

KHORI MONGOLS AND THEIR CONNECTIONS WITH ANCIENT KOREANS

(on the basis folklore, linguistics, archaeology)

Bair B. Dashibalov, Russia

The Buryats are a Mongolian-speaking nation who dwell in Siberia, around Lake Baikal. It is an interesting fact that Buryat legends preserve ancient reminiscences about connections with Koreans. In genealogical and historical Buryat legends there have been preserved some traces of Buryats' relations with Koreans. Here is one of them. Once in Mongolia there lived Khun Taizhi khan. He produced four sons: Barga-bator became the progenitor of Yakuts, Shono-bator became the progenitor of Koreans, Seren-Galdan gave origin to Bulgads and Khoryodoi ubgun – to the tribes of Khori and Sharaid. It follows from the legend that Buryats and Koreans have the common progenitor. Koreans are also mentioned in the story of Balzhin khatan – Bubei beile's wife was the daughter of Gulin khan, a Korean khan. It should be noted that in the legend Bubei beile is often referred to as a Solongut prince. By the name of Solonguts Buryats meant the people relating to Koreans and the Manchzhu. In the latter story Koreans are mentioned not as a closely related people, as they were in the former legend, nevertheless, they are included into the common continuum of interrelated peoples. Moreover, the medieval Mongols considered Koreans as related peoples.

One of the myths says that Tonmen, the progenitor of Koreans was thrown to a pig-shed, but the pigs warmed him up, and he survived. What is interesting is that the Buryat folklore also contains some vague remembrance of the pig as a cult animal or even a progenitor. The Swiss author Renier, who was one of the

first to describe Buryats, in the chapter “The origin of Buryats” writes: “... they were bred up by the pig”. In the manuscript by Mikhail Tatarinov “Opisanie o bratskikh tatarakh ...” Buryats are also described as “fed up by the boar”. Nowadays the remembrance of the pig in the Buryat historical self-reflection has been forced out as it couldn’t match their real nomad life. The folklore, the linguistic and archaeological data, however, prove for the fact that the Mongolian ancestors of Buryats were once aware of the domesticated pig. There are also a number of legends connecting Buryats and Koreans.

The tribe of Khori-buryats have the ritual calling: “The origin of ours is from the swan-bird, the sacred tree of ours is the birch, the elder sister of ours is Alan-Gua.” It is the swan that many Buryat genealogical legends are connected with. It should be noted here, that similar legends have been registered at the Manchzhu tribe living to the East of the mountain of Changbongshan. Tangun, the founder of the ancient Korean state, is addressed as “the Ruler-prince of the black birch” for his father was an earthy deity – the Tanusin father (the black birch’s spirit). And Tangun’s mother (Chumona) is described in “Weishu” as: “Mother Chumona, the River Deity’s daughter, was hidden in the room by the Pue ruler. The sunrays threw light on her. She tried to find a shade, but the rays reached her. And this is why she got pregnant.” There is an analogous text by Kim Busik in his work “Samgug sagi”. It should be reminded that Alan-Gua, the progenitor of the Khori-Buryats got pregnant from a sunray too. It should also be noted that legends connected with the worship of the swan, the birch and the sunray are widely spread and found not only in Buryat and Korean mythology (the topic will be considered again later). The totemic meaning of the pig is characteristic of a more limited circle of peoples, and it is certain that the sacredness of the pig among Buryats and Koreans requires some explanation. Where was the probable area of connections between the Mongol-tongued ancestors of the Buryats and the Koreans, which produced the circle of closely related notions and legends?

R.Sh. Dzharylgasynova proved the existence of two ethno-cultural complexes in the Koreans' ethnogenesis – the northern and the southern ones. The former component matches “the Altaic groups”. In the broad understanding of “the Altaic component” Mongols play a big role. The studies of ethnonyms and toponyms of the ancient Korea also clarify the role of the Mongol component in the Korean ethnogenesis. Here the biggest interest is drawn to anything connected with Kori – the country which gave name to Korea. Some scholars, in their studying the word Koryo (guryo), namely, Siratori, Misina, Dzhevon, Gimun, emphasize its similarity with the word “kuru” – a town, with the old root “kor” – a cave, a shelter, a fortress. The words' semantics is relevant to the Mongolian language. In the Mongolian language «huree» – a fence, a camp, a circle.

According to the legends Tonmen, the founder of the Korean state of Puyo, originated from the northern nomad country Kori (Gaoli). To Yukho and Khon Gimun connect the name of Koguryo, especially in the variant of Kore with the country of Kori. This mythical state produced the ancestors of the Puyo and Koguryo peoples. As Kan Insuk and Li Dzhirin state, there were different names for the state of Puyo in different sources, among them was the name of Koriguk (the Northern Puyo was located in the upper parts of the Liao river). In the second part of the I millennium B.C. the people of Dunhu inhabited the area. Li Kan believes that the tribe from the northern Puyo – the Dunhu peoples – took part in the foundation of Koguryo. The Chinese scholars also support the version that the population of Puyo (Fuyui) could be constituted by Mongols. The data available allow to state big closeness of historical lines of the Mongols - dunhu and the ancient Koreans, besides, the lingual connection of the words dunhu and Kori should also be emphasized.

The ethnonym *dunhu* means eastern *hu*. The Tibetan scholar Minchzhul khutukhta considered *hu* to be a mispronounced Tibetan word *khor*. The idea was supported by one of the founders of Russian sinology V.P. Vassilyev. He pointed that *hu* was *khor*, the traditional name for Mongolian tribes in China. Yu.N. Rerich wrote

on the case: “The Tibetan tribal name *chor* is nothing but a Tibetan transcription of the Chinese *ku* – the name denoting central Asian tribes of Iranian and Turk-Mongolian origin”. G.N. Rummyantsev also supported these ideas: «It is very probable that *chor* is the plural form of *ko-* or *ku-*. Then the Chinese name of the Syanbi’s ancestors – dun-hu “the northern barbarians” can be interpreted as “the northern khors”».

Thus, the representative of Mongolian studies G.N. Rummyantsev, the sinologist V.P. Vassilyev and the tibetologist Yu.N. Rerich revealed the existence of fields of common and connections between the ethnonyms *hu*, *dunhu* and *chor*. There has not been any universal opinion given about the Dunhu language. Researchers concluded that it was a mixed people; they even assumed its Iranian origin; later on, it became the ancestor of the Turks and the Mongols. It is very often that an ethnonym comes from another language. To give some examples, the Slavic Bulgarians got the name from the Turk tribe, bearing the same name, or China (Khitai - in Russian) is named after the name of the Mongols – khidans. Some ethnonyms consonant with “chor” exist in Iran, Middle Asia and Europe – Khorasan, Khorasm, Khorvatia in Russian (Croatia in English). There is an idea that the ethnonym “khorvats” is of Iranian origin and appeared where the Slavic tribes closely interrelated with Iranian-tongued population. The toponym Khorasm means the country of the sun, and Khorasan is translated as the land of the sun. The meanings of these names provide basic for the supposition that they could be connected with the language of the ancient Indo-Iranians. The old Iranian term *hvar* – the sun; it also can sound as *sur* – in Indo-Arian languages and *hur* – in the Iranian language. The sun cult is a very widespread one among ancient Iranians. The sun was the embodiment of the good. The god of the Sun’s name was Khors (oset. – xur and avest. – hvar – the sun). There have been attempts of comparison of the English *horse* with the name of the Slavic God of the Sun – *Khors*. It should be noted here that in mythology the images of the sun and the horse are interconnected, for instance, the ritual posts – “horses” (lower German Horsa).

The etymological analysis considered give us the basic for the supposition that the ethnonym - hu or - khor is also associated with ancient Iranian spreading and has been preserved today in different languages. Moreover, it unites such different peoples as Buryats (khori), Koreans and Croatians.

Which of the Indo-European migration can match these facts? One of the possible answers can be the Tokhar. Linguists note the connection of the Tokhar language with the Turk language, it is I millennium B.C. that contacts between Tokhars and Chinese are thought to take place. The eastern border of the Tokhar influence is reconstructed by the material of G. Ramstedt, who pointed early contacts between Tokhars and Koreans. Of interest is E. Pulliblanc's hypothesis that ancient Chinese ideas of sky horses and the unicorn (tsylin).

Thus, ancient Mongols were developing in one historical-cultural continuum with the Manchzhu and Koreans. The shift to nomadic life is associated with Indo-Iranians – -khu, -khor. This name passes on to Mongols and becomes the self-name. Mongols dunhu pass on the ethnonym to the ancestors of Koreans in the form of Kore – Kogure. The search for etymologies of assonant ethnonyms from different languages is rather hard and provokes futher questions, whose solving is often impossible within the framework of linguistics only. Thus etymological hypotheses appear during historical background reconstruction. This historical background involves interpreting related linguistic ties, broken by the force of history and time.

Now we shall consider archeological data. Our familiarity with mountain fortresses of Korea allows speaking about a significant typological similarity of Korean and Siberian fortifications. Mountain fortified settlements with coarse stone block walls have been studied in Cisbaikalia. The settlements fortified by walls are built on uplands. There are no fortifications erected on plains among them. Settlements similar in architectural and plan details are known in Khakasia, Tuva, and Altai.

Scholars refer mountain settlements of Cisbaikalia to the Kurumchi culture of the medieval epoch. In our opinion this

archeological culture was created by early Khori-Mongols. Ethnogeny and culture genesis of the Khori-Mongols was connected with the Far Eastern region. Therefore, the proximity of archeological evidence and artifacts of Cisbaikalia to those of the Far East in general and Korean ancientries in particular, becomes clear.

Far Eastern cultures significantly influenced the specific character of the material outlook of the Kurumchi culture (the construction of mountain fortified settlements in particular) and determined its peculiarities. Let us turn directly to the Kurumchi culture materials. Let us consider the burial ritual of the Kurumchi culture population. It is notable that the burial ritual is a rather conservative and slowly changing trait of culture. Comparative analogies here are methodologically more plausible than, for instance, an exposure of similarities between items of material culture, which can be explained by territorial proximity, trade or other contacts. A similarity of burial rituals, in its turn, testifies to more significant and deep ties as well as common spiritual beliefs apparently having same roots.

The Kurumchi graveyards are divided into two main groups according to presence or absence of tomb superstructures. They are burial mount type graveyards and ground graveyards without tomb superstructures. If a tradition of the burial mount tombs is widespread among Siberian and Central Asian monuments, the ground burial tradition is less represented in the archeology of Cisbaikalia. Ground graveyards of the Kurumchi culture were situated close to a reservoir, usually by a river. It is notable that dry open uplands or terraces, usually formed by sandy soils were chosen, which led to their practically universal destruction when the upper layer was damaged.

In the ground tombs characteristic of the early medieval period most bodies were laid into the ground without any in-tomb constructions. In the rest of the cases half-rotten wooden planks were found. Most probably they were remnants of a frame coffin. Surviving funeral beds in some tombs of Bayangol graveyard in the

Barguzin valley testify to it. In those cases when it is possible to determine the position of a corpse the deceased laid on the back with a right side turn; on the back with legs bended and turned to the right; crouched on left side. Skeletons are orientated head to the north and north-east. On the territory of Bayangol graveyard vase-like pots were found. These vessels were placed out of the tombs and were, apparently, associated with commemorative cults. Possibly fire was used in commemorative rituals or there were rather rare cases of cremation, but it should be noted that no burnt bones of a deceased were found. There are only burnt iron items with characteristic blue-black shine and cinder. In the same Bayangol graveyard a ritual burial of a bear's head was found in a separate circular pit. In burial mound tombs the bodies were most often placed into stone boxes or a rare ritual of building a gable roof covered with reed over a corpse was indicated. The position of a corpse was crouched, lying on the right side, or, rarely, lying on the back with legs bent and turned to the right. As with ground tombs the corpses are orientated predominantly to north-east.

Let us consider medieval burial rituals of the Far Eastern people. There are comparative studies of burial traditions based on archaeological, ethnographic, and written sources which significantly foster our work.

The majority of studied medieval graveyards of the Far East are ground and the graveyards are mostly situated on the river banks on sandy uplands. The bodies lie simply in tomb pits and in some cases in frame coffins. In a pit or on the surface vessels were placed, quite often with pierced bottom or broken off crowns. The position of the corpse is mostly on the back with bent knees and in other cases crouched on the left or right sides. The predominant orientation is to the west.

In this way we see that, except the orientation, the burial traditions of the medieval peoples of the Amur region resemble those of the peoples living on the shores of Lake Baikal. Many features of burial rituals, from the choice of burial place to commemorative cults match.

Let us compare the burial inventory found in the graves. Similarity and sometimes identity of not only instruments of labor and everyday life items, but rather specific items of cult, demonstrating religious beliefs should be highlighted. This, undoubtedly, testifies to the unity of worldview images that inspired their creators.

The main type of medieval Far Eastern dwellings is a semi-dugout of quadrangular form (close to quadrangles) the entrance to which was with a door and a special dip. Plank beds edged the perimeter of the dwelling. The fireplace of quadrangular or square form was with stone lining or without it. There are fireplaces in a form of a rectangular platform edged from four sides with wooden planks. The walls were made from vertically mounted pillars or planks. For the Parhae (Bohai) people it was characteristic to daub the walls and roofs with clay. Cellar pits were dug near or in the dwellings. They were used to store meat which is proved by pig bones found in them.

The look of the Kurumchi culture settlements is completely similar in the Far Eastern region. There are some slight differences, like the dwellings from vertical pillars were not found in the Amur region; it is not excluded that the roofs of the Kurumchi dugouts were of inverted V form because in several tombs there are reed-covered roofs of such forms above the buried bodies and the planks rested upon a crossbeam mounted on two poles.

Connections with the Hunnu traditions are important in understanding of Far Eastern elements in the cultural complex of the Kurumchi culture. Let us note a characteristic feature which draws together the graveyards of the Hunnu and the population of the Kurumchi culture. Both cultures are characterized by ground burial sites and, in our view it is not accidental that the ground burials of Hunnu and the Kurumchi culture were situated on sandy soils. The choice of burial places in these two cultures was determined by common principles which, perhaps, formed sometime ago on the sandy loess of South Manchuria. It is not by chance that the Hunnu dug deep grave pits – graves of their kings

of more than 10 meters deep and common tombs of 3 meters. This tradition may have formed on soft and easy to dig loess soils. That is why when the Hunnu came to Central Asia and Siberia they tried to choose similar soils for their burial places.

Some planigraphic peculiarities of several Kurumchi settlements are connected with the Hunnu-Uighur traditions. We mean the fortified settlements of quadrangular form. The peculiarity of the Kurumchi settlements was that they were mostly constructed on capes, though the Baronomukhinskoe settlement in the flood-plain of the river Kuda is of quadrangular form. As a rule, Hunnu and Uighur settlements were built in the flood-plains of rivers. A number of items characterizing the outlook of the Kurumchi culture have analogies in the inventory of Hunnu monuments. Analogies have been found among the Hunnu ceramics and vase-like vessels found in the Kurumchi graves and commemoration places.

Far Eastern origins of the Hunnu culture and its proximity to the sedentary centers of South Manchuria have been quite convincingly proven. A considerable part of analogies which bonds together the Hunnu and the Kurumchi cultures is mostly connected with East Asian ancientries. Items of the Kurumchi and Burkhotui cultures are typologically compatible with Korean and Japanese ancientries. Among the artifacts of the Kurumchi culture bronze drops with six jingles are connected with the solar cult. They resemble similar bronze jingles called “pkhaljuren” in Korean ancientries. Shuicheng Li, professor of Archeology Department of Beijing University, confirmed after familiarizing himself with our findings that such drops are considered typically Korean decorations. Analogous drops with jingles are known as a part of the Zorgol culture of East Transbaikalia. The tradition of these jingles in its relic form survived until the 19th century in the culture of Far Eastern Ulchi people.

It should be said that the anthropology of the Kurumchi peoples is comparable with the Hunnu of Mongolia and Transbaikalia. In scholars' opinion, the anthropological outlook of

the Hunnu bears traits of the Far Eastern race. Possibly, these traits are traced in the anthropology of the Kurumchi culture peoples because their similarity with contemporary peoples of the Lower Amur, such as the Ulchis and Negidals, has been noted.

Therefore we have reasons to regard the Kurumchi culture in one line with the Far Eastern medieval archaeological complexes. Yet it is good to highlight that it is also a Central Asian phenomenon which encompasses traditions of the steppe south. In this it is analogous to the Hunnu culture and is its natural successor. A culture of any nation is a complex phenomenon which embraces many layers reflecting a controversial and complex history of its development, because there were no absolutely isolated “clear” nations.

Marking out of the Far Eastern or, broadly taken, East Asian substratum in the Kurumchi culture allows tracing Mongolian origins in it. Presence of archaic elements that suggest a sedentary way of life also points at the Far Eastern roots of these phenomena.

In this way, the similarity of the archaeological complex of Cisbaikalia such as, particularly, mountain settlements with the analogous monuments of the Korean peninsula can be explained in ancient migrations of people from the Pacific shores. Those Far Eastern traditions preserved their peculiarities for a long time and influenced the cultural genesis of Buryats and Mongols. This material allows us to speak about a greater closeness between Khori Mongols and Ancient Koreans.

This research was made possible by support of RFFI № 08-06-00328; RFHI № 08-01-00390