

AODUNHU (ODONKÜÜ)

Matrimonial Typology in the Mongolian Heroic Epic, *Ĵangyar*

1. Introduction to the *Ĵangyar* Epic

The Mongolian epic (Mong. *tuuli*, Kalm. *dūlwr*, *bātrly tūl'*, *ayistē tūl'*, Khal. Oir. *tūl'*, *bātrly tūli*, Bur. *ūl'ger*)¹ is probably the most significant genre of Mongolian folk literature. The Mongolian heroic epic, *Ĵangyar* (Mong. *Ĵangyar*, *Ĵingyar*, Kalm. *Ĵangyr*) is a traditional, long, oral narrative and one of the most typical and prominent epics of the Mongols. The main content of *Ĵangyar* describes the story of orphan *Ĵangyar qayan* and his twelve main heroes as well as thousands of warriors who fought against enemies to protect their homeland. They established the ideal kingdom, *Bumba* that was like paradise: a place without war, disease, and hunger, but with evergreen grasslands, abundant in herds and flocks. This epic is not only a performance or product of people aiming to achieve well-being and protection through odes to heroes and ancestors, but also reflects the life of Mongolian people.

From 1802 to 1803, the German missionary B. Bergmann was retold long chapters from the *Ĵangyar* by Kalmyks on the banks of the River Volga and published a summary of the stories in German in 1804 and 1805.² According to our present knowledge, B. Bergmann was the first man to introduce this Mongolian heroic epic to the world. In 1864 K. F. Goltunsky published two manuscripts of *Ĵangyar* written in Mongolian clear script (Mong. *todo bičig*), collected in Astrakhan,³ and which is the first version recorded in the world in one variant of Mongolian scripts. Regarding *Ĵangyar* studies, the Russian scholar B. Ja. Vladimircov studied the emergence, formation, transmission and variations of

¹ Birtalan 2011: 39.

² Bergmann 1804: 205–214; Bergmann 1805: 183–214.

³ Голстунский 1864: 8–74.

Ĵangyar first.⁴ Since then, the scholars of more than twenty countries including Russia, Germany, Mongolia, Hungary, the UK, France, Finland, and Japan have studied *Ĵangyar*, from the perspectives of language, history, literature, religion, culture, and so on. Clearly, the theme of *Ĵangyar* has become the subject of international interest.⁵

2. The Main Motifs of Matrimony in Mongolian Epics

The following scholars studied the structure and pattern of the Mongolian heroic epics and reached the consensus that matrimony forms a body of richly patterned motifs within these epics. N. N. Poppe, one of the founders of studies in Mongolian heroic epics, was the first researcher to establish the *Ĵangyar*'s typology based on Khalkha materials.⁶ He divided the epic into four categories: 1. The hero fights and defeats the enemy; 2. The hero goes through three "manly competitions" and gets married; 3. The hero is revitalized by super-natural power; 4. The hero and his son defeat the enemy. In 1978, Russian scholar A. S. Kichikov divided the heroic epic into 12 parts in his article, of which parts 7–10 are related to the hero's matrimony:⁷ 7. Getting information on the hero's destined wife; 8. The hero goes to remote places to find his destined wife; 9. The hero fights for his destined wife; 10. Encountering obstacles while going home with the wife. In 1978, German scholar W. Heissig divided the storyline structure into 14 categories based on the analysis of many Mongolian heroic epics, dividing it into several further types and motifs. The 12th and the 13th categories are about the marriage of heroes, with the 12th category divided into 7 subcategories and 36 motifs, and the 13th category divided into 3 subcategories.⁸ The Chinese scholar

⁴ Vladimircov – Krueger 1983–84: 5–58.

⁵ Sečenmönögle et al. 2018: 1–9.

⁶ Поппе 1937: 74–84.

⁷ Кичиков 1978: 3–6.

⁸ Further expression about the 12th and 13th categories: 12. Courtship: 12.1. Land of the bride; 12.2. Residence (yurt, palace); 12.3. Herd ownership; 12.4. Bride; 12.5. Bride's parents; 12.6. Marriage proposal (12.6.1. rough behavior of the groom; 12.6.2. reference to pre-engagement of children [süi] / declaration of intent; 12.6.3. riddles; 12.6.4. refused by the bride's father; 12.6.5. trying to find a way to approach the bride; 12.6.6. the men compete for the bride); 12.7. Competition (12.7.1. wrestling: 12.7.1.1. wrestler; 12.7.1.2. description of the wrestling; 12.7.1.3. forms of victory; 12.7.2. archery: 12.7.2.1. distance; 12.7.2.2. goals; 12.7.2.3. tensioning the bow; 12.7.2.4. shot; 12.7.3. horse race: 12.7.3.1. distance [race track]; 12.7.3.2. participants [riders and horses]; 12.7.3.3. use strategy; 12.7.4. The bride's parents raised other obstacles: 12.7.4.1. fight against a phoenix; 12.7.4.2. fight against seven blue wolves; 12.7.4.3. Mongyol köke buq-a [blue Mongolian bull, the embodiment of mangyus monster]; 12.7.4.4. search for horses etc; 12.7.5. Parents' lists: 12.7.5.1. attempted murder with poison; 12.7.5.2. stop; 12.7.5.3. falling into

Rinčindorĵi classified it into two types: single-round and multi-round (a series type and a parallel type). He pointed out that the Mongolian epic is comprised of two types of fighting and courtship.⁹ The above-mentioned scholars studied the structure and pattern of the Mongolian heroic epics and reached the consensus that matrimony is a considerable pattern in Mongolian epics. In *Ĵangyar*, Qongyor is one of the people's favorite characters: the story of his marriage has been disseminated in the various regions where Mongolians live.

3. Variants of Qongyor's Matrimony in *Ĵangyar* Epic

At present, there are more than twenty variants of the chapters of Qongyor's marriage. Its main motifs can be summarized as follows: At *Ĵangyar qaγan*'s suggestion, Qongyor married a girl who was an evil (demonic) woman. After Qongyor figured out her real nature, he killed her and started to look for his destined wife. Qongyor eventually overcame the three "manly competitions" and married the destined girl.

3.1. *Kalmyk version*

The *Ten Chapters of Ĵangyar* sang by Ēlyan Owla, was published with Kalmyk script lithograph in Saint Petersburg in 1910 (Mong. *Taki Ĵula qaani ũldŭl Tangsay Bumba qaani ači Ūĵüng Aldar qaani köbün üiyin önčin Bjangyariyin arban bölüg*) by the initiation and with the financial support of W. Kotwicz. D. Taya transcribed it into written Mongolian and published it in 2012. In this version, there is a chapter about Qongyor's marriage entitled The Chapter of 'Qongyor's Marriage' (Oir. *Qongyoriyin ger abalyani bölüg*).¹⁰

3.2. *Khalkha version*

U. Jagdasüren collected the versions of *Ĵangyar* from various regions of Mongolia and Tuva, and published them in Ulaanbaatar in 1978. There is a chapter

a pit; 12.7.5.4. messengers, servants of the parents / lies; 12.7.5.5. penalties for failure to perform the task). 13. Wedding: 13.1. Blessings of the parents / consent; 13.2. Dowry; 13.3: Wedding celebration. Cf. Heissig 1979: 9–27.

⁹ 仁钦道尔吉 Ren qin dao er ji 2001: 50.

¹⁰ The Kalmyk edition was published in 1910 by W. Kotwicz in Saint Petersburg on the basis of the *Ĵangyar* told by the Kalmyk bard Ēlyan Owla in 1910. In this essay, I will quote from the version that transcribed in written Mongolian (Taya 2012).

about Qongyor's marriage, 'Qongyor, Well-known in the World' (Mong. *Ayanan aldartu ayalhan Qongyor*),¹¹ which was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer (Mong. *Ĵangyarči*) G. Odo of Khöwsgöl Province.

3.3. Xinjiang versions

Six different versions were collected in Xinjiang, China. Some of them have only one chapter related to Qongyor, whilst others have several relevant parts.

(1) *Manuscripts of Ĵangyar* (Vols. 1–12): In 1979, the *Ĵangyar* Collection Office was set up in Xinjiang. They recorded *Ĵangyar* from the areas of Bayan-yool and Bortala in Xinjiang. The twelve volumes of the *Manuscripts of Ĵangyar* were published in Mongolian clear script based on these collected materials from 1979 to 1996. There are five chapters related to Qongyor's marriage.

Vol. 3. 'The Chapter of Lion-like Qongyor Married Düdbür Sira Način, Lost His Blood-red Horse and Defeated Dombo Bars' Qayan (Mong. *Araslang-un Aray Qongyor Düdbür Sir-a Način-i abču burqan saiqan jegererte-ban aldayulju abuyad Dombo Bars qayan-i daruysan bölüg*).¹² It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer G. Basai of Hejing County in 1980.

Vol. 5. The chapter 'Lion-like Qongyor Captured Toryon Ĵiluyu Qayan and His Territory, Married the Daughter of Kögsin Ĵambal Qayan and Occupied the Territory of the Three Large Enemies' (Mong. *Araslang-un Aray Qongyor Toryon Ĵiluyu qayan-i gele bariju, tegün-ü nutuy-i oljalayad, basa Kögšin Ĵambal qayan-u keüken-i qatun kijü, yurban yeke mangyus-un nutuy-i oljalaju iregsen bölüg*).¹³ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Aĵaya of Bortala in 1980.

Vol. 10. The chapter of 'Red Qongyor Married the Little Daughter of Kürel Ĵambul Qayan' (Mong. *Odoqan Ulayan Qongyor Kürel Ĵambul qayan-u Otqon Dagini lai gerlegsen bölüg*).¹⁴ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Būdibajār of Bortala in 1986.

Vol. 11. The chapter of 'Qongyor with Marbled Yellow Horse Killed Alayači Talayači Asar Ĵandan Qayan, and Married His Daughter, Otqon Qarayči Dagini' (Mong. *Gandiy qula mori-tai yalsang-un ulayan Qongyor Alayači Talayači Asar Ĵandan qayan-i alayad Otqon Qarayči Dagini-yi ni ĵalaysan bölüg*).¹⁵ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Doki in Bortala in 1978. Also, the chapter of 'Little Red Qongyor Married Güsi Ĵandan Čečeg Who is the Daughter of

¹¹ Загдасүрэн 1978: 69–82.

¹² *Ĵangyar-un eke materiyl* (yurba) 3. 1985: 285–326.

¹³ *Ĵangyar-un eke materiyl* (tabu) 5. 1985: 209–237.

¹⁴ *Ĵangyar-un eke materiyl* (arba) 10. 1992: 405–498.

¹⁵ *Ĵangyar-un eke materiyl* (arban nige) 11. 1996: 455–511.

Alayači Qayan' (Mong. *Otqon Ulayan Qongyor Alayači qayan-u keiken Güsi Ĵandan Čečeg-i ĵalaĵu abuysan bölüg*).¹⁶ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Gerbü in Bortala in 1980.

(2) The Manuscript of Ĵuunai's *Ĵangyar*: Ĵuunai, a famous bard of Qoboysayir, Xinjiang, presented D. Taya with his Mongolian clear script manuscripts of *Ĵangyar* written down by himself from 1983–1999. D. Taya prepared these materials in written Mongolian and published them in 2006. A chapter describes the marriage of Qongyor, namely the chapter of 'Red Qongyor's Marriage Who is a Hero of the Bumba Kingdom' (Mong. *Bumba-yin oron-u bayatur Burĵin Ulayan Qongyor örgöge örgögelegsen bölüg*).¹⁷

(3) *Publication of Ĵangyar Studies*: classical texts of *Ĵangyar* sung by a Chinese *Ĵangyar* performer: the anthology of *Ĵangyar* sung by the bard from Ili, Xinjiang. It contains 21 chapters of the *Ĵangyar*. Mandarwa sorted out those chapters with Mongolian clear script and published it in Xinjiang in 2009. In this version, there is one chapter dedicated to Qongyor's marriage recorded from bard B. Nasunka of Mongyolküriye County: The chapter of 'Red Qongyor's Marriage Who is the Grandson of Böke Mönggün Sigsirge and the Son of a Lion (Wrestler)' (Mong. *Böke Mönggön Sigsirge-yin ači arslang-un köbegün Aray Ulayan Qongyor-un ger abulĵa-yin bölüg*).¹⁸

(4) *Ĵangyar* (Vols. 1–3): It includes the original records of epic singers and was compiled by the Xinjiang Folk Artists Association according to the dictation of the Xinjiang *Ĵangyar* performer original audio tape, recorded in the late 1970s.

Vol. 1. 1). The chapter of 'Qongyor, the Son of Böke Mönggün Sigsirge Took the Head of Geleg Ĵambul Qayan and Married the Daughter of Alayači Qayan' (Mong. *Böke Mönggün Sigsirge-yin köbegün Qongyor Geleg Ĵambul qayan-u toloyai-yi abču Alayači qayan-u keiken-i mordayulĵu iregsen bölüg*).¹⁹ 2). It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer B. Wčir of Bustunayur County in 1980. The chapter of 'Lion-like Red Qongyor Defeated Dombo Bars Qayan' (Mong. *Arslan-u Aray Ulayan Qongyor Dombo Bars qayan-i daruysan bölüg*).²⁰ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer G. Basai of Hejing County in 1982. 3). The chapter of 'The Holy Ĵangyar Attacked Sira Gerel Qayan' (Mong. *Boyda noyan Ĵangyar Sira Gerel qayan-i dayilaysan bölüg*).²¹ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Basangqara of Nilqa County in 1985.

¹⁶ *Ĵangyar-un eke materiyal* (arban nige) 11. 1996: 7–139.

¹⁷ Taya 2006: 46–89.

¹⁸ Mandarwa 2009: 303–327.

¹⁹ *Ĵangyar* (nige) 1. 2013: 643–675.

²⁰ *Ĵangyar* (nige) 1. 2013: 676–692.

²¹ *Ĵangyar* (nige) 1. 2013: 55–174.

Vol. 3. The chapter of ‘Little Red Qongyor Married Gilbaya Dalba Güüsi Jandan Čečeg, the Daughter of Alayači Talayači Aral-tai Qayan’ (Mong. *Otqon Ulayan Qongyor Alayači Talayači Aral-tai Qayan-u Keüken Gilbaya Dalba Güüsi Jandan Čečeg-i jalaysan bölüg*).²² It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Sayjai of Rasiyan County in 1980.

(5) The 23 Chapters of P. Arimpil’s *Ĵangyar*: This academic text of the *Ĵangyar* epic includes 23 chapters sang by the famous bard P. Arimpil, which involves five chapters recorded by Čoiĵongĵab, 17 chapters recorded by D. Taya, and 1 chapter collected by O. Taibung. D. Taya published it in 2013. There are two chapters related to Qongyor’s marriage: a whole chapter, namely the chapter of ‘Qongyor’s Marriage’ (Mong. *Qongyor-un ger abulĵa-yin bölüg*)²³ and an incomplete chapter, the chapter of ‘Qongyor’s Marriage’ (Mong. *Qongyor-un ger abulĵa-yin bölüg*).²⁴

(6) *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (Vols. 1–3): The three-volume manuscript of *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* was edited both in Mongolian clear script and traditional Mongolian script by B. Möngke, Xiong Fu Ma, Amĵilta, and Naranyuwa in 2015. It includes material from the counties of Hejing, Yanĵi, Qosiyud, and Bostunayur. There are six chapters related to the marriage of Qongyor:

Vol. 1. The chapter of ‘Qongyor’s Marriage’ (Mong. *Qongyor-un ger abulĵan-u bölüg*),²⁵ which was recorded from *Ĵangyar* performer Liĵai of Hejing County in 1982.

Vol. 2. 1). The chapter of ‘The Married Qongyor and his Son, Qosiyon’s Defeat on Malai Qabqa Qayan’ (Mong. *Silbi-yin ulayan Qongyor gerlegsen ba Qongyor-un köbegün Qosiyon Malai Qabqa qayan-i daruĵsan bölüg*).²⁶ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Basang of Hejing County in 1980. 2). The Chapter of ‘Red Qongyor’s Defeat on Qara Kükül Qayan’ (Mong. *Silbi-yin Ulayan Qongyor Qara Kükül qayan-i daruĵsan bölüg*).²⁷ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Busqumĵi of Hejing County in 1981.

Vol. 3. 1). The chapter of ‘Qongyor Occupied Alayači Qayan and Married His Daughter Araqini Dagini’ (Mong. *Qongyor Alayači qayan-u nutuy-i oruĵulĵu abuyad Araqini Dagini-yi jalaysan bölüg*).²⁸ It was recorded from the bard Lireb of Qosiyud County in 1980. 2). The chapter of ‘Qongyor’s Defeat on Gelüg Ĵambul Qayan’ (Mong. *Qongyor Gelüg Ĵambul qayan-i daruĵsan bölüg*).²⁹ It was

²² *Ĵangyar* (ĵurba) 3. 2013: 458–497.

²³ Taya 2013: 150–209.

²⁴ Taya 2013: 210–226.

²⁵ *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (nige) 1. 2015: 228–417.

²⁶ *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (qoyar) 2. 2015: 841–945.

²⁷ *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (qoyar) 2. 2015: 412–500.

²⁸ *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (ĵurba) 3. 2015: 276–324.

²⁹ *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (ĵurba) 3. 2014: 226–246.

recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer Ĵojon of Qosiyud County in 1983. 3). The chapter of ‘Lion-like Red Qongyor’s Defeat on Kögsin Ĵambul Qayan’ (Mong. *Arslan-u Aray Ulayan Qongyor Kögšin Ĵambul qayan-i daruysan bölüg*).³⁰ It was recorded from the *Ĵangyar* performer N. Bulaŷa of Yanĵai County in 1981.

4. Matrimony in the Story of Qongyor’s Marriage

Various rites are held at important stages of a person’s life including birth, adulthood, marriage, death, etc. These rite processes are defined as “rites of passage” by Arnold van Gennep,³¹ as they help individuals to pass from one social group to another as their life progresses and embrace certain cultural norms. Regarding terminology P. S. Pallas,³² B. Bergmann,³³ G. Bálint,³⁴ G. Kara,³⁵ Á. Birtalan and A. Rákos,³⁶ and many other scholars recorded and published available sources of Oirad-Mongolian weddings. As for the typologies of Mongolian marriage, J. Holmgren demonstrated the system of political marriages in the Mongolian empire and the Yuan dynasty (1206–1368),³⁷ and also explained the essence and functions of levirate and bride-price theories, and made assumptions on the marriage customs of the early Mongolian society.³⁸ G. Q. Zhao analyzed the Mongolian royal marriages of the Mongol Empire in his PhD dissertation, focusing on the characteristics and strategies of Mongolian royal marriages, and describing the various marriage relationships between the royal family of the Mongols and their marriage partners including the Onggirat, Ikires, Oirat, Öngüt tribes, the Korean royal family, and others.³⁹ P. Ratchnevsky pointed out that the Yuan dynasty introduced a dualistic levirate system to correspond to the relevant local situation: each nationality would have followed traditional marriage customs: Mongolians could have practiced levirate, but the Hans and southerners would not.⁴⁰ R. Pop summarized levirate and polygamy as typologies of matrimony existing for a long time in the ancient Mongolian society.⁴¹ A. Sárközi

³⁰ *Bayanyool Ĵangyar* (γurba) 3. 2014: 121–149.

³¹ Gennep 1960.

³² Pallas 1801: 235–241.

³³ Bergmann 1804: 145–152.

³⁴ Birtalan 2011: 139–144.

³⁵ Kara 1997: 72.

³⁶ Birtalan – Rákos 2002: 83–86.

³⁷ Holmgren 1991: 58–97.

³⁸ Holmgren 1986: 127–192.

³⁹ Zhao 2008.

⁴⁰ Ratchnevsky 1968: 45–62.

⁴¹ Pop 2010: 87–92.

introduced the history and current status of levirate based on Mongolian historical sources and modern Mongolian social phenomena experienced in Qaračin, Mongour, Ordos, and other areas.⁴² The studies which came later indicate that scholars primarily focused on historical sources related to the royal clan and made a thorough inquiry into the forms of Mongolian traditional marriage.

In the Mongolian heroic epic *Ĵangyar*, exogamy, monogamy, and bride-price appear as signs of preponderant matrimony system. What follows below is a description of these phenomena in different versions of Qongyor’s marriage.

4.1. Un-destined wife

Un-destined wife (Mong. *birman süüdü*) refers to a woman who married a hero, but she is not the destined one for him. *Birman* in this context means “evil, demon”; and from the word *süüdü*, the *süi* steam means “betrothals, engagement”; and the suffix of adjective derivatives *-dü* is added. This noun refers to an engaged woman. This expression is fully demonstrated in the story of Qongyor’s marriage:

1. Motif of marrying an un-destined wife

The chapters on Qongyor’s marriage starts with a woman called Sira Način as Qongyor’s wife. Most of the chapters name *Ĵangyar qayan* as the person who chooses her to be Qongyor’s wife. However, after getting married, Qongyor thought that Sira Način was not a proper spouse. As Altan Ćegeĵi said:

<i>Tödbör Način bolqul-a belgegüsün-eĉe ni ögede-ben bolqul-a qorin dörben qoortan moyai-yin sinĵi бүридүгсен belgegüsün-eĉe ni uruĵu-dayan bolqul-a qorin dörben šulum-un... (Bayanyool Ĵangyar 2005 [Vol. 1]: 237–238)⁴³</i>	Tödbör Način whose upper half of the body is twenty-four venomous snakes, lower half part of the waist is twenty-four demonic [characteristics]...
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This motif also exists in the chapters of Qongyor’s marriage, sung by Ėlyan Owla.

⁴² Sárközi 2006: 259–267.
⁴³ The collection, *Bayanyool Ĵangyar*, was written in clear Mongolian script and traditional Mongolian script. In this essay, the traditional Mongolian edition is quoted.

<p><i>yadar bey-e ni mōn araqini mōn bolba ču dotor-a bey-e ni šolom-un düri-tei keüken bile.</i> (Taya 2012: 7)</p>	<p>Although she looks like a fairy from the outside, actually is an evil woman inside.</p>
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Sira Način was constructed as an image of an evil woman, one who is clearly not the perfect wife of a hero that people expected.

2. Motif of killing the un-destined wife

Qongyor had a bad dream in one morning:

<p><i>Bum kürügsen Bumba-yin oron butaraysan bolju boyda noyan Ĵangyarai olja-du yabuysan bolju. Bumba-yin burqan saiqan jeđerde ni tergen-ü arsi-du oruysan bolju Qongyorai bey-e ni terge dayuysan bolju jegüdün ni oruyad</i> (Bayanyool Ĵangyar 2005 [Vol. 1]: 259–260)</p>	<p>The hundred-thousand-year-old Bumba palace has been disintegrated, the holy Ĵangyar was caught by the enemy. The gorgeous red horse of Bumba is pulling the shafts of cart, Qongyor himself became the carter – these appeared in his dream</p>
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In ancient times, the main function of dreams was to anticipate the future.⁴⁴ In the Mongolian heroic epic, dreams similarly represent a prediction. Qongyor regarded his dream as a bad omen. He killed Sira Način and ran away from Ĵangyar qayan's court to find his destined wife. The motif of killing the un-destined wife by the hero is not only a pre-condition for finding one's destined wife, but also confirms monogamy in the *Ĵangyar* epic.

4.2. Qongyor Pursues his Destined Wife

Destined wife (Mong. *ĵayayan-u süitü*), as the name suggests, becomes the real spouse of a hero. Some motifs of marriage rites appear in the process of finding the destined wife, which correlate to Mongolian traditional wedding customs, and also reflect features of exogamy, monogamy, and bride-price system.

⁴⁴ Stevens 1997: 11–13.

1. Motif of marriage proposal

One such source is ‘The Secret History of the Mongols’, which refers to the marriage proposal (Mong. *uruy duradqu*). It describes the great Chinggis Khan’s father, Yisügei Bayatur, meeting Dei Sečen, while on the way to the Olqunud tribe for the courtship of his nine-year-old son. Dei Sečen says:

“Quda Yisügei, I had a dream last night, I did. A white gyrfalcon clasping both sun and moon in its claws flew down to me and perched on my hand. I told the people about this dream of mine, saying, ‘Before, when I looked, I could only see the sun and the moon from afar; now this gyrfalcon has brought them to me and has perched on my hand. He has alighted, all white. Just what sort of good thing does this show?’ I had my dream, quda Yisügei, just as you were coming here bringing your son. I had a dream of good omen. What kind of dream is it? The august spirit of you, Kiyat people, has come in my dream and has announced your visit.”⁴⁵

Yisügei bayatur discontinued his trip and agreed with the marriage proposed by Dei Sečen. This is a famous example of acting in accordance with a dream metaphor. People firmly believed that a dream was an indicator of the future and a sacred inspiration coming from a supernatural power. In the *Ĵangyar* epic, information relating to the destined bride was received in various ways, for instance, the hero has a dream early in the morning or predicted as an augur. According to the chapters of the marriage of Qongyor, he dreamed about a white hair old man who told him about the destined girl:⁴⁶

<i>Buyurul Ĵambal qayan-u</i> <i>Ĵula Ĵandan gedeg üren bain-a</i> <i>egün-i</i> <i>ayuu yeke küčütei</i> <i>asar Ulayan Qongyor köbegün</i> <i>abču gedeg</i> <i>ataya möröi</i> <i>yamar saiqañ kereg!</i> (Taya 2013: 165)	Buyurul Ĵambal qayan has a daughter, whose name is Ĵula Ĵandan. It is a wonderful thing if the great, powerful Red Qongyor marries her.
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To take yet another example:

⁴⁵ Rachewiltz 2013: 13.

⁴⁶ The destined girl in various chapters has different names. Cf. P. Arimpil: Ĵula Jandan; Ĵ. Juunai: Joo Jandan; Ēlyan Owla: Gerenjil; Gerbü: Güüsi Jandan Čečeg.

<i>ĵayayan-u süitü čini bolbal... buĵurul Ĵambal qan-u keüken Ĵoo Ĵandan-i örgögeledeg bolqula čini ene orčilang-du berke qobor, aldar čola ĵirĵal edlene či. (Taya 2006: 55)</i>	your destined wife is... Ĵoo Ĵandan, the daughter of Buĵurul Ĵambal qan. If you marry her, there is nothing impossible and you will enjoy honor and happiness.
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The hero went to a distant tribe in search of a destined wife. On the way, he faced many natural or man-made obstacles. Qongyor was not afraid of these difficulties and was not shaken by temptations. He persistently looked for the destined girl. To a certain extent, this motif embodies the characteristics of exogamy and monogamy in the *Ĵangyar* epic.

2. Motif of leaving a sign

Putting a sign (Mong. *temdeg talbiqu*) refers to mementos given by a hero as a token of love. In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, before Yisügei bayatur returned home, he left a horse as gift for Dei Sečen:

<i>kötöl moriniyan belge ögčü, Temüĵin-i küregete talbiĵu otču.⁴⁷</i>	Then he gave him his spare horse as a pledge and went off, leaving Temüĵin as his son-in-law. ⁴⁸
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This is an early phenomenon of the bride-price (Mong. *süi beleg*) system. A certain object was used as a symbol of engagement. This custom has gradually become a provision recognized by law. For example, in the *Oirat Code*, the corresponding bride-price enactments are proposed according to different classes.⁴⁹ In the chapters of the marriage of Qongyor:

<i>ta nar-tu yamar temdeg bain-a ged Alayači qayan suraqul-a ni: eĵen düni unuĵuluĵsan morin bolqul-a aduĵun dotor-a ni bain-a yender esitei tongĵoray ni abdar-a duni bain-a man-u öggüĵsen yaĵuman tere gedeg (Bayanĵool Ĵangyar 2005 [Vol. 3]: 318)</i>	What is your symbol? Alayači qayan asked them. A horse for the owner to ride among the horses, the knife with the long handle in the cupboard. We gave these things.
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⁴⁷ Bayar 1981: 112.

⁴⁸ Rachewiltz 2013: 14.

⁴⁹ Doronatib 1985. See the terms of 37–43.

In another version:

<i>Alayači qayan-luḡa quda anda uruḡ eligen boluḡsan ulusud biden. minu temdeg bolbal aduḡunduni talbiḡsan boru morin čiki bain-a küisü-yi ni kerčigsen kituḡa basa keüken-ü abdar-a-du bayidaḡ bolqu minu temdeg tere geḡü keledeg ni ene bile gen-e lai. (Ĵangyar 2013 [Vol. 1]: 650)</i>	With Alayači qayan we are relatives by marriage. My symbols are a grey horse among the horses, the knife to cut off the umbilical cord in the cupboard of the girl. These are my symbols.
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The word *temdeg* means “symbol, mark”. In these two versions sang by bards Lireb and Anja from Bayanḡool and Bortala counties, Xinjiang. A horse and a knife were given to the destined girl as tokens, and a symbol of their engagement. The bride-price system in the *Ĵangyar* epic originated from the life of Mongolian people. Meanwhile, this system has been fully demonstrated and preserved in folklore.

4.3. The Hero’s Competition

Matrimony by competition emerged with the development of exogamy. In this marriage system, men were not allowed to marry women within their own clan, but had to marry women from other clans who were of a different lineage.⁵⁰ The heroes of the *Ĵangyar* epic, for instance, Ĵangyar, Böke Mönggün Sigsirge, Qosiyun Ulayan, Qayan Siir, Kündü Ğar-tu Sabar, and Qongyor all travelled afar to look for their destined wives, and overcame various obstacles to complete inter-clan matrimony. In order to make their own tribe more powerful, the chieftain (Mong. *qan*) would choose a son-in-law who came from a more powerful clan. In general, there were two ways of testing the power of contestants. The first is a common motif in the *Ĵangyar* epic: heroes take part in the “three manly games” (Mong. *ere-yin ḡurban naḡadum*), which include horseracing (Mong. *mori uralduqu*), archery (Mong. *sur qarbuqu*), and wrestling (Mong. *böke barilduqu*).⁵¹ The other type is that the hero completes the challenges proposed

⁵⁰ Владимирцов 1934: 46.
⁵¹ Bálint recorded the Kalmyk traditional custom of the “three manly games”. This is one of the first records about these games and competitions, though in Bálint’s material “stealing horse or livestock” belongs to this custom, as a challenge for the men’s skills. Cf. Birtalan 2011: 148–149.

by his future father-in-law. The example below is from the Kalmyk version of the chapter of Qongyor's marriage sung by Ēlyan Owla:

<i>Doysin Čayan Ĵula qayan marɣuɣa kine bi tere marɣuɣa abuɣsan tani keöke mini abuɣtun kebe.</i>	Doysin Čayan Ĵula qayan said, My daughter will marry the one who wins in competitions.
<i>Türügün marɣuɣan-du tabin bara ɣaǵartu urulduɣa talbiɣsan-du Sanal-un buɣurul qalǵan külig tasurqai tabin bara ɣaǵartu ɣarču irebe.</i>	In the first competition of horse racing for fifty miles, Sanal's bald grey horse reached the final line first and got the win.
<i>Qoyadayči marɣuɣa ni sumu qarbulɣan boluɣsan-du Ĵangyar-un mergen erke qara gedeg bodong sayuɣsan-iyar-iyen oroɣuluɣad sanaysan-iyar-iyen ɣarɣaɣad ataɣa marɣuɣa abuba.</i>	In the second competition of archery, Ĵangyar's soldier Mergen Erke Qara was thinking deeply and as he expected, hit the target [easily].
<i>Basa ediür-iin sayin-du ɣurbadayči marɣuɣa boluɣad ɣurban naɣur bulǵu sayuɣad qoyar kürgen-i noolduɣuluy-a geǵü baina.⁵²</i> (Taya 2012: 28.)	After that, on a nice day people gathered for the third competition, let two candidates (Qongyor and his opponent) wrestle.

In the above example, in order to choose the most powerful son-in-law, the chieftain proposed three tasks. But it was not Qongyor who completed these three tasks alone. First of all, the hero Sanal won the horse racing competition; secondly, the hero Mergen Erke Qara won the archery competition; finally, Qongyor defeated his opponent in the wrestling competition. This confirmed that Ĵambal qayan not only examined the strength of his son-in-law, but also tested the strength of the entire tribe.

Conclusion

There are various versions of Qongyor's marriage story recorded in the Kalmyk, Khalkha, and Xinjiang areas. To a certain extent, the motifs that appear in the chapters of Qongyor's marriage in the *Ĵangyar* epic, explain the features of matrimony. The main points of Qongyor's matrimony are as follows:

⁵² Taya 2012: 27–28.

Qongyor married two wives, but not at the same time. He killed the first, un-destined wife before looking for the destined one. Therefore, Qongyor's marriage complies with monogamy.

Bride-price marriage systems have been wide-spread in Mongolian society since the clan-period. This is verified by historical sources. Qongyor gave a horse and a knife as signs of his betrothal, which is evidence of the bride-price system in the epic *Ĵangyar*.

The custom of competition for the bride is a wide-spread motif in the Mongolian epic and appears in the *Ĵangyar* as well.

Traces of traditional exogamy are clearly reflected in the chapters about Qongyor. Exogamy is the most notable feature of the matrimonial system of the Mongolian heroic epic, *Ĵangyar*.

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