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Striving together for Mongolian Studies at the Charles University

In memory of Jaroslav Vacek

J. LUBSANGDORJI

“You were one of the closest people to the deceased, would you write some reminiscence of him?” asked one of the editors of our *Mongolica Pragensia*. I have already written a short retrospective for J. Vacek’s 70th anniversary. He was alive and in good health at that time, so it was written as a recollection of various “adventures” which happened to him when he was learning Mongolian.¹ Prof. Vacek and I have worked together for many years and the success of my professional activities, i.e. teaching and research, came into being thanks to the effort and time he put into me, and advice he gave me. Therefore I decided to write a few words about the topic.

Our professions and research topics were very different, as was the cultural environment we both grew up in – one being a Westerner while the other was a man from the East. But it was “the methodology of teaching Mongolian as a foreign language” that connected us as our shared secondary profession.

Jaroslav Vacek, a teacher and researcher into Sanskrit and Tamil, who was appointed to establish and become head of the Mongolian studies department, was sent out to the Mongolian State University to study Mongolian in 1974. As a linguist he asked for extra classes of Mongolian phonetics in addition to the classes of colloquial Mongolian and Mongolian grammar. At that time I was teaching phonetics at the University and thus I became his teacher.

The phonetics of a Mongolian child that is starting to talk

I invited him to my home on New year’s day. J. Vacek had already spent four months learning Mongolian and was able to speak a little. Our family with four children used to live in a felt yurt in a yurt (ger) district. As soon as he saw what living in the yurt was like, he said: “I feel as if I have come to a different world.”

1) Lubsangdorji 2013, pp. 152–158.

It happened to be the time when my middle daughter was just about to start talking (1975). Vacek was fondling her and then he took a spoon that was lying around and said: “*Ene yu ve?* (What is this?).” “*Abag* (A spoon),” she answered. “Say *khalbaga* (a spoon),” repeated Vacek, surprised. But she said again: “*Abag.*” Vacek laughed loudly: “Say *akh* (brother)!” “*Akh,*” she repeated. “The child is able to pronounce the sound *kh*, but it seems as if she does not hear it in the first position in the word *khalbaga* (a spoon). What about the sound *l*, does she hear that, too?” he asked me, as he took a piece of carrot (*luuvan* in Mongolian) and asked: “What is this?” “*Yuuban,*” my daughter said. Vacek was quite surprised and asked my daughter to say “*Luvsan,*” which is the first part of my name. My daughter said: “*Yuvsan.*” “For Czech people it is very difficult to pronounce the Mongolian sound “*l*”. It seems to be difficult for her, too, as she replaces it with a completely different consonant. But both “*l*” and “*y*” have in common that they belong to the same group of fricative consonants,” he joked. “Let’s study the phonetics of children that are learning to talk. You make notes about the process of language acquisition of Mongolian children and I will do the same for Czech children.”

Nothing followed this conversation but after several years, when my youngest daughter started talking, I was observing the process and made rather thorough notes on its phonetic features. I am not sure whether Vacek made such notes or not. We never spoke about the topic again.

Teaching grammar using the method observed in first-language acquisition

My cooperation with Vacek started in 1976 when he elaborated the detailed plan of a textbook for teaching Mongolian as a second language to Czech students. This is what we proposed: “*We should make a textbook containing fifteen lessons. The words, idioms and phrases along with their translation into Czech, a short explanation of grammar and examples, should be given at the beginning of each lesson. There is no need to speak of more grammar rules. The classes have to be structured in such a way that student will be forced to speak Mongolian right away. The children’s acquisition of grammar rules will not be needed. We have to find out the method that will enable students to acquire the colloquial language in this way.*”

And so I chose a method based on sentence patterns that has been finding its position in the field of second language acquisition in the recent past. I transferred Mongolian dialogues into sentence patterns. This was the

specific feature of our textbook – it became the “Textbook of colloquial Mongolian” with about 20 pattern dialogues (answers and questions) in each lesson, designed to teach grammar and colloquial language in this way.² Later on we made some alterations and added some updates to the textbook and published it in English.³ Vacek – in the meantime he became vice-rector for international affairs – told me that they got letters from foreign universities in appreciation of the textbook used for teaching Mongolian. “That is to your merit,” he repeated with great gratitude.

The method of “chewing” the text

Later Vacek suggested that we have to make a manual for students to get them to acquire written Mongolian. We discussed many times the method for making this manual. He said that students have to “chew” all the words, idioms and phrases in the text from the point of view of the lexicon, grammar, stylistics etc. until they will not perceive them as their own. He said the word “chew” in Russian, showing the chewing movement with his teeth and smiling. And I understood the term *зажуулах* (‘to make somebody chew something’) as the method applied in translating the text from inside, when the students have to try their best to study. Thus in order to make students learn (“chew”) a text, each lesson was subdivided into many sections with such titles as *Үгсийн тайлбар* (Explanation of the words), *Соёл түүхийн ойлголт* (Commentary on the cultural and historical context), *Нэр томъёо* (Terminology), *Хэлзүйн лавлах* (Grammar): *Үгсийн холбоо* (Lexical phrases), *Өгүүлбэрийн бүтэц* (Sentence structure), *Бичвэрийн хувилбар* (Variants of the texts): *Хувилбар холбоо үгс* (Variants of phrases) and *Хувилбар өгүүлбэрүүд* (Variants of sentences), *Бичвэрийн дагалт* (Follow-ups to the texts): *Холбоо үгийн онцлог* (The specific features of phrases), *Өгүүлбэрийн онцлог* (The specific features of sentences), *Асуулт, даалгавар* (Questions, tasks), etc. As a result we came up with a textbook that enabled students to “chew” the lessons thoroughly with a teacher, with no need to have the texts translated.⁴ Apart for making students able to understand well the meaning of the text by using the method of “perceiving it from inside”, our aim was to also help them gain/obtain the ability to feel the literal and

2) Luvsandordž, Vacek 1979.

3) Lubsangdorji, Vacek, 2004.

4) Luvsandordž, Vacek, 1985.

metaphorical meaning of the words, phrases and analytical patterns, as well as their “idea” (modality). In other words it was inevitable that we would fashion lessons that would enable a student to get deep into the text and gain first-practice at the highest level.

In the course of creating this manual, I myself started to learn the methods of getting deep into the written Mongolian and based on this, I started to look critically at the research work of some researchers. Prof. Jaroslav Vacek is an example of the many who acquired foreign languages, including a language that became extinct long ago (Sanskrit), using this very method of “chewing” them. He had excellent knowledge of English. I personally heard people saying that the Czech professor of the Charles University J. Vacek has very clear pronunciation in English and can translate to and from English amazingly well. A year before he died I was invited by the Ashmolean museum in Oxford to give a speech at a seminar on *Pax Mongolica*. When I told Vacek that I was going to London he looked at me and asked: “Is London a nice place? I have never been there!” “A man who has never been to London speaks such perfect English! It is admirable! So this is a result of his method of “chewing out” the texts?” I thought.

How I started to “chew out” the Secret History of the Mongols

My cooperation with J. Vacek spurred me on to apply the method of “chewing out” to the Mongolian texts. I started to think that “chewing out” the Mongolian ancient literary works might deliver very interesting results. And so I started to “chew out” the Secret History of the Mongols since 2000. Its translation into Khalkha Mongolian, Linguistic and Cultural Commentary was published in 2014. The SHM has been studied in Europe for 150 year, it has been translated into more than 20 languages and a great number of research works have been published on this topic. If one asks what makes my SHM different I would answer that it comes with the correct reading of the original text and changes the manner of its translating and is a result of root and branch research. I have destroyed the false belief that the very first translation of the SHM into Chinese is in fact its original. In a manner based on my interpretations of the text of the SHM, many scholars around the world are now able to translate the text not from the Chinese translation but from its Mongolian original. Consequently many ideas generally accepted by present-days researchers about Genghis Khan and Mongolian history will have to be reconsidered completely. Why am I so proud of this? Because I was able

to reinterpret the 800-year-old text and find out correct meaning of some words and expressions. What helped me to do it? The research method of “chewing out” the ancient Mongolian texts which I learned following the advice by Prof. J. Vacek. J. Vacek translated my numerous works, focused on research into the SHM, into English and they were published in the journal of the Charles University – *Mongolica Pragensia*. He enjoyed translating my papers from Mongolian very much and used to reward me with words of praise saying: “You have got it!”

“Answers and questions”

After the textbook *Učebnice mongolštiny. Moderní spisovný jazyk* (The Mongolian Textbook. Modern Standard Language) was published J. Vacek said: “This book is a little more difficult for the students to learn right away than the textbook of the colloquial language. We have to do another textbook that will serve as a bridge between the textbook of colloquial language and the standard language,” and he showed me the book *Question and Answer* by L.G. Alexander.⁵ We used its method to make another textbook.⁶ It consists of three parts, including exercises to improve the dialogues on the topics from everyday life in the first one. There are also 30 texts on the same topic, each consisting of 100–160 words, that are assigned to improve speech skills. The exercises for improving dialogue skills on Mongolian culture and history in the second part are appended with 30 simplified academic texts on the same topics, each consisting of 160–180 words. The third part – 15 lessons – includes exercises for improving interpreting skills when receiving guests and is based on the book “Exercises for interpreting” by J. Vochala.⁷ Thus my cooperation with J. Vacek resulted in a set of textbooks for foreign students.

Multilingual comparison

J. Vacek’s main research topic was a comparison of Tamil with many languages in Central Asia. From the very beginning when he started to learn

5) Alexander 1977, 1981 (4).

6) Luvsandordž, Vacek 1990.

7) Vacek 1988.

Mongolian he realized certain lexical and grammatical similarities between the two languages and was wholeheartedly surprised by that fact. He even used to say that knowledge of Tamil helped him to acquire Mongolian much faster. The book “Dravidian and Altaic”⁸ became his main work on comparison between Tamil and other Dravid languages on the one hand and the Mongolic, Turkic and Tungus languages on the other. I did not interfere in this part of his research. I told him many times that I do not agree with his choice of the Mongolian words shown as examples in his comparative research.

When I came to Prague in 1987 J. Vacek advised me to start comparative research between the Mongolian and the other Central Asia languages and helped with publishing the output. In such a manner our jointly-written research papers began to appear in the journal of the Oriental Institute.⁹

Once J. Vacek gave me a dictionary by V.I. Tsintsius¹⁰ saying: “The Manchu-Tungusic languages are presumably related to Mongolian since ancient times, there is a large number of words borrowed from Mongolian in those languages. If you find it possible to research their vocabulary we might publish a very interesting book.” The vocabulary of the Manchu-Tungusic languages is really very interesting from the point of view of Mongolian studies. As the eminent mongolist N. Poppe had provided ancient phonetic examples from the times preceding the process of development of long vowels from Tungusic languages, I started to analyse words from those languages very carefully. I was browsing through the dictionaries for several years and made plentiful notes on phonetics, the lexicon and etymology of Mongolic and Tungusic languages. Tsintsius marked around 3,000 Tungusic words as of Mongolian origin. In addition to that I have identified more than 3,000 other words of presumably Mongolian origin. When I showed my work to J. Vacek, he said: “It looks like a very interesting work, my dear bagsh! Let’s wait for better times. It could very well be the professorial work of two toothless old men,” he joked.

8) Vacek 2002.

9) Lubsangdorji, Vacek 1992, pp. 409–430; Vacek, Lubsangdorji 1994, pp. 401–414.

10) *Сравнительный словарь тунгусо-маньчжурских языков*, 1975.

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November 1976. J. Vacek with J. Lubsangdorji (teacher of Mongolian at MSU) and D. Damba (headmaster of the Buddhist College in Ulaanbaatar) during their trip to the Terej mountains near Ulaanbaatar.

From the left – J. Vacek, L. Darambazar (J. Lubsangdorji's son), driver D. Damba



November 1978. Prof. J. Vacek during his visit to J. Lubsangdorji's house. (J. Vacek is playing with J. Lubsangdorji's 4-year-old son Biligbazar). Later, when J. Lubsangdorji's family moved to Prague, J. Vacek became an "English hometutor" to Biligbazar.



Ulaanbaatar 1981. In the yard, in front of the yurt of J. Lubsangdorji, the teacher of MSU. From the left: M. Badamgarav (J. Lubsangdorji's wife), their son L. Biligbazar, daughter L. Munkhzul, T. Tserendejid (Lubsangdorji's mother), Lubsangdorji and Badamgarav's son L. Darambazar, J. Vacek, Lubsangdorji and Badamgarav's daughter L. Dulmaazul.

Delden Mend – The Darkhad Shaman and Outlaw

ÁGNES BIRTALAN, Eötvös Loránd University

Summary: The article deals with the narratives and ritual texts about Delden Mend, one of the most famous shamans of the Darkhad ethnic group living in Khöwsgöl Province of Mongolia. The core of the present analysis is the field data recorded by the author during the nineties from Darkhad informants and field material of other experts (G. D. Sanžeev, V. Diószegi, S. Badamxatan, O. Pürew, S. Dulam and B. Oidow). The material is interpreted in the context of Darkhad shamanism and the commonly known narratives about Mongolian outlawry. The fate of the outlaw and the shaman intertwine in Delden Mend's narratives. Due to his adventurous life Mend shaman's *ongon* (transformed soul) is one of the most powerful ones among the Darkhad shamans even nowadays and is invoked frequently during shamanic rituals.

0. Introduction

Darkhad shamanism is one of the most intriguing shamanic traditions in Inner Asia and Siberia, documented in scientific detail already in the first half of the 20th century (cf. Sanžeev 1930) and analysed multilaterally in an ethnographic framework in the sixties (Diószegi 1961/republished in 1998, 1963/republished in 1998, Badamxatan 1965). Since the nineties numerous researchers have carried out fieldwork among the Darkhads, collecting data about the still surviving shamanic tradition (Dulam 1992, Pürew¹ 1999, 2003, Birtalan 1993, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2012a, 2012b, Birtalan; Sipos; Coló 2004). All the above-mentioned works contain valuable information about the historical and socio-economic context of the Darkhads' religious life and practice.² The later changes (first decade of the 21st century) and the latest developments in the Darkhads' social life and religious practices as a newly emerging

-
- 1) Researcher O. Pürew has lived and worked among the Darkhads for several decades and published his results quite late. He was the assistant and interpreter of the Hungarian scholar Vilmos Diószegi in Khöwsgöl.
 - 2) The sources these studies refer to and their analyses will not be repeated here. Readers who are interested in the contextual studies can consult the following works and their rich references: Žamcarano 1991 (English translation with explanations), Badamxatan 1965, Natsagdorj 2014, etc.

paradigm have attracted the attention of some researchers as well (Pedersen 2011, Hangartner 2011); however, these data do not belong to the topic of the present article which focuses on the period when the “original” or almost unchanged shamanic phenomena characterised the Darkhads’ religious tradition.

The Darkhad language and culture have been one of the primary target subjects in my field research. I have focused my studies on the Darkhad shamanic ritual texts (Birtalan 2012a), the non-verbal ways of shamanic communication (Birtalan 2008), the female shamans’ life stories (Birtalan 2007a), the specifics of Darkhad shamanic language usage (Birtalan forthcoming) and ritual objects the shamanesses use (Birtalan 2007b).³ There is still a large amount of material at my disposal collected in the nineties from Darkhad informants: shamanic and folk religious ritual texts recorded *in situ* and outside the rituals, shamanic narratives told by the shamans themselves and by their community members, myths (*domog*)⁴ and narratives (e. g. *xüč yaria*) about shamans’ lives and deeds who are supposed to have lived in earlier times, aetiological myths (*domog*) about the origin of *ongons*, etc.⁵ In the future I intend to issue my records in a complex and comprehensive study devoted to the “original” (pre-transitional) Darkhad shamans’ textual tradition in the context of sacral communication. Using the concept “original” I allude to the shamanic material which has not – or only to a lesser extent – been influenced by other, external phenomena (cf. above) since the late nineties and predominantly since the turn of the 20–21st century. My materials from the early nineties have preserved phenomena which survived the persecutions of the socialist period and have kept the oldest layers of the textual tradition and world of shamanic objects.⁶

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- 3) My fieldwork among Mongolian ethnic groups was supported several times by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA, currently named NRDIO/NKFI; currently I am carrying out my research in the framework of the project K 100613). The results of my previously published studies will not be repeated here, only the most relevant data are referred to concerning the present topic; those who are interested in some recently issued results and information, please consult the following articles: Birtalan 2007a, 2008, 2012a, 2012b, etc.
 - 4) If the language or dialect is not indicated, I use the Khalkha forms of the terminology.
 - 5) The *ongon* (Written Mong. *ongyon*) is a quite complex phenomenon, it can briefly be summarised as “a kind of helping spirit, originating mostly from the transformation of an ancestral soul” and “the objectified representation, depiction of the spirit”. On the traditional use of the Darkhad term and on its wider context, cf. Badamxatan 1965, Dulam 1993, Pürew 1999, 2003, Birtalan – Sipos – Coló 2004, etc.
 - 6) The Phenomena of Inner Asian and Siberian shamanism have changed considerably due to the mass media, first of all the Internet, the shamanic meetings (conferences, frequently held rituals with recently developed purposes), the needs of tourism (Schlehe; Weber 2001)

For the present article I chose some of my records (fragments of ritual texts and orally transmitted narratives) about a famous Darkhad shaman called Delden Mend who lived in the Darkhad territory around the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, whose soul became one of the most frequently summoned *ongons* of the Darkhad shamans and who also earned fame as a fair outlaw, the supporter of the poor – a typical figure of the 19th century Manchu period.

1. Shaman Delden Mend’s brief “personalia”

Mend or Delden Mend – similarly to other famous shamans – is known by different names: his personal name including his given name: Mend (rarely together with his father’s name, the *owog*), Semjĕgĭn Mend (Pürew 2003, pp. 120–121), he is known by his sobriquet: Delden “Lap-eared, Lop-eared, One with sticking out or protruding ears” and also by his *ongon*’s name(s): Xosĭn āw/Xosain āw “Father from Khos”, also Iwedĭn yum/Ibedei yum “The One from Iwed”⁷.

He was born in 1757 and died in 1826. (Pürew 2003, p. 120). He is one of those few famous Darkhad and Mongolian shamans who is remembered not only by name but also by his lifetime. He belonged either to the Darkhad *cagān xūlar* clan “White Khuular” (Sanžeev 1930, p. 49) or to the clan of the *xar darxad* “Black Darkhads” (Pürew 2003, p. 120).⁸ The majority of the narratives about him attach to him the term denoting the most respected and most experienced powerful shamans i. e. *jairan* (variant *jārin*)⁹ referring to his high status among the Darkhad shamans. Obviously, he is also mentioned with the usual designation of male shamans, i. e. *bō* (Written Mongolian *böge*). According to the emic typology of Mongolian shamans concerning the acquisition of shamanic ability (Khalkha, *uwdis*, Darkhad *owdis*, *uwdis* Written Mongolian *ubadis*, from Sanskrit *upadeśa*) he was not considered a hereditary shaman who is chosen by the ancestor spirits and having many shaman ancestors is the descendant of a shamanic lineage (on the phenomenon of hereditary

and the pursuits of establishing institutionalised shamanism (Bumochir 2014). On the transformed variant of Darkhad shamanism, cf. Hangartner 2011, Pedersen 2011, Bumochir 2014.

7) Concerning the ambiguity of Mend’s *ongon*’s name cf. below.

8) Such uncertainty in his clanic affiliation might refer to the shaman’s popularity. More clans claim to possess him as their own iconic person. In my opinion Mend shaman’s real, authentic belonging to one or another clan still remains uncertain and needs further research, if it is possible at all.

9) Khalkha forms, cf. Darkhad *jārin*, *jārin*, Written Mongolian *jayarin*, *jayiran*.

shamanhood among the Darkhads and Oirads, cf. Birtalan 2007a, Birtalan 1996). He became a powerful shaman almost “accidentally” (cf. the motifs of this narrative below). This category of shamans is called by Pürew (1999, p. 70, *passim*) and Dulam (1992, p. 17) *udamgüi bō* or *jeleg bō* “shaman without roots, without ancestry” versus the hereditary shamans (*udamtai bō*).¹⁰ There are lots of narratives about his superlative shamanic abilities and also – which makes him peculiar among the shamans – about his pursuits as an outlaw. This later component of his life story earned for him also the fame of a “Robin Hood-like” – in the Mongolian historical context “Toroi bandi-like”¹¹ – figure, the supporter of the poor, the peripheral social layers of Manchu rule.

In the present paper I introduce narratives about Delden Mend as shaman and the outlaw and fragments of ritual texts in which his *ongon* has been invoked by shamans of the 20th century.

2. The shamanic narrative about Delden Mend *jairan*

2.1. The earliest data about shaman Mend

“В старину жил шаман по имени Мендѣ-зәр’иң из рода цагаң-хүләр. Он был известным вором и разбойником. Когда его ловили и заковывали в кандалы, то он рвал последние, как верёвочки из жил. Он был шаман вредный и мог своим камланием съестъ человека (т. е. его душу).” (Sanžeev 1930, p. 49). In the probably earliest brief reference about Delden Mend, the first researcher of the Darkhad dialect and culture, G. D. Sanžeev summarised his field data that contain already the main motifs of narratives about the shaman recorded later. In his book devoted to the ethnography of the Darkhads, Sanžeev listed the most frequently summoned Darkhad *ongons* and shamans whose authority was decisive in the Darkhad folklore of that time. Compared with the other shamans’ narratives recorded and issued by Sanžeev, the information about Mend is relatively short, but it contains the

10) The phenomenon of “hereditary and non-hereditary” shamans is an emic distinction, as proven in the narratives; however, concerning the above terms, further research is necessary on their origin and use. The Khalkha and Darkhad *udam* “lineage, origin” is used similarly to Buryad *udxa* “id.”.

11) The text corpora about the figure and activity of Toroi Bandi, the famous Dariganga outlaw, has been analysed from various aspects. Lately the Hungarian researcher István Seres recorded new narratives and folksongs and analysed his material in the context of previously published materials: Seres (2004).

motifs about his supernatural (not necessarily shamanic) ability of breaking easily his handcuffs when he was caught and refers to his being a bandit and outlaw as well. This motif returns also in the invocation text (*dūdлага*) about his *ongon*. It is remarkable that Sanžeev specifically mentions him as a “harmful” shaman (*vrednyj*) without going into the details of his information. However, such a judgement is not confirmed in other narratives about him. Shaman Mend certainly appears as dreadful to his enemies (cf. below) and he was a tricksome robber who was able to steal large amounts of livestock, but the later narratives interpret these characteristics rather positively as a famous shaman of the Darkhads.

2.2. (Delden) Mend – The high-ranked shaman

In the above-quoted piece of information Sanžeev’s informant assessed Mend as the highest ranked shaman, calling him Mend(e)-*jārin* which refers to his high and well-established reputation among the Darkhads. All the known narratives and other data equally refer to him as *jairan/jārin/jārin* and sometimes the more neutral designation of male shamans (in some cases also female shamans) *bō* is also used.¹²

2.3. (Delden) Mend’s shamanic narrative – The example of a non-hereditary shaman’s initiation

The narrative of how Mend became a shaman is well documented and quoted by several authors. Although Diószegi mentions that there were some shamans in his ancestry, other narratives rather emphasise the fact that he was an “ordinary” man who became a powerful shaman with the help of the lord spirit of the place (a genius loci?).

“*Tegāt bayar [sic!] delxā bolāt tendēs-le tere bō modāgičīn šüteji ongod tengertā wolsan xūn tere. Udamān bō wiši jūgēr xūn yawaji bāiyāt tere bō modonā owidasār, gajarā albinā xüčēr bolcīma [sic!]. Daldān dalda dalan aldān dōra dabxar ongoditā albin*” *geji ongodtani orāt baidīma.*” (Dulam 1992, p. 129, published or reinterpreted also by Pürew 1999, p. 70, Süxbat 2007, pp. 50–52,

12) On the Mongolian terminology of male and female shamans, cf. Birtalan 2001, passim and the references quoted, Pürew 1999, 2003, etc.

Oidow 2012, pp. 55–56). “Then [...]”¹³ thereafter he venerated that shaman-tree and became possessed by *ongon*-deity(s). He was not a hereditary shaman, he was an ordinary man, and through the gift of that shaman-tree with the power of the local *albin*-spirit obtained [his ability]. “The secret of secrets, beneath seventy fathoms, *albin*-spirit with double *ongons*.’ So enters his *ongon* [into the shaman’s body during the ritual].”¹⁴ The motif of Mend’s becoming a shaman is embedded into the outlaw’s narrative as well. The young Mend was stealing livestock and while trying to flee from his pursuers, his life was saved by the local lord spirit that later became his initiator into his shamanic existence. The spirit that bestowed upon him his shamanic ability was defined in various ways by the informants: 1. a female chthonic being of *lus*-category (Khalkha *emegčīn lus*, Written Mongolian *emegčīn lus*, *luus* from Tibetan *klu*),¹⁵ 2. a lord of the territory (the natural phenomena) (Khalkha *sawdag*, Written Mong. *sabday* from Tibetan *sa bdag*), 3. a goblin-like ambivalent being of the middle world layer with magic ability (Khalkha *alwin*, Written Mongolian *aliban*), 4. a kind of half-being also with rich morphology in various traditions (Khalkha *tiren*, Written Mongolian *teyireng*, from Tibetan *theu rang*).¹⁶

Researcher Pürew, himself also a Darkhad, who lived in the Darkhad milieu, recorded the probably most widespread tradition about Delden Mend. Its brief version is narrated as follows:

“... *arwād nastaidā Algaḡin emegčīn lustai nōxcöj olson id šid, ilbe, xowsīn erdem čadwarā šudargū busīn esreg temceldē negen töröl jewseg bolgon xereglej yawsan ix bō baijē*” (Pürew 2003, p. 120). “... when he was about ten years old he became the companion of a female chthonic spirit (*lus*) and obtained magic and mystic power (*id šid, ilbe*), secret knowledge (*xowsīn erdem*) and ability (*čadwar*). He was a great shaman (*bō*) and used them

13) Obscure text fragment that needs further research, cf. *dayar delxi* or *delxi dayar* (?) “the whole world”.

14) In order to make the English translation as accurate as possible, I inserted longer explanatory parts translating the terms.

15) The *lus* (Khalkha) is the most general designation of the chthonic beings related to the Earth and waters. There is a great variety concerning their role and morphology, but almost all concepts about them including the narratives and depictions, are considerably influenced by the Indo-Tibetan tradition (in detail, and further references cf. Birtalan 2001, pp. 1006–1007).

16) The *alwin* (Khalkha) is a collective name of beings (in fact usually of male ones) that are connected to the human inhabited middle world. The morphology of this spirit-group (or individual spirits) shows a great variety according to the local traditions (in detail and for further references, cf. Birtalan 2001, pp. 939–940).

[i. e. the abilities] as a kind of weapon in his fight against injustice.” The narrative fragment refers to some significant elements of becoming a shaman without the vocation of the shamanic ancestors, i. e. the way of obtaining shamanic ability and power. Pürew’s terminology alludes to a kind of magic power, as he uses the lexemes *id*, *šid*, *ilbe* which allude to a kind of magic and mystic power (cf. the wide semantic fields of the above listed lexemes). The more neutral terms used by shaman-informants frequently were *čadwar* “ability”, *xüč* “strength” and *erdem* “gift, talent, knowledge” Pürew names the initiator spirit *algagīn lus* “lus-spirit of Algag” and describes it as follows: “Монгол улсын дархад нутагт эрэгчин, эмэгчин лусуудтай Алгаг хэмээх онгон, догшин газар-ус буй. Эрт цагаас нааш эрэгчин лустай нь нөхцсөн удган, эмэгчин лустай нь нөхцсөн заарингууд газар-лусаар хөллөсөн хүч чадалтай сайн бөө болдог байжээ.” (Pürew 2003, p. 8). “There is a fierce area (lit. Earth and water) in the Darkhad territory of Mongolia called Algag which has male and female chthonic spirits (*lus*). From early times the female shamans became companions of male chthonic spirits, the male shamans became companions of the female chthonic spirits and became powerful and good shamans initiated by earthly lus-spirits.” The above narrative motif and Pürew’s data refer to the importance of non-hereditary shamanic initiation, through interaction with a “spirit-spouse”. In the case of shaman Mend – obviously – the gender of the initiator spirit is female (*emegčīn lus*). Even if the narrative motifs do not mention the presumably sexual relationship between the spirit and the shaman candidate, other case studies illuminate the real nature of such an encounter with a spirit of the opposite gender. The male spirit-spouse narrative is described in more detail by Sanžeev in the case of Nādmāt (cf. Khalkha Nadmid) *udgan* “shamaness”, whose spirit spouse visited her climbing down from a cedar tree and having sexual intercourse with her every day since she was ten years old while she was pasturing the flocks. Nadmid became a shamaness when she was twelve years old and had a family in the spirits’ world (a husband and three children). Sanžeev did not specify what kind of spirit was the initiator, but he emphasised that the spirit helped her during rituals and was talking in the Tuva language through the mouth of the shamaness¹⁷ (Sanžeev 1930, p. 58).

Other records indicate a more detailed description of Delden Mend’s initiation-narrative:

“Ibidān yūm geji xelēt baiyā, Delden Mende jairan gedek xūn. Tere jalūxam baiyāt, xulyā xiji yabsam xūn. Bō čik bolāgiüi baisim dā. Delden Mende tere

17) The xenoglossia is quite typical among the Darkhad shamans (Birtalan forthcoming).

nūr balyiās adō xulyā xīxe gēt xoišā Ibid ökseji yabsam baiyama. Säixan nogān jūm baisam. Ibidān jūrxenā oyarta olan salā saklayar bō modonā ündüsen dēre nege gyalāsan bōndegör cayā yuma xarakdāt baixalā ternigi 'Yūn cayām bäidak bilā, mišxe wāixa.' Mišxe gej modonās urgudak mögil dō. 'Timim bäji' gej bodāt dōxēt iresen. Nögāxīn önxeret unačixa šige bolsan. Očixlār gajar-lō šinggēt yūma-gā wolčixasam bäisim. 'Ene yäibči učirtā modo, xanyān ejem bolji tarlā ene modonās ejen sabdak-ni bäix ni.' geji bodāt 'Jä, namāgi bucāt irexde ayül bolbal amä-mni awarātxā. Xerektā cakta xaraji üjeji baiyārāta.' gegēt mor'ināxān del sōlās xeden xialyasa abči xoita gišündēn uyaji jangidāt yawaji." (Dulam 1992, p. 127) "Talking about the [ongon called] Iwediin yum, this is the [ongon of a] man called shaman Delden Mend. He was living by stealing, when he was young. He did not become a shaman [that time]. Once he was going to steal horses from the Lake [Khöwsgöl] and the moor, went northwards to the river Iwed. It was a lovely green summer. Close to the heart of the Iwed at the roots of the twigsome shaman-tree there was a round white shining thing. 'What is this white thing, probably a puff-ball?' The puff-ball is a [kind of] mushroom growing on the tree. 'It must be that' – he thought and went closer. [But] that [thing] seemed to be falling. When he went closer it melted into the earth and disappeared. 'This should be a tree with a [special] purpose. I met a lord spirit (ejen) of the Khanggai. That is the lord-spirit (ejen sawdag) of this tree.' – he thought. 'Well, when I come back and I am in danger, please protect my life! In times of need look after me, watch over me!' – he said and tearing out some hair from his horse's mane and tail, he tied them to the northern branches of the tree."

The shamanic myth (*domog*) published by Dulam demonstrates not only the typical narrative motifs of how to become a shaman without shamanic ancestry, but also the first ritual in which Delden Mend showed respect to the lord spirit of the tree. The term for the initiator transcendental being is *sawdag* or *ejen sawdag* lit. "lord spirit of the territory". In the communities' comprehension the distinction between *ongon* and *sawdag* was clear in the early nineties. The informant did not confuse the various types of spirits, important members of the shamanic pantheon. Delden Mend's first ritual is connected to the well-known *seterle*- "marking the sacred phenomenon with ribbons, pieces of textile, silk and other materials or in some cases with the livestock's hair"¹⁸

18) Here I use the notion *seterle*- in a broader sense than just denoting the anointment the livestock offered to the deities or spirits, I designate with the term *seterle*- any kind of

The myth further narrates Delden Mend's faith in the way he was protected by the tree from his pursuers (cf. below in the paragraph about the outlaw's narrative).

2.4. Shamanic rivalry

The rivalry between shamans and other religious specialists acting as mediators (cf. the Hungarian *táltos*)¹⁹ is typical in the shamanic textual tradition. The plot (Dulam 1992, pp. 133–136) of the rivalry between shaman Delden Mend and Manggai/Magnai (?) *jairan* (Darkhad Mangyã) consists of the following motifs:

1. Delden Mend was a shaman involved in outlawry.
2. Delden Mend stole livestock from the powerful shaman (Darkhad *yexe owidastã*) Mangyã, a fat effete yak-cow (Darkhad *suwã taryam mongyol*).
3. Mangyã became aware of the yak-cow and sent a curse (Darkhad *jatax yawũlax*) against Delden Mend who became ill.
4. Delden Mend set out with a leading a horse, taking some mutton with him, in order to meet Mangyã and show respect to his *ongons*.
5. Mangyã decided to revenge himself on shaman Mend and did not take the horse and the mutton Mend brought in return, but demanded that Mend make his *ongons* return. (Mangyã's *ongons* settled at Mend's place after the cursing).
6. Mend carried out rituals (Darkhad *bõlõx*), but without any success.
7. Mangyã threatened him and his family with death if Mend was not able to make his *ongons* return.
8. Shaman Mend tried again to carry out rituals and descended to the underworld (Darkhad *onyodan yazar dõyur oroji*). He met Magyã's *ongon* in the underworld, it was a "four-eyed piebald dog" (Darkhad *dõrben nüdete xaltar noxã*).
9. Though Delden Mend was not able to make the other shaman's *ongons* return, Mangyã accepted the mutton and Delden Mend could leave.
10. Mangyã summoned all his *ongons* – Mend was not able to do so – without difficulty: "Tere Mangyã *jairim bolxalãr yanca nüdën darãl yancaxan*

offering carried out with sacred ribbon-like objects, cf. Heissig 1979–1980, Birtalan 2001, pp. 1039–1040.

19) The Hungarian *táltosviaskodás* (Hungarian) "*táltos*-rivalry" is well documented in the ethnographic literature; e. g. Diószegi (1952) studied this phenomenon in the context of Siberian shamanic rivalry. His material can be considered in analysing the motifs of the Mongolian material as well.

xördäl tamalxa derēn xamak onyodān cuklülāl irejāgā. Tere wol šidetā jāirim möm biddē." (Dulam 1992, p. 136).

"That shaman Mangyā closed one of his eyes, played on a Jew's harp (Darkhad *xördā-l*) a bit and while chanting an invocation (Darkhad *tamlax*) he could summon all his *ongons*. He was a great shaman with magic power."

The plot of shamanic rivalry contained parts from the narrative of Mend as an outlaw and also a very attention-grabbing description about the *ongons'* world, a kind of underworld, where the shaman met an *ongon* that took the shape of a typical dog of Mongolian nomads. No further explanation is attached as to why the *ongon* appeared in the form of a dog. Equally interesting is the description of the transcended world layer (here underworld) by the local community: the shaman descended through a dark hole (Darkhad *xaranxā nüxēr yawāt*) that occurred in the middle of an ocean – probably the Khöwsgöl nuur – (Darkhad *usan dalā dundūr garāt*).

In the narrative the power of the curse and its consequences are clearly proven; Mongols who had an encounter with shamans are usually afraid of being cursed by a shaman or a professional curser (Bordžanova 2007). No doubt such narratives foster that fear. Data about the powerful Mangyā's life do not occur in Badamxatan's and Pürew's available works.

3. From the shaman's soul to the *ongon* spirit – Shaman Mend and his *ongon* Father of Khos and the One from the Iwed River

The well-known type of narrative about the origin of the Mongolian shamanic protector spirits is the aetiological myth (*domog*) of soul-transformation. It is widely recognised that the shaman's [free] soul transforms into the most important spirit of shamanic rituals and of the shamanic existence, the *ongon* – a phenomenon described in detail in academic literature. Generally comprehended as the shamans' "protector spirit" and its "representation", however, the concept of the *ongon* is a rather complex one and comprises numerous aspects of the pre-Buddhist belief-system and traces of Buddhism as well. The peculiarities of the traditional (pre-transitional) Darkhad comprehension about the *ongon* also appears in numerous field records and their elaborate analyses (Badaxatan 1965, Dulam 1992, Pürew 1999, Birtalan 2007a, Birtalan; Sipos; Coló 2004). Below I present this important aspect of being a shaman, namely existence in the form of an *ongon*. The death of the shaman means only the disappearance of his/her human body but this is the beginning of a new existence of his soul. Usually the Darkhads explain the origin

of *ongons* as follows. When a shaman dies, his body is buried (in different ways according to the tradition of the area he lived in), and his/her paraphernalia (garment, headgear, drum and other ritual objects) are offered to nature, i. e. put on a tree into a cave or into a small shrine-like edifice (Pürew 1999, *passim*). After three years have passed, the shaman's soul revives into its new existent, becomes an *ongon* and earns its name after the place where his/her belongings were placed. Female shaman Joljayā explained it to us in an interview as follows (including Delden Mend's story as well):²⁰

“[Question] – *Bügdērē ongod ū?*

– *Tīm yolīn ejnīxx^e bol Ja^ewrā ēji yum. Xuyuk^kxengereg xoyarīn ejen onyad bol Xosō āw gedek nertē ongy^d. Bō xūn iūxēd, gurwan jil bolād erg^{ej}tōr^ulgüē onyod bolj törnā. Bi saya xelsen šū dē Dašdawā udyⁿ gej baes^m. Odā Dašdawā udyan onny^d bolčixs^m baēyā yum gedek. Erēnē ēj nertē ongy^d bolsan. Ene Erēnē ēj buyu Dašdawā udyan ongy^d bol minī malyān ejen ongy^d bolnā. Xosō āw gedgig bō sudlāč O. Pürūw guā sāⁿ meddek. Mend^e ja^ernī ongyⁿ bolsan nere. Delden mend^e ged^k xoč^a nertē xūm baēsīm bilē. Manā ēji döčīn xoyir ongy^dtā.”*

“[Question] – *Are those all ongods?*

– Yes, the main master (*golīn ejen n*) is Jaewrā ēj “Mother of Dsaiwar”. The master spirit of the armour and drum is an *ongod* called Xosō āw “Father of Khos”. Three years after his death a shaman does not have a rebirth, he becomes an *ongod*. I have just mentioned, there was a shamaness, Dashdawaa. Shamaness Dashdawaa is said to have become an *ongod* now. She became the *ongod* called Erēnē ēj “Mother of Ereen”. This Mother of Ereen, or the shamaness Dashdawaa, is the master *ongod* of my headgear. The shaman-researcher, Mister O. Pürew knows Father of Khos very well. This is the *ongon*-name of shaman Mend. He was a man with the nickname Delden Mend. My mother has forty-two *ongods* and I have twenty-two *ongods*.”

As a protector of that place and of many future shamans, he/she is called “father”, “mother” or “the one”, either with terms reflecting a real or pseudo-kinship “mother or father” or with the taboo name “the one”. Sometimes the taboo-expression of sacred mountains “*xairxan*” “merciful” appears as

20) Interview 1. with Shamaness Joljayā (named also as Xörög) made by J. Colō Ulanbator, Chingeltei (Čingeltei) circle, Khaïlast (Xaïlast) on 13th January 2001 (tape record from the archive of the Expedition).

an appellation of *ongons* as well. This phenomenon I will discuss in detail in a forthcoming publication, devoted to the Darkhad shamanic pantheon. Here I focus on the peculiarities of Delden Mend's *ongon*, on the basis of primary sources, shamanic invocations, and fragments from interviews with shamans. Kosiin aaw "Father of Khos", Iwedein yum "The One from Iwed [River]" are the *ongon*-appellations of his transformed soul. Below I summarise the information about this *ongon*'s role in the Darkhad shamanic pantheon, including my records from Three Darkhad shamans, the famous Tuwaanii Baljir (Tuwānī Baljir), Bandzaragchiin Bayar (Banjaragčīn Bayar) and Maibay(a) riin Dzoldzayaa (Maibairīn Joljayā) called also Khöörög (Xörög).²¹

3.1. Xosin āw

"Father of Khos", also pronounced in Darkhad as Xosō āw, Xosain āw, is the transformed soul of shaman Mend. He is a frequently summoned *ongon*. Similarly to Xarmain āw, Xosin āw also belongs to the regularly invoked *ongons* of the four shamans interviewed by Badamxatan (1965, p. 215.). He is one of the most important (regularly invoked) *ongons* of shamaness Dzoldzayaa. She named him as the "master spirit", the lord/owner spirit (*ejen*) of her mother Bayar's armour and drums: "*Xuyag xengereg xoyorin ejen ongod bol Xosō āw gedeg nertei ongon. ... Xosō āw gedgīg bō sudlāč O. Pürüw guā sä^en meddek. Mend^e ja^ernī ongyⁿ bolsan nere. Delden Mend^e ged^k xočⁿ nertē xüm baēsīm bilē.*" "The master of the armour and drum is an *ongod* called Xosin āw "Father of Khos". ... The shaman-researcher, Mister O. Pürew knows the Father of Khos very well. This is the *ongon*-name of shaman Mend. He was a man with the nickname Delden Mend."²²

An early version of the invoking text, from the *tamlaga* genre and attributed to Delden Mend's *ongon*, was recorded by Rinčēn (1975, p. 120) and elaborated by Even (1988–1989 pp. 115–117 *Invocation du père de Xos*). The text contains one of the typical modules of invoking shamanic texts (i. e. a eulogy – including the description of the *ongon*'s origin, history and dwelling place –, an enumeration of offerings and an enumeration of requests, cf. Birtalan 2006): the eulogical module of the invocation:

21) For some more information about the three mentioned female shamans' activity and their *ongons*, see the Appendix.

22) Interview with shamaness Joljayā 1. 2001 January, for the details, see above.

Xosin awin *tamlaga*²³

<i>Jā, gurwan xar gojgorig dewelegsen</i>	Well, You fluttered [above] three black stumps (?)
<i>Gurwaljin xar toxoig cengeldesən</i>	You rejoiced at the triangular black [river]-bend,
<i>Gurwan otgig yambār xūrtūlsan</i>	You furnished the three clans with offices,
<i>Xögnör xöndöjlülj</i>	You put [the <i>ongons</i>] on a rope,
<i>Xündesər yambalülj</i>	You furnished [them] with respect,
<i>Xeden üyein süld bolson</i>	You became the <i>süld</i> -spirit of many generations,
<i>Xōxōn xar tenger nömörögtən</i>	You have the blue black sky as cover,
<i>Xawtgai šar šajinig üdendē delgesen,</i>	You spread the flat Yellow Faith at the door,
<i>Xar šar olondō süld bolson</i>	You became the <i>süld</i> -spirit of the lay people and Lamas,
<i>Xarātın dund xarā bolson</i>	You became the seer among ones who have sight,
<i>Xar jürxend tolti bolson</i>	You became the arteries of the black heart,
<i>Delden Mend aw</i>	Father Delden Mend!
<i>Maxıg newt yasıg tölson</i>	You [looking] through the flesh counted the bones,
<i>Malgaig newt üsıg tölson</i>	You [looking] though the hat counted the hairs,
<i>Magadtai ejegnesen jayā gej</i>	For the fate that is destined to have,
<i>Malgaitai doxin mörgösön</i>	You bowed giving the sign of respect with your hat.
<i>Ertñi üye</i>	Ancient generation
<i>Elgen surwaljās nāš</i>	Hither from asking the maternal relatives,
<i>Ejentei bušmal tanıg</i>	You having a lord' [...]
<i>Erslej ünen xašgırmı öngönd</i>	With the voice crying the truth,
<i>Xūlar Agar surag xar tenger narās</i>	The news of Khuular Agar [place]
	I listen every evening (?)
<i>Urū bürin sonsoj</i>	From the Black deities.
<i>Noyon Xaj</i>	Noble Khaj
<i>Nogön surülj jıwerēsē</i>	From the green [...] wings.
<i>Ayunga Xaj</i>	Lightning Khaj
<i>Agar Surag oçgorösō</i>	The news from Agar [...]
<i>Büren sonsogtui!</i>	Let us listen entirely.

3.2. Iwedın yum

“The One of Iwed”, according to Dulam: Darkhad *Ibidān yum*, *Ibedein yum*, *Ibedein yum* (Dulam, 1992, p. 12), also *Ibidai yum*, *Iwedın aw* (Pürew, 1999, p. 97) belongs to the group of spirits originating as transformed souls of the shaman’s ancestors. The Iwed is a river in the northernmost Khöwsgöl Province. Pürew derives it from the Tuwa word *iw* “reindeer” (Pürew, 1999, p. 97).²⁴ Dulam published an invocation-type text to *Ibidān yum* without

23) On the genre of *tamlaga*, cf. Birtalan 2004; the transcription of the original Darkhad text was simplified in the above version.

24) This explanation must be checked by further research.

genre designation (Dulam 1992, pp. 124–126). Dulam and Pürew interpret this spirit in somewhat different ways. Dulam connects a female member of this spirit-group, Iwedīn *yum* *ex* “Mother, the One of Iwed” with shaman Delden Mend. The shaman’s name is mentioned in the “invocation” text to Iwedīn *yum*: “Delden Mend is my reminiscence!” (*Deldem Mende dūrisxal mni!*) (Dulam 1992, p. 124), Pürew ascribed this *ongon*-name also to shaman Delden Mend besides Xosō (Xosīn) *āw* (cf. above). According to Pürew’s explanation Xosīn *āw* and Iwedīn *āw* seem to be the same spirit with two different names (Pürew 2003, pp. 219–220). I have interviewed Shamaness Baljir’s daughter about the symbolical meaning of the invocation text recited during a night ritual. She identifies the invoked spirit in the following text fragment as Iwdīn *yum* and explains that he is shaman Delden Mend. The spirit entered the shamaness’ body after her main *ongon* (*yasnī ongon* “bone-*ongon*”, i. e. “initiator *ongon*”) called Ojūrā *yum*. During the ritual these two *ongons* – as is clear from the shamaness’ daughter’s explanation about her mother’s ritual –, occupied Baljir’s body simultaneously.

Baljir’s ritual text fragment:

“Öwöljō <i>min!</i>	My winter-camp!
Öndör <i>mod nādam min!</i>	The high tree is my playing place!
Xoid Čancal, xoigō <i>min!</i>	The northern Chantsal is my peninsula!
Dēd-I <i>tenger delgene.</i> ”	The sky above opens.

Baljir’s daughter’s explanation:

– *Delden Mend baina*. This is [shaman] Delden Mend [who occupied my mother’s body].²⁵

4. The outlaw’s narrative about Delden Mend

The time he lived in was the end of the Qing Dynasty’s zenith: three emperors ruled at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries: Qianlong (1736–1796), Jiaqing (1796–1820) and Daokuang (1821–1850). After the prosperous period of Qianlong, the symptoms of decline started to appear – among other things – in the renewed activity of the outlaws. The 19th century produced dozens of famous

25) Interview with shamaness Baljir’s daughter about the *dūdлага*-text performed by her mother (Khöwsgöl province, Bayandsürkh (Bayanjürx) district, Bambart 3rd August 1993. The interview was made by the author.

outlaws, valiant representatives of bravery. These people – appropriately or not, this is not the topic of the current essay – were presented as fighters for the freedom and independence of the Mongols. One such typical outcome of the epoch is the horse and other livestock stealing, the main endeavour of the outlaws. The typical narratives about the Mongolian outlaws (*sain er*, *šilīn sain er*) are based on the following main motifs:²⁶ 1) the skills of the outlaw, how he (rarely she) steals livestock and tricks the livestock's owner, 2) how he escapes from his pursuers, 3) how he escapes from prison, 4) his bravery while he is tortured, 5) distribution of stolen livestock and also other goods to the needy, poor people, 6) love stories of the outlaws, 7) tricks, and magic abilities of the outlaws – just to mention the main motifs of the plots. Concerning shaman Delden Mend, evidently, the motifs of escaping and using various magical abilities are the most typical. Although Pürew mentions his solidarity with the deprived members of society (Pürew 2003, p. 120), this motif might be of later origin and developed under the influence of late 19th century stories about the freedom fighter outlaws – such as Toroi bandi.

4.1. The young outlaw

The narratives about Delden Mend start with his usual occupation, i. e. stealing livestock, mostly horses. These parts of his stories are not very detailed, just briefly narrate that he went to Lake Khöwsgöl and drove the flocks of livestock, herds of horses away. His becoming initiated into shamanhood also started with such a motif (see above).

4.2. Pursuing the outlaw

Typical motif in narratives about the outlaws is the “chasing” by the representatives of the Manchu and Mongolian authorities, i.e. soldiers, gendarmes, members of armoured organisations, guards, bodyguards, etc. (Seres 2004). Obviously the harmed person whose livestock was stolen hunts for the outlaw as well. A large number of narratives published by Oidow (2012) centred

26) There are some detailed elaborative works devoted to the outlaw tradition and among them a special role played the Dariganga outlaw Toroi Bandi (Seres 2004). Concerning the motifs about them, cf. Heissig, Bawuudorj, Seres, etc (quoted in Seres 2004). B. Oidow (2012) has recently issued six volumes of a collection of stories about the outlaws in Northern Khalkha.

also around such a motif: cf. how the outlaw counterplotted against his persecutors. Delden Mend's story of how he became a shaman is closely connected with the narrative of the outlaw. His first encounter with his initiator spirit happened while he was going – as usual – to steal some livestock. Being chased after stealing horses, his life was saved with the help of the spirit of the shaman-tree. The motif about a thunderbolt that either appears as the cause of becoming a shaman or saves the life of a shaman (or of an ordinary person, too). In Delden Mend's story it is narrated as follows:

“He was chased and came to the surroundings of that shaman-tree. He was to be caught and neither the stolen horses nor his own horse were able to move further. Meanwhile a huge cloud appeared and it started to rain. Then that shaman (*bō*) raced to the shaman-tree. ‘Well, it is time to look after me, to watch after me. If you can save my life, save it now. If not, just kill me right now. If you can protect me, just protect me now.’ – he told and circumambulated once the tree. He fell (?) from his horse and was sitting at the roots of the tree. There was a loud grumble and Mend was struck there by lightning.

When he got up, it was raining, his clothing was soaked, the earth was wet, and his clothing became wet as well. But he stayed alive. His horse was set free beside him. Its reins fell down, its tether had fallen to the ground and it was grazing freely. The horse was wholly exhausted, because it chased [the other horses]. The more than twenty horses that were stolen, were also there. [Mend] took his horse and thought: ‘These scums will get me now and take me somewhere to kill me.’ He looked around and there were some white things and oval-shaped black things; he became frightened. ‘What happened here?’ – he thought. He saw something and leading his horse went there. All the people [who chased him] had been struck by lightning and [their bodies] lay one beside another on the road.” (Dulam 1992, pp. 128–129).

4.3. The avenger shaman

One of the important motifs in a shaman's narratives is how a shaman is able to take revenge on his enemies to protect him- or herself from harm. Although when he was living, during the Manchu times there was not such organised persecution against the shamans as was organised during the 20th century, Delden Mend – being an outlaw and stealing livestock – was caught and tortured several times. However, due to his shamanic ability he was able to save himself with the help of his *ongons*. Sometimes these motifs have nothing to do with real shamanism, rather they seem to be the

tricks of a trickster. Such a motif appears in the narrative about the rivalry between Delden Mend and Dor'gi *xiya* “guardsman”. In the story published by Dulam the shamanic and trickster motifs are merged together. The main idea in Dulam’s long narrative is the rivalry between two equal enemies, the shaman and the official. According to the plot shaman Mend, being chased and tortured earlier by the guardsman Dor'gi tried to take revenge and kill him three times. Delden Mend sent a curse against him in a very shrewd way, e.g. he asked a young man to give Dor'gi a gazelle’s shank as a game bag and sent his curse into the meat (the marrowbone?). But while Dor'gi was roasting the shank on a broach the evil being sent with the curse into the meat could not bear the fire and came to the tip of the broach out of the meat. It is remarkable how the informant imagined the shaman’s curse in the form of a kind of harming being, a *čötgör* “devil” (Birtalan 2001, pp. 961–962). Dor'gi was roasting the meat and the curse was imagined by the story teller as a kind of devil, not being able to be burnt, that came out of the gazelle’s shank. “... *idsēr bāitlā önā čötkör-čin äiji dēši öxössēr šoranā üjūr talān maxanda orāt iresīma. Tere yalās äixal čötkörīm bāina.*” (Dulam 1992, pp. 130–130) “... while [Dor'gi] was eating that [shank] the devil came out of the meat on the tip of the broach. That was a devil that feared the fire.” Finally the guardsman gave the piece of meat from the tip of the broach to a dog and so he escaped being killed by the shaman’s curse.²⁷

Another attempt of Mend’s to kill Dor'gi happened after the above story, when Mend sent another curse (Darkhad *jatax*) against the guardsman, in the form of his shamanic object the rattle (Darkhad *xonkinūr*). However it fell on Dor'gi’s wife’s breast and killed her. “*Nege sönö böleji, böginxä yuma yawulāt or’kisan oronā urdūr untajāsan Dor’gi xiyāgi tolayä dēre nögā jatxanā xonkinūr tusāt tendesā oiyāt emegenā cējrū orsam bāiyāma.*” (Dulam 1992, p. 131) “One night [Mend] was carrying out a ritual and sent his shamanic one [sic!]; the rattle of that curse fell on the head of the Dor'gi guardsman who was sleeping in front of the bed. From there it [i. e. the curse] fell and entered into the breast of his wife.”

27) There is another narrative about the rivalry between Mend and Dor'gi that is a symbolical opposition between shamanism and Buddhism: the guardsman appears as the reincarnation of the Black Mañjuśrī. (Dulam 1992, pp. 129–133) This narrative will be the topic of another study.

5. Conclusion

In the above analysis I have tried to systematise the available material about one of the most famous Darkhad Mongolian shamans, Delden Mend, who was known also as an outlaw. Three aspects of a shamanic existence were surveyed: the life of the would-be shaman before being initiated (this aspect is particularly interesting in Delden Mend's story, as he was not a hereditary shaman), his activity as a shaman and as an outlaw and narratives about his *ongon*. There are some more aspects I would like to investigate in the future: the narratives about Delden Mend's ritual objects, particularly about his famous belt with rattles (Darkhad *xonkinūr*, cf. Pürew 1999, pp. 221–224), the terminology of invocations dedicated to him recorded by Rinčen, Dulam, Birtalan and probably newly “invented” ones, and the motifs of his torture and pursuit in the broader context of the Mongolian folklore about the outlaws.

Appendix

The brief database given below about the shamanesses interviewed during my field research are only fragments from a longer study (the interviews were made by Ágnes Birtalan, J. Coló, L. Čulünbatar and O. Sambüdorj 1992, 1993, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001). For more detailed information about the shamanesses' activity and life stories cf. Birtalan 2007a).

Shamaness Tuwānī Baljir

Tuwānī (pronounced by herself and by other Darkhad informants as Tuwānā) Baljir (her whole name is Cerenbaljir) was very weak and ill (Darkh. *orālgan*). She was born at the Barūn Agar “Western Agar” river in 1913 (the year of the tiger), and died in 2003. When she was born, a lama told her parents that the girl would be very lucky and blessed and asked her parents not to let her be adopted by others. The camps of her family are in Bayandzürkh district (Bayanjürx *sum*). She belonged to the Black Darkhads (*xar darxad*), to the larger family of Taitaan Mönkh (Darkh. *tātān mönx*) *tēxen*.²⁸ Her father's name was Mederjāgīn Tuwān (Darkh. form), which seems to refer to the Turkic speaking Tuwas in South-Siberia, her mother belonged to the Dalai

28) 108 households (*örx*) in a clan form a *tēxen* (Dulam 1992, p. 8). The Black Darkhads have traditionally seven *tēxens*.

Nyamain (Baljir: also *dalā nimān*) *tēxen*. She lived together with her husband S. Čoisüren and two daughters, and her daughters' families.

She was a hereditary black shaman. However, she was attracted to Buddhism in her youth. As the lama who had given her a name ascertained, she was a blessed person and had a close connection to goddess Lhamo. Her main *ongons* were “The One of the Roots” (she and her family called this *ongon* Ojūrānyam, i. e. Ojūrā *yum*), “The One from Iwed” (Iwedīn *yum*), the *ongon* of shaman Delden Mend, the *ongons* of the Turkic speaking Soyod people (Soyodīn *ongod*).

Shamaness Banjaragčīn Bayar

Her father was Banjaragč (not a shaman); her mother was the very famous shamaness Süren (1916–1992). Her husband was Maibayar, who used to be the helper during her rituals. She belonged to the Tsagaan Khuular (cagān xūlar) clan of the Darkhads. She lived in the centre of Tsagaan Nuur (Cagān Nūr) district of Khöwsgöl province and in 1999 (?) moved to Khailast (Xailast) circle of Ulaanbaatar with her family. Bayar died in 2001, while she was traveling throughout Mongolia to cure people.

Her daughter claimed Bayar had forty-two *ongons*, Pürew mentioned thirty-six (Pürew, 1999, p. 295). Her main *ongons* were: Mother of Dsawir/Dsaiwar (Jaiwīrīn *ēj*), Father of Khos (Xosīn *āw*), the *ongon* of shaman Delden Mend, Mother of Ereen (Erēni *ēj* also called Öndör Erēn, “The High Erēn), the *ongon* of shamaness Dašdawā, Father Grey-haired Damdin (Damdin Būral *āw*), Mother of Üdsüür (Üjūrīn *ēj*, they also called her Öjūrīn *ēj*) i. e. the *ongon* of shamaness Süren, Uigur *ongons*, Mother of Tsakhir (Caxirīn *ēj*), Mother of Uran (Urāni *ēj*), Mother of Usudag (Usudagīn *ēj*), the Tsaatan Baljgaa from the Taiga (Taigīn cātan Baljgā), Mother of Tsaram (Caramīn *ēj*). She also worshipped the Merciful spirit of Agar (Agarīn *xairxan*), the lock of whose sacral place could only be opened by blowing on it.

Shamanes Maibayarīn Joljaya (Xörög)

One of the youngest and most successful shamanesses in Mongolia, she is a hereditary shaman, daughter of the previously mentioned shamaness Bayar. She moved to Ulaanbaatar and has been an active shamaness since her childhood. Her grandmother Süren and mother Bayar were her masters.

She has twenty-two *ongons*, the main ones being: Mother of Dsawir/Dsaiwar (Jaiwīrīn *ēj*) and Mother of Üdsüür (Üjūrīn *ēj*), that is the transformed soul of shamaness Süren. These are her two main *ongons* (*yasni ongon*). The master spirit of her garment and drum is Father of Khos (Xosīn *āw*), the

transformed soul of shaman Delden Mend, the master spirit of her headgear is Mother of Ereen (Erēnī ēj), the transformed soul of shamaness Dašdawā. In addition she invoked Father Grey-haired Damdin (Damdin Būral āw).

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Some remarks on reflexion of the relationship between man and horse in the oral tradition of Mongolia and Eastern Slovakia

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Summary: This paper compares the relationship between man and horse in the oral tradition of nomadic Mongolian culture and sedentary Eastern Slovakian culture, with a focus on the description and classification of horses, naming horses, as well as their use, protection and other related customs, which I consider crucial to understanding the researched relationship. The paper is the first step of my research on the relationship between man and horse in folk literature.

Introduction

The significance of the horse in the life and culture of nomadic societies is a well-known fact. Mongols have to travel great distances daily while grazing their herds and performing other activities. Therefore the horse is a completely irreplaceable means of transport in this area. This irreplaceability is expressed in many Mongolian proverbs, such as “Meet people through your father, get to know the country through your horse” (*Aaviin biid hu’ntei tanilc, agtiin biid gazar uz*; S’iirevz’amc 2014, p. 56; Tamir 2011, p. 27). The nomad, who often spends nearly the whole day in the saddle, would not be able to cope in everyday life without horses, and therefore he appreciates them a lot. The phrase *moritoi / mori saitai yav- / bai-*, which indicates to ride a horse or have a good horse, has the metaphorical meaning “to have good luck”, as well as some proverbs:

<i>Mori saitai hu’n zam meddeggu’i,</i>	A man with a good horse does not know any roads,
<i>hani saitai hu’n zovlon meddeggu’i.</i> ¹	A man with a good wife does not know any worries.

i.e. a man who has a good horse does not need to worry about the route because his horse knows it well.

1) Tamir 2011, p. 51.

A large part of Mongolian oral traditions and folklore is related to horses. That is why the description of the relationship between man and horse is essential for understanding the Mongolian perception of the world and the bond between man and nature.

But the horse plays an important role in the oral tradition of non-nomadic, sedentary people of Eastern Slovakia, where traditional horse breeding still continues to exist, as well. In Eastern Slovakia the horse played a key role as a draught animal ensuring almost all transport until the 1970s, when it was completely replaced by automobile, truck, tractor and machines. Nevertheless, this region is still famous for horse breeding. Residents of my hometown Prešov are known as *koňare*, a term which, according to Buffa, refers to “*person who worked with horses*” or “*horseman*” (Buffa 2004, p. 130). This term refers to widespread horse breeding and has been used since 1973, when a new stud farm was built in Prešov. The original stud farm had been in Prešov since 1859 (Staviarsky 2011, pp. 32, 146). There was also a horse market in Prešov. Slovaks have, just like Mongols, a very close emotional relationship with horses and they consider this animal primarily as a friend. But ordinary people did not traditionally ride horses and were even afraid to try it. At present, the situation is completely reversed and horses are used primarily for riding.

The aim of this paper is to describe the part of nomadic Mongolian culture related to the relationship between man and horse by outlining some interesting parallels and differences from sedentary Eastern Slovakian culture.

Characteristics of horses. Appearance

The prevailing horse breed in Mongolia is the Mongolian domestic horse *Mongol aduu*. These horses represent an absolute majority and are preferred for traditional as well as for practical reasons, because they have great stamina and deal very well with harsh natural conditions. Mongols sometimes crossbreed the Mongolian horse with other horse breeds, but although this practice has a long history in Mongolia, it has never been very widespread. In fact, crossbreeding is practised only amongst wealthy owners of racehorses. The necessity of regulation of crossbreeding and the participation of crossbred (*erliz*) horses in racing has been frequently discussed in recent years. The history of the contact of Mongols with foreign breeds goes even further. The import of Arabian horses *tobičaud* dated from the 1230s is mentioned in

The Secret History of the Mongols.² Ordinary Mongols ride the Mongolian domestic horse (*Mongol aduu*). In Slovakia, a large variety of horse breeds is maintained, most of them hot bloods and cold bloods, and only one of them is archaic: hucul. Crossbreeding is also permitted, but it is strictly regulated. Whilst the variety of horse breeds is much bigger in Slovakia (and generally in Europe), the number of horses is not. In Mongolia ordinary people kept larger herds of horses, for example an average Barga³p. family in the area of Hulun Buir used to have 500–600 horses. Today the number of horses in this area is lower and only three families have more than a thousand horses.⁴ Currently the number of horses in Mongolia is 3,294,600,⁵ while the population is 3,061,896,⁶ i.e. horses outnumber people.

In Slovakia the number of horses is much lower and it is continuously decreasing. In the period before World War II Czechoslovakia, as well as other European countries, had the highest number of horses. In 1937–1939 656,000 horses were still bred in Slovakia, but after the Second World War the number of horses started to decline gradually, for example in 1972 there were only 118,000 horses in Slovakia (Medvecký 1981, p. 7). At present the number of equine animals in Slovakia is 8,988,⁷ while the population is 5,424,058.⁸

Colour, gait

In Mongolia the classification of horses by colour, gait, age and temperament is of great importance, and in the Mongolian language for each of these categories there is a vast number of special expressions. Within different types of gaits the most important category is the ambling gait (*z'oroo*), typical for its low occurrence and high value. An ambler is a horse who “dances”⁹,

2) “*Čormaqaŋ-Qorči made the people of Baytađ to submit themselves. Knowing that that land was said [to be] good and that its things [were said to be] good, when Ögödei Qahan made a decree, he said: “Čormaqaŋ-Qorči sitting even there [as] tamma, making [one] to bring [unto Us] in [each] year yellow gold, naquđ, brocades, damasks having [all three] yellow gold, [little] pearls, [big] pearls, tobičauđ long of neck and high of leg, güring elöüđ, daüsi, kičidud, mules of burden, and mules [to ride upon], be [ye], sending them”* (Cleaves 1982, p. 214).

3) Mongolian ethnic group

4) Bavuu, undated manuscript, p. 1.

5) <http://www.nso.mn/>.

6) <http://www.nso.mn/>.

7) <http://www.pssr.sk/cehz/subory/archiv/cehz1115.pdf>.

8) <http://slovak.statistics.sk>.

9) “*Bu'z'igdeg* (Luvsandorž, IN 2015).

when walking he moves simultaneously or nearly simultaneously both feet on one side of the body. Such a gait is very comfortable for a rider as vibrations of the spine are minimal. The ability to perform the ambling gait is inherited and it is more common within some breeds of horses than within others.

When distinguishing colour Mongols use more than three hundred words designating different colours and this classification is a basis for naming horses: *“It is worth noticing the traditional way of describing the appearance, which became the alphabet for knowing the cattle, and to which a truly detailed, deep knowledge similar to learning a foreign language is necessary. Because the description of the appearance of the cattle has a much larger number of different variants than anyone could imagine, regarding only horses it is necessary to remember not several dozen, but several hundred expressions. But when compared with horses, there are only a few variants of expressions describing the appearance of sheep, goats, camels, cows and similar animals.”*¹⁰ This skill is one of the components of the ability to “have eyes for cattle”, (*mald nu'dtei [hu'n]*) which every good shepherd must have. Of course, it is not enough to identify three hundred different colours of the cattle, a herdsman must also instantly recognize which animal in his herd is ill and which did not drink enough water. This knowledge is learned from childhood by watching cattle and listening to the words of the elders including idioms and proverbs.

Although the colour of the horse is not very important for ordinary Mongols, some colours carry certain meanings, for example an appearance bringing luck and appearance bringing bad luck are distinguished (Tu'dev 2015, pp. 178–179; Davaasu'ren 2014, p. 55). An especially good colour is maroon, and this is reflected in the wise saying “Good colour is bay (*heer*), good meat is vertebrae (*seer*)” (*Zu'snii sain heer, mahnii sain seer*).¹¹ On the contrary, a very unlucky coloration is a spotted horse with yellow muzzle or white horse with black head (*ho'l zeerd mori, har deltei cagaan haliun mori, altan o'ngot s'arga mori*, unlucky colours in Mongolian are as follows: *s'ar amtai coohor*,

10) Mal tanih bic'ig u'gsiin cagaan tolgoi bolson zu'sleh ulamz'lal ni u'nen heregteer o'vormoc negen hel surahtai adil neleen gu'nzgii medeelel aguulsan zu'il baisan gez' u'zuus'tei bilee. Uc'ir ni maliin zu's gedeg bas c' sanasnaas ilu'utei o'vormoc mas' olon yanziin huvilbartai tul zo'vhon aduu gehed arvaar bis' heden zuugaar tooloh u'g ceez'leh s'aardlagatai boldog bilee. Harin honi, yamaa, temee, u'her met ni bol zu'smiin huvid aduuniihaas co'on huvilbartai yum (Tu'dev 2015, p. 176).

11) Tu'dev 2015, pp. 178–179.

har tolgoitoi cagaan).¹² Mongols distinguish a large number of shades of brown and other common colours, when describing the colour of the horse, but they use all colours of the rainbow, including blue and green.

Other important specifics of Mongolian hippology is the classification of horses according to several “animal types” (*yazguur*). This classification is based on similarities of appearance. For example, Batbold (2008, p.5) lists the species lion, deer, wolf, rabbit, bird, jerboa, wild sheep, saiga, frog, dragon, snake, roe deer. Davaasu’ren (2014, p. 54) lists lion, deer, jerboa, dragon, bird, Przewalski horse, frog, fox, wild sheep, rabbit, wolf, fish, goat, musk deer, saiga and wild ass and Davaahu’u lists types of dragon, lion, wolf, hare, fox, frog, bird, musk deer, roe deer, saiga, wild ass, moose and deer (Davaahu’u 2008, pp. 36–61). Parts of the body of the horse are also often described using this method. One good example is the following description of the characteristics of a good racehorse:

<i>Maral duhtai</i>	Doe’s forehead
<i>Bugiin eru’utei</i>	Deer’s jaw
<i>Tuulai c’ihtei</i>	Hare’s ears
<i>S’uvuun hons’oortoi</i>	Bird’s snout
<i>Melhii magnaitai</i>	Frog’s nose
<i>Ogotnoi nu’dtei</i>	Vole’s eyes
<i>Ene zurgaa bu’rdvel hudalgu’i sain bolno.</i>	When these six [attributes] are gathered together, it is undoubtedly good. ¹³

Description using resemblance to different kinds of animals is used in folklore (songs, etc.) but it is also commonly used by ordinary people and especially by trainers of horses, mostly when speaking about racehorses.

In Slovakia, classification of horses within the breed is not developed to such a high level but it has also never been that necessary, considering the number of horses. In contrast with Mongolia, amblers are not being bred, therefore terminology in this area is missing and common people lack knowledge about this gait; either they do not know what it is or they consider an ambling gait to be a mistake that the horse makes when it is nervous. Fewer colours are being distinguished, the main colours being black horse (*vraník*), grey horse (*sivko*), bay horse (*hnedák*), white horse (*beluš/šimel*), chestnut

12) Tu’dev 2015, p. 179.

13) Batbold 2008, p. 50.

horse (*ryšiak*), cream horse (*žlták*) and dapple grey (*grošák*). Just like in Mongolia also in Eastern Slovakia numerous local variants of names for colours were very common. Unlike in Mongolia these local names are not used anymore, therefore it was impossible for me to establish by field research whether the different use of some expressions is caused because they bear different meanings in different localities or whether the original meaning was simply forgotten. For example, in the village of Kendice the expression *dereš* is used to describe a grey horse,¹⁴ whereas Buffa (2004, p. 52) defines this term as “horse with dappled hair”. The colour *šarga* was described by Balog as yellowish red,¹⁵ by Bruss and Miškaň as light red¹⁶ and by Cigán as chestnut.¹⁷ The colour *pejka* is considered to be brown by Balog¹⁸ and dark red by Miškaň.¹⁹ The use of the term *cigán*, which usually refers to the member of the Roma ethnic group, is very interesting. According to Buffa (2004, p. 38) one of the meanings of this term designates “black horse”.²⁰ Also Juraj Balog mentioned during the interview a black horse named Cigán.²¹

Horse names

As I mentioned, the colour is crucial for naming a horse. In Mongolia the name of the horse consists of the name of the owner in the form of a possessive pronoun and the colour of the horse, or sometimes distinctive characteristics or abilities. A horse can also have a nickname or a pet name. This practice is not very widespread and is usually connected with racehorses. Their nicknames refer to a specific location, origin (*yazguur*) or some special features, but they are always non-human names f. e.: *Mana* ‘Chalcedony’, *Arap* ‘Arab’, *Zanz’in* ‘Warlord’, *Harcaga* ‘Hawk’, *Avarga* ‘Winner’, *Sagai* ‘Anklebone’, *Hangal* ‘Tameless’, *Altan gadas* ‘North Star’ and *Mangas* ‘Monster’ (Ganhuyag 2008). Winners of a greater number of races are also rewarded by obtaining titles.

14) Miškaň, IN 2014.

15) Balog, IN 2015.

16) Miškaň, IN 2014; Bruss, IN 2016.

17) Cigán, IN 2015.

18) Balog, IN 2015.

19) Miškaň, IN 2014.

20) Buffa 2004, p. 38.

21) Balog, IN 2015. Also a consultant from the region of Žilina states that they had a dark puppy called Cigán. This name was given to it because all of the other puppies from the same litter were light-coloured (Mištríková, IN 2016).

Slovak horses do get personal names. During field research the following names of horses owned by consultants were collected: *Šarga, Pejka, Gaštan, Dereš, Cigán, Sultán*²² and *Bandi*²³ who were named after colours, and *Katka, Norbert, Miňa, Mica, Laci, Šuhaj* and *Tulipan* who were named differently. All of these horses were draught animals unlike today's horses, which are mainly used for riding and racing. At present there is no uniform system of naming horses. However, a very frequent practice is giving a name first letter of which is identical with the first letter of the name of the mother or giving the name a first letter of which is identical with the first letter of the name of the father. Sometimes a combination is used- giving a name the first letter of which is identical with the first letter of the name of the father to a colt and a name the first letter of which is identical with the first letter of the name of the mother to a filly. When examining these new names, I noticed two particularly significant trends: an almost complete disappearance of names designating also the colour and the strong influence of foreign words, most probably due to selective breeding by using horses from abroad. New names represent functions, titles and professions: *Pištolník* 'Gunman', *Vítaz* 'Winner', *Rektor* 'Rector', *Princezná* 'Princess', *Gejša* 'Geisha', *Notár* 'Notary'; personal (human) names: *Šaňo, Coco Chanel, Cassandra, Frodo, Cézár, Ďurko, Rusalka, Hamlet*; local names: *Haiti, India, Texas, Saturn, Nevada, Nitra, Torysa*; colour, characteristics or relationship with a horse: *Šari* 'Light red', *Gaštan* 'Chestnut', *Chytrá* 'Smart'; other words: *Chrumka* 'Crunch', *Hviezda* 'Star', *Colour of Love, Dreams, Cocktail Party, Lentilka* 'Smartie', *Azalka* 'Rhodies', *Kvetinka* 'Flower', *Šalvia* 'Salvia', *Sosna* 'Scots pine', *Gazela* 'Gazelle', *Puma* 'Puma', *Fantastika* 'Fiction') or combinations: *Flying Sophie*.²⁴

22) I consider *Sultán* to be the equivalent to the "color" *cigán*.

23) According to Bruss the name *Bandi* is mostly given to geldings or stallions, which are dark, almost black. Such a horse recalls a bandit or a horse that a bandit could have ridden, so it is possible that the name was originally used in this context (Bruss, IN 2016).

24) Names of currently living horses taken from the studbooks. I examined the names from all over Slovakia, since the current naming of horses in Eastern Slovakia does not have any specifics.

Use

The life of Mongol is inseparably connected with cattle, especially with the horse, man's irreplaceable means of transport, helping him graze cattle, his most reliable friend (*er hu'nii hamgiin itgeltei no'hor*)²⁵ and precious gem.²⁶ The reason for the formation of such a close relationship between man and horse is a way of life of Mongolian nomads, which is bound to nature and influenced by natural conditions. Therefore, we cannot wonder at the following words of C'adraabal, herder from Bayan-O'lgii aimag: "*Mongol could not get by without eating meat. Neither could he keep sitting. He could not get by without riding too, is that not so?*"²⁷ Horseback riding represents the primary use of the horse and it is an essential skill that every Mongol possesses and learns from the age of four. If the child is a very good rider and is chosen to participate in the horserace, it starts to ride fast horses at the age of six and is referred to in the context of the horserace as *unaac*.²⁸ While foreigners are surprised by tiny kids speeding along on Mongolian horses, Mongols often like to joke about the riding abilities of foreigners.²⁹ One example is a playful comparison of a Mongol and a tourist way of riding by the interpreter accompanying tourists I met at Naiman Nuur. He told me that Mongols ride while standing, but tourists always sit down on the horse's back and after the ride they are so shaken up that they have "*heart here, kidney here, one eye there, two eyes*" (pantomiming how the heart, kidney and eyes moved to incorrect places by jolting), "*they cannot even recognize me. Are you here? My eyes won't switch [to the right place].*" He pantomimed and cheerfully laughed.

25) "Gansu'h, IN 2015.

26) The horse is respectfully referred to as *molor erdene* 'topaz' (Gansu'h, IN 2015).

27) "Mongol hu'n mah idehgu'i baiz' bas c'adahgu'i. Suuhgu'i baiz' bas c'adahgu'i. Mori unahgu'i baiz' bas c'adahgu'i, tiim uu" (C'adraabal, IN 2015).

28) To'mroo, IN 2015; Davaasu'ren 2014, p. 88.

29) A similar experience is mentioned by Poucha (1957, pp. 70–71) in the travel book describing his visit to Mongolia in 1955: "*It is natural that the Mongolian army is equestrian, and for a nation that lives on horseback and hunts on horseback, military drill is not long, because they know everything since childhood. Sükhbaatar shot accurately from a rifle at full speed, cut potatoes skewered on rods in half with a palash while riding, he was able to raise a scarf from the ground while riding and was doing handstands on the saddle. And he was the first minister of war of the new Mongol state, the leading man in the nation. How many times have I seen an old Mongolian grandpa in the steppes at full speed and he even greeted us with a raised wooden stick, which is used to speed up the horse, while riding. Our circus-rider would not probably gain much fame in Mongolia. What he knows, everybody knows there. Also, I have never seen a circus-rider on horseback in the state circus in Mongolia. I suppose the Mongols would have many laughs about what we admire in our country.*"

“Everyone except us Mongols sits like this,” he mimicked the ride of weekend riders.³⁰ The importance of the use of the horse as the means of transport is obvious from many words and idioms, for example to have good luck (*mori saitai yav-*) or ‘horse of favour’ (*his’igtiin mori*), which is synonymous with the ‘shepherd horse’ (*honinii mori*).

The horse is not only a means of transport, grazing cattle, catching wild horses, hunting and racing, all with the man on his back, but it is also an important article for sale, and its price can reach very high amounts when a racehorse or an ambler is being sold. Sometimes the horse is also used to carry cargo or to make felt. Using the horse as a harness animal has already disappeared, but in modern times the Mongolian horse obtained a new task which is carrying tourists in popular destinations. Mongols never ride mares, which are used solely for the production of milk. A similar taboo can be observed in Slovakia, where horses including mares and oxen were used as working animals, but not cows: “*Harnessing the cow is defied by the very nature of our people; from these only milk and even more prosperous fruit for breeding is being expected*” (Dobšinský 1880, p. 50).

Mares are milked from the first summer month, from early morning when the herdsmen drive them from pasture till night, every two hours. After milking mares are always driven back to pasture. Foals are tied to a rope (*zel*)³¹ without any access to water, milk, or grass throughout the whole day (except at night) and thus they gain resistance, ability to withstand harsh conditions. However in the event of heavy rain or other adverse conditions foals are kept together with mares.³² The method of milking is also different from the method applied to other kinds of cattle: the foal is first brought to the mare to drink milk for a few seconds, so the mare lets the milk flow (*ivleh*), then the man or a boy who is at least ten years holds the head of the mare while a woman is milking. Originally the mares were presumably milked by men.³³

No part of the horse and its products is wasted: meat, leather, milk, dung, mane and tail are all utilized (Serz’ee 2011, p.61). In particular the horse’s

30) “Zu’rh end, bo’or end, nu’d end, hoyer nu’d, daraa ni namaig tanihgu’i. Ci’end u’u? Nu’d ee solihgu’i. ... Manai Mongoloos busad bu’gd ingeed suudag.” (Interpreter for tourists from Ulaanbaatar, IN 2015).

31) Long rope stretched between two stakes driven into the ground to which colts are tethered.

32) Luvsandorz, IN 2016.

33) For example William of Rubruck states when describing a yurt: “*Right at the door on the women’s side there is another figure with a cow’s udder for women, who milk the cows. Across from it on the men’s side is a similar statue with mare udders, because mares are milked by men.*” (Knobloch 1964, p. 75).

mane and tail have very specific kinds of use. Some string instruments have strings made of horsehair. For example, the strings of both body and bow of *morin huur*, an instrument with horse head carved on a pegbox, are made from horsehair. Two of the strings must be from the tail of the owner's favourite fast horse (Pegg 2001, p. 105). Not only are the shape and material of *morin huur* linked to the horse, but also its mythical origin, which has several versions.

Carole Pegg (2001, pp. 100–101) describes a Chahar myth about eight star-princes who descend from the sky, turn into heroes in golden armour and ride eight steeds. One day one of the heroes falls in love with a young shepherdess and starts to visit her. The shepherdess falls in love as well, but soon she decides she does not want her lover to leave her every day, and when the hero falls asleep, she cuts off his horse's wings. When the hero flies away next morning, the wounded horse falls into the vast desert and dies. The hero in despair starts to strangle the horse's corpse and at that moment it turns in his hands into a *huur* with a pegbox in the shape of the horse's head. Very similar is the legend of Ho'hoo Namz'il, who keeps visiting a beautiful girl from the lake every day, but his wife, to whom he returns every evening cuts the windpipe of his horse with scissors so he is not able to leave her during the day. Mourning Ho'hoo Namz'il carves the head of his horse from wood and thus creates *morin huur*, on which he plays and sings about the deeds of the beloved horse (Altangerel 1988, pp. 37–40).

A bowstring has also been traditionally made from horsehair. This tradition continues today, when occasionally silk is used instead of the hair. Horsehair is also the main part of the first national emblem of Mongolia, which is a Great White Banner with nine poles (*yeso'n ho'lt Ih cagaan tug*). The upper part of each banner is made from horsehair from the mane and tail of snow-white stallions (Serz'ee 2011, p. 111). The banner is, in accordance with Article 12.4 of the Mongolian Constitution, still the honorary state symbol Mongolia.

In Slovakia in the past horses were bred for ceremonial needs, riding (aristocracy), military needs and peasant farming. For ordinary people the horse was primarily a working animal until mechanization. Such horses were first bred as private property, but since the sixties in cooperatives. They were used for ploughing, logging, transporting construction materials, hay, gravel, flour and all other raw materials and products, sometimes also to pull carriages. Body parts and products of the horse were used just to a small extent.

There was a horse abattoir in Prešov, centre of the Šariš region, but horses in this area were not bred for meat nor was the meat consumed. Ordinary

people saw the horse as a friend and were reluctant to get rid of their old horses in such a way. According to Bruss a family usually said farewell to their old horse, the head of the family then took him behind the village and put him to death in a humane way: *“It was like this, he asked the gamekeeper or someone else from the village or that settlement who owned a gun. And there he [the horse] was mostly shot by one shot to the head, honourably, like in Winnetou movies.”*³⁴ *The meat and skin of the horse were utilized by Roma people or meat traders. Horsehair was commonly used as bow strings in string instruments. Horsehair from the tail was also used to treat warts and other skin growths. However, there was one exception connected to racehorses (not to horses kept by families of ordinary people). It is documented that in Prešov stallion testicles were consumed until very recently:*

“Adventures in the stud farm were experienced after the autumn selection of stallions from breeding stock. Selected stallions had to be castrated so they would not be used for backyard breeding. The castrations of stallions were connected with the feasts, for which a delicacy was prepared from stallions’ testicles. It was prepared on the premises of the stud farm or directly in the tavern. Naturally good food always came with good beer and often with something stronger too” (Staviarsky 2011, p. 123).

As I mentioned above, the horse was in the first place a draught animal. For example, one of the respondents described how construction materials for numerous buildings in Prešov were transported on horse carts: *“The meat processing factory was built from local gravel too, a cold store was built here, Křížík was built from here. Everything was drawn.”*³⁵ *Also the horse’s work in agriculture was of great importance, but local conditions, for example lack of pastures, significantly limited the possibilities of breeding, which is why their number in villages was rather low, and the horses were shared among neighbours. A person who had horses helped his neighbours when something had to be transported and they helped him with other work. Draught horses had to be tame and obedient, therefore mostly mares were used for this purpose. Horses that were wild and likely to rear were unfit for work and dangerous, which was why the breeder or owner did not want them and often tried to get rid of them as quickly as possible. For example, Jozef Matis describes a case in which*

34) *“Bolo to takto, že poprosil buď horára alebo niekoho, kto vlastnil v dedine alebo v tej danej usadlosti zbraň. A tam sa väčšinou zo cti, tak ako je to vo vinetouovkách zastrelil jednou ranou do hlavy”* (Bruss, IN 2016).

35) *“I mesokombinat še postavil z toho šutru tu, mraziaren še stavala tu, Křížík še stavial stadzi. Šicko še cahalo”* (Miškaň, IN 2014). Křížík was the factory famous mostly for production of electric meters.

*a horse that was wild was exhausted by physical exertion before the visit of the potential buyer and then sold as domesticated.*³⁶

Despite the close relationship with horses, ordinary people did not use to ride them. Horseback riding was common amongst the aristocracy and the army, but not amongst ordinary people. Ordinary people owned carts, collars and harnesses, and these were also shown to me by my consultants during the interviews, but not saddles. Some consultants even told humorous stories about how they tried to sit on the horse in childhood, and got scared when the horse unexpectedly started to run. Nevertheless, the horse was used a lot and appreciated for his work. This is obvious from many proverbs, for example to this day when somebody works very hard it is often said that he is “working [hard] as a horse” (*robi jak kuň*). The horse was an important part of everyday life, which is why he also often occurs in various sayings that teach how it goes in life. Eastern Slovakian sayings are often humorous to lighten the gravity of the situation:

Koň ma štiri nohi a še pošpoci.

*The horse has four legs and yet stumbles.*³⁷

Psu z predku, koňovi zo zadku a babe z ňijakej strani ňever.

*Do not trust a dog from the front, a horse from behind and a woman from any side.*³⁸

Kebi mal kuň rohi, bul bi jeleň.

*If a horse had horns, it would be a deer.*³⁹

Nowadays horses in Eastern Slovakia are being kept almost exclusively for the purpose of riding as a sport or as a hobby. Other rather marginal kinds of use, such as hippotherapy, are also related to horseback riding. A change in the role of the horse, which used to be a working animal but today is used mostly for riding as a sport or as a hobby, has also led to a fundamental change in the relationship between man and horse “Formerly peasants and people considered the horse to be a member of the family, today they consider him to be a pet.”³⁷

36) Matis, IN 2015.

37) “Kedysi mali sedliaci aj ľudia kone za člena rodiny, dnes ho majú za miláčika” (Bruss, IN 2016).

Horserace

Mongolian horse racing is a national sport, which is very popular amongst Mongols, who even dream about it very often.³⁸ It is distinctive not only because the horse is at the centre of attention and admiration, but also because even participation in this event itself, whether through training, riding or otherwise, has a very beneficial effect on man, awakens his ‘wind horse’ (*hiimori*) and elevates it.³⁹ The horserace is also a celebration, has a sacred character and often represents an offering, for example to a sacred mountain.

Historically a horserace was connected with a ceremony taking place in Ordos, during which the first mare milk was being offered to the sky. After that mares were sprinkled and released onto the steppes with red and white cloth stripes braided into mane and tail together with the fastest horses of the race. Declaring the winners was accompanied by recitation of a blessing (Pegg 2001, pp. 214–215). Contemporary Mongolian horse races often take place within the three games of men *naadam*, which consist of a horse race (*morinii uraldaan*), archery (*sur harvaa*) and wrestling (*bo’hiin barildaan*). The most important *naadam* is the *dans’ig naadam*⁴⁰ and *state naadam* (*ulsiin naadam*). Other horse races are often held on various occasions, public holidays, anniversaries, offerings or similar events. All the competing horses are trained by trainers (*uyaac*), to whom a set of necessary traditional skills is transferred by the older generation. These include, for example, the skill of recognizing the potential of a horse to become a racehorse *hurdan mori* (synonymous with the expression fast horse *uraldaanii mori*) from certain groups of characteristics. The characteristics include “external attributes” like colour, shape of the head, eyes, ears, nostrils, neck, back, tail, qualities of other body parts, as well as gait and behaviour (Davaasu’ren 2014, pp. 41–54). This knowledge about horse attributes (*morinii s’inz*) is transmitted mainly by oral

38) Mongols often dream about horses, especially about horse races. These dreams always have positive connotations. In Slovakia, on the contrary, a dream about a white horse means the death of a close person. The grandmother of the consultant dreamt twice about a white horse and this dream was always accompanied by the death of a family member (Mištríková, IN 2016).

39) “*Hiimorio deedleh, ih sergeleh*” (To’mroo, IN 2015). *Hiimori*, wind horse, is an invisible protector of a man in the form of a horse.

40) The Tibetan word *dans’ig* corresponds to the Mongolian expression *bators’ih* (Davaasu’ren 2014, p. 150.) with the meaning “persistent”, literally “firmly situated, steady”. This *naadam* was supposed to bring prosperity to the newly-established seven Khalkha *koshuun* (administrative unit).

tradition, including proverbs and songs of praise, but it is also contained in some sutras, for example:

Yasan su'ul ni urt, sambai ni o'tgon, u'zuur ni s'ingen baih heregtei. Mo'n su'uliin neg u's olon salaalsan baival sain. Urt buduun yumuu, bogino nariin su'ul dund zereg. Nariin urt, sul su'ul muu.

Vertebrae of the tail should be long, the upper part of tail-hair thick and the lower part thin. It is also good when one tail-hair splits into many. A long and thick or short and thin tail is average. A thin, long, and frail tail is bad. ⁴¹ (attributes in sutras)

But not only do fast horses race and take part in competitions, races between shepherd horses (*honinii morini naadam*), also called race of the horses of good fortune (*his'igtiin morinii naadam*) is also very popular, as is a competition of horsemen (*aduuc'in temceen*), in which the versatility of the herdsman and his horse is being tested. Herdsmen compete in several categories: throwing lasso (*buguil*),⁴² lifting pole-lasso (*uurga*)⁴³ from horseback while galloping, taming the horse and a horse 'beauty contest'.

Also individual parts of a race are connected with long-kept traditions. After the race the head and sometimes also buttocks of the first five horses who arrive to the finishing line are ceremonially poured over with kumis. This custom is called *mori airagdah yos* (Oberfalzerová 2006, p. 67). Then the horses and riders obtain medals and traditional songs of praise *col* for winning horses are proclaimed. An essential part of this unique type of song is the name of the owner of the horse, the description of the horse, a list of his victories and a mention of his origin.⁴⁴ The description of the horse consists of specifying the appearance, his qualities, and how they are manifested in the race. Usually the traditional attributes of fast horses (*morinii s'inz'*) are mentioned. Specific forms of description vary. For example, sometimes individual attributes of the horse are compared to attributes of other animals, sometimes abilities of the horse are described as they developed according to the age at which they were acquired (one-year-old colt, two-year-old colt etc.). For example:

*Erdeniin nayan naiman s'inz' ni
bu'rdsen*

*Let's celebrate the attributes of this fast
horse*

41) Davaasu'ren 2014, p. 46.

42) Lasso.

43) Lasso fastened to the top of a seven-metre-long pole made of birch and willow.

44) www.morinerdene.mn.

<i>Ene hurdan hu'lguudiin s'inz'iig duudiya</i>	<i>Who comprised eighty-eight attributes of gem</i>
<i>Hulan hoyor cihte</i>	<i>Two ears like khulan</i>
<i>Hu'n su'mber hos'uutai</i>	<i>Snout like Su'mber mountain</i>
<i>Hur targa ni uucandaa</i>	<i>Fatness in the croup</i>
<i>Hurdan s'inz' ni borvindoo</i>	<i>Speed in the tendon</i>
<i>Buyan his'ig ni su'ulendee</i>	<i>Good fortune in the tail</i>
<i>Bus'uu tu'rgen ho'londoo</i>	<i>Swiftness in the feet</i>
<i>Dun bu'urii hamartai</i>	<i>Nose curved like a conch</i>
<i>Duran har nu'dtei</i>	<i>Black eyes like binoculars⁴⁵</i>

Some *col* are influenced by Buddhism. For example, there is one comparing various body parts to eight auspicious signs: head to vase, ears to lotus, eyes to fish, mane to parasol, hooves to wheels, decorations to endless knot, colour to the colour of the conch and tail to banner (Morin-u čol, Copenhagen Royal Library, Mong. 175). According to Mo'nhtor such songs are declaimed by U'zemeč'in nationalities who dedicate them to the horse that won the race (Mo'nhtor 2013, p.43). The description of the horse in this example is an interesting parallel to the Tibetan tradition in which auspicious signs symbolize (among other things) eight parts of the Buddha's material body (Beer 2005, p. 26). While the ceremonial and aesthetic function is intensified in this *col*, the traditional attributes of fast horse are entirely missing. Another genre in which the horse often represents the main topic is the hymn of praise (*magtaal*). In *magtaal* horse is described, often by using "visual" onomatopoeia (Oberfalzerová 2006, p. 21), in such a way that the entire Mongolian countryside and its shapes are reflected in him. Such a description of the horse is very aesthetic and emotional, it clearly shows the close emotional relationship of the Mongol to his horse. The horse is also a frequent topic of long and short songs, where he occurs not only in connection with the celebration of the speed of a racehorse, but also in the context of the common situations of everyday life. A special type of songs is melodies imitating the gait of the horse, which usually include a prologue in the form of astory. Some melodies on *morin huur* or *ihil*⁴⁶ are played to calm the horse (Pegg 2001, p. 238).

In Slovakia the description of the horse in folk songs is also very emotional, but the horse usually is not the central topic and topics dealing with the horserace or a detailed description of the appearance of the horse and

45) Davaasu'ren 2014, p. 176.

46) The horsehead fiddle, a traditional Mongolian bowed string instrument.

its attributes are completely absent. In the songs loyalty, reliability, diligence, strength and other characteristics of the horse are highlighted, but not speed. This difference arises from the nature of the society – while in a nomadic society the element of movement is ubiquitous, in a sedentary society it is not so important.

Mongolian fairy tales are also specific. In both Mongolian and Slovak fairy tales the horse represents a faithful, wise and fast companion of man, in the magical tales he tends to have magical abilities, advises his master and is able to take him to places at a month of travel's distance in a single day.⁴⁷ But Mongolia is unique for fairy tales in which people are completely absent, or play only a minor role. Instead, the main hero is the horse and his abilities are personified. *“For example: When an orphaned colt grew up, it was cooking for its master and sewing on the buttons, it recaptured his wife from alien hands and brought her back to him etc. [in fairy tales] many other notable and extraordinary deeds are contained.”*⁴⁸ This excerpt is from the most famous fairy tale about horses, which is a fairy tale about a white mare (*Cagaagc ǰu'u*).

In Slovakia horse racing is also popular but its popularity is not as widespread as in Mongolia and it is not an original tradition. The beginnings of equestrian sports in this area are dated from the 19th century (Staviarsky 2011, p.15). The final form of these sports was greatly influenced by the English aristocracy. In Prešov the first canter and harness racing took place in 1903 on the lands of Count Wengerský in Šarišské lúky, a district of the town of Lubotice. It was organized by the army. Staviarsky describes the tremendous thrill and interest that the event immediately raised amongst citizens: *“An hour after lunch, the first spectators began to arrive. 250 people interested in horse racing came on carriages and wagons. But the number of pedestrian visitors was several times higher. In the end it turned out that there would be shortages especially of the cheaper seats of the second and third class. The situation got even worse when just before two o'clock another 600 people came from Prešov by train”* (Staviarsky 2011, p. 23).

47) In Slovak oral tradition *tátoš* is a magic horse that is transformed into a magic steed after being fed one manger of oats and one manger of fire or ember (Polívka 1932–1933, p. 20.) Sometimes he is transformed after the binder from the straw is put on his head instead of snaffle (Dobšinský 1880, p. 116.). *Tátoš* can talk and advises his master, he can fly and transform himself into various creatures and things.

48) *“Tuhailbal: o'nc'in unaga o'sc' tom bolood ezendee togoo taviz', tovc' hadah, hatniig ni bus-diin garaas bulaan avc' irz' o'gc' baigaa zereg sodon sonin u'ils olontaa gardag bilee”* (Ceren-sodnom 2009, p. 10).

At present there is a wide range of races in Slovakia, which are similar to races in other European countries. Warmbloods mostly race in flat races and jumps. Cold bloods compete in popular chariot races (*furmanské / gazdovské preteky*), which are races of horses drawing a wagon. This competition consists of three disciplines: obstacle cone driving, work with wood and heavy drawing. Another specific horse race is Hubert's ride, in which the participants recall aristocratic fox hunts. In modern times fox is represented by a rider with a fox tail attached to the shoulder. Riders representing a pack of dogs and hunters chase him. Unlike in Mongolia, people bet on horses.

Protection

One ritual which is devoted exclusively to horses and ensuring their prosperity is the ritual sprinkling with milk, (*su'unii cacal*) taking place in the first summer month, a few days after the first milking of mares, when there is enough mare milk and kumis. The most important part of *su'unii cacal* is the sprinkling of milk onto the foals tied to a rope as well as onto mares, sometimes stallions. It is accompanied by the recitation of a wish (*cacal myalaal-giin u'g*) and a benediction (*yo'rool*), which are the expression of gratitude for the prosperity of the herd and a demand for this prosperity to continue.⁴⁹ The ritual is accompanied by the burning of juniper on dry droppings of cattle (*argal*) and circling around a rope (*zel*) clockwise.

Another ritual that is still commonly practised by Mongolian nomads is sparing the life of cattle, (*malaa seterleh*) which is connected with securing protection and is close to the traditional treatment of equine diseases (Tu'dev 2015, p. 187). *Seter* is an expression of the Tibetan origin and means 'to spare life'.⁵⁰ The ritual can be performed on horses, sheep and goats, but on cows and camels only in some areas. (Neklyudov, IN 2016) Cattle on which *seter* has been performed are "untouchable", it is forbidden to kill or eat them, to use them for work, for women to ride them, neuter them, or cut their mane. It is very fortunate to have such an animal in the herd, "Because it is said, that while there is a spared animal *setertei mal* in the herd the prosperity of cattle

49) Luvsandorz, IN 2016.

50) Tib. *tshé thar*. It is almost synonymous with the expression *srog blu gktong*. Both expressions refer to the act of saving or sparing the animal's life (Hanker, IN 2016). Blezer states *tshé thar* means 'to liberate' one's own animal, which was meant to be slaughtered, while *srog blu* means "to liberate" an animal, that is not one's own by repurchasing it just before the killing, and thus saving its life (Blezer 2002, p. 218).

will not pass.⁵¹ According to Tu'dev (2015, pp. 187–199) this tradition originates with the original Mongolian custom⁵² of declaring an animal sacred *darhlah* or *hiv tatah* (Tu'dev 2015, pp. 187–199; Davaasu'ren 2014, p. 31), which was later influenced by Buddhism.

Seter carried out on a horse takes different forms depending on the locality and type of *seter*. The act of *seterleh* is a ritual that takes place on a designated day. First, an offering is prepared, then the lama reads a religious text or the shaman performs an appropriate ritual. When the ritual is completed the horse is tied in front of the yurt and sprinkled with milk. In the end the *seter*, which can take the form of silk strips of five colours sewed together by string made of sheep or camel wool, is tied on the right side of the mane of the horse (Davaasu'ren 2014, p. 31). Sometimes a silk scarf (*hadag*), bells, cattle or wolf ankle bones or other things are tied to its neck. As mentioned, there are more types of *seter* and each of them has different rules. For example, a horse that is a bearer of *seter* of the soul of ancestor (*ongon seter*) can only be ridden by the head of the family, a woman cannot even touch it. Simple *seter* (*engiin seter*) can be passed on to a similar-looking horse after the death of its previous holder. The horse is being consecrated by *seter* mostly to deities of the sky *tenger* and deities of the waters *lus*. For each type of *seter* (each deity) there are specific rules that determine the necessary colour of the horse, the designated day and words to be recited.

Other forms of magical protection are *sahius* and *sayag*. *Sayag* is an amulet, a sign with magical power which protects its holder, which may be a human, horse or other type of livestock. Providing an animal with *sayag* is often a reaction to a bad sign or event (Tu'dev 2015, p. 261). For example, Davaahu'u describes its use in the event of a threat to fast horses from disease or evil forces,⁵³ or when there is a need to increase the speed of the horse (Davaahu'u 2008, p. 31). *Sahius* is very similar and together with *seter* and *sayag* it represents a means through which a Mongol tries to ensure the prosperity and well-being of his herds. Protection is often provided to cattle rather than to humans, because when the cattle are well, their owner will not suffer from shortages. *Seter* has also other connotations: it may be an expression of gratitude, reward for faithful service or an unusual deed by a horse.

51) "Uc'ir ni terhu'u setertei mal baigaa cagt maliin buyan tasrah yosgu'i gene" (Tu'dev 2015, p. 187).

52) This custom is mentioned in The Secret History of the Mongols.

53) Davaahu'u describes the protection rendered by *sayag* as appropriate in the case of the negative influence originating in supernatural beings or forces of nature *ad zedger*, or in the case of "contamination", with negative influence coming from some person *horlol buzar*.

Traditional medicine for equine diseases (*aduunii ovc'nii dom zasal*)⁵⁴ is described by some authors, for example by Davaasuren (2014, pp. 283–286), though it is presumably not used for practical purposes anymore. Treatment methods include giving various herbs, human, animal and mineral products to an animal, smearing with ointment, using the cleansing smoke of plants or bloodletting. When applying these methods colours also play an important role. For example: “If a horse gets scabies, give him a little of blood from a red cow. Attacks on livestock by wolves and other beasts will stop if cattle, men and children wear wolf ankle bones round their necks” (Davaasu'ren 2014, pp. 283–286).

Also in Slovakia traditional medicine exists, but methods of treatment of equine diseases have been forgotten to a much greater degree than in Mongolia. The only traditional method of treatment identified during my fieldwork was the treatment of the ‘evil eye’ (*z očí*). This is a sudden illness of humans or animals, especially horses, caused by the words or sight of a person. Juraj Balog described the incident when his own horses were afflicted by an evil eye: “*I went uphill to collect hay, I went and there was one man grazing cows. They (i.e. the horses) [were] black, you know, and me. And there was one girl from Soľukov and me with the hook. We loaded straw and hay, and [then I went] to the cutter. And [I gave horses] pollard and oats. Horses then had such dapples all over them, they shone. And I greeted him: Good morning uncle. Good morning. He says: What do you feed them? They shine. And [when] we came to the hay and I looked at the mares that were already [sick] and foam was dripping from them. That's how they were. And they trembled.*”⁵⁵

In this particular case a doctor was called and managed to cure the horses. Juraj Balog, however, consistently with other consultants stated that at that time the traditional treatment of evil eye was still being practised in form of purification by smoke. It was performed by putting cloth strips of nine colours, herbs⁵⁶ or a few pieces of cut-off hair asked from a person who

54) *Dom zasal* is traditional medicine standing in between the medicine and the magic.

55) “A mi išol po šeno tam merkom huru, mi išol a tam jeden pas kravi. A oňi čarni ñe a ja. A tam bula taka soľukovianka a ja s kľučku. Raz slami, raz šena a do šečkarňi. A i šrotu, i ovsa. Koňe mali talare taki po tim, po sebe, lem še švicili. A ja pozdravil: Dobre rano svatku. Dobre rano. Ej, tak hutori, ta co to im davaš? Lem še švica. Pridzeme ku šenu, patrim, kobuli už, peni z ñich kapkaju. Taki bili. A še tresu” (Balog, IN 2015).

Solicitude of Slovaks for their cattle and their pride in them was described by Dobšinský: “*To the farm belongs cattle, these are: horses, oxen, cows, sheep. People are speaking of the cattle collectively as of their “statek”, and it is spoken of with pride, it is said to be like weasels, i.e. with good and beautiful fur and wool*” (Dobšinský 1880, p. 50.)

56) Interviewees do not remember, what particular sort of herb it was.

presumably caused the disease, on the cinder put on the scoop. Then the scoop was circled around and underneath the animal.⁵⁷ Just like in Mongolia, where Buddhist elements were later included in traditional medicine, also in Slovakia the treatment integrated Christian elements in some localities: *“Because formerly, I say that it was done, there were superstitions, is that not so, I do not know what were superstitions and what were not. For example, I do not know, I do not remember when, I know that in summer some herbs were consecrated, which were called something. I know that I went to collect them somewhere in a birch grove, some herbs that were growing in such a way, trailing on the ground, and more kinds were collected and a priest consecrated them. Then sometimes when there was a cow or something, and they felt that something was wrong with the cow or something like that, my poor mom put on that thing, what is it called, on a scoop he put some coal and put that grass on it because it was consecrated and went to smoke the cow to mend it.”*⁵⁸ Also other consultant described a case in which a horse who was suffering from colic was successfully treated by a Greek Catholic priest he witnessed. It was carried out by smearing consecrated oil on the head and other body parts of the horse in the shape of the cross.⁵⁹ As a prevention or protection against the evil eye horses have always worn something red, such as tassels on the harness.⁶⁰

It is worth noticing that in all of these cases only one specific horse or cow is being protected by a given ritual, while some of the Mongolian means of protection are able to secure this protection for the whole herd, for example *seter* and *su'unii cacal*. But there is one method by which Slovaks are able to create protection with much greater coverage. It was practised by using horse skulls, later sculptures of horse heads: *“The Slavs and Germanic peoples shared the idea of the apotropaic effect of horse heads. Therefore, we encounter them in the rampart of the Slavic hillforts or towns which they were supposed to provide with greater strength. E.g. in Zabuřany and Budeč in Bohemia, in Polish Gdansk, where a whole skeleton of a horse and skulls of wild boars were*

57) Balog, IN 2015; Miklušová, IN 2015.

58) “Bo dakedi hvarim, že onačelo še, poveri buli ňe, znam co buli poveri a co ňepoveri. Ked napríklad ňeznam, už še ňepametam kedi, znam že to v lece šveceli dajake žele še volalo. Znam že som bula dachdze v brežinoh na ňeho, na dajake žele co tak roslo, po žemi še cahalo a tak še nažbiralo do oneho vecej sorty, a to farar švecel. No a ked dakedi bula krava abo daco bulo a še im vidzelo že je nedobre daco s kravou abo daco také, ta vžali mama neboha na toto, jak še vola, no na šmetník uhla a dali totu travu tam bo to bula švecena a tak išli pokuric kravu žebi še jej polepšelo” (Miklušová, IN 2015).

59) Bruss, IN 2016.

60) Bruss, IN 2016.

found” (Váňa 1990, p. 147). Sculptures of horse heads, mostly wooden, with a protective function were present also in Prešov: “... *people placed such sculptures at highly visible spots on buildings they were supposed to protect. Some two stone sculptures of horses’ heads were placed above the main entrance to the premises of the State stud farm.*”⁶¹

Customs

In this section I will mention a few examples of many Mongolian customs related to horses. We can learn about them from many sources, one of the most valuable being the Secret History of the Mongols, where we can see their early form. One example is *and boloh yos*, the act of formal confirmation of the establishment of a close friendship, similar to a blood relationship, between two boys or men. Friendship was affirmed by an oath, by which both men swore that they will fight together against their enemies, that they will be loyal to each other and mutually equal and that they will settle their disputes by talking. During the ceremony “new brothers” mutually licked the blood from the thumb, tore away and took one hair from the mane of the steed (*hu’leg mori*) or tied the mane and tail of two steeds (*hu’leg mori*) together and crawled underneath it together (Katuu 2009, pp. 16–18). The oath was often followed by the exchange of gifts, for example Temüjin and Jamukha renewed their friendship bond after recapturing Börte from Merkits by giving each other a horse (Cleaves 1982, pp. 49–50).

Another example recorded in the Secret History of the Mongols documents the belief in the prophetic abilities of the horse. It took place when the Temüjin was hiding in the thick forest surrounded by Taichiud. Seeing no other way out he finally decided to come out, but at that moment his saddle came loose and fell down and Temüjin thought: “*As for the belly strap, let it be. But how could the breast strap loosen itself? Is heaven staying [me]?*” and decided to remain in hiding (Cleaves 1982, p. 26). In another part of the Secret History of the Mongols the event when Temüjin consults the possibility of attacking Naimans with his commanders is described. Many of them do not want to attack and say: “*Our geldings are lean. Now what shall we do?*” (Cleaves 1982, p. 118).

61) “... ľudia si podobné plastiky umiestňovali na dobre viditeľných miestach stavebných objektov, ktoré mali ochraňovať. Takéto dve kamenné plastiky konských hláv boli umiestnené nad hlavným vchodom do areálu Štátneho žrebčince” (Staviarsky 2011, p. 10).

To understand Mongolian customs connected with the horse and their place in everyday life, the concept of the wind horse (*hiimori*) is essential. It is based on the idea that each man is constantly accompanied by his own invisible guardian – a horse – and if the guardian is all right, then that man has nothing to worry about. Therefore, Mongolians use expressions such as *hiimortoi*, having luck and *hiimorgu'i*, having bad luck (Oberfalzerová 2006, pp. 64–65). It is necessary to take care of *hiimori*, do everything to elevate it, and avoid actions that cause its decline.

Not only humans, but also yurts and five kinds of cattle have their *hiimori*.⁶² That is the reason why it is strictly prohibited to beat cattle, scold or curse them. In particular it is prohibited to hit a horse's head, which may not occur under any circumstances. If such a thing happened, the horse would lose its good fortune (*hiimori* 'wind horse'). The prohibition of hitting a horse is also a manifestation of love and respect on the part of a Mongol for his horse, whom he calls precious gem (*molor erdene*), and also has the practical purpose of protecting the horse and its proper training.⁶³ It is also one way of honouring the horse (*mori deedleh*).⁶⁴

Also pole-lasso (*uurga*) is treated with great respect and should never be stepped on or over. A similar prohibition is connected with other tools associated with the horse, such as reins or bridle. There are lots of taboos (*ceer yos*), for example it is prohibited to dismount the horse at the hitching post (*uyaa*), the place where horses are tied. The host is not supposed to ask the master of the house what the number of his cattle is, and if he does so, the question should not be answered – otherwise the number of cattle will diminish (Tu'dev 2015, pp. 358–380). An important cultural heritage of Mongolia is a wooden saddle, which is significantly different from all other saddles. It is used traditionally and even in tourist areas only tourists receive a different "comfortable" saddle. The Mongol receives his first saddle from his father when his hands can reach the reins and his feet can reach the stirrups. This custom is called 'to prepare a saddle' (*emeel to'hooroh*) and is accompanied by saying a proverb: 'Meet people through your father, get to know the country through your horse' (*Aaviin biid hu'ntei tanilc, agtiin biid gazar uz*).⁶⁵

62) "Tavan hos'uu mal dotroo bas hiimoritoi" (To'mroo, IN 2015).

63) "The horse must not be hit on the head, his rein must not be stepped over. There are many such ways to correctly handle a horse." (*Tas'uuraar tolgoig cohidoggu'i, morinii culbuur deegu'ur alhadaggu'i. Odoo tegeed moriig zo'v edlez' heregleh yanz bu'riin tiim arguud baina aa.* To'mroo, IN 2015).

64) To'mroo, IN 2015.

65) "Aaviin biid hu'ntei tanilc, agtiin biid gazar uz" (S'iirevz'amc 2014, p. 56; Tamir 2011, p. 27).

Also in the Eastern Slovakia many customs related to horses existed. For example just like in Mongolia the horse had prophetic abilities: “One of the specifics of medieval West Slavic, pre-Christian culture between the 10th and 12th century was so-called hippomancy, or telling fortunes by observing the horse and his behaviour” (Dynda 2016, p. 61). It was mainly war hippomancy which was practised in the form of a ceremony during which the horse, dedicated to a deity, stepped over crossed spears. Success in a future military campaign depended upon the way the horse stepped over: whether the horse stepped over spears or tripped on them, or whether it stepped over using the right or left hoof.⁶⁶ Fieldwork conducted in eastern Slovakia revealed a lack of preserved habits, providing further evidence of interruption of oral tradition and a change in lifestyle. Nevertheless, there are a few recorded examples, for example by Dobšínský (as a „superstition”): “*Bury “zier” (worms living in a pile, gathered) in the barn: cattle will stay together at home and on pasture too.*”⁶⁷ *In order to make horses nice and fat: get a rag from a beggar or a hangman and wipe them with it. They burn the killed snake and give the ashes in a second fodder for the cattle to eat it: so that it would not die from the plague or other diseases.*”⁶⁸

Some customs are still being practised, for example the horse is not left out during the celebration of Christmas: “*It is distinctive in our country that the horse is the first livestock, which is rewarded, for example in connection with Christmas Eve. He is the first who is given the goodies from the table, for us basically sacred food.*”⁶⁹ *One custom that has been preserved to this day is spitting on a horseshoe that has been found and throwing it over one’s own head in order to have good luck.*⁷⁰ A horseshoe is also often placed above the

66) See Dynda 2016, pp. 61–85; Váňa 1990, pp. 85–86, 90, 94, 248.

67) Consultant Miklušová describes a similar practice that took place on Christmas Eve. When the dinner was finished, the cutlery had to be immediately picked up, so that the cows remained together and did not wander from the rest of the herd (Miklušová, IN 2015).

68) “*Žier (červy v hrbke, pohromade žijúce) zakop do maštale: bude statok vo vedne držať sa doma i na paši. – By kone boli pekné a tlusté: opatri si handru zo žobráka alebo z obesenca a tou jich utieraj. – Zabitého hada spála a popol dajú v druhom krmu statku zožrať: by na dŕl lebo druhé choroby nekapal*” (Dobšínský 1880, pp. 58–61, 105).

69) “*Čo je aj u nás také príznačné je, že kôň je prvé hospodárske zviera, ktoré odmeňujeme napríklad v súvislosti so Štedrou večerou. Prvému mu podávame tie dobroty zo stola, v podstate posvätené jedlo pre nás*” (Bruss, IN 2016).

70) Miklušová, IN 2014; Bruss, IN 2016. In Mongolia, where shoeing the horse is not so common, this meaning is associated with stirrups. It is mentioned by Rinc’en (1958, p. 165) in the novel Dawn: “... at some taiz’ ancient bronze stirrups with gold and silver damask patterns from the Tang period glittered, which were considered to be “thundery”, i.e. fallen from the sky during a clap of thunder and bringing happiness to those who found them in the steppes.”

door for the same reason. It must be turned in the right direction so that the luck does not fall out.

The horse is treated with respect not only throughout its life but also after its death. In Mongolia to this day the horse's head is always treated with great respect, whether the horse was slaughtered or died: *"The head of the horse cannot be tossed onto an insignificant place, it is placed on an elevated pure, sacred place ... [for example] on owoo, on a willow..."*⁷¹ On sacred sites such as owoo, a pile of rocks, mainly the heads of famous fast horses are deposited.⁷² In Slovakia, a horse who was considered to be a family member used to die an "honourable" death, as described above, and for the same reason there was a taboo on eating horse meat. In the past a horse could protect the dwelling of men if his skull was placed in the wall or in the rampart.

Conclusion

In this paper I tried to describe the relationship between man and horse, which is reflected in almost every aspect of the everyday life of the Mongol, and its description also represents an important part of the world-view of this society. This is undoubtedly true in Mongolia, where the oral tradition is still preserved with the exception of larger cities. In Eastern Slovakia I noted severe disruption of oral tradition, which has led to the disappearance of knowledge about traditional colours of horses, traditional medicine, and many other traditions and customs.

It is clear that nomadic and sedentary culture have many differences. Nevertheless, they have common elements as well, such as naming horses according to the colour or the use of cleansing smoke as a traditional treatment. Mongols have great respect for the horse, which is essential to carry out the everyday work of herdsmen. Respect for the horse is so strong that it does not concern just the horse itself. It is connected also with respect for its owner and with respect for the harness and other similar tools. The horse is admired and receives respect also in Eastern Slovakia, for example on Christmas Eve, when the horse is the first animal, which is offered "sacred" food from the Christmas Eve Supper. But here the relationship between man and horse underwent a significant change after the seventies – while in the past

71) "Aduuni tolgoig hamaagu'i gazart hayadaggu'i, o'ndorlog – cever, ariun gazartavidag... owoon deer, burgas modon deer..." (Luvsandorz', IN 2016).

72) Luvsandorz', IN 2015.

the horse was practically one of the family members and worked as hard as any of them, currently it is a pet. Nevertheless, the horse has been honoured during its life as well as after its death in both of these areas, although in different ways.

It is interesting to notice the role of the horse as a representative element. In Mongolia it is the essential part of all ceremonies of an official and private nature. Although in the Eastern Slovakia such a role belonged to it only in the past, even in this geographical area it is obvious that the horse still is a representative element: *“All the public figures in the history of all nations, even though they did not ride, they get portrayed in the historic squares on horseback.”*⁷³

Another piece of evidence of the great importance of the horse is the increased protection of the horse by man from ordinary and magical diseases: Eastern Slovak horses wear red tassels on their harness, which protects them from the evil eye, Mongolian horses wear “amulets” *seter* and *sayag*. But the horse is not only protected, it also protects. In Slovakia the horse protected the man even after its own death: horse skulls used to be put in the walls and ramparts, while later sculptures of horses heads started to be used instead of skulls. Also in Mongolia the horse represents a protector, for example in the form of the invisible guardian of man, animal or yurt *hiimori*, or in the form of a real live horse with *seter* that protects the herd of the nomad.

List of Consultants and Interviewees

Balog, Juraj, coachman, Petrovce

Bruss, Samuel, horse breeder and trainer, art historian and ethnographer, Pavlovce

Čigán, Miroslav, horse breeder and trainer, Lužany pri Topli

Matis, Jozef, locksmith, Kuková

Mikluš, Imrich, auto mechanic, Prešov, originally from Klenov (from the family of farmers)

Miklušová, Adela, warehouseman, Prešov, originally from Klenov (from the family of farmers)

Miškaňovi, Anton a Ludmila, farmers, Kendice

Mištriková, Jana, a graduate of Hispanic Studies, Štiavnik

Č'adraabal, horseman, Bulgan sum, Bayan-O'lgii aimag,

Gansu'h, horse trainer, Bulgan sum, Bayan-O'lgii aimag,

Interpreter for tourists, Ulaanbaatar (the meeting took place at Hu'isiin Naiman Nuur)

To'mroo, herdsman, Bulgan sum, Bayan-O'lgii aimag,

73) “Všetci svetoví dejatelia v histórii všetkých národov aj napriek tomu že nejazdili, sa dávajú zobrazovať na historických námestiach na koni” (Bruss, IN 2016).

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Topography of the Middle world – interpretation of some of the descriptive techniques in the Sakha heroic epic – *olonkho*

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Summary: This paper is a study of descriptive tools used by a singer of the Sakha (Yakut) heroic epic (*olonkho*), using the methods of textual semiology invented by Y. Lotman. The epic here is studied through its topography, i.e. setting of the stage, creation, depiction and delimitation of the Middle world. Analysed material is mainly based on Karataev's *Modun Er Soghotox*, with examples from other classical *olonkhos*.

Introduction

The aim of the following text is to present some descriptive methods used for depiction of the Middle world in Sakha heroic epic. Sakha heroic epic, known under the emic term *olonkho*¹, is an important part of the Sakha culture. *Olonkho* is often a source for research in various fields, especially those dealing with the archaic strata of the Sakha language, history or ethnogenesis.²

In this paper, I understand the term “*olonkho*” as a synonym for “heroic epic”, with a significant contextual setting within the system of Sakha folklore. W. Sieroszewski, one of the first researchers into *olonkho*, defined *olonkho* in a similar manner. He described *olonkho* as a folklore genre standing in opposition to other Sakha genres, namely *kepseen*, *seheen* and *ostuoruja* (Sieroszewski 1900, p. 366). *Olonkho* has numerous storylines and hundreds of documented versions from the past three centuries (Govorov 2010, pp. 8–10). In this article, I have chosen the *olonkho Modun Er Soghotox* as a representative. The reason for this choice is that the storyline about the main hero *Er Soghotox* was one of the first *olonkhos* ever written down and is therefore the best one to examine. *Er Soghotox* also has links to a cycle of legends concerning the Sakha hero Ellej,³ considered to be the ancestor and founder of

1) Common transcription of the original Sakha term *olongox*.

2) See for example works of P. Ojuunskaj or E. K. Pekarski.

3) *Er Soghotox* and Ellej are just different names for the same hero (see also Vlasák, 2016, pp. 23–25).

Sakha culture (Ksenofontov 1977, p 16–17). The version I am working with is the *olonkho Modun Er Soghotox* recorded and edited by V.V. Illarionov from a famous *olonkhohut* V.O. Karataev (Karataev, Illarionov 1996). Throughout the text, I will compare Karataev's *olonkho* with excerpts from *Müldžü Böghö, Dyyraj Bergen* and from *Üölen kyyrdžyt olongxo*.

Topography plays an important role in *olonkho*. The macrocosm of *olonkho* consists of three worlds (the Upper, Middle and Lower world) whose mutual balance is maintained by oppositions between them. This harmony is first disrupted, and only then re-established by a hero during his journeys between the worlds. Such a structure is present in all *olonkhos* I have encountered. The narrative is dependent on the relations between its semantic spaces: each world is one such semantic space (or semiosphere), separated from the others (and in the same time connected) by borders. For this reason, I found the thoughts of Y. M. Lotman the most suitable for my own analysis (Lotman 1990).

The description of the Middle world consists of two main parts: the world is at first described through its creation and then it is delimited by boundaries (seas and rocks).

In the first part, the perspective is set, from which the story is told. *Olongxohut*, the singer of *olonkho*, makes it clear that the *mythical aspect* is providing the perspective from which we should understand the story. *Mythical*, according to Lotman, is such a text, which shapes the whole cosmos. It is therefore ahistorical, because it does not describe any given episode of reality, but is instead interested only in 'pure natures' (Lotman 1990, p. 243).

In the second part the early world is fortified, braced and bounded, so it is secured from within as well as from without.

Most of the features of the Middle World are usually described in the first part of *olonkho* (in *Modun Er Soghotox* the first 230 verses).

Setting a stage for the narrative

At first, the *olongxohut* needs to set a stage for the narrative. The perspective of the *olonkho* narrative is always based in the Middle world. Although heroes may have mixed origin⁴, their home is in the Middle world. Heroes

4) For the hero of *olonkho* to have parents from different worlds reflects his nature as a liminal being (see Vlasák 2016, pp. 51–56).

protect Middle world, from which they rush out and to which they return. This perspective is already set out in the introduction to *olonkho*, which usually begins with a hymn to the Middle world.

From a few examples given below, the perspective from which the story is told is clearly and repeatedly stated. *Olongxohut*, the story-teller of *olonkho*, unambiguously describes the story from the point of view of humankind, in particular from that of the Sakha.

***Illud tempus* – Description of the world through its creation**

The Middle World is the world of the humans, who in the *olonkho* language are represented mainly by Sakha (also Saxa-Uraangxaj). Already in the first verses we meet the Sakha who, however, do not have their culture yet.

20	<i>Күһү аймабым</i>	My human kind
21	<i>Кэпсэтэн билсэ илигинэ,</i>	Not talking to each other, not meeting each other yet,
22	<i>Саха аймабым</i>	My Sakha people ⁵
23	<i>Санарсан дьааһыйа илигинэ,</i>	Not opening their mouths yet,
24	<i>Ураанхай сахам,</i>	My <i>Uraangxaj</i> Sakha,
25	<i>Ураһа соннообум,</i>	(in) coats (like) <i>uraha</i> , ⁶
26	<i>Уу ньамаан тыллаабым,</i>	With tongues like seaweed,
27	<i>Уһаты уллунахтаабым,</i>	With long steps
28	<i>Утарыта көрсөн,</i>	While meeting each other,
29	<i>Ол-бу дии илигинэ,</i>	Were not talking about this or that,

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p. 76)⁵⁶

This fragment provides us with an example of placing the perspective in time, from which we will follow the narrative. The perspective is *in illo tempore* – in ahistorical time, in the time, during which the world is still in the process of creation, or in other words in the “*narrative about origin*” (Eliade’s attitude as interpreted by Ricoeur 1990, pp. 6–11).

5) Traditional Sakha summer house.

6) *Ajmax* is literally “kinship” or a family in a broader sense.

Lotman literally says: “to explain a phenomenon is to explain its origin” (Lotman 1990, p. 244). The beginning is thus important as a means of helping us to characterise the semantic space of *olonkho*. The Middle world is defined in the moments of its creation. That is why we will be often encountering verbs like *üüner* “to grow”, *ajyyr* “to create” or *kiirer* “to make”. For the understanding of the narrative, it is not as important *who* made the world, as is the fact, that we are in the moment of creation, when the world is not yet fully *striated*.

The metaphorical description of space as a horse

As I have mentioned earlier, the description of the Middle world is mostly given in the first verses. On the following pages, I will comment on some of those verses, which may serve as a representative example of such a description (verses 138–235). The verses follow a description of the creation of the Middle world. Their main topic is the future homeland of Er Soghotox:

138	<i>Манных бэйэлээх</i>	With such a body
139	<i>Аан ийэ дойдум</i>	My mother world
140	<i>Улай киинигэр</i>	In the very centre ⁷
141	<i>Аан дойду кэдэйр снэ,</i>	(of) the bent spine of the world,
142	<i>Дьогдойор саала буоллун</i> <i>диэннэр.</i>	Its high withers ⁸ have appeared, they say.

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p.82)

Beje in verse 138 has similar semantic extension as it has in other related languages (Mongolian or Manchu). Therefore, it may in this case refer to “a form” or “a shape”, rather than to “a body”⁹.

While describing space, *olonkho* uses a metaphor similar to the one describing time. Space is depicted as a horse. It has *kedejer sihe* “a bent spine” and *džogdojor saala* “high withers”. The horse’s withers here stands for a high

7) I translate this verse “In the very centre”, following Karataev’s explanation. The word *ulaj* does not have suitable lexical meaning applicable to the translation.

8) The literal meaning of *saal* is “the fat behind the horses neck”, therefore in the context of the following verses, I consider *saal* to be an anatomical metaphor for a spot corresponding with “withers”.

9) *Beje* will later be used also with the meaning “self; itself”. This is a form of usage common for Mongolian and Manchu as well.

spot (in the middle of an *alaas*, as we will see later), from which the story that follows is being told.

This spot is a key for understanding descriptive topography, and is also referred to here as *ulaj kiin* “the very centre”, the base for the *olongxohut*'s perspective.

***Alaas* as a microcosm**

The following verses 143–150 differ from the description given so far. On the one hand, they provide a *pars pro toto* description which depicts the Middle world as an *alaas*¹⁰, a home of the story-teller, similar to a “real world”. On the other hand, this description also sets the story into the mythical context by hyperbolic means, as we will see in the next chapter.

143	<i>Уордаах мохсоболум</i>	(At the place, which) my ferocious falcon
144	<i>Отут хонон</i>	In thirty days and nights
145	<i>Уоруйан-туоруйан</i>	From his last breath
146	<i>Унургуу дьоргул хара тыатын</i>	In the direction of the high, black ¹¹ forest
147	<i>Кыайан туттубатах</i>	Could not reach
148	<i>Урсун дуолай</i>	(Just ¹² like) a shadow ¹²
149	<i>Улуу тумарык</i>	In a great fog ¹³
150	<i>Алаас олобурбут эбит.</i>	The <i>alaas</i> was placed.
151	<i>(Нoo!)</i>	(Noo!)

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p.82)

10) *Alaas* is a depression with a small lake in the middle. They are often inhabited by Sakhas, especially in the central parts of Sakhaia.

11) Karataev explains the verse 146 as “high, deep (*dremučij*) forest”. *Džorgul* may be related to *džorghono* “high game”, but I decided to leave *xara* in its primary meaning “black”, which reflects the modality of a “deep, impassable forest” in English as well (Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p.381)

12) *Duolaj* literally means “completely”, in the context of the verse, translation “just” seems to be more appropriate.

13) Note the similarity of *ursun duolaj* to *Arsan Duolaj*, the ruler of the underground ghosts.

14) *Tumaryk* is related to Russian *tuman*, loanword again from other Turkic languages.

An important feature of this description is the usage of a first person possessive suffix, which transfers *olongxohut* into the space of *olonkho* as a direct witness. *Alaas* so huge, that not even a flying falcon can reach its edge in thirty days, will become the home world of Er Sogotox and the perspective of the whole narrative. Because of the usually relatively small expanse of *alaases*, verses 143–146 can be considered hyperbolic. Hyperbole is a common technique, especially in descriptions of heroes and their battles, as in the case of Mongolian epics (Kočková 2009, p.32).

There is an interesting correlation between *ursun duolaj* “like a shadow” or “the very shadow” and the name of the ruler of *abaahy* (the inhabitants of the lower world), *Arsan Duolaj*.

Hyperbolic means for setting the perspective

The usage of hyperbole helps the *olongxohut* to separate the world of *olonkho* from “ordinary” reality, as well as from the reality of historical tales. According to Yuri Lotman, we may distinguish two aspects of a narrative: “One, by which we model the whole universe, may be called *the mythological aspect* and the second, reflecting any episode of reality, *the fabulating aspect*.” (Lotman 1990, p.243, my translation). By creating such an absurd reality in a narrative (for example a reality, in which one may travel thousands of kilometres through a single valley), the *olongxohut* separates himself from historicity and enters mythical time, as we see in the following verses:

151	Бу алаас эбэ хотуммун	This lady, my grandmother <i>alaas</i>
152	Эргийэр кишинигэр,	By turning around in her centre
153	Кэдэйэр саалыгар	On her mount withers
154	Киирэн эрэ тураммын,	I have come and stood
155	Тизэрсэс харахынан	By my round eyes
156	Көрөн дьэргэлдьиттэхпинэ,	I have been watching, shivering,
157	Тэргэн кулгаахпынан	By my big ears
158	Истэн сэргэлдьиттэхпинэ,	I have heard, shaking,
159	Арбаа диэки өттүн	Towards the west
160	Эргитэ көрөн кээспитим,	I have turned and I saw,

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, pp.82–84)

A world placed in front of the reader is manifested in a strange double epic/mythical time. On the one hand, in the first twenty-six verses, we are placed, as a public, into primordial time without culture, into the world which has just been created and which is still in the process of growing, expanding and being constituted. On the other hand, we are part of that same time through a story-teller, who is standing in the centre of the world and describes the world as he is turning around.

View from the centre

Olongxohut's description of a landscape of the *alaas* in the following verses correlates with the macroscopic description. Standing in the centre and turning in the four directions, the *olongxohut* defines the space in which the story will be taking place. It is significant that he begins with description of the forests, which serve as a natural barrier of *alaas* and only then does he follow with the description of the inner parts.

138	<i>Арабас сьлгьм</i>	A black forest cleft
139	<i>Арбаһын түүтүн</i>	Sticking out
140	<i>Адаарыччы тунпут курдук,</i>	(Like) my yellow horse's
141	<i>Ардай хара тыалар</i>	Fur on its back
142	<i>Арытыалаан үүнэн</i> <i>киирбиттэр эбит.</i>	They have created, it seems.
143	<i>Хоту өттүн</i>	In the northern direction
144	<i>Эргитэ көрөн кээспитим,</i>	I have looked and I saw,
145	<i>Куба көтөрүм</i>	Dark dry woods
146	<i>Хотобойум түүтүн</i>	Tightly planted out
147	<i>Холбуу тунпут курдук</i>	Like my swan's
148	<i>Хохудал хара тыалар</i>	Feathers
149	<i>Хойдон үүнэн киирбиттэр</i> <i>эбит.</i>	They have created them thickly, it seems.
150	<i>(Нoo!)</i>	(Noo!)
151	<i>Илин өттүн</i>	In the eastern direction
152	<i>Эргитэ көрөн кээспитим,</i>	I have turned and I saw
153	<i>Эрдэбэс көтөрүм</i>	Dark round woods
154	<i>Түөһүн түүтүн</i>	Planted close to each other
155	<i>Кэккэлэччи тунпут курдук</i>	Like feathers
156	<i>Эргис хара тыалар</i>	On the breast of a grouse ¹⁵

- 157 *Эргийэ үүнэн киирбиттэр эбит.* They have created rotating, it seems.
- 158 *Собуруу өттүн* Into the southern direction
- 159 *Эргитэ көрөн кээспитим,* I have turned and I saw
- 160 *Сур сылгым* Early¹⁶ dark woods
- 161 *Сургууньябын түүтүн* Extended
- 162 *Субуруучу тунпут курдук* Like fur under the belly
- 163 *Суһал хара тыалар* Of my grey horse
- 164 *Субуруһан үүнэн киирбиттэр эбит.* They created standing in a row, it seems.
- 165 *(Нoo!)* (Noo!)

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p.84)

The previous view is purely centralistic, as was mentioned in verse 140, when *olongxohut* established a perspective from *ulaj kiin* “the very centre”. The verbal phrase *үйнен киирер* “to make (and) create” is worth noticing. Although the creators themselves are not named here, they are probably *ajyy*, the beings (or deities) inhabiting the Upper world. *Aj-* is a verbal root meaning “to create” (synonymous to *үйн-* used in the text).

The *olongxohut* delimits *alaas* by turning around and describing the barriers (the dark woods). The same technique is used in the next illustration of the topography of the Middle world.

Defining the world

Macrocosm- the borders and braces

In the following chapter, I will interpret the description of the borders of the Middle world. Because the Middle world tends to expand (verses 72–79) it is encircled and enclosed by rocks and seas.

- 42 *Туруу чобой хара буорум* Standing straight, my black earth
- 43 *Туруу дьаанынан тулаланан,* Encircled by standing cliffs
- 44 *Араат байбалынан арбастанан,* By stormy *Araat* sea

15) Lit.: “black-billed capercaillie”, *Tetrao urogalloides* in Latin.

16) A lexical meaning of the word *suhал* is “fast, urgent”. The word’s meaning is subject to the alliterated whole and I therefore decided to translate it as “early” following the context.

45	<i>Уолбат муоранан улабаланан</i> [испит],	Edged by the never drying sea
46	<i>Сэттэ иилээх-сабалаах,</i>	With seven perimeters
47	<i>Сэттэ биттэхтээх</i>	With seven bars
48	<i>Сир ийэ-аан дойдум</i>	My mother world
49	<i>Сити курдук үөскээн испит</i> <i>эбит.</i>	Was created in such a manner, is heard.
50	<i>(Нoo!)</i>	(Noo!)

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p.78)

The only sea mentioned by name in the *olonkho Modun Er Soghotox* is the *Araat bajghal*, with the attribute *arghastanan*. *Arghastaa-* is a verbal root derived from the word *arghas* “hill; dome; convexity”, probably a metaphor referring to waves on the stormy sea. However, there may be also a kind of secondary etymological reference to the word *arghaa*, meaning “beyond; (the side, which is) behind something” or “west; western direction”. *Araat* is often set in a westerly direction. Its name seems to be formed by means of alliteration. However, P. Ojuunskaj also claims a connection with the Aral Sea.¹⁷

Although *Araat bajghal* is the most commonly mentioned sea, there are more seas described in other *olonkhos*. For example, *olonkho Dyyraj Bergen* mentions the following four: *Bukkullar muora*, *Džakkyllar muora*, *Ergiller itii muora* and *Orgujar uluu muora* (NoxSOROV 2009, p. 23).

We can find a similar depiction in *olonkho Müldžü Böghö*, by D. Govorov:

17) В большинстве случаев в «олонхо» упоминается, что на среднем мире, на его западной части находится «Араат байбал» или «Арылы байбал». «Араат» и «Арылы» – одно и то же море; одно должно означать, без сомнения, Аральское море. Следовательно, средний мир должен был находиться на востоке или в северо-восточном направлении от Аральского моря. “In most cases “olongxo” recalls that in the middle world, in its western part, is situated “Araat bajghal” or “Aryly bajghal”. “Araat” and “Aryly” are one and the same sea, which should indicate, without doubt, the Aral Sea. Middle world should be therefore located at the east or northeast of the Aral Sea.” (Ojuunskaj 2016 [1962], pp. 128–194, my translation). Ojuunskaj is one of the most influential representatives of a historical attitude towards the study of *olonkho*. He considered the Middle world to be an ancient homeland of Sakhas (Ibid.).

18) The usage of the sociative suffix here is most likely a subject to rhyme and rhythm. The Russian translation ignores the suffix altogether and translate the verses with an ablative (“from the west” etc.).

19) Translator of the *olonkho Müldžü Böghö* E. S. Sidorov refers in a footnote to the form *Tebii*, which may be related to *tebier* “to shake, to tremble” (Pekarski 1959, pp. 2608–2609)

38	<i>Аллара көрөн кэбистэххэ:</i>	When looking down:
39	<i>Араат муора арбаалаах,</i>	With ¹⁸ the western sea Araat,
40	<i>Тибиик муора сиксиктээх,</i>	With the corner sea Tibiik, ¹⁹
41	<i>Итии муора эркиннээх,</i>	With hot sea (like a wall),
42	<i>Дуранг муора тулалаах,</i>	With surrounding Durang ²⁰ sea,
43	<i>Диринг байбал түгэхтээх,</i>	With a deep lake ²¹ on the bottom,

(Govorov 2010, p.22)

As we can see, all the names of the seas are derived from their most distinctive features: hot, deep or shaking. In my opinion the word *araat* itself is closely related with the west, *arghaa*, with which it always stands in alliterative pairs. Karataev's *olonkho* is silent about the names of the other seas. On the other hand, some verses later in the text mention more of them:

105	<i>Сэттэ иилээх-сабалаах,</i>	With seven lateral supports
105	<i>Сэттэ биттэхтээх</i>	With seven braces
106	<i>Сир ийэ аан дойдубун</i>	My mother world
107	<i>Сэттэ сиикэй муоранан сиксиктээннэр</i>	(With) a wet sea in seven corners
108	<i>Ситэрэн-ханаран испиттэр эбит; (Нoo!)</i>	They have done, they finished, they heard. (Noo!)
109	<i>Тобус иилээх-сабалаах</i>	With nine lateral perimeters
110	<i>Тобус биттэхтээх</i>	With nine braces
111	<i>Тобус тонмот муора улабалаах</i>	With nine never-freezing seas on the edge
112	<i>Туруу човой хара буорбун сол курдук</i>	Like my straight standing black earth
113	<i>Туруоран испиттэр эбит. (Нoo!)</i>	Was built, they heard. (Noo!)

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, p.78)

20) Sidorov translates *durang* here as “stormy” (*burnyj*) and interestingly enough, a few verses later he leaves *Durang* as a name of the sea without translation (verse 72). It may be another case of subordination of a meaning to alliteration and rhythm (*diring* “deep”, in the next verse).

21) The semantic range of the word *bajghal* ranges from “lake” to “sea; ocean” and is synonymous with *tuora*, a loan word from the Russian *more* (“sea”).

The numbers for seas and braces surrounding the world are again subject to alliteration. I consider these inconsistent numbers, when describing topography, to be a metaphorical expression of plurality. There are never less than seven perimeters (*sette iileex-saghalaax*) but there can also be eight or nine. There are many of them, but the number is always specified.

An analogous representation of seas encircling the Middle world and of a certain number of braces and girts is also incorporated into following verses of *olonkhohut* Воцоох:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 160 | <i>Түүрт уон төгүүрүйэр муора түгэхтэнэн,</i> | Forty round seas on the bottom, |
| 161 | <i>Сэттэ уон эргичийэр байбал биттэхтэнэн</i> | Supported by seventy rotating seas, |
| 162 | <i>Абыс уон ааһар байбал алыннанан</i> | Eighty flowing seas underneath |
| 163 | <i>Сүүс сиикэй муора сүрүннэнэн</i> | (In the) bed of a hundred wet seas |
| 164 | <i>Үөскээн-төрөөн үөскүүр күнүгэр</i> | In the day of creation |
| 165 | <i>Сымара таас хайа сыттыктанан,</i> | Underlaid with granite mountain, |
| 166 | <i>Буор хайа муннуктанан,</i> | Earthen mountain in the corners, |
| 167 | <i>Таас хайа дьайыннанан</i> | Stone mountain on the sides |
| 168 | <i>Орто туруу дойдум</i> | My world, standing in the middle |

(Поров-Воцоох 2007, p.16)

Here as well, the numbers are closely dependent on alliteration. Another important feature of descriptive passages is the need to support or to brace the newly created world. While the description of the seas and mountains was defining the space from without, it is necessary to support it from within. After *sette iileex- saghalaax* “with seven perimeters” comes *sette bittexteex* “with seven braces”:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 50 | <i>Бу</i> | This |
| 51 | <i>Сир ийэ аан дойдубун</i> | My mother-world |
| 52 | <i>Силихинэн силбиэһиннэнэнэр,</i> | Bound up with roots, |
| 53 | <i>Отунан оскуомалааннар,</i> | Nailed down by grass, |
| 54 | <i>Маһынан бааччийаннар,</i> | Entangled with trees, |

Verses 37 and 38 mentioned the indestructibility of the Middle world. Here, verses 50–54 secure the world, bind and keep together. *Olongxohut* secured the Earth with vegetation. In the following verses, he will secure the sky. I have decided to include a description of the sky in the Middle world, because its function here is to demarcate the Middle world in the same way as the seas and mountains did.

72	<i>Кистэлэнэ биллибэт</i>	Unknown secret
73	<i>Кинкиниир кизнхаллааммын</i>	Wide rumbling sky
74	<i>Үллэн-тохтон түһүү диэннэр,</i>	Will upheave, overflow and fall, they say,
75	<i>Үргэл тойонунан өһүөлээбиттэр,</i>	(And so) they supported it by Pleiades <i>tojon</i> ,
76	<i>Бллан-хайдан түһүү диэннэр,</i>	Will burst and fall, they say, ²²
77	<i>Бй тойонунан ытаһалааннар,</i>	(And so) they wedged it with the Moon <i>tojon</i> ,
78	<i>Көллөн-тохтон түһүү диэннэр,</i>	Will stretch, overflow and fall, they say,
79	<i>Күн тойонунан көлөһөлөөннөр,</i>	(And so) they ringed it with the Sun <i>tojon</i> .

(Karataev, Illarionov 1996, P. 78)

Comparing the last two passages, one describing the earth and the other the sky, we may reconstruct the missing motif of the inner tension of the earth. The circumscription and strengthening is present in both parts, although the reason for this is expressed only in the description of the sky.

For instance, the word *xajdar*, which is a passive form of the verbal root *xaj-* “to burst, to rip open” implies the idea of the sky as something inherently unstable, which must be therefore secured. That is why the sky is encircled (the verb *kölöhölöönнөр* is etymologically related to the Russian *koleso* “wheel”) so it wouldn’t extend more. The expression *toxtон түһүү* “will overflow”,²³ also implies the idea of the sky as something liquid and unstable.

22) I was not able to find the relevant meaning for the verb *yllar*. It is most probably a passive form of the verb *ylar* “to take”, but with incomprehensible meaning in the given context.

23) The word *tüher* may have only an auxiliary function, denoting direction downward.

The borders keep the world separated from the outside, but also from its own inside. The world (the earth and the sky) tends to extend, threatening to disrupt the inner structure and to destroy itself.

Conclusion

The description of the Middle world of *olonkho* can be divided into two main phases. In the first phase, the world is described at the moment when it is being created. The second phase deals with the world, which is complete, but which still tends to expand. This new, early world needs to be bound, because it threatens to destroy itself, but it also needs to be separated from outer space. Hence the double function of borders: keeping the inner space intact while protecting it from the outside.

Olongxohut uses various techniques to create the Middle world. He uses hyperbole to point out the mythical aspect of the narrative, while comparing it (the macrocosm/ Middle world) to his home *alaas* (microcosm). The Middle world is surrounded by a varying number of seas, names of which are sometimes provided, but whose function is primarily mythical, not historical.

Such is the nature, or one aspect, of *olonkho* in general: it is ahistorical, not describing any episode in our every-day reality, but modelling a universe (Lotman 1990, p. 243).

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Review Section

**Teleki Krisztina, *Introduction to the Study of Urga's Heritage*,
Ulaanbaatar: Admon 2015, 496 pp.; Hardcover, price: not specified;
ISBN 978-9997307484 – Reviewed by Luboš Bělka**

A new book by Kristina Teleki, entitled *Introduction to the Study of Urga's Heritage*, was published in 2015. Actually, we should not speak of an *introduction*; because in fact it is an exhaustive account a very detailed and solid treatise about the treasures hidden in the Mongolian capital. The book represents an essential handbook for every historian interested in either religious history or the political or general history of Mongolia. We have long waited for this type of book, and thanks to the meticulous work of the author, we now have the opportunity to enjoy it.

The book consists of three parts. The first one, entitled Urga's History, Art and Literacy is devoted to the capital city's history since its establishment until the beginning of the last century, with special regard to religious life. It describes both the destroyed and surviving sacral structures from an urban studies and architectural viewpoint. (Remaining and Destroyed Temples by Districts and the Reopening of Gandan). The part about the recent history of the main Ulaanbaatar temple Gandantegchigling is especially interesting. A very important and valuable portion of this chapter presents personal testimonies; see Reminiscences of Old Monks about City Life in the 1920–1930s. These records give us a plastic image of life in Urga almost one hundred years ago. The author also utilizes works of visitors to Urga in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as A. M. Pozdneev.

The second part – Present-Day Institutes and their Heritage – is a detailed account of the collection of texts located in Urga, as well as of collections of artifacts located in Ulaanbaatar's four main contemporary museums (Bogd Khaan Palace Museum; Chojjin Lama Temple Museum; Fine Arts Zanabazar Museum; Gandantegchenlin). The Collections of Photographs is a particularly successful part of the book, which mentions both the collections made by visitors to Mongolia in the old days, and Ulaanbaatar collections.

The last part of the book, entitled Translations and Analyses of Some Sources, is devoted to the visual representation of Urga, the Colophon of the Urga Kanjur and translations and analyses of some archival documents in the conclusion.

There are a few minor omissions and a few imperfections. First, there is no index. The truth is that such an index would be far too extensive, and that is probably the reason why the author did not include it. One imperfection

is Figure 1 on page 12, which is illegible. The other figures are perfect and some are in colour.

We may mention one more detail about Hans Leder. On p. 248, K. Telki mentions: "...the Austrian Hans Leder visited Mongolia several times (1899/1900, 1902, 1904/1905), but only a couple of photos taken by him are available." In fact H. Leder himself probably did not take any pictures in Mongolia. All the ten photographs in his book *Das geheimnisvolle Tibet: Reise-früchte aus dem geistlichen reiche des Dalai-Lama*, Leipzig: Grieben 1909, were from another, non-specified source (as was customary in that period); none is his own. This has been confirmed by Maria-Katharina Lang: "Unfortunately, no photographs taken by Leder during his travels to the Mongol countryside have survived or are known of (so far)." (See her article: "Zayayn Khüre Revisited: In the Footsteps of Hans Leder", *Bulletin du Musée d'Anthropologie Préhistorique de Monaco*, supplément no. 5, 2016, p. 118).

The principal and invaluable advantage of this book is extraordinarily thorough research work which will be of long-lasting benefit, which is a result of long-lasting extraordinary and thorough research work. Because of this the book will be a jewel in the bookshelf of every historian of Mongolian culture. The book is a continuation of the earlier work of the author – *Monasteries and Temples of Bogdiin Khuree*, Ulaanbaatar: Institute of History, Mongolian Academy of Sciences 2011, 381 pp., and together with hers the present book creates a very solid basis for further research.

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