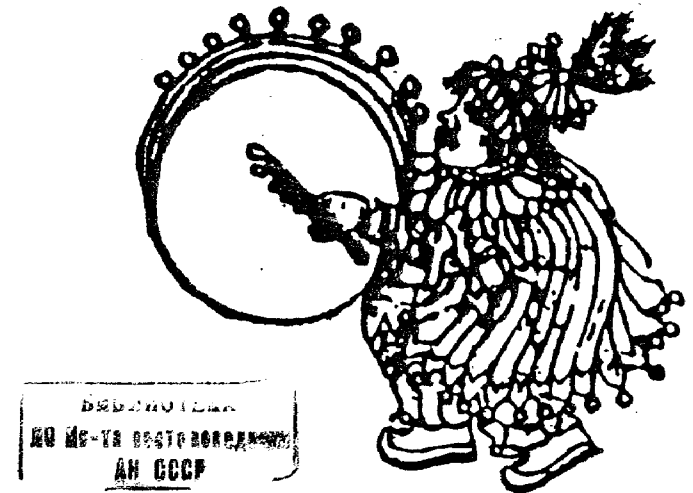


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# Altaic Religious Beliefs and Practices

Proceedings of the 33rd Meeting of the  
Permanent International Altaistic Conference  
BUDAPEST June 24-29, 1990

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A Turkic word *bögü* meaning 'sage, wizard' is attested in not a few Turkic historical texts, as having slightly different meanings. The word seems to connote both wisdom and mysterious spiritual power (Clouston 1972:324). In the Orkhon inscriptions which are the oldest Turkic texts about 8th century, this word occurs two times as a ruler's title *bögü qagan* (TI N10, TII S6). In Uighur manuscripts, *bögü* occurs as not only a title but also a term meaning 'sorcery, witchcraft, sage': *bögü qayan* (T 50), *bögü qan* (TT II 6,33); *bögüler quvrayında* (TT V 10, 107) "in the assembly of sages", *bögü Kung Futsı* "the sage Confucius" (TT V 26, 104), *bögün keligin toymaq* (U II 44:33), *ilki bögü eliglar* (M III 35:17), *toruq İnuq bögü* (M III 35:1), *bögü elig* (M III 28:6) etc. In Uighur manuscripts, *bögü* was used with *biliglig* and *bilig* together in the Hend. i.e., *bögü biliglig* (Suv. 89:9, BT XIII 14:2) and *bögü bilig* (Kuan 207). The form of *bögülig* (< \**bögü-lüg*) meaning "wise" occurs in Uighur texts (Suv. 436:11, USp 90:6, Kuan. 188). In MK, the word *bögü* is attested in the Hend. *bögü bilge* "learned, wise, intelligent". In Osman Turkic the word preserves its original meaning "sorcery, spell; charm" in the form of *büyü* or *büyü*. An Anatolian dialect has *bögü* (Derl. 758) with the meaning "*söz seçen adam*" which is supposed to be developed semantically from "sage, wise".

Besides the word *bögü*, there are two forms *bögün-* and *bögüş* which seem to have a connection with *bögü* in their origin. As far as I know, *bögüş* meaning "wisdom" is found only in Uigurica II 9:12. The other form *bögün-* which is never attested in Middle and Modern Turkic languages, occurs several times in Uighur manuscripts. Firstly, the verb *bögün-* occurs in Suv. 615:13. As for the meaning of the word *bögün-*, for the first time, Gabain (1941:306) suggested "erkennen" or "to be aware of". Çağatay (1945:87), however, rejected the meaning Gabain suggested in Alt. and proposed "düşünmek" or "to think" as the meaning of the verb in the phrase of Suv. Her view seems to be plausible, even though Drev. gives the meaning "urazumevat" or "to undersand, perceive" for the word *bögün-* in the same phrase of Suv. i.e., *küsümüş küsüşmin qanturmayay tep bögünüp*. Secondly, the verb *bögün-* occurs in TT III 143. Bang and Gabain (1929: 18, 31) read this verb *pükün-* with the meaning "verwerfen" or "to reject, dismiss". In Drev. (1969:116) the reading and the meaning were corrected and proposed *bögün-* meaning "postigat" or "to understand, grasp". However, Clouston (1973:328) accepted Drev.'s reading of the verb but for the meaning maintained the old view, i.e. *ürlüksüz nomlariy bögünüp* "discarding (or ?opposing) transitory doctrines". In my opinion, this phrase would be translated as follows "thinking over transitory doctrines" being the meaning of the verb *bögün-* "to think over, think". Thirdly, *bögün-* is attested in the phrase of Suv. 228:16: *munculayu köni on yaru bögünüp* "thinking straightforwardly in this way".

In Buddhist texts recently published by S. Tezcan and P. Zieme, the verb *bögün-* (to be read *bügün-* by them) occurs two times. S. Tezcan (1974:33), in the sentence *burxan inča tep bögünüp yarliqadi*, translates the phrase *bögünüp yarliqadi* as "zu erkennen (und sagte)" and Zieme (1985:149) translates the phrase *yinçürü köngültä bögünsär* as "Wenn man, sich verneigend, im Sinn erkennt". However, these

phrases should be translated as "Buddha deigned to think over the following" and "if (a man) bows (the head) and thinks over (deep) in (his) heart", respectively.

In my opinion, the meaning of the verb *bögün-* would be "to think, to think over" more than "to understand, to know or to be aware of". Actually, the phrase of Suv. 706:16 strongly supports my theory that *bögün-* was used with *saqin-* "to think" in the Hend., i.e. *öngräkin munçulayu bögünü saqınu yarlıqamaz* "He does not deign to think over the previous in this way".

Up to the present, not many etymological explanations of the word *bögü* have been suggested. N. Poppe (1924:309; 1960:60) and Ramstedt (1935:56) equated Turkic *bögü* (to be read *bügü* by them) with Mongolian *böge* meaning Shaman. S. Tezcan (1974:87) translates *bögü* as *bügü* and also *bögün-* as *bügün-* and proposes *\*büg-* as the stem of these words. E. V. Sevortjan (1978:294) maintained that this word etymologically consisted of *\*bük-* or *\*böc-* and a deverbial noun suffix {-I}, and that the words like *bögüş* (Caf, EUS 49), *bügüş* (Gabain 1941:306) "wisdom" and *bögün-* "to know" (< *\*bögün-*) were derived from the same stem. Sevortjan also considered the forms of Anatolian dialects *bu y*, *büg* "sorcery, witchcraft" as the stem.

As a matter of fact, the verb *bögün-* "to think, to think over" as Sevortjan and Tezcan propose, if their transcriptions are not considered, is derived from the stem *\*böc-* whose form, as far as I have looked into it, is never attested in historical and modern Turkic languages. In my opinion, the stem *\*böc-* is a loan-word from Ancient Chinese *puk* 卜 > Mandarin *pu*, Canton *puk* "to divine by tortoise-shell, to divine; to think", Sino-Japanese *boku* id. (Shuowen, Kangxi, Giles, Karl.757), Sino-Korean *pok* "divination by burning tortoise shells; to divine; witchcraft, sorcery; to think".

Generally, it is correctly supposed that the borrowing of verbs is quite difficult. No one, however, can argue that there are no exceptions to it. As it is known, there are not a few verb borrowings between Mongolian and Manchu-Tungus, as well as between Mongolian and Yakut. Actually, the verb borrowings among Altaic languages were not usual but might have occurred especially in the early stages. Chinese is not a member of the Altaic languages. However, there are not only noun borrowings, but, even though they are just a few, there are also verb borrowings between Turkic and Chinese, as well as between Korean and Chinese, owing to the geographical positions and the close cultural relations.

Verb borrowings between Turkic and Chinese languages that I confirm are as follows: Uig. (IrkB 57) *tong-* "to be frozen hard", MK, Chag., Kom., Kip. *tong-* id., cf. MK *tong* "frozen hard", Xwar., Kip. *tong* "solid ice" // Chin. ACh. *jung* 凍 > Mandarin *tung*, Canton *tung* "to freeze", Sino-Japanese *to* (*tou*) id. (Karl. 1146), Sino-Korean *tong* "to freeze; solid ice"; Uig. (Suv. 418:23) *mang-* "to walk", KB (3659, 3702, etc.) *mang-* "to step, to walk", Chag. *mang-* id., cf. Uig. (U II 24:2; U VI 72:17; TT VII 24:13, 24:16; BT VIII B 221; BT XIII 5:28; Ht X 44, etc.) *mang* "gait, step, fast gait", Uig. (BT VIII: B 221) *mangla-* "to step" < *\*mang-la-*, Uig. (BT II 59:1035) *mangliγ* "gait, pace" < *\*mang-liγ*, KB (1211) *mangit-* "to step" < *\*mang-i-t-* // Chin. ACh. *b'eng* 馬步 "the walking figure of a horse" (Kangxi), Sino-Korean *phaing* "the walking figure of a horse; to walk".

There is an example of the verb borrowings between Korean and Chinese languages in the early stages: Ko. *ssi-* "to write" // Chin ACh. *siwo* 書 >

Mandarin *su*, Canton *sü* "to write, writing", Sino-Japanese *so* (*sio*) id. (Karl. 1187), Sino-Korean *sa* id. (W.J. Kim 1982:229).

In conclusion, the verb *\*böc-* meaning "to think" from which the two Ancient Turkic forms *bögün-* and *bögüş* were derived, was borrowed from Chinese in the early period, estimate before the 5th century.

As for *bögü*, there are two possibilities for the etymology. One is that the word *bögü* was derived from the Chinese loan-word *\*böc-* meaning "to divine by the means of tortoise; to think". This assumption seems to be quite likely from the point of the structure of the Turkic language. However, this theory has a weak point from the point of view that the Ancient Turkic suffix {-U} was usually used as a deverbial suffix to make adverbs more than to make nouns<sup>1</sup>. As is well known, there are {-*ma*}, {-*Ga*} and {-*č*} in Ancient Turkic used fairly commonly as a deverbial noun suffix designating results of actions or names of vocations.

The other possibility is that the word *bögü* is a loan-word from Ancient Chinese, which is a compound word of two basic radicals, No. 25 and No. 213: compounded of ACh *puk* 卜 > Mandarin *pu*, Canton *puk* "to divine by tortoise-shell, to divine; to foretell; to think", Sino-Japanese *boku* id. (Shuowen, Kangxi, Giles, Karl. 757), Sino-Korean *pok* "witchcraft, sorcery, divination by burning tortoise shells" and ACh. *kjwi* 龜 > Mandarin *kuei*, Canton *kuai* "tortoise, divination by aid the cracks in heated tortoise-shell", Sino-Japanese *ki* id., Sino-Korean *kui* id. cf. Chin. 卜 龜 *puk-kjwi* "to divine by means of tortoise-shell" (Giles 9476).

It is very difficult to determine which theory is right from the two. I prefer the second from phonological, morphological and semantic points of view.

In my opinion, this word *bögü* was borrowed from Chinese together with the verb *\*böc-* "to think" nearly at the same time, before the 5th century, with the original meaning "divination by tortoise-shell". Later on, as Turkic tribes set up their social structure and organized themselves politically, its meaning was developed into "sage, wizard" and then the word *bögü* was adopted and used as a title of a ruler in the 7th century. Using the word *bögü* in its developed meaning "sage, wizard", Ancient turks who probably know that *bögü* was of Chinese origin, made up the equivalent word *bilge* which was a Turkic word derived from *bil-* "to know" and began to use it beside the foreign original word *bögü*. It is interesting that while İlderis Kagan gave his first son a Turkic name *bilge* as an official name, his brother Kapagan Kagan gave his first son the foreign origin name *bögü* which had the same meaning and had already been appropriated to the Turkic tribe at that period.

On the other hand, F.W.K. Müller (1919 44:33) read the word as *bögü* for the first time. W. Radloff (1928: 269) transcribed as *bökü* the word occurring in both Suv 89:9, etc. and MK. However, W. Bang and Gabain (1931:18) considered the form as *bügü* with the vowel in the first syllable being *ü*. Poppe (1960:60) presented the same reading. Malov (1951:373), however, read the word as *bögü*. In *Drevnetjurkskii slovar'*, Malov's form of reading was adopted. Clauson also preferred the form *bögü* and proposed also the possibility that the word can be read *bögö*, making the second

<sup>1</sup> There is an example to make noun with {-U}: Uig. (TT III 105, TT IV 10:26-7, etc.) *usu* "profit" < *us-* "to be beneficial, useful". Cf. Mo. *tusa* id. < trk.

vowel a rounded front-low vowel *ö*. Recently, S. Tezcan (1974:87) and P. Zieme (1985:210) maintained Gabain's view and read the word *bügü*.

In my opinion, this word should be read *bögü*, as Malov suggested for the first time. For most Sino-Korean and Sino-Turkic were borrowed from Northern Chinese, rounded vowels of Sino-Turkic correspond to those of Sino-Korean; rounded-low vowels *o, ö* in Ancient Chinese became high vowels *u, ü* in Sino-Turkic and Sino-Korean and on the contrary, rounded-high vowels in Ancient Chinese became low vowels in Sino-Turkic and Sino-Korean.

Actually, in the Chinese source T'ang-shu, the Chinese characters for *bögü* which is the name or title of Inel Kagan son of Kapagan Kagan, support this theory that the reading of the word should not be *bögö* or *bügü*, but *bögü*: Chin. 𪛗俱 *büuk-kiu*, Sino-Ko. *pok-ku*, Sino-Japan. *puku-ku*.

As for the Mongolian word *böge* meaning a male shaman, although Ramstedt and Poppe considered Turkic *bögü* and Mongolian *böge* as a cognate being not a borrowing, this word should be borrowed from Turkic *bögü* as Clauson (1972:324) stated in his etymological dictionary. The reason why the second vowel of *böge* is not rounded but unrounded is but the result of the phonetic change occurring in borrowing from Turkic to Mongolian. In addition to *bögü*, there are not a few Turkic loan-words in Mongolian that suffered "unrounding" phonetic change: Mo. *torga(n)* "silk" < Trk. *torgu*, Mo. *tusa* "profit, advantage" < Trk. *tusu*, etc.

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