



❖ SPRING ENDOWMENT

With the arrival of spring and mild weather, livestock is emancipated, but pasture grass is still usually rare. Animals typically give birth in the spring, however, despite these conditions. This is the busiest and hardest period for livestock breeders. There is the Lunar Month festival which celebrates the passing of winter safe and sound. The spring endowment symbolizes the end of the hardships of winter and the welcoming of a new and favorable season. Our livestock breeders deem it necessary to undertake a ritual that symbolizes that everything in the universe is in coming forth, that the animals are producing their young, and that dairy products are available. They, therefore, perform a ceremony of bird or camel endowment at the end of spring and the beginning of summer. This is the celebration of welcoming an auspicious season after raising young animals well and increasing their animal population.

According to the verses, “Do not go out to see the birds flying away; Do not come in when you see the birds flying back in”, it seems that birds flying away means sadness and birds coming back means happiness. The return of birds is a sign of coming good times. The following verses are recited during the bird endowment ceremony:

*When the white pen comes
When the snow on the mountain melts*

❖ MARE MILKING CEREMONY

The milk libation ceremony is celebrated to greet the warmth of spring and to receive the newborn animals. But at the beginning of summer, the mare’s milking ceremony is performed as a sign of mare’s milk fermentation. Mongolians have a custom to tether their foals and colts on the Tiger Day, at the inception of summer, and release them from their tethers on the Dog Day of autumn. There is a custom to celebrate the occasion of fermenting mare’s milk with a feast, which is held within three days of the tethering. We rejoice with a feast when we release our foals and colts from their tethers in the autumn. Nearby catchers of horses

When the whitish yellow mare gives birth

Plenty of endowments may come

Hurray, Hurray, Hurray

When the swan comes

When drifts of snow thaw

When mares give birth

Fortune of endowments may come

Hurray, Hurray, Hurray

When the cuckoo comes

When the frozen earth thaws

When lambs are released from their tethering-line

The endowments may come

Hurray, Hurray, Hurray

The swan is considered to be a beautiful, lovely, and harmless bird. It is believed that if a swan cries while passing over a *ger* during its journey back in the spring, then that summer will bring happiness and plenty of dairy products.

The verses of the endowment ceremony of the camel are similar to the verses of the bird endowment ceremony. It also symbolically welcomes the warm season and gives blessings to the newborn animals. The verses of the bird endowment ceremony are common among livestock breeders who live around many lakes and rivers and the verses of camel endowment ceremonies are common in the Gobi desert where there are many camels.

gather together when the day of tethering arrives. The most venerated catcher of horses binds an honorable scarf to his lasso pole, catches the first born foal, and then hitches it to the first peg of the tethering-line.

As soon as the tethering of foals and colts is over, the household invites those participants and hosts for a day of feasting mare’s milk fermentation.

After tethering, the household ferments their mare’s milk and preserves it. They also prepare dairy products for the feast of mare’s milk fermentation. Nearby acquaintances, friends, and relatives gather for the feast. Particularly, those