

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Paper

Comparison of “Urugsırat” in Old Turkic and “Four Cutting” Expressions in Chinese and Their Relation to Genocide

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Abstract

This study examines in detail the etymological origins, semantic meanings, conceptual frameworks and historical contexts of the expressions “Urugsırat” in Turkic Bengü Stones (Orkhun Inscriptions) and “Four Cutting” (四绝 / Sì Jué) in Mandarin Chinese. It also emphasizes their relationship with the modern concept of genocide. It is revealed that “Urugsırat” is linked to the systematic extermination of a community and the implementation of genocide-like policies in Ancient Turkic societies. It reflects not only physical extermination, but also strategies targeting the identity and future of a people. Similarly, the Mandarin Chinese expression “Four Cutting” refers to a comprehensive policy of extermination aimed at eliminating the biological existence (extinction), lineage, economic and social resources, and social structure of target groups. The study explores the relationship between these two expressions and the phenomenon of genocide through comparative linguistic and historical analysis. Both expressions reveal the historical continuity of genocide. Especially today, China’s policies towards Uyghur Turks and other Turkic communities in East Turkestan are considered as a modern implementation of the “Four Cutting”. Practices such as mass surveillance, concentration camps called re-education, forced birth control and cultural assimilation have been associated with the crime of genocide by scientific reports and academic studies. In this context, the study aims to illuminate the historical and contemporary genocide processes by emphasizing the similarities

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(goal of extinction) and differences (scope and implementation methods) of "Urugsırat" and "Four Cutting".

Keywords: Urugsırat, Four Cutting, Turkic Bengü Stones, genocide, China, Uyghur, Turk, China

Eski Türkçedeki "Urugsırat" ile Çince'deki "Dört Kesme" İfadelerinin Karşılaştırılması ve Soykırımla İlişkisi

Özet

Bu çalışma; Türk Bengü Taşları'nda (Orhun Yazıtları) geçen "Urugsırat" ve Mandarin Çincesindeki "Dört Kesme" (四绝 / Sì Jué) ifadelerinin etimolojik kökenlerini, semantik anlamlarını, kavramsal çerçevelerini ve tarihsel bağlamlarını detaylı bir şekilde incelemektedir. Ayrıca bu ifadelerin modern soykırım kavramıyla ilişkileri üzerinde durulmaktadır. "Urugsırat"ın, Eski Türk toplumlarında, bir topluluğun neslinin sistematik olarak kurutulması ve soykırım benzeri politikaların uygulanmasıyla bağlantılı olduğu ortaya konulmaktadır. Bu ifade yalnızca fiziksel yok etmeyi değil, aynı zamanda bir halkın kimliğini ve geleceğini hedef alan stratejileri de yansıtmaktadır. Benzer şekilde Mandarin Çincesindeki "Dört Kesme" ifadesi, hedef grupların biyolojik varlığını (neslin kesilmesi), soyunu, ekonomik ve sosyal kaynaklarını ve sosyal yapısını ortadan kaldırmayı amaçlayan kapsamlı bir yok etme politikasını ifade etmektedir. Çalışma, karşılaştırmalı dilbilimsel ve tarihsel analiz yöntemleriyle bu iki ifadenin soykırım olgusuyla ilişkisini araştırmaktadır. Her iki ifade, soykırımın tarihsel sürekliliğini gözler önüne sermektedir. Özellikle günümüzde Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'daki Uyghur Türkleri ve diğer Türk topluluklarına yönelik politikaları, "Dört Kesme"nin modern bir uygulaması olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Kitlelesel gözetim, yeniden eğitim adındaki toplama kampları, zorunlu doğum kontrol ve kültürel asimilasyon gibi uygulamalar, bilimsel raporlar ve akademik çalışmalarla soykırım suçuyla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma "Urugsırat" ve "Dört Kesme"nin benzerliklerini (neslin yok edilmesi hedefi) ve farklılıklarını (kapsam ve uygulama yöntemleri) vurgulayarak tarihsel ve güncel soykırım süreçlerini aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Urugsırat, Dört Kesme, Türk Bengü Taşları, soykırım, Uyghur, Çin

Throughout history, societies have employed various terms to describe systematic extermination policies. These expressions offer valuable linguistic, historical, political, and sociological insights. Shaped by unique historical experiences and cultural memories, different societies have developed their own concepts to define such policies.

This analysis explores two such terms from different linguistic and geographical origins that both target Turkic peoples: "Urugsırat" from the Old Turkic Bengü Stones and "Four Cutting" (四绝 / Sì Jué) from Mandarin Chinese.

The Turkic Bengü Stones, including the Orkhon and Yenisei Inscriptions, are crucial texts detailing the history and governance of ancient Turkic societies. Within these inscriptions, the term “Urugsırat” refers to Chinese policies of assimilation, extermination, and identity erasure against captive Turks. The meaning of this term is rooted in the social structures and political realities of the time.

In modern Chinese political discourse, the expression “Four Cutting” (四绝 / Sì Jué) describes policies aimed at eradicating a people’s physical presence, roots, connections, and cultural continuity. This terminology has been frequently applied to China’s policies towards Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkestan, reflecting an ideological goal of disrupting ethnic and cultural continuity.

Understanding the historical precedents for what modern international law defines as genocide is of great legal and sociological importance. The term “genocide,” coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, is the contemporary legal term for systematic extermination policies that have existed throughout history. This examination of “Urugsırat” and “Four Cutting” provides a historical and linguistic analysis of such policies, evaluating their relationship with the modern concept of genocide and contributing to a broader understanding of this recurring phenomenon.

This research will employ a combination of linguistic, historical, comparative, and qualitative research techniques. First, a linguistic analysis will be conducted. This stage involves an etymological, semantic, and contextual examination of the term “Urugsırat” as it appears in the Old Turkic Orkhon Inscriptions. Similarly, the Chinese expressions constituting the “Four Cuttings”—断根 (duàn gēn - cutting the roots), 断联 (duàn lián - cutting the connections), 断源 (duàn yuán - cutting the origins), and 断代 (duàn dài - cutting the generation)—will be analyzed for their etymology, semantics, and conceptual contexts. As part of the qualitative approach, discourse analysis will be utilized to understand how these terms function within their respective political and historical narratives. The historical method will be used to examine China’s policies towards Turkic peoples during the interregnum period (630-681 AD) following the collapse of the First Eastern Kök-Türk Khaganate, referencing the Turkic Bengü Stones and other relevant historical sources. This historical perspective will be connected to the present by evaluating the People’s Republic of China’s current policies towards Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkestan, drawing on international reports and academic studies.

Using the comparative method, the linguistic similarities and differences between “Urugsırat” and the “Four Cutting” expressions will be assessed. This comparison will illuminate how both concepts articulate a

systematic intent to destroy a group's physical, cultural, and social fabric. Finally, the study will establish the relationship between the modern concept of genocide and the historical expressions of "Urugsirat" and "Four Cutting." By focusing on how the strategies of physical, cultural, and biological destruction defined within genocide are manifested in both terms, the research will highlight the parallels between their historical meanings and their contemporary applications.

Etymological, Semantic, Conceptual and Contextual Characteristics of Urugsirat Expression in Turkic Bengü Stones

Urugsirat appears in line 10 of the eastern face of the Köl Tigin Bengü Tasi and in line 9 of the eastern face of the Bilge Kağan Bengü Tasi (Ergin, 2011, p. 10). This expression has evolved from a simple verb *ur-* (to place/put) to complex and deeper meanings. In the first stage, the process of noun formation from the verb took place and the word *urug* was derived with the suffix *-(X)g* added to the root *ur-*. Initially meaning seed, this word had a concrete meaning as something placed or planted in the soil, but over time it underwent a metaphorical expansion and turned into a concept of lineage, i.e. the continuation of human descent (Clauson, 1972, p. 214-215). Later, in the process of verb formation from the noun, the suffix *-sIrA-* was added to the word *urug* to derive *urugsıra-*, and at this stage it acquired the meaning of "to be deprived of something". Finally, the passive participle *-t-* was added to the verb and the form *urugsirat-* was reached (Ata, 2018, p.138). Thus, the word has been transformed into a term with social and political dimensions by taking on a strong and dramatic meaning such as genocide (genocide), eradication (Ercilasun, 2016, p.725).

Urugsirat- "to leave without generation" < *urug* "tribe, lineage" + *sIrA* "to leave childless" [verb-forming suffix from noun] -*t* [passive voice suffix]

In Neo-Uighur, the word *Uruḡ* in its primary meaning corresponds to concrete concepts and includes the seed or fruit of plants and the semen or semen of men. However, over time, it has acquired abstract and social meanings and has come to be associated with genealogical concepts such as ancestors, offspring, and siblings. The suffix *Sirat* adds the meaning of deprivation and deprivation. For example, when combined with the word *kan*, it means "deprivation of blood," whereas when combined with *uruḡ*, it conveys a deep sense of deprivation that encompasses not only a biological separation but also a separation from lineage and roots (Yakup et al, 199 p. 726).

Let us examine the use and context of the expression *urugsirat* in Turkic Bengü stones: In the Bilge Kagan and Költigin Bengü stones, the policies of the Tang Empire¹ towards the Kokturks in China's political history are described within the framework of the expression *urugsirat*. This expression is used in these Bengü stones in the context of drying up the lineage and destroying the nation, and reflects a critical evaluation of the T'ang Empire's systematic assimilation policies. Ahmet Bican Ercilasun in his work *Türk Kaganlığı Türk Bengü Taşları* (2016), while explaining the context of this word, draws attention to the establishment and rise of the Köktürk State. It is stated that in the early period of the state, the people lived in prosperity, but after the death of the founding ancestors, weaknesses emerged in the administration. The fact that the subsequent kings and rulers were not as knowledgeable and competent as the previous generations, the weakening of the people's loyalty to the state, and China's policies towards the Turks accelerated the process of the state's collapse. This process caused the Turks to lose their political and military organization and to fall under the rule of China. During this period of captivity, which lasted about fifty years (630-681), the Chinese government implemented systematic oppression and assimilation policies against the Turks and carried out mass massacres to intimidate the Turks seeking independence. During this period, the Turkic people not only lost their political and military power, but were also subjected to genocidal policies of forced assimilation, displacement, mass executions and cultural destruction. Over time, a backlash against captivity emerged and the Turkic people embarked on a struggle for independence, seeking their own state and kagan. However, due to lack of organization, these rebellions failed and the Chinese government

¹ The Tang Dynasty (May 6, 618 – October 16, 690, March 3, 705 – May 12, 907) constitutes a significant period in Chinese history, reigning for 289 years. Governed by 22 rulers—including Wu Zetian, China's first and only legally recognized female ruler—the dynasty's name derives from the ancient Jin Kingdom in Chinese history, corresponding to the central region of present-day Shanxi Province. Founded by Tang Gaozu Li Yuan, the Tang Dynasty was a powerful, Han-origin yet multi-ethnic unified empire, and together with the Sui Dynasty, it is referred to as the "Sui-Tang" period. The ruling class of the Tang Dynasty originated from the Guanlong Group, and Li Yuan's ancestor, Li Hu, held the title of "Tang Guogong" (Prince of the Tang Kingdom) as one of the eight great statesmen of Western Wei during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period (Jiāng, 4). During the Sui Dynasty, Li Yuan served as a commander in Jinyang (present-day Taiyuan, Shanxi). Amid the popular uprising that followed the collapse of the Sui Dynasty, he moved toward central China and, in 618, established the Tang Dynasty after the abdication of Sui Emperor Yang You. The Tang Dynasty's capitals were Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi) and Luoyang (present-day Luoyang, Henan), with Taiyuan serving as the northern capital and other subsidiary capitals (Drompp, 2004, p. 39).

started a genocidal process that could lead to mass extinction by applying harsh repression policies against the Turks (Ercilasun 404). This situation is mentioned in the Bengü Stone of Köl Tigin as follows:

"k(a)g(a)nl(i)g bod(u)n (e)rt(i)m k(a)g(a) n(i)m k(a)nı ne k(a)g(a)nka iş(i)g küç(ü)g birür m(e)n tir (e)rm(i)ş (a)n̄ ça tip t(a)bg(a) ç k(a)g(a)nka y(a)gı bolm(i)ş y(a)gı bol(u)p it(i)nü y(a)r(a)t(i)nu um(a)dū k y(a)na i ç(i) km(i)ş bun̄ ça iş(i)g küç(ü)g birtü k(ke)rü s(a) k(i)nm(a)tı türü k bod(u) n(u)g öl(ü)r[eyin urugsır](a)t(a)yin tir (e)rm(i)" (Ergin 10).

(I was a nation of kagans, where is my khan? To which khan am I giving my labor (serving)?" Saying this, he became an enemy of the Chinese kagan, and being an enemy, he could not organize himself and become organized and again became dependent on (the Chinese). (The Chinese people) would say "Let me kill the Turkic people, let me destroy their generation" without thinking that he had given (served) so much work and power). In lines 22-24, the collapse of the Turks, but the event that does not end with the end, is expressed as follows: "*barduk yirde edgüg ol erinç kanning subça yügürti süngüküng tagça yatdı beglik urı oglung kul boltı eşilik kız oglung küng boltı*" (Ergin 16). The sky above has fallen, the earth below has been pierced, the state is gone, the tradition is gone. The nation was scattered, scattered here and there, the blood flowed like water, the bone lay like a mountain. Your son who would be a master became a slave, your daughter who would be a wife became a concubine. In this state, Kapgan also flew away." (Ercilasun 404). The expressions "*His blood flowed like water, his bone lay like a mountain*" in Bengütaş indicate a systematic process of physical extermination and the existence of mass deaths. The dissolution of the social structure is described with the expressions "*The sky above has fallen, the earth below has been pierced*" and "*The state is gone, and so is the honor*". These metaphors indicate that the political and legal system of the Koptürk society was deliberately destroyed and the social order collapsed. The process of ethnic and cultural destruction is emphasized with the expression "The nation is scattered, scattered here and there". The change of social status is clearly revealed with the phrase "Your sons who were to become gentlemen became slaves, your daughters who were to become wives became concubines". This shows that the traditional hierarchical structure of Göktürk society was deliberately destroyed and the social structure was systematically transformed. In the words of Serken Şen (2023), the Turkic nation, throughout its history, has never been the subject of this act, but has always seen being the object of this act as not only a defeat, but also as the peak of the greatest disasters that threaten its existence and identity (Şen, 2023, p. 118).

In summary, the term *Urugsırat* refers to the systematic and deliberate extermination of a community's lineage, i.e. the elimination of its existence over generations in line with deliberate policies. In *Turkic Begutaş*, this expression is used to describe the policies of mass extermination, genocide and assimilation, especially by hostile communities, and includes not only physical extermination but also cultural and identity erasure.

Let us consider the historical context of the expression *Urugsırat*. In *Ahmet Taşagül's Göktürkler II (Fetret Devri 630-681) (1999)*, China's targeting of the Turks during the *Fetret Period (630-682)*, especially the policies of almost exterminating and drying up their lineage as expressed in the *Turkic Bengü stones*, are discussed in a multifaceted way. According to him, during this period, China tried to destroy the identity of the Turks not only through physical annihilation strategies but also through comprehensive interventions in the cultural, social, political and ethnic spheres.

Throughout the conquest period, China directly intervened to physically exterminate the lineage of the *Kokturks*. This process was particularly realized through the geographical separation of *Turkic tribes* and their resettlement in different regions. Thus, it was aimed to break the ethnic ties between the *Turkic tribes* and weaken their social and cultural relations. Through resettlement policies, China created economic dependency to eliminate the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the *Turks* and tried to reshape the social structure of the *Turks* through the slavery system and agricultural labor. Forcing *Turkic youth* to serve in the Chinese army led them to distance themselves from their identity and adapt to Chinese culture, which was seen as part of China's long-term assimilation strategies. The resettled *Turkic tribes* were isolated by being integrated into Chinese military garrisons and a serious process of dissolution of their social structure was initiated. In addition, the traditional education and training methods of the *Turks* were eliminated and they were integrated into the Chinese education system and encouraged to identify with Chinese culture. Forcing the *Turks* to settle down led to the abandonment of their nomadic lifestyle and this process constituted an important stage in terms of erasing their cultural identity. The breaking of social ties was one of the most prominent features of China's settlement policies during the conquest period. The separation of *Turkic tribes* from each other led to the weakening of their social solidarity and the dissolution of their social structure. This change led especially the younger generations to move away from traditional *Turkic culture* and lose their national identity.

Throughout the conquest period, China targeted the political independence of the *Turks* and pursued a series of strategies in this direction. After the collapse of the *First Eastern Kokturk State*, China directly intervened

in the political structures of the Turks and tried to weaken their leadership structure and independence. The granting of Chinese titles to Turkic beys and the integration of these leaders into the Chinese bureaucracy was another step aimed at weakening the political independence, aristocratic structure and political authority of the Turks. In addition, the military forces of the Turks were incorporated into the Chinese army, aiming to eliminate their warrior identity. China adopted a harsh attitude aimed at preventing the political independence of the Turks and tried to prevent the Turks from establishing their own self-government. This process was reinforced by the intense resistance against the Turks' demands for independence. While dividing the Turks ethnically, China aimed to maintain effective control over this division. In addition, China's intermarriage policies aimed to merge the Turkic aristocracy with the Chinese aristocracy and erase their ethnic lineages (Taşağıl, 1999, p.13-82).

The Etymological, Conceptual and Contextual Status of the Four Interruptions in Mandarin Chinese

In Mandarin Chinese, the expression 断根 [duàn gēn] - cut off the root, 断原 [duàn yuán] - cut off the source, 断联 [duàn lián] - cut off the connection, 断代 [duàndài] - cut off/stop the generation. Let us dwell on the etymological and semantic features of these words. The character 断 [duàn], which is the common component of these words, is translated as "cut-" in the oldest Chinese dictionary, the Description of Chinese Characters.² It also means block-, stop-, cut off- judge-, divide-, forbid-, kill-, leave-, manage-, leave incomplete-, erect. Etymologically, the character 断 is made up of two main components: 丝(sī, thread/link): Symbolizes the physical or abstract breaking of threads or connections. 𠂔(duàn, axe or cutting tool): Refers to a cutting, severing or cutting intervention. When these components are combined, the character 断 takes on the meaning of physically cutting something, but also expands to include abstract meanings of severing ties, relationships or the continuity of generations.³

The meanings of the words that make up the expression Four Cutting are as follows:

断根 [duàn gēn] - To cut off the root: 断 (to cut) + 根 (root) → It means to completely uproot or eradicate something. When used of plants, it refers to physical root cutting, while when used of people or communities, it connotes cultural or biological genocide.⁴ 断原 [duàn yuán] - To cut off the

² 說文解字-Shuō wén jiě zì

³ <https://www.zdic.net/hans/断>, July 7, 2024.

⁴ <https://hanyu.baidu.com/hanyu-page/term/detail?ptype=zici&wd=断根>, July 7, 2024.

source: 断 (to cut) + 原 (source, origin) → To cut off, destroy the source or birthplace of something. This refers to cutting off an economic, cultural or physical source.⁵ 断联 [duàn lián] - to cut the connection: 断 (to cut) + 联 (connection, relationship) → It means to break the relationship or bond between two people, groups or concepts. The severing of ties between individuals or communities can be associated with policies of discrimination, isolation or exile.⁶ 断代 [duàndài] - To cut off/stop the generation: 断 (cut off) + 代 (generation, generation) → To cut off the continuity of a generation, to prevent the continuation of a lineage.⁷

This word can refer to policies of demographic genocide, forced sterilization or cultural assimilation. In all words, the character 断 [duàn] denotes that something physical, biological or intangible is forcibly cut or severed. (Zens, 2021, p. 23) These words relate to the severing of individuals or communities from their roots, lineage or cultural ties. The words usually refer to the result not of a natural process but of a deliberate intervention from outside (Human Rights Watch, 2021, p.7).

The phrase four-cutting is currently used to describe the Chinese government's systematic policies of systematic destruction of the physical presence, culture, and social ties of Uyghurs and other Turks in East Turkestan (Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021, p.5). Below we will discuss the context in which this expression is used.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's (习近平) speech during his visit to East Turkestan on April 30, 2014 signaled a policy of four cuts. During his visit to East Turkestan in the aftermath of the "301" attack in Kunming in March 2014, Xi Jinping issued harsh instructions on security policies. In his speech during the visit, he emphasized that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project needs a stable internal security environment and that tough and repressive measures must be maintained. Xi said, "Tough measures must be taken and swift and effective attacks must be launched. In the fight against violence and terrorism, we must increase pressure, eradicate it and not expand it." He also emphasized the strategic importance of the region, saying, "The security and equilibrium of both Xinjiang region and the nation as a whole is contingent upon the conditions in Southern Xinjiang." He argued that anyone who falls under the influence of religious extremism - no matter old, young, male or female - will lose their conscience, lose their humanity and will not hesitate to kill people, arguing that Uyghurs and diegrian Turks should be educated. The documents⁸ include speeches not

⁵ <https://hanyu.baidu.com/hanyu-page/term/detail?ptype=zici&wd=断原>, July 7, 2024.

⁶ <https://hanyu.baidu.com/hanyu-page/term/detail?ptype=zici&wd=断联>, July 10, 2024.

⁷ <https://hanyu.baidu.com/hanyu-page/term/detail?ptype=zici&wd=断代> July 10, 2024.

⁸ <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/> 8 Ağustos 2024.

only by Xi Jinping, but also by then Prime Minister Li Keqiang (李克强), CCP Politburo Standing Committee member Yu Zhengsheng (俞正声) and Party Secretary Chen Quanguo (陈全国), who was transferred from Tibet to East Turkistan in August 2016. In this regard, Zhu Hailun's speech at the "Anti-Terrorism and Stabilization Meeting" held in Hotan province in February 2017 can be cited as evidence.⁹ At the meeting Zhu Hailun, who serves as the Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee, said that in order to eradicate the "three evil forces", it is necessary to "strike hard like an iron mallet, destroy the enemy at its root, annihilate it en masse, expel it, and uproot it like a nail, destroy, chase and exterminate, crush and exterminate, crush and exterminate, scrape and destroy, do not even give them a chance to breathe, show no mercy, take a tough stance, show authority, and demonstrate a will of steel" (Wáng, 2017). Prime Minister Li Keqiang has also called on all ethnic groups in East Turkestan, especially the youth, He said that support should be given to enable them to learn the lingua franca of the state and stressed that priority should be given to what the international community calls internment camps but the Chinese state calls *Vocational Skills Training and Education Centers* (Zhíyè jìnéng jiàoyù péixùn zhōngxīn - 职业技能教育培训中心) or conversion therapy (Jiàoyù zhuǎnhuà - 教育转化). In a video speech, Chen Quanguo, one of the most prominent figures in the crackdown in East Turkestan, called for the full implementation of Xi Jinping's Xinjiang strategy. In his speech, he used the phrase "four cuts", such as "Let's cut off the root, cut off the lineage, cut off the connections and cut off the resources", indicating that harsh policies in the region should be continued in the long term. He also stated that vocational training centers (concentration camps) in East Turkestan should be operated in a stable manner in the long term.¹⁰ In this context, since May 2014, the Chinese government has been conducting a policy in East Turkestan, which it calls *Operation Coup against Violent Terrorism* (严厉打击暴力恐怖活动专项行动).

Operation Violent Counterterrorism Crackdown, also known as Four Cutting, is considered a systematic state policy of the Chinese government to destroy the ethnic and cultural identity of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkestan. As understood from the speeches of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Xinjiang Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, this operation targets Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples and imposes a deep transformation process on their cultural, religious and ethnic identity. Sin-

⁹ "Three Evil Forces: Separatism, Extremism, Terrorism" (Ch: 三个恶势力, Sān gè è shì lì)

¹⁰ 习近平2014年考察新疆的谈话文件曝光 <https://d430ely3up8ax.cloudfront.net/docs/transcript-document-01.pdf> 8 Ağustos 2024.

ce 2014, 65% of mosques, shrines and cemeteries have been reported to have been vandalized or completely destroyed as part of this operation. Xi Jinping has strengthened state oversight of religious activities alongside other aspects of daily living. He has mandated that religious practices must be adapted to Chinese characteristics and purged of outside influences (Is-hfaq, 2018, p. 5). In addition, education in the New Uyghur language has been banned, erasing it from the public sphere, while children have been forcibly placed in Mandarin-medium boarding schools. Muslims who observe their religious beliefs have been given extended jail sentences under accusations of extremist activities. Under the *Operation Crackdown on Violent Terrorism* campaign launched in 2014, high birth rates of Uyghur families were suppressed, linking them to radicalism and separatism. After 2017, birth restrictions on Uyghurs became even harsher, with fines, forced abortions, forced IUD insertion and sterilizations becoming commonplace. In documents such as The Karakax List,¹¹ it was found that the most common reason for arresting Uyghurs was having too many children (Zenz, The Karakax List, 2020, p. 3).

In 2017-2018, sterilization operations in East Turkestan increased by more than 60% among Uyghurs, while they tended to decrease in the rest of the country. In 2019, the Chinese government implemented a plan called “Two Comprehensive Investigations”, aiming to sterilize or implant IUDs in 80% of women in East Turkestan. Those who declined to undergo these procedures faced the possibility of being detained, particularly women (Zens, 2020, p. 13).

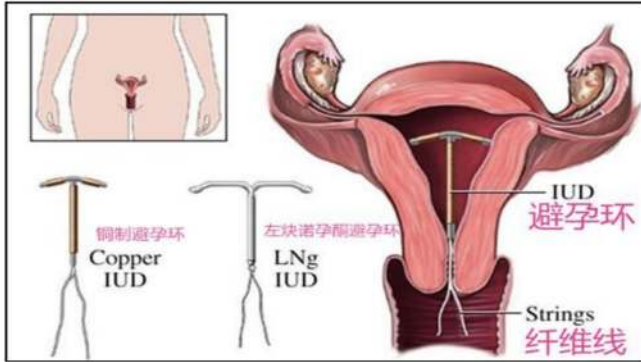


Figure 1: In 2019, Xinjiang's Health Commission obtained four differently shaped intrauterine devices, none of which included strings. The image shown above illustrates the intended functioning mechanism of these IUDs.. (Image source: <http://archive.is/wip/6fpCH>)

¹¹ PDF_Ch_3pg_fully-redacted.pdf, 24 Ağustos 2024.

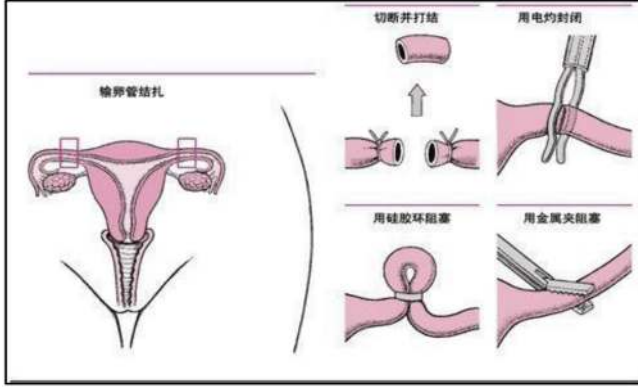
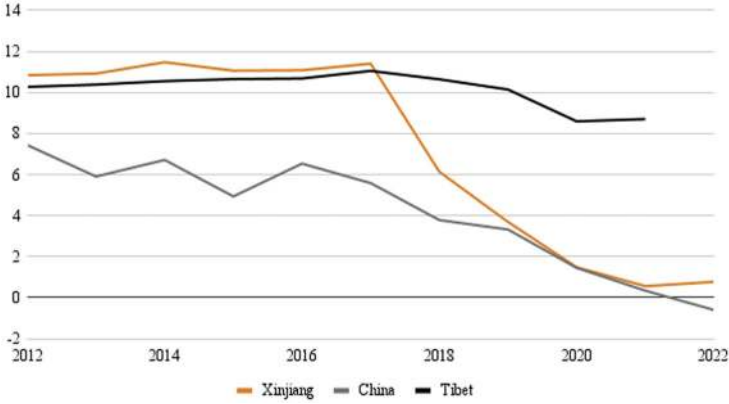


Figure 2: Tubal ligation sterilization (输卵管结扎, shuluanguan jieza), which can be reversible or irreversible. (Image source: <http://archive.is/LwFcs>.)

Some of the women who were forcibly sterilized and implanted with IUDs in concentration camps found out that they had lost their fertility during medical examinations after escaping from China. There are also testimonies of forced abortions of pregnant women. The forced and systematic destruction of Uyghur women's fertility reveals the Chinese government's policies to deliberately change the demographic makeup of these communities. The Chinese government has set targets to reduce the birth rates of the Uyghur population in southern Xinjiang to the lowest levels in the world. Between 2015-2018, population growth in the two largest Uyghur counties in Xinjiang fell by 84%. In Hotan county, the birth rate decreased by 70.8% between 2012 and 2018. (Ruser and Leibold, 2021, p. 11)

Analyzing the birth rates of the eight districts in Urumqi in 2018, six Han-majority districts saw an increase in birth rates, while Uyghur-majority Dabancheng and Urumqi districts saw a decrease of 17.34% and 9.9% respectively. In 2018, birth rates remained stable in Han-majority areas, while more than 160,000 expected births did not materialize in Uyghur-majority areas. In 2019, there were an estimated 186,400 fewer births in Xinjiang, 95% of which were recorded in Uyghur-majority areas (Ruser, 2021, p. 6).

Figure 3: Rate of natural increase in population for the Xinjiang¹², Tibet, and the Peoples Republic of China, 2012-2022.¹³



The deployment of Fanghuiju (访惠聚)¹⁴ teams in East Turkestan to Uyghur and other Turkic families is another practice that prevents Uyghur and other Turkic families from keeping their culture and tradition alive within the family. Between 2014-2017, the Chinese government dispatched 200,000 male officials from various state entities to rural communities.

¹² The term “Xinjiang” in this context refers to East Turkestan. While the region is officially named “Xinjiang” in Chinese state discourse and official literature, it is known as “East Turkestan” in Turkish history and the Turkic world.

¹³ Sources: For the Uyghur region, annual government reports, 2013-2022, entitled [year] “... Statistical Report on the National Economy and Social Development in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” (新疆维吾尔自治区国民经济和社会发展统计公报), accessible at <https://archive.ph/wip/CUSnM> (2013); <https://archive.ph/wip/liqHY> (2014); <https://archive.is/wip/a0yK4> (2015); <https://archive.ph/wip/zjU0C> (2016); <https://archive.is/HSLow> (2017); <https://archive.is/HIv7N> (2018); <https://archive.ph/wip/eIesL> (2019); <https://archive.ph/wip/qjZn1> (2021); <https://archive.ph/wip/qstbE> (2022). For other provinces, see National Bureau of Statistics data, which is compiled at CEICdata.com: <https://archive.is/wip/ZECXT>.

¹⁴ First, the abbreviation for “Halkı Ziyaret Et, Halka Fayda Sağla ve Halkın Kalplerini Birleştir” (Visit the People, Benefit the People, and Unite the People’s Hearts). These teams, also known as “köy temelli çalışma ekipleri” or village-based work teams, were first implemented in 2011 in the Tibet Özerk Bölgesi (Tibet Autonomous Region) by the then Tibet Parti Sekreteri (Party Secretary) Chen Quanguo and have been extended indefinitely. See İnsan Hakları İzleme Örgütü (Human Rights Watch), “China: No End to Tibet Surveillance Program,” 18 January 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/18/china-no-end-tibetsurveillance-program>; “In Sincan (Xinjiang), 200,000 Komünist Parti (Communist Party) members were assigned to stay in grassroots villages to visit the people, benefit the people, and win the people’s hearts (访民情、惠民生、聚民心),” Halk Çevrimiçi (People’s Daily Online), <http://xj.people.com.cn/GB/188750/361873/>, 24 September 2024.

These representatives conducted regular surveillance visits and delivered political indoctrination to residents. This initiative was later made permanent. In October 2016, authorities introduced the "Becoming Family" (结对认亲) campaign. Starting December 2017, this program evolved into a compulsory residential arrangement where over one million officials spend a minimum of five days bimonthly living in the homes of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples, primarily in countryside areas.¹⁵

Family relationships also began to systematically unravel; children of detained parents were placed in state-run orphanages or boarding schools (Zenz, 2019, p. 2-8). Between 2017-2018, the Xinjiang government invested in building or expanding at least 45 orphanages and boarding schools. According to research cited by the European Parliament in 2020, it is estimated that more than 880,000 Uyghur children had been placed in boarding schools by the end of 2019.¹⁶ Uyghurs and other Turks have been banned from contacting their relatives, and family members of Uyghurs and other Turks abroad in China have been taken hostage and forced to return. In addition, communications of Uyghurs and other Turks were monitored through digital surveillance systems and arrests were made for messages deemed "dangerous".¹⁷ Severe restrictions have also been imposed in the economic sphere. The assets of Uyghurs and other Turks have been confiscated, business activities have been restricted, and thousands have been included in forced labor programs and forced to work in factories or agricultural fields. This has been described as modern slavery, with international corporations benefiting from the forced labor system (Cockayne, 2022, p. 3-17).

The Chinese government has encouraged inter-ethnic marriages between Uyghur women and Han Chinese men through various forms of coercion, incentives and propaganda. This includes financial incentives such as cash rewards and gifts to those who marry Han men. The government has used these policies to promote the assimilation of Uyghurs into Han Chinese society, often presented as promoting "ethnic unity" (民族团结)

¹⁵ China: Visiting Officials Occupy Homes in Muslim Region," Human Rights Watch news release, May 13, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/13/china-visiting-officials-occupy-homes-muslim-region>.

¹⁶ European Parliament's declaration regarding compulsory labor conditions and the circumstances of Uyghur people within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, reference 2020/2913 (RSP), issued in Strasbourg: Legislative Observatory, 2020. para D, [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2020/2913\(RSP\)](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2020/2913(RSP)). October 4, 2024.

¹⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/zh-hans/news/2025/02/03/china-travel-uyghurs-heavily-restricted>, October 4, 2024.

and “social stability” (社会稳定). Since 2014, there has been an increase in inter-ethnic marriages, which were rare in previous years due to political, religious and cultural differences. Women who refused these marriages faced serious consequences, such as the arrest of their male relatives.¹⁸ The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) has raised concerns about the exploitation and vulnerability of Uyghur women under these policies. According to this organization, these policies are part of a broader effort to assimilate Uyghurs into Han Chinese culture. These forced and encouraged marriages are seen as gender-based crimes and violations of international human rights standards and contribute to the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in East Turkestan.¹⁹

In the field of education, content reflecting the cultural and ethnic identities of Uyghurs and other Turks has been harmonized with Chinese ideology. Uyghur education has been banned, Uyghur history and culture has been erased or transformed in accordance with Chinese culture and ideology. Within the scope of the sibling family policy, cultural transmission within the family was prevented, children were separated from their parents, and practices were carried out to weaken cultural solidarity. In addition, Uyghur and other Turkic educators and intellectuals were purged, books published in New Uyghur and Kazakh were banned, and Uyghur and Kazakh-language educational institutions were closed. Many Uyghur village names were changed to Chinese (UHRP, 2019, p. 2-6). Uyghur and Other Turkic farmers have been forced to relinquish their land and livestock rights, transferred to state-controlled collectives and converted into industrial workers. This leads them to break away from their traditional way of life and distance themselves from their cultural identity. Han Chinese are also being resettled in Uyghur East Turkestan.²⁰

The Chinese government has forcibly imposed political propaganda on detainees in Vocational Training Centers in East Turkestan and has run these camps with a military-style disciplinary approach. Chinese authorities

¹⁸ <https://bitterwinter.org/uyghur-women-forced-to-marry-han-chinese-men/>, October 12, 2024.

¹⁹ <https://uhrp.org/news/uyghur-women-forced-to-marry-han-chinese-men/>, October 12, 2024.

²⁰ During the initial four months of 2020, Qira (Cele) County in Hotan saw 1,500 workers transferred to locations beyond Xinjiang’s borders, representing 10.9 percent of all labor transfers in that period (Renminwang, April 22, 2020). Following the 2009 unrest and subsequent conflicts, the county’s yearly out-of-province worker transfers had decreased from 963 in 2010 to just 127 by 2014 (XUAR CCP Rural Work Committee Website, December 11, 2015). The 2020 figure thus significantly exceeds the previous high point recorded in 2010. October 19, 2024.

have stated that the purpose of these camps is to erase the thoughts of religious extremism and violent terrorism from the minds of individuals and to treat ideological diseases. (Human Rights Watch, 2018, p.31) The main goal of the education provided is to make individuals politically qualified and raise them to be role models for society. These centers are located in former schools, nursing homes, production facilities and prisons, and new camps are being built. These structures, usually surrounded by metal bars, have a prison-like organization. Those held in the camps were subjected to military discipline (Zenz, 2018, p. 3) and were instructed to make their beds, take walks and behave in a disciplined manner. As part of political propaganda, detainees were forced to attend a flag ceremony every morning, sing propaganda songs and praise the Chinese Communist Party. Before meals, they must also express their gratitude to the Chinese Communist Party and President Xi Jinping. Under the guise of language training, Mandarin Chinese is compulsorily taught in the camps, and the use of Turkic languages such as Uyghur and Kazakh is banned or prevented. Detainees were required to memorize rules stating their support for the party and opposition to Uyghurs and other Turks, described as the "three evil forces"; they were required to follow rules such as using Mandarin greetings instead of Islamic greetings and having only Chinese characters on restaurant signs (Human Rights Watch, 2018, p.17-18).

Individuals held in camps were forced to sit on uncomfortable stools for long hours and were under constant surveillance. Surveillance was carried out even in the toilet, certain individuals among prisoners were assigned the task of spying on others, and quotas were imposed for reporting misconduct. Reasons for arrest included foreign connections, national and religious sentiments, religious practices or being considered "untrustworthy". Even using foreign communication software such as WhatsApp has been grounds for arrest. There was serious evidence of torture and ill-treatment in the camps. Torture during interrogations has been reported, including sleep deprivation, "tiger chair" torture, and physical and psychological pressure on prisoners (Human Rights Watch, 2018, p. 19). Deaths in the camps have raised serious concerns due to physical and psychological abuse, poor conditions and inadequate medical care. These arrests were often carried out without any legal basis and detainees were not given any official explanation or documentation. They were not allowed to hire lawyers and were told that only "studying" was sufficient. All these practices have been linked to violations of international human rights law, and these camps have been considered as a policy of assimilation aimed at destroying the ethnic identity and culture of Uyghurs and other Turks (Human Rights Watch, 2019, p. 20-25).

These practices reveal that Uyghurs and other Turks are being subjected to a process of collective, not just individual, extermination and that the Chinese government's policies involve a systematic attack on the identity of Uyghurs and other Turks (Byler, 2018, p. 72). These practices can be considered as crimes against humanity and genocide (Human Rights Watch, 2021, p. 37). Furthermore, the Uyghur People's Tribunal in London ruled on Genocide Prevention Day, December 9, 2021, that the Chinese Communist Party is deliberately aiming to destroy Uyghurs and other Turks and their physical existence and cultural life. State-sponsored mass detentions, family break-ups, forced sterilization, sexual violence, forced labor, and the systematic destruction of cultural heritage have been carried out, said court president Geoffrey Nice. The court also found that the Chinese government pursued a deliberate and organized policy to reduce the Uyghur and other Turkic population. Nice stated that China is not only guilty of genocide, but also of crimes against humanity such as rape, torture and forced sterilization (Uyghurtribunal, 2021, p. 55-60).

In addition, since November 2019, journalists, academics and human rights groups have published half a dozen leaked Chinese government documents on the situation in East Turkestan. Taken together, these documents constitute the most comprehensive source of documentary evidence on the Chinese government's actions and intentions regarding the persecution and mass detention system in East Turkestan (Human Rights Watch, 2021, p. 25). The "Xinjiang Papers" published by The New York Times reveal Chinese authorities' mass detention orders and the coercive nature of the crackdown, highlighting Xi Jinping's calls for drastic intervention and the expansion of the camp system under Chen Quanguo's leadership.²¹

Around the same time, the "China Cables" report published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists revealed secret instructions on the operation of the concentration camps, methods of forced indoctrination and mass surveillance. In addition, the "Karakax List" and the "Aksu List" contain official arrest warrants for individuals sent to the

²¹ "The Xinjiang Papers": An exposé by Austin Ramzy and Chris Buckley entitled "Absolutely No Mercy": Leaked Files Reveal China's Systematic Mass Detention of Muslim Populations: Over 400 pages of confidential Chinese government documents provide unprecedented insight into the suppression of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang region," published in the New York Times on November 16, 2019, accessible at www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html; The Chinese government's official response to this New York Times investigation can be found in Steven Lee Myers' article "China Defends Its Muslim Crackdown and Criticizes Times Article," published November 18, 2019, available at www.nytimes.com/2019/11/18/world/asia/china-xinjiang-muslims-leak.html, November 20, 2024.

camp between 2017 and 2019.²² Taken together, these documents constitute the most comprehensive documentary evidence of the Chinese government's repression and detention system in East Turkestan (Zenz, *The Karakax*, 2020, p. 6).

It is possible to say that the Chinese state's *Operation Coup Against Violent Terrorism*, defined by the four-cutting statement, is directly linked to the occupation process of East Turkistan (Kamalov et al, 2020, p. 3), and the main purpose of this policy is to permanently transform the demographic, economic, cultural and political structure of the region. East Turkestan has been the homeland of Turks throughout history, but with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, it was occupied and placed under Chinese rule. This occupation process not only provided military control, but was also reinforced by systematic colonization and assimilation policies. In line with the four-cutting *Operation Violent Counterterrorism Crackdown*, the Chinese government has aimed to deprive the Uyghurs and other Turks in East Turkestan of their physical survival, economic independence, political guarantees, cultural identity and religious freedoms; thus, it is clear from its policies that it aims to fully integrate the region into the Chinese state and erase the identity of Uyghurs and other Turks.

The policies implemented since the Mao Zedong era show that this process has been carried out systematically. The land reform carried out in the early 1950s weakened the economic structure of the Uyghurs and other Turks, created a great imbalance in the distribution of wealth and pushed East Turkestans into poverty. This process was a strategic step aimed at increasing the Han Chinese population in the region and breaking the economic independence of Uyghurs and other Turks. Mass transformation policies such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution directly targeted the religious and cultural fabric of East Turkistani society, with mosques closed, the Holy Quran burned, and religious leaders imprisoned or killed. During this period, artifacts representing the cultural heritage of the Uyghurs were also destroyed in an attempt to erase their

²² "The China Cables": Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, "Exposed: China's Operating Manuals for Mass Internment and Arrest by Algorithm.: A new leak of highly classified Chinese government documents reveals the operations manual for running the mass detention camps in Xinjiang and exposed the mechanism of the region's system of mass surveillance." 24 November 2019, www.icij.org/investigations/china-cables/exposed-chinas-operating-manuals-for-mass-internment-and-arrest-by-algorithm/;"The Telegram":availableat: www.documentcloud.org/documents/6558510-China-Cables-Telegram-English.html, November 20, 2024.

historical memory. Following the military occupation, the Chinese People's Liberation Army was deployed to East Turkestan under the command of Wang Zhen with the support of the Soviet Union, and paramilitary production units called Bingtuan were formed. This military and economic structure not only consolidated China's dominance over East Turkestan, but also encouraged the migration of Han Chinese to the region, reducing the population ratio of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples and increasing the Chinese population. Thus, a long-term colonial rule was established to demographically assimilate East Turkestanis and break their political power. This process should be considered as part of the political disruption, as the Chinese government aimed to eliminate the possibility of administrative independence in the region by completely excluding Uyghurs and other Turks from political decision-making (Becqueli 1993, p. 114).

The Ili-Czechak events of 1962 emerged as a mass reaction against China's repressive rule, and hundreds of thousands of Uyghur and Kazakh Turks sought refuge in the Soviet Union due to political repression and economic hardship. This mass exodus illustrates the devastating impact of the Chinese government's policies on the people of East Turkestan. Increasing protests throughout the 1980s and 1990s were indicative of efforts to preserve the identity of Uyghurs and other Turks, and the Barin Uprising of 1990 and the Gulca Incidents of 1997 have gone down in history as acts of resistance against the oppressive policies of the Chinese government. The Chinese government tried to legitimize such uprisings by describing them as "terrorist activities" and suppressed the protests with harsh security measures (Amnesty International, 2021, p. 19).

The 2009 Urumqi events were one of the culminations of the Uighur Turks' reactions against the Chinese state. The protests against the attacks on Uyghur workers by Han Chinese in Guangdong were bloodily suppressed by the Chinese government and martial law was declared. After this process, the repression against Uyghurs and other Turks increased further, resistance movements continued between 2012 and 2015, and the Chinese government resorted to mass arrests and death sentences to suppress these movements. As of 2017, the Chinese government established concentration camps under the name of Vocational Training Centers for Uyghurs and other Turks, and started a systematic physical and cultural genocide by forcibly sending nearly 3 million of East Turkistanis to these camps (UyghurTribuna, 2021, p. 9-12).

All of these processes are supported by international scientific reports and academic studies that have been carried out to consolidate China's occupation of East Turkestan and to systematically weaken the Uyghur and

Other Turkic people. Through economic disruption, the Uyghur and Other Turkic people's rights to independent production and property are destroyed, while through political disruption, their participation in governance is prevented. With cultural disruption, their historical and ethnic consciousness was tried to be erased, and with religious disruption, the spiritual solidarity points of the Uyghur and Other Turkic people were tried to be eliminated by targeting the Islamic faith (Human Rights Watch, 2019, p. 25-28). This policy was planned by China to permanently assimilate East Turkestan and turn it into a colonial territory, and it is possible to say that it is being carried out meticulously to ensure the continuity of the occupation. Therefore, based on the reports of international organizations and the results of academic studies, it is possible to say that China's *Operation Coup Against Violent Terrorism*, which is characterized by the expression of four cuts, is a direct extension of the occupation process of East Turkestan and constitutes the main basis of the systematic extermination of Uyghur and other Turkic peoples.

Etymological, Semantic, Conceptual and Contextual Comparison

The comparative analysis of the expression Urugsirat in the Turkic Bengü Stones and the expression Four Cutting in Mandarin Chinese involves the analysis of both expressions in terms of origin, semantics, concept and context. This analysis aims to assess how both expressions reflect systematic policies of extermination and genocide by revealing their similarities and differences.

Although the expressions Urugsirat and Four Cutting are found in Old Turkic and Mandarin Chinese, the addressees of both of them and the people they are shaped in the world of meaning are Turks. Although they have been expressed in different languages in the historical process, the meaning they carry and the context they refer to are directly related to Turkic existence, culture and identity. These two expressions bear witness to different historical periods when the Turks were under Chinese domination. These two expressions can be considered as conceptual mirrors reflecting two different historical periods in which Turks lived under Chinese hegemony. These statements, which strikingly document two different periods of Turkic history under Chinese hegemony, clearly reveal the projection of China's political, military and cultural oppression periods on Turks. While the processes experienced by the Turks under Chinese domination in different periods of history are embodied in these two expressions, Urugsirat and Four Cutting carry the conceptual codes of two different historical periods that the Turks spent under Chinese hegemony. These two expressions, as linguistic witnesses of the different historical periods that Turks

lived under Chinese oppression, strongly reflect the bitter experience of two different periods of Turkic history under Chinese hegemony.

Etymological and Semantic Comparison: Both expressions are fundamentally related to the concepts of “cutting, destroying” and have evolved from simple roots to complex meanings. Urugsirat is derived from the verb “ur-” (to place/put) and is expanded with the suffixes -sIrA and -t. Four Cutting, on the other hand, includes the components thread/link and axe/cutting tool through the Chinese character 斷 (duàn) and refers to four different types of cutting (root, source, link, generation). Semantically, both expressions describe a systematic process of destruction, include meanings of physical and cultural annihilation, and refer to the severing of social ties. However, while Urugsirat focuses more on extinction and the prevention of continuity of lineage, Four Cutting involves a more comprehensive strategy of extermination, including root, source, link and generation cutting.

Conceptual and Contextual Assessment: Conceptually, both expressions refer to a systematic policy of extermination, aiming at the erasure of cultural identity, the destruction of physical existence and the dissolution of the social structure. While Urugsirat describes a holistic process of extermination under a single concept, Four Cutting includes four different dimensions of extermination strategies. Contextually, both expressions were implemented as Chinese state policy towards the Turks and refer to systematic processes of assimilation and extermination. Urugsirat describes the policies implemented against the Kokturks in the 7th-8th century, while Four Cutting refers to the current policies implemented against Uyghurs and other Turks in East Turkestan in the 21st century.

Methods of Implementation and Consequences: In terms of implementation methods, both expressions show similarities, such as forced resettlement policies, cultural assimilation, severing social ties, systematic physical extermination, and creating economic dependency. However, important differences are the limited technological means during the Urugsirat period and the use of modern methods such as digital surveillance and concentration camps during the Four Cutting period. In terms of consequences, both expressions have similar effects such as the dissolution of the social structure, weakening of cultural identity, depopulation, economic dependency and loss of political autonomy. As a result of the Urugsirat policy, the Kokturks were able to regain their independence, whereas the Four Cutting policy is still in place and its consequences continue.

This comparative analysis reveals that Urugsirat and Four Cutting express systematic extermination policies that serve similar purposes, but differ in terms of the period and methods of their implementation. Both

policies are important in terms of showing the historical continuity of the Chinese state's assimilation and extermination strategies against the Turkic peoples.

The Relation of Urugsırat and Four Cutting to the Modern Term Genocide

The modern term genocide is specifically defined as the systematic extermination of a particular group, an act aimed at eliminating both the physical existence and cultural identity of the targeted group. In this context, the expression Urugsırat in Turkic Bengü Stones and the Four Cutting policy in Mandarin Chinese provide important examples that exhibit remarkable parallels at the conceptual, methodological and practical levels. The element of "intent to destroy a group partially or completely", which is prominent in the modern definition of genocide, is clearly evident in both the Urugsırat and the Four Cutting expressions. Genocide (genocide or genocide) refers to the planned elimination of members of a community on the basis of their race, religion, ethnic origin or other distinguishing characteristics, by killing or other means. The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (SSECS), conceptualized by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, established a formal legal framework for genocide. This definition encompasses various acts targeting specific groups, including: deliberately killing group members, inflicting serious physical or psychological harm, creating conditions designed to destroy the group, implementing birth prevention measures, and forcibly removing children from their communities and transferring them elsewhere (Dunoff et al, 2006, p. 615-621). This definition also provides a critical framework for understanding the extermination intent seen in the Urugsırat and Four Cutting policies.

The term Urugsırat in the Turkic Bengü Stones describes the systematic extermination policies practiced on the Kokturks and their descendants in the late 7th and early 8th centuries. Urugsırat is a process that can be considered as the genocide of the Turkic peoples, which was aimed at cultural and physiological extermination and the destruction of the social, economic and cultural structures of the targeted community. Similarly, the People's Republic of China's Four Cutting policy against Uyghurs and other Turks in East Turkestan reflects such a systematic practice of extermination. The Four Cutting policy includes strategic steps such as destroying the economy, severing social ties, erasing cultural elements, and preventing the continuation of lineage. These tactics align precisely with contemporary definitions of genocide. According to the SSECS framework, genocidal actions encompass deliberate group member killings, causing severe

bodily or psychological damage, creating destructive living environments, implementing reproductive restrictions, and the forced removal of children from their original community to another group. These elements are clearly evident in the Urugsirat and Four Cutting policies.

In modern genocide literature, the categories of cultural, physical and biological genocide are often combined. Cultural genocide describes the process of destroying the cultural identity of a society, while “physical genocide” involves the physical killing of members of the group. Biological genocide, on the other hand, refers to the prevention of reproduction, i.e. the prevention of births and the extinction of the group. The expressions Urugsirat and Four Cutting bear the traces of these three types of genocide.

The historical continuity between Urugsirat and Four Cutting shows that genocide was practiced with similar methodologies in different historical periods. Both expressions involve the elimination of the existence of the targeted group, the erasure of their cultural identity, the destruction of their social ties and the destruction of their economic resources. These parallels shed light on the historical background of the modern concept of genocide and reveal the continuity of genocide in human history.

Conclusion

This study presents a comparative analysis of the Old Turkic term “Urugsirat” and the Mandarin Chinese expression “Four Cutting” (四绝 / Sì Jué), examining their relationship to the modern concept of genocide. Etymological and semantic analysis reveals that both terms denote systematic extermination. “Urugsirat,” derived from the roots for “lineage” and “to break,” signifies the destruction of a community’s ancestry. “Four Cutting” describes the methodical termination of a group’s social, cultural, economic, and biological existence.

Despite originating in different historical periods and language families, “Urugsirat” and “Four Cutting” share striking connotative similarities with the fundamental elements of the crime of genocide. Both expressions clearly articulate the “intent to destroy” a community in a planned and systematic manner. In this context, it is recommended that “Urugsirat” be recognized in international legal literature as a historical term for genocide.

China is currently applying the “Four Cutting” policy to Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkestan, reflecting a historical pattern of brutality embedded in its political culture. The Turkic Bengü Stones and other historical records document China’s systematic implementation of cultural, social, and demographic extermination policies in the regions under its control. This comparative analysis of “Urugsirat” and “Four Cut-

ting" reveals a clear continuity in China's genocidal actions—a historical trajectory that persists today as a systematic threat to the cultural, social, and physical existence of Uyghurs and other Turks in the region.

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