

A MONGOLIAN OFFERING TO THE GODS OF THE NINE PLANETS

KÁPOLNÁS OLIVÉR¹

Abstract: The article gives an introduction, translation and transcription of a short Mongolian offering text dedicated to the gods of the nine planets (*visün grag-un tngri*). Among the nine planets the Mars is in the main focus of this manuscript. An offering and requests to its God gives the main part of this short text. The article also concerns with the origin of the cult of the nine planets.

Key words: Nine planets, Mars, offering, manuscript.

The Mongolian written heritage is very rich in different religious texts. Most of them are buddist works from the Kanjur, Tanjur or collected works of famous lamas. In addition to these, some manuscripts belonging to the folk-religion and beliefs can be found in different collections. Usually these works were not spread by xylograph, only in manuscripts – this is why the majority of these works exist only in a few copies. Although, over the last decades several studies have been carried out studying these texts, not only new versions of the published texts can be found, but unknown texts appear, too.

The present paper concentrates on a short Mongolian offering text dedicated to the gods of the nine planets (*visün grag-un tngri*). According to the Mahāvvyutpatti, the nine planets (*visün grag*) are as follows: 1. *Naran* or *Adiy-a* (Sun); 2. *Saran* or *Sumiy-a* (Moon); 3. *Anggaray* (Mars); 4. *Bud* (Mercury); 5. *Braqsbadi* (Jupiter); 6. *Šugr-a* or *Sugra* (Venus); 7. *Šanišcar* or *Šanicar* (Saturn); 8. *Raqu* (The ascending node of the Moon); 9. *Ketu* or *Urtu segül-tü* (The descending node of the Moon).² The origin of this paradigm can be traced back to Hindu cosmology,³ via Tibetan culture.⁴ The gods

¹ Research for this paper was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) [K 116568].

² Alice Sárközi and János Szerb (eds). *A Buddhist Terminological Dictionary – The Mongolian Mahāvvyutpatti*, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2005, 235.

³ Bauman, Brian. *Divine knowledge: Buddhist mathematics according to the anonymous Manual of Mongolian astrology and divination*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008, 126.

⁴ The same paradigm appears in Tibet, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René. *Oracles and demons of Tibet: the cult and iconography of the Tibetan protective deities*. Hague: Mouton & Co., 1956, 262-263 and Kelényi Béla. “The Cult of Good Luck,” in *Demons and Protectors. Folk Religion in Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism*. Edited by Béla Kelényi. Budapest: Ferenc Hopp Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art. 2003, 60–61.

of the planets are not mentioned in the Mahāvvyutpatti. The cult of the planets is missing from Heissig's famous work on the religions of Mongolia,⁵ what is more, no similar text can be found among the published folk-religion texts. Offering to the nine planets appear only in one text entitled *yisün gray-i takiqu-yin jang üile orosiba*,⁶ which was translated from Tibetan. It did not spread among the Mongols, it can be found only in the Tanjur.

The planets usually appear in astrological or divination texts, but the present text does not belong to this category. However, a short summary is necessary to show the planets in different Mongolian works. Their earliest mention can be found in a divination text from Xarboxyin balgas. Although it is only a fragment, it is clear that only seven planets were used in the divination (the Raqu and Ketu, which are not exactly planets, are missing).⁷ This text shows that the planets had influence on people. This is confirmed by a short text for protection, called *Seal of 1000 Buddhas* (*mingyan burqan-u tamay-a*), which can protect its user from the shadow of the planet (*grag següder*) that causes stroke.⁸ We do not find any evidence for the cult of the gods of heavenly bodies in the Mongolian sources, it is only the Sky, the Sun and the Moon that appear, for example in the *Secret History of the Mongols* and in later works only the Sun and the Moon have cultic role,⁹ the planets are missing. Among the folk-religious texts, we can discover the traces of only the Sun and Moon cult, for example there is an Offering to the Golden Sun and Silver Moon (*altan naran . menggün saran-u dayadqal*),¹⁰ or there is a blessing

⁵ Heissig, Walther. *The Religions of Mongolia*, translated from the German edition by Geoffrey Samuel, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.

⁶ Its colophon is as follows: *ene inu enedkeg dorun-a jüg-ün pandita nags-kyi rinchen ber mön kü surṣayuli-yin baysi hanika kemegdekü-yin nomlan toyṭaysan-i bicigsen bicig-ece kumar-a śri orciyulbai..* (Rintchen (ed.). *Catalogue du Tanjur mongol imprimé*, part 3., New Delhi, 1974: 589).

⁷ Chiodo, Elisabetta. *The Mongolian Manuscripts on Birch Bark from Xarboxyn Balgas in the Collection of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences*, part 2. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2009, 212.

⁸ The Sign of Thousand Buddhas is a well-known protection symbol (Б. Батсанаа (эмх.). *Их нууц тарнийн чухал хэрэгтэй сахиус тарниудын тайлбар* 2004. Тэргүүн дэвтэр, Улаанбаатар хот: Шамбал нийгэмлэг, 2004, 97; Доржийн Бямбасүрэн (эмх.). *Газар, лусын эзний тахилга хийгээд малчин ардад чухал хэрэгт сахиус, тарниудын тайлбар*. Улаанбаатар хот: Хуврагийн чуулганы уламжлалыг дэлгэрүүлэх төв, 2005, 91). I have seen only one “user manual” for it. It is short, consists of only 2 pages, and is entitled *Mingyan burqan-u tamay orosiba*.

⁹ Sárközi, Alice. “The Cult of the Sun and the Moon in Mongolian Written Sources”, in Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, Elena V. Boykova, Brigitte Heuer (eds.) *Man and Nature in the Altaic World. Proceedings of the 49th Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Berlin, July 30-August 4, 2006.*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2012, 283-287.

¹⁰ It starts with this verse: *arban jüg-ün qamuy orod-i / aburan geyigülügci gegen gereltü / aldarsiysan degedü naran saran-du / ariyun takil-iyar takin mörgömü - I make a pure offering and bow to the majestic Sun and Moon, who protect and shine over all the lands in the ten directions.* (*Ordos-un Tayily-a Takily-a Irügel Maytayal*. Yeke Juu ayimay-un cöken toyatu ündüsüiten-ü erten-ü nom bicig-i emkidken coylayulqu alban ger nayirayulba. Öbör Mongyol-un arad-un keblel-ün qoriy-a, 1992, 106).

to the Sun and Moon (*naran saran-du mörgögülekü irügel*).¹¹

The detailed description of the planets can be found in Mongolian astrological manuals. Lajos Ligeti mentioned one of them in his report on his research trip in Inner-Mongolia.¹² In 1967, he published this text under the title *doloyan gray . qorin naiman odun . qorin doloyan lagša-dur . yisün mengge . ed egüdeber jil sara edür cay möce-yin sayin mayu-yi ilyaju üjekü lagša-dar-un sudur-nuyud sayitur orosiba*.¹³ The text consists of the description of the nine planets. Almost the same can be found in an anonymous astrological and divination text which was published by Mostaert in 1969¹⁴ and by in 2008,¹⁵ who provided the full translation of the former text. In these works, the cult of the planets is not mentioned, nevertheless, it includes advice on what is allowed and prohibited to do on the days ruled by a planet (each weekday is governed by a particular planet, for example Tuesday is governed by the Mars). Apart from the text in hand, the gods of the planets are not mentioned in Mongolian texts, but they exist in the Tibetan tradition, pictures (and presumably texts in Tibetan language) can be found in Mongolia¹⁶ (see figure 1.).

The cult of the gods of the nine planets appears in only one Mongolian text. It is kept in the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, its call number is Mon. 327 (see figure 2). It consists of four pages (one sheet is folded in half), the first page is empty and it bears no title. The sheet is 20*15cm, therefore one page is 20*7.5cm. The handwriting is easily legible, showing that the scribe was experienced. The text can be divided into two parts: a short prologue and the main part.

The beginning of the prologue is in Sanskrit, written in Mongolian script. It is a short homage to the *guru*, and mantra of *om a hum*. Mantra of Kundali (*om vajra amrita kuṇḍali hana hana hūṃ phaṭ*) and a purity mantra (*om svabhāva-suddhaḥ sarva-*

¹¹ Cerendondob (ed.). *Degedü Mongyol-un Arad-un Aman Jokiyal-un Ciγulyan*, Öbör Mongyol-un suryan kümüjil-ün keblel-ün qoriy-a, 2008, 138-139.

¹² Louis Ligeti. *Rapport préliminaire d'un voyage d'exploration fait en Mongolie chinoise, 1928-1931*, Budapest: Société Kőrösi-Csoma, 1933, 62–63.

¹³ Ligeti Lajos (ed). *Preklasszikus emlékek 3. Jüan- és ming-kori szövegek klasszikus átírásban. Mongol nyelvelmúltjár V.* Budapest: ELTE Belső-Ázsiai Intézet, 1967, 159–188. The text is kept in the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and can be accessed with the call number Mon. 32 (Kara György. *The Mongol and Manchu manuscripts and blockprints in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 2000, 63).

¹⁴ Mostaert, Antoine. *Manual of Mongolian astrology and divination*. Cambridge & Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 1969.

¹⁵ Bauman, Brian. *Divine knowledge: Buddhist mathematics according to the anonymous Manual of Mongolian astrology and divination*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008.

¹⁶ Farkas János & Szabó Tibor. *The Pictorial World of the Tibeto-Mongolian Demons*, Budapest: Mandala & Librotrade, 2002, 88.

dharmāḥ svabhāva-śuddho 'ham) are the next. Many of the Mongolian offering texts start by these mantras¹⁷ with the intention of calming the mind. It is usually continued by a visualization, describing the appearance of the deities that the mediator wants to summon. After the Sanskrit sentences, there are some words in Tibetan, written in Mongolian script. Although the text starts by preparing the mind for meditation, it is not continued by a visualization. This prologue is only an adornment, which intends to show that this text is a Buddhist work, so that the user may have thought that this text was a powerful one.

The main part of the text is in Mongolian, there is no direct connection between this part and the initial sentences. This part is very simple: there is an offering and requests, and finally the text is finished by some wishes. Its translation is as follows:

I make a pure offering, pray and bow to the gods of the nine planets, who have been protecting me from my birth. Deign to accept and consume my offering presented now, protect my insignificant self! I make a pure offering, eulogize, pray and bow particularly to you, god of planet Mars, who protects me in this year. Deign to pay attention and consume my offering and protect my person and life! Deign to manage not to have a misfortune in my home, not to be illness, infection in my body! Deign to implement all of my wishes as I imagine. Oh, deign to accept and consume my pure offering presented now, deign to carry my spoken, entreating words into fulfillment! Oh, let the happiness of Qormusta be fulfilled! Let the happiness of all of the gods be here!

As we have seen, the main role of the gods of the nine planets is to provide protection. They protect the human beings from their birth, like the *Five Personal Protectors* (*‘go ba’i lhas*).¹⁸ The main subject of the text is the god of the planet Mars. According to the astrological texts, it has a fire element, thus probably it was asked for protection when a year with this element started. This implies that the offering was presented around the beginning of a new year. The text is very short and since there is no Mongolian parallels, the Mongolian cult of the gods of the nine planets can not be described well.

¹⁷ Some examples: *Ündüsün bsang* (Serruys, Henry. “A Mongol Lamaist Prayer: Ündüsün bsang „Incense Offering of Origin””, *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XXVIII, 1971, 360), *Corji blam-a Ayvangdorji ber jokiyaysan ingri delekei yajar oron-u sang takily-a* (Tatár Tatár, Magdalena. “Two Mongol Texts Concerning the Cult of the Mountains”, *Acta Orientalia Hungaricae*, tomus XXX., 1976, 21)

¹⁸ Mongolian texts concerning the Five Personal Protectors are very rare, I know only of one Mongolian version from a private collection. Its title is: *yobilh-a-yin sang*. It is an offering text with a short description of the *‘go ba’i lhas*, they are like the shadow from the birth (*törögsen tedüi-ece bey-e-lüge següder metü*) and their task is to protect. Their cult also originates from Tibet (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René. *Oracles and demons of Tibet; the cult and iconography of the Tibetan protective deities*, Hague: Mouton & Co., 1956, 327–328).

It is necessary to study these little works in order to gain a better understanding of the Mongolian popular belief, which has many unexplored fields. It is supposed that the cult of the gods of the planets is one of the fruits of the Tibetan influence, which enriched the Mongolian culture.

Transcription

namo guru. om a hum. om bazar amrita küngdeli qan-a qan-a hum pad . om sabuwa sütün sarwa darma sabuwa sütün qom. tongbo nidüü jür tongbai in anglai saksjii pungsan coy ba namai dan nimabar jürar-a

törögsen cay-aca amin bey-e-yi minu sakiysan yisün γ'ray-un tngri-ner-i-yi ariyun takil-iyar takin jalbaraju mörgöümü .. [1/2] edüge ergügsen takil-i mini örösiyen abcu joyolayad . öcükten minu ami bey-e-yi sakın ibegen soyurq-a . ilangγui-a ene jil-dür minu ami bey-e-yi sakiysan angg'aray odon-u tngri cimayi ariyun takil-iyar takin maytan jalbariju mörgömüi . angqaran joyuylaju bürin ami bey-e-yi minu sakın ibegen soyurq-a . ger-tür γai baricid(?) ügei öber-ün beyen-dür ebedcin taqul ügei aliba sanaysan [2/3] bügüde-yi minu sedkilcilen bütügen soyurq-a . ay-a edüge ene ergügsen ariyun takil-yi minu örösiyen küliyejü joyolayad ögüleksen üge bükün-i bütügen soyurq-a .. ay-a asuru qormusda tngri-nerün öljei qutuy orosiqu boltuyai .. qamuy tngri-nerün öljei qutuy orosiqu boltuyai ...





Figure 2.

The manuscript of the offering to the gods of the nine planets.

(With the permission of the Oriental Collection of the Library and Information Centre
of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.)

Bibliography

- Alice Sárközi and János Szerb (eds). *A Buddhist Terminological Dictionary – The Mongolian Mahāvvyutpatti*, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2005,
- Bauman, Brian. *Divine knowledge: Buddhist mathematics according to the anonymous Manual of Mongolian astrology and divination*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Chiodo, Elisabetta. *The Mongolian Manuscripts on Birch Bark from Xarbuxyn Balgas in the Collection of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences*, part 2., Wiesbaden; Harrasowitz Verlag, 2009.
- Farkas János & Szabó Tibor. *The Pictorial World of the Tibeto-Mongolian Demons*, Budapest: Mandala & Librotrade, 2002.
- Heissig, Walther. *The Religions of Mongolia*. Translated from the German edition by Geoffrey Samuel. London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.
- Kara György. *The Mongol and Manchu manuscripts and blockprints in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000.
- Louis Ligeti. *Rapport préliminaire d'un voyage d'exploration fait en Mongolie chinoise, 1928-1931*. Budapest: Société Kőrösi-Csoma, 1933.
- Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René. *Oracles and demons of Tibet; the cult and iconography of the Tibetan protective deities*. Hague: Mouton & Co., 1956.
- Mostaert, Antoine. *Manual of Mongolian astrology and divination*. Cambridge & Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Kelényi Béla. “The Cult of Good Luck,” in *Demons and Protectors. Folk Religion in Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism*. Edited by Béla Kelényi. Budapest: Ferenc Hopp Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art, 2003, 47–78.
- Ligeti Lajos (ed.). *Preklasszikus emlékek 3. Jüan- és ming-kori szövegek klasszikus átírásban. Mongol nyelvemléktár V*, Budapest: ELTE Belső-Ázsiai Intézet, 1967.
- Ordos-un Tayily-a Takily-a Irügel Maytayal*. Yeke Juu ayimaγ-un cöken toyatu ündüsüten-ü erten-ü nom bicig-i emkidken cöylayulqu alban ger nayirayulba, Öbör Mongyol-un arad-un keblel-ün qoriy-a, 1991.
- Rintchen (ed.). *Catalogue du Tanjur mongol imprimé*, part 3., New Delhi, 1974.
- Sárközi Alice. “The Cult of the Sun and the Moon in Mongolian Written Sources”, in Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, Elena V. Boykova, Brigitte Heuer (eds.) *Man and Nature in the Altaic World. Proceedings of the 49th Permanent International Altaistic*

Conference, Berlin, July 30-August 4, 2006., Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2009, 283-298.

Serruys, Henry. “A Mongol Lamaist Prayer: Ündüsün bsang „Incense Offering of Origin””, *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XXVIII., 1971, 321-418.

Tatár, Magdalena. “Two Mongol Texts Concerning the Cult of the Mountains”, *Acta Orientalia Hungaricae*. Tomus XXX., 1976, 1–58.

Б.Батсанаа (эмх.). *Их нууц тарнийн чухал хэврэгтэй сахиус тарниудын тайлбар, тэргүүн дэвтэр*, Улаанбаатар хот: Шамбал нийгэмлэг, 2004.

Доржийн Бямбасүрэн (эмх.). *Газар, лусын эзний тахилга хийгээд малчин ардад чухал хэрэгт сахиус, тарниудын тайлбар*, Улаанбаатар хот: Хуврагийн чуулганы уламжлалыг дэлгэрүүлэх төв. 2005.