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Choi Han Woo**

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On the Indo-European Root of Ethnonyms – Khorī and Koreans

B.B. Dashibalov

Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies,
Russian Academy of Sciences Russia, Ulan-Ude

The paper focuses on the etymological approach to commonality of Buryat, Mongolian and Korean peoples. Assonant ethnonyms from different languages are hard to find. Thus etymological hypotheses appear during historical background reconstruction.

The ethnonyms *Khorī* and *Koreans* appear to be similar or one-root words. Consideration of the following data proves that this similarity is not an accidental one.

In genealogical and historical Buryat legends there have been preserved some traces of Buryats' relations with Koreans. Here is one of them. Once in Mongolia there lived Khun Taizhi khan. He produced four sons: Barga-bator became the progenitor of Yakuts, Shono-bator became the progenitor of Koreans, Seren-Galdan gave origin to Bulgads and Khoryodoi ubgun – to the tribes of Khorī and Sharaid [18, p.173]. It follows from the legend that Buryats and Koreans have the common progenitor. Koreans are also mentioned in the story of Balzhin khatan – Bubei beile's wife was the daughter of Gulin khan, a Korean khan [18, p.183]. It should be noted that in the legend Bubei beile is often referred to as a Solongut prince. By the name of Solonguts Buryats meant the people relating to Koreans and the Manchzhu [1, p.155]. In the latter story Koreans are mentioned not as a closely related people, as they were in the former legend, nevertheless, they are included into the common continuum of interrelated peoples. Moreover, the medieval Mongols considered Koreans as related peoples.

One of the myths says that Tonmen, the progenitor of Koreans was thrown to a pig-shed, but the pigs warmed him up, and he survived

[10, p.109]. What is interesting is that the Buryat folklore also contains some vague remembrance of the pig as a cult animal or even a progenitor. The Swiss author Renier, who was one of the first to describe Buryats, in the chapter "The origin of Buryats" writes: "... they were bred up by the pig" [11, p.192]. In the manuscript by Mikhail Tatarinov "Opisanie o bratskikh tatarakh ..." Buryats are also described as "fed up by the boar" [16, p. 12]. Nowadays the remembrance of the pig in the Buryat historical self-reflection has been forced out as it couldn't match their real nomad life. The folklore, the linguistic and archaeological data, however, prove for the fact that the Mongolian ancestors of Buryats were once aware of the domesticated pig [7, p.54-56]. There are also a number of legends connecting Buryats and Koreans.

The tribe of Khori-buryats have the ritual calling: "The origin of ours is from the swan-bird, the sacred tree of ours is the birch, the elder sister of ours is Alan-Gua." It is the swan that many Buryat genealogical legends are connected with. It should be noted here, that similar legends have been registered at the Manchzhu tribe living to the East of the mountain of Changbongshan [18, p. 157]. Tangun, the founder of the ancient Korean state, is addressed as "the Ruler-prince of the black birch" for his father was an earthy deity – the Tanusin father (the black birch's spirit). And Tangun's mother (Chumona) is described in "Weishu" as: "Mother Chumona, the River Deity's daughter, was hidden in the room by the Pue ruler. The sunrays threw light on her. She tried to find a shade, but the rays reached her. And this is why she got pregnant." There is an analogous text by Kim Busik in his work "Samgug sagi" [10, p. 105]. It should be reminded that Alan-Gua, the progenitor of the Khori-Buryats got pregnant from a sunray too. It should also be noted that legends connected with the worship of the swan, the birch and the sunray are widely spread and found not only in Buryat and Korean mythology (the topic will be considered again later). The totemic meaning of the pig is characteristic of a more limited circle of peoples, and it is certain that the sacredness of the pig among Buryats and Koreans requires some explanation. Where was the probable area of connections between the Mongol-tongued ancestors of the Buryats and the Koreans, which produced the circle of closely related notions and legends?

R.Sh. Dzharylgasynova proved the existence of two ethno-cultural complexes in the Koreans' ethnogenesis – the northern and the southern ones. The former component matches “the Altaic groups”. In the broad understanding of “the Altaic component” Mongols play a big role [10, p. 108-114; 23]. The studies of ethnonyms and toponyms of the ancient Korea also clarify the role of the Mongol component in the Korean ethnogenesis. Here the biggest interest is drawn to anything connected with Kori – the country which gave name to Korea. Some scholars, in their studying the word Koryo (guryo), namely, Siratori, Misina, Dzhevon, Gimun, emphasize its similarity with the word “kuru” – a town, with the old root “kor” – a cave, a shelter, a fortress. The words' semantics is relevant to the Mongolian language [8; 9; 14, p. 323]. In the Mongolian language *xypəə* – a fence, a camp, a circle [22; p.578].

According to the legends Tonmen, the founder of the Korean state of Pue, originated from the northern nomad country Kori (Gaoli). To Yukho and Khon Gimun connect the name of *Kogure*, especially in the variant of *Kore* with the country of Kori. This mythical state produced the ancestors of the Pue and Kogure peoples [8]. As Kan Insuk and Li Dzhirin state, there were different names for the state of Pue in different sources, among them was the name of Korigut (the Northern Pue was located in the upper parts of the Lyaohe river). In the second part of the I millennium B.C. the people of Dunhu inhabited the area [3; p. 48]. Li Kan believes that the tribe from the northern Pue – the Dunhu peoples – took part in the foundation of Kogure [4; p.106]. The Chinese scholars also support the version that the population of Pue (Fuyui) could be constituted by Mongols [21; p.81]. The data available allow to state big closeness of historical lines of the Mongols – dunhu – and the ancient Koreans, besides, the lingual connection of the words dunhu and Kori should also be emphasized.

The ethnonym *dunhu* means *eastern hu*. The Tibetan scholar Minchzhul khutukhta considered *hu* to be a mispronounced Tibetan word *khor*. The idea was supported by one of the founders of Russian sinology V.P. Vassilyev. He pointed that *hu* was *khor*, the traditional name for Mongolian tribes in China [6; p.91, 144]. Yu.N. Rerich wrote on the case: “The Tibetan tribal name *khor* is nothing but a Tibetan transcription of the Chinese *khu* – the name denoting central Asian tribes

of Iranian and Turk-Mongolian origin” [17, p. 89]. G.N. Rumyantsev also supported these ideas: «“It is very probable that *khōr* is the plural form of *kho-* or *khu-*. Then the Chinese name of the Syanbi’s ancestors – *dun-hu* “the northern barbarians” can be interpreted as “the northern khōrs”» [16, p.127].

Thus, the representative of Mongolian studies G.N. Rumyantsev, the sinologist V.P. Vassilyev and the tibetologist Yu.N. Rerich revealed the existence of fields of common and connections between the ethnonyms *hu*, *dunhu* and *khōr*. There has not been any universal opinion given about the Dunhu language. Researchers concluded that it was a mixed people; they even assumed its Iranian origin; later on, it became the ancestor of the Turks and the Mongols [6, c.91, 142-148]. It is very often that an ethnonym comes from another language. To give some examples, the Slavic Bulgarians got the name from the Turk tribe, bearing the same name, or China (in Russia) is named after the name of the Mongols – *kidans*. Some ethnonyms consonant with “*khōr*” exist in Iran, Middle Asia and Europe – Khorasan, Khoresm, Khorvatia (Croatia in English). There is an idea that the ethnonym “*khōrvats*” is of Iranian origin and appeared where the Slavic tribes closely interrelated with Iranian-tongued population [20, p. 98-100]. The toponym Khoresm means the country of the sun [15, p. 251], and Khorasan is translated as the land of the sun. The meanings of these names provide basic for the supposition that they could be connected with the language of the ancient Indo-Iranians. The old Iranian term *hvar* (фвар in Russian) – the sun; it also can sound as *sur* – in Indo-Arian languages and *hur* – in the Iranian language [2, p.54]. The sun cult is a very widespread one among ancient Iranians. The sun was the embodiment of the good. The god of the Sun’s name was *Khōrs* (oset. – *xur* and avest. – *hvar* – the sun) [15, p.251]. There have been attempts of comparison of the English *horse* with the name of the Slavic God of the Sun – *Khōrs* [5, p.50, 51]. It should be noted here that in mythology the images of the sun and the horse are interconnected, for instance, the ritual posts – “horses” (lower German *Horsa*) [13, p.529].

B.A. Rybakov notes that the form of round ritual constructions of the Slavic sacred places provokes the thought that the term “*khōromy*” (хоромы in Russian) is connected with the notion of a circle: (*khōro*) – a

circle “khorovod” (хоровод in Russian), (the Buryat circle-making dance “yokhor” ёхор, the Bulgarian dance “kolo” – B.D.). In pagan times the similar semantics covered Khors – the sun, and after christening – “khoros” – a round thurible in the Christian church, coming back to the Greek “khor”, an assembly. The notions “assembly” and “circle” remain close even further on – kazachii krug [19, p. 228].

The etymological analysis considered give us the basic for the supposition that the ethnonym *-hu* or *-khor* is also associated with ancient Iranian spreading and has been preserved today in different languages. Moreover, it unites such different peoples as Buryats (khori), Koreans and Croatians.

Which of the Indo-European migration can match these facts? One of the possible answers can be the Tokhar. Linguists note the connection of the Tokhar language with the Turk language, it is I millennium B.C. that contacts between Tokhars and Chinese are thought to take place. The eastern border of the Tokhar influence is reconstructed by the material of G. Ramstedt, who pointed early contacts between Tokhars and Koreans. Of interest is E. Pulliblanс’s hypothesis that ancient Chinese ideas of sky horses and the unicorn (tsylin) [12, p.15, 16].

Thus, ancient Mongols were developing in one historical-cultural continuum with the Manchzhu and Koreans. The shift to nomadic life is associated with Indo-Iranians – *-khu*, *-khor*. This name passes on to Mongols and becomes the self-name. Mongols *dunhu* pass on the ethnonym to the ancestors of Koreans in the form of *Kore* – *Kogure*. The search for etymologies of assonant ethnonyms from different languages is rather hard and provokes further questions, whose solving is often impossible within the framework of linguistics only. Thus etymological hypotheses appear during historical background reconstruction. This historical background involves interpreting related linguistic ties, broken by the force of history and time.

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