



KASHGAR

KASHGAR (Kāšgār; Modern Uighur *Qāšqār*, Chinese *Kashi*), a town in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in northwestern China (lat 39°29' N, long 76°02' E; elev. 1,304 m). Located in the westernmost extremity of the Tarim Basin (which is occasionally called Kashgaria, as well as Eastern or [Chinese Turkestan](#)), Kashgar can be reached from the east by roads along both the southern and northern edges of the Taklamakan Desert. One can travel from Kashgar to the southwest, along the Tashkurghan gorge and across the Pamirs to the Oxus and Indus basins, while the easily surmountable passes of the Terek-davan lead to the west to [Farḡāna](#), a land that often shared Kashgar's historical destinies.

It was not until the eve of the Common Era when Kashgar was introduced into written histories. Its western and probably indigenous name is Kāš, to which the East Iranian *-yar* ('mountain') was attached, while in the East it appears in Chinese as Shule and in Tibetan as Śu-lig; a few other names of minor importance were also associated with Kashgar in the course of its history, none with established etymology (Bailey, pp. 50-54; Pelliot, pp. 196-214). The Chinese history *Hanshu* enumerates Shule among the 48 principalities of the "Western Regions." It consisted of 1,510 households and possessed 2,000 soldiers. From 59 BCE until 23 CE, Shule, along with the other principalities of the Tarim Basin, was under formal Chinese rule; the local dynasty accepted the suzerainty of China and was controlled by ten Han officials. Later it fell under the domination of Shache ([YĀRKAND](#)) and [Xiungnu](#). In 75 CE Kashgar was again subjugated to Chinese rule by Ban Chao and served as his informal



residence during an unstable period which lasted until 91 CE, when official Chinese control over the Tarim Basin was re-established. At that time, the trade agents of the Macedonian merchant Maes Titianus composed an itinerary to Serica (China), which ultimately came down to us in Ptolemy's *Geography*. The *Kasia chora* (Ptolemy, *Geogr.*, 1.12.7 sq., 6.13.1) is described therein as a trading place situated between the Stone Tower (located after the mountain pass of Imaios) and Throana (Dunhuang); according to many modern scholars, this site corresponds to Kashgar.

Nominal Chinese supremacy over Kashgar weakened during the early 2nd century, and in 170 CE an official was killed there. Meanwhile, in 107-13 CE, the local dynasty sent a prince as a hostage to the Yuezhi, and later he was installed as king of Kashgar under Kushan protection (for summaries of the Chinese accounts about Shule, see Stein, pp. 47-89; Pelliot, pp. 196-214; Litvinskii, pp. 279-81, *et passim*; Hulsewé and Loewe, pp. 141-42). From this period until the 10th century, Kashgar became a part of the Buddhist world, although the local religion, called the “God of Heaven,” is attested to as late as the 7th century. Several *stupas* stand near Kashgar, among them the Kurghan Tim, some 25 meters high, and the Mauri Tim, which is still in a fairly good state of preservation (Rhie, pp. 249-54). Around the beginning of the 3rd century, Kashgar became one of the six centers of power in the “Western Regions”; somewhat later, however, according to the [Ka'ba-ye Zardošt](#) inscription of Šāpur I (r. 241-71; Huyse, I, p. 24; II, pp. 36-37, par. 3.14), *K's* (probably Kāšgar) is described as being the limit of Kušānšahr, in the possession of the Sasanian sovereign. In the *Beishi* (4th century to 618 CE), Kashgar is described as a rich country with twelve large cities. In the 6th century it is enumerated among the principalities of the Yada ([Hephthalites](#); see de La Vaissière, pp. 122-25), and it later came under the control of the First Turkish Kaghhanate.

After Tang China started to expand westwards and defeated the Eastern Turks in the mid-7th century, Kashgar was included into the Western Protectorate, but the local dynasty Pei was still in power. The famous traveler Xuan Zang visited Kashgar around 640 CE and described it as a vast kingdom (its circumference entailing five stages) with a moderate climate, developed agriculture and textile manufacturing, and some 10,000 Buddhist monks in a hundred monasteries, all of the Hināyana Sarvāstivāda school. In 676-78 Kashgar was invaded by the Tibetans, but it was soon recovered by the Chinese, who established a governing administration and counted the city as



one of the “Four Garrisons” of the “Pacified West.” The ruler of Kāš in the late 8th century, according to the Middle Persian Manichean text *Mahrnāmag* (Müller, lines 75-76), was called xšyð (‘ruler’ in Sogdian), with the title “Head of Auditors” and the name *lyfwṭwšy*, which is possibly Chinese.

The first Islamic raid on Kashgar took place in 715 (Beckwith, p. 82), but the city was still under Chinese administration and the local dynasty in 788, when the pilgrim Wu Kong visited it. Soon after that it was probably conquered by the Uighurs, and later by the Qarā-khanids or *Ilak-khanids* of Qarluq origin. Satoq Boğrā Khan, the ruler of the western part of the Qarā-khanid empire, converted to Islam before 955, and the eastern division, centered in Kashgar and *Balāsāgun*, consequently became Muslim as well. Satoq Boğrā Khan is venerated as a local saint in Kashgar up to the present, although he was primarily active to the west of the Tarim Basin. From that time onwards, Kashgar became a center of Islamic Turkic learning; local copper and silver coinage was minted. Maḥmud Kāšğari (1005-1102), a native of Kashgar, composed his famous *Divān-e loğāt al-tork* (Compendium of the Turkish Language) in Baghdad in the last quarter of the 11th century; he provides a number of details about his native city, mentioning the river Tūmān, which flows past Kashgar (Kāšğari, tr., I, p. 306), and Mān-kānd, the ruins of a city near Kashgar (Idem, tr., I, p. 360). Additionally, Kāšğari states that Kashgar was also called Ordu-kānd, (city of residence), and that among the townsfolk, *Ḳāqānī* Turkic, the Qarā-khanid literary language, was common (Kāšğari, tr., I, p. 84). Kāšğari also mentions some other place names of the area. Yusof Ḳāšḡ Hājeḡ Balāsāğuni (11th century) composed the first Turkic Muslim poem, the *Qutadğū Bilig* (The Wisdom of Royal Glory) in Kashgar in 1069-70.

Little is known about the pre-Turkic language of Kāšğar. Although a number of manuscripts were brought from Kāšğar, none of them is of documented local provenance. Xuan Zang speaks of the local variety of the Brāhmī script (Beal, II, p. 307), and an ostrakon with Brāhmī characters, excavated by Pelliot, appears to be the only written record from pre-Islamic Kāšğar (Hambis, p. 20). Maḥmud Kāšğari (tr., I, p. 85) lists 19 words of the Kānčākī language, spoken by the people living outside the city of Kāšğar, and he asserts it to be non-Turkic. However, some words (e.g., hata ‘father’ and hana ‘mother’) rather suggest Kānčākī to be a Turkic dialect similar to Arghu and *Khalaj*. Recently X. Tremblay (2007) has clearly shown that Kanjaki in the 11th century was a Turkic dialect, albeit rich in Iranian borrowings; he also attempts to give an etymology of the name *Kāšğar* and to explain proper names of the Han-period



rulers of the Kāšġar state as ones originating from a dialect closely related to Khotanese. Buddhist texts and documents in the Tumshuquese language, closely related to Khotanese Saka (see KHOTAN iii), have been excavated in Maralbashi and Tumshuq, some 200 km to the east of Kāšġar (Emmerick, pp. 204 ff.). The discovery of eight business documents in the Tocharian B language in Maralbashi (Malzahn, p. 94) makes a linguistic map of the Kāšġar region in the pre-Turkic times even more complicated. Marco Polo speaks of the peculiar language of Cascar (that is, Kāšġar; Yule, I, p. 191), but he probably means the local Turkic dialect (in contrast to Persian).

The weak Qarā-khanid authority in Kashgar was overtaken by Küčlüg (the usurper of the Qarā-khitay throne) in 1211, and he subsequently banished Islam. Thus, by 1220 the city willingly subjugated itself to the Mongols. After the division of the Mongol empire, Kashgar, along with Transoxania, became the domain of Čengiz Khan's (d. 1227) second son Čaġatāy (d. 1241), whose line ruled there until the 17th century (see CHAGHATAYID DYNASTY). In this period, ca. 1275, the Christian population of Kāšġar was noted by Marco Polo (Yule, I, p. 191), and Kāšġar was included in the 13th-century Nestorian list of metropolitans (Mingana).

Kashgar remained one of the chief territories of the Chaghatayids, although under the control of a Duġlāt family of Mongol origin, and in the late 14th-early 15th century it acknowledged the suzerainty of the Timurids (Barthold[Spuler], 1965, p. 622; Bretschneider, II, pp. 225-36 and 245-46). However, Kashgaria became unstable through the antagonism between the “Black Mountain” and “White Mountain” Sufi lines of Yārkand and Kashgar respectively. Mirzā Abu Bakr (1480-1514) destroyed the old city of Kashgar and erected a new one, which is today inhabited by Uighurs and is called the Old City. Although Yārkand became the capital of the region in 1514, Kashgar still possesses spectacular architectural monuments in classical east-Islamic style of both that time and the following periods, including the ‘Aydġāh and Udašiq mosques and the mausoleums of Yusof Kōdāyār Khan and Āfāq-K̲vāja (see Liu; Li *et al.*; Liu, tr. Kōrram).

In 1678 the Duġlāt family ceded their suzerainty to the K̲vāja theocratic dynasty, which was controlled to a large extent by the Lamaist Dzungars (Oyrat, Western Mongols). Subsequently, Kashgar was conquered by Qing China in 1759 and incorporated into the newly founded Western province (Xinjiang); Chinese rule in Kashgaria was interrupted by several revolts, the most prominent was that of Ya‘qub Beg, a native of Kokand (Kōqand), between



1865 and 1877. In the 19th century, Kashgar became an important site for the British and Russian colonial powers during the ‘Great Game.’ The Chinese town of Shule, or “New Kashgar,” is located 8 km to the southeast of “Old Kashgar.” In the mid-2000s, Kashgar was a predominantly Uighur town with a population of *ca.* 200,000 people. It has large markets and a number of tourist attractions.

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