Language and Literature – Japanese and the Other Altaic Languages

Studies in Honour of Roy Andrew Miller on His 75th Birthday

Edited by
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Old Japanese *FaFuri* 'Priest, Shaman' and Yakut *aba* 'Poison'

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I

It is surely not easy at first sight to imagine how words with two meanings as different as 'poison' and 'priest' could be associated etymologically with each other. In our *Geschichte des jakutischen Vokalismus*[1] we proposed PT *$\bar{a}bo$ as an etymon of Yak. *aba* '1. poison; 2. bitterness'. Now, we think, however, that this reconstruction may be somewhat altered (*$\bar{a}bo$ → *abo) and more profoundly analysed which will make it possible to connect the Yakut word with OJ *FaFuri* 'priest' (> *hafuri* [11th/12th c.][2] = the NJ reading-convention *hōri* 'Priester der Suwa-Schreine'[3]). Let us at first examine the phonetic aspects of the PT *$\bar{a}bo$.

There exists no discrepancy between *$\bar{a}$- in PT *$\bar{a}bo$ on the one hand and *a*- in Yak. *aba*, on the other because, in the Yakut phonetic history, long vowels of the first syllable of the base noun were shortened after a derivational suffix had been added, as in the well known example: Yak. *biäs* 'five' (< *$b\ddot{a}s$) vs. *bähis* 'fifth' (< *bäsis* < *$b\ddot{a}\ddot{s}i\ddot{c}$ < *$b\ddot{a}\ddot{s}+i\ddot{c}$ = other Tkc. languages: *$b\ddot{a}s+in+\ddot{c}$). It was Trkm. *$\bar{a}vy$* 'poison' which seemed to force a long vowel in the first syllable of the asterisk form. On the other hand, there is a tendency in Turkic languages for the lengthening of short open vowels if they are followed by a syllable with a close vowel (e.g. Khak. *at* 'horse' vs. *$\bar{a}dym$* 'my horse'; *xol* 'arm' vs. *$x\bar{o}ly$* 'his arm'). Even if the tendency is first of all typical of Siberian Turkic languages, one has to reckon with its sporadic examples in non-Siberian languages, as well, which

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1 STACHOWSKI 1993.
2 MILLER/NAUMANN 1994, 33, fn. 3.
3 MILLER/NAUMANN 1994, 145.

would possibly allow us to modify our reconstruction in **abo* (for another possibility of explaining the long vowel in Trkm. *āvy* see 4.3).

The final **-o* of the reconstruct seems to be the best solution to the *-a ~ -u* alternation, as in Yak. *aba* vs. Anat. *avu* 'poison', see (4.4); cf. also OK **pap+o-* in § 5.

2

Let us now have a look at the previous etymological work concerning Yak. *aba*. Interestingly enough, all the reconstructions proposed so far can be divided into two groups: [1] *bg*-type etymologies in the first half of the 20th century and [2] *g*-type etymologies in its second half.

VILHELM GRØNBECH seems to have been the first linguist that proposed a concrete asterisk form of the Yakut word: "[. . .] these forms [i.e. first of all Yak. *aba* and New Uig. *ōga ~ oga*] taken together yield an original **ab; aba* and *oya* are identical, going back to **abga*".[4] The same was repeated in NÉMETH 1914, 63.

In 1949, i.e. almost precisely in the middle of the century, GUSTAF J. RAMSTEDT connected Mo. *ag* '1. strength (in poison, brandy, tobacco); 2. poison' with Uig. Ott. Čag. *agu* 'poison' but, typically enough, neither with Yak. *aba* nor with New Uig. *oya*.[5] It was, maybe, the last work in which the **ap+* words were not mixed with **āg+* words.

MARTTI RÄSÄNEN proposed in 1969 a reconstructed form **āγu* both for Yak. *aba*, New Uig. *ōya* (LE COQ) ~ *oya* (RADLOFF) and for Čag. *agu*.[6] The phonetic shape of **āγu* does not, however, fit very well the Yakut word. Neither *-b-* is identical with **-g-* (RÄSÄNEN used the letter <γ> merely as a symbol of the velar allophone of the stop /g/), nor can *-a* readily be traced to **-u*.

In 1974, É.V. SEVORTJAN tried to trace all the words in question back either to a nominal stem **āg* '1. poison; 2. bitter' or to a verbal **āg-* 'to poison'.[7] In the rich lexical material he had gathered, there are, however, words which cause essential phonetic problems. One of them is Anat. *avğı*

~ avu 'poison', a word both variants of which are (ibid.) derived from **av-* + **+gu*. We feel compelled to raise two objections against this etymology.

First of all, the problem why **-vg-* yielded *-v-* if the combination of a consonant with a *-g-* between two vowels is quite normal in Turkic languages (to cite only one example from Lit. Tksh.: *kavga* 'quarrel'). Somewhat anticipating, we would instead propose **ap+gu* as the etymon of *avğı* (see 4.3) and **ap+o* as that of *avu* (see 4.4).

Another objection concerns the mutual relationship between the stems **av-* and **āg-*. They both were proposed by SEVORTJAN on one and the same page of his dictionary but neither the **ā- > *a-* shortening nor the **-g- > *-v-* change was commented upon.

Under the same headword SEVORTJAN writes on the Yakut word as follows: "*aba < *ab- + -a?*".[8] It seems much more plausible to connect the Anat. **av+* with Yak. **ab+* rather than with the hypothetical **āg(-)* (and its Mongolian counterparts, see below).

In 1978, STANISŁAW KAŁUŻYŃSKI tried to avoid the *-b- ~ -v- ~ -g-* problem by suggesting a bilabial stop in the etymon **aβu >* Yak. *aba*.[9] It is true, he mentions Trkm. *āvy* with its long *ā* but he does not solve the problem of its origin. Moreover, there is probably still another problem involved in this etymology. KAŁUŻYŃSKI (ibid.) writes as follows: Yak. *aba* 'poison' = Mo. *ag* '1. poison; 2. bitterness'. If the Yakut word is to be understood as a Mongolian loan word, then the Yakut proto-form **aβu* seems to call for a Mo. **agu* which, in its turn, confronts us once again with both the phonetic problems presented above: *-g-* vs. *-b-* and *-u* vs. *-a*.

3

It was already in 1960 that N. POPPE reconstructed the proto-form of Mo. *ab*, Middle Mo. *hab* as **pap* 'Zauber' = Yak. *ap* 'Hexerei',[10] a suggestion which has in every respect been ignored by other scholars. On the one hand, Yak. *ap* has, as it seems, always been viewed as a loan from Mongolian. On the other hand, the possibility of connecting Yak. *aba* 'poison'

4   GRØNBECH 1902, 68f., § 65.
5   RAMSTEDT 1949, 4.
6   RÄSÄNEN 1969, 9a.
7   SEVORTJAN 1974, I, 67.

8   SEVORTJAN 1974, I, 67.
9   KAŁUŻYŃSKI 1978, 6.
10 POPPE 1960, 43.

with Yak. *ap* 'whitchcraft, magic, sorcery' appears to have been fully over-looked. Thirdly, only after thirty years, the question about the further etymology of the proto-form **pap* was picked up (and solved). In order to understand the problem better, we are going to begin with the last-mentioned aspect of the topic.

In their extremely interesting study on OJ *FaFuri* 'priest', R. A. MILLER and N. NAUMANN examine carefully a great deal of lexical material which belongs here and they etymologize the PA **pap*—for the first time after POPPE's publication of his reconstruction—as a loan word from Middle Chin. **/pi̯ap/*, phonetically **[pi̯wăp]* > Modern Chin. *fa* '1. law, model; 2. style, fashion; 3. religion'.[11] The same stem **pap* > Modern Tkc. **ap* is attested in numerous Turkic verbs, as e.g. (PT **ab+(u)rā-* >) Čag. *arba-* 'hexen, bezaubern' = Tel. *arba-* 'zanken, schelten' = Yak. *arbā-* '1. den bösen Geistern unter Mitwirkung des Schamanen ein Stück Vieh verweigern; 2. jemandes bösen Krankheitsdämon in ein Opfertier überführen [. . .]', and also in secondary nominal derivatives, as Čag. *arbag* 'Lüge, Betrug', Tel. *arbyš* 'Murren, Zauberei', Šr. *orba* 'Trommelschlägel', etc.[12]

Nothing can be said about Old Uig. *apra-* because in RÖHRBORN 1981 (169a) only a reference to Old Uig. *opra-* can be found: "alter Fehler für oder Var[iante] von → *opra-*"; however RÖHRBORN's *Uigurisches Wörterbuch* has yet to reach the letter <o>. But it is beyond doubt that Old Uigur attestations like *arvyš* '1. [Subst.] magische Praktik, Zauberformel, Zaubertext; 2. [Adj.] magisch, Zauber-', *arvyščy* '1. [Subst.] Zauberer, Beschwörer, Dhāraṇī-Kenner; 2. [Adj.] Zauberer-', *arvyšlyg* [Adj.] 'mit . . .-Zauber'[13] also belong to this word family and that they point to a verb like **abrā-* or **abyr-*, cf. also [1] Dolg. *abar-* 'sich ärgern, böse werden' (< Dolg. **aba* = Yak. *aba* 'poison'; as to the meaning cf. Pol. *za-klinać* '1. to bewitch, to cast a spell; 2. to entreat' vs. *prze-klinać* 'to curse, swear', as well as Pol. *za-kląć* '1. to bewitch, to cast a spell; 2. to curse, swear'); [2] Kirg. *arba-* 'zavoraživat', zakoldovyvat', zaklinat'' and *arbak* 'duchi svjatych ili čtimych predkov'.[14]

The Ottoman-Turkish counterpart of Čag. *arbag* 'Lüge, Betrug' was *arpağ* [arpaɣ] ~ [arpā] 'zaklinanie, koldovstvo',[15] but still more interesting

is another derivative, namely Ott. *arpağcı* = [arpaɣɣy] ~ [arpāɣy] 'šaman, znaxar', koldun; volšebnik',[16] a word which obviously was fairly early contaminated with Ott. *arpa* 'barley' and therefore misinterpreted as Ott. *arpağy* (i.e. [arpāɣy], in lieu of **arpağcı* = **arpaɣɣy* [arpāɣy]) 'eine Art Wahrsager, die sich zu ihrer Kunst der Gerste bedienen'.[17]

At the same time it should be emphasized that this verb must not be confused with Kar. *abra-* 'to protect, guard, defend' (= Šr. *abyra-* 'to calm down') < **abyra-*[18] < *abyr* 'peace, harmony'[19].

As can be seen, the Turkic languages seem to attest exclusively derivatives of the PA **pap*. This same holds true for almost all other Altaic languages, as well, so that MILLER and NAUMANN could write as follows:

> "Das so übernommene altaische Nomen **pap* unterliegt einer Vielzahl denominaler Verben und deren sekundären Derivaten in allen altaischen Sprachen, den 'inneren' wie den 'äußeren' [. . .]"[20]

On the other hand, cf. also Mo. *ab* and Yak. *ap* (see above), the direct descendants of the reconstructed PA **pap* and note that it remains (for the time being?) open whether Yak. *ap* is a Mongolian loan word or a direct reflex of **pap*.

We could, then, find modern reflexes of the stem **pap* as denominal verbs and deverbal nominal derivatives (i.e. **pap* → verb; verb → nominal). What is missing, is an example of a direct denominal nominal derivative (i.e. **pap* → nominal). As we think, Yak. *aba* 'poison', see (4.4), seems to fill the gap very well.

4

If the PA stem was **pap* it had to yield **ap* in PT. An **+o* derivative of the stem (**ap+o*) yielded then *aba* in Yakut and possibly also *avu* in Anatolian-Turkish dialects. The -*g*- and -*v*- variants, however, should rather be

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11 MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 13 and fn. 7; the semantics of the whole word-nest is rather complicated, for details see ibid. 23, 77–91.
12 MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 15; for Old Uig. *apra-* (without metathesis!) see ibid., 18 f.
13 RÖHRBORN 1981, 217a–218b.
14 JUDACHIN 1985, 65.

15 BASKAKOV 1977, 64c.
16 BASKAKOV 1977; cf. also *arpağ* = [arpaɣ] ~ [arpā] 'incantation; charm' and *arpakçı* = [arpakčy] 'wizard, sorcerer' (HONY 1947, 18f.).
17 ZENKER 1866, 24b.
18 ZAJĄCZKOWSKI 1932, 160.
19 ZAJĄCZKOWSKI 1932, 131.
20 MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 98.

interpreted as a different morphological formation, i.e. one with the *+go (or *+gu) suffix: *ap+go > *abgo, *ap+gu > *abgu. The differentiation between *apo and *apgo seems to be rather unavoidable because *abgo would have, in Yakut, been changed into *abga, and then further > *abā (as to *Cga > Yak. Cā cf. *bulgak > Yak. bylāx 'Trog', *uðgar- > Yak. utār- 'treiben, weg-/ fort-/jagen').[21]

Concerning the long vowel (as in Trkm. *āvy*), it can be explained as a secondary result of the *-bg- > -gb- metathesis, see (4.3).

Let us recapitulate now what has been suggested above:

(4.1) Middle Chin. */piăp/ > PA *pap > [a] Mo. *ab*; [2] PT *ap. Unfortunately, the etymological status of Yak. *ap* 'sorcery' remains open, i.e. either Chin. */piăp/ > Mo. *ab* > Yak. *ap*, or Chin. */piăp/ > [1] PT *ap (> Yak. *àp*); [2] Mo. *ab*.

(4.2) PT *ap + *+go/a > *abgo/a > (with a vowel metathesis: *abgo > *obga, or without metathesis but with a secondary rounding of the initial vowel [under the influence of *b*]: *abga > *ābga >) Uig. *ōga* (> and ~ *oga*).

(4.3) PT *ap + *+gu > *abgu (> *āgu or directly > OT *agu*) > *abgy (> Anat. *avğı*), and further on: with metathesis > *agby (> Trkm. *āvy*).

(4.4) PT *ap + *+o > [1] *abo (> Yak. *aba*); [2] *apu > *avu (> Anat. *avu*). Students of the Ottoman-Turkish philology may think of the opposition: Ott. *ady* 'his name' (< *āt+y) vs. *aty* 'his horse' (< *at+y), when seeing the voiced consonant of Anat. *avu*. However, the -*v*- does not necessarily point to an original long vowel *ā-. If the intervocalic *-p- (in *ap+o, see 4.4) became spirantized it could not possibly yield an *-f- because there existed no *-f- in Oguz languages. The only consonant which could have resulted from the spirantization of the original *VpV was, then, a voiced -*v*-. This is why Anat. *avu* cannot be viewed as parallel to Ott. *ady* < *āt+y 'his name'.

Some phonetic details can possibly still be changed or more precisely specified in the scheme above (so e.g. the problem of *+o or *+a in the suffix; cf. in this context also the OK derivative *pap+o- in § 5; another

possible change is interpreting *abgu as a result of the phonetic development of *abgo, i.e. *abgo > [1] *ābga; [2] *abgu > *abgy > *agby). Nevertheless, the scheme contains all the decisive elements and guidelines of the morphological and etymological development. It allows us to make one more inference:

(4.5) It does not make much sense to discuss the stem *āg 'bitter' in tandem with *ap 'witchcraft', and the (most?, all?) Turkic words for 'poison' presented above should better be derived from *ap and separated from *āg.

5

If OJ *FaFuri* 'priest' is a deverbal +*i* nominal from the verbal stem *FaFur- < PA *pap+(u)r-[22] < *pap (< Chin. */piăp/), then the three first sounds of *FaFuri*, i.e. *FaF* correspond etymologically to Mo. *ab*, Tkc. *ap*, Yak. *ab*+ (in *aba*); interestingly enough, the morphological structure of the OJ verb *FaF+ur- is almost identical with that of Dolg. *ab+a+r-* 'sich ärgern, böse werden'. The PA stem *pap survived also in an Old Korean poem, in which it is attested as *pap+o-sälß'on* 'ihr werdet geopfert', i.e. "eine adnominale, honorativ-unterwürfige Formation an einem Sekundärstamm auf -*o*-"[23] and, on the other hand, in Tungusic languages, as e.g. in Nan. *papō ~ papun* (~ dial. *fafō*) 'prohibition' = Ma. *fafun* '1. id.; 2. law'.[24] Thus, the stem *pap is attested in all five groups of Altaic languages.

It is interesting how differentiated the meanings of the *pap derivatives are. However, traces of the original meaning 'law, rule; religion' and its variety 'witchcraft, magic, sorcery' can be seen in all attestations, so also in Yak. *aba* 'poison', probably < *"magic drink/substance' (cf. Lat. *pōtiō* 'Getränk, Gifttrank, Liebestrank, Heiltrank' :: Fr. Engl. *poison* 'Gift').

21   STACHOWSKI 1993, 36f., § 2.6, 2.9, 2.10.

22   MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 22.
23   MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 26, 34.
24   MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 86; CINCIUS 1949, 116, 318.

Abbreviations

1. Languages

Alt.	Altaic	OJ	Old Japanese
Anat.	Anatolian-Turkish dialect(s)	OK	Old Korean
Čag.	Chagatai	OT	Old Turkic
Chin.	Chinese	Ott.	Ottoman-Turkish
Dolg.	Dolgan	PA	Proto-Altaic
Engl.	English	Pol.	Polish
Fr.	French	PT	Proto-Turkic
Kar.	Karaim	Šr.	Shor
Khak.	Khakas	Tel.	Teleut
Kirg.	Kirghiz	Tg.	Tungusic
Lat.	Latin	Tkc.	Turkic
Lit.	literary	Tksh.	Turkish
Ma.	Manchu	Trkm.	Turkmen
Mo.	Mongolian	Uig.	Uigur
NJ	New Japanese	Yak.	Yakut.

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