

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Influence of Turkic North Pole Star Tradition on Chinese Culture*

Zhaozhong Jiang**

Abstract

Considered as the rotation axis of the northern celestial hemisphere, north pole star was called *altun qazınuq* “gold stake” in OT (Old Turkic). The article finds that Turkic north pole star tradition exerted its influence on Chinese culture twice. At the first time, the Chinese transcribed OT *qazınuq* into *gōzhèn* (勾陳) in the Warring States period. And at the second time, the transmission took place in the Qing dynasty, when the government tried to confirm that the huge rock called *altan yadasu* in Mongolian was the origin of the Yellow River, the Mongolian translation of OT *altun qazınuq* was translated into “gold north pole star” (黃金北極星).

Keywords

North pole star, Turkic-Chinese transcription, astronomy, *qazınuq*, Yellow River.

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** Lecturer PhD, South-Central Minzu University, School of Ethnology and Sociology – Wuhan/China, ORCID: 0000-0001-8877-792X, jiangzhaozhong@foxmail.com

Türk Kuzey Kutup Yıldızı Geleneğinin Çin Kültürüne Etkisi*

Zhaozhong Jiang**

Öz

Kuzey gök yarım küresinin dönüş eksenini olduğu kabul edilen kuzey kutup yıldızına Eski Türkçede *altun qazuq* “altın kazık” deniyordu. Bu makale, Türk kuzey kutup yıldızı geleneğinin Çin kültürü üzerinde iki önemli etkisi olduğunu anlatmaktadır. İlk etkisi, Çinlilerin eski Türkçedeki *qazıuqu* Savaşan Devletler döneminde *gōzhèn* (勾陳) olarak kullanmaya başlaması ile görülmüştür. İkinci etkisi, Qing hanedanlığı döneminde, hükümetin Moğolcada *altan yadasu* olarak adlandırılan devasa kayanın Sarı Nehir’in kökeni olduğunu doğrulamaya çalıştığı dönemde görülmüştür. Bu dönemde Eski Türkçedeki *altun qazuqun* Moğolca çevirisi “altın kuzey kutup yıldızı” (黃金北極星) olarak yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kuzey kutup yıldızı, Türk-Çin transkripsiyonu, astronomi, *qazıuqu*, Sarı Nehir.

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** Dr. Öğr. Görevlisi, Güney-Orta Minzu Üniversitesi, Etnoloji ve Sosyoloji Fakültesi – Wuhan/Çin, ORCID: 0000-0001-8877-792X, jiangzhaozhong@foxmail.com

Introduction

Reviewing Turkic north pole star tradition, the first section of the article uses OT (Old Turkic) material and also takes into account the relevant works about the tradition and its terminology.

After reviewing, the study examining the influences of Turkic north pole star tradition over Chinese culture has two main parts. In the first part confirming the Turkic origin of the Chinese constellation Gouchen (勾陳), the Chinese material used is mainly from the Zhou dynasty (周朝, 1046 BC-256 BC) to the Middle Ages, and Zhengzhang Shangfang (鄭張尚芳)'s reconstructions of EOC (Early Old Chinese), LOC (Late Old Chinese) and EMC (Early Middle Chinese) are applied (Lin and Zhengzhang). And this part is made possible because of the following conditions. The people living in the north of China and called *di* (狄) by the Chinese during the Zhou dynasty were traditionally considered as Turkic (Y. Li 98: 3270-3273), and this idea was supported by contemporary historians (Ma 1-2; Zhou 1-17; Duan 2-11). And scholars found that some loanwords, several of which were of unknown origin, but others came from the Di people, recorded in Chinese texts formed during the Zhou dynasty were OT or at least quite close (Hirth 66-67; Zhengzhang, “‘Man’, ‘Yi’, ‘Rong’”; Zhengzhang, *Shanggu Yinxi* 90; Zhengzhang, *Yanzhi yu Yanzhi* 78-80).

Relying on studying the Manchu and the Chinese material from the Qing dynasty (清朝, 1616-1912), the second part shows the role of Turkic north pole star tradition, which came from Manchu and Mongolian, in the Yellow River (黃河) exploration project and charts its impact on the intellectuals of that time. Though scholars did yield detailed studies on nearly each of Yellow River exploration projects (Qi; Niu; Feng and Li; Q. Wang, 448-456) including the Qing dynasty's (Zhang; H. Liu, “1782 nian Amida”), undiscussed are the etymology and the cultural influence of the river source recognized by the Qing dynasty.

Turkic North Pole Star Tradition

In the 70s of the 11th century, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* explained the OT name of north pole star, “north pole star is called *tāmūr qazuq*” meaning “iron stake”, and “the reason why north pole star is called *tāmūr qazuq* ‘iron stake’ is that ‘the sky moves in a circle around it’” (al-Kāšgarī, *Tujueyu*

Dacidian Juan 1 17; al-Kāšgarī, *Tujueyu Dacidian Juan 3* 38, 373). Meaning “stake”, *qazyuq* and *qazuq* are the same word, while another form of it, *qazyuq*, is also seen (Clauson, “Early Turkish Astronomical”; Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary* 682).

In the first decade of the 15th century, the anonymous *Glossary of Gaochang Bureau* (*Gaochang Guan Zazi* 高昌館雜字), a Chinese-Turkic glossary, was produced by the order of the Ming dynasty (明朝, 1368-1683) for communicating with its vassal the Buddhist Uyğur living in Qoço (Gaochang 高昌) area. And in the glossary, OT *altun qazuq* “gold stake” was transcribed into *antun hazu* (俺吞哈足) and translated into Zi Wei Xing (紫微星, α UMi, the north pole star) (Yuandai Shiliao Congkan Bianweihui 305).

And in the *Oyuz Nama* written between 13th and 15th centuries, a goddess was appeared in a blue beam shining from the sky after Oyuz praying to *kök täñri* the “eternal god”. And then the term for north pole star was used to describe the goddess, it said that, “There is a shining mole on her forehead, it is just like the ‘gold stake’ (*altun qazuq*)” (Geng, *Wugusi Kehan de* 17, 31). The story of Oyuz has many versions, but not like all others that are Islamic, this is considered as influenced by Buddhism because of two reasons. One is that Oyuz was addressed as *uyurniñ qayani* “emperor of Uyğur” (Geng, *Wugusi Kehan de* 19, 32), and the word *uyur* was the ethnonym of the Turkic Buddhists, for example, a poem from *Diwān Lughāt al-Turk* provided by a Turkic Muslim called Uyğur *tat* “infidel”, *oyri* “thief” and even *yavuz it* “bad dog” (al-Kāšgarī, *Tujueyu Dacidian Juan 1* 508-509; al-Kāšgarī, *Tujueyu Dacidian Juan 2* 289). The other is a title which Oyuz fulfilled *yärniñ tört buluñinuñ qayani* “emperor of the four directions of the earth” (Geng, *Wugusi Kehan de* 19, 32). According to Buddhist materials such as *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāsa Śāstra* (Kātyāyaniputra 31: 710), a monarch ruling the four directions of the earth is a *cakravartin* in Buddhist ideology, for instance, in the Turkic *Maitrisimit* produced in between the 8th and the 9th centuries, it said that, if Siddhārtha the Buddha had stayed at home, he would have become *tört yirtinçü yir suwda ärklig çkrwty ilig xan* “rightful *cakravartin* emperor of the four worlds on the earth” (Geng, *Huihuwen Hamiben Mile* 84). In the 6th century, Buddhism already exerted its political influence on Turkic peoples, Taspar Qayan (r. 572-581) was famous for his

support of Buddhism (Wei 84: 1865). And the concept of *tört buluj* “four directions” from Buddhism was embraced by Turkic peoples quite early. The expression is seen not only in Buddhist materials, such as the Turkic *Tale of the Two Princes* made in between the 9th and the 10th centuries (Hamilton 12), but also in political materials, such as the Kül Tigin inscription (Geng, *Gudai Tujue Wen* 121), and it was equal to Chinese *si tianxia* 四天下 “four worlds”. For example, in the 12th century, close to the time when the *Oyuz Nama* was written, Emperor Gao Zong of Song (宋高宗, r. 1101-1125) was addressed as *si tianxia taoguanzhu ajiu da guanjia* 四天下條貫主阿舅大官家 “four worlds Tavḡač uncle great emperor” by his vassal the Uyğur Qayan ruling Hotan. The Uyğur’s Chinese expressions made the Chinese astonished (T. Cai 1: 8-9), and here, the expression *si tianxia* 四天下 “four worlds” commonly seen in the Buddhist materials of the Chinese but hardly seen in the political sphere of the Song should have been translated from *tört buluj*.

However, the reason why the “stake” is shown in both Islamic and Buddhist contexts is not that it belongs to either of the ideologies but that the roots of the tradition are genuinely Turkic. As nowadays, most of the Turkic peoples still call the north pole star “stake” such as *qazuq* commonly seen, *örge* only in Qazaq and *šalsa* only in Čuvaš (Y. S. Li). And the naming can be comprehended in its mythological background, for example, in Qazaq astrology, the north pole star is called *temir qazyq* while γ UMi and β UMi two stars of the constellation Ursa Minor are respectively considered as *aq boz at* “white grey horse” and *kók boz at* “blue grey horse” tied to the “iron stake”, and the seven stars of the Northern Dipper are *jeti qaraqshy* “seven robbers” trying to steal the horses (Z. Yang; Bi).

Gouzhen: A Chinese Astronomical Term from Old Turkic

Commonly, Chinese people prefer to name stars and constellations in their own tongue (Sun, “Hengxing Guance” 67), for instance, the names of Si Xiang (四象, “four images”, Four Symbolic Animals), namely Qing Long (青龍, “green dragon”), Bai Hu (白虎, “white tiger”), Zhu Que (朱雀, “red sparrow”) and Xuan Wu (玄武, “black tortoise”, literally “black armoured”) respectively representing, the east, the west, the south, and the north directions, are all Chinese. But alien influence is not avoidable, for

example, Luohou (羅睺) < EMC. [*la həu] and Jidu (計都) < EMC. [*keih tuo] are the transcriptions of *rāhu* and *ketu* from Sanskrit.

Located in Zi Wei Yuan (紫微垣) the central region of the northern celestial hemisphere and being important in Chinese astrology and astronomy (Yu 1: 13), Gouzhen was a constellation which traditionally consists of six stars (Chen *shang*: 405). But since the meaning of its name is not easy to tell, there were many explanations of the constellation.

Ambiguous Connotation

During the Han dynasty (漢朝, 202 BC-9 AD; 23-220), about Gouzhen, there were two ideas commonly seen. Sometimes, according to its location on the northern celestial hemisphere, the constellation was considered as the representative of the rear palace. The earliest clue is in the *Record of History* (*Shi Ji* 史記) saying, “the four stars of Gou (句, Gouzhen), the big star (α UMi) at the end is the main queen consort, the rest three stars belong in the rear palace” (Sima 27: 1289). Meanwhile, there were people preferring to tell its connotation by folk etymology, and the earliest was Fu Qian (服虔, fl. 2nd century) saying, 鉤陳, 紫宮外營陳星。 “Gouzhen are the stars as the (military) camp and (tactical) formation out of Zi Gong (紫宮, “purple palace”, Zi Wei Yuan)” (Ban 87 *shang*: 3523).

After the Han dynasty, while the number of the stars of Gouzhen increased from four to six (Fang 11: 289), the meaning of the constellation not only remained undecided, but also increased in number of the explanations. Gautama Siddha (瞿曇悉達, fl. 8th century) serving the Tang dynasty (唐朝, 618-690; 705-907) collected varied opinions, Gouzhen is the array or the position of Saturn called *tu jing* (土精, “essence of earth”) or *huang long* (黃龍, “yellow dragon”), and Gouzhen is the rear palace, the consort or the general of β UMi called *da di* (大帝, “grand emperor”) *tian zi* (天子, “son of heaven”) or *tai yi* (太一, “supreme one”) (Gautama 67: 35). Even the astronomer could not decide which is correct in this mass of explanations.

And a paragraph in the *Warp of Stars* (*Xing Jing* 星經), which has two ostensible authors living in the Warring States period (戰國時期, 475-221 BC) but formed as the present book during the Five Dynasties period (五代時期, 907-960) (N. Pan 74-99), can also be used to summarize,

The six stars of Gouzhen (鉤陳) under Wu Di (五帝, “five emperors”, five stars all in Leo) are the rear palace, Da Di’s main queen consort. They also represent the general taking charge of the six armies of Tian Zi. They also represent the three ducal ministers. If the stars are dark, it is the phenomena that the ruler of people is in danger. (Gan and Shi *shang*: 1)

And a note in the *History of Song* (*Song Shi* 宋史) tells something similar (Тоҕтаҕа 49: 976). Accompanying Di, Gouzhen might be an array, a general, the administrator of the horses, the three ducal ministers or the queen consort, *etc.* Obviously, although people spent many centuries on debating, no agreement was reached.

If we keep examining other constellations always talked about with Gouzhen, the bafflement is more clearly seen. In the Ming dynasty, after studying some theories of Gouzhen as a component of Liu Shen (六神, “six gods”, namely Si Xiang, Gouzhen, and Teng She 騰蛇. Teng She is a legendary snake), Yang Shen (楊慎, 1488-1559) found that accompanied by Si Xiang and their confirmed images, the controversial Gouzhen always unreasonably occupying the centre might be a *qi lin* (麒麟, a legendary beast), a divine horse or a *huang yin* (黃蠃, “yellow earthworm”), and realised that there was no acceptable explanation of the word (Shen Yang 75: 7-8).

Representing the North Celestial Pole

Though the image or connotation of Gouzhen is always ambiguous, just like what Yang Shen told, the constellation indicates the centre of the northern celestial hemisphere alongside Si Xiang representing the four directions.

And the correspondence is seen in *Six Scabbards* (*Liu Tao* 六韜), which was written in the Warring States period, where the first appearance of Gouzhen shows. In the book, while talking with King Wu of Zhou (周武王, r. ca.1050-1043 BC), Tai Gong (太公) elaborated on the mysterious relation between the five notes of the Chinese pentatonic scale and the areas of the northern celestial hemisphere: the notes Gong (宮), Shang (商), Jue (角), Zhi (徵), Yu (羽) correspond to Qing Long for the east, Zhu Que for the south, Bai Hu for the west, Xuan Wu for the north, Gouzhen for the centre respectively (P. Xu 3: 134). Henceforth, we can always see that Chinese

people use Gouzhen to indicate the centre of the celestial hemisphere, *i.e.* the north celestial pole.

In a poem presented in an imperial pageant for sacrificing to a god of road, Cai Yong (蔡邕, 133-192) of the Han dynasty, wrote about a cruise, while Si Xiang stays in cardinal directions, “Gouzhen stays in the middle, oppressing the four directions” (Y. Cai 1: 236). Here, the words again show that, just like Si Xiang are the representatives of the four areas of the north celestial hemisphere, the named Gouzhen is that of the north celestial pole which would be more ideally represented by Bei Dou (北斗, Northern Dipper), whose handle “points east, under the sky, it is completely spring; south, summer; west, autumn; north, winter” (Lu *shang*: 16) or the named Bei Chen (北辰, “north celestial body”, the north pole star β UMi), which was “saluted by all the stars” (Ruan 2: 16), “surrounded by Ershiba Xiu (二十八宿, Twenty-Eight Mansions)” (Sima 130: 3319) and actually not Gouzhen Yi (勾陳一, α UMi, a star of the constellation) yet but Di (帝, “emperor”, β UMi) at that time (Chen *shang*: 199).

Because Chinese constellation system did not completely take shape until the Three Kingdoms period (三國時期, 220-280) (Sun, “Zhongguo Gudai Xingguan”), it is normal to find the situation that a single name was used for different celestial bodies before and after. And in fact, initially, the name *gouzhen* was not utilised for the stars which are exactly the same as that of the present-day Gouzhen, but for some constellation more closely related to the north pole star β UMi.

Crucial will be our examining Liu Xiang (劉向, 77 BC-6 BC)’s words about Gouzhen. While analysing Xuan Ji (璇璣) one of the names of the Bei Chen, he told, “Xuan Ji means that this celestial body is the pivot-star of Gouzhen” (Xiang Liu 18: 609). Here, since the named Gouzhen is surprisingly but undoubtedly a constellation containing the north pole star β UMi, we finally find the reason why Gouzhen is qualified to represent the north celestial pole. And this discovery is also supported by other materials such as the “Preface of the *Record of Ten Islands*” (“*Shi Zhou Ji Xu*” 十洲記序) and the *Dunhuang Manuscripts* (*Dunhuang Xie Ben* 敦煌寫本). The first one delivered by Dongfang Shuo (東方朔, 154 BC-93 BC) says, “reach the most northerly until Gouzhen and have Hua Gai (華蓋, a constellation whose stars are all in the constellation Cassiopeia)” (Dongfang 25: 267).

And the second one written down in 621 shows that until that time point, though sometimes Bei Ji (北極, “north pole”, here it is a constellation) and Gouzhen were considered as two, “the standard arrangement was designating Bei Ji and Gouzhen a single constellation” (N. Pan 143).

In conclusion, on the one hand, Gouzhen has neither a fixed image, nor an established connotation, and the disagreement should be contributed to the reality that, being important in traditional Chinese astronomy, the name *gouzhen* is actually not comprehensible in Chinese language, on the other hand, the named Gouzhen representing the north celestial pole since the signified of *gouzhen* was not exactly the present-day constellation but something containing the north pole star β UMi. In view of these, when driven to seek the source of the name in peoples living nearby, we suggest that the name Gouzhe is a loanword indicating north pole star in OT.

Transcription of Old Turkic *Qazınuq*

Above, Fu Qian said, “Gouzhen are the stars as the (military) camp and (tactical) formation out of Zi Gong”, and the term *yíng zhèn* (營陳) literally means “(military) camp and (tactical) formation”. Though Fu’s explanation is far-fetched, his using 營陳 (營陣) whose pronunciation is for sure *yíng zhèn* to interoperate Gouzhen (勾陳) indicates that the pronunciation of 陳 (陣) should be *zhèn* < LOC [*diŋh] < EOC [*l’iŋs], rather than *chén* < LOC [*diŋ] < EOC [*l’iŋ].

Table 1

Initial Yi Mu (以母) in Putonghua (普通話) and six dialects of Min Chinese (閩語)

EOC	普通話 Putonghua	建甌 Jian’ou	福州 Fuzhou	廈門 Xiamen	漳州 Zhangzhou	三亞 Sanya	東方 Dongfang
液 [*la:g]	[jɛ51]	-	[suɔʔ4]	[sioʔ5]	[sioʔ12]	-	-
翼 [*luŋ]	[ji51]	[siɛ44]	[siʔ4]	[sit5]	[sit12]	[si51]	-
蠅 [*b.luŋ]	[jiŋ35]	[saiŋ33]	[siŋ52]	[sin24]	[sin13]	[siŋ21]	[sin21]
鹽 [*g.lam]	[jɛn35]	-	[siet52]	[sĩ24]	[sĩ13]	-	-
陳 [*l’iŋ]	[tʃhən35]	-	-	-	-	[seŋ21]	-
陣 [*l’iŋs]	[tʃən51]	-	-	-	-	-	[sun21]

Source: Gu. “Hanyu Ziyin Dili”, accessed July 7, 2021, http://www.kaom.net/si_word.php

The earliest record of 勾陳 *gōzhèn* < LOC [*ko: diŋh] < EOC [*ko: ʔiŋs] was shown in the *Six Scabbards* written in the Warring States period when Early Old Chinese was changing into Late Old Chinese. Since the initial Yi Mu (以母) EOC [*l-] of the character 陳 (陣) *zhèn* would become [*r-] before it turned into LOC [*d-], and the change of the initial would follow the way [*l-] > [*z-] > [s-] in some other descendants of EOC (Zheng, “Tansuo Butong Cailiao”; Zheng, “Ziran Yinbian yu”; W. Pan 271-273), for example, Yi Mu [*l-] would become [*z-] in the Proto-Min (Norman), and in the Min Chinese (閩語) spoken in Dongfang (東方), Hainan (海南), the pronunciation of 陳 (陣) *zhèn* is [sun21], *i.e.*, for the initial of 陳 (陣) *zhèn*, Modern Standard Mandarin Chinese [tʂ] < EMC. [*d] < LOC [*d-] < [*r-] < EOC [*l-] > [*z-] > Dongfang Min Chinese [s-], the pronunciation of 勾陳 must have been [*ko: riŋh] ~ [*ko: ziŋh] in the time of the first appearance of Gouzhen. Meanwhile, there was no [*z-] in LOC phonology because the initial Cong Mu (從母) had changed from EOC [*z-] into LOC [*dz-] (Lin and Zhengzhang 2107-2109).

And a Chinese transcription might change the syllabification or the vowel of the original word, for instance, the original syllabification of OT *sälänjä* was *sä-lä-ŋä*, but its Chinese transcriptions are 仙娥 (Xu Liu 138: 3785) EMC [*sien ŋa] which made the syllabification *säl(ä)-ŋä* and 娑陵 (Xu Liu 195: 5195) EMC [*sa liŋ] which made the syllabification *sä-län(ä)*. Thus, with the transcription 勾陳 [*ko: riŋh] ~ [*ko: ziŋh], it shows that the syllabification of *qazŋuq* was changed into *qa-zŋ(u)q* from the original *qaz-ŋuq*.

So, 勾陳 [*ko: riŋh] ~ [*ko: ziŋh] should have been qualified and suitable for transcribing the Old Turkic word *qazŋuq*. However, since there are no details that serve as evidence other than the etymology, assuming that the loanword probably came into Chinese from some Turkic Di people living near the Chinese, we do not over-interpret in order to avoid being naïve or frivolous.

Fountainhead of the Yellow River

In terms of vocabulary and ideology, Turkic impact is more apparently found in Mongolian and Manchu rather than Chinese because Turkic languages were popular in the Mongolian plateau. Henceforth, the Mongolian and

the Manchu not only accepted the ideas behind OT *altun qazuq*, but also had the Turkic term stimulate Chinese culture and its *literati* indirectly.

Mongolic and Manchu North Pole Star Traditions

In Mongolian, the north pole star is called *altan γadasu (odun)* “gold stake (star)” which is the translation of OT *altun qazuq*. And Mongolic peoples such as Mongols and Oirats also adopted the mythology behind the term considering north pole star as a stake used as a horse hitching post as well as the axis of the northern celestial hemisphere (Tokarev and Meletinskij 544-545, 654). The Mongolian term has existed at the latest since the 16th century because in *Must Study for Ascending to a Terrace (Deng Tan Bi Jiu 登壇必究)* first published in 1599, *altan γadasu* was transcribed into *an’ertan hatašu* (俺兒炭哈塔速), though mistranslated into *ming xing* (明星) meaning “bright star (Venus)” (M. Wang 22: 66), and in *Record of Military Preparation (Wu Bei Zhi 武備志)* finished in 1621, the identical mistake is also seen (Mao 227: 2). The reason why they are defined as wrong is that Chinese *ming xing* indicates Venus in this kind of context, for example, in the *Glossary of Gaochang Bureau*, *ming xing* is correctly used to translate OT *čolpan* (Venus) transcribed into *chuanban* (喘班) (Yuandai Shiliao Congkan Bianweihui 305).

In Manchu, the north pole star is called *hadaha (usiha)* also meaning “stake (star)”, here, *hadaha* was translated from either the Turkic or more probably the Mongolic. And like the Mongolic peoples, the Manchu adopted the Turkic idea that north pole star is a stake where two grey horses are tied since, in Manchu, γ UMi and β UMi are called *juru sirha* translated from Mongolian *qoyar sirya* meaning “a pair of white with pale yellow horses” (Jiang and Wang).

Indirect influence of Turkic North Pole Star Tradition

In 1782, Emperor Gao Zong of the Qing (清高宗, r. 1735-1796) a Manchu ruler sent his guard Amida (阿彌達) to search the source of the Yellow River. Then according to the fieldwork in Qinghai (青海) area, Amida reported that the source is a huge rock called *altan γadasu* in Mongolian (Ji 1-2). Thus, from the cultural background mentioned above, the emperor wrote the poem “Imperially-Made Poem to the Source of the He River” (“Yu Zhi

He Yuan Shi” 御製河源詩 “hūwang ho birai sekiyen”) having Chinese and Manchu versions,

因遣侍衛往，窮源命必至。

uttu ofi hiya be unggifi, urunakū sekiyen de isinakini seme baihanabuha.

So, I sent my guard there, arriving at the fountainhead must be done.

.....

更西得巨石，詢蒙古名字。

erei wargi ergide amba wehe bifi, emgeri fonjici inu monggo gebu bihebi.

Going more westerly found a huge rock, asked its Mongolian name. 阿勒坦噶達素，北極星名意。

altan gadasu seme gebulehengge, amargi i hadaha usiha de duibulehebi.
altan γadasu, the name and meaning are that of the north pole star.

(Shen and Mao 41-44)

The poem shows the emperor’s confirmation that the rock named after the star is the fountainhead of the Yellow River. Thus, the Mongolian theory about the source of the river was accepted by the Manchu emperor ruling multiple ethnicities politically and intellectually. Associating the river with the star, the Turkic term went into Chinese again indirectly but stimulatingly. For the Chinese constituting the majority of the population of the country and trying to find the headstream for more than two millennia, widely accepted and deeply influential was the emperor’s proposal (H. Liu, “Qianlong Chao Chonggou”).

Many important figures accepted the theory that the rock called *altan γadasu čilayu* (阿勒坦噶達素齊老) or “gold north pole star” (黃金北極星) is the headstream of the Yellow River. Working on significant classics were some of them, e.g. Liang Yusheng (梁玉繩, 1744-1792) in his study on the *Record of History* (Liang 35: 17-18), Liu Yuan (劉沅, 1768-1855) in his commentary on the *Ancient Books* (*Shang Shu* 尚書) (Y. Liu 2: 66), Hu Linyi (胡林翼, 1812-1861) in his on the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* (*Zi Zhi Tong Jian* 資治通鑑) (Hu 8: 25), Wang Xianqian (王先謙, 1842-1917) in his on the *Book of Han* (*Han Shu* 漢書) (X. Wang 28:

8), and Yang Shoujing (楊守敬, 1839-1915) and Xiong Huizhen (熊會貞, 1859-1936) in theirs on the *Commentary on the Warp of Rivers* (*Shui Jing Zhu* 水經注) (Yang and Xiong 2: 122), Some other of them, *i.e.*, Heying (和瑛, 1741-1821), Xu Song (徐松, 1781-1848) and Wesin (倭仁, 1804-1871), wrote about geography (Heying 1: 20-21; S. Xu 863-864; Wesin 158).

And among the authors, some eulogised the discovery and the Qing proudly and chirpily. For example, Wu Xinglan (吳省蘭, 1737-1810) said in his geographic work,

Commonly, a subterranean river will come on the ground as a crystal one, only the subterranean river from *altan youl* (阿勒坦郭勒) and *γadasu čilayū* (噶達素齊老) is golden when it just comes out, so it is named “gold”. Isn’t it that the river giant and divine, though flowing underground, doesn’t change its essence? ... Only our dynasty rules the most west, makes the distant lands in a single family, and sends envoys to search the source. From *odun tala* (鄂敦他臘, “star land”) going west three hundred miles to the places that haven’t seen from the ancient times, thus the true source of the giant river is unveiled illuminatingly. (Wu 688-689)

Though the remote-controlled expedition to the fountainhead was more like the visualization of the emperor’s preference for some certain hypothesis for the headstream of the Yellow River but not for geographical discovery (Q. Wang 456), indirectly instructed by Turkic north pole star tradition, the emperor successfully forged a heartening symbol located in the deep mountains but triumphantly inspiring his subjects from most parts of the country.

Conclusion

When China was ruled by Emperor Gao Zong of the Qing, through Mongolian then Manchu, shown as “gold north pole star” (黃金北極星), the Turkic idea that north pole star is an *altun qazınuq* went into Chinese. Though embraced by the Chinese who were intellectually eager and politically sensitive, the charming and dazzling “gold north pole star” was just a nine days’ wonder constructed upon the governmental propaganda about their Yellow River exploration.

However, this was not the first time that Turkic peoples' idea that the star is a gold stake impacted on the Chinese, and actually the former influence was more direct, inner and lasting. Despite being forgotten for hundreds of years, the fact is unveiled that OT *qaznyuq* is the real source of Gouzhen (勾陳) which is important in Chinese astronomy and astrology.

Though comprehending the influence of the Turkic term might be considered as tedious or trivial, the far-reaching impact of Turkic culture on Chinese lands and even East Asia is definitely exhibited by the tiny instance. And the reason why we do so is just that only by drawing particulars can an author depict historical scenery vividly, while only by providing concrete examples can a description tell convincingly. Meanwhile our practicing is neither in favour of *petit récit* nor from dislike to the grand since these two are nothing but merely a pair of conceptual proliferations supporting each other.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

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