

Törü: Ancient Turkic Law 'Privatized' by Chinggis Khan and his Descendants

Roman Pochekaev

Törü is one of the most mysterious sources of law in the Turkic-Mongol history as we have not so much information about it. Originally törü was means orders and edicts of Ancient Turkic khagans who pretended to state the will of Heaven. Later Mongols (before Chinggis Khan) transformed it into series of general legal principles which were postulated by Heaven itself and couldn't be changed as it would cause the divine anger.

The only interpreters of törü became *bekis*, Mongol tribal leaders and that became a barrier for Chinggis Khan who during the first stage of his fight for power deprived bekis of their monopoly to interpret törü and became the only official interpreter himself. Later political and legal tradition of Mongol states of 13th-16th cc. connected origin of törü with Chinggis Khan (*Torah-djenkhizkhaniah*) and the most eminent of his successors in different states (e. g. '*tura of Batu*' in Chaghadaid Khanate or '*tura of Idigu*' in the Golden Horde).

Thus, törü became one of legal instruments of Chinggis Khan and his descendants to obtain and legitimate their power. Its role, firstly diminished by *yarliks* of Chinggis Khan (his *Yasa*), substantially increased in 14th-15th cc. after the crisis of imperial state system: as historical sources mentions, it was widely used in the Golden Horde, state of Timur and Mughal Empire, Crimean Khanate, etc.

At last, during the 17th-19th cc. term 'törü' (*tura, tyurya*) became a something like title of certain princes in Central Asia as reflection of their undoubted rights for throne as members of the 'Golden Clan' of Chinggisids. So, that was logical completion of process of 'privatization' of törü by descendants of Chinggis Khan.