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Who Will be Remembered as a Princess? A Comparative Study on the Princesses of Chinggizid Recorded in the Shu'ab-i Panjgana and in the 'Table-of Princesses' of Yuanshi

Like the male members of “Golden Lineage” (altan urugh), the Chinggisid princesses played the significant roles in the political, economic and daily life of Mongol Empire as well. Nevertheless, among the various duties of the Chinggisid princesses, it is undoubted that the imperial marriage is a basic function. Through establishing the marriage alliance, the influential families gained access to the center of the power and became a part of it afterward. Meanwhile, as the marriage partners and sometimes the agents of their husbands, the Chinggisid princesses were able to display their personal abilities on a broad political arena.

Despite the documents relating to the princesses’ marriage recorded in the multi-lingua historical sources occasionally, there is, however, lack of the detailed information for the modern researchers to study the situation and the function of the princess’ marriage in different Chinggisid Khanates. Fortunately, referring to following two works — the genealogical compendium entitled as Shu‘ab-i panjgāna (hereafter as SP) which is considered to be compiled by Rashīd al-Dīn, and the “Table of Princesses” of Yuanshi (hereafter as YS), an official history of Yuan Dynasty — which included a considerable information on the Chinggisid princesses (106 in SP and 85 in YS), it is avail for us to consider the character of Chinggisid princesses and the function of the imperial marriage in depth.

Based on a comparative study, firstly, I will compare the similarity and the difference of the record in aforementioned works and in further, discuss the different principles during the period of compilation. Moreover, in the second section, this article will analyze the probable cause due to the differences within both works, e.g. the infringement of the exogamous principle, and the different policies of exchange marriage with the Chinggisid princesses in Iran, Central Asia and China. I consider, to a certain extent, the changes in practice and in concept relating to the princesses’ marriage coincide with the process of localization which occurred in the western and eastern part of Mongol Empire respectively.