

SOME NOTES ON THE TERMS *önđi* AND *tönđi* IN THE KUTADGU BILIG

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Abstract: *In this paper, I would like to discuss a minor point that does not alter any of the great issues connected to the study of the Kutadgu Bilig. I used mainly the translation of Robert Dankoff which has already inspired many scholars who are engaged in the study of the Karakhanid literature. Although well-known, I would like to mention that R. Dankoff's introduction, too, gives full justice to Yusuf's masterpiece. Working on the Old Uigur fragments I always had an eye open to the Karakhanid literature in the western region of Turkistan to find something worth to compare with the East. This time, I am able to present a small piece that opens the curtain a little bit.*

Keywords: *Karakhanid Literature, Kutadgu Bilig, Wisdom of Royal Glory, önđi, tönđi.*

Kutadgu Bilig'deki önđi ve tönđi Terimleri Üzerine Bazı Notlar

Öz: *Bu yazıda, Kutadgu Bilig çalışmalarıyla ilgili büyük konuların hiçbirini değiştirmeyen küçük bir noktayı tartışmak istiyorum. Çalışmada esas olarak Robert Dankoff'un Karahanlı Edebiyatını inceleyen pek çok bilim insanına ilham vermiş olan çevirisini kullandım. Çok iyi bilinmekle birlikte R. Dankoff'un eserindeki giriş kısmının Yusuf'un şabeserinin hakkını verdiğini de belirtmek isterim. Eski Uygur fragmanları üzerinde çalışırken Doğu ile karşılaştırmaya değer bir şey bulmak için Türkistan'ın batı bölgesindeki Karahanlı Edebiyatına her zaman bir gözüm açıktı. Bu sefer perdeyi biraz aralayan küçük bir parça sunabilmekteyim.*

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Karahanlı Edebiyatı, Kutadgu Bilig, Wisdom of Royal Glory, önđi, tönđi.*

At first sight, it seems that the words *önđi* and *tönđi* are known only from the *Kutadgu Bilig* (KB).¹ Á. Vámbéry and W. Radloff considered *tönđi* of the word pair as the opposite of *önđi* “rule, law”, i. e. “turmoil, revolt” (Vámbéry 236b; Radloff, 1910: 401 / 134/2). Today most scholars regard both words more or less as synonyms. So far, for *tönđi* the KB remains the only source. The words belong to the same semantic field (law, custom) as *törö/törü* on which many contributions exist (Başer, 1990; Bergil, 1999).

I. The terms *önđi* and *tönđi* in the KB

I.1. *tönđi*

In contrast to the many examples of *önđi* there are only two verses that contain the word *tönđi*.

KB 1547 (A, B, missing in C)

(A, B) bu kurtga kılınçı bu ol önđisi

(B) kerek önđi tutgil kerek tönđisi

(A) özi semridür em özi yegüçi

“He fattens someone or he himself eats.”

The version in A seems to be based on a proverb of the sense “Eating alone makes fat”. R. R. Arat translated the version of B: “Bu dünya acüzesinin huyu ve âdeti budur;

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¹ Cp. ED 176-177 *önđi* “pec[uliar] to KB”.

ister beğen, ister beğenme” (Arat, 1959: 119). So did R. Dankoff, too: “That is the habit of this ancient hag—take it this way or take it that” (1983: 90).

The same idea that the world is bad and everybody cares only for oneself, is expressed in a little different way in

KB 4720 (A, B, C)

bu yağlıg turur bu ajuñ öñdisi
kerek öñdisi tut kerek töñdisi²

R. Dankoff’s translation: “This is the way of the world—take it this way or take it that” (1983: 194).

I. 2. **öñdi** “custom”

In the Indeks of the *Kutadgu Bilig* the verb *öñ-* “kasdetemek”³ is listed. In his comment S. Tezcan mentions that the word is missing in Clauson’s dictionary, but there is a reference to a verb *on-* (ED 168). He also refers to Kirg. *öñ-* “sessizce yaklaşmak, gafil avlamak” as well as to *öñ-* “beklemek, gözetlemek, pusuya düşürmeye çalışmak” (DS 3341) etc. (Tezcan, 1981: 55-56). But it remains unclear how all these different meanings come together. Of course, one could derivate *öñdi* from such a verb, although semantically it seems to be doubtful.

The Indeks lists 24 occurrences for *öñdi*: KB 1456, 1459, 1460, 1547, 1931, 2111, 2179, 2490, 3049, 4016, 4309, 4918, 4605, 4606, 4720, 5735, 5737, 5765, 6344, 6492, 6588, 6593, 6594, 6595, but only one for *öñdü*: KB 3077.

I. 2.1. **öñdi** “custom” as a single term

KB 1456

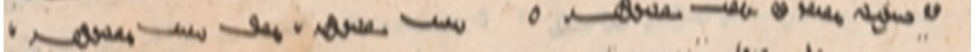
isiz öñdi⁴ urma⁵ törü edgü ur
künün edgü bolgay kutuñ бага kur⁶

“Do not establish bad customs, establish good laws! Your days will be good, and Fortune will fasten its belt to you.”⁷ R. Dankoff : “Establish justice and good laws. Then your day will be bright and Fortune will fasten its belt to you” (Dankoff, 1983: 87).

KB 1459-1460

isiz öñdi urma ay elçi bügü
isiz bolsa bolmaz ajuñug yegü
isiz öñdi ursa özi öz üdin
isiz kodtı atın özinde kedin

² Both *öñdi* and *töñdi* are written with a final /w/ suggesting variant spellings *öñdü* and *töñdü*.



³ Indeks, *öñ-er* KB 4265. Cp. also the verb *öñdür-* “kurmak” KB 5971.

⁴ A has here *ondu* or better *öñdü*, spelled ’wñkdw.

⁵ A: *turgil* Imperative. If this is correct, *isiz* cannot mean “bad”. But C has *isiz öñdi buzgil* “Destroy the bad customs!”

⁶ The second half is acc. to A: *kudun vak-a kur* (qwdwn v’q-’ qwr), as if the scribe did not fully understand the Ms. in Arabic script. No reading for this in Arat’s edition.

⁷ Following Dankoff’s translation.

“Do not lay down bad law, O sage ruler! If it is bad, you cannot enjoy the worlds’ (blessings). He who leaves a legacy of good law thereby plants his name firm and upright.” R. Dankoff : “And do not lay down bad law, O sage ruler, for then you cannot enjoy the worlds’ blessings. He who leaves a legacy of good law thereby plants his name firm and upright” (Dankoff, 1983: 87).

I.2.2. **önđi** “fate”

KB 6344

ajun önđisi bu telimde berü
isiz edgü erter neçe yillasa

KB 3049

bu yañlıg turur bu ajun önđisi
saranka söküşi akı ögdisi

R. Dankoff : “This is ever the course of the world: to curse the miser and to praise the generous” (Dankoff, 1983: 140).

I.2.3. **önđi** “law”

KB 2179

ilin itse bassa tüz önđi urup
isinse er at köñli edgü bulup

R. Dankoff : “How can he best direct the government and administer its laws? How can he stay on good terms with the military?” (Dankoff, 1983: 111).

KB 6588

nelük artadı halk negü önđi kodtı
kayu ödke tuştum ya kayda turayı

R. Dankoff ; “How have people become so corrupt, abandoning law and custom? What times have I befallen, what place do I inhabit?” (Dankoff, 1983: 257).

I.3. **önđi** in compounds

I.3.1 **önđi** as first element of the word pair **önđi törü**

KB 1931

bu beglik işin barça begler bilir
törü önđi kılq yañ olardı kelir

R. Dankoff : “Only princes know what it is to be a prince. Law and custom and protocol derive from them” (Dankoff, 1983: 103).

KB 2111

neteg tutsa begler kör önđi törü
budun boldı andag ol önđi körü

R. Dankoff : “Whatever customs the prince adopts, the people follow his example” (Dankoff, 1983: 109).

KB 2490

törü hem toku önđi yinçke tapug
ulug hacib itse açar yol kapug

R. Dankoff : “It is a delicate office to administer the rules and customs and ceremonies of the court. If the grand chamberlain arranges matters correctly, he opens the way and the door” (Dankoff, 1983: 121).

KB 4016

biz emdi bu öjdi törü ursamız
negü teg yaraşur törü buzsamız

“If we establish these customs and laws, how would it be suitable to break the law.”
R. Dankoff : “Since this is so, it would not be seemly to break with royal custom”
(Dankoff, 1983: 170). Similar examples are KB 4018, 4605, 5737, 6593, 6594.

I.3.2. **öjdi** as second element of the word pair **törü öjdi**

KB 4309

idi yakşı aymış törü bilmiş er
törü öjdi birle budun tüzmiş er

“A man who knows the LAW spoke very well, one who governs the people with LAW.” R. Dankoff : “Thus pronounced one who governed his folk by royal custom”
(Dankoff, 1983: 179).

KB 4606

kılıksız törü öjdi bilmez kişi
kişike katılsa itilmez işi

R. Dankoff : “But if he fails to observe the norms and codes of society, his affairs will never prosper” (Dankoff, 1983: 190).

KB 5735

törü öjdi edgü uruldı tükel
isiz yitti ilde kodup hile al

R. Dankoff : “Now good laws are firmly established, while the wicked have disappeared from the realm” (Dankoff, 1983: 226).

KB 5765

ajun boldı erse törü öjdisi
kişike kişilik bolur belgüsi

R. Dankoff : “And it is the law and custom since the world began that to treat others with humanity is the sign of being human” (Dankoff, 1983: 227).

KB 6492

kamug tegşürüldi törü öjdiler
karalı ürüñli bir ök boldılar

R. Dankoff : “All the old laws and customs have been perverted. Black and white now have become the same” (Dankoff, 1983: 252).

1.4. One example of **ögdü**

KB 3077

bu yañlıg turur bu ajun ögdüsi
yayıg dünya devlet çavıkar küsi

R. Dankoff : “Such is the custom of the World, such the repute of fickle Fate” (Dankoff, 1983: 141).

Much more often the word *törü* is used in the same meaning. This is a very old word in the meanings of “law, customs, habits” etc. There are about 150 examples of *törü/törö*, in a few cases in a compound with *öjdi*. From this short overview it becomes evident that the word *öjdi* is a usual term of “law, customs” similar to *törü/törö*.

Problems of the etymology of öjdi

After presenting the result of an analysis of the semantics of the term we shortly look into possible etymological connections. C. Brockelmann listed *öjdi* simply under the rubric of words with the ending *di*⁸ (Brockelmann 1954: §22). But M. Erdal did not include this word in his respective section (OTWF 339-340). According to Clauson’s dictionary both words are difficult to explain (ED 176-177).

Old Uigur literature

Despite the religious differences the Old Uigur literature offers parallel and contrastive material for several words present in books of the Karakhanid literature. It concerns words that are listed in the *Dīvan lugāt at-türk* only once. When they turn up in Old Uigur texts of Eastern Turkistan their state can be confirmed. To some extent this is also true for words of the KB.

From Old Uigur texts two different words carrying the meaning of “bowing down” are known. A Buddhist text that belongs to the *Abhidharma* literature explains the verb *yükünmāk* “to venerate” by the biverb *äjitmāk töjitmāk* both meaning “to bow”: *yükünmāk tegüči savta nāgü tep yörüg’ol tep tesär munda äjitmāk töjitmāk tep yörüg’ol* “When one asks what is the explanation of *yükünmāk*, the explanation is here *äjitmāk töjitmāk*.”⁹

In literary works “frozen converbs” of these verbs are well attested in parallel expressions: *äjitā ätözin* and *töjitä töpön*. This type of inner alliteration very often is used in poetical works or in prose texts mixed with poetical passages. Here are two examples in their contexts:

(a)

019 [tizi]mizni čökütip
 älgimizni 020 kavšurup
 äjitä ätözin
 töjitä 021 töpün
 [a]gır ulug süzök 022 kertgünč köjülin
 ayayu ağırlayu 023 yinčürü yükünü täginür-män .. (DKPAM I, p. 234.)

“Bending our [knees],
 putting together our hands,
 bowing the body,
 bending the head,

⁸ Formans *di*.

⁹ The biverb is attested in Shōgaito, 2008: 678 *äjitmāk töjitmāk* 1327, 1330.

(thus) in great belief

I venture to venerate and to bow down.”

____(b)

töš-lärin basa : töñitü :

ärin-lärin 04 yapınu äñitü

alkıŝ-lıg yamgur yagıtdı-lar : (Zhang and Zieme, 2011: 138).

“Pressing the breast, bowing down,

closing the lips and bending,

(thus) they pured the rain of praises.”

How are these two verbs related to the discussed words of the KB? Apparently they belong to the semantical sphere of human behaviour, of etiquette, and from this basis one can assume a more general meaning like “habits”, “customs”.

The verb *töñit-* “to bow down” is the base for *töñitä* and *töñitü*. A variant is the verb *töñüd-* known i. a. from a line to line translation of the Koran: *kiriñ kapugka töñüdüp ya eglip* “Go in through the door and bow down!” (Üşenmez, 2013: 556).

In the same way the verb *äñit-* is recorded as *äñitä* and *äñitü*. The different converb vowel is a marker of dialect variants.

Another dialect marker is the interchange of *ä* and *ö* in some lexemes. The alternation of *ä* and *ö* is a rare phenomenon in the history of the Turkic languages, but was noticed already before, e. g. in Sevortjan’s Etymological dictionary (Sevortjan, 1974: 556). The most famous example is the word for “bread” which is attested in Old Uighur as *äkmäk* or *ötmäk*. Other examples include the verb “to sing” which is either *ät-* or *öt-*¹⁰, *ärkäčlän-* or *örkäčlän-* as well as *äñäyük* ~ *öñäyük* “special”¹¹; *öñ* “colour” vs. *äñ* “complexion” (UWN II.2.1). In the Xuanzang Biography (HT V 1714) there is a compound interpreted as *yookta äyigtä* “über Klippen und Abgründe”, but the evidence for a noun *äyig* is scarce. Perhaps one should read *äyik* as a variant of *öyük* “quicksand, mound”¹² (ED 271-272).

Based on this *ä* ~ *ö* alternation one can suppose the verb *äñit-* with a possible variant **öñit-*.¹³ If the nominal suffix *-I* is attached to *töñit-* the final result would be *töñdi* (< **töñit-i*), and likewise *äñit-* would result in **äñdi* (< **äñit-i*). The act of bowing down can be used in different semantical connections, in a simple way of bowing down here and bowing down there, but perhaps from “bowing down” one may imagine as mentioned above a change to “following the customs”. From the latter phrase the noun can also be used in the meaning of “law, customs”.

Considering dialect variants one has to conclude that only the variant *öñdi* is used in this meaning. There is apparently no **äñdi* in this meaning.

One xample of öñdü in the Old Uigur literature

¹⁰ *öt-* “to sing” in KB, in Old Uighur both *öt-* and *ät-*.

¹¹ In UWN II.2.1 K. Röhrborn rejects the hypothesis that Kāšgarī’s *öñäyük* is due to a wrong vocalization. He argues that the change to *öñäyük* is influenced by *öñi* “different”.

¹² two lexemes *öyük*.

¹³ For *äg-*, *äg-it-*, *äg-il-* cp. OTWF 770.

Recently, I had the privilege to work on some newly found Old Uigur fragments collected by Paul Pelliot in the Mogao grottoes near Dunhuang in Gansu. From these materials, he had offered five pieces to Jean Deny for publication. But, apparently he did not find the time to work on these fragments, and thus they remained in his estate where they turned up recently.

Among these Old Uigur fragments there is a small booklet which is a miscellany and contains at least two different texts: one is a philosophical exposition on topics known from the *Abhidharma* literature, the other is a tractate on the four Āgamas that form one of the most ancient parts of Buddhist literature. In this tractate the compound *öñdü törü* appears: *öñdü* [’wnkdw] *törün mujadınçig körk mäniz bütürür ärsär* “ Si on complète formes et figures merveilleuses en suivant la ligne directrice et la tradition”¹⁴ (Zieme, 2017: 6, 13, ll. 18-19).

Conclusion

Contrasting the Karahanid texts with Old Uigur texts of the same period is still a rather neglected field of studies. Since such comparative analysis work is promising to gain some new insights into the history of cultures and texts of the Middle Ages in Central Asia, hopefully more scholars will devote respective studies to these and similar fields.

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¹⁴ Now also in HWAU 534a.

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