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ON SOME ALTAIC NAMES  
OF DWELLINGS

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## On Some Altaic Names of Dwellings

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The Altaic languages<sup>1</sup> do not have names of dwellings of common origin, spread in all or in most of the languages concerned. One of the few exceptions is Ev. V 471<sup>2</sup> *harān* »place for a dwelling, place for the hearth, fireplace; yurt, dwelling; encampment; bed», Ev. B 57<sup>3</sup> *harān* »a place owned by somebody», Ev. B 57 *harāmi* »a place abandoned by the inhabitants, a place from which people have moved to another place, a place in which a yurt used to be before», Lam. C 453<sup>4</sup> *harān* »sleeping place» = MT<sup>5</sup> *aran* »stable», Tob., Kūr., Bar., Chag., Kar. *aran* »anteroom, yard, cow-shed»<sup>6</sup> = Mo. *aran*

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations: Alt. — Altai Turkic, Az. — Azerbaijan Turkic, Bar. — Baraba, Bash. — Bashkir, Bur. — Buriat, CA — Common Altaic (Altaic »Ursprache»), CMo. — Common Mongolian, Chag. — Chaghatai, Crim. — Crimean Tatar, ET — Eastern Turki, Kach. — Kacha, Kalm. — Kalmuck, Kar. — Crimean Karaim, Kar. L — Karaim of Lutsk, Kaz. — Kazakh, Kh. — Khalkha, Kir. — Kirghiz, Koib. — Koibal, Küär. — Küärik, Kūr. — Kurama, Lam. — Lamut (Even), Ma. — Manchu, MMo. — Middle Mongolian, Mo. — Written Mongolian, MT — Middle Turkic, Nan. — Nanai (Goldi), Neg. — Negidal, Oroch. — Orochi, Orok. — Oroki, Osm. — Osman Turkish, Sag. — Sagai, Tel. — Teleut, Tob. — Tatar of Tobolsk, Turkm. — Turkmenian, Ul. — Ulcha (Olcha), Yak. — Yakut.

<sup>2</sup> Evenki (Tungus) after G. M. Vasilevič, *Évenkijsko-russkij slovar*, Moskva 1958. The numbers refer here and elsewhere to pages.

<sup>3</sup> Evenki of Barguzin after N. N. Poppe, *Materiali dlya issledovaniya tungusskogo yazika, Narečie barguzinskix tungusov*, Leningrad 1927.

<sup>4</sup> Lamut (Even) after V. I. Cincius i L. D. Rišes, *Russko-ëvenskij slovar*, Moskva 1952.

<sup>5</sup> Middle Turkic after Maḥmūd al-Kāšgharī, *vide* Besim Atalay, *Divanü Lûgat-it-türk dizini »Endeks*», Ankara 1943, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Unless the source is indicated, the Turkic forms are always quoted from Radloff's dictionary.

»people», MMo. *haran* < CA \**parān*. It should be remarked, in defense of this etymology established by Ramstedt, who compared the words in question with Korean *param* »wall, partition wall»<sup>1</sup>, that the semantic divergence »dwelling, yard» and »people» should not raise doubts in view of Latin *domus*, Greek *δῶμος* »house», Ionian *δμῶς* »prisoner of war, servant», *δμῶν* »maid servant», and Cretan *μνῶα* »serfs».<sup>2</sup> It should also be added that the MMo. term *haran* referred mostly to ordinary, subordinated people.<sup>3</sup> But this word is one of the few exceptions, and most words for all kinds of dwellings occur only in few Altaic languages, not having cognates in other Altaic languages and being strictly regional terms. Suffice it to say that Turkic \**āb* > *āv*, *ög*, *öi*, *üi*, *ü* »house» is not found in all Turkic languages: whereas it occurs in all the »proper» Turkic languages with the exception of Yakut, it does not occur in Chuvash.<sup>4</sup> It is also unknown in Mongolian and in the Manchu-Tungus languages.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. J. Ramstedt, *Studies in Korean Etymology*, Helsinki 1949, p. 190. Tsintsius compares the Tungus and Lamut forms with Neg. *palan* »floor», Oroch. *pala* id., Orok. *palla* id., Ul., Nan. *palā* id. Cf. Prof. V. I. Cincius, *Sravnitel'naya fonetika tunguso-mančžurskix yazikov*, Leningrad 1949, p. 156. This comparison raises, however, doubts in view of the correspondence *r = l* which otherwise does not occur and is not explained in Cincius's book. Mr. Unensechin of the University of Washington told me that in his native dialect, Khorchin, »floor» is also *p'alan*. The origin of this word being obscure, I chose to exclude Neg. etc., *palan* and Khorchin *p'alan* from discussion.

<sup>2</sup> J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3. Lieferung, Bern 1949, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *č'eri 'udun noyadda* »to the commanders of armies» versus *č'erig harana* »to the soldiers» (lit. »to the army people», obviously »ordinary people of the army»): N. Poppe, *The Mongolian Monuments in ḥP'ags-pa Script*, Second edition translated and edited by J. R. Krueger, Wiesbaden 1957, pp. 52–53. Cf. also *haran* »ordinary person» in N. N. Poppe, *Mongol'skij slovar' Mukaddimat al-Adab I–II*, Moskva-Leningrad 1938, p. 437.

<sup>4</sup> »Proper» Turkic languages are *z*- and *š*-languages, descendants of the *z*-dialect of Proto-Turkic. Chuvash is an *r*- and *l*-language, a descendant of the *r*-dialect of Proto-Turkic.

<sup>5</sup> Unless this word can be connected with MMo. *e'ede* »Zeltgerüst, Tür-rahmen», cf. E. Haenisch, *Wörterbuch zu Mangḥol un niuca tobca'an* (Yüan-

Some regional terms for dwellings have been discussed in literature, e.g., Mo. *ayil* < CA \**agil* »yurt, family, neighbor» = Turkic *ayıl*, *aul*, etc. »enclosure, village, etc.»<sup>1</sup>; MMo. *geyid* < CA \**gebüt* »dwelling» = Cuman *kebit* »shop» > MMo. *k'ebid* »shop» and Russian *kibitka* »yurt».<sup>2</sup> Some terms are borrowings from one language into another language, e.g., Yak. *ǰä* »house» < Mongolian *ǰige*.<sup>3</sup>

In this article a few more Altaic terms will be dealt with.

### 1. Buriat *söl*.

Bur. *söl* Alar, Tunka »house», Tunka »wall of the house», Alar, Bokhan »stove»<sup>4</sup> has no cognates in other Mongolian languages. It is mentioned but not explained in Sanžeyev's comparative grammar.<sup>5</sup> Although it is an isolated word in Buriat, it has, however, cognates in Turkic.

It is known that Bur. *s* goes back to CMo. \**š*.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the older form must have been \**šöl*. It has been also established that long *ō* originated either from \**oγa* or \**uγa* <sup>7</sup>, *γ* standing for \**g*, \**b*,

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ch'ao pi-shi), Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen, Wiesbaden 1962, p. 42. The form *e'ede* may have originated from \**ebède* which may be a derivation from \**ebe* = Turkic *äb* »house». The element *-de* in *e'ede* being obscure, this comparison cannot be regarded as doubtless.

<sup>1</sup> Z. Gombocz, Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache, Helsinki 1912, pp. 108—109.

<sup>2</sup> B. Ya. Vladimircov, Sravnitel'naya grammatika mongol'skogo pišmenogo yazika i xalxaskogo narečiya, Vvedenie i fonetika, Leningrad 1929, p. 272. Cf. N. Poppe, The Turkic Loan Words in Middle Mongolian, CAJ 1 (1955), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> N. Poppe, Jakutische Etymologien, UAJb 23 (1961), pp. 136—137.

<sup>4</sup> K. M. Čeremisov, Buryat-mongol'sko-russkij slovar', Sostavil — pod redakciję C. B. Čidendambaeva, Moskva 1951, p. 405.

<sup>5</sup> G. D. Sanžeev, Sravnitel'naya grammatika mongol'skix yazikov, t. I, Moskva 1953, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> N. Poppe, Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies, MSFOu 110 (1955), pp. 111—112.

<sup>7</sup> N. Poppe, The Groups \**uγa* and \**üge* in Mongol Languages, StO 14: 8 (1950).

and some other consonants in weak position.<sup>1</sup> From this the conclusion can be drawn that *sōl* < \**čōl* must have developed either from \**čugàl* or \**čubàl*, i.e., in the same manner as CA \**čupàkur* > CMo. \**čubāqur* > Bur. *sōγor* »motley, dappled» = Özbek *čipor*<sup>2</sup> id.; CA \**kubà* > CMo. \**quβā* > Ordos *χō* »yellow, pale» = Tel., Shor., Soyot *quba* »pale», etc.

The Turkic word corresponding to Bur. *sōl* »house, stove» is Kūr. *čual* »chimney, smoke-pipe», Bash. *sīnal* < \**čubal* »kind of a fireplace or an ancient stove»<sup>3</sup>.

Bur. *sōl* »house» and (original meaning) »stove» is a regular development of \**čubàl* = Turkic \**čubal* > Kūr. *čual* »chimney». It occurs also as a loan-word in Russian: *čual* »fireplace, hearth, the front side of a Russian stove with the chimney».<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Buriat *ursa*.

Bur. *ursa* »a conic hut»<sup>5</sup> corresponds to Kalm. *urtsu* »hut, tent without a smoke-opening in the roof».<sup>6</sup> Otherwise this word is little known in Mongolian. It corresponds to Yak. *urasa* (pronounced as *uraha*) »summer-dwelling in the shape of a high conic hut made of rods covered with birch-bark or skins; a transportable hut or tent; the carcass or framework of an *urasa*; rods put together in the shape

<sup>1</sup> N. Poppe, *Vergleichende Grammatik der altaischen Sprachen*, Teil I, *Vergleichende Lautlehre*, Wiesbaden 1960, pp. 70–71.

<sup>2</sup> *Uzbeksko-russkij slovar', Glavnij redaktor . . . A. K. Borovkov*, Moskva 1959, p. 522.

<sup>3</sup> *Baškirsko-russkij slovar'*, Moskva 1958, p. 493.

<sup>4</sup> Max Vasmer, *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bd. 3, Heidelberg 1955, p. 350. The present article has originated from a paper read at the Inner Asia Seminar, University of Washington. During the discussion of that paper, Professor O. Pritsak suggested to connect Kūr *čual* with MT *čuvāč* (Besim Atalay, op. cit., p. 162) »tent». Being unable to explain the different endings of *čual* and *čuvāč* and the difference in meanings (»stove, house» — »tent»), I hesitate to accept this comparison. I wish to remark, however, that other suggestions made by Professor Pritsak have been accepted with appreciation.

<sup>5</sup> Čeremisov, op. cit., p. 487.

<sup>6</sup> G. J. Ramstedt, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch*, Helsinki 1935, p. 451.

of a cone».<sup>1</sup> As far as it is known, no other Turkic language has this term.

Yak. *urasa* may be connected with Yak. *urayas* »rod, shafts of an ox cart, poles of a yurt, fence».<sup>2</sup> Yak. *urā* »chimney, the top of a summer yurt (*urasa*) with an opening for the purpose of letting the smoke out»<sup>3</sup> is certainly to be regarded as cognate with *urasa*. The fact that Yakut has *urasa*, *urā*, and *urayas* makes the assumption that *urasa* might be a borrowing from Mongolian rather improbable. It should be added that Kałužiński does not list it as a loan-word taken from Mongolian.<sup>4</sup>

CMo. \**urača*, Bur. *ursa*, Yak. *urasa*, *urā*, and *urayas* have cognates in Tungus: cf. Lam. C 680 *uradan* »hut made of tree-branches», Lam. B *uran* »summer yurt, tent made of tree-bark».<sup>5</sup>

The suffixes present in the forms discussed are, to a large extent, known. Mongolian *-ča* (> Bur. *-sa*) and Turkic *-ča* is a diminutive suffix. It is unproductive in Mongolian but occurs, i.a., in Mo. *öröče* < \**öreče* »diaphragm» from Mo. *örö*, MMo. *öre* »inside, mind»<sup>6</sup>; Mo. *уруча*, Kh. *ū't'sv*, Kalm. *ūtsv* »sacrum» from \**уру*, etc. It is productive in Turkic, e.g., Özb. *-ča* in *kitobča* »a small book», *oyoqča* »little foot», etc.<sup>7</sup>, Karakalpak *-ša* in *jolša* »a small road», *qutışa* »a little box», etc.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> È. K. Pekarskij, Slovar' yakutskogo yazıka, tom III, Leningrad 1928, p. 3062.

<sup>2</sup> Pekarskij, op.cit., p. 3057.

<sup>3</sup> Pekarskij, l.c.

<sup>4</sup> S. Kałužiński, Mongolische Elemente in der jakutischen Sprache, Warszawa 1961, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> J. Benzing, Lamutische Grammatik mit Bibliographie, Sprachproben und Glossar, Wiesbaden 1955, p. 246.

<sup>6</sup> Poppe, Mongol'skij slovar' Mukaddimat al-Adab, p. 382: *öre aitatba tündü* = Chag. *mihribanliq qıldı aqa* »he had compassion for him».

<sup>7</sup> A. N. Kononov, Grammatika sovremennogo uzbekskogo yazıka, Moskva-Leningrad 1960, p. 126.

<sup>8</sup> N. A. Baskakov, Karakalpakskij yazık II, Fonetika i morfologiya, Čast' I, Časti reči i slovoobrazovanie, Moskva 1952, p. 180.

<sup>9</sup> O. Böhlingk, Über die Sprache der Jakuten, Teil 1, Einleitung, Jakutischer Text, Jakutische Grammatik, St. Petersburg 1851, p. 248.

As for Yak. *-γas*, it occurs as an unproductive suffix on a number of verbal stems,<sup>1</sup> occurring also in other Turkic languages, e.g., in Turkish,<sup>2</sup> Karakalpak,<sup>3</sup> etc. Although it forms nouns and adjectives from verbal stems, it occurs also on some noun stems, e.g., Chag. *ärkäč* »buck» from *är* »male».<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Turkic \**ōpaγ*.

MT *oba* (probably *ōba*) »tribe»<sup>5</sup>, Turkm. *ōba* »village»<sup>6</sup>, Cuman *oba* »hill»<sup>7</sup>, Crim., Osm., Chag. *oba* »yurt», Az. *oba* »stone or mud hut of herdsmen», all going back to \**ōpaγ*<sup>8</sup>; Kaz., Shor., Küär., Koib. *obā* »heap of stones, cairn», Sag. *obā* »tombstone», Alt., Tel. *obō* »cairn», correspond to Mo. *oboyā* < CA \**ōpaqā*, Bur. *obō*, Kh. *owō*, Kalm. *owā* »cairn, landmark, frontier mark, heap of stones made in honour of mountain-ghosts».

Whereas Turkm. *ōba* and Chag., Az., etc. *oba* are regular correspondences to Mo. *oboyā* and go back to \**ōpaγ*, Kaz., Shor., etc. *obā* and Alt. *obō* are obvious borrowings from Mongolian, this being evident from the final long vowel in *obā* / *obō* and from the meaning »cairn» which is identical with that of the Mongolian forms.

Another form, namely \**ōpak*, is found in Mo. *obog<sub>k</sub>* and Kh. *ownk<sub>k</sub>* »clan»<sup>9</sup> which has the suff. *-\*k*.

An interesting word is Mo. *oboyāqai* »a conic roof; a yurt con-

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Kononov, *Grammatika sovremennogo tureckogo yazika*, Moskva-Leningrad 1956, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Baskakov, *op.cit.*, pp. 406—408.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmet Cevat Emre, *Türk Dilbilgisi*, İstanbul 1945, pp. 179—181.

<sup>4</sup> Besim Atalay, *Divanü Lûgat-it-Türk dizini »Endeks»*, Ankara 1943, p. 421.

<sup>5</sup> M. Räsänen, *Türkische Miscellen*, *StO* 25: 1 (1960), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> K. Grønbech, *Komanisches Wörterbuch, Türkischer Wortindex zum Codex Cumanicus*, København 1942, p. 173.

<sup>7</sup> M. Räsänen, *Zur Lautgeschichte der türkischen Sprachen*, Helsinki 1949, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> A. Luvsandëndëv, *Mongol'sko-russkij slovar', Pod obščej redakciej* ---, Moskva 1957, p. 291.



sisting of the upper part of a normal yurt, placed directly on the ground, a hut», Kh. *owōχ<sup>v</sup>ē* id.<sup>1</sup>, Bur. *obōχoi* »heap, cairn».<sup>2</sup> It has the diminutive suffix *-qai*, e.g., Bur *šubūχai* »a little bird» from *šubūn* »bird».<sup>3</sup> Thus Kh. *owōχ<sup>v</sup>ē* is »a little *owō*, a small heap», in this case »a small yurt».

Written Mongolian has also *oboyā dai* »a conic hat of the lamas», Kh. *owōb<sup>v</sup>ē* id.<sup>4</sup> which is provided with the diminutive suffix *-\*dai*, cf. Bur. *ulā dai* (name of a plant) from *ulān* »red», *aχadai* »dear little brother» from *aχa* »elder brother», etc.<sup>5</sup>

The Mongolian words Mo. *oboyā*, *oboyāqai*, and *oboyā dai* have further cognates such as Bur. *obogor* »rising, towering, heaplike», *oboi-* »to protrude, to tower, to rise above, to be heaplike». The original meaning of Mo. *oboyā* was, consequently, »heap, cairn». It is interesting to note that *obog* in Buriat means both »clan» and »heap».<sup>6</sup> The meaning »clan» is obviously a secondary one: »heap» > »dwelling» > »clan» (»heap» > »a heap which is inhabited» > »those who live in the latter»).

#### 4. Turkic *\*ōtay*.

MT, Chag, ET *otay* »temporary dwelling», Turkm., Az. *otay* »room», Kirg. *otō* »tent», Koib., Kach. *oday* »hut made of tree-branches», Alt., Tel. *odū* id., Kaz. *otau* »the new yurt of the bridegroom», Tar., Chag. *otaq* »hut made of branches» go back to *\*ōtay*, the evidence being presented by Osm., Crim. *oda* < *\*ōtay* »room».<sup>7</sup> This word has undergone complicated developments due to numerous instances of borrowing: Az., Turkm. *otay* »room» and Osm. *otaq* »hut» are loan

<sup>1</sup> Luvsandэндэв, l.c.

<sup>2</sup> Čeremisov, op.cit., p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> N. Poppe, Buriat Grammar, Bloomington, Ind. 1960, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Luvsandэндэв, l.c.

<sup>5</sup> Poppe, op.cit., p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> Čeremisov, op.cit., p. 361, cf. *obog-tobog* »heap», *tobogor* »towering, protruding, hill-shaped», *toboi-* »to protrude, to tower», Čeremisov, op.cit., p. 435.

<sup>7</sup> In Osm., Crim. intervocalic *\*t* has resulted in *d* only after an original long vowel, cf. Räsänen, Zur Lautgeschichte der türkischen Sprachen, p. 160.

words taken from other Turkic languages because of the intervocalic *t* which, after an original long vowel, results in *d* in the languages in question. In Turkmenian it should have resulted in *\*ōda* if it had not been borrowed from another Turkic language. Yak. *otū* is also a borrowing because Yakut preserves the long vowels, and *\*ō* would have developed to *uo*. Yak. *otū* was, furtheron, borrowed by Lamut which also has *otū* »hut»<sup>1</sup> and »bonfire».<sup>2</sup>

The primary stem of *\*ōtay* is CT *\*ōt* »fire». The suffix *-γ* is here on *\*ōta* which is a verb formed with the suff. *-a-*. Consequently, *\*ōta-* must have had the meaning of making fire, heating, or burning. There is the verb *ota-* in Tar., Chag., ET »to graze, to be on the pasture» which is formed from *ot* »hay», but the verb *\*ōta-* »to make fire» has disappeared, the result being that *otay* etc. might have been reinterpreted as being a noun derived from *ota-* »to graze», i.e., as a hut which is made for herdsmen on or near the pasture, like *yailay*, Kaz. *ǰailau* »summer-dwelling» from *yaila-/ǰaila-* »to spend the summer» from *yai/ǰai* »summer». However, *otay* is to be regarded, for phonetical reasons (> *oda*) as a noun formed from *\*ōta-*, ultimately from *\*ōt* »fire».

The Turkic words discussed have further parallels in Mongolian: Bur. *otog* »hut made of branches on a meadow»,<sup>3</sup> Tumet *o'fok* »village», Kh. *o'fok* »group of yurts, clan, group of hunters; extinguished hearth, ashes and coals remaining after a bonfire, a place in which a bonfire was some time ago»<sup>4</sup>, Kalm. *otok* »clan»<sup>5</sup>, Mo. *otog* »group of yurts, clan» and »traces of an old fire», like Lam. *otū* »hut» and »bonfire», thus corroborating the etymology *\*ōtay* < *\*ōt* »fire» + *-a-* + CA *-\*g*.

Mongolian has preserved other words derived from *\*ōt* »fire»: cf. Mo. *odčigin* »youngest son» < *\*ōt* »fire» + *\*igin* »prince», a borrowing from Ancient Turkic; Mo. *odqan* »youngest son», »deity of fire» <

<sup>1</sup> Cincius i Rišes, op.cit., p. 680.

<sup>2</sup> Cincius i Rišes, op.cit., p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Čeremisov, op.cit., p. 379.

<sup>4</sup> Luvsandéndév, op.cit., p. 311.

<sup>5</sup> Ramstedt, Kalmückisches Wörterbuch, p. 291.

\**ōt* »fire» + *qan* »khan»<sup>1</sup>, also a borrowing from Turkic; Mo. *oči* < \**odči* < CA \**ōtči* »spark» (like Turkic *očağ* »fireplace» < \**ōt* »fire» + suff. *-čağ*).

The word \**ōtay* is also found in Tungus but there it is a borrowing from Mongolian, cf. Ev. Nerchinsk *otok* »outdoor lavatory»<sup>2</sup>, Ev. Nerch. and B *otog* »hut made of bark or grass».<sup>3</sup> It also occurs as a loan-word in Sayan Samoyed.<sup>4</sup> As for Titov's opinion that *otog* is of Sogdian origin<sup>5</sup>, it lacks supporting evidence.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the Altaic languages possess a number of words for dwellings. The etymologies of most of them are obscure. Thus, Lam. C 689 has *unēn* »yurt» (also *čōra unēn*) and Olekma Ev. V 449 has *unēnki* »lower cover of a yurt» which correspond to Mo. *unin*, Kh. *uni* »rods of the roof of a yurt»<sup>6</sup>, Bur. *unā* < CMo. \**uni-gā* id.<sup>7</sup> It is hard to say whether »rods for the roof» or »yurt» is the primary meaning and what the primary stem \**uni* was.

As for the few words discussed in this article, two of them reflect the idea of fire or hearth. These are Bur. *sōl* and Turkish *oda*. Further investigation might tell what the origin of Turkic \**āb*, Mongolian *ger*, and some other words is.

<sup>1</sup> N. Poppe, *Zum Feuerkultus bei den Mongolen*, Asia Major 1 (1925), p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Vasilevič, *op.cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Poppe, *Materiali dlya issledovaniya tungusskogo yazika*, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Aulis Joki, *Die Lehnwörter des Sajansamojedischen*, Helsinki 1952, p. 249.

<sup>5</sup> E. I. Titov, *Tungussko-russkij slovar'*, Irkutsk 1926, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> Luvsandэндэв, *op.cit.*, p. 457.

<sup>7</sup> Čeremisov, *op.cit.*, p. 482.

