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THE SHAMAN TERM *JÜKELI* IN THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

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The following two paragraphs of the *Secret History* inform us of an interesting discord:

§43 *Bodončar-un ablin eme-deče töregsen Barim Sigiratu Qabiči neretü bülege. tere Qabiči bayatur-un eke-yin inǰe iregsen-i Bodončar tataǰu bülege. nigen kōbegün törebe. J̌egüredei neretü bülege. J̌egüredei urida ǰükeli-dü oron bülege.*

§44 *Bodončar ügei boluγsan-u qoyina tere J̌egüredei-yi ger daruγa Adangqa Uriyangqadai kümün aluγa. tegünükei büi-ǰe kemeǰü ǰükeli-deče yaryaǰu J̌egüreyid oboγtu bolyaǰu J̌egüred-ün ebüge tere bolba.*

§43 He who was born from the wife which Bodonchar himself had taken was named Barim Shigiratu Qabichi. Bodonchar had taken [a girl], who had come as *inje* [that is 'part of the dowry'] of the mother of that Qabichi Baghatur. One son was born. He was named Jegüredei. Jegüredei before had part in the *jükeli*.

§44 After Bodonchar's death, "The mayor of the house had been a man of the Adangqa Uriyangqai clan. It may be that he [that is Jegüredei. — L. Bese.] belongs to him", saying, they [that is he members of the family or clan] expelled Jegüredei out of the *jükeli*. He was caused to become of the Jegüreyid clan. The ancestor of the Jegüred was he.[1]

In these two paragraphs of the *SH* we are particularly interested in *ǰükeli*, a shaman term, concerning which Prof. Ligeti (1962, 142, note 43) wrote the following: "The sacrificial ceremonies in which Jewüredei was allowed to take part in the life of his father were called *ǰügeli* in Mongolian. In the Chinese summary at the end of the chapter, this word is simply interpreted as 'sacrifice'. According to the interlinear Chinese gloss, it means more precisely a kind of sacrifice offered to Heaven in such a way that — among others — a part of the meat of the slaughtered sacrificial animal is usually

[1] For the translation of these two paragraphs see also Haenisch 1948, 6, Kozin 1941, 83, Pelliot 1949, 127, Ligeti 1962, 13, de Rachewiltz 1971, 124—25, Cleaves 1982, 9.

hung on top of a pole set up askew. The sacrifice was obviously offered to the ancestors of the family and clan, which is borne out by the fact that after his father's death, Jewüredei was forbidden to be present at the rites under the pretext that his father, not being Bodonchar, he did not belong to the family. This meaning of the word has disappeared from contemporary Mongolian languages under the influence of Lamaism; however, some nuances of the ancient word's meaning have been preserved in the Manchu language. In the Manchu, the verb *ǰuge-* means: 'to offer sacrifice to the Big Dipper at night'; *ǰukten* — of the same origin — means: 'sacrifice offered to gods', 'sacrifice offered to ancestors' [E. Hauer, Handwörterbuch der Mandschusprache (Wiesbaden 1952), 552]." This explanation have been quoted, since they serve as a basis for this paper and also because they might have influenced de Rachewiltz 1971, 155 in establishing his opinion: "The sacrifice to the ancestors mentioned in this and in the following paragraph is called *jügeli*; my interpretation ('in which meat is hung on a pole and offered to Heaven') is based on the Chinese interlinear gloss (*YCPS* 1.25b). We have no further details on this ceremony." Some lines below, de Rachewiltz defines *ǰükeli* as 'ancestor worship ceremony', though there is no such reference in the Mongolian text or the Chinese interlinear gloss either. Kozin 1941, 83 interpretes *ǰükeli* as 'rodovoe zhertvoprinoshenie', which is ambiguous since the Russian expression may mean both 'sacrifice to the ancestors' and 'clan sacrifice'.

According to the Chinese interlinear gloss the meaning of the shaman term *ǰükeli* is 'Opfer für den Himmel mit Fleisch, an e. Stange aufgehängt' (Haenisch 1939, 94), 'to hang meat on a pole and offer to Heaven' (de Rachewiltz 1971, 155) or 'to suspend meat with a pole and sacrifice to Heaven' (Cleaves 1982, 274). It can also be concluded from the Mongolian text that only the members of the family or clan were allowed to take part in the *ǰükeli* ceremonies.

The data quoted below will make it obvious that many important informations concerning *ǰükeli* have escaped the attention of the two outstanding Mongolists mentioned first. It is surprising how they disregarded Cheremisov's Buriat-Mongolian—Russian dictionary (1951) in which the MMo. word is attested in the form *züxeli* (p. 286) and in meaning exactly corresponding tho the Chinese interlinear gloss. The new, enlarged edition of the dictionary (Cheremisov 1973, 270) is cited here: *züxeli* (obs.) skin of a sacrificed animal with the head and shanks (drawn on a longe pole), *taxilgata züxelite uula* mountain, where shaman ceremonies were performed; *figur.* a tall and lean man; a great hulking fellow, girl *colloq.* [In Russian.] It can also be quoted from Cheremisov's dictionaries *züxe-* (obs.) to suspend on a pole (the skin of a sacrificed animal with the head and shanks, liver and kidneys with some quantity of hay); to pierce (through), spit, run (in, into). [In Russian.] Thus the word *ǰükeli* in the *SH* is none other than a derivative

of an unattested MMo. **ǰüke-* 'to put on the spit (sg), spit (sg)' with the Mo. dev. n. *-li* 'to form nouns designating abstract ideas' suffix.[2]

The facts mentioned below will convince us that not only the MMo. word *ǰükeli* and its meaning, but the relevant shaman ceremony are still present on the map of the so-called Ethnical Mongolia, preserved by the Western Buriats until this very day. Let us quote for instance Prof. Poppe (1972, 111), who has written the following: "The skin of a sheep or a goat which is hung on a high tree as an offering to the gods is called *züxeli* which corresponds to *ǰükeli* in the *Secret History*. I saw such *züxeli* offerings in large numbers among the Bulagat Buriats in the Western part of the Buriat country when I was collecting folklore in 1932."[3] This quotation also suggests that the data referring to the Buriat *züxeli* can be used as analogues to make our knowledge of *ǰükeli* in the *SH* more perfect. The earlier literature on the Buriat *züxeli* is very important for us, but unfortunately only occasional references and imperfect definitions are available, from which it is impossible to reconstruct it.[4] So when I met my colleague an d friend, Taras Mikhailov, a born

[2] Cf. also Mo. Kow. *ǰüküli* 'mouton suspendu au bout d'une perche par les chamans' — Further derivatives of the Bur. verb *züxe-* in Cheremisov's dictionary: *züxeger* 'with the head drew into the shoulders', *züxer* in *züxer züxer jaba-* 'to go rocking the head'. [In Russian.] On the basis of the Mo. *ǰüke-* ~ *ǰükü-*, Khal. *dzüxe-* 'to curse, swear, scold', it can be supposed that the *ǰigur.* 'to curse, scold, abuse' meaning given by Cheremisov to the Bur. *züxe-* is the meaning of another verb that is its homonym.

[3] The word *ǰükeli* and the ceremony denoted by it was also known by the Khori-Buriats. Cf. *ǰarim-ud-tur qoni yamayan-i keger-e abuyačiǰu alayad*: *urtu modun-u ǰüküli-dü elgüǰü bögeleged*: . . . 'Sometimes in the steppe they catch sheep and goats to kill them, and suspending them on a long wooden *ǰüküli* they perform shaman rites, and. . . . 'In: *Letopisi khorinskikh buriat. Vyp. 1. Khroniki Tugultur Toboeva i Vandana Yumsunova.* Tekst izdal N. N. Poppe. M.-L. 1935, 108. For the Russian translation of this passage see *Letopisi khorinskikh buriat.* Perevod N. N. Poppe. M.-L. 1940, 65. I want to note that in the autumn of 1969, when visiting the Aga-Buriats living in the northern and north-eastern territories of the MPR, I did not find any evidence of the word *züxeli* or the ceremony denoted by it. The Alt. *d'ükeli* 'picture of a sacrificed animal suspended on a long pole on the shaman drum' may prove the spread of MMo. *ǰükeli.* A photostate of the Alt. *d'ükeli* is published in Boyle 1963, 205.

Because the subject of the Bur. *züxeli* sacrifice may also be a horse, I refer here to the important contributions of A. Boyle (1963 and 1965) and Alice Sárközi (1979) on the horse sacrifices among the Mongols. These two authors and Viatkina (1969, 26) inform us about several kind of (horse) sacrifices containing features identical with or similar to the Bur. *züxeli* sacrifice from various historical records regarding the so-called Altaic peoples.

Note that the description of the horse sacrifice among the Buriats given by Jeremiah Curtin (and quoted by Sárközi 1979, 253) refers in all probability to the *züxeli* sacrifice.

[4] I mean, for example, Khangalov I—III, Prof. Poppe's definition (in: K slovarnomu izucheniiu buriat—mongol'skikh govorov. *Sbornik v chest' N. Ya. Marra.* Leningrad 1935, 334), and Manzhigeev 1960, 183 and 189.

Western Buriat and also a researcher of Buriat shamanism, I asked him to answer my relevant questions. I wish to express here my thanks for his willing cooperation, without which I would never have been able to publish this paper in the given form.

With regard to the description of the Buriat *züxeli*, some important information can be learned from Manzhigeev 1978, 55—56: "*züxeli* — the head, the four limbs, the fell and tail of the sacrificed animal suspended on a birch pole like a stuffed animal, and staked into the ground with the end (of the pole); the head is decorated with many-coloured ribbons, with fir-bark squeezed into the teeth and turned to the direction of the sunrise." [In Russian.] The sunrise may have been the basic direction. However, as stated by Mikhailov 1980, 179—80 the *züxeli* was turned facing different directions, depending on which god or protector the sacrifice was offered to. The birch pole, on top of which the head of the sacrificed animal was suspended by the skin was usually three or four metres long.[5] The *züxeli* may have been set up at different places, e.g. in the yard (usually the backyard) of the house leant against the fence, or outside inhabited areas often against protruding side-branches of tall pine trees so that it could not be reached by animals. It also happened in olden times that a *züxeli* was set up against a yurt. Several *züxeli*-s could be set up near each other at different times. At some places even thirty or forty *züxeli*-s could be found. The pole of a *züxeli* was not always planted into the ground; on the other hand, a *züxeli* standing alone was often enclosed. Only the place of communal, that is tribal or clan *züxeli* was considered sacred.[6] It was forbidden to touch or remove a set up *züxeli*, therefore, it remained in its place until it putrefied or dissolved.[7]

The sacrificed animals could be sheep, horses of different colour and also goats, depending on which gods or protector they were offered to. Khangalov I, 515 claims that the sacrificed animals offered to the Western white (that is "good") smiths[8] were grey or white horses. According to my friend Mikhailov's information, originally black horses were offered as a *züxeli* sacrifice to the Azharai Bükhe,[9] the protector of Western Buriat fighters. Being rather rare, the black horses were later replaced by black sheep. No cattle (cows or bulls) were offered at *züxeli*-s as sacrificed animals, since according to the beliefs the gods and spirits of the next world consumed only horse-meat and mutton. The Buriats never salt the meat of the sacrificed

[5] Among the Buriats, birch trees had long since been regarded as essential requisites at religious ceremonies. On this see Manzhigeev 1978, 15.

[6] This is confirmed by the place name *Zakulei* (from Bur. *züxeli*) in Cis-Baikalia. Cf. Melikheev, Toponimika Buriatii. Ulan-Ude 1969, 128.

[7] See also Manzhigeev 1978, 56.

[8] See, for example, Manzhigeev 1978, 42.

[9] See Manzhigeev 1978, 14—15.

animal, since they think that the gods and protectors do not accept salted meat and in this case the sacrificed animal will not be reborn.[10] Earlier, live lambs were also drawn onto the sharpened birch pole. According to the beliefs, the reason of setting up the birch pole in a steep angle is that the soul of the sacrificed animal would fly into Heaven as quickly as possible.

The *züxeli* sacrifice was always performed in the dark night.[11] A cauldron was set up in advance at the designated place, and the meat of the sacrificed animal was cooked in it lather. After that a bonfire was made of juniper so that the sacrificed animal and the other drinks and foods consumed during the ceremony would be purified in it.[12] At a *züxeli* sacrifice it was forbidden to take the meat of the sacrificed animal into the house. The *züxeli* sacrifice belonged to the so-called bloodless sacrifices, since no blood of the sacrificed animal was shed. As in the case of other animal sacrifices, they had to be careful not to break the bones of the animal. If they did, it was regarded as a bad omen. The meat of the sacrificed animal was divided into parts (*xubi*): one part was given to the god or protector it was offered to, another part was allocated to the members of the family or clan, and a third to the guests. The participants who did not get any of the parts were despised and considered inferior people.[13] During the ceremony, the participants did not sit around the *züxeli*, but usually around the bonfire. There was a willow branch (*tüürge*)[14] stabbed into the ground in front of each of them. The eating-bowles (*ajaga*) with the meat of the sacrificed animal, as well as the milk brandy or vodka and the milk foods (*sagaan edjeen*) in round birch-bark vessels were placed on the right hand side of the *züxeli*. Since there was no Buriat shaman sacrifice without milk brandy or vodka, many of these drinks were consumed at the *züxeli* sacrifices. At the end of the ceremony, the bones of the animal were burned.

[10] Cf. also Mikhailov 1980, 84.

[11] In this respect Ma. *juge-* 'to offer sacrifice to the Big Dipper at night' quoted by Prof. Ligeti may bear significance. Among others, Mikhailov claims that the Mongols attributed supernatural qualities to stars, believing that they could provide them with health, long life, wealth, richness and could ensure the reproduction of animals. The most respected constellation was the Big Dipper. However, I did not manage to establish any connection between the MMo. *jükeli*, the Bur. *züxeli* ceremonies and the cult of stars among the Buriats.

[12] Ritual purification formed an important part of the ceremonies. On this cf. Mikhailov 1980, 83. Baldaev 1970, 154—55 noted an occasion when an unexpected thunderstorm hindered the ritual purification and therefore the sacrifice was offered in vain.

[13] Recently no part is given to the participant who does not contribute to the price of the sacrificed sheep, which marks the significant changes in the form of the Bur. *züxeli*, namely the survival of a traditional ceremony in a modern form. Compared to traditions, the presence of "guests" also seems allowed.

[14] For this see also Manzhigeev 1978, 73.

The *züxeli* sacrifices were always organized with the participation of a shaman. As it could be seen above in the *SH*, a *ǰükeli* was regarded as an ancestor worship ceremony only because Jegüredei, being a stranger was not allowed to take part in it. However, we must not forget that among the Buriats and undoubtedly also among the old Mongols, strangers were forbidden to be present at several of the ceremonies. (By reason of the clan exogamy wives were also considered strangers. On this subject cf. also Poppe 1972, 111.) All this can be said about *züxeli* in which — unlike other ceremonies — only the grown-up male members of the clan or family had the right to take part. At the same time, it was obligatory for the members of the clan or family — in some cases only for the grown-up male members — to have part at the sacrificial ceremonies. The person being absent — as they say — offended the clan or the family, which — according to the beliefs — made the god or protector, that is the personage the sacrifice was offered to, angry not only with the given person, but with the whole clan or family.

Three types of shaman ceremonies performed by Buriats and old Mongols can be distinguished: 1. tribal or clan, 2. family, and 3. individual ceremonies.[15] At the same time, there were ceremonies regularly held in certain periods of the year,[16] and ceremonies made necessary by some extraordinary event. Being organized when the tribe or clan was struck by a natural disaster, unusual drought or epidemics, etc., *züxeli* belongs to the latter type of "occassional" Buriat ceremonies. Such or similar reasons motivated the family *züxeli*, which were held when no children were born, the sick would not recover or the animals remained barren, etc. Besides, a *züxeli* sacrifice was performed when boys reached manhood (*šara texe*).[17] Khangalov I, 406 mentions that as a result of the sacrifices *tengeri duudaxa* 'to call god' and *züxeli gargaxa* 'to perform *züxeli* offering'[18] Guzhir sagaan tengeri may present the sacrificer with a lot of offspring, both children and animals. The Buriats believe that some people go to Heaven and stay there for ever, while others — due to sacrificial ceremonies — may return to Earth. Khangalov II, 138—39 refers to a case when at the request of a girl's parents a woman shaman performed a *züxeli* sacrifice which was successful for the third time and their daughter could return to earthly life. Thus among the Buriats, the *züxeli* sacrifices seem to have been offered for fertility and help. It is

[15] Cf. Mikhailov 1980, 249.

[16] Such are the *tailgan* 'offering's. On them cf. for example Manzhigeev 1978, 69, Mikhailov 1980, 176—78, etc. Without doubt a *züxeli* sacrifice could be also offered at *tailgan*-s.

[17] On *šara texe* see, for example, Manzhigeev 1978, 98.

[18] These two sacrifices are the same in content, but different in form. Cf. also Khangalov II, 205. A concept about the origin of the *züxeli gargaxa* and *tenggeri duudaxa* is expressed by Khangalov I, 228—29.

worth noting that sacrificial or other songs could be performed at many of ceremonies, while it was strictly forbidden at *züxeli*-s. It can be also read in Khangalov II, 205 that the participants at a *züxeli* were not allowed to shout, make a noise, fight or use bad language. Thus the *züxeli* — as it can be seen — was a "serious" ceremony.

Manzhigeev 1978, 56 claims that according to beliefs, the *züxeli* — more precisely its ideal image — must get into Heaven, and the sacrified animal after regaining its bones and muscles, of which it was stripped during the ceremony, must return to Earth. Suspending the *züxeli* on the sacrificial pole expresses heir animistic belief in the rebirth of the slaughtered sacrificial animal, which is realized through the transmigration of its soul. At the same time, the set-up *züxeli* draws the attention of the god or protector to the offered sacrifice, due to which the troubles must be healed, offspring must be born, the sick must recover, and animals must be reproduced, etc.

This is what I can say just now in the case of the Buriat *züxeli*. I think that the informations published here about this shaman ceremony may serve as important analogues, which not only supplement our knowledge of *ǰükeli* in the *SH* and make it more exact, but in several aspect also confirm and verify the facts included in the *SH* and the interlinear Chinese gloss. On the basis of the quoted text of the *SH*, the following can be stated:

The definition of *ǰükeli* in the interlinear Chinese gloss is in fact acceptable, but not exact enough. With regard to the Buriat analogues, the more exact definition might be the following: *ǰükeli* 'skin of the sacrificed animal (horse, sheep) with the head and shanks (and perhaps with the liver and kidneys and some quantity of hay) suspended on a long pole of birch and staked into the ground with the end of the pole for offering to the gods or protectors; the head of the sacrificed animal is turned to the direction of the sunrise'. At the same time, the word *ǰükeli* may denote the ceremony itself, the place where the ceremony was performed or the place where the *ǰükeli* was set up. Therefore, *ǰükeli-dü oro-* in *SH* §43 may be interpreted as 'to have part in the *ǰükeli* (offering)', and also as 'to enter, to go into (the place of) the *ǰükeli* (offering)'.[19]

It is quite obvious from the Buriat analogues that the *ǰükeli* cannot be considered as ancestor worship ceremony. The *ǰükeli* in the *SH* belonged to the bloodless occasional sacrifices, which were offered when the family

[19] The Buriat expression *ongondo oro-* 'to communicate with the shaman idol' may also be ambiguous. It must be added that for the translation of the shaman term *ǰükeli* in the *SH* witty and apposite equivalents can be found in several languages, such as the German translation 'Stangenopfern' by Haenisch 1948, 6. In most languages, however, it can be expressed only in stodgy circumlocations. Therefore, I think that Prof. Cleaves' (1982, 9) solution of using the original Mongolian word in the English translation with the necessary explanation in the notes can be considered most appropriate.

or the clan were in trouble and turned to the gods or protectors for help. Thus *ǰükeli* must have been a sacrifice for help.

It is verified by the Buriat analogues that the text of the *SH* — in accordance with reality — reflects a custom of the patrilinear exogamous society, that is only the members of the tribe or clan and the family, but sometimes only the grown-up male members were allowed to take part in shaman ceremonies including the *ǰükeli* sacrifice. This custom or law excluded Jegüredei — regarded as a stranger — from the *ǰükeli* sacrifice.

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