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[Materials and Research Notes]

A Shinekhen Buryat Text: “A Liar Who Tells Seventy Lies”

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1. Introduction

This article provides a short narrative told by a Shinekhen Buryat speaker, with interlinear gloss. Shinekhen Buryat is a dialect of the Buryat language. Most of the Buryat people live in Russia. By contrast, the Shinekhen Buryat community (Shi. *sʲinexeen borʲaad* or *sʲinexeenei borʲaad*) inhabits the region around the Shinekhen River Basin in Hulunbuir (Chi. *hulunbeier*) City, Inner Mongolia, People’s Republic of China. In addition to the Shinekhen Buryat people, Shinekhen Buryat is also the mother tongue of another ethnic group called Khamnigan Evenki (Shi. *xamnigan* or *tunguus*), which inhabits the area around the Shinekhen River basin. These two ethnic groups are descendants of refugees from the USSR. For more information about the socio-linguistic and linguistic outlines of Shinekhen Buryat, please see Yamakoshi (2011), which is available online. The phonemic inventory of Shinekhen Buryat is as follows: vowels: *a*[a ~ a], *o*[o ~ o], *ɔ*, *e*[e ~ ə], *u*, *ø*, *i*; consonants: *p*^{*}, *b*, *t*, *d*, *k*^{*}, *c*^{*}[ts], *f*^{*}[ɸ], *s*, *z*, *x*, *g*, *h*, *l*, *w*, *j*, *r*, *m*, *n*, *ŋ* (consonants marked with * are phonemes that appear only in loan words). Consonants except *h*, *w*, *j*, and *ŋ* have corresponding palatalized consonants which are marked with *ʲ* to the right of the consonant letter (e.g. *bʲ*).

The text presented here was narrated by Ms. Galzuud Ts. Dogarmaa, a native speaker born in 1933, on March 10, 2006. The duration of the text is 2’47”. The author, Yasuhiro Yamakoshi, recorded it and did both the phonological and grammatical analyses.

Ms. Dogarmaa kept collecting and memorizing several genres of Buryat oral literature (e.g., folktales, proverbs, riddles, and songs). She was also a good storyteller and told the author much oral literature she knew. Some of these narratives have been published as part of the studies of Yamakoshi (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024, forthcoming) and in the online database called “Online Text of Mongolic Languages” (Yamakoshi 2020–). The text here will be uploaded and published in Yamakoshi (2020–) as well as other narratives.

The text is presented in §2. Each line of the text is presented in a three-line format such as 1. Phonological representation with segmentation of morphemes (in *italic* style), 2. Grammatical gloss for each morpheme (in Sans Serif style), and 3. Free translation.

In Yamakoshi (2024), the author has separated the text in each “sentence” unit

according to the conditions such as:

- a) Principally, a sentence break is inserted where a predicate appears, either accompanied by a sentence-final particle, a finite verb, an independent word attached with a predicative pronominal enclitic, or a combination of these elements.
- b) The criterion in (a) does not apply if noun phrases or adverbial phrases controlled by the predicate are supplementally added after the predicate. Here, the sentence break is put after the supplementary phrase.

We observe cases where there is no phonetic pause or the pause is very brief at the point where these two conditions apply. Although pauses are expected at sentence breaks, clearly different sentences are uttered in succession without pauses. In other words, sentence breaks do not match both phonological and syntactic aspects. The question of how to separate “sentences” in Shinekhen Buryat and other Mongolic languages remains open for further study.

2. Text

Date of recording: 2006-03-10

Place: Hailar district, Hulunbuir City, Inner Mongolia, People’s Republic of China.

Speaker: Ms. Galzood Ts. Dogarmaa (born in 1933)

Plot: One day *Dalan Xodalsha*, the liar who tells seventy lies was shepherding camels and found that a female camel had disappeared. He looked for it and found it in the sea. After bringing it back, he noticed that a camel’s tail was almost reaching the heaven. He climbed up to the heaven along the camel’s tail. People in heaven’s world were so pleased that they slaughtered and feasted on a fly they used as food. *Dalan Xodalsha* ate the fly and came back to his hometown.

- [1] *tere, øør-iij-g-øø ab-ain tur-øø-gui-de,*
 that self-GEN-E-REFL father-GEN be.born-PTCP.IPFV-NEG-D/L
ubgesⁱ-iij-g-ee ulgii-tei bai-xa-da, ᠠᠳᠳᠠ
 grandfather-GEN-E-REFL cradle-PROP be-PTCP.FUT-D/L now
elense ubgen-iij-g-ee temee adoo-l-z’a
 grand grandfather-GEN-E-REFL camel:INDF horse.herd-VBLZ-CVB.IPFV
bai-g-aa =han =bi, ge-z’ie ene, dalan xodals’a
 be-E-PTCP.IPFV =PFV =1SG say.that-CVB.IPFV this seventy liar:NOM
jari-xa.
 talk-PTCP.FUT

“‘Before my father’s birth, when my grandfather was in his cradle, I have shepherded

my great-grandfather's camel," *Dalan Xodalsha* (the liar who tells seventy lies) talks so.'

- [2] *ii-g-eed* *nege uder temee*
do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV one day camel:INDF
adool-z'ai-xa-da *nege tur-xe*
horse.herd-VBLZ-PROG-PTCP.FUT-D/L one be.born-PTCP.FUT
ingjen =in *dotoo bai-g-aa ge-ne.*¹
female.camel:NOM =3:POSS shortage be-E-PTCP.IPFV say.that-IND.PRS
'One day shepherding camels, he noticed that a female camel which was to bear a baby had disappeared, (they say so).'

- [3] *ii-g-eed* *bid'ier-eed* *gar-xa-da* *gazaa*
do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV search-CVB.PFV go.out-PTCP.FUT-D/L outside
dalai-n *ɔɔɔɔ, dɔɔɔr dalai-n gazaa bɔɔɔgɔ-l-ɔɔɔ*
sea-GEN inside inside sea-GEN outside baby.camel-VBLZ-CVB.PFV
bai-z'ai-na ge-ne.
be-PROG-IND.PRS say.that-IND.PRS
'Then he went outside to search for the mother camel and found that she was giving birth to a baby camel into the sea, (they say so).'

- [4] *ii-g-eed* *gar-aad* *ɔɔi-ɔɔɔ =le*
do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV go.out-CVB.PFV reach-CVB.PFV =only
dalai-jii getl-eed, ɔɔi-ɔɔɔ =le, ɔɔɔɔ
sea-ACC cross-CVB.PFV reach-CVB.PFV =only now
bɔɔɔgɔ-jii =n exe-de =n tegne-xe
baby.camel-ACC =3:POSS mother-D/L =3:POSS load-PTCP.FUT
ge-xe-de neg-xen daa-xa-gui
say.that-PTCP.FUT-D/L one-DMN bear-PTCP.FUT-NEG
bɔɔɔgɔ-j-ɔɔ.
baby.camel-ACC-REFL
'And so he set out and went across the sea, trying to load the baby camel on its mother, but he couldn't.'

- [5] *ii-xe-de =n* *exe-jii =n*
do.like.this-PTCP.FUT-D/L =3:POSS mother-ACC =3:POSS

¹ The word *gene* is often used at the sentence-final position in such story-telling to indicate "hearsay". In some cases, the translation may not be quite natural, but in this article, the sentences that use the word *gene* have been translated with '(they say so)' added to the ending.

<i>bətəgən-də =n</i>	<i>tegn-eed</i>	<i>ab-aad</i>
baby.camel-D/L =3:POSS	load-CVB.PFV	take-CVB.PFV
<i>iri-ee =bi</i>	<i>ge-ne,</i>	<i>munəə.</i>
come-PTCP.IPFV =1SG	say.that-IND.PRS	now

‘Then he loaded the mother camel on her baby camel and brought them now, (they say so).’

- [6] *ii-g-eed* *temeen-d-ee* *iri-eed*
do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV camel-D/L-REFL come-CVB.PFV
bai-z'ai-tar-aa *gente* *xar-aŋ*
be-PROG-CVB.TERM-REFL suddenly see-CVB.MOD
ge-xe-de =n *nege* *temeen-ei* *huul*
say.that-PTCP.FUT-D/L =3:POSS one camel-GEN tail:NOM
tengeri-te *tol-aad* *bai-z'ai-na* *ge-ne.*
heaven-D/L prop.up-CVB.PFV be-PROG-IND.PRS say.that-IND.PRS
‘(They say that) thus, when he returned to the herd of camels, he looked up at the sky and saw a camel’s tail almost reaching the heaven.’

- [7] *ii-xe-de =n* *tere* *temeen-eiŋ-g-ee* *huul-eer*
do.like.this-PTCP.FUT-D/L =3:POSS that camel-GEN-E-REFL tail-INS
damzi-aad *ii-g-eed =le,* *tengeri deere*
climb.up-CVB.PFV do.like.this-CVB.PFV =only heaven over
gar-s'a-ba =bi, *ge-ne.*
go.out-PFV-PST =1SG say.that-IND.PRS
‘(They say that) so he climbed up to the heaven along the camel’s tail.’

- [8] *ii-g-eed* *gar-aad* *jab-z'ai-tar* *nege*
do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV go.out-CVB.PFV go-PROG-CVB.TERM one
jum,² *put* *put* *g-eed* *siemee³*
thing:INDF ONM ONM say.that-CVB.PFV voice:INDF?
gar-aad =le *bai-na* *ge-ne.*
go.out-CVB.PFV =only be-IND.PRS say.that-IND.PRS

² In this sentence, since it is assumed that this *jum* is the subject corresponding to the predicate *baina*, it is expected that the nominative form *juumen* should appear. However, when the subject and the predicate are positioned far apart, case form mismatch often occurs in this way.

³ Since the noun *siemee* ‘voice’ found in [8] and [9] is the subject of the verb *gar-* which is an intransitive verb, it should appear in the nominative form *siemeen*, not in the indefinite accusative form. However, in idiomatic SV expressions, the word-ending *n* is sometimes dropped and realized in the same form as the indefinite accusative form in this way. Whether this can be regarded as an indefinite accusative form or not requires consideration.

ge-ne.

say.that-IND.PRS

‘And they slaughter and entertain him with a fly, (they say so).’

- [14] *ene niid-deg ene batgana =sie =tee.*
this fly-PTCP.HBT this fly =SFP =SFP

‘This flying fly, you know.’

- [15] *ii-g-eer tere boz'gar mād-ɔɔr oorga*
like.this-E-INS that stout wood-INS horse.catching.pole:INDF
x-eed box-ain arah-aar goib
make-CVB.PFV ox-GEN skin-INS leather.string:INDF
x-eed, ii-g-eed tere baitahan batgana
make-CVB.PFV do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV that for.slaughter fly:INDF
oorga-l-xa-da =n taha
horse.catching.pole-VBLZ-PTCP.FUT-D/L =3:POSS ONM
tat-aad =le jab-s'a-na ge-ne.
pull-CVB.PFV =only go-PFV-IND.PRS say.that-IND.PRS

‘Thus, they made a horse-catching pole out of thick wood and a cord out of male camel skin, and tried to catch a fly, but the fly cut the cord with a snap and escaped, (they say so).’

- [16] *ii-xe-de =n ene xubuun tarnaan-aar*
do.like.this-PTCP.FUT-D/L =3:POSS this boy:NOM pieplant-INS
oorga x-eed x'algaah-aar
horse.catching.pole:INDF make-CVB.PFV horse.mane-INS
goib x-eed =le x'aagal-tar
leather.string:INDF make-CVB.PFV =only (hawks.)cry-CVB.TERM
oorga-l-aad tat-aa =b'i,
horse.catching.pole-VBLZ-CVB.PFV pull-PTCP.IPFV =1SG
ge-ne, baitahan batgana-jii.
say.that-IND.PRS for.slaughter fly-ACC

‘So this boy (the liar) made a horse-catching pole out of pieplant and a cord out of a horse’s mane and caught the fly with the horse-catching pole so that the fly screamed, the fly for the feast, (they say so).’

- [17] *ii-g-eed =le baitahan batgan-aa al-aad*
do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV =only for.slaughter fly-REFL kill-CVB.PFV

mⁱaxa-jii =n *sⁱana-han.*
 meat-ACC =3:POSS boil-PTCP.PFV
 ‘Thus, they killed the fly and boiled its meat.’

[18] *tere* *xabhan =in* *xubθθ* *nebterxei* *ge-ne.*
 that rib:NOM =3:POSS edge penetrating say.that-IND.PRS
 ‘Its ribs are pierced through, (they say so).’

[19] *xubθθ* *xabhan* *ge-zⁱe* *bai-na =sⁱe =tee.*
 edge rib:NOM say.that-CVB.IPFV be-IND.PRS =SFP =SFP
 ‘There is a part called “*xubθθ xabhan* (edge rib).”’

[20] *ii-g-eer* *idⁱeel-eed =le* *urθθhen* *gotal-d-aa*
 like.this-E-INS eat-CVB.PFV =only one.side boots-D/L-REFL
gar-aiŋ-g-aa *təhɔ-l-sⁱ-ɔɔd* *gotal-aa*
 hand-GEN-E-REFL oil-VBLZ-PFV-CVB.PFV boots-REFL
tail-ool-aad *ont-aa =jum* *bai-na,*
 take.off-CAUS-CVB.PFV sleep-PTCP.IPFV =MOD be-IND.PRS
tere =sⁱni.
 that =2SG:POSS
 ‘Thus he ate the fly’s rib and wiped the grease from his hands with one of the boots
 he was wearing, took off his boots, and went to bed.’

[21] *ii-g-eed* *huni* *juumen* *nege* *tusⁱ* *gusⁱ*
 do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV night thing:NOM one ONM ONM
ge-ne.
 say.that-IND.PRS
 ‘Then, in the middle of the night, something is making a noise, “*tush, gush!*” (they
 say so)’

[22] *gente =le* *tur* *tar* *g-eed =le* *jun*
 suddenly =only ONM ONM say.that-CVB.PFV =only what:NOM
bɔl-zⁱai-g-aa =jum =b *g-eed =le*
 become-PROG-E-PTCP.IPFV =MOD =Q say.that-CVB.PFV =only
xar-xa-da =le *xɔjɔr* *gotal =in* *nansⁱal-zⁱai-na*
 see-PTCP.FUT-D/L =only two boots =3:POSS fight-PROG-IND.PRS
ge-ne.
 say.that-IND.PRS
 ‘Suddenly he heard the noise “*tur, tar,*” and when he looked to see what was going

on, he saw that one of the boots and the other were quarreling, (they say so).’

- [23] *s'am-da* *təhə* *tulxi-ee* *nam-da* *təhə*
 2SG-D/L oil:INDF oil-CVB.PFV 1SG-D/L oil:INDF
tulxi-ee-gui, *ge-z'ie,*
 oil-PTCP.IPFV-NEG say.that-CVB.IPFV
 ‘‘He greased you, but not me!’’

- [24] *ii-xe-de =n* *bəd-əd* *təhə*
 do.like.this-PTCP.FUT-D/L =3:POSS get.up-CVB.PFV oil:INDF
tulxi'e-hen *gotal-aa* *xəjər* *al'ga-d-aad,* *təhə*
 oil-PTCP.PFV boots-REFL two palm-VBLZ-CVB.PFV oil:INDF
tulxi-ee-gui *gotal-aa* *nege* *al'ga-d-aad,*
 oil-PTCP.IPFV-NEG boots-REFL one palm-VBLZ-CVB.PFV
ii-g-ee *ont-aa =b,* *ge-ne.*
 do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV sleep-PTCP.IPFV =1SG say.that-IND.PRS
 ‘So he got up, tapped one greased boot twice and the other un-greased boot once, and went back to sleep, (they say so).’

- [25] *ii-g-ee* *xəəre-be.*
 do.like.this-E-CVB.PFV talk-IND.PST
 ‘He told the story in this way.’

- [26] *juun-d-aa* *xari-z'a* *iri-ee =jum =bud =dee,*
 what-D/L-REFL come.back-CVB.IPFV come-PTCP.IPFV =MOD =SFP =SFP
n'otag-ta,
 homeland-D/L
 ‘Why did he come back to my hometown?’

- [27] *boo-z'a* *iri-ee =xe =dee.*
 go.down-CVB.IPFV come-PTCP.IPFV =FUT =SFP
 ‘He came down to his homeland.’

- [28] *gəj-ər* *xodal-aa* *xel-ne.*
 beautiful-INS lie-REFL tell-IND.PRS
 ‘He lies well.’

- [29] *dalan* *xodals'a* *xel-ne.*
 seventy liar:INDF tell-IND.PRS

‘*Dalan Xodalsha* (the liar who tells seventy lies) tells so.’

3. Notes

Here I would like to add a few explanations for readers to understand the story precisely.

3.1 As a variant of the tall tales

This folktale is a kind of tall tales, classified into 1875–1999 in the Aarne–Thompson–Uther type index (ATU index or AT index: Uther 2004). In the ATU index, this folktale can be classified as a combination of 1920D “Contest in Lying –Climbing to Heaven” and 1960M “The Great Animals or Great Object –The Great Insect” in particular. However, we cannot find similar tales in Lőrincz (1979) which classified many folktales of Mongolic people along with the AT index.

Because the scene is set in heaven, the story is consistently a wildly ridiculous tale. Interestingly, the people in heaven are herders just like the people on the Mongolian plateau. Therefore the audience can imagine the lifestyle of the people in heaven. Using something familiar as a comparison when we exaggerate the story is important. The size of various objects in heaven in this story seems to be considerably larger than the size of them on Earth. For example, the people in heaven live on flies, not cattle. It seems that flies are larger than cows which Buryats live on because people in heaven use a horse-catching pole to catch a fly in [15]–[16] and *Dalan Xodalsha* could only eat a rib of a fly in [19]–[20].

3.2 Cultural background

As I mentioned above, people in heaven are also the nomadic people. For example, they use a horse-catching pole to catch a fly. This pole is called *oorga* in Mongolian or Buryat (see Photo 1). Mongolian herders catch a horse by hooking the *oorga*’s string (called *goib* in [15] and [16], *xuib* in Mongolian, see Photo 2) around the horse’s neck. According to Ar’yaasüren (2000), the *oorga* is usually made of a long branch of white birch. Then a *xuib* which is made from cow tendon or deer neck skin is tied to the *oorga*. The *oorga* is usually 5–6 meters long (Ar’yaasüren 2000: 79–80). On the other hand, we can find in [15] that the *oorga* that the people in heaven use seems to be larger than that on Earth. After the *oorga* used by the people in heaven was broken in [15], *Dalan Xodalsha* made a new *oorga* with pieplant and horse’s mane in [16]. This looks much smaller than the *oorga* made of birch wood and cow tendon on Earth. This is because all the objects are so huge in heaven, even pieplants are as long and thick as birch planted on earth.

The scene of making felt in [8]–[11] is another example of nomadic culture on the Mongolian plateau. They beat and compress the sheared wool to make felt (see Picture 1 and Photo 3). Although there is no direct reference to it, the fact that the people in heaven

also beat the wool off the sheep suggests that the sheep are no larger than those on Earth. This is in contrast to the flies, which are larger.



Photo 1. A man with horse-catching pole called *oorga* (photo by Nobuyuki Nozawa at Töv Aimag in Mongolia, on January 2009)



Photo 2. *Oorga*'s string called *xuib* in Buryat/*goib* in Mongolian (photo by Nobuyuki Nozawa at Töv Aimag in Mongolia, on January 2009)



Picture 1. Process of making felt from sheared wool. Two persons beat wool on the right side of the picture (drawn by Wanjiliin Dawa born in 1937 at the Shinekhen River basin)



Photo 3. Beating wool (taken by Nobuyuki Nozawa at Xövsgöl Aimag in Mongolia, in 1992)

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Symbols & Abbreviations

-	affix boundary
=	clitic boundary
1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
ACC	accusative
CVB	converb
D/L	dative-locative
DMN	diminutive
E	epenthesis
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IND	indicative
INDF	indefinite accusative
INS	instrumental
IPFV	imperfective
MOD	modal/modality
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
ONM	onomatopoeia
PFV	perfective
POSS	possessive
PROG	progressive
PROP	propriative
PRS	present
PST	past
PTCP	participle
Q	interrogative marker
REFL	reflexive
SFP	sentence final particle

SG	singular
TERM	terminative
VLZ	verbalizer

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シネヘン・ブリヤート語テキスト：七十の嘘をつく嘘つき

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本稿はシネヘン・ブリヤート語による語りのテキストにグロス・英訳を付し、さらに背景となる牧畜文化に関する若干の注釈を付した言語資料である。語りの題材は「七十の嘘をつく嘘つき (*Dalan Xodalsha*) 」と呼ばれる民話である。これはいわゆる法螺吹き話に類するもので、天上界に行った主人公が天上界での出来事を語る構図で展開されている。録音は2006年3月10日、中国内モンゴル自治区フルンボイル市にて筆者がおこなった。

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