

C. R. BAWDEN

A NOTE ON A MONGOLIAN BURIAL RITUAL

In an article published some years ago<sup>1</sup> I attempted to link up a group of objects in the possession of the Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig with certain texts connected with the selection and acquisition from the local deities of a suitable site upon which to dispose of the body of a dead person. These two texts were MS. 36 of the collection at Louvain,<sup>2</sup> (no title; inc. *Ükügsed-i bariqu kümün kemebesü*, "As for the persons to convey the departed".) and MS. 1939 of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin,<sup>3</sup> entitled: *Ғаҗар-un еҗед-и җасақи ба тақил ергүкүи санг җарҗақуи җаҗар җуууқуи үйлес-лүге селте орусiba*, "Rituals for dealing with the lords of the place, offering sacrifices, making incense-offerings and begging a site".). What I tried to show in that article was that the articles, which were described as "Grabbeigaben" were probably not funerary gifts but ritual objects used in connection with ceremonies for the disposal of the dead, and, to be more precise, in selecting a site and obtaining the agreement of the local deities to make use of it.

A number of different forms of prayer to be addressed to the local deities are known. N. N. Poppe provides a convenient reference to some of these,<sup>4</sup> and W. Heissig to others.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere I have referred to ten copies of the text listed by Poppe with the title *Ҷорҗи блана Аҗвангдорҗи-бер җоқийаҗсан тнгри делекеи җаҗар орун-у санг тақилҗа орусiba* which are known to me, and have edited a long list of local place-names inserted at an appropriate place in one of these, together with an order from the Mongolian administrative authorities of the time for the recitation of the prayer to be carried out.<sup>6</sup> Other relevant texts known to me at present are:

I. A prayer addressed to one particular mountain: *Онгҗон җодолан қан-у санг-un судур*, "Incense offering to the Sacred җодолан қан." MS, 5 folios, white Russian paper, State Library, Ulan Bator. This is a prayer for the worship of the mountain җодолан қан, perhaps the җодула аҗула listed by

Haltod as marked on maps of Sečen qan ayımaγ.<sup>7</sup> The mountain appears to have a special association with the line of Činggis qan. Thus, 2r. *ene oron-u čaγan жүг-i tedkügči qamuy tngri-nuγud ba: ene kü ilangγui-a erkim činggis ijaγurtan-u yeke sülda tngri: erten-ü čaγ-ača: ijaγur-i sakiγči badarangγui čoy-tu ongγon řodolan qan*, "all the gods, protectors of the white direction of this land, and especially the great tutelary genii of the noble line of Činggis, the splendid sacred řodolan qan, from of old the defender of this line", and also 3r-3v. *kedüi бүкү ene oron delekei-yin eřed nökör selte kiged: keřiye-dü činggis ijaγurtan-i sakiγči yeke küčütü jayayγan-u tngri: ketürkei čoy řibqulang ülemři badarayγan ongγon řodolan qan: kebčeg berke řodolan qan kemekü aldartu ene qayırqan: ayula*, "all the lords of the place of this area, with their companions, the very powerful fate gods, constant defenders of the line of Činggis, Sacred řodolan qan greatly resplendent with extreme majesty, this gracious mountain named steep, hard řodolan qan."

This is a prayer for the furtherance of the Yellow Faith in Mongolia, and for the general well-being of the worshippers. Thus 4r. *qarangγui ene umara жүг-tür burqan-u řasin delgereged: qan ijaγurtu noγad qarlıγ albatu selte qotalayγar: qamuy tngri kümün-ü tegüs amur řirγalang-i sayitur edeleři: qarın urbaltu ügei asida-yin amuyulang-i olγayulun řokiya*,<sup>8</sup> "Let the Buddhist Faith flourish in this dark northern land, let those of the royal line and the common subjects all enjoy thoroughly the full peace of all gods and men, and grant unfailing, lasting happiness", and so on.

## II. Prayers of more general nature:

1. *Delekei-yin eřed-yin sang-un sudur-yi oruřiγulbai*, "Incense offering to the lords of the earth". MS, 4 folios, thin Russian paper, private possession, Ulan Bator. This is a general prayer addressed to the eight classes of lords of the earth of the bright cosmos, and in particular to the local deities of temples, monasteries, tents, buildings and other places, and to the gods, water spirits and lords of the earth and non-human demons and spirits of old and new pastures, waters, springs, ponds, lakes, mountains, rocks, stones, *obos*, woods, highways and paths, with grass, flowers and crops. (*Gegen sangsar naiman ayımaγ-un delekei-yin eřed bügüdeger kiged ilangγui-a keyid süme ger bayıřing oron terigüten oyıra orčın nutaylan sayıγsan qamuy delekei kiged qayučın sine bayıγsan nutuy usu bulay čögüreng nayur ba ayula qada čulayγun obuyγan oyi modu ebesü čečeg tariya delgereged yeke řam qarγui terigüten-dür orusiγsan*

*tngger luus čöm delekei-yin ejed kümün busu učaraγsan todqar jedker nu-γud botunarun ijaγur-tan.*). The prayer begs for benefits of all sorts for the worshipper, their flocks and herds and their crops.

2. *Γaγar usun-u sang orusibai*, "Incense offering to earth and water". MS, concertina book, 5 written sides, thin white paper, State Library, Ulan Bator. This is a version of the preceding text. The passage corresponding to that just quoted shows verbal differences and is less corrupt. The insertion of the name *Qalqa* (Khalkha) between *oron* and *terigüten* is however the only difference of substance.

3. *Delekei-yin ejed-ün baling ergükü yosun orusibai*, "Ritual for offering sacrificial cakes to the lords of the earth". MS, 4 folios, Chinese paper, sewn along the top edge, private possession, Ulan Bator. This is a general prayer to local gods and demons for the spread of the faith, and for material benefits to be granted to the worshippers. I have not ascertained whether this text is identical to the one with the same title amongst the collected works of Mergen diyanči blama.<sup>9</sup>

4. *Tngri delekei-yin ejed-tü küsel γuyuqu jalbaril*, "Prayer for beseeching the gods and lords of the earth". MS, 11 folios, white Russian paper, State Library, Ulan Bator. This is also a prayer for material benefits, but is also, in part, a confession of unseemly acts which might have offended the local deities. These actions include such things as making a scorching smell,<sup>10</sup> killing insects and beasts, digging up the ground, cutting down trees, pulling out stones, throwing out carrion, and so on.

5. *Šabdax-un sudur orusiba*, "Sutra for the lords of the earth". MS, 2 folios, thin brownish paper, Institute of Language and Literature, Ulan Bator. A general prayer for benefits.

Actions concerned with the disposal of the dead do not seem to be specifically mentioned in any of these texts. I have, however, come across one further example of the text which was the subject of my article published in Leipzig and which does deal with the disposal of the dead, and in which the names of a number of tools are mentioned with warnings being given about what may result if they are not made use of in the rite. During my stay in Mongolia in 1967-1968 a colleague there put at my disposal, and allowed me to photograph, a bundle of six manuscripts, all of which had to do with prognostication of different sorts. These were:

- 1) Inc. *Namō gürü mañču gošaya: ediige nögčigsed-ün toγa-yi delgen nom-*

*lasuqai*, "Teaching of the numbers of the departed." 13 folios.

2) *Tabun üküdel-ün qaǵar kemebesü*. 18 folios.

3) Inc. *Nama širi gala tsagri-a*: 66 folios.

4) *Beri-yin ĵiruqai*, "Prognostications for the bride", 46 folios.

5) *Altan saba kemekü sudur orusiba*, 26 folios.<sup>11</sup>

6) *Beri-yin üǵelge orusiba*, "Omens for the bride", 7 folios.

The second of the above manuscripts, whose title I leave deliberately untranslated, contains the passage referred to. Fol. 16v, line 5 foll. read: *yerü qaǵar üǵekü kümün-dür sine torqa esegei debesöü sayuǵaqu bui: ese debesbesü qoyitu üre aǵinar-tu amur ügei ĵobaqu buyu: ügei kümün<sup>12</sup> bögesü čayan arisu debeskü bui: ese debesküle üre aǵinar-tu ebečün ülü tasuraqu boluyu: baling inu yisün yisün tariya ügei bögesü luus qaǵan ülü bayasqu: sumun-dür ödü ügei bögesü irüger ülü toytaqu: oni ügei bögesü ači-tu kiged köbegün-dür maǵu bolqu: mösün-dür gemtei bögesü kürgen-dür maǵu bolqu: tabun öngge kib ügei bögesü tonılqu mör ügei bui: oǵtalqu süke ügei bögesü ükükü mör ülü tasuraqu kirüge ügei bögesü üge daǵun ülü tasuraqu soyoǵan ügei bögesü qaǵar ülü nomuǵadqaqu: kürje ügei bögesü tere ger-ün ere eme qoyar-tu maǵu bui: 17r. tere bügüde yaǵuma ügei bögesü yerü qaǵar üǵegči kümün-dü maǵu bui: čayan temege botuǵu-tai čayan gegüü unaqatai čayan ünıye tuǵal-tai: čayan imaqıa ünügü-tei: tede bügüde-yin sün-i ese sačubasu luus-un ülü bayasqu: sakiǵulsun burqan ber ülü bayasqu: qaǵar üǵegči kümün-i öglige-yin eǵed bügüdeger gem ülü talbiqı bui.*

"There shall be spread out a piece of new silk or felt for the »ground-seer« to sit upon. If it is not spread out, later progeny will have no peace and will suffer. Otherwise, a white skin shall be spread out. If it is not spread out, sickness in the progeny will not be broken off. The ritual cakes are of the nine sorts of grain. If not, the royal water spirits will not be pleased. If there are no feathers to the arrow, good wishes will not be confirmed. If there is no notch, it will be bad for grandchildren and sons. If the shaft is faulty, it will be bad for the son-in-law. If there is no five-coloured tissue, there will be no way of release. If there is no cutting axe, the way of death will not be broken off. If there is no saw, disputes will not be broken off. If there is no tusk, the earth will not be pacified. If there is no spade, it will be bad for the man and woman of that tent. If all these things are lacking, it will be bad for the »ground-seer«. A white camel with a foal, a white mare with a foal, a white cow with a calf, a white goat with a kid — if

the milk of all these is not scattered, the (kings) of the water spirits will not be pleased, the tutelary spirits will not be pleased, and evil for the »ground-seer» and all the patrons will not be released."

Though not identical to the corresponding passage in the Louvain manuscript, this passage is very similar, but the preceding and following contexts do not correspond.

A manuscript which was written out for me by a Mongolian colleague during my visit on the basis of information supplied by two informants whom I did not myself meet, offers a brief account of how these miniature tools, or some of them, might have been used. I did not at the time obtain the permission of the two informants to publish their names, and by now I have no means of doing so, and accordingly I have deleted the names from the photograph of the MS. Apart from this, it is reproduced in its entirety. It is written in pen and ink on paper torn from a modern exercise book, and measures approximately 20.5 by 16.5 cm.

1. *Nasu baruγsan kümün-i nutuγlayulqu*  
*γaγar γuyuqu yosun-u tuqai:*

*Nasu nögöigsen kümün-iyen talbiqu γaγar-i*  
*öbersed-iyen toblan olqu: eseküle lama-bar*  
*tölege talbiγulun toytaγaγu kemen qoyar jüil bui:*  
*čuum ende kümün-iyen talbimui kemegsen γaγar-a*  
*dayaγaγsan lama-yin qamtu očiγad uridu-ača*  
*tusqayilan beledkegsen bayidaγ bui (tusqai qobdo*  
*-dur dalalγa-yin sumu metü qadaγalaysan bayimui)*  
*olan jijiγ baγaγi-nuγud tuqayilabasu:*  
*süke: kirüge: aluqa: qayiči dösi: purbu: Jerge*  
*busud olan jijiγ baγaγi-nuγud-i orongγo-yin*  
*eber-tür uyaγu: lama uul eber-iyer kümün-iyen*  
*talbiqu γaγar-i toyoriγulun jiruqu-dur tegün-ü*  
*qoyina-ača menekei-yin yasun-i ulayan utasu-bar*  
*oyosorlan čiriγü: čayan budaya asqamui:*  
*tegün-ü daraya jiruγsan γaγar-un dumdu kiri*  
*kümün-iyen talbimui:*  
*Ene yosun bolbasu lama-yin sašin šitüjü бүкүй-дүр*  
*yosulaγu bayiγsan jang üile abaču: erten-ü*  
*mongγolduud-un urid emüne bayiγsan yosu surtaqun-ača*  
*asiγlan jalaysan jüilüüd basa bayiγsan bolqu / metü:*

2.

*Ene inu böge mörgül-ün jarim nigen jang  
yosun-u damjiydan qoçoroγsan jüil bayiju  
medemii:*

*Doronayobi-yin ebügen -----*

*Übörqangγai-yin ebügen ----- nar-un*

*yariγsan-ača temdeqlen abubai:*

*1968 on-u 2-duγar sara-yin 5-u edür-e*

*Ulayanbayatur qotan-a.*

"On the custom of begging a site for disposing of a dead person.

There are two ways: either one fixes on a place for exposing the dead person oneself, or one gets a lama to arrange the exposure. Having gone with the accompanying lama to the place where in fact one intends to expose the person, one ties to the horn of an antelope a lot of little tools which have been specially prepared (and kept like the luck-summoning arrow in a special case) to wit, an axe, a saw, a hammer, scissors, an anvil, a ritual dagger and so on.<sup>13</sup> The lama draws (a line) around the place where the person is to be exposed with the horn, and then drags round the shell of a tortoise tied to a red cord, and scatters rice. After that, the person is placed in the middle of the place which was drawn round.

This custom was a ritual followed in lamaistic worship, but it seems as if it might have been something taken over from older customs of the Mongols and made use of. It may have been something handed on and left over from some shamanistic ritual or other.

Taken down from the account given by the old man ----- of Dornogov' and the old man ----- of Övörhangai.

February 8th, 1968, at Ulan Bator."

References to this burial custom in the literature I have so far seen are rare,<sup>14</sup> but two instances can be quoted. There is an interesting hint, which is not explained or followed up, in Ts. Damdinsüren's monograph on the "Princess's temple", the tomb of the daughter of the emperor K'ang-hsi who was married to the Khalkha prince Dondubdorji.<sup>15</sup> Writing of the excavations which had been carried out at the site in 1948 and 1949, he describes how the tomb had evidently been plundered by grave robbers, and writes: "It looked as if the robbers who had dug into it had simply been

after objects of high value. For example, they had left two pearls the size of sheep's droppings in the coffin. There was also one of a pair of earrings made of *piisüi* stone.<sup>16</sup> Nothing else of importance or value emerged. The surface of the pearls spoiled as soon as they came out, and became like cloudy white stone. To the right of the princess's coffin there had been buried a male sitting in a cross-legged position in an oval coffin. As this corpse was quite frozen it had not deteriorated at all, and he looked as if he had only just died. The coffin was lined with seven layers of silk. From inside the coffin there came out with the corpse a lot of little toy tools such as a saw, chisel, spade, adze and so on."<sup>17</sup>

Another and more explicit reference is to be found in a book of biographical reminiscences by J. Damdin, entitled *Üimeeni Jil*, published at Ulan Bator in 1973. On page 290, in connection with the death of his grandmother, the author writes:

"So, two days after the death of my grandmother, Tseveen achit went with me to perform the custom of »getting a site»<sup>18</sup> at Öndör güveen. We reached this Öndör güveen, where since long ago the dead had been disposed of, and got off our horses and stood there, and Tseveen achit looked in all directions, and stood muttering prayers. Then my horse urinated. »Right, that's it. That is really good» he said, and spread out a prepared antelope skin, the size of a human body, on the place where my horse had urinated.<sup>19</sup>

Then, with an antelope horn to which a multicoloured scarf had been fixed he drew (a line) around the skin, recited prayers for a while, took up the skin, placed markers<sup>20</sup> at the site, scattered milk and barley and so on, and finished the rite of gaining a site, and we went away."

The actual funeral took place on the following day, when the corpse was brought to the site on a cart. "We reached the site where the exposure was to take place, and spread out a felt, and Tseveen achit recited some prayers, and we laid her on the site which had been gained, performed various ceremonies, scattered some grain, recited prayers and formulas, and then we went away."

Soon after this, Damdin's mother died, and the body was disposed<sup>21</sup> of in the same way, but he does not describe the ceremonies further.

## Notes.

- <sup>1</sup>"Einiges zu den Ethnographica der Chalcha und Burjaten im Museum für Völkerkunde Leipzig", *Jahrbuch des Museums für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig*, XXV, 1968, pp. 79-91.
- <sup>2</sup>Walther Heissig: "The Mongol manuscripts and xylographs of the Belgian Scheut Mission", *Central Asiatic Journal*, III, 3, pp. 161-189.
- <sup>3</sup>D. L. Snellgrove and C. R. Bawden: *A catalogue of the Tibetan Collection and a catalogue of the Mongolian Collection*, The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Hodges, Figgis and Co. Ltd., 1969, p. 105.
- <sup>4</sup>N. N. Poppe, *Opisanie Mongol'skikh »shamanskikh» rukopisei*, now reprinted as part of N. N. Poppe: *Mongolica*, Gregg International Publishers Ltd, Farnborough, 1972, pp. 184-186.
- <sup>5</sup>W. Heissig: *Mongolische volksreligiöse und folkloristische Texte*, Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1966, pp. 30-32 and pp. 154-156.
- <sup>6</sup>"Notes on the worship of local deities in Mongolia", in Louis Ligeti, *Mongolian studies*, Budapest, 1970, pp. 57-66.
- <sup>7</sup>M. Haltod: *Mongolische Ortsnamen*, Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1966, No. 6153.
- <sup>8</sup>The alliterative verse form of this prayer will be apparent.
- <sup>9</sup>W. Heissig: *Die Pekinger lamaistischen Blockdrucke in mongolischer Sprache*, Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen, 2, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1954, p. 153 (Band 3, No. 30).
- <sup>10</sup>*Kengsigüü kirbusu sitayaysan butsar burtay talbiysan*. For this practice see M. Tatar: "Quacksalbereien und Beschwörungen bei den Mongolen (char dom)", in W. Heissig, *Altaica collecta*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1976, p. 262. Apart from this practical method of treating sick animals, there was also a ritual with the title of *Kengsigün talbiq*, one manuscript text of which is kept in the State Library, Ulan Bator. This may perhaps be what K. V. Vyatkina refers to in her monograph "Mongoly Mongol'skoi Narodnoi Respubliki", *Vostochno-Aziatskii Étnograficheskii Sbornik*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1960, p. 254, where she speaks of *hingshü*, *hiingshihü*, as funerary foods amongst the Üjümüchin. At any rate, the text indicates that the scorching is to be done deliberately: *kengsigün-iyer takiqi yosun inu: šangluu terigüten: ariyun saba-yin doora kengsigün-ü ed-i yal-dur kijü*, "The rite of worshipping with scorching: put the items for scorching in the fire under the censer and other pure vessels."
- <sup>11</sup>Not entirely identical with the text edited by John R. Krueger in *Monumenta Serica*, XXIV, 1965, pp. 207-272.
- <sup>12</sup>*kümüin* seems superfluous here.
- <sup>13</sup>Note that this list varies from those already mentioned.
- <sup>14</sup>But see P. Tomka: "Les termes de l'enterrement chez les peuples mongols", *Acta Orientalia* XVIII, 1-2, Budapest, 1965, p. 164.
- <sup>15</sup>Ts. Damdinsüren: "Günjiin süm", *Studia Ethnographica*, II, 3, Ulan Bator, 1961, 23 pp. My translation differs from that published by L. Moses in *The Mongolia Society Bulletin*, IX, 2, Bloomington, 1970.

- <sup>16</sup> Identification uncertain. I have also seen the spelling *piitsüü*.
- <sup>17</sup> Op. cit., p. 10.
- <sup>18</sup> *gazar avah yos*.
- <sup>19</sup> For omens taken from the behaviour of a horse see for example my article "The supernatural element in sickness and death according to Mongol tradition, I", *Asia Major*, VIII, 2, 1961, p. 231.
- <sup>20</sup> Possibly these "markers" (*temdeg*) may have been something like the line and pegs shown in illustration 162 of Werner Hartwig's catalogue of the Leipzig collection in *Jahrbuch des Museums für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig*, XXII, 1966. On p. 162 Hartwig says that this line would have been set out round the site of the grave.
- <sup>21</sup> In describing his grandmother's funeral Damdin uses the word *nutagluulah*, defined in Tsevel's dictionary as *hüür orshuulah*, *hüür geeh*, "to bury a corpse, to abandon a corpse". In mentioning the second funeral he says the ceremonies were the same, but he uses the word *orshuulah*, which should mean "to inter", and is commented on in this sense by Tomka, p. 165. I do not think that this varying terminology can be interpreted to show exactly how the corpse was disposed of.

1. Die erste Aufgabe ist die  
 Bestimmung der Nullstellen  
 der Funktion  $f(x) = x^3 - 2x^2 - 5x + 6$ .  
 Hierfür kann man das Horner-Schema  
 verwenden.

Man wählt eine Zahl  $a$ , die  
 eine Nullstelle sein könnte.  
 In diesem Fall ist  $a = 1$  eine  
 gute Wahl. Man teilt die  
 Polynomdivision durch  $(x - 1)$   
 durch. Das Ergebnis ist  
 $f(x) = (x - 1)(x^2 - x - 6)$ .  
 Die Nullstellen der  
 quadratischen Gleichung  
 $x^2 - x - 6 = 0$  sind  
 $x_1 = 3$  und  $x_2 = -2$ .  
 Zusammenfassend sind die  
 Nullstellen  $x_1 = 1$ ,  $x_2 = 3$   
 und  $x_3 = -2$ .

~~~~~  
 Die zweite Aufgabe ist die  
 Bestimmung der Nullstellen  
 der Funktion  $g(x) = x^2 - 5x + 6$ .  
 Hierfür kann man die  
 Nullstellensatz verwenden.

2

Handwritten cursive text, likely a signature or title.

Handwritten cursive text, possibly a date or a specific reference.

Handwritten cursive text, possibly a name or a short phrase.

Handwritten cursive text, partially obscured by a black redaction box.

Handwritten cursive text, possibly a small note or signature.

Handwritten cursive text, possibly a list or a series of notes.

