A New Trend in the Relationship between the Landlord and His Slaves in South China of the 16th and 17th Centuries

In Medieval China, a landlord generally had his tenants work on their own farms. At the time, when agricultural productivity was still low, the master would keep his slaves in a more or less total economic dependence on himself. The relationship is termed as "the provision of labor" or "the provision of labor and land." In such a system, the tenant's economic management as a result of increased productivity of the slave in farm work is reinterpreted with loyalty (Sheng Anzi, 1535) of the latter. This phenomenon is a reflection of the higher agricultural productivity. The 18th-century economic interdependence between the master and the slave, termed "economic interdependence between the master and the slave," is another aspect of the relationship that the former is under the obligation of favor (on ซื้อ) to the latter.

Details of the life of Osman, who gave his name to the Osman Dynasty, are yet to be clarified. The author of this article attempts to make them clear through the re-examination of early Ottoman chronicles (especially 'Asgharname' Turki, written in the second half of the 16th century) with reference to the present researches on the subject. The author discusses

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Osman and the First Organization of the Ottoman Turks
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Osman succeeded his father Ertuğrul as the head of a small band of nomads belonging to Kayi, a branch of Türkmen tribes. Osman was therefore first of all a nomad chief and there is no reason to regard his Kayi genealogy false.

Soon after his succession towards the end of 13th century, Osman began to extend his territories around Süğüt at the expense of the Byzantine dominion in the north-western Anatolia. The expansion was not accomplished all at once but was proceeded by steps. Osman’s military movement against the Byzantine Empire might be largely divided in two stages. At first, his operations on the Byzantine frontiers remained within the scope of small conflicts or skirmishes with the neighbouring Christian princes (‘tekfur-lar’ in Aşıkpaşaçade Tarihi). At this stage, Osman’s followers consisted for the most part of Kayi tribesmen.

But in the second stage, when the siege of Bursa and İzmit (Nicaea) was undertaken, Osman’s operations against the Byzantine dominion grew in character into a systematic invasion and Osman began to appear more and more as a leader of a ghâzi organization which had almost constantly existed on the frontiers of the Moslem World. The ghâzi (‘gazi-ler’ in Aşıkpaşaçade Tarihi) under Osman’s leadership were marked by their nomadic elements (the elements of ‘Alp’ in Aşıkpaşaçade Tarihi) and their passion for loot rather than for the faith.

Osman died a chief of nomad tribesmen as well as a head of the ghâzi organization. At the time of his death, his dominion was still limited to the north-western corner of Anatolia. Osman was neither a sultan nor a great conqueror as he was described by most Ottoman historiographers. The importance of Osman in Ottoman history lies in the fact that he organized the earliest core of the Ottoman Turks.