

At this period there were always four sub-divisions of the Ölot tribe. When the Dzungar chief BATOR HUNG-TAIJI had achieved greater power than any of the other tribes, HU URLUK, the chief of the Torguts, who hated him, determined to betake himself with the whole of his tribe to the south of Russia. This took place in 1618, and towards the end of the Ming dynasty, or more precisely 1643, they settled down in the region of present Astrakhan. Their head-quarters is described in the Chinese annals as being 40° N latitude and 53° W from Peking. To the south of their new settlement the Kosacks had one of their favourite resorts. Finally, the Torguts became Russian subjects.

HU URLUK's sons, however, sent ambassadors and gifts every year to the Emperor of China. HU URLUK's son SHUKER TAIJI (SHAKUR?) had a son PUNT-SUK (PANSUK), whose son AYUKA (AICHI) assumed the title of Khan. In the fifty-first year of the reign of K'ANG HSI (1712) AYUKA sent a messenger to the emperor. The latter showed interest in this distant people and in order to get trustworthy information about their country he sent TU LI-CHEN through Russian territory to the Torguts' district. TU LI-CHEN has described his three years' journey in a work called I-yü-lu or »The Book on Foreign Countries».¹

In the middle of the eighteenth century the Torguts were a large tribe under their chief OBISH KHAN (also written UBASHI, UBASHA and OSIBA). At that time the Russians were at war with their neighbours, and as the Torguts were their subjects they were also obliged to serve in the field. When as a consequence of the Russian wars OBISH KHAN had lost many of his people he wearied of living under the Tsar's sceptre and decided to seek new pastures. One of his relations, who was resident in China, visited his head-quarters and advised him to undertake the conquest of Ili, which district had been taken by China in 1758.

OBISH KHAN wished to have the whole Torgut tribe with him and sent a fiery cross to those who lived to the west of the river (Volga), with word that they should begin to march in the winter, when it would be possible to cross the river on the ice. But just that winter (1771), as it happened, the river did not freeze over, and he therefore set off with only 160,000 men for Ili. The Russians pursued OBISH KHAN and his following, but the latter had a fair start and made good their escape. When the Qazaq began to harass him he resolved to take another route, and turned towards the Buruts,² living to the west of Sinkiang and north-west of Kashgar. The Buruts, however, also attacked the migrating tribe, plundering

¹ This book, which exists in English translation, is of particular interest for us Swedes, for the author met captive officers from CHARLES XII's army in Siberia. Descriptions of the embassy exist also by some of these soldiers of King CHARLES XII. One of them, J. S. SCHNITSCHER, was an officer in the escort to TU LI-CHEN. He related the story of this visit at AYUKA KHAN's court in a little book that was published in Stockholm in the year 1744 under the title of *Berättelse om Ajuckinska Calmuckiet*. F. B.

² Burut = Qara-Kirghiz. F. B.