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The Title Name: ‘*Ch(T)igin*’ or ‘*Chinggis*’

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Abstract. The article examines some versions for the etymology of the title ‘Chinggis’ and notes that the amount and quality of studies on the topic have reached the level when it is necessary to classify and arrange them on the basis of historiographic analysis. Most researchers consider the title of Chinggis Khaan (Genghis Khan) to be a recent one. The most popular opinions regarding the etymology of the title suggest that the word ‘Chinggis’ stems from a number of different lexemes, namely: 1) the word *tengis* (‘ocean’) borrowed from the language of ancient Turks, 2) the word *chin* (‘firm’), 3) the word combination *chingis tengri* related to shamanistic beliefs, 4) the Hunnic title name *chan-yu* (*shaniui*, ‘Son of Heaven’) inherited by the Mongols in a misspelled form to evolve into *Chinggis*.

Still, the paper concludes none of the hypotheses mentioned have been supported with sufficient arguments, and sets forth an original version regarding the origin of the title. The work proposes that the title of the prominent Khan of Mongols stems from the term *chigin* / *tigin* traditionally inherited by Mongolic nomads since the earliest times. In Mongolian, the word *chigin* / *chagan* / *chege* contains the seme ‘white’. The word was first mentioned in written sources describing the states of the Tuoba and the Xianbei — in the form 直勤 ‘Cjichjeni’. It is thus suggested that the title bestowed upon the noble elites (‘the white bone’) in the mentioned states actually meant ‘Tsagaan’ (‘the White (ones)’). Later, ancient Turks kept using the title in the form ‘tegin’, and attributed the title to members of the ruling dynasty who did not inherit the throne. So, the use of the title ‘chigin’ (‘white’) can be traced back to the era of the Tuoba and Xianbei, and is historically determined by the long-lived tradition to refer to the ruling clan elites as ‘the white bone’. And the ancestors of Mongols passed the title down from generation to generation up to Chinggis Khaan’s reign.

Keywords: titles, *chagan-chege*-*j/chigin* (‘white’), *tegin*, *tiini*, *chigins*, Chinggis, Borjigin

N. Mynbayev published the article “On the title and name of Chinggis khan”. He made the conclusion “It is a kazak word ‘Shynkas’. The first syllable of the name Great Chinggiskhana is *shyn-* (reality) that has same meaning of the Mongolian word *Ching* and the second syllable *kas* (real, terrible). So the word Shynkaskhan means “Real great terrible khan”. Lately this name became Shyngys khan. “...he had many titles but the title ‘Chinggis’ that was absent among the steppe titles and honor became his name and the word “Chinggis” comes from Turkish language completely” [Мынбаев 2014]. As this article show there are several researchers who have such meaning. We cannot accept this kind of explanation because words that can explain the reason of the title for our Great Khan and titles with similar pronunciations have kept in the ancient Mongolian language vocabulary. Therefore the author decided to write this article.

First of all it must be said that a weighty analyzes on the works to decode the “secret” of this title are absent. There are many researchers that consider the name *chinggis* as the “Mongolian version of the Turkish word *tengis* (oceanic)” is the best from the different hypothesis on this name¹. There is something to analyze here. Researcher D. Tserensodnom notices that if this title considered to come from the word *tengiz* (tengis (ocean)) it cannot be given to our Great khan because that time very few Mongolian tribes, for example, Merged, Taichuud, Jalairwere integrated. Moreover, he said, “It is controversial and conflictingto consider this title as “Ocean-like khan” or Khan that occupied all world as several researchers think” [Цэрэнсодном 2000: 247]. We support this view. In other words, there have occurred many changes in Mongolian language caused by the vowel “i”.

PM. (*t+i)>AM. (ć+i) Mo. ćinar “chanar”<PM. *tinar;

Mo. aćiy-a “achaa”<PM. *atiyan

Mo. ɣućin “guch (in)”<PM. *gutin [Шагдарсүрэн 1999:105].

As this examples show the consonant “T” was changed into the consonant “Ch” being influenced by the vowel “i”. However, the word “*tenggis*” cannot be changed as “*chinggis*”.¹

One of the interesting explanations on the title of our Great khan is connected to the root “chin”. As Rashid ad Din explained “in Mongolian *ching* means strong, and *chingiz* is the plural. <...> in Mongolian *chingiz khan* means the same, but even more so because it is a plural. This word is used very much as, for example, *shahanshah* [‘king of kings] is used in Persian” and “the meaning of *ching* is ‘strong’ and ‘hard’, and *chingiz* is the plural — like *gür khan*, which is the great title of the Qarakhitai rulers meaning ‘strong and mighty monarch’” [Rashiduddin 1998, vol. I, p. 1: 90, vol. I, p. 2: 204]. In brief, the suffix of plural has role to strengthen the meaning of the “*chin*” (Ching {g} + s). Abu-l-Gazi explained Shyn +yz or the root of the word means “hard” and “yz” is the suffix of plural [Абу-л-гази 1958:

44]. The word root with meaning of hard and strong is connected with the stone as researcher D. Tserensodnom suggested expanding it with information kept in Mongolian legends, shamans call and folk works as for example praise [Цэрэнсодном 2000: 246–254].

Another version that appreciated by the researchers is the hypothesis connected with the note by D. Banzarov who remembered Khadjir Chinggistenger, the idol of shamans that was among Mongolians in the XIX century. He said that it is the regaining the “*chányú*”, the title in Xiongnu with meaning of son from the heaven [Банзаров 1997: 99]. This explanation in connection with shamanism, the traditional Mongolian belief is supported by the researchers also. The explanations of the title Chinggis suggested in such different ways have one common thing except the connecting it with the *chányú* of Xiongnu. All these explanations do not connected the title with the traditional Mongolian nomadic titles and honors and tried to confirm it a newly thought uptitled depending the given time. They too far deviated from the fact and abstracted deeply as we consider.

The idea by I. Beckwith “The title Chinggis Khan (traditionally, ‘Genghis Khan’, ‘Jenghiz Khan’, etc.) is believed to mean ‘Oceanic

¹ The researchers as G. Ramstedt, I. Rahvels, Ch. Dalai, N. Natsagdorj, J. Boldbaatar and other renowned researchers followed the explanation by B. Vladimirtsov and P. Pelliot as this title is connected to the Turkish word *teniz* (in the Secret history of Mongols *tenggis*).

[universal] Ruler'. This follows Ramstedt and Pelliot (cited by: [Rachewiltz 2004: 460]), who take Chinggis [č̌igis] to be a loanword from Turkic *teiz* (Middle Mongol *tēgis* 'sea' in the Secret History) 'sea, ocean' or a dialect form of it. The vowel of the first syllable reflects a Mongol dialect in which Turkic -e- shifted to -i- as it did in the borrowing of Turkic *tegin* 'prince' as **tigin*, which became Mongol *čigin*, or alternately, the form *č̌igis* derives from a Turkic dialect that already had -i- in the first syllable. The title must have been carefully chosen with a view to other rival rulers past and present. Recently it has been proposed that *č̌igis* here is an adjective meaning 'fierce, hard, tough', and Temüjin's title means 'Fierce Ruler' [Beckwith 2009: 415] aroused our interest a lot. G. Derfer explained the Turkish title "*tegin*" as the prince-descendant or the youngest son of a king. It can be determined by the high governor. *Tegin* cannot have title *kagan* by himself and it is the duty of a high rank state clerk. Moreover, *tegin* is the general name of the "prince" and it is higher than "*shad*" and "*yagbu*" (also princes) [Шервашидзе 1990: 81–82]. On this Turkish title *tegin* B. Batsuren noted: "The Turkish leaders <...> had titles *shad*" and "*yagbu*" that come from Indo-Iranian language when they lived in mountain ranges Altai as it became clear now. It is very interesting after they came to Mongolia their state clerks had Mongolian title and honor as "*khan*" "*khatan*", "*chigin/tigin*" (entered Mongolian language through Toba and Jujan)" [Батсүрэн 2009: 172]. Therefore, the high possibility that name "*tegin*" with the meaning "prince" can enter the Turkish language from Mongolian language as we consider. Therefore, we have to quote several suggestions on the origination and meaning of the title by several researchers.

There were *Xian wang* (贤王 (*smart king*)) in the east and west under the rule of *chányu* <...>. Xiongnu people called the smart people as "*tutsi*" (屠耆 *Tu qī*). Therefore the oldest son of shaniyui was appointed as the east *tutsias* it was written in the sources [Таскин 1968: 40]. There are many explanations on this name and E. Pulliblack considered it as the ancient form of the title "*tegin*" and inherited by toba and ephtalit [Пуллиблэнк 1986: 53–56]. Therefore, as he considers, it comes from Xiongnu. However, Peter A. Boodberg noted that the princes of Toba are called *Chih-chin* (叱斤 *чжицзинь*) 直勤 (or 𪛗) in 95, Sun shu and in 57, Nyantsishu restoring its pronunciation

as *d'əjk-g'əjn* (B. Karlgren. Analytic Dictionary of Sino-Japanese, 1220, 389). It corresponds fully with the *t'ê-chin* (*tetszini*) in the sources of the Tang dynasty period and with 特勤-*d'əjk-g'əjn* — "*tigin, t̃agin* (тигин, тэгин)" of Turkey in Orkhon and also with "*čigin* (чигин)" prince in Mongolia [Boodberg 1936: 172]. Lu Maotsai expanded the research of this title as it became Turkish "*tigin*" that was passed by Toba people in the Jujan period. He also considered Uchida and Gimpū are the *tschi-k'in* [*zhi-qin*] in Jujan and *tsch'i-k'in* [*chi-qin*] is similar to the *t'ê-k'in* (*tegin*). Therefore his consideration is analogical with the explanation by Boodberg [Батсүрэн 2009: 171]. As Ts. Khandsuren considered that the title 直勤 "*Cjichjeni*" used by Toba people also used in the Turk period being inherited thanks to Jujan people that is confirmed by the king title "*tigin*" [Хандсүрэн: 2005: 37]. Moreover, A. Schuessler restored the 直勤 — (*chjitszini, zhi-qin*) as MC. *ɖjək-gjən* (Сүю, Тан МЭ VII) LH. **dik-gin* (latest Han dynasty I-III century AD) [Schuessler 2007: 616, 430]. Therefore, the word "*chigin*" was inherited up to the Turk period almost without serious change. Its pronunciation became firm in the Toba people period but the presence of the title in the Hunnu period is not clear.

Researchers noticed that this title was inherited by Kidan people after Turks. For example, in the work "History of five genesis" by CyueTszuichlen it was said that seven thousand riders were sent to Dinchjou under the command of teligun (*tiini*). It is connected to the *tegin, tigin* that was written with the name of young member of a family in the Orkhon inscription. In the Kidan dictionary this word is explained as "a governor-clerk in the emperor's tribe". The title *tiini* was used by Kidan people until the state formation <...> the title *tiini* is considered as a very high rank position as explained by V. S. Taskin [Таскин 1984: 179, 380].

Yu. Boldbaatar made an interesting explanation of the word *tigin/chigin*. He noticed that "*chigan*" in the name Batachigan in the Secret history of the Mongols and the "*chegeen*" in the chegeen and yellow man in the legend of Alan-goo mother that have meaning "*white*" express genesis of the ancient Mongolian aristocrats that come from the heaven [Болдбаатар 2004: 57]. As he thinks the *tigin/chigin* considered by us means the genesis from heaven, in other words "white" ethnic. From very ancient time the princes in all states of nomads in the territory of Mongolia in different periods considered

that they have high “white” genesis and therefore high rank title *tigin/chigin* have kept stable.

As we mentioned above Rashid-ad Din explained the high rank title Chinggis as ‘chin’ means ‘firm’ and the word ‘Chinggis’ also means ‘firm’ <...> but it is the plural of the word ‘chin’ only the consonant “g” was let in as a separator. Moreover, he confirmed his meaning explaining it is same to the Persian word *shahan shah* or king of kings. The analogical argument is made by H. Beckvit who argued the “*tigin*” in Turk language can be “chigin”, “chinggis” in Mongolian language. As it was mentioned above this “chigin” was appeared among the Toba people and came to Mongolia period being inherited by Jujian, Turk and Kidan people as the title has given to princes, the white high rank aristocrats.

As we know the title CHINGGIS given to our Great khan was created in the way of adding the plural suffix “s” to the word “chigin” that expresses the high rank white ethnic aristocrats of Mongols same to the argument by the big Persian recorder. In brief it is *chigin + s = chigins*{Chinggis}. Its meaning is the whitest from all whites, the highest from all highs and the purest from all pure in other words the highest prince of all high rank princes. Temuulin was 28 years old young “prince” when this high rank title was given to him in the Khurildai in the Basin of Kherlen River in the year of Rooster.

To the purpose, the idea by me about the name of the genesis “borjigin” the suffix “jigin” means “white” as Yu. Boldbaatar decoded. However “bor” {бур, бър, бөр} word root has same meaning with the word “*bürün*” that was written in the Secret history of Mongols many times. As D. Tseerensodnom interpret this word had the following meanings of the axillary verbs: § 59-was, were, §107-to be, § 106- *am/is/are*, § 150-*am/is/are* § 162-was, were, § 196-self, § 201- *am/is/are*, § 202- *am/is/are*, § 203-made, § 227- but, § 276-how and as Sh.Choimaa §107-to be, § 106- *am/is/are*, § 150-*am/is/are*, § 162-was, § 196- *am/is/are*, § 200-being, § 201-*am/is/are*, § 224-burun (was), § 227- *burun* (was), § 228-each, § 276-how. In brief, the word *bürün* means *has been, since* or *really*. For example, in the § 227 *jarliq sonoasqa`asu bürün daba`asu jarliq-un yosu`ar kesik ho`ara`asu kesikten aldaltan boltuqai!* [Rachewiltz 1972] is interpreted as “*Since* *khishigten* had order to be in the watch he cannot be absent not to be guilty”. Therefore,

the name of the tribe “borjigin” has meaning *bürün + jigin* in other words, “*real white*”, “*became white (high)*”.

The word *Chigin / tigin* in Mongolian language has meaning “white” and has inherited by Mongolian nomadic states almost without change since the Toda people in the territory of Mongolia as a title given to high rank princes. The title “Chinggis” given to young Temuujin is the plural form of the word *chigin*. In brief, *chigin+s = chigins/chinggis*.

Conclusion:

The title *čigin/tigin* has meaning white and related with the Mongol word *čayan* (white). Beginning from the Toba Wei (386–535) state this title was transferred among the Mongolic-speaking nomadic states, as the title for the high-ranked princes. As we suggest, the title given to young Temüjin, *Činggis* is originated from this old title (plural form of the title *čigin*). In other words, it means ‘many princes’ or ‘the whitest’. *čigin+s = čigins/činggis*

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Титул Ch(t)igin или Chinggis

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Аннотация. Автор исследует версии этимологии титула «Чингис» и отмечает, что количество и качество исследований по этому вопросу достигли уровня, когда следует классифицировать и упорядочить их на основе анализа историографии. Большинство исследователей считают титул Чингис-хана новым названием. Наиболее распространены среди исследователей точки зрения, согласно которым титул «Чингис» рассматривается как произошедший: 1) от слова *тэнгис* ('океан'), пришедшего из языка древних тюрков; 2) от слова *чин* ('крепкий'); 3) от словосочетания *чингис тэнгри*, связанного с шаманскими верованиями; 4) от титула *чань-ю* (*шаньюй*) ('сын неба') у хуннов, который был унаследован монголами в искаженном виде и получил форму «Чингис».

Однако, по мнению автора, все перечисленные точки зрения не подкрепляются основательными аргументами. Автор выдвигает собственную гипотезу относительно титула «Чингис». Он считает, что этот титул великого монгольского хана происходит от термина *чигин* / *chigin* (*tigin* / *тигин*), традиционно непрерывно наследуемого монгольскими кочевниками с древних времен. Слово *чигин/чаган/чэгэн* имеет значение «белый» в монгольском языке. Первые упоминания этого слова встречаются в источниках, относящихся к государствам тобасцев и сяньбийцев, в форме 直勤 'Cjichjen'. Автор считает, что титул, которым в этих государствах наделялись представители аристократии (или «белой кости»), обозначал «Цагаан» ('Белый'). Позже древние тюрки продолжали использовать этот титул в форме «тегин» и наделяли этим титулом членов правящей династии, которые не наследовали престол главы государства. Таким образом, присвоение титула «чигин» ('белый') началось со времен тобасцев и сяньбийцев, и обычай этот восходит к традиции именовать представителей «белой кости», т.е. представителей правящей семьи. Этот титул передавался предками монголов из поколения в поколение до периода правления Чингис-хана.

Ключевые слова: титулы, *чаган-чэгэн-ж/чигин* ('белый'), тегин, тийни, чигинс, Чингис, боржигин