ON SOME SUFFIXES OF PLANT NAMES IN MONGOLIAN

The Mongolian names of plants can be divided, from the morphological point of view, into two main groups, namely, suffixless names and those formed with suffixes. The suffixless plant names include Mo₁ uđa, Kh. ud₂ ‘willow-tree’ (Salix L);³ Ma fodo ‘a willow branch used at shamanistic ceremonies’, Or potokto ‘willow-bushes’, etc.;⁴ Mo suqai, Kh suxaj ‘tamarisk’ (Tamarix L); Mo tooori, Kh tooorj ‘poplar’ (Populus diversifolia) = MTu to raq id.; Mo arča, Kh arc ‘juniper’ (Juniperus L) which, according to DOERFER, might be of ultimate Turkic origin,⁵ whereas RÄSANEN regards Mo arča as a form derived from ar-_ ‘to cleanse’, a cognate of Tu arîč ‘juniper’, etc.⁶

The plant names formed with suffixes are numerous. Some suffixes occur often, others are rare. The following suffixes have been noted:


4. Mo -yal, Kh -ual.¹⁰ Mo qamqurul, Kh xamxul ‘eryngium’ (Cori- spernum L) from qamqur, Kh xamxa- ‘to be crushed, to fall to pieces’.

5. Mo -ør, Kh -üur.¹¹ Kh xoržgurur Sphaerophysa DC from xoržgo-n ‘to creak’.

6. Mo -una, Kh -una (rare).¹² Mo bažûna, Kh bažuna ‘rhubarb’ (Rheum L), cf. Kh bažqir ‘rough’ from *baži-


8. Kh -la.¹³ Kh xonxloj ‘bellflower’ (Adenophora Fisch.) from xonx ‘bell’. The other name of this flower is xonx cêcêg ‘bellflower’.

9. Mo -mag, Kh -mag, a diminutive suffix.¹⁴ Kh sarmag ‘colza’ (Barbarea Rehb.) from Kh sar ‘moon’.
10. Mo -nčar, Kh -ncar, a diminutive suffix;\textsuperscript{15} Kh ojmoncor ‘cryptogram’ (Cryptogramma Stelleri) from Mo oyina, Kh ojm Dryopteris Adams.

11. Mo -ngya, Kh -nga: Mo oriyangya, Kh oroongo ‘dodder’ (Cuscuta L) from Mo oriya, Kh oroö ‘to wrap, envelop’.

12. Mo -nggir, Kh -ngar (-nger etc.);\textsuperscript{16} Kh mainglingar Thesium L.

13. Kh -žīn;\textsuperscript{17} Kh jargužin ‘anemone’ (Anemone L) from jargui Pulsatilla Mill.

The suffixes enumerated (1 – 13) occur in relatively few plant names, and the words which are formed with them in most cases belong to other semantic groups. However, there are suffixes which are found often, and some of them are particularly characteristic of plant names. Such widely spread suffixes are Mo -jana (-jana, -lyana, -layana), -фи, -lfa, and -sun.

1. Mo -jana

A. Mo -jana, Kh, B -gana occur as suffixes forming names of plants, animals, and some diseases mostly from primary stems which denote qualities characteristic of the object (plant, animal, disease) denoted by the secondary noun.

a. Names of plants: Kh бёмбогон̣̃ Neslia paniculata L from бёмбог ‘ball, globe’; Mo гідкеген̣е, Kh гідкеген̣е ‘silverweed’ (Potentilla anserina L); Kh noorgongo Trichophorum persicum from noor ‘down’; Kh ulaagana ‘currant’ (Ribes L) from ulaan ‘red’; Mo qaražana, Kh xargana Caragana arborescens from Mo qara, Kh xar ‘black’; Mo kilažana, Kh xillaža ‘feather grass’ (Stipa L) from *kil, cf. Mo kilgusun, Kh xilgaz ‘hair of the tail, horse hair’, cf. Tu qil ‘hair’; Kh combogono Microstigma deflexum Bge. from combon ‘bud-shaped’; Kh jorndooṇ̃ Antitoxiscum sibiricum (L) Pobed. from ?; Kh noorgongo Xanthium L from nooc ‘seizing, grasping’; Kh xaragana Hieracium L from xarcag ‘hawk’; Kh xororgogono, Karelina Less. from xorrentgog ‘cluster, bunch’; Kh salaagana Chorispora DC from sala ‘branch’, etc.

b. Names of animals, mostly insects, some fish, and a few birds: Mo quyljana, Kh xulgana ‘mouse’ from Mo qula, Kh xul ‘fawn-coloured, bay having a black stripe along the spine’; Mo butarana, Kh butgana ‘gnat, small fly’ from ?; Mo kedegene, Kh xedegene ‘horsefly, gadfly, wasp, bumblebee’ from Mo keder ‘irsatile’; Mo čegere, Kh čörgooṇо ‘locust’ from Tu čögirgā, čögirikā, čögirkiti, etc. id.; Mo alagaṇа, Kh algana ‘perch’ (fish) from alay ‘spotted, motley’; Mo quviražana ‘seagull’ from quvir ‘gravel, pebbles’ (probably because of often being seen standing on gravel).

c. Names of diseases: Mo badaryana, Kh badgana ‘cancer of the stomach’ < Tib bad-kan, the Mo form having taken the suff. -jana by analogy with numerous words having the suffix -jana: Mo esergene, Kh ēkergêne ‘rash’.

The words ending in -jana, -gana denote mostly such plants (or animals) which occur in large numbers in one place and are relatively small and difficult to separate from each other, e.g. bushes forming a thicket, insects swarming all over a place (e.g. mosquitoes). The suff. -jana corresponds in function to the Tungus suffix -kta which denotes something small and occurring as a large accumulation,\textsuperscript{18} cf. ynamakta ‘mosquito’, lawikta ‘iceland moss’, etc. It is interesting to note that Finnish (Suomi) has a suffix almost exclusively forming names of animals and plants. This is -Ja < -j̣a, e.g., petäjä ‘pine tree’.\textsuperscript{19}

B. Mo. -jana, Kh -gana as suffix of some plant names. There are some plant names formed from stems ending in r, e.g. Kh šūuder ‘dew’, Mo šīdēr id.; Kh šūvargana Limosella aquatica L from šavar, Mo šēbar ‘mud, clay’; Kh koorgono Angelica dahurica Benth. from coor ‘flute’; Mo fegere, Kh žeergēne Ephedra L from Kh žeēr ‘antelope’, etc.

It is obvious that the following plant names end in -jana (-gana) by analogy with the above examples because the respective primary stems do not have a final r; Mo altarana, Kh altargana ‘golden rod’ (Solidago virga aurea) from Mo, Kh alta ‘gold’; Mo ajājana, Kh azargana ‘sonchus’ (Cirsim Mill.) from ? aza ‘good luck’.

On the other hand, some plant names are formed from primary verbal stems. The suff. -jana is not taken by verbal stems. Therefore, -r in -jana must be a suffix of a noun derivation from verbal stems. Indeed, there is a number of nouns formed from verbs by means of the no longer productive suff. -r, e.g., Mo amur ‘peace’ from amu ‘to take a rest’; Mo belîgger ‘pasture’ from belîgger ‘to pasture’ (transitive) from beli ‘to pasture, graze’ (intransitive); Mo qabudur ‘swelling, tumor’ from qabud ‘to swell’, etc. The suff. -jana is a compound, namely, -r of deverbal nouns + -jana. The suff. -jana is, however, a petrified compound, and in most cases there is no noun in -r from which the plant name in -jana could have been formed.

Examples: Kh asagana Lindefelia stysla Brand from Kh as-, Mo asa- ‘to climb’, Kh noorgono Lappula Moench. from nooc ‘to seize, grasp’, Mo sedergeng ‘beadweed’ (Convolvulus L) from ?; Mo čējājana, Kh čājargana ‘sea buckthorn’ (Hippophae rhamnoides L) from Mo ēkēa, cf. Mo čējā, Kh čāga ‘diarrhea’ = Tu tēčę, sit čę ‘to defecate’ (the plant is called so probably because the fruit is purgative); Kh žeergēne ‘catchfly, campion’ (Silenus conoides L) from šē, Mo šē ‘to urinate’ (the plant is probably diuretic); Mo arđājana
"lily" (Lilium dahuricum) from *ayduyi- 'to be short, to shrink'. Mo ayşirana 'hellebore' (Veratrum nigrum L) from *aş- 'to contract, shrink, curl up'.

C. A number of plant names is formed with the Mo suff. -ışana, Kh -ığana from primary verbal stems. It is to be assumed that the element * is a suffix of nouns formed from verbal stems.20

Examples: Mo taşişana, Kh taşişana Lycopsis orientalis L from taşi- 'to slant, to slope, incline'; Kh xasalıgana 'rhododendron' (Rhododendron aureum) from xasar, Mo qasır- 'to curtail, shorten'; Kh xoovolgono 'baneaner' (Actaea l-earthtornca Fisch.) from xoovo 'well bucket, trough', its other name being xoovol id. and 'gutter, pipe, trough'.21

D. The suff. -işana in Mo, -iszana in Kh is a compound one and can be divided into -iş (-i) < -*iş (see 2.) and -ana. The words formed with this compound suffix are names of plants and animals.

Examples: Kh cégelgêne Castilla mutis from cégêne 'light, white, whitish'; Kh şaralıgana Sonchus L from šar, Mo šira 'yellow'; Mo borolıgana/bololıgana, Kh borolıgono Dasiphora fruticosa L from boro 'grey'; Mo bôgerelıgine, Kh bôgerelıgøno 'raspberry bush' (Rubus L) from Mo bôger 'kidney' (probably because the raspberry has the shape of a kidney); Kh ulalıgana 'red currant' (Ribes nubrum L) from ulaan 'red'; Mo güğelıgine, Kh güğelıgøne 'strawberry' (Fragaria L) from Mo güğe, Kh güţe 'stomach' (probably because the shape of the berry resembles that of the stomach), etc.

The suff. -ışana occurs also in a few animal names, e.g., Mo temegelıgine, Kh temelgêne 'dragon fly' from Mo temeg, Kh temee 'camel' (because of the size of the insect); Mo kögelıgine (here -iş + -ıgene), Kalm kögelırsn [kögelırsın] 'dove' = Mtu körükëkän id. from kör 'blue, grey', the Mo word having received its form by analogy with other words in -ıana.

The words in -ışana (-ıgana) denote, like those in -ıana, such plants and animals which are small in size and occur in large numbers in the same place as strawberries, dragon-flies, etc. which cannot be counted easily. It is interesting to note that the Solon word for strawberry gudigërgë has the suff. -re < -*kte which was discussed in 1A.

2. Mo -iş

a. Mo -iş. Kh -iş form names of plants and animals the characteristic features of which are denoted by the nominal stem concerned. The suff. -iş is not to be confused with the suff. -IŞIN of names of geometrical figures, e.g., Mo dörbelfin 'square' from dörben 'four'.

Examples: Mo borolîfi, Kh borolîfi Helecharis R, Br. from Mo bore 'grey', Kh bore; Kh zêgêlîfi 'Comarum palustre' L from ?; Kh nafalzîfi 'sneezewort' (Parnica Neck.) from nafnss- 'to sneeze' (as an exception, the primary stem is a verb because the Kh name is a loan translation from Russian čítznik from čítat' 'to sneeze'); Kh namalzîfi Callitriche L from namag, Mo namur 'morass, swamp' = Ma namu, Ev lamu 'sea'; Mo terelîfi, Kh têreţ 'rhododendrum' (Rhododendron dahuricum L); Mo ulalîfi, Kh ulalî 'sedge' (Carex L) from Mo ula in ulaan 'red', cf. Mo ula 'tinder' (because of its reddish colour); Mo qurlâfi, Kh qurlîfi Erasgrostis minor Host. from Kh xurg âlam' Lamb; Mo şalîfi, Kh şalîl 'wormwood' (Artemisia L) from Mo şira, Kh şar 'yellow'; Kh cêgelîfi Glauk L; Mo saralîfi, Kh saraţîfi 'goosefoot' (Chenopodium L), cf. Mo sarbâyî- 'to spread out, sprawl', etc.

b. Names of animals: Kh xavgilîfi, Mo qabatayîfi 'lapwing' (Vanellus) from Mo qabtaya, Kh xavgi 'bag, pouch'; Mo şaylîfi, Kh cagalîfi 'salmon' (Salmo lavaretus) from Mo čayan, Kh cagaan 'white'; Mo şurîlîfi(n), Kh şorgooût 'ant' from Mo şurîya verbal noun from şurî, Kh şurga- 'to creep in, to sneak in'; Mo salalîfi, Kh salalî 'white-tailed snipe' (a bird), etc.

3. Mo -îlîfi

Mo -îlîfi, Kh -îlây form names of plants from nouns denoting colours and other characteristics of objects.

Mo ulalâfi, Kh ulalâlây 'lily' (Lilium sarana) from Mo ulaan, Kh ulaan 'red'; Kh cagalâfi (a new botanical term translated from Greek) Leucanthemum DC from cagaan 'white'; Kh jagalâfi Braya Sternb. et Hoppe from jagaaan 'pink'; Mo borolâfi, Kh borolîlaj Hyppolitias trifida from Mo bore, Kh bore 'grey'; Kh xatâlaj Potentilla serica L from xataa (verbal noun) from xat- 'to dry up, to become hard'; etc.

4. Mo -sun

Mo -sun, Kh -s (the stem of such words ends in -san in Kh) is found on very many nouns. The words formed so have basically the meaning of a single piece, e.g., Mo adurysun, Kh adus 'animal, beast', from Mo aduyan, Kh adu 'horses, a herd of horses'; Mo kimsun < *kimsun 'nail, claw' from SH kimul 'finger nail', etc. The original meaning has been lost, and forms with -sun and without it are often used interchangeably, e.g., Mo sudasun < *sudalsun 'vein' from Mo sudal id.22

As for the names of plants, the original function of the suff. -sun has been preserved to a certain degree, and the plant names with the suff. -sun (Kh -s)
belong mostly to such plants which can be separated easily from each other. Some of them are trees or bushes, others are tall herbs the stalks of which can be counted with no difficulty, i.e., plants which are the opposite of such plants which represent one huge mass of stalks and leaves.

a. Trees and bushes: Mo narasar, Kh nars 'pine' (Pinus L) from Mo naran 'sun', cf. Tatar narat 'pine', an original plural form, borrowed from Mongolian; Mo ulyarun < *h utfarun, Kh ulas 'poplar' (Populus L), B ulyaahan 'aspen', cf. Ev hula 'aspen', Nan polo, Ma fulxa 'aspen, poplar'; Mo qayilsun < *kayilarsun, Kh xalas 'elm' (Ulmus L); Mo şinesin, Kh şinês, B şinehen 'larch' (Larix Mill.); M Mo huzen, B ushöhen 'purple willow'; Mo burgasun, Khburgas 'willow' (Salix L); Mo munusun, B munahan, Kh mons 'bird-cherry tree' (Padus Mill.); Mo moyilisun, B mojil/mojhon another name for Padus Mill, Mo nürgešin, Kh nürğês 'alder' (Alnus L), etc.

b. Herbs, berry plants, etc.; M Mo deresin, Kh ders 'broom grass' (Lasiagrostis Link.); Mo jëgesin, Kh jëgês < *jekensin 'cane, reed' (Scirpus L), cf. Tu yekân 'reed'; Mo alirsun, Kh alirs 'bilberry' (Vaccinium vitis L); Mo nersin, Kh ners 'blueberry' (Vaccinium uliginosum L); Mo ýoyosun (a sing. form), Kh gojod (an original plural form) 'onion' (Allium odorum L), etc.

* * *

The general conclusion is that Mongolian has only a few suffixes which form exclusively plant names. Such are Mo -γyan and -fil. There is one suffix which forms names of plants, animals and a few diseases (Mo -yan). The remaining suffixes Mo -yan, -fiyan, and -fil form plant and animal names. Of languages known to the author of these lines only Tungus and Finnish possess suffixes forming exclusively plant and animal names. The characteristic feature of Mongolian and Tungus is, however, that the suffixes of plant and animal names are used only in cases in which the plants or animals in question are small in size and occur in large numbers in the same place. It is interesting to note that some other languages, unrelated to Mongolian, also distinguish between two kinds of animals or plants, namely, large and small. Thus, we say in English 'they catch fish', in Russian ryba pošla gusto "fish started moving in large numbers", oni pošli po brusniku "they went after bilberries", etc. Here the Russian uses singular forms which function as collective nouns. Some of the above Mongolian suffixes can also be called suffixes of collective nouns.

Notes

1) Abbreviations: B — Buryat, Ev — Evenki, Kh — Khalka, Ma — Manchu, Mo — Script (Written) Mongolian, MMo — Middle Mongolian, MTu — Middle Turkic, Na — Nanai (Goldi), O — Ordo, Or — Oroki, SH — Secret History, Tb — Tibetan, Tu — Turkic.

2) The Khalkha forms are given in transliteration of those in the official orthography.

3) The names of plants have been taken from Ulysyn nér tom'óny komisyyn mélè [Bulletin of the state commission on terminology], No. 59–65, Ulaanbaatar, 1965, and the Latin equivalents have been verified with V.I. GRIBOV, Konpekt f{ö}r Mongolskôj Narodnoj Respublik, Moskva-Leningrad, 1951 and often with A. A. JUNATOY, Omonnye čerty rastele'nogo pokrova Mongolskôj Narodnoj Respublik, Moskva-Leningrad, 1950.

4) Srastitel'nyi slovar' tunguso-man'čur'skix jazykov, Materialy k etimologičeskому slovarju, Tom II: O — Ţ, Leningrad, 1977, p. 45.


7) U.-Ţ. DONDUKOV, Affiksal'no skoobrazovanije častej reči v burjatskom jazyke, Ulan-Ude, 1964, p. 30. This suffix is also found in names of birds and many other words, DONDUKOV, l.c.

8) This suffix also occurs in various nouns which are not names of plants, vide N. POPPE, "On Some Proper Names in the Secret History", UAJb 47 (1975), pp. 162–163. The same holds true with regard to all suffixes, including No. 13.


10) POPPE, Grammar, p. 46; Khalkha-mongolische Grammatik, l.c.

11) POPPE, l.c.

12) This suffix has not been mentioned in literature because it is very rare. There are only two other words known to the author, which appear with this suffix: Mo qarygya the name of a bird from qara 'black' and Mo géšgine, Kh géśünê another word for rhubarb.

14) POPPE, Grammar, p. 43.

15) POPPE, Lc.

16) DONDUKOV, op.cit., p. 92.

17) This suffix forms also nouns denoting female beings, cf. POPPE, Grammar, p. 42; DONDUKOV, op.cit., p. 21.


20) POPPE, Grammar, p. 47.

21) The name xovoolgono is formed from a noun by analogy. The same is the case of savalgana.


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