a powerful ruler who invaded other parts of the world in search of economic resources, food, and trade. These invasions established a bond of common political and cultural interaction with other people. The area is still the center of the world's attention even today in the 21st century. These landlocked states still need some route, through sea or land, for trade and transportation of their economic resources to the world market. The circumstances in Central Asia throughout the 20th and 21st centuries are closely similar to those of the 18th and 19th centuries.

³⁴ Canfield, Robert L., ed. *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, (2002), 5-33.