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On a Proverb in the Kül Tegin and Bilgä Kagan Inscriptions*

By Yong-Sŏng Li, Seoul

Summary: Many parts of the Kül Tegin and Bilgä Kagan inscriptions are the same with each other. These inscriptions are now much damaged when compared with the data of more than 100 years ago. Therefore, the inscription pictures taken by early researchers are very important, but in fact, over the past 100 years, researchers have overlooked the importance of these inscription pictures. In particular, the inscription pictures in the Finnish edition in 1892 and in the Radloff's edition in June 1893 of the Orkhon inscriptions are very important, since they are ahead of the time when Vilhelm Thomsen officially announced his success in deciphering the Turkic "runic" script on December 15, 1893. Nevertheless, all the studies, including Thomsen's research, have been based on the typeset text of the Finnish edition or Radloff's later editions and used these materials repeatedly. Many errors have occurred in the process of typesetting and editing the types of Turkic "runic" script, which researchers have not noticed. One of these errors is the first word of a proverb in the 8th line on the south side of the Kül Tegin inscription and in the 6th line on the north side of the Bilgä Kagan inscription.

1 Introduction

The Köktürks are the first Turks who appeared in history under the name of 'Türk' and the first people who left their documents to this day among the nomads active in Mongolia.

The Turkic inscriptions found in Mongolia are largely divided into inscriptions left in the Second Köktürk Kaghanate (682–744) such as Tunyukuk (725), Kül Tegin (732), Bilgä Kagan (735), Ongi (732?), Küli Čor (= Ikhe-Khüshötü) (722–723) inscriptions, etc. and those left in the Uighur Kaghanate (744–840) like Moyun Čor (= Šine-Usu) (759–760), Tariat (= Terkh) (753), Tes (750) inscriptions, etc.

After the Danish linguist Vilhelm Thomsen announced on December 15, 1893, at a meeting of the Copenhagen Academy of Sciences that he had

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succeeded in deciphering the "runic" script used in the Orkhon and Yenisei inscriptions,[1] scholars around the world have been studying Kül Tegin, Bilgä Kagan, Tunyukuk inscriptions, etc. based on the works of VILHELM THOMSEN and WILHELM RADLOFF. In the meantime, the contents of these inscriptions became mostly known well through many researches, but there are still parts that are not well understood. Since over the past 100 years various studies have been carried out based on VILHELM THOMSEN's works and also with reference to WILHELM RADLOFF's works, it is impossible to do a groundbreaking research that goes beyond the accomplishment of these two scholars.

Many parts of the Kül Tegin and Bilgä Kagan inscriptions are the same with each other.[2] The Bilgä Kagan inscription is in a worse state of preservation than the Kül Tegin inscription.[3] Already at the end of the nineteenth century, there were many parts that were severely damaged in the Bilgä Kagan inscription.

These inscriptions are now much damaged when compared with the data of more than 100 years ago. Therefore, the inscription pictures taken by early researchers are very important, but in fact, over the past 100 years, researchers have overlooked the importance of these inscription pictures. In particular, the inscription pictures in the Finnish edition in 1892 and in the RADLOFF's edition in June 1893 of the Orkhon inscriptions are very important, since they are ahead of the time when VILHELM THOMSEN officially announced his success in deciphering the Turkic "runic" script on December 15, 1893. Nevertheless, all the studies, including THOMSEN's research, have been based on the typeset text of the Finnish edition or RADLOFF's later editions and used these materials repeatedly. Many errors have occurred in the process of typesetting and editing the types of Turkic "runic" script, which researchers have not noticed. One of these errors is the first word of a proverb in the 8th line on the south side of the Kül Tegin inscription and in the 6th line on the north side of the Bilgä Kagan inscription.

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[1] See TEKİN 1968, p. 13.

[2] The lines on the north side of the Bilgä Kagan inscription are identical to the lines on the south side of the Kül Tegin inscription except for the last seven lines. The second to twenty-fourth lines on the east side of the Bilgä Kagan inscription are somewhat different, but are identical to lines 1 to 30 on the east side of the Kül Tegin inscription.

[3] See TEKİN 1968, p. 10 and TEKİN 2008, p. 50. These two inscriptions have now been moved to a nearby museum and preserved indoors.

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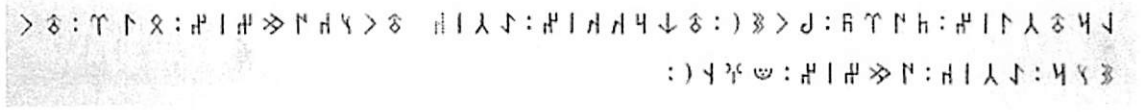
2 Researches up to present

This proverb is in the 8th line on the south side of the Kül Tegin inscription as follows:

– the picture in the Finnish edition (1892, Tab. 10)[4]



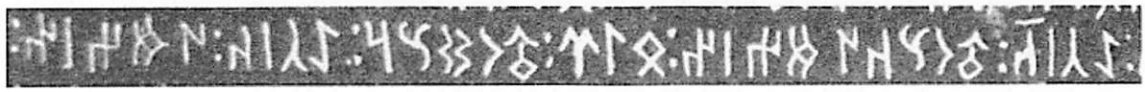
– typeset in the Finnish edition (1892, p. 7)



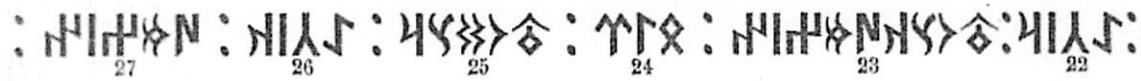
– the untouched rubbing in Radloff's edition (1893, Tafel XIX)



– the touched rubbing in Radloff's edition (1893, Tafel XX)

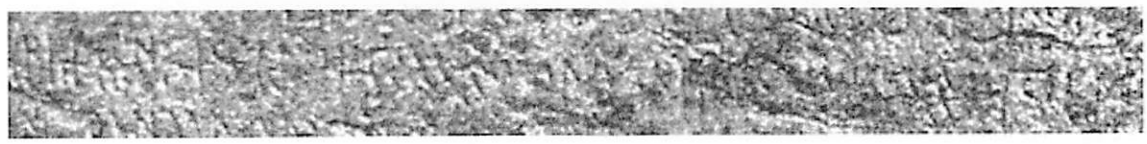


– typeset in Radloff's edition (1896, Tafel XCIX)

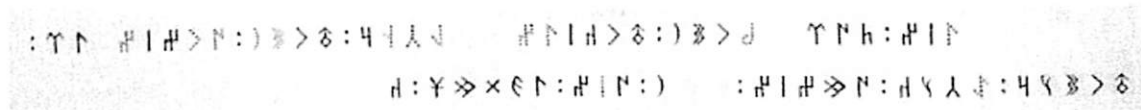


The same proverb is in the 6th line on the north side of the Bilgä Kagan inscription as follows:

– the picture in the Finnish edition (1892, Tab. 34)



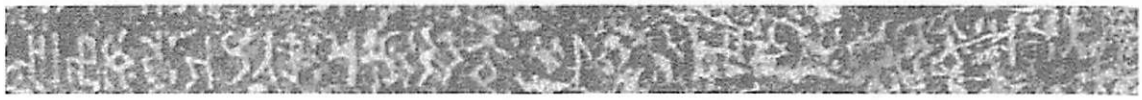
– typeset in the Finnish edition (1892, p. 22)



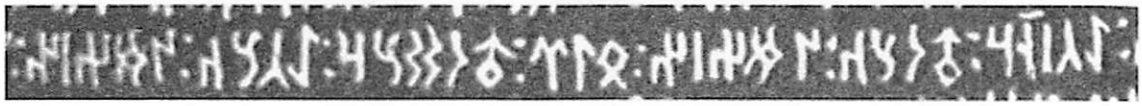
[4] The images of this paper were all scanned by the author at the Seoul National University Library.

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– the untouched rubbing in RADLOFF's edition (1893, Tafel XXIV)



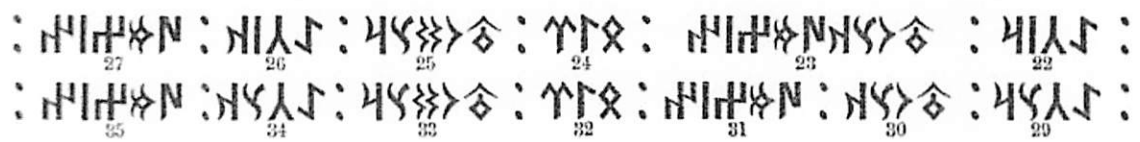
– the touched rubbing in RADLOFF's edition (1893, Tafel XXV)



– typeset in RADLOFF's edition (1896, Tafel CI)



This proverb is typeset in RADLOFF's edition (1896, Tafel CIV) for both inscriptions as follows[5]:



This proverb is transliterated and transcribed in Latin script according to RADLOFF's edition (1896) as follows:

: AČS²R¹ : T¹WS¹K¹ẄMZS²N² : B²IR² : T¹WD¹S¹R¹ : AČS²K¹ : ẄMZS²N² : (KT S 8)
ačs(a)r : tos(ï)k öm(ä)z s(ä)n : bir : tods(a)r : ačs(ï)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n :

: AČS¹R¹ : T¹WS¹K¹ : ẄMZS²N² : B²IR² : T¹WD¹S¹R¹ : AČS¹K¹ : ẄMZS²N² : (BK N 6)
ačs(a)r : tos(ï)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n : bir : tods(a)r : ačs(ï)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n :

This proverb has been read as follows:

(1) RADLOFF 1894:

ачсар тодсак өмзісін, бір тодсар ачсак өмзісін (p. 35) (KT S 8)
"weil, wenn es hungrig war, es sich sättigen wollte, und wenn es einmal satt geworden (wieder) hungrig wurde," (pp. 34–35)

ачсар тодсак өмзісін, бір тодсар ачсак өмзісін (p. 77) (BK N 6)
"weil, wenn es hungrig war, es sich sättigen wollte, und wenn es einmal satt geworden, (wieder) hungrig wurde," (p. 76)

[5] The first line is from the Kül Tegin inscription and the second line from the Bilgä Kagan inscription.

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(2) Radloff 1895:

"da es durch Hunger gezwungen sich Sättigung schaffte und wenn es sich gesättigt hatte, (bald wieder) Hunger und Noth sich einstellten," (p. 447) (KT S 8)

"da es durch Hunger gezwungen wurde sich Sättigung zu verschaffen und wenn es sich gesättigt war, bald wieder Hunger (und Noth) sich einstellten," (p. 458) (BK N 6)

(3) Thomsen 1896:

ačs^{y}q tos^{a}q[6] ‿üm^{ä}zs^{ä}n, bir tods^{a}r ačs^{y}q üm^{ä}zs^{ä}n.[7]

ačsar[8] tos^{a}q üm^{ä}zs^{ä}n, bir tods^{a}r ačs^{y}q üm^{ä}zs^{ä}n. (p. 117) (BK N 6)

"(autrement,) quand tu as faim, tu ne peux pas te rassasier, mais quand tu t'es une fois rassasié, tu ne peux pas avoir faim (?)." (p. 117) (KT S 9; BK N 6)

(4) Bang 1896:

ačsar tosak ömäzsän, bir todsar ačsak ömäzsän

"Wenn hungrig, rühmst Du nicht das Sattsein, wenn einmal satt, rühmst Du nicht das Hungrigsein" (p. 15) (KT S 8)

(5) Radloff 1897:

ачсар тос(с)ук ömäз-сän, бір тодсар ачсук ömäз-сän.

"(und ein Sprichwort sagt:) hungrig seiend verstehst du das Sattsein nicht, einmal satt seiend, verstehst du das Hungrigsein nicht." (p. 152) (KT S 8; BK N 6)

(6) Radlov/Melioranskij 1897:

ачсар тос(с)ук ömäз-сän, бір тодсар ачсук ömäз-сän.

"Ты[, о турецкій народъ, то сытъ, то голоденъ и] (по пословицѣ) будучи голодымъ не понимаешь сытости, а разъ насытившись не понимаешь (состоянія) голода." (p. 39) (KT S 8; BK N 6)

(7) Vámbéry 1898:

ačsak tosak ömäz sän bir todsar ačsak ömäzsän

"..., du bist nicht bald satt, bald hungrig, (denn) wenn du einmal gesättigt bist, wirst du nicht mehr hungrig." (p. 74) (KT S 8)

(8) Melioranskij 1899:

ачсык[9] тосык‿ömäзсän; бір тодсар, ачсык ömäзсän

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[6] ou *tos^{y}q*? (pour *tods-*) (Thomsen 1896, p. 117)

[7] ou *öm^{ä}zs^{ä}n*? (Thomsen 1896, p. 117)

[8] It is an editorial error for ačs^{a}r.

[9] Лучше, какъ въ X: ачсар! (Melioranskij 1899, p. 62).

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"[о турецкій народъ, ты то сытъ, то голоденъ,] (но тѣмъ не менѣе) ты не понимаешь (состоянія) голода и сытости (т. е. истинныхъ причинъ того и другого), и, разъ насытившись, ты не понимаешь (состоянія) голода." (p. 62) (KT S 8)

(9) RADLOFF 1905:

тод (v) [𐰚𐰇𐰴 (AT.), تودمق (Uig. Kair.)] = тот, toi

насытиться – satt werden; **ачсар тос(с)ук ömäzsän bir todsar ачсак**[10] **ömäzsän** (Ka 8,23) голодымъ ты не понимаешь, что значитъ быть сытымъ, насыщеннымъ не понимаешь, что значитъ быть голоднымъ – hungrig seiend verstehst du das Sattsein nicht, einmal satt seiend verstehst du das Hungrigsein nicht." (col. 1206) (KT S 8)

(10) THOMSEN 1924:

"Wenn du hungrig bist, so erinnerst du dich nicht daran, was Sattheit ist; aber wenn du einmal satt bist, so bedenkst du nicht, was Hunger ist." (p. 142) (KT S 8; BK N 6)

(11) ORKUN 1936:

açs^{ı}*k* tos^{ı}*k* üm^{e}zs^{e}n bir tods^{a}r açs^{ı}*k* üm^{e}zs^{e}n
açsar[11] tos^{ı}*k* üm^{e}zs^{e}n bir tods^{a}r açs^{ı}*k* üm^{e}zs^{e}n
"açsan tokluk nedir bilmezsin; bir [de] doyar isen açlık nedir bilmezsin." (p. 26) (KT S 8; BK N 6)

(12) GABAIN 1941:

ačsïq, tosïq ömäz sän; bir todsar, ačsïq ömäz sän (p. 248) (KT S 8)

(13) ÇAGATAY 1950:

açsıḳ, tosıḳ ömäz sän; bir todsar, açsıḳ ömäz sän (p. 4) (KT S 8)

(14) MALOV 1951:

ачс^{2}ык, тосык ömäzsän; бір тодсар, ачс^{2}ык ömäzsän (p. 28) (KT S 8)

"когда же ты тощ и голоден (но тем не менее) ты не понимаешь (состояния) сытости (*т. е.* истинных причин сытости) и, раз насытившись, ты не понимаешь (состояния) голода." (p. 35)

(15) TEKİN 1968:

āčsïq tosïq ömäz sän, bir todsar, āčsïq ömäz sän. (p. 232) (KT S 8)

"You do not think of being hungry or satiated; if you once become satiated, you do not think of being hungry (again)." (p. 262)

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[10] It should be an editorial error for **ачсук**.
[11] It should be an editorial error for açs^{a}r.

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(16) Nadeljajev *et al.* 1969:

> **ö-** думать, размышлять: **ačsar tosïq ömäz sẹn bir todsar ačsïq ömäz sẹn** если ты голоден, ты не думаешь о сытых; раз насытившись, ты не думаешь о голодных (KT м8); ... (p. 375a) (KT S 8).
>
> **tosïq** сытый: **ačsar tosïq ömäz sẹn bir todsar ačsïq ömäz sẹn** если ты голоден, ты не думаешь о сытых; раз насытившись, ты не думаешь о голодных (KT м8); ... (p. 578b) (KT S 8).

(17) Ergin 1970:

> Açsıḳ tosıḳ ömez sen. Bir todsar açsıḳ ömez sen. (p. 50) (KT S 8)
> "Açlık, tokluk düşünmezsin. Bir doysan açlığı düşünmezsin." (p. 3)
>
> Açsar tosıḳ ömez sen, bir todsar açsıḳ ömez sen. (p. 72) (BK N 6)
> "Acıksan tokluk düşünmezsin. Bir doysan açlığı düşünmezsin." (p. 32)

(18) Ajdarov 1971:

> ачсыḳ тосыḳ өмезсен. Бір тодсар [ачсыḳ][12] өмезсен.
>
> "ты не думаешь о том, будешь ты голоден или сыт. А раз насытившись, не думаешь, что можешь быть голоден." (p. 288) (KT S 8)

(19) Clauson 1972:

> **a:çsa:r** *(sic)* 'if a man is hungry' I S 8, II N 6 (p. 19a) (KT S 8; BK N 6)

(20) Tekin 1988:

> : āçs(ı)k[13] : tos(ı)k öm(e)z s(e)n : bir : tods(a)r : āçs(ı)k : öm(e)z s(e)n : (p. 4) (KT S 8)
> "Açlığı tokluğu düşünmezsin; bir (de) doyarsan açlığı (hiç) düşünmezsin." (p. 5)
>
> : āçs(a)r : tos(ı)k : öm(e)z s(e)n : bir : tods(a)r : āçs(ı)k : öm(e)z s(e)n : (p. 30) (BK N 6)
> "acıkırsan doyacağını düşünmezsin, bir (de) doyarsan (tekrar) acıkacağını düşünmezsin." (p. 31)

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[12] This part is missing from the original text.

[13] "22) KT G 8: *āçs(ı)k* = BK K 6: *āçs(a)r*. KT yazıtındaki şekil yanlış olmalıdır (bunu izleyen *tosık* kelimesinin etkisi ile Yolluğ Tigin *āçsar* yerine *āçsık* yazmış olabilir). BK yazıtındaki şekil ile Bilge Kağan'ın burada eski bir ata sözünü Türk halkına uyguladığı anlaşılıyor: *āçsar tosık ömez sen; bir todsar āçsık ömez sen* "Acıkırsan tokluğu (yani, doyacağını) düşünmezsin; bir (de) doyarsan açlığı (yani, acıkacağını) düşünmezsin".

Bilge Kağan'ın bu cümlesi, bence bir ata sözü üzerine kurulmuştur. O ata sözü, büyük bir ihtimalle, şöyle idi: *Āç tosık ömez, tok āçsık ömez* "Aç doyacağını düşünmez (veya, sanmaz), tok (da) acıkacağını düşünmez (veya, sanmaz)". Bu anlamda bir ata sözü Türkçemizde vardır: Aç doymam, tok acıkmam sanır(mış). ..." (Tekin 1988, pp. 66–67)

This proverb is also found in the following two Turkic languages:

- Azerbaijanian: *Aj deyär:–Doymaram!, tox deyär:–Ajmaram!* "'The hungry one says: 'I will not be full!'; the full one says: 'I will not be hungry!'" (Hüsäynzadä 1985, p. 89)
- Karachay-Balkar: *Ač toymam deydi, toyyan ač bolmam deydi* "The hungry one says: 'I will not be full'; the full one says: 'I will not be hungry'." (Tenišev/Sujunčev 1989, p. 98b)

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(21) TEKİN 1995:

Āçsık tosık ömez sen; bir todsar āçsık ömez sen. (p. 36) (KT S 8)
"Açlığı tokluğu düşünmezsin; bir (de) doyarsan açlığı (hiç) düşünmezsin." (p. 37)

Açsar tosık ömez sen; bir todsar açsık ömez sen. (p. 58) (BK N 6)
"Acıkırsan doyacağını düşünmezsin, bir (de) doyarsan (tekrar) acıkacağını düşünmezsin." (p. 59)

(22) TEKİN 2000:

āç-sık to-sık ömäz sän
"açlığı (acıkacağını) tokluğu (doyacağını) düşünmezsin" (KT S 8)[14] (p. 168)

āç-sar tosık ömäz sän, bir tod-sar āçsık ömäz sän
"(Ey Türk halkı...), acıkırsan doyacağını düşünmezsin, bir de doyarsan (tekrar) acıkacağını düşünmezsin" (BK N 6) (p. 178)

āçsar tosık ö-mäz sän bir todsar āçsık ö-mäz sän
"Acıkırsan doyacağını düşünmezsin, bir (de) doyarsan acıkacağını düşünmezsin" (BK K 6) (p. 188)

(23) AMANŽOLOV 2003:

ačsʲq tosʲq ömäz sän. bir todsᵃr ačsʲq ömäz sän. (p. 158) (KT S 8)

"ты не думаешь о голодных и сытых. Раз насытившись, ты не думаешь о голодных." (p. 165)

(24) BERTA 2004:

ačsïq toswq ömäz sän bir toð°sar ačsïq ömäz sän (p. 131)

"[Ha éhes vagy] jóllakottságra nem gondolsz. Egyszer ha jóllaksz, az éhségre nem gondolsz."[15] (p. 191)

(25) ŞİRİN USER 2009:

açs(a)r : tos(ı)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n : bir tods(a)r : açs(ı)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n : (KT G 8; BK K 6)[16]

(26) AYDIN 2012:

açs²ık tosık ömez sen bir todsar açs²ık ömez sen
"Açlık (ve) tokluğu düşünmezsin. Bir doyarsan açlığı düşünmezsin." (p. 42) (KT S 8)

açsar (açsık?) tosık ömez sen bir todsar açsık ömez sen
"Açlık (ve) tokluğu düşünmezsin. Bir doyarsan açlığı düşünmezsin." (p. 73) (BK N 6)

[14] This sentence appears in the text example of the Kül Tegin inscription on p. 219 as Āçsar tosık ömäz sän; bir todsar, āçsık ömäz sän. The first word is given as *āçsar*, not *āçsık*.

[15] This sentence was translated into Turkish as "[Eğer açsan] tokluğu düşünmüyorsun. Eğer bir kez doyarsan açlığı düşünmüyorsun." in BERTA 2010, p. 191.

[16] The sentence comes three times in a row. This sentence appears in the text example of the Kül Tegin inscription on p. 445 as açs(ı)k : tos(ı)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n : bir tods(a)r : açs(ı)k : öm(ä)z s(ä)n :. The first word is given as *āçsık*, not *āçsar*.

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(27) Ölmez 2012:

: āçsık : tosık ömez sen : bir : todsar : āçsık : ömez sen : (p. 79) (KT S 8)
"Acıkacağını ya da doyacağını düşünmezsin. Bir doyarsan, (tekrar) acıkacağını düşünmezsin." (p. 91)

: āçsar : tosık : ömez sen : bir : todsar : āçsık : ömez sen : (p. 121) (BK N 6)
"Acıkacağını ya da doyacağını düşünmezsin. Bir doyarsan, (tekrar) acıkacağını düşünmezsin." (p. 135)

3 Conclusion

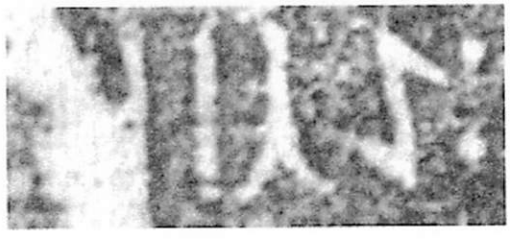
As we have seen above, the first word of this proverb appears as *ačsar* in the Bilgä Kagan inscription, but in the Kül Tegin inscription the researchers read it in two different ways. Its readings in the Kül Tegin inscription can be tabulated as follows:

ačsar		Radloff 1894, 1897, 1905, Bang 1896, Radlov/ Melioranskij 1897, Nadeljajev *et al.* 1969, Clauson 1972, Şirin User 2009
		Radloff 1895, Thomsen 1924
ačsïk	*ačsïk*	Thomsen 1896, Melioranskij 1899, Orkun 1936, Gabain 1941, Çagatay 1950, Malov 1951, Tekin 1968, 1988, 1995, 2000, Ergin 1970, Ajdarov 1971, Amanžolov 2003, Berta 2004, Aydin 2012, Ölmez 2012
	ačsak	Vámbéry 1898

In this table, the researches with *ačsïk* are almost twice as much as the researches with *ačsar*. By the way, it is *ačsïk* in Thomsen 1896, but *ačsar* in Thomsen 1924. In other words, Thomsen himself first read it as *ačsïk*, but later read it as *ačsar*. Nevertheless, many researchers have overlooked this fact and read it as *ačsïk*.

According to the untouched rubbing of Radloff's edition (1893, Tafel XIX), the last letter of this word is as follows in the Kül Tegin inscription:

1. The horizontal line of the left side of 𐰴 is a little further down to the left.
2. The short vertical line beside it points upward.
3. There is a crack immediately after this letter.



Thus, it can be seen that this letter is R^1 (𐰴), not K^1 (𐰚) as in the typesetting in the Finnish edition (1892, p. 7) or in the touched rubbing of Radloff's

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edition (1893, Tafel XX). However, this letter has been usually read by the researchers as K[1] (𐰴).

Therefore, the first word of this proverb, as in RADLOFF's works, should also be read as 𐰴𐰇𐰼𐰍 *ačsar* 'if you are hungry' in the Kül Tegin inscription. Based on the untouched and touched rubbings of the inscriptions in RADLOFF's edition (1893) [and also on the pictures in the Finnish edition (1892)], we need to re-edit the Turkic "runic" texts of the Kül Tegin and Bilgä Kagan inscriptions.

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