

The etymology of some Buryat jewel names*

By BAIARMA KHABTAGAEVA (University of Szeged, Hungary)

Many scholars have taken interest in the investigation of Buryat jewelry, e. g. TUGUTOV (1958: 134–139), KHANGALOV (1: 253; 2: 59), LINKHOVOIN (1972: 32–34), BADMAEVA (1987: 71–78) and BABUEVA (2001: 52–65). In most cases these scholars have studied the ethnographic aspects of the jewelry. As far as linguistics is concerned, this topic is unexploited.

In this paper I will examine the origin and the structure of some Buryat jewelry terms.

Jewels items even nowadays are important components and accessories of the Buryat ladies' apparel. Their common designation is *zūdxel* 'wear', and they indicate both the family's place in society and its wealth. For example, before World War I the price for a piece of ladies' jewelry was 500 rubles – in comparison, a cow at that time cost 20 rubles (LINKHOVOIN 1972: 34). As part of the dotal gift at their marriage women received pieces of jewelry, which parents began collecting already during their daughters' childhood. There was a ceremony called *berin mürgel* 'prayer of the fiancée' before the bridal during which jewelry was placed on the head of the fiancée for the first time to indicate her becoming a married woman (BASAEVA 1991: 147–149; KHANGALOV 2: 83). Then, during another ceremony called *üxin berin ümedxel* 'young fiancée's wear', the family of the bridegroom gave the fiancée jewelry as a present while singing *yüröl*, i. e. a song asking for blessings (MENŽIGIIN 1991: 66–67). Jewelry are important in the folklore also apart from the traditions connected to marriage. Many related proverbs, riddles and folk songs can be found among the collected texts.

Silver was the main material used in the fashioning of jewelry, and the most popular semi-precious gems were coral *šüre*¹, pearl *xuba*² and lazurite *nomin*³.

* This work is dedicated to Prof. András Róna-Tas on his seventieth birthday. It was carried out by the Research Group of Turkic Linguistics of the University of Szeged.

¹ Cf. LM *sirü* ~ *siru*, Khalkha *šür(en)*, Kalmük *šür* ~ *šur*, Ordos *šürü* ← Tibetan *byi-ru byu-ru*.

² Cf. LM *quba*, Khalkha *xuwan*, Kalmük, Ordos *xuwa* ← Chinese *húbò*.

³ Cf. LM *nomin*, Khalkha, Ordos *nomin* ← Tibetan *mu min*.

Etymology

From an etymological point of view, the designations for items of jewelry can be divided into four groups:

Names of jewels of Mongolian origin:

There are two subcategories involving terms of Mongolian origin:

1. Words which have the same meaning in every Mongolian language, e. g.:

Buryat *hīxe*⁴ ‘earring’⁵ < **sūi* ‘engagement, betrothal; gifts given to the bride’s family’ + *KA*⁶: cf. Ibn-Muh. *sūike*, Muç. *söike*, LM *sūike*, Khalkha *sūix*, West-Üjümčün *s’ū’xe* ~ *sū’xe* ~ *s’ix*, East-Üjümčün *s’i’x*, Kalmük *sik’*, Oirat *sikē*, Ordos *sūi’^hxe*, Monguor *súge*;

Buryat *tuiba* ‘a curve-shaped hair-slide of a married woman’⁷: cf. LM *tuyiba* ‘id.’, Ordos *t’uīwa*.

2. Words which do not have the same meaning in different Mongolian languages as in Buryat, e. g.:

Buryat *darūlga* ‘coral wreath’ < **daru-GUI-GAn*⁸: cf. LM *darūgulga* ~ *daruulga* ‘saddle decoration, saddle button made of silver’ < *daru-* ‘to press, to press down’, Khalkha *darūlga*, Dariganga *darūlag*, Kalmük *darūlga(n)*, Inner Mongolian dialects: Arukhorčün, Barin, Ulanjab, Čakhar *darūlag*, Ordos *darūlga*;

Buryat *oryōdohon* ‘thin ring’ < **oriya-dAsUn*⁹: cf. LM *oriyadasun* ‘ribbon, cord, wrapping’ < *oriya-* ‘to tie around, entwine, coil; to wrap’, Khalkha *orōdos*, Kalmük *orād’sn*, Ordos *orōdos*;

⁴ This is the only word in Literary Buryat in which *i* < **üi*, but this change is characteristic to the Western Buryat dialects and Kalmük, e. g.: LM *kūiten* ‘cold’ > Literary Buryat *xūiten*, cf. Western Buryat *kiten*, Kalmük *kitin*; LM *kūyisün* ‘navel’ > Literary Buryat *xūiben*, cf. Kalmük *kisn* (POPPE 1955: 81; RASSADIN 1982: 62).

⁵ Mongolian → Turkic: cf. Kirgiz *söykö* ‘bol’sie ser’gi, podveski v forme konusa’, East-Turkic *sikā* (R 4: 798) (see Räs. 430a); Mongolian → Tungus (see SSTMJ 2: 121a, Rozvcki 189): cf. Manchu *suixun* ‘von Männern getragener Ohring’, Orok *siye* ‘ser’ga ženskaja’, *siyelu* ‘ser’ga nosovaja’.

⁶ + *KA* – Mongolian non-productive Den. N. suffix (cf. DONDUKOV 1964: 27; KHABTAGAEVA 2001: 138).

⁷ ? ← Tibetan.

⁸ -*GUL*- Causative (GWM § 226), -*GA(n)* Dev. N. (GWM § 149).

⁹ -*dAsUn* Dev. N. (GWM § 144).

Buryat *yubūn* 'forehead ornament': cf. LM *ibaḡu* 'small shell, kauri shell', Khalkha *yuwū*, Oirat *yowū*;

Buryat *börenxei* 'gorget, from which strings hanging like clusters' < **böge*¹⁰ + *rA-ngKAI*¹¹: cf. LM *bögerengkei* 'round', Khalkha *börenxī*, Kalmük *börñkē*, Oirat *börāñkē*, Inner Mongolian dialects: Arukhorčin, Šilinghol *börönxī*, Čakhar *börönkī*, Ordos *börön^kxī*.

Jewelry terms of Turkic origin:

The jewelry terms of Turkic origin can in turn be divided into two groups:

1. The words which can be found in all Mongolian languages, e. g.:

Buryat *bebelig* 'ring'¹²: cf. Muq. *bilezük* (← Turkic), LM *bilüčüg* ~ *bilisüg* ~ *biličüg*, Khalkha *büljeg*, Dariganga *bilǰig*, Kalmük *biltsäg* ~ *bültsäg*, Ordos *beledžik* ~ *büledžik* ← Turkic: cf. Old Turkic *bilēzük*¹³ 'bracelet'¹⁴.

Judging from Buryat, it seems at first sight clearly to be a Mongolian formation from Buryat *bebe* which is LM *būse* 'belt', and + *liG* Den. N. In Ordos language there is a word *būselek* 'belt', which corresponds to an assumed formation of the type found in the Buryat example. I have already mentioned an example which is semantically equivalent: *oryōdohon* 'thin ring', originally meaning 'rope, cord'. However, if we examine the word from the point of view of historical linguistics, it is of Turkic origin, and should be seen as the metathetic form of *bilesük*;

Buryat *bolto* 'coral wreath' < **bogo-ltA*¹⁵: cf. LM *boḡolta* 'cord, rope, wire, bandage; bundle, bale, parcel' < *boḡo-* 'to bind, bundle, wrap', Khalkha *bolt*, Dariganga *bolt* 'the Dariganga national hair-dress', Kalmük *bolt^o*, Ordos *bolt^o* ← Turkic¹⁶: cf. Old Turkic *boḡ-* 'to strangle, choke';

¹⁰ **böge*: cf. LM *bögen* ~ *bögem* (< **böge* * + *m* ~ * + *n*) 'lump, clot, cluster; ball; bunch; crowd; heap'; Khalkha *böröncög* 'roundish' (< **böge* + *rA-nčAG*), Khalkha *böröljgönö* 'raspberry' (< **böge* + *rA-ljAGAnA*).

¹¹ + *rA*-Den. V. (GWM § 246), -*ngGXi* (GWM § 177).

¹² Mongolian → Turkic (see SEVORTJAN 2: 143-145): Buryat → Yakut *bibiläx* 'persten', kol'co' (PEKARSKIJ 477), Oirat → Tuva *bilzek* (TATARINCEV 2000: 223-224).

¹³ RADLOFF's (R 4: 1762) etymology according to which the word *bilezük* is compound (< *bilek* 'wrist' + *yüzük* 'ring') was supported also by CLAUSON (ED 345b) and RÄSÄNEN (76a).

¹⁴ cf. Modern Turkic data: Turkish, Turkmen, Gagauz *bilezik*, Azeri *bilüzik*, Kumik *bilezik*, Tatar *beläzek*, Baškır *belädek*, Kazak *biläizik*, Karakalpak, Nogaj *bilezik*, Kirgiz *bilerik*, Uzbek *bilaguzuk*, Ujgur *biläküzük*.

¹⁵ The stem itself is of Turkic origin, while the suffix -*ltA* is a Mongolian productive Dev. N. suffix (GWM § 163).

¹⁶ The detailed etymology of this Turkic word was discussed by SEVORTJAN (2: 164).

Buryat *bugābša* 'bracelet'¹⁷ < **buğağa* + *bči*¹⁸: cf. MNT *buqa'u*, Ibn-Muh. *bağū*, LM *bağui* ~ *bağū* ~ *buğui*, *bağubči* ~ *buğubči* ~ *buğuibči* ~ *buğuiči*, Khalha *buguıwč*, Kalmük *buğüptši* ~ *buğū*, Oirat *buğū* ~ *buğō*, Inner Mongolian dialects: Khorčın, Dürbed, Arukhorčın, Barın, Ongnighud, Nayman, Kheşıgten, Kharčın, Tümed, Čakhar *buğū*, Ghorlos, Jalayid *bugā*, Ordos *bugub'is'i* ← Turkic¹⁹: cf. Old Turkic *buqağū* 'fetter, leg-iron, handcuff'²⁰.

2. The words existing in Buryat alone, e. g.:

Buryat *sāža* 'hair-slide on a hanging braid' ← Turkic: cf. Old Turkic *sac* 'hair': cf. Tuva, Tofalar *ča'š* 'braid, plait'²¹.

A problematic word. According to RASSADIN (1996: 135) the Buryat word was borrowed from the Tofalar *ča'š* with the 3rd person singular possessive suffix + *I*.

Jewelry terms of Tibetan origin:

Buryat *gū* 'amulet-case lying on the chest'²²: cf. LM *gūu* 'frame; locket', Khalkha *gū*, Üjümčın *gū*, Ordos *gū* ← Tibetan *ga'u* 'a little box or case; when containing a talisman or amulet, it is worn suspended round the neck'.

Jewelry terms of unidentified origin:

Buryat *habiga* 'small corals hanging from a cap': cf. Tuva *čavaga* 'decoration of the braid'.

Its connection to the Tuva word is not certain. There is a problem not only with the initial consonant, but also with the vowel of the second syllable.

¹⁷ Buryat → Turkic: cf. Tofalar *buqā* 'bracelet' (RASSADIN 1971: 166); Mongolian → Tungus: cf. Evenki *buğutuna* 'ornament' (SSTMJ 1: 102a).

¹⁸ + *bči* - Mongolian Den. N. suffix, which designates covers of objects (GWM § 108).

¹⁹ Elements of Turkic origin in Mongolian were treated by DOERFER (TMEN 2: 725).

²⁰ cf. Modern Turkic data: Turkish *buqağı*, Azeri *buxov*, Turkmen *bukav* 'ženskoe serjabrannoe ukrašenje, nadevaemoe na šuju', Gagauz *bukā*; Karačay-Balkar *bug'ou*, Kumik *bug'avlar*, Tatar *bogau*, Baškır *biğau*, Kazak *boğō*, Karakalpak *buğau*, Nogay *bugav*, Kirgiz *bogā*; Uzbek *buğov*, Tuva *bogā*.

²¹ Cf. other Modern Turkic data: Turkish, Turkmen, Gagauz *sac*, Kumik, Karačay-Balkar *čač*, Tatar *čäč*, Baškır *säs*, Kirgiz *čač*, Nogay, Karakalpak, Kazak *šaš*, Uzbek *säč* ~ *čäč*, Uygur *sac* ~ *čač*, Khakas *sas* ~ *čač*, Altay *čäč*, Yakut *susuox* ~ *sisiäx*.

²² Mongolian → Tungus (see SSTMJ 1: 156b): cf. Manchu *go* 'von verheirateten Frauen zur Hofgala am Halse getragene Goldkapsel' (HAUER 1: 369).

Of the termes mentioned above, I would like to draw attention to one linguistically remarkable example:

Buryat *axalga* ‘a silver ornament attached to the vest at the waist, from which small silver personal belongings are hanging (*for example clip, tea-strainer, ear scoop*)’:

Morphologically it consists of the Buryat *axa-* ‘to attach the quiver onto the belt’ and the productive *-lgA* Dev. N. suffix (DONDUKOV 1964: 33; GWM § 161). The Buryat verb in this form is only known from the Buryat language. Originally it can be traced back to the verb **agsa-* ‘put up; to attach to or suspend from a belt’, which has the same meaning in the Buryat language. The relationship between the Buryat verbs *axa-* and *agsa-* can be explained in terms of a very rare Buryat linguistic phenomenon, which so far has not been dealt with in the scholarly literature. Yet some examples exist of the following intervocalic transformation: *-VgsV-* > *-VxV-*; and it is remarkable that in all extant cases both of the involved forms can be found in the present-day language. For example: LM *bögsen* ‘buttock, buttock’ > Buryat *bügse* ~ *büxe*; LM *sogsoyi-* ‘ruffle and curl’ > Buryat *sogsoi-* ~ *soxoi-*; LM *uğsara-* ‘attach, fit, assemble’ > Buryat *uğsar-* ~ *uxar-*.

The word *axalga* cannot be found in any other languages, and its meaning generally corresponds only to that of Khalkha *agsarga* < LM *agsarağa*²³ ‘belt for wearing quiver’ or Khalkha *agsā* < LM *agsağa*²⁴ ‘a belt to which a quiver and a bow case are attached; a small bag suspended from a belt’, but these are formed with other suffixes. We can see from the meaning of the Khalkha word that it is a belt used by men onto which they attached their guns, knives, and tools for fire-drilling. And the Khalkha word *büsgüi*²⁵ ‘woman’, literally meaning ‘without belt’, indicates that women could not use belts, so they must have attached their personal belongings onto a silver object of this kind.

In my presentation, I have attempted to show that only by the etymologization of the Buryat words and through an appropriate knowledge of their dissemination and history can many pitfalls for future researches be avoided.

²³ < **agsa-rA-GA: -rA-* Dev. V. Verbia media (GWM § 237), *-GA(n)* Dev. N. (GWM § 149).

²⁴ < **agsa-GA: -GA(n)* Dev. N. (GWM § 149).

²⁵ < LM *büse ügei*.

Bibliography

- Altay BASKAKOV, N. A. (ed.): *Ojrotsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1947.
BASKAKOV, N. A. (ed.): *Russko-altajskij slovar'*. Moskva 1964.
- Azeri AZIZBEKOV, H. A.: *Azerbajdžansko-russkij slovar'*. Baku 1965.
- BABUEVA 2001 BABUEVA, V. D.: *Mir tradicij burjat*. Ulan-Ude.
- BADMAEVA 1987 BADMAEVA, B. D.: *Burjatskij narodnyj kostjum*. Ulan-Ude.
- BASAEVA 1991 BASAEVA, N. D.: *Sem'ja i brak u burjat*. Ulan-Ude.
- Baškir *Baškirsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1958.
- Buryat ČEREMISOV, K. M.: *Burjatsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1973.
Buryaad xelenei tobšo tailbari toli. Kratkij tolkovyy slovar' burjatskogo jazyka. Ulan-Ude 1992.
- Chinese BARANOVA, Z. I., KOTOV, A. V.: *Boľšoj russko-kitajskij slovar'*. Moskva 2001.
- Dariganga RÓNA-TAS, A.: A Dariganga Vocabulary. *AOH* 13. 1961. 147-174.
- DONDUKOV 1964 DONDUKOV, U-Ž. Š.: *Affiksál'noe slovoobrazovanie častej reči v burjatskom jazyke*. Ulan-Ude.
- ERDAL 1991 ERDAL, M.: *Old Turkic Word Formation. A Functional Approach to the Lexicon*. 1-2. Wiesbaden.
- Gagauz BASKAKOV, N. A.: *Gagauzsko-russko-moldavskij slovar'*. Moskva 1973.
- GWM see POPPE 1964.
- Ibn-Muh. see Muq.
- Inner Mongolian TODAEVA, B. KH.: *Jazyk mongolov Vnutrennej Mongolii. Materialy i slovar'*. dialects Moskva 1981.
- Kalmük RAMSTEDT, G. J.: *Kalmüeckisches Wörterbuch*. Helsinki 1935.
- Karačay-Balkar TENIŠEV, E. R., SUJUNČEV, Č. I. (ed.): *Karačevno-balkarsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1989.
- Karaim *Karaimsko-russko-pol'skij slovar'*. Moskva 1974.
- Karakalpak BASKAKOV, N. A.: *Karakalpakskij jazyk. Materialy po dialektologii (teksty i slovar')*. Moskva 1951.
- Kazak MAHMUDOV, H., MUSABAEV, G.: *Kazabsko-russkij slovar'*. Alma-Ata 1995.
- KHABTAGAEVA 2001 KHABTAGAEVA, B.: Colour names and their suffixes. A study on the history of Mongolian word formation. *AOH* 54. 85-165.
- Khakas BASKAKOV, N. A. (ed.): *Hakassko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1953.
- Khalkha KARA GY: *Mongol-magyar szótár*. Budapest 1998 [Mongolian-Hungarian Dictionary].
LUVSANDENDEV, A.: *Mongol-oros tol'*. Moskva 1957 [Mongolian-Russian Dictionary].
- KHANGALOV HANGALOV, M. N.: *Sobranie sočinenij*. I-III. 1958, 1959, 1960. Ulan-Ude.
- Kirgiz JUDAHIN, K. K.: *Kirgizsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1965.
- Kumik BAMMATOV, Z. Z.: *Kumyksko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1969.
- LINKHOVIN 1972 LINKHOVIN, L.: *Zametki o dovevoljcionnom byte aginskib burjat*. Ulan-Ude.
- LM KOVALEVSKIJ, O. M.: *Mongol'sko-russko-francuzskij slovar'*. I-III. Kazan' 1844-1849.

- LESSING, FERDINAND D.: *Mongolian-English Dictionary*. Reprint Bloomington 1996.
- SEČENČORTU: *Mongyol üges-ün ijaγur-un toli* [Mongolian Etymological Dictionary]. Öbör Mongyol (Kökeqota) 1988.
- Manchu
MENŽIGIIN 1991
HAUER, E.: *Handwörterbuch der Mandschusprache*. Wiesbaden 1952-1955.
MENŽIGIIN, D.-D.: *Buryaad oronoi sartuul ug izaguurtan* [The Sartuls of Buryatia]. Zakamensk.
- MNT
HAENISCH, E.: *Wörterbuch zu Manghol un Niuca Tobca'an (Yuan-ch'ao pi-shi): Gebeime Geschichte der Mongolen*. Leipzig 1939.
- Monguor
DE SMEDT, A., MOSTAERT, A.: *Le dialecte monguor parlé par les Mongols du Kansou occidental*. III^e partie. Dictionnaire monguor-français. Pei-p'ing 1933.
- Muq.
POPPE, N. N.: *Mongol'skij slovar' Mukaddimat al-Adab*. I-II. Moskva - Leningrad 1938.
- Nogay
BASKAKOV, N. A. (ed.): *Nogajsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1963.
- Oirat
COLOO, J.: *BNMAU dax' mongol xelnij nutgijn ayalguuny tol' bičig. Ojrd ayalguu* [Dictionary of the Dialects of Mongolia. The Oirat Dialect]. Ulaanbaatar 1988.
- Old Turkic
CLAUSON, G.: *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-thirteenth-Century Turkish*. Oxford 1972.
- Ordos
MOSTAERT, A.: *Dictionnaire ordos* I-III. Peking 1941-1944.
- POPPE 1955
POPPE, N.: *Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies*. Helsinki 1955.
- POPPE 1964
POPPE, N.: *Grammar of Written Mongolian*. Wiesbaden.
- R
RADLOV, V. V.: *Opyt slovarja tjurkskikh narečij*. I-IV. Sankt-Petersburg 1893-1911.
- RASSADIN 1971
RASSADIN, V. I.: *Fonetika i leksika tofolarskogo jazyka*. Ulan-Ude.
- RASSADIN 1982
RASSADIN, V. I.: *Očerki po istoričeskoj fonetike burjatskogo jazyka*. Moskva.
- RASSADIN 1996
RASSADIN, V. I.: *Prisajanskaja grupa burjatskikh govorov*. Ulan-Ude.
- RASSADIN 1999
RASSADIN, V. I.: *Stanovlenie govora nižnendinskikh burjat*. Ulan-Ude.
- RÄSÄNEN
RÄSÄNEN, M.: *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türkisprachen*. Helsinki 1969.
- ROZYCKI
ROZYCKI, W.: *Mongol Elements in Manchu*. Bloomington, Indiana, 1994.
- SANŽEEV 1962
SANŽEEV, G. D.: *Grammatika burjatskogo jazyka. Fonetika. Morfologija*. Moskva.
- SEVORTJAN
SEVORTJAN, E. V.: *Étimologičeskij slovar' tjurkskikh jazykov*. I-III. Moskva 1974-1980.
- SSTMJ
CINCUS V. I. (ed.): *Sravnitel'nyj slovar' tunguso-man'čžurskikh jazykov*. I-II. Leningrad 1977.
- Tatar
Tatarsko-russkij slovar'. Moskva 1966.
- TATARINCEV 2000
TATARINCEV B. I.: *Étimologičeskij slovar' tuvinskogo jazyka*. Novosibirsk.
- Tibetan
SARAT CHANDRA DAS: *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*. Reprint Delhi 2000.
- TMEN
DOERFER, G.: *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*. 1-4. Wiesbaden 1963-1975.
- Tofalar
RASSADIN, V. I.: *Tofalarsko-russkij slovar'. Russko-tofalarskij slovar'*. Irkutsk 1995.
- TUGUTOV 1958
TUGUTOV, I. E.: *Material'naja kul'tura burjat*. Ulan-Ude.
- Turkish
REDHOUSE: *Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük*. Istanbul 1998.

- Turkmen BASKAKOV, N. A.: *Turkmensko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1968.
Tuva TENIŠEV, E. R. (ed.): *Tuvinsko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1968.
Uygur NADŽIP, E. N., RAHIMOV, T. R. (ed.): *Ujgursko-russkij slovar'*. Moskva 1968.
Üjümčün KARA, GY.: Un glossaire Üjümüčün. *AOH* 26. 1963. 1-43.
Yakut PEKARSKIJ, E. K.: *Slovar' jakutskogo jazyka*. I-III. Repr. 1959.
Yellow Uygur MALOV, S. E.: *Jazyk želtyh ujugrov*. Alma-Ata 1957.