OTHER TURKISH AND CHINESE SOURCES

DLT
Divan-u Lugat'it-Türk. First Turkish dictionary written by Mahmud Kashgari in 1074 AD in Bagdad, capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. Translated by Besim Atalay (Ankara 1998)

HTS
Hsin T'ang Shu. Dynastic History of T'ang (618–906 AD), written by Wo Yang-hsiou and Sung Ch'i Ting-wen Shu-chü (Taipei / Taiwan 1987).

Chin Shu
Dynastic History of Chin, written by Fang Hsüan-ling in the 6th century (Taipeh / Taiwan 1987).

Pei Shi (PS)
Dynastic History of the Northern States (386–581), written by Li Yen-shou between 630–650 AD (Taipeh / Taiwan 1987).

Suei Shu (SS)
Dynastic History of Suei (386–581), written by Wei Cheng between 629–636 AD (Taipeh / Taiwan 1987).

T'ai-p'ing Yü-lan (TPYL)
Encyclopaedia written by Li Fang in 983 AD (Shanghai 1935).

THC
T'ai-p'ing Huan-yü Chi. Geography edited by Yüe Shih before 1007 AD (Beijing 1955).

T'ung Chih (TC)
Encyclopaedia written by Cheng Ch'iao in 1150 AD (Shanghai 1935).

TT
T'ung Tien. Encyclopaedia written by Tu Yu in 805 AD (Shanghai 1935).

Wei Shu (WS)
Dynastic History of the Northern Wei (386–535 AD), written by Wei Shou in 551–554 (Taipeh / Taiwan 1987).

WTK
Wen-hsien T'ung-K'ao. Encyclopaedia written by Ma Tuan-lin in the 13th century (Shanghai 1935).

THE CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OLD TURKIC KINGSHIP AND DEER IMAGE

Takashi Osawa

We know that there are many nomad and hunting peoples in the Eurasian Steppe, which have a close relationship with animals such as wolves, bears, oxen, falcons, cows, etc. as the ancestors in their mythology. In particular, among the ancient Turks, a tribe named Gaoche, or Tujue in Chinese sources, is well known to have respected the wolf as part of their ancestry[1]. However, it seems that there is no known case in which there is also the deer cult that has a close relation with their mythology. In this paper, I will first analyze the deer cult based on a Chinese source named Youyang Zazu comparing with some Runic texts, and secondly I would like to consider aspects of the relations between the deer cult and the kingship among the ancient Turkic peoples based on archaeological data, in particular from three Mongolian sites (Möngöt Khiasaan, Khöshöö Tsaidam, Khöl Asgat).

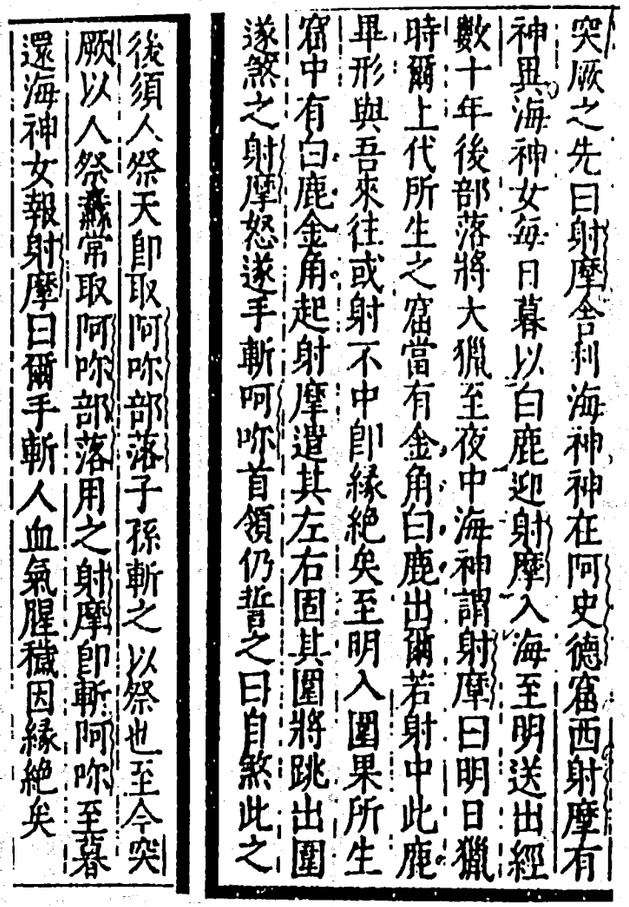
THE ROLE OF THE DEER IN THE MYTHOLOGY ACCORDING TO YOUYANG ZAZU

The classical Chinese source named Youyang Zazu (Fig. 1) that I would like to introduce here was compiled in approximately 860 AD by Duanchenshi of the T'ang Dynasty. As far as I know, nobody has yet analyzed the significance of the deer cult for the ancient Turkic peoples. First I would like to translate the corresponding chapter from Youyang Zazu as follows:

"The ancestor of 'Tujue' is called 'Shemo'[2]. There was a Sea-God named 'Jieli haishen'.

1 Mythology regarding female wolves as their ancestors among the Tujue tribe, cf. SS-84, 1863 and ZS-50, 907–908. And in another version in which male wolves are regarded as their ancestors among the Gaoche, cf. BS-98, 3270.

2 Shemo can be pronounced as "Dzia Mua" in ancient Chinese phonetics based on the reconstructed phonetics by B. Karlgren (1923, Nos. 865, 593) or as "*ziah/*ziajk/*jiah/*jiajk" and "ma" based on the reconstructed phonetics of E. G. Pulleyblank (1991, 279; 283; 364; 370 and 217). And this name can be identified as Yama Kaghan in the first line of the Ongin Inscription that I can revise on the basis of G. Ramstedt's and S. Pälsi's paper rubbing, which has been preserved in the archive of the Finno-Ugric Society, and of N. M. Iadrintsev's original paper rubbing in the Institute for Oriental studies in Saint Petersburg. While V. Rybatzki (2000, 209) considered that Yami Kaghan of the Ongi Inscription – which is how the name has been read until now – can be a Tujue leader "zha-ma-mo-nan" (i. e. Zhama Kaghan) in the Tibetan document No. 1283 of the Pelliot Collection (Moriyasu 1977; 3; 10; 13–14) from Tunhuang of Xinjiang, China. Similar to this, the Chinese philologist Rui Chuan Ming offered the hypothesis that "Yami Kaghan" of the Ongin inscription can be identified with "Shemo Kaghan" because of the phonetic similarity between them; however, he did not analyze the etymology (Rui Zhuan Ming 1998, 297–298). In this presentation, I consider that "Shemo Kaghan" can be identified with a version of "Yama Kaghan" of the Ongin inscription and "Zhama Kaghan" of an Old Tibetan document (No. 1281) as one of the ancestral leaders of the Old Turkic tribes. In my opinion, this name can be traced back to the Old Iranian name of the God Yima as one of the guardian kings of the Goddess Anahita of the Zoroastrianism (Boyce 1984, 94) that can be also associated with the Old Indian name YAMA meaning the "the Earth-God" (Boyce 1984, 19) as well as with the Earth-God who occurs in the Old Indian classical work Rigu-Veda (Boyce 1983, 19–20).



突厥之先曰射摩舍利海神神在阿史德窟西射摩有神異海神女每日暮以白鹿迎射摩入海至明送出經數十年後部落將大猲至夜中海神謂射摩曰明日猲時爾上代所生之窟當有金角白鹿出爾若射中此鹿畢形與吾來往或射不中即緣絕矣至明入圍果所生窟中有白鹿金角起射摩遣其左右固其圍將跳出圍遂煞之射摩怒遂手斬阿咻首領仍誓之曰自煞此之後須人祭天即取阿咻部落子孫斬之以祭也至今突厥以人祭蓋常取阿咻部落用之射摩即斬阿咻至暮還海神女報射摩曰爾手斬人血氣腥穢因緣絕矣

Fig. 1. Extract from the Youyang Zazu.

Shemo lived to the west of the Ashide tribes' cave (ku). Shemo had a mysterious power. At sunset every day a daughter of the Sea-God met Shemo with her white deer dived under the Sea, at sunset she came out of the water to see him. Several years later, the great hunting was planned among this tribe. In this night the Sea-God spoke to Shemo: 'Tomorrow when you are going to hunt, you will certainly find a white deer with golden antlers (Jinjiaobailu) in the Ashide's cave and it will try to run away from there. If you shoot an arrow and hit it, you will be successively able to maintain a close relationship with me. If you shoot it and cannot hit it, our relationship cannot be continued any more.' The next day he went into the hunting enclosure, and, as expected, in the cave where his ancestor had been born, he found a white deer with golden horns on the head. When the deer woke up, Shemo sent his attendants to strengthen the fence. When the white deer was going to jump over the fence, at last they killed it. Shemo was angry with them forever. Finally he killed the leader of the Ashi tribe with his own hands, and made an oath and said: 'After the deer was killed, a man should worship Tängri-God'. Thus he ordered his followers to catch and kill descendants of the Ashi tribe and worship Tängri-God with human sacrifice. Until now the ancient Turks (Tujue) worship the standard (dao:tugh in Old Turkic) of the tribe with human sacrifices, for this they always used to catch the Ashi

people. Afterwards, Shemo killed one of the Ashi tribe, and then in the sunset he came back to the Sea. The daughter of the Sea-God answered to Shemo as follows: 'You killed a man with your own hands, so your blood and your spirit were defiled with blood.' Then their relationship came to an end"[3].

Summarized, in this mythology an Old Turkic tribal leader (Shemo) is recognized as an owner of the mysterious power by the Sea-God, so he could have a close relationship with him through the communication with a daughter of the Sea-God, i.e. a Sea-Goddess.

From the text cited above, we can see that the white deer is a symbol of the mysterious ability that "Shemo" has, a supernatural power to communicate with the Sea-God. As is well known, the adjective word "bai" (white) of "bailu" (white deer) can be identified with the Old Turkic terms, and this colour has literally the meaning of "white colour", and metaphorically means "pure, superior", as shown by the symbolic colour of holiness among the nomadic and hunting peoples of Inner Eurasia[4]. In this text mentioned above, a white deer can be regarded as an attribute of the holiness of the Sea-God. As is well known, the deer image is dated back to deer figures of the rock art imagery (petroglyphs) of nomads or hunting peoples of the Old Stone Age to the deer figures of the rock art and the deer stones of the Scythian and Hun-Sarmatian periods. In the Stone Age, the golden horn of the deer image can be considered as a symbol of the sun shining on the earth or the world moving from east to west, as well as a symbol of the growth of all living things (Okladnikov 1968, 239). Therefore, since ancient times, the deer has been commonly respected as the symbol of fertility of the earth, and it has been often pictured or carved as the representative animal of the acts of hunting game in rock art and other artisan craftwork of Inner Eurasia.

Now, when we look at how the hunt is carried out in the text cited above, it is noteworthy that it reflects the typical Altaic custom of hunting animals by surrounding them and the ruler then killing prey with his own hands (Baldick 2000, 48). For example, I can cite a similar hunting scene from the "Ïrq Bitig" (Fortune-book) of the 10th century: (No. 63) "The army of the Kaghan went out to hunt. [Meanwhile] a roebuck came inside the circle. The Kaghan caught it with his hand. All his followers rejoiced, it says. Know thus: [The omen] is good" (Tekin 1993, 26–27). From this, we can assume that success in hunting deer can be regarded as good omen for the nomad Turkic peoples.

As I pointed out, the deer image has been a symbol of fertility for nomadic and hunting peoples since the Stone Ages. In my opinion, moreover it may also be a symbol of sovereignty sent as a gift to nomad leaders by Tängri-God. In the light of this latter view, we can especially compare the deer image with the Turkic "qut" that basically means "the charisma imparted, distributed, or sent from Heaven to human beings, especially sovereigns", often described in Old Turkic inscriptions (Mori 1981, 72). In this case the deer is considered to be a symbol of "qut"; and a symbol of sovereignty. Additionally, this brings to mind the similar relationship between the kingship of Sogdian countries and Ahuramazda, the superior God of Zoroastrianism, through the deer image, which can be considered as a symbol of "Xuwarna", which meant "glory, fortune, victory" for the ancient Iranian kings, and "good fortune, property, good luck" given by Ahuramazda to Sogdian aristocrats (Tanabe 1988, 64; Osawa 2001, 234–235).

3 YYZZ-4, 30–31; cf. Imamura 1982, 241–243. This story is also recorded in Taiping Guangji-480 with some differences; however, this has no effect on this interpretation (TPKJ, 3957).

4 As for the analysis of "white colour" of the Turkic peoples, cf. Laude-Cirtautas 1961, 40–50.

With regard to this, I would like to refer to four images on a rectangular stone pillar in the Möngöt Khiasaan (Silver Rock Mountain) on the north bank of the Bogd Gol, in a distance of approximately 30 km from Uliastai, Zavkhan aimag, in north-western Mongolia (Fig. 2). As far as I know, this locality was discovered first by the famous ethnologist G. P. Potanin in 1881, and he published sketches of the image and emphasized the significance of this image with its rough drawing of the figures (Potanin 1881, Tab. X, Fig. 37). Then E. Haenisch and A. von Le Coq investigated the site and published photographs in 1929 (von Le Coq 1929, Taf. 32, No. 1-a, b). In the year 1951 the Japanese archaeologist N. Egami also interpreted this picture as the portrait of the Tujue leader (Egami 1951, pl. 26). Also, according to Y. Harada, in the late 19th or in the early 20th century the Chinese researcher Chinyi also visited this rock image during the Qing Dynasty and made paper rubbings and sketches. Chinyi assumed this image to belong to the Old Turkic Kaghanate (cf. Harada 1970, 175, n. 1). Y. Harada also analyzed these pictures presenting his hypothesis of a Tujue aristocratic leader of the Old Turkic period (Harada 1970, 173–175, n. 1). Finally, in the year 1996, the Mongolian researcher D. Baiar also studied this monument (Baiar 2007).

Generally spoken, research on this imagery emphasized hairstyles and the features of dress or tribal identifiers. In a contrary interpretation to this, I. L. Kyzlasov called attention to the existence of the two deer figures looking the opposite way from each other under the carpet of the first warrior (cf. Fig. 3). He compared the scene of Tängri and Umay sitting cross-legged on the carpet as symbol of Kline with the two rulers – Kaghan and Kaghatun – of the Sulek rock image of the Khakassia, and he analyzed the significance of this image as a symbol of the kingship that was descended from the Old Iranian or Sogdian cultural tradition as seen in their tomb-pictures in Central Asia (Kyzlasov 1998; Osawa 2001, 237–239).

Last summer I also visited the site as a member of the international joint Archaeological-Epigraphical Japanese-Mongol research team, and took some photographs. According to the Global Positioning System (GPS), this site is situated at 47° 38' 45" N and at 97° 05' 38" E, and at 1,939 m above sea level. This granite stone pillar is shaped in a trapezoid form (Fig. 2). It measures 230 cm in height, 57 cm in width at the top and 70 cm width at the bottom, and 14 cm thickness at the top and 64 cm thickness at the bottom. There we can see the four warriors carved in a wide west-facing side as follows (Fig. 3):



Fig. 2. Möngöt Khiasaan, Zavkhan aimag. Stone pillar.



Fig. 3. Möngöt Khiasaan, Zavkhan aimag. Four images from one side of the stone pillar (from von Le Coq 1929, Pl. 32,1b).

1. The first figure (22 cm high) is carved in the upper part of the left side. It is a warrior sitting cross-legged on a carpet (11 cm length, 8 cm width), which is supported by two deer with horn (9 cm high, 4 cm wide). He is turning to the right side and has long hair styled in plaits, a cup in the right hand, and a long sword (or long stick) at his left side.
2. The second figure (20 cm high) is carved in the upper part of the right section. It depicts a warrior turning to the left side and sitting, perhaps cross-legged, and having a long braid. Probably he was carved grasping a cup in the right hand; however, the left half has worn away. Maybe he was also grasping a long sword in his right hand.
3. The third figure (40 cm high, 12 cm wide) is carved in the left side of the lower part of the panel. He stands turning to the right side, having a long Turkic braid and carrying a 25 cm long stick.
4. The forth figure (28 cm high, 8 cm wide) is on the lower part of the right side. He also stands turning to the left side. He has many long plaits and is carrying a long stick in the right hand.

As we can easily see from these images, there are two deer sitting down facing each other in place of a platform supporting the carpet. This carpet under the noble warrior can be compared with the enthronement-Kline that had been used in the enthronement ceremony of a nomad king (a Kaghan) as the envoy of the Eastern Roman Empire, Zemarchus, reported about his meetings with Sizabul (i. e. Istemi) who was the younger brother of Bumïn Kaghan of the ancient Turks Kaghanate. Zemarchus described many details of the dwellings and daily life of the Western Old Turkic Kaghan as follows (handed down by the Byzantine historian Menandros Protector):

"On the morrow they met in another hut... Sizabul sat there on a couch made completely of gold.... [omitted]... On the following day they came to another dwelling in which there were gilded wooden pillars and a couch of beaten gold, which was supported by four golden peacocks..." (Blockley 1985, 120–121).

From this description we can interpret the four golden peacocks of this golden couch being used by the Western Old Turkic Kaghan as a symbol of kingship, and we can also compare these peacocks of the couch with the two deer under the carpet of the first figure of Möngöt Khiasaan in Western Mongolia. Thus we can state that the image of the two deer indicates the kingship of the Old Turkic Kaghan, and thereby supports it.

In a parallel analysis, we can say first that Shemo was supported by the white deer, i.e. the symbol of sovereignty. However, during the hunt Shemo failed to catch and hit it with his hands, moreover he became angry and finally killed wrongly the guards of the Ashi tribe. As a result of this, Shemo's relationship with the Sea-God was broken off. It means that he lost his charismatic ability to rule the ancient Turkic peoples.

The Role of the Silver Deer from Bilgä Kaghan's Memorial Site in Mongolia

At this point, I would like to support my theory by some archaeological materials. First of all, I would like to discuss the two figures of silver deer excavated from Bilgä Kaghan's monument on the Orkhon Steppes of Mongolia under the project "Turkish Monuments in Mongolia" (MOTAP) of the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in August 2001. As is well known, Turkish and Mongolian joint researchers have excavated Bilgä Kaghan's memorial site at Khöshöö Tsaidam, Khashaat sum, Arkhangai aimag, since the year 2000. They found a part of a golden headdress (or diadem), gold and silver cups and vessels in a silver box beside a sarcophagus as well as two gilded silver deer[5]. The complete extant silver deer, according to reports of TICA, measures 8 cm in height and 4 cm in width (Fig. 4). Other cups and vessels are also not of normal size for use in everyday life. Because of this, it seems that the two silver deer are also miniature along with the golden and silver vessels and cups excavated from the same silver box (Fig. 5).

Concerning animal images, the above-mentioned Zemarchus, vividly informs us that there were many possessions and ornaments inside the tent of the Sizabul Kaghan in 568 AD:

"In front of this dwelling were drawn up over a wide area, wagons containing many silver objects, dishes and bowls, and a large number of statues of animals, also of silver and in no way inferior to those which we make; so wealthy is the ruler of the Turks" (Blockley 1985, 120–121).

According to Menandros Protector, Sizabul (i. e. Istemi Kaghan) had many golden and silver statues of animals and luxurious goods in his tent. This scene is evocative of the silver box from Khöshöö Tsaidam. Based on this description, the silver deer figures can be regarded as of his possession along with the golden and silver dishes and many animal statues inside the tent of Sizabul. In this case, it is worthy to mention that the silver deer could be miniatures. This means that they

5 TICA 2002; TICA 2003a; TICA 2003b, 132–133; TICA 2004.



Fig. 4. Khöshöö Tsaidam. One of the two gilded silver deer (after Dschingis Khan und seine Erben 2005, 77 Fig. 50).



Fig. 5. Khöshöö Tsaidam. Golden miniature dishes (after Dschingis Khan und seine Erben 2005, 78 Fig. 51).

could be ritual objects showing off his political and economic power. Of course, the silver deer could also be a charm that symbolizes, as well as the golden headdress his sovereignty and the fertility of his country during his lifetime, after his death the fertility and his revival in the next world. Among Old Turks when a nomad man died, his family or relatives would first cremate horses of the deceased with his everyday goods and perform the funeral ceremony in a place near his tent. Only then they would bring his ashes to be buried in a tomb, where they worship him with the sacrifices of horses and sheep, and erect stones in accordance to the numbers of enemies killed by the deceased person during his lifetime (ZS-55, 910; SS-84, 1864). This funeral custom can be supported by archaeological data over a vast area of Mongolia and Central Eurasia (Osawa 2003, 163–196). From this, we can understand that the silver deer, golden and silver cups and vessels in the size of miniature can also be connected with rituals after his death.

As for the significance of these vessels and cups, in "Ïrq Bitig" they were described as follows: (No. 42) "A woman went away, leaving behind her cups and bowls. Then she stopped and thought thoroughly. Where am I going apart from my cups and bowls? she says. She again came back and found her cups and bowls safe and sound. She rejoices and becomes delighted, it says. Know thus: (The omen) is good" (Tekin 1993, 18–19).

In my mind, this situation must be interpreted as a description of the flight of the dead woman's spirit. After her death her spirit flew away and drifted in the air, but it was not contended with this, so her spirit came back to her cups and bowls that were buried during the funeral in her

tomb, and she rejoiced. Based on this, the cups and bowls buried in the tomb can be regarded as the dwelling place of the spirit of the dead. Therefore we suggest that the silver deer at the memorial complex of Bilgä Kaghan must also be connected with ritual items after death along with the golden and silver cups and vessels. From this point of view, I can point out that the silver deer can be regarded as the symbol of fertility that reflects a deer cult among the ancient Turks, and that it must had been offered to Bilgä Kaghan's spirit after his death for fertility in the next world.

Furthermore, I can suggest a similar usage for the "keyik" meaning 'deer' in the funeral ceremony described in the first Altun Köl Inscription (E-27), which was found in the steppe along the Abakan River, in the middle Yenisei Basin: (R3) "altun Songa yis keyiki, artgï̈l, tog[g]ï̈l. tad içinge, Barsïm adrï̈lu bardï̈. Yï̈ta!" (The wild animal of the golden Sunga mountain forest, increase and revive! To the foreign peoples, my Bars departed [from me]. I am regretful!)[6].

In this inscription, Bars bäg, probably the person whose honour was memorialized by his brothers and family, was described as one of the aristocratic leaders of the Yenisei Kyrgyz tribes and a brave warrior, who died in the battle. The sentence cited above should be placed in the last part of this inscription, according to M. Mori. In this inscription, we can see the Old Kyrgyz people prayed that the beasts, including deer, will be plentiful and revive in the golden Sunga Mountain and their leader Bars will not be hungry in the next world. This must reflect the fact that there were plenty of beasts including deer in the Sunga Mountain. In particular, what is remarkable here is the term "keyik", which means "beasts; deer", and it shows that the Kyrgyz peoples recognized the deer as representative animals of beast.

The scenes of hunting deer such as this can also be observed in the Rock carvings of Sulek in Khakassia[7]. Furthermore, we can also add to this a drawing of the deer inhabiting mountain forest on a bone plate unearthed from the Unga site of the Qurikan tribes along the Angara River[8]. From the same site, one bone object with a Turkic runic epitaph was also found, so we can conclude that this belonged to the ancient Turkic period.

From the horizontal lines on the Chinese side of the bilingual Turkic-Chinese runic inscription of Bilgä Kaghan's funerary stele (Fig. 6–7), we can confirm that the deer must have had a close relationship to the flying spirit of the dead[9]:

(1) Bilgä Kaghan uçdï̈ (Bilgä Kaghan flew away [i. e. died])
(2) Yay bolsar üze Tängri (when the spring has come, above the sky)
(3) Köbürgesi eterçe ança (how many times thunder is rumbling, it is useless)
(4) Tagda sıgun etser ança (in the mountain, how many deer are bellowing, it is useless)
(5) Sakınur men kangï̈m kaghan (I am weeping, my father Kaghan's)
(6) Taşın özüm Kaghan (eternal stone, myself, [I] Kaghan)
(7) ..... (.....)
(8) ..... (.....)

This is a fragment of the appendix of Bilgä Kaghan's inscription, and these words consist of Bilgä Kaghan's son Tängri Kaghan calling toward the flying spirit of his dead father. From here we can deduce that "sıgun" meaning "male deer" is used as a symbol for the living animals of the world, compared with the thunder as the symbol of the natural phenomenon in the line below. Thus, in this case we can also confirm that the deer image has a close relationship with the Old Turkic Kaghan's sovereignty.

6 This transcription and translation are based on M. Mori (1992, 497; 500–501). According to G. Clauson, "keyik" means "wild four-legged game animals; wild goat; gazelle, etc." (Clauson 1972, 755a, b).

7 Cf. Appelgren-Kivalo 1931, 77–81; Kyzlasov 1998; Osawa 2001.

8 Okladnikov 1963; 1968, 150–163; Mori 1992, 216–229.

9 Radloff 1892–1899, Pl. 21; 82; FinAtlas, Tab. 35; Sertkaya et al. 2001, 95; Cengiz 2005, 106; 143, Photo 203–204.



Fig. 6. Khöshöö Tsaidam. Head stone from the western side of the Bilgä Kaghan stele.

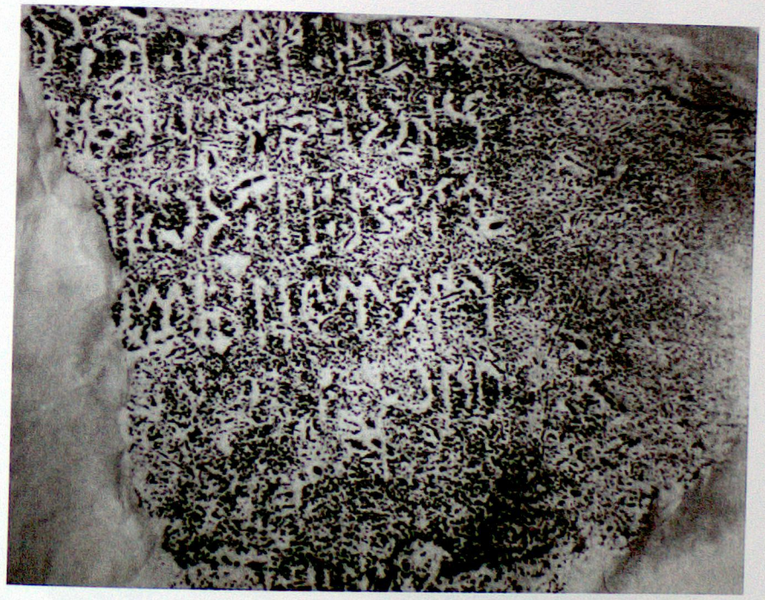


Fig. 7. Khöshöö Tsaidam. Copy of the Runic text fragment from the head stone (western side) of Bilgä Kaghan' stele.

THE DEER IMAGE OF THE KHÖL ASGAT INSCRIPTION IN BULGAN AIMAG

We know of a site of the Old Turkic period named "Ikhe-Askhete" (Khöl Asgat) in Bulgan aimag. This site has been famous since the Orkhon-Expedition of W. Radloff in 1890, especially for the three images that are carved in low relief on the (eastern) front side of the first sarcophagus (Fig. 8). I was also able to investigate this site on both the 24th August 2006 and 15th–16th August 2007, and take some photographs and partial paper rubbings as a member of the international joint research of Japan and Mongolia. This site is situated at latitude 48° 00' 27" N and longitude 103° 04' 00" E, and is at 1,410 m above sea level.

According to our research, we can confirm that there are eight stone slabs: The first is 100 cm high, 90 cm wide, and 14 cm thick; the second one is 67 cm high, 133 cm wide, and 10 cm thick; the third one is 92 cm high, 155 cm wide, and 10 cm thick; the fourth one is 100 cm high, 140 cm wide, and 10 cm thick; the fifth one is 86 cm high, 113 cm wide, 10 cm thick; the sixth one is 70 cm high, 90 cm wide, and 7 cm thick; the seventh is 160 cm high, 62 cm wide, and 7 cm thick; and the eighth is 74 cm high, 155 cm wide, and 25 cm thick. These slabs seem to be the remains of two sarcophagi. As already mentioned, the front side of the first sarcophagus is ornamented with three warrior portraits carved in bas-relief. We also know that the second sarcophagus was carved with a runic inscription and the Ashinas typical tamga on the front side and a deer image on the rear side.



Fig. 8. Ikhe-Askhete (Khöl Asgat). Three humans and a bird relief with a 'ram tamga' and Runic texts. From the eastern side of a sarcophagus in the centre of the mound.



Fig. 9. Ikhe-Askhete (Khöl Asgat). Western side of a stone pillar of the eastern mound.



Fig. 10. Ikhe-Askhete (Khöl Asgat). Eastern side of a stone pillar of the eastern mound.

The runic inscriptions on the front (eastern) side and rear side of the first sarcophagus, and the runic inscriptions of the front side of the second one have been partly read and interpreted by several archaeologists and philologists including H. N. Orkun, S. E. Malov, N. Ser-Odzhav, V. E. Voitov, L. Bold, and M. Dobrovits. According to our investigation by paper rubbings, we are able to confirm several new letters on the front side of the first sarcophagus (E1; Fig. 8) and on the front side (E2; Fig. 9) and the rear side (W2; Fig. 10) of the stone pillar.

As a result, I analyzed the text and published a new preliminary transliteration, transcription and Japanese translation in 2008 (Osawa 2008). Now I can say that these sarcophagi were made for Altun Tamgan Tarkan, younger brother of Kül Tudun, and his two sons Tugrul and Yelgek, all three relatives of the Ashinas' royal family. Therefore it seems that this site belonged to the second Eastern Turkic Kaghanate. Specifically, we can decipher the phrase in the 2nd line of W2 as follows (Osawa 2008, 43):

(Tarqan) ogul(l)arï:taygunblarï kün üçün:laqzïn yïlqa bardïngïz:a:sizim ä (Tarqan's sons flew away for his honour of them in the year of the pig).

Also we can attest the same sentence in the 5th line of the second part on W2 as follows (Osawa 2008, 49):

ogïllarï:taygunlarï kün:üçün laqzïn:yïlqa:bardïngïz:yïta:äsiz a:ülügimin: üçün:yoglayï:bertimizä: (his sons died in the honour for them, they flew away in the year of the pig. I am regretful, alas! For my dead men we did perform the funeral ceremony, a!).

Using the twelve-animal-system-calendar of the Old Turkic tribes, the term "year of the pig" can be equated to the year 724 AD, according to L. Bazin's philological point of view anyway (Bazin 1974, 166). But for me, we must analyze another expression on W2 as follows (Osawa 2008, 51):

Üzä:tängri:erklig ermish asra:yagïz yerimizä:toquz yaşïma:kün üçün:adrïldïngïz:ölügimin: üçün:yoglayu:bertimiz (It seems that above Tängri-God is strong and below our brown ground! Alas, when I was nine years old, you departed away for the honour of them, certainly. For my dead, we did perform his funeral ceremony).

These lines indicate that the sons of Altun Tamgan Tarqan died when the writer was nine years old. And we should pay attention to the fact that, at those times, nobody were allowed to hold a funeral ceremony and could be named (er at [warrior name]), which was at least 15 years old, as shown in the 31st line of the eastern side of the Kül Tegin inscription (Tekin 1988, 16–17). Therefore the writer had to wait six years, and this site and inscriptions were soonest made in the year 729 AD. According to the Terkhiin inscription (Terkh, E-5; Katayama 1999, 171), the first Old Uighur Kaghan destroyed the second Turkic Kaghanate in 741 and at last in 744. The second Turkic Kaghanate under the Ashinas' royal family was ruined by Basmil, Karluk, and Uighur tribes and flew away to the northern border of T'ang Dynasty as shown in Terkhiin and Shine-Usu inscriptions of Moyun Chor of the second Uighur Kaghan (Terkhiin, E-S-1; Shine-Usu, N-10)[10]. Based on that, the site of the Ashinas' royal family at Khöl Asgat had to be constructed before the war against the Old Uighur peoples in the year 741 AD. Therefore it can be dated between 729 and 741 AD.

All this is validated by a tamga of a stylized ram symbolizing the sovereignty of the Ashinas' royal family, which can be seen on the upper section of the front side of the second sarcophagus. Moreover, we can also confirm a deer figure being carved in the centre of the sarcophagus

10 Katayama 1999, 171; Moriyasu 1999, 183; Moriyasu et al. 2009, 23–24; 33–34.

in the rear side of the second sarcophagus. I would like to call special attention to the position of the deer; it does not seem to be accidentally, but intentionally. From my point of view, the deer image must have been carved on purpose to indicate its significance to an observer through its position surrounded by runic letters. It is carved in the middle of the sarcophagus between "Tängri" (i. e. sky) and "yägïz yer" (i. e. brown ground).

In short, the deer is positioned under the Tängri and on the earth. This reminds us of the position of the human being, as we know it from the runic writing of the Orkhon inscription or other runic inscriptions, such as "üzä Tängri, asra yagïz yer kïlïntïkda ekin ara kishi oglï kïlïnmïsh" (i. e When the sky was created above and the brown earth was created below, the human being was born between them)[11]. From this, we can equate the deer image with the human being, who can be regarded as the ancestor of the Turkic tribes in the two preceding examples, so the deer image can also be thought of as presenting the origin of that creature.

CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned above, on the basis of the analysis of philological and archaeological materials, we can define the deer image as a symbol of kingship in the Old Turkic periods. This deer image can be seen in the traditional cult and culture of nomadic peoples such as Scythian, Hun-Sarmatian, and Avar tribes of the Eurasian Steppe including Mongolia and Central Asia. Petroglyphs and carvings on the deer stones, etc. support this view. This image can be also considered as an ancestral image of the Mongols, along with wolves as we know; the deer image is included in the Secret History of Mongols. In future, we would like to analyze the cultural contacts between Old Turkic peoples and neighbouring peoples such as Sogdians, Iranians, Chinese and other nomadic peoples including Avars, Hungarians, and Tatar peoples from a comparative viewpoint looking at the deer cult as well as the role of the deer in mythology.

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11 On the Kül Tegin inscription: the first line of eastern side (Tekin 1988, 8–9); on the Bilgä Kaghan inscription: the second and third lines of the eastern side (Tekin 1988, 36–37).

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ABBREVIATIONS

FinAtlas
Société Finno-Ougrienne (ed.), Inscriptions de L'Orkhon, Recueilles par L'expédition Finnoise 1890 (Helsingfors 1892).
BS
Bei shi (Chronicle of the Northern Chinese dynasty), Zhong hua shu ju, Beijing 1983.
SS
Sui shu, Chonguo shuju (Beijing 1973).
MOTAP
Moğolistan'daki Türk Anıtları Projesi.
TICA
Turkish International Cooperation Agency.
TPKJ
Taiping kuangji Chonguoshujiu (Beijing 1961).
YYZZ
Youyang zazu, Chongguo shixue congshu 35 (Tai bei 1985).
ZS
Zhou-shu, Chonggua shuju (Beijing 1971).

REVISION AND REINTERPRETATION OF THE CHOIR INSCRIPTION

Kōsetsu Suzuki

INTRODUCTION

The most famous of stone statues or stone babas discovered in Mongolia is the stone statue from Choir. It was located in the east central part of Mongolia, in Sümber sum of Gov'-Sümber aimag (formerly Dornogov' aimag). This stone statue carries two tamgas and a runic inscription, the Choir Inscription is written in Turkic. Therefore, it is of importance not only as an archaeological artefact of ancient Mongolia, but also as historical document in Turkic philology.

Today, we can study stone statues spread widely across Inner Eurasia, especially the stone statues in Mongolia, which often belong to the ancient Turkic period, the era of Türk Empire/Kaghanate (6th–8th century AD). We know that runic inscriptions first appeared in Mongolia in the first half of the 8th century under the rule of the Second Türk Empire (682–744). Thus, the stone statue from Choir is essential for historical studies on ancient Mongolia.

In August 2003, through the cooperation with Ayudai Ochir, the former Director of the National Museum of Mongolia, the author had the chance to examine the stone statue from Choir held at this Museum and was permitted to take paper rubbings (estampage). This short article deals with the Choir Inscription and contributes a new reading based on examination of the paper rubbing. The aim here is to derive information from this inscription and to clarify the reason why it was written and engraved.

SHORT REVIEW OF STUDIES

The stone statue from Choir was scientifically reported in October 1929. It was found on a kurgan at Mount Sansar (Ikh Sansar Uul) in the region of the Dornogov' aimag (the Eastern Gobi Prefecture) in about 200 km distance from Ulaanbaatar (Malov 1936, 251–252).

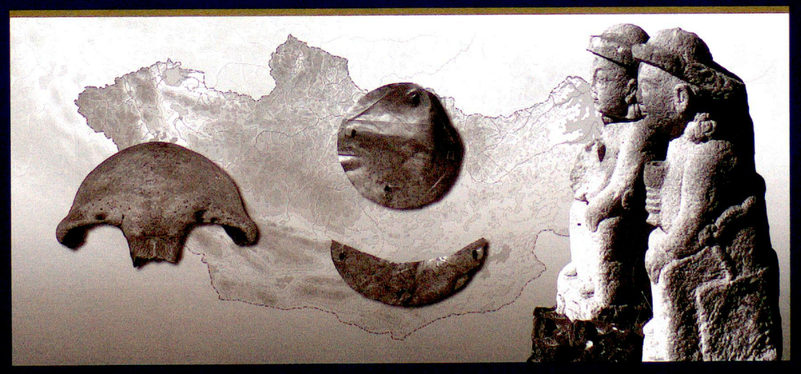
This stone statue is made from granite. Its height is 132 cm, its width 37–41 cm, and its thickness is 22 cm. The main (body) part measures from there is top to bottom 94 cm. The runic inscription was engraved from the front to the right side of the statue. Two tamgas that show the associated clan were carved from the front to the left side of the statue. After the discovery, it was transported to the National Museum of Mongolia. As described ahead, because the stone

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PREFACE

Since Mongolia's political opening in the early 1990s, the number of archaeological expeditions under bi- and trinational direction has increased considerably. Scholars from the United States, Japan, Korea, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Monaco, Switzerland, France as well as from other countries are engaged in cooperative projects with the Archaeological Institute of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, the National Museum of History or one of the archaeological university institutes in Mongolia. These various research projects (cp. the compilation by Tsogtbaatar and Batbold 2005[1] and the contribution of Tseveendorzh in this volume) confirm impressively the hospitality and openness of the Mongolian people towards new approaches in research as well as the extraordinarily favourable working conditions in the country.

The impetus for organising an international conference in Mongolia was ultimately supplied by the reorientation of our research which so far has focused on Karakorum. This induced us to make a first assessment not only of our own projects (contributions by H.-G. Hüttel and E. Pohl), but furthermore to gain information about the state of research that has been achieved in the meantime. We intended both to document retrospectively the increase of knowledge and, at the same time, to look ahead.

In recent years there have been colloquia in Ulaanbaatar or in the respective partner countries, mostly arranged in the context of the numerous cooperation agreements, although these were rather like workshops attended by colleagues who knew each other well. Yet a comprehensive conference that included all teams working in Mongolia still remained a desideratum. Accordingly, our first enquiries and circulars regarding such a conference received positive response. The main concern of the conference was to improve the international network of research groups in Mongolia and to initiate a first exchange of experiences. The aim was to gain an overview of the work being conducted, share experiences in project management and draw Mongolian as well as foreign colleagues together into discussions. Firstly, research deficits would become more apparent, while, secondly, the opportunity would be presented to coordinate future research projects and to cooperate more closely in the field of basic research. Through the various national and international research projects almost the entire time span from the Palaeolithic until the early modern era is covered. Moreover, all source categories are represented, and the expeditions have reached the many diverse regions and natural environments of the country.

Thanks to the very generous funding by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, from 19th to 23rd August, 2007, the results of what had been achieved so far could be presented for the first time after almost two decades of intensive field research in a conference entitled "Archaeological Research in Mongolia".

1 Tsogtbaatar/Batbold 2005: B. Tsogtbaatar/N. Batbold, Archaeological Cooperations in Mongolia. Bulletin of Japanese Association for Mongolian Studies 35, 2005, 109–126.