

2. REAL-LIFE LEGENDS

The legends are a popular genre of prose oral literature. The real-life legends are always complementary expressions of historical events within folk literature. Even though the historical facts are usually adorned with fanciful magic and metaphoric devices, these often later became historical legends. In other words, old sayings are enriched. The old legends can be reminiscences of past feats, legendary deeds, or the origins of the names of mountains, rivers, cities and towns. The themes of real-life legends can be categorized as:

- Ethnographic legends
- Legends of historical places
- Legends of past events
- Narratives of famous people, e.g. wise judges, good men, beautiful women, good horses, and champion wrestlers
- Cultural legends
- Legends of religious events

• ETHNOGRAPHIC LEGENDS

The most ancient legends are the ethnographic legends. These are often about the lineages of clans or tribes, or explorations of their progenitors. The origin-legends of the Mongolian people are linked to Heaven, nature, and soul totems. For instance, there is a legend about a wolf and a fallow-doe, a legend about *Khori-tümed*, and a legend about *Khoridai mergen*. The legend of the wolf and a fallow-doe is one that is shared by all the Mongolian tribes. The legends of *Dobu mergen* and *Alungua* are the legends of specific Mongolian tribes.

THE LEGEND OF ALUNGUA

The sons of Torgoljin were *Duva-sokhor* and *Dobu mergen*. *Duva-sokhor* has a single eye in the middle of his forehead and he could judge the distance three day's journey. One day, *Duva-sokhor* with his younger brother, *Dobu mergen*, ascended Mount *Burkhan-khaldun*. When they were on the top of the mountain, *Duva-sokhor* looked round and saw a band of nomadic people who were approaching the *Tunggelig* stream. *Duva-sokhor* said, "There is a beautiful maiden sitting in the seat of the covered carriage drawn by an ox. If she is not betrothed to any man, let us beg for her hand for you, my brother *Dobu mergen*." He sent his brother *Dobu mergen* for a closer look. *Dobu mergen* reached those people and found a really charming maiden who had won renown and was not yet betrothed to any man. Her name is *Alungua*. She was born from *Bargujin gua*, wife of *Khorilardai mergen* in the *Arig-usun* of the *Hori-tümed* country (the country of *Hori-Buriad*). *Bargujin gua* was the daughter of *Bargudai-mergen*, of the *Bargujin* family, and from a far-away land. This band of people had had a row with their own tribal fellows and separated themselves from them. They then moved to *Burkhan-khaldun* after hearing that the place teemed with game, including sables and squirrels. They wanted to meet *Shanch Bayan-Uriankhai*, who alone established an altar on the top of a mountain. *Alun-*





gua born of Arig-usun, daughters of Khorilardai mergen of the Khoritümed, was beseeched. This was the initial rite of Dobu mergen's marriage. Alungua was married to Dobu mergen and bore him two sons, Bügünüdei and Belgünüdei.

Duva-sokhor, the elder brother, had four sons. Before long Duva-sokhor died. After his death Duva-sokhor's four sons did not claim kinship with their uncle. They instead held him in contempt and moved away. They became the Dürved clan. After this, one day, Dobu mergen climbed up Togotsog Heights to hunt. In a forest he chanced to meet a hunter of the Uriankhai tribe who had killed a sorrel and was roasting its short ribs. Dobu mergen said "Dear fellow, let us share a slice of good luck." The hunter agreed and cut into its head with the pluck and skin of the quarry. Then he took the head with the pluck and skin, and gave Dobu mergen the whole venison. Dobu mergen took the whole venison on the cart and plodded along. He chanced to meet a poor man and his son, who were walking hand-in-hand. He asked, "Who are you?" The old man replied, "I belong to Malig bayagudai. Now I am wretchedly poor. He begged for a piece of venison from the quarry and offered to give his son in reward.

Dobu mergen accepted the offer and cut one piece from the hind leg of the quarry and gave it to the poor man and took his son, Dobu mergen, and made him a servant.

Before long, Dobu mergen died. After his death Alungua was a widow, but she bore three sons. They were named Buha khatagi, Buhatu-salji and Bodonchar-munhag.

Belgünüdei and Bügünüdei, the two sons begotten of Dobu mergen, talked with each other secretly about their mother, Alungua, saying that even though she had no husband she bore

three sons. In this house there was only man, Malig-bayagudai. They must be his sons, they decided. The mother Alungua learned of her sons' surreptitious talk about her.

One spring day, mother Alungua boiled some meat that she had long kept in store. She then made her sons Belgünüdei, Bügünüdei, Bukha khatagi, Buhatu-salji and Bodonchar-munhag sit down in a semi-circle, gave each an arrow, and told them to break it. They broke their single arrows easily. She then bound five arrows together in a bundle and gave it to them to break. The five sons took the five bound arrows and despite the best efforts of each of them, no one could break them.

Then mother Alungua said, "My Belgünüdei and Bügünüdei, you two talked to each other about your mother who has borne these three sons. You questioned the truth about whose sons they are. This doubt is reasonable. Every night a man who looked ghostly in the darkness, sneaked through the tiny crack in the crown of the ger. He caressed my abdomen and his light sank into my womb. Then he slipped out before day light came. He scampered away the same way that guilty dogs do, wagging their tails as they go. Why do you speak with such insolence? It must be evident to all of you that my new sons are the sons of heaven. Why do you compare them to persons of low pedigree? When they become lords of all, then the ordinary people will recognize them." Alungua addressed these words of admonition to her five sons. "You, five sons were born of one womb. If each of you keeps to himself, like those single arrows, anybody shall easily defeat you. If you remain together and unified, then, like the bound arrows, none can vanquish you".

• LEGENDARY NAMES OF PLACES OR RIVERS

The legendary names of places are linked to historical events. For example, there are many names or places in central Mongolia which are mentioned in the Secret History of Mongols. The name of *Mt. Burkhan Khaldun* started including *Tsenkheriin gol*, *khar Zürhenii Khökh nuur*, *Bürig erig*, *Khorhanag Jubur* ancient *Kharkhorum* city, *Khödöö aral*, *Avarga balgas*, *Tuuliin khar shugui*, *Mt. Lakh* (battle place where the battle between *Tayan Khan* from *Naiman* and *Chinggis Qahan* was fought). These names written in the chronicles are still in active usage. These legendary names of places and rivers are connected with local scenery, resources, and places of worship.

Some of them are described as having picturesque shape. The Legend of *Noyon Bogd* and *Khatan Sevrei* of *Umnugobi aimag* (province) and the Legend of *Eej Khairkhan* of *Bayan Tooroi* sum (country) of *Gobi-Altai aimag* have examples of fanciful and picturesque imagination.

THE LEGEND OF MT. EEJ KHAIRKHAN

Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl whose name was *Eej Khairkhan*, which means mother mount. Her beauty illuminated nearby places. But one day *Burkhan buudai khan* from a far country abducted her and took her to his birth place. *Burkhan buudai khan* was fierce and mean, and his subjects were scared of him greatly. After her abduction,

Eej Khairkhan lost her appetite and became sleepless and was gloomy day and night as she yearned for her parents and birth place. So her beauty disappeared and she pined for this distant place.

The *Burkhan buudai khan* organized feasts which he wanted to revive her mood. Because of this feast, people got