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The Role of Women in the Altaic World

Edited by
Veronika Veit

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Inhalt

Veronika Veit · Bonn	
Zur Einführung	7
Liste der Teilnehmer.....	9
V. M. Alpatov · Moskau	
Female Variant of Japanese	11
Zoya Anayban · Abakan	
The Women of Tuva in the Context of the Transformation Period in Russia	15
Ágnes Birtalan · Budapest	
Ada: A Harmful Female Spirit in the Mongolian Mythology and Folk Belief	19
Elena Boikova · Moskau	
Common-Law Marriage in Pre-Revolutionary Mongolia.....	35
Danuta Chmielowska · Warschau	
The Image of Woman in Turkish Literature in the Second Half of the 20th Century	39
Mihály Dobrovits · Budapest	
Maidens, towers and beasts.....	47
Michael R. Drompp · Memphis	
From Qatun to Refugee: The Taihe Princess among the Uighurs	57
Barbara Frey Näf · Basel	
Compared With the women the ... menfolk have little business of their own.“ – Gender division of labour in the history of the Mongols	69
Marián Gálik · Bratislava	
The Twenty-Fourth Nasreddin? Two Women in Wang Meng's Xinjiang Stories	77
Johannes Gießauf · Graz	
Mulieres Bellatrices oder Apis Argumentosa? Aspekte der Wahrnehmung mongolischer Frauen in abendländischen Quellen des Mittelalters	83
Mark I. Gol'man · Moskau	
The Mongolian Women in the Russian Archives of the XVIIth Century	93
Walther Heissig · Rheinböllen	
Zum Motiv der Hexenverbrennung in der Mongolischen Volksdichtung.....	97
F. G. Hisamitdinova · Ufa	
The Place and Role of the Bashkir Woman in Family and Society: the Present and the Past	99
Peter Kalchofner · Mainz	
Expressing Feminine Gender in Mongolian.....	103
Barbara Kellner-Heinkele · Berlin	
Abu I-Ghazi Bahadur Khan and the Famous and Infamous Women	109
N. Kurpeshko · Kemerovo	
Female Names Shor Textbooks	119

Yuan-Chu Lam · Wellesley A Khotanese Chaste Wife and her Biographer in Yuan China	123
Ruth I. Meserve · Bloomington The Red Witch	131
Junko Miyawaki-Okada · Tokyo The Role of Women in the Imperial Succession of the Nomadic Empire	143
Nina Nazirova · Moskau Traditional Jewelry Decorations of Uighur Women of Eastern Turkestan at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Centuries	151
Nima · Peking Die weiblichen Heiligtümer und ihre historische Funktion	159
Hidehiro Okada · Tokyo The Role of Women in the Erdeni-yin Tobchi: The post-imperial period in particular	173
Tatiana A. Pang · St. Petersburg The Destiny of Qing Taizu Nurhaci's Second Wife Gundai	183
Alessandra Pozzi · Rom Manchu Women of the Early Stage: Fantasy and Reality	189
Elena Remilev-Schlüter · München The Role of Women in the Oirat-Kalmyk Society	199
Volker Rybatzki · Helsinki Female Personal Names in Middle Mongolian Sources	211
Alice Sárközi · Budapest Goddess With the White Parasol! Protect Us!	231
Sečenmönke · Peking The Role of Women in Traditional Mongolian Society	247
A. Senderjav · Bonn Bezeichnungen des Weiblichen im modernen Khalkha-Mongolisch	253
Denis Sinor · Bloomington Some Observations on Women in Early and Medieval Inner Asian History	261
Nina Solntseva · Moskau Kinship Terms and Third Person Pronouns in Mongolian and South-East Asian Languages	269
Giovanni Stary · Venedig Three Manchu Heroines and their „Destiny“ in Qing Historiography	273
Erika Taube · Leipzig Die Frau in der Volksdichtung der Tuwiner im Altai	279
Jakob Taube · Markkleeberg Albasty und das Motiv der Vielbrüstigkeit	293
Edward Tryjarski · Warschau On Turkish Women in a Polish Work of the 17th Century	307
Hartmut Walravens · Berlin A Manchu Gynaecology	319
David C. Wright · Calgary The Political and Military Power of Kitan Empress Dowagers	325

Ada: A Harmful Female Spirit in the Mongolian Mythology and Folk Belief¹

The present paper is a part of a larger study dealing with the concept of the demonic in the Mongolian mythology and folk belief, folk religion, on the basis of different sources: such as aetiological myths (Mong. *domoy*), different ritual texts (Mong. *maytayal* “praise”, *iriüger/iriügel* “benediction”, *sang* “incense offering”, *dalahy-a* “beckoning”, “libation” *saëuli* etc.), shamanic texts (e.g.: “invocations, incantations, chants” Mong. *dayudlay-a*, *tamalaya* “prayers” *jalbaril*, *dayadqal*, “curses” *jüikel*, *qariyal* etc.), epic tales (Mong. *tuuli*¹), tales (Mong. *üliger*), materials, notes of travellers (P. S. Pallas, B. Bergman, N. Nefed’ev, P. Smirnov, I. A. Žiteckij, G. N. Potanin, Bálint G., etc.) and later studies of 19-20th centuries scholars (M. N. Hangalov, G. Sanžeev, N. O. Šarakšanova, I. A. Manžigeev, L. Lörincz, N. L. Žukovskaja, S. Ju. Nekljudov, D. Cerensodnom, S. Dulam, etc.).²

Different evil and malevolent phenomena such as: *aada*, *aliban*, *anaaxai*, *booxoldoi*, *eliye*, *xaluunai*, *kölčün*, *mayu sibayun*, *mangyus simnus*, malevolent *ejed*, *jayayači*, *noyad*, *qad*, *tenggeri*³ etc. belong to the notion of “demonic” in the Mongolian concept of the world. Certain names of evil, malevolent phenomena figure in most cases as a general designation for a group of spirits, and only in particular cases denote individual characteristics, mostly in the origin stories of the spirits, in aetiological myths. In the very near future we propose to prepare a thorough study, devoted to demonic phenomena on the basis of the above mentioned textual materials and on new fieldwork data, collected by the Hungarian-Mongolian Joint Expedition, researching Western- and Northern-Mongolian dialects, custom- and folklore-materials.⁴ As a starting point for our investigation, and the further systematisation, we suggest the following framework.

1. Terminological problems (including linguistical aspects, evidences) *i.* the meaning of the terms denoting demonic phenomena, name change of spirits; *ii.* contextual use of the terms; *iii.* diachronic aspects: etymological evidences, semantical changes in the names; *iv.* synchronic aspects: spirits’ names in the contemporary language usage.
2. Original religious background of the demonic phenomena: Prebuddhist religions, religious concepts [animistic, shamanistic concept, different worships]; Buddhism [Mahâyâna, Vajrayâna], the possible connections to Manicheism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, or to Christianity; syncretism in the origin stories, aetiological myths and other texts.

1 Here we will not deal with the different terminology in different Mongolian languages; we quote only the Written Mongolian data.

2 The study is carried out in the frame of a project of the Hungarian Research Foundation (OTKA T032084).

3 We used either the Written Mongolian or the Khalkha or Buriat forms, according to the frequency of their occurrence.

4 About the activity of the Expedition cf. BIRTALAN, Á., - Sárközi, A., *Hungarian explorers of Mongolia in the twentieth century: A new dialogue between Central Europe and Japan*. Institute for Social Conflict Research, HAS, Budapest The International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto 1997. pp. 119-122.

3. Morphology of demonic phenomena: *i.* anthropomorphic, *ii.* zoomorphic, *iii.* anthropo-zoomorphic, *iv.* amorphic appearance v. appearance in forms of objects; special features (e.g. one-eyed, half-man, haired – hairless, deformed, having special colour, special garment, special smell, visibility – invisibility, audibility – inaudibility, etc.).
4. The place of certain demonic phenomena in the hierarchy of spirits, or in the pantheon: *i.* ruler of a group of spirits, or gods, *ii.* lonely spirit, *iii.* member of a group of spirits, *iv.* messenger type of spirits.
5. The position of certain demonic figures in the Mongolian concept of the world (Upper-, Middle- or Underworld); the distinguished role of *bayumal*-“descended” type of spirits; possibility of moving between the worlds (see above Nr. 4., the messenger type of spirits).
6. Special roles of certain demonic phenomena: *i.* causing illness, causing death, *ii.* harming only a limited group of people, e.g. children, women, travellers, hunters, etc., *iii.* causing specific calamities, misfortune, e.g. *jud*.
7. The possible ambivalence of certain demonic and non-demonic phenomena.
8. Enemies of demons, ways, methods of banishing.

The above listed criteria certainly can not be verified in each spirit category, because of the lack of sufficient data, but they will also be completed with new ones during the process of study.

1. Terminological problems, definitions

For establishing the framework of analysis, the phenomenon *ada* seems to be ideal, because of the relatively rich source and fieldwork material collected on it. Further the designation *ada* includes features of an individual spirit (cf. origin stories), of a group of particular spirits (the group of *ada*-s 7, 13, etc.), and a special category of spirits (according to their role, and morphology, etc., see below). Mongolian *ada* (Written Mongolian and Buriat form), *ad* (in numerous spoken Mongolian languages and dialects) is a complex phenomenon in the Mongolian folk belief system and in Mongolian mythology, showing animistic and Buddhist features as well. This common and general category comprises several types or several characteristics of different minor demonic spirits or spirit-groups.

Before going into the details of the evidences of mythological and folklore texts, some definition on the *ada* will be presented, namely definitions, descriptions of some scholars of the Mongolian ancient belief system. An important part of the terminology is the “survival” of the traditional terms of the ancient belief system. The usage of these terms in Modern Mongolian languages shows semantical preservation and changes, mutation, too, which is fairly interesting in the case of *ada*. Thus some dictionary data will also be mentioned here.

Dorži Banzarov gives a scholarly definition about *ada*. He provides short descriptions of some main demons in the Mongolian belief system (*ada*, *eliye*, *albin*, *kölčin*), emphasising the common characteristics of harmful spirits, rather than giving a real specification. “*Ada* (*ada*) letajut po vozduhu, pugajut čeloveka rasprostranjajut bolezni i vnušajut bešenye

strasti”⁵. He does not mention *ada*’s most common and widespread feature, harming children, but he mentions rarely quoted characteristics, namely the ability to cause madness (which seems to be a dictionary explanation), cf. Mong. *adatu* “possédé du démon; fou, aliéné”, *adalaqu* “être possédé du démon, être obsédé du démon; être en fureur, sévir”⁶. G. Sanžeev deals with *ada* in detail, stressing its harmfulness against children: “Im allgemeinen werden Kinder hauptsächlich von besonderen Geistern = Kinderfressern (*ada anaxā*) überfallen, ...”⁷.

On the basis of his informants’ data M. N. Hangalov compiled the following definitions of *ada*: “By reason of similarity *ada* belongs to the same group of beings as the *muu šubuun*”⁸. There are benevolent and malevolent *ada*-s and they remind us of Russian *domovoj*, which is called in Siberia *susedka* (surely because he is always in the neighbourhood). The Buriats imagine the *ada*-s as a man of small build with a peculiar mouth under its chin. The *ada* could transform itself into a child, a girl, a dog or into a blown blister. If the *ada* becomes a transforming human being, it keeps its mouth hidden with its sleeves, not showing its deformity (Balaghan data). The *ada* has an odd smell, similar to that of the onion. If the *ada* is killed, it transforms into a small beast. ... People are sometimes able to see *ada*, but primarily the shamans see them”⁹. Here is another descriptive definition by Hangalov, including references to the *ada*’s origin: “*Ada* had been a maiden before and became *ada* after her death. The *ada* has a single eye on her forehead and three fingers on her hands. She eats only new-born babies; but as soon as the child grows up and is able to lift his legs, the *ada* will not disturb him any more; she is scared and is not able to eat him up anymore. The *ada* is scared to enter a house where an angry and inflammable person lives, because such a man closes a door banging it. The *ada* is scared to enter together with him, being afraid to be squashed by the door. She enters a house only with a slow and tame person. The *ada* is of a dog’s size; her belly is hairless, absolutely bald. Some other people state that she is similar to a cat. A Buriat man saw an *ada* with bald belly, similar to a dog. The *ada* is very miserly. Therefore, if the owner of the household, where she lives, gives away some food to anybody, the *ada* would not allow it and follows the food. That is why the Buriats avoid taking any food from a household where [they believe] an *ada* lives, being afraid that the *ada* will follow it. (Information of a Buriat man, called Vasilij Ivanov, from Bil’šir county)”¹⁰. Another short reference to *ada* is in the chapter (of volume II) about the man-eater spirits (*Duxi ljuđoedy u burjat*). Hangalov here also mentioned the special group of *ada*-s, which is benevolent (s. below, in the part about Morphology and Ambivalence). As a most characteristic attribute of this spirits’ group, their being man-eaters is mentioned. “Malevolent *ada*-s eat new-born children, that is why the Buriats try to avoid in every way not to let them enter their home.”¹¹ Here Hangalov emphasised that *ada*-s harm children under the age of one year old.

5 BANZAROV, Dorži, *Černaja vera ili šamanstvo u mongolov*. In: *Sobranie sočinenij*. Ed. by D. B. ULYMŽIEV. Ulan-Ude 1997. pp. 46.

6 KOWALEWSKI. I. p. 66.

7 SANŽEEV, G., *Weltanschauung und Schamanismus der Alaren-Burjaten I*. In: *Anthropos* XXII. (1927), pp. 592.

8 About *muu šubuun* (Khal. *muu šuwuu*, Mong. *mayu sibayun*) cf. BIRTALAN, Á., *Die Mythologie der mongolischen Volksreligion*. In: *Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Abteilung. Die alten Kulturvölker*. 34. Lieferung. Ed. by E. SCHMALZRIEDT - H. W. HAUSSIG. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2001.

9 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Sočinenij I*. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel’stvo. 1958. p. 333.

10 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Sočinenij III*. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel’stvo. 1960. p. 41.

11 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Sočinenij II*. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel’stvo. 1959. p. 202.

Manžigeev's findings are similar to the above mentioned characteristics: "Ada is a kind of transforming spirit, causing children's illness and death. According to the Buriat shamanic belief *ada* is invisible and inaudible for most people, but sometimes it becomes visible primarily for the shamans and for children less than three years of age. *Ada* kills children [younger than three years] with her clawed hands. *Ada* appears in a form of a small beast, having an single eye on her forehead, or in a form of a handicapped woman, who covers her mouth with her hand, hiding her bloody mouth and her single tooth. *Ada* lives and even gives birth in dark nooks of the house of her mistress, whom she follows everywhere. *Ada* stays rarely alone at home. *Ada* fears angry, choleric people, they can press her between the door and doorpost with their vigorous movements. If she is killed accidentally, she turns into a piece of old felt, or bone fragments. *Ada* harms not only children, but also adults, spitting on their food before they take it and causing tuberculosis."¹²

In other materials, which only touch lightly on the *ada* problem, scholars also try to give a short determination of the term. J. Partanen wrongly identified *Ataa tengeri*, the ruler of Eastern Heaven with the *ada*, but his general definition on the class of spirits is similar to the previous ones of the Buriat scholars. He (perhaps on the basis of Kowalewski's data) also attributed to them the cause of madness: "... usually one-eyed, evil demon who makes people mad, raging, and erratic; especially harmful to young children. Also benevolent *ada*-s are believed to exist."¹³ On the basis of her own fieldwork and founding on data of other ethnographers (P. P. Batorov, N. Zatopljajev), she determines the *ada* as another name of *anaaxai/anaxai*: "*anaxai* or *ada* is a harmful one-eyed being which is able to transform into small animals, such as frog, cat and dog, etc. *Anaxai* harmed children primarily. He (!) chose an *ulus* for his dwelling, and some households were extremely "beloved" by him. If an *anaxai* settled down in one *ulus*, it was considered as a big trouble, and he could cause harm even in the neighbouring counties. Only children with a strong fate (born under protection of any *tengeri*, such as Buxa noyon baabai or the soul of a powerful shaman) could escape *ada*'s harm."¹⁴

W. Heissig interprets the *ada* as one of the demonic forces, "... which the shamans combat with the aid of the Ongghot they command."¹⁵ He emphasises the following characteristic abilities of *ada*-s: "demons which are thought of as soaring in the sky and which surprise men, spread illnesses and awaken desires."¹⁶ This definition includes one of the characteristics of *ada*-s, such as spreading illness, but without referring to the particular group of people (the children), to whom *ada*-s are extremely harmful. The ability of soaring in the sky and surprising (frightening) people are common features of demonic phenomena and the mentioned "awaking desires" seems to be a Buddhist notion.

A recently finished, detailed study about Mongolian mythology, namely about the mythology of Mongolian folk religion, without touching upon the Lamaic phenomena, has been published by us, where numerous sources have been collected under the entry *ada*.¹⁷

12 MANŽIGEEV, I. A., *Burjatskie šamanističeskie i došamanističeskie terminy*. Izdatel'stvo, Nauka, Moskva 1978, pp. 13-14.

13 PARTANEN, J., *A description of Buriat shamanism*. In: JSFOu 51. (1941) p. 9.

14 BASAEVA, K. D., *Sem'ja i brak u burjat*. Burjatskoe knižnoe izdatel'stvo, Ulan-Ude 1991. p. 179.

15 HEISSIG, W., *The religions of Mongolia*. London-Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980. p. 15.

16 HEISSIG, W., *The religions of Mongolia*. London-Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980. p. 15.

17 BIRTALAN, Á., *Die Mythologie der mongolischen Volksreligion*. In: Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Abteilung. Die alten Kulturvölker. 34. Lieferung. Ed. by E. SCHMALZRIEDT - H. W. HAUSSIG. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2001,

Some linguistic data in support of the term. *Ada* in a *hendiadion* compound appears in early Uigur documents *ada tuda* (cf. Mong. *ada todqar*).¹⁸ The earliest mention of the expression in Mongolian sources is similar to that of the Uighur documents, and with its duplicate (*tülegen* and *qoor*) means evil, harm: "... *ada* *tülegen*-eče *aburan* ..." "saving from harm", and ... *qoor* *ada* *kürgekügü* ... "to cause harm".¹⁹ Concerning the contemporary data, *ada* is commonly used in several contexts: with a sociative suffix it is well known for example in Khalkha and in Inner Mongolian languages: the expression *adtai* for instance means "skilful, smart, capable, etc.". The semantic background, the changes in the meaning, needs further research. As an example of contemporary use see the data in the Appendix I.

2. The origin of the *ada*

The existence, and the origin of the demonic, malevolent forces should be interpreted in the conception of the world of the Mongols, which is based on the tripartite vertical cosmology, consisting of upper world (sky), the human middle world, the underworld.²⁰

upper world
middle world
underworld

However, concerning the human – spirits/demonic spirits relationship, the horizontal dualistic opposition of human and spiritual worlds is more important regardless of the level of the spirits' existence:

human world	realm of spirits
-------------	------------------

The genesis of the *ada* is similar to that of other spirits (both benevolent and malevolent ones): 1. it originates from another world layer as a *bayumal* type of spirits, 2. it originates by soul-transformation of human beings. The first type of origin is usually included in a myth, the second type of origin-story constitutes a part of folk-belief-system and is rooted in animistic conception.

I. G. Sanžeev collected an Alar Buriat aetiological myth about the origin of *ada*, in which she is a particular personified being, the daughter of a malevolent Eastern *tengeri*, the Buumal *tengeri*. According to her mythical origin, *ada* is a typical *buumal* (Khal., Bur., Oir.-Kalm., and in Mong. *bayumal*), in Buriat mythology, a spirit which descended from Heaven (particularly

pp. 879-1097., on p. 936-937.

18 The detailed dictionary material to this expression cf. KARA, G., *Late Mediaval Turkic elements in Mongolian*. In: Silkroad Studies V. Brepols, Turnhout 2001., p. 78.

19 *Monuments Préclassiques* I. XIIIe et XIVe siècles. In: Monumenta Linguae Mongolicae Collecta II. Ed. by L. LIGETI. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó 1972. pp. 40., 43. Quoted also in KARA, G., *Late Mediaval Turkic elements in Mongolian*. In: Silkroad Studies V. Brepols, Turnhout 2001., p. 78.

20 In details cf. BIRTALAN, Á., *Die Mythologie der mongolischen Volksreligion*. In: Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Abteilung. Die alten Kulturvölker. 34. Lieferung. Ed. by E. SCHMALZRIEDT - H. W. HAUSSIG. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2001. pp.879-1097., on pp. 1057-1058., 1061-1065.

from the Eastern Heaven, the realm of malevolent *tengeri-s*)²¹. She climbed down from the Heaven in order to find a husband actually in Tibet. There are several remarkable motifs in the myth:

- 1.1. As we mentioned above, *ada* originates from a non-human world layer, in our case from the upper world, and according to the horizontal division of the sky from the eastern malevolence realm, so her malevolence springs from her background.
- 1.2. She seeks a husband, so she wants to live a full life in Tibet (NB! according to other conceptions, *ada* is a soul-transformation of maidens, who could not marry and bear a child, see below). Tibet appears very often even in Mongolian myths, as a place of a certain type of legitimacy (cf. the mythical cycle about Dayan degereki)²².
- 1.3. Not finding a husband *Ada* seeks a place, in which to settle down: a black cow, a black dog, the rat hole, the remains of a meal, and finally in the children's body. She had to leave the cow and the dog, because wishing to get rid of her, they jumped, the dog barked, the cow mooed. Cf. according to other data, the *ada* is afraid of sudden movements and shouting. The *ada* had to leave all her previous dwellings, because the Western benevolent gods pursued her and other malevolent spirits. It seems, that it was not possible to catch her in the bodies of children.
- 1.4. The *ada* could be pacified only by a powerful shaman (Axan saəan), who first prepared a conciliating stone-offering (*bogol*). However, he could not achieve his aims, because *ada* continued to attack children at night (one could see the marks of her hand (claws) on children's throats. Later in the Eastern Heaven the shaman also tried to annihilate the *ada* by driving pegs into her body.
- 1.5. The myth refers to the fact, that *ada* became "earthly", i. e. unable to return to her home to the upper world, after she left the bodies of the cow and dog, but this motive is not explained. The *ada* had to use the shaman's mount (his horse's tail) to try to return to the Eastern Heaven.
2. According to her origin stories, based upon the animistic belief system of for instance the Buriats, *ada* is a soul-transformation. The not dying, immortal soul of ordinary people, in our case of woman, transforms into an *ada*. Another, probably common, Mongolian notion is that *ada* was a young maid, whose early, untimely death, which prevented her living an a full life, i. e. getting married, bearing children, turned her into a harmful, jealous demon. This kind of origin story of a harmful female spirit is a well-known phenomenon in the world-mythology, too. According to Hangalov's data: "*Ada* had been a maiden before, and became *ada* after her death."²³ Similar material on the origin of *ada* was collected by K. N. Basaeva among the Buriats: women, who are not able to bear children, are considered harmful, and even evil for their community. If such a woman visited the home where a child was born, or the children were small, the family tried to avoid her harmful influence, she was held to have an evil eye and to be able to curse. "After their death, such women's souls transformed into *ada* or *anaaxai*, causing

21 About the *bayumal* cf. BIRTALAN, Á., *Die Mythologie der mongolischen Volksreligion*. In: Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Abteilung. Die alten Kulturvölker. 34. Lieferung. Ed. by E. SCHMALZRIEDT - H. W. HAUSSIG. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2001. pp. 879-1097. on pp. 957-958.

22 BIRTALAN, Á., *Die Mythologie der mongolischen Volksreligion*. In: Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Abteilung. Die alten Kulturvölker. 34. Lieferung. Ed. by E. SCHMALZRIEDT - H. W. HAUSSIG. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2001. pp. 879-1097. on pp. 967-969.

23 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Socinenij*. III. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel'stvo. 1960. p. 41.

only harm and eating small children. That is why women unable to bear children were considered as sinners (*seertei*). When a young maid proposed to marry, elder people told her: *Basagamani ošongüi, xübiüi gargangüi ada boloxoni*. Our daughter will marry, if she does not become an *ada*, not bearing a son! When a young wife gave birth to her first child: *xün boloo, seeree garaa*. She became a human being, got rid of sin."²⁴ According to one of his banishing story Hangalov interprets *ada* as a transformed soul of children. His statement is reasoned by the following: the *ada* called their master and mistress "mother and father". The shaman who also turned into an *ada* could banish them (cf. Enemies, ways, methods of banishing *ada*.)

3. Buddhist context. We tried to distinguish the possible oldest layers (Prebuddhist features) concerning the *ada* in the Mongolian belief system, and using the above-described framework, a kind of systematisation of the accessible material will be presented about the phenomenon *ada*. Here we would not deal with the origin of the numerous *ada*-s of non-Mongolian, of Tibetan origin which belong to different groups of Tibetan demonic phenomena, such as: the *gdon*, the *dreg-pa* and others. In our opinion most of them belong to a belief system which is different from the original Mongolian one, and only the name of *ada* as a collective name has been used to make certain types of demons of Tibetan origin understandable for Mongolian believers.²⁵ The definition and description given by Ch. Bawden, based on Mongolian ritual texts suggest originally foreign expressions, translated with *ada*: "In our manuscripts *ada* appears primarily as the general appellation of the pathogenic agency. ... But *ada* also occurs as an individual provoker of disease, and is not always distinguishable from the spirits mentioned. ... If a sickness occurring on the fifth, does not get better, the outlook is poor, and the continued illness is due to the *ada* of a "dead corpse" – *ükiüksen ükeger ada ebedgeyü*."²⁶

The *ada* appears in different ritual texts as a generalising term for evil forces, in most cases in a *hendiadiuin* compound with the names of other demonic spirits, and malevolent, harmful phenomena, such as *simmus*, *jedker*, *tiidker*, etc. Thus many of the ritual texts had a Tibetan origin, and the expressions containing any demonic phenomena are translations of Tibetan terminology, such as *gdon*, etc.²⁷ In the ritual text the individualisation of the *ada* seems to be fully missing. The *ada* appears usually in two-lines based on *parallelismus membrorum*: in an opposite position to good luck, fortune, friends, etc. cf. some fragments from various text-types:

24 BASAEVA, K. D., *Sem'ja i brak u burjat*. Burjatskoe kniznoe izdatel'stvo, Ulan-Ude 1991. p. 55. Actually the Buriat word *seer* means „taboo, prohibition”, so women, not bearing children were considered as a taboo. Writing about the social status of women, C. HUMPHREY quoted the same data about the origin of the *ada* among the Buriats. HUMPHREY, C., Karl-Marx Collective: *Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983. pp. 69-70.

25 An earlier reference on the connection of Tibetan and Mongolian demonic phenomena is offered by A. SÁRKÖZI, who also quotes the data given by NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ, here we will not deal with this aspects of our topic, cf. SÁRKÖZI, A., *A Mongolian text of exorcism*. In: Shamanism in Eurasia. Part 2. Ed. by M. HOPFÁL. Göttingen. pp. 325-339. A more detailed study on the different groups of *ada*-s see article of A. SÁRKÖZI about *Čayan sikiürtei* in present volume.

26 BAWDEN, CH. R., *Supernatural Elements in Sickness and Death according to Mongol Tradition I*. In: Asia Major VIII. (1960-1961) pp. 215-257, on p. 246.

27 Further examples cf. in Mongolian and Tibetan Pañcaraksa-texts.

Exorcist ritual: *Nüke bögelekü*

ada simmus-tur dariyatu "let me be an obstacle to the evil spirits [or: let me
[*tarnitu*] *boltoyai* have magic spells against the evil spirits]"²⁸

Ritual-text for saddle-thongs offering: *Tanfuy-a-yin sang*

Ada jedker-i qoladqan jayilayuluyad, "Sending far away the demons (*ada* and
jedker),
ayulajayulun, Let (us) meet here our beloved friends,"²⁹

Obô-ritual:

"Allay illness and the hindrances of *ada*- and
jedker-demons; spread the splendour of long
life and joy of felicity;"³⁰

Praise to the čuyur

Ayaru zandan čuyur-iyar Meine Čuyur aus Agar-Sandel
Ayalu tataju küngginel-e. Spiele ich und bringe sie zum klingen.
Arban жүг-ийн ејед-ийд Die Herren der zehn Richtungen
Alaya-ban tašiyad bayasul-a. Klatschen in die Hände und freuen sich.
Ad tüidker qoortan-i Aber die bösen Geister und Teufel
Alan daruyad söniigel-e. Werden vernichtet, besiegt und getötet.³¹

Fragments from the invocation to Odon Jayayan *ingri*:

Emün-e жүг-i ејelegči, kidaγur ba ada The god dominates on the southern
čitküir-i arilyaju, ger erüke-yin yeke bay- direction, banishes the ... and demons,
a-yi qamyalagu ba ger-ийн teјigebüri-yin evils, protects the big and small ones in
*kijig ebedčün-i sergeyilekü ingri ...*³² the family, keeps away the sickness
and disease of cattle ...

28 SÁRKÖZI, A., *A Mongolian text of exorcism*. In: Shamanism in Eurasia. Part 2. Ed. by M. HOPPÁL. Göttingen 1984. pp. 325-339, on p. 328.

29 RINTCHEN, B., *Les matériaux pour l'étude du chamanisme mongol I. Sources littéraires*. (Asiatische Forschungen 3.) Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1959. pp. 47-49.

30 HEISSIG, W., *The religions of Mongolia*. London-Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980. p. 105.

31 HEISSIG, W., *Zur Re-Mythisierung des ostmongolischen Epos*. In: Fragen der mongolischen Heldendichtung V. Vorträge des 6. Epensymposiums des Sonderforschungsbereich 12, Bonn 1988. Ed. by W. HEISSIG. Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1992. pp. 92-112. on the p. 97.

32 QURČABAĞATUR, L., *Mongyol böge mörgül-ийн yeren yisün ingri-yin tuqai*. In: Öbör Mongyol-un Yeke Surayuli-yin Erdem Šinčilegen-ü Setgül. 1987. 1. pp. 75-82. on p. 79.

Banishing ritual:

Doruna-ača iregsen Like devils which
Tudqar čedküir metü. have come from the East.
Emüne-eče iregesen Like demonical fiends which
Ada eliye metü. have come from the South.³³

Exorcist ritual (*Čalm-a tasulqu orosiba*):

... *tačiyangyuy-yin üiles-eče boluγsan: ada todqar-un šijim-(ийн) degesün-i oγtalumui.*
„I cut the string of evil hindrance originating from passionate actions.”³⁴

Texts on amulets:

... *önggörügsen kümün-ü qubčasun-iyar* „[Wenn man ...] mit den Kleidern eines
uriyaju γutul dotara [jegü]besü aman Verstorbenen umwickelt innerhalb der Stiefel
aldaγsan ada ayuli qarun ayuli sakiyu trägt, schützt es vor der Gefahr, das Leben zu
verlieren und den Dämonen ... zu verfallen.”³⁵

3. The morphology of *ada*

Since several different demonic phenomena merged together into the category of *ada*, its appearance shows a great variety.

- 1.1. Zoomorphic appearance: *i.* rodents, such as different types of mice, rats; *ii.* domestic animals, such as dog, cat, or their young; to the zoomorphic appearance belong special features, such as mouse or rat with a single eye in the middle of their forehead, and with a single tooth in their mouth, having strong claws; dog, cat and rodent animal are with hairless belly; and according to some other data *ada* is able to appear in snake form.
- 1.2. Anthropomorphic appearance: *i.* small child, *ii.* woman with a single tooth in her mouth that she covers with her hands, or woman with mouth under her chin; or she is a woman with three fingers on her hands.
- 1.3. Appearance in forms of household goods, objects: the living and even the killed *ada* turns into a piece of old rug, leather, and textile, felt, strange *hapax legomenon* is the blown blister mentioned by Hangalov (see above).
- 1.4. As far as we know there is no amorphic appearance known of the *ada*.

33 HEISSIG, W., *A Mongolian Source to the Lamaist suppression of Shamanism in the seventeenth century*. In: Anthropos 48. (1953) p. 510.

34 SÁRKÖZI, A., *A text of popular religious belief „Cutting off the lasso”*. In: AOH XXXIX (1985), pp. 39-44., on the pp. 43-44.

35 HEISSIG, W., *Ein mongolisches Handbuch für die Herstellung von Schutzamuletten*. In: Tribus 11. (1962). pp. 69-83., o p. 72.

1.5. The gender of the *ada*. Although in the Buddhist iconography and in the folk religious texts there are female, male and even hermaphrodite *ada*-s, we would like to suggest, that this variety of gender is of later, Buddhist origin. As Sanžeev stated in his elaborate work about the Alar Buriat belief system, the soul of a human being has the ability to transform after death into a spirit. According to the life of his former "owner" the soul turns into a *booxoldoi*³⁶ when the deceased was a man, and it turns into an *ada* when the deceased was a woman. Only if the person, regardless of its gender, lived a very meritorious life, is the soul able to transform into a *zayaan* (Bur.), *onggon*, or *ežen* (Bur.), i. e. into a kind of protector spirit of its family, clan, tribe, its community. This duality of the soul-transformation allows us to conclude that the two genders are well represented in such a system, and in all probability the division into the male cf. *booxoldoi* and the female cf. *ada* could be considered as the original system of harmful spirit-transformations. One of Hangalov's stories simply mentions *ada* as "čelovek", without referring to its gender, and uses Russian *on* "he" as a general designation for the term.

1.6. The perceptible qualities of *ada*. The killed or injured *ada* smells like onion. The *ada*-s are invisible and inaudible spirits, only the shamans and the children under three (var.: nine) years of age are able to see and hear them.

4. Place of *ada* in the hierarchy of spirits

The *ada*, similarly to her male counterpart the *booxoldoi* in the oldest layers of the belief system and the numerous *ada*-s of the Buddhist notion, belong to the minor spirits, although a certain *ada qan* is known from the Buddhist folk religious texts and also from the Buddhist iconography.

The aetiological myth about the *ada* explains that she has been the daughter of a malevolent Eastern tenggeri, a single celestial being, whose name - according to the myth - became a designation of a group of spirits, which act malevolently and cause harm similarly to the celestial, individualised *ada*. Later the Buddhist conception deals - as I mentioned before - with a great variety of different harmful spirits. The number, such as: 15, 18 etc. of the *ada*-s, belonging to different groups of spirits, follows the Tibetan tradition.

5. Position of *ada* in the Mongolian concept of world

We find the position of spirits in the Mongolian world concept, whether the spirits (both types, the malevolent and benevolent) originate from the human or from the non-human world layers, especially important. In the case of the *ada* the myth of her origin deals with her celestial origin. The other concept evinces clearly that she comes into being through the metamorphosis of a human soul, namely that of a woman. In the aetiological myth the *ada* lost her ability to journey between the worlds, she was able to return to the upper world

36 BIRTALAN, Á., *Die Mythologie der mongolischen Volksreligion*. In: Wörterbuch der Mythologie I. Abteilung. Die alten Kulturvölker. 34. Lieferung. Ed. by E. SCHMALZRIEDT - H. W. HAUSSIG. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2001. pp. 879-1097., on p. 951.

only following a powerful shaman. The *ada*-s do not show the characteristics of *genius loci* "local spirits, owner spirits" (*eřed, qad, noyad, zayan*), they are not bound to a certain territory or landmark (tree, *oboy-a*, rock, pass, summit, cave, etc.), but they would stay in their owner's dwelling, and they especially "hang" on to food, and also other properties, household goods. If something (first of all food) is given away, the *ada* does not hesitate to follow it. In this matter the *ada*-s become wandering spirits.

6. Special role of *ada*

The most data emphasise that the *ada* is especially harmful for children. But the sources define differently the age under which the *ada* could be harmful. The *ada* could harm young mothers and pregnant women as well. One of the origin stories about her (cf. above 2. The origin of the *ada*) stated that the *ada* was a young girl who died an untimely death. This is a real reason of her jealousy of the children that she was not able to bear. According to Manžigeev's data (in the Buriat shamanic and preshamanic terminological dictionary) the *ada* can harm all the family members, spitting on their food, causing illness thereby. Despite this latter record, the *ada* could be considered as the demonic force harming children (from the new-born infants to one year (var.: age of three, age of nine).

7. Ambivalence

Although a great number of spirit-phenomena in the Mongolian belief system belong to the ambivalent ones, the original notion of *ada* seems to be a harmful and evil force according to most of our sources (see above, the Terminological problems). However, Hangalov mentions a group of benevolent *ada*-s as well.³⁷ In his stories, collected among the Balaghan Buriats the benevolent *ada*-s guard the cattle and all the properties, household goods of their "owner", shouting *manai* "our one". "A newcomer, called Zotoxon from the second clan *Olzoi* (Balaghan province) had seven such *ada*-s. His wife once asked a wrestler, called Bariban-böxö (*böxö* "wrestler") to take a horsehide from the wall of the yurt, but the *ada*-s did not allow Bariban to take it, and fighting with him ripped the hide in half, shouting "it is our one".³⁸ Hangalov mentioned that the so-called benevolent *ada*-s do not "eat" children (children's soul) they look after them. This data - according to the accessible material - is rather curious. We suggest that another group of spirits could hide in the background, the name of which merged with the very common designation of *ada*. According to the numerous other data there are no traces of benevolence or even ambivalence.

37 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Socinenij* I, II. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel'stvo. 1958. pp. 334-335., 1959. p. 202.

38 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Socinenij* I. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel'stvo. 1958. pp. 334-335.

8. The enemies of *ada* and methods of its pacification, suppression, banishing

There are several gods (Mong. *ingri*, *tenggeri*), spirits (Mong. *ongān*) which are considered as very effective ones against the *ada*'s harm which, causing illness or death for children, endangers the future of the clan. Therefore gods and spirits of the family and clan's fate and fertility figure in invocations and sacrificial texts as protectors. The *Ĵayayaci ingri* "Fate god" being the protector of the well-being of the family and its properties, guards the cattle, saves from injury and first of all the members of the family from many kinds of harms.³⁹ E. g. in an offering text for the saddle-thongs (Mong. *yanjuy-a*) the *Ĵayayaci ingri* is invoked to provide plenty of game and also to send away harming forces, among others *ada*-s. However, in this context the *ada* could lose its original character and simply be used as a general term for evil (s. Nr. 3. Morphology. Buddhist context). Hangalov described two stories about banishing *ada*-s. In both stories food and household goods play important roles (cf. the insisting character of *ada*-s on possessions and food). The shamans deceive the *ada*-s with food (cooked meat and milk brandy) in a teapot (*domb*) and suddenly close its top and burn it far away from home. The whole ritual is built round the *ada*'s desire of eating and drinking. In the first story thirteen *ada*-s settled into a house of a rich Buriat, who had three wives, but no children because the *ada*-s ate them all. The shaman Zamxan transformed himself into an *ada*, and got into the teapot with meat and milk brandy, together with other *ada*-s. One of the *ada*-s stood guard while the others were eating, which reminds us of the habit of animals living in groups (cf. rodents, zoomorphic appearance of *ada*-s). When the shaman's turn to guard came, he suddenly closed the teapot and burned the *ada*-s.⁴⁰ In the second story the *ada* (only one!) has been deceived also with meat and milk brandy in a teapot, which has been put in the eastern side of the yurt. A Buriat who lost his children has invited the shamaness Arzut. Four drunken strong men helped the shamaness, who started her ritual outside of the yurt and pulled a long rope (*šidexen*) around the tent, leaving the entrance clear. The *ada* entered the tent, and the shamaness following him (!) closed the door. She started the ritual and seemed to catch something and fight with it. Then the four strong men held her by the hand and cut between her arms with a knife. This way the *ada*, became perceptible and smelled of onion, turned into a rodent without hide.⁴¹ Hangalov mentions the common Inner Asian phenomenon about the protective role of owl and owlet: "The owlet harms *ada*-s and can even kill them. As the *ada* harms mostly children, people keep a living owlet or its skin at home to make the *ada* abandon the yurt."⁴² In his manuscript about the owl in the Mongolian written and oral tradition also he mentions the following: *ada-yin daruly-a* "suppression of *ada*", and emphasises the positive role of owl in the traditional Mongolian belief system.⁴³

39 HEISSIG, W., *The religions of Mongolia*. London-Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980. p. 54-55.

40 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Sočinenij* I. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel'stvo. 1958. p. 333.

41 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Sočinenij* I. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel'stvo. 1958. p. 334.

42 HANGALOV, M. N., *Sobranie Sočinenij* I. Ulan-Ude, Burjatskoe Kniznoe Izdatel'stvo. 1958. p. 333. Further references on the role of the owlet: *An Oirat Ethnogenetic Myth in Written and Oral Traditions (A Case of Oirat Legitimacy)*. In: Acta Orientalia Hung. volume commemorating the 100th birthday of its founder Louis Ligeti. Ed. by A. RÖNA-TAS. To be published in 2002. appr. 30 p.;

43 KÜRELŠA, *Uyuli sibayun sitilge kiged ırsayatan-u domoy* „The worship of owlet and the ethnogenetic myths” (a manuscript).

Conclusions

We suggest that there is a phenomenon of female demonic force, which means danger for the survival of the clan (family), by causing sickness and even death for new-born and small children. This spirit lives in the human world, exists in its owners' dwelling, but even more to his/her possessions which it follows, if they are given away. This spirit originates from *i.* malevolent gods, or *ii.* due the soul transformation of women, who have not lived a full life (have not born children).

From the numerous records about the *ada* we can draw the following conclusions:

1. In the original animistic conception of the Mongols there is a male - female opposition concerning the world, which pertains to the spiritual world, as well and is characteristic of the system of harmful spirits, too. In this system the female *ada* is the opposite of the male *booxoldoi*.
2. There must have existed at least one kind of original female harmful spirit in the Mongolian belief system, but whether it was originally called *ada* or something else, can not be clarified. The designation *ada* is used in the Buriat mythology for an individual harmful spirit of celestial origin. Parallel to this designation the expression *ada* is used for a group of harmful female spirits, harming mainly children, and appearing in a great variety of forms. The syncretic Buddhist religion and chiefly the folk religious practice adopted this expression for different kinds of spirits and groups of spirits, regardless of their gender.

On the example of the *ada*, we wished to show a model of analysis of mythological and folk religious phenomena, which could be used for the profound research of the supposedly original Mongolian mythology and folk religion also influenced by Buddhism. Further connection of *ada* with such spirit-phenomenon as the *albasti* well-known among Turkic peoples must be demonstrated in the future.

Appendix I. Selected dictionary data on *ada*

Written Mongolian data cf. Kowalewski (1. Terminological problems).

Buriat data (W means Western Buriat data):

ada domovoj, bes, zloj duh, nečistaja sila, *ada anaaxai* (ili *baršal*, *todxor*, *šüdxer*) besy, čerti, zlie duhy, nečistaja sila; W *ada boloxo* byt' v t'jagost', nagoedat'; *ada booxoldoi boloxo* pridirat'sja, pristavat'; *ada erligei xiisen* vraž'ja sila; *ada šüdxer xarahandal ugtaxa* vstrečat's nenavist'ju; *ada xoron sedixeltei* zlovrednyj⁴⁴
adalxa W besnovat'jsja, neistovstvotat'; *adalža baihan ada šüdxer* čertovščina⁴⁵

44 ČEREMISOV, *Burjatsko-russkij slovar'* p. 30.

45 ČEREMISOV, *Burjatsko-russkij slovar'* p. 31.

Khalkha data:

ad 1. бага хүүхэд метiin sambaa jali ow jiwteig gaixan xelex üg; *adtai* хүүхэд; 2. busdaas oncgoi etgeed, gažuud; *adtai* xašgırax; *adtai* ineex; 3. muu süg, čötgör *ad* nöxcöx, ad jetger; *ad* üjegdex (xünd šoowdorlogdon dor üjegdex); *ad* üjex (šoodon durgüicex, jewüürxen šoowdorlox); *ad* bolox (xüniig jalxaaḡ durgüi bolgox; bain bain xelseer ad below; ad šood bolox); *ad* nöxcöx (setgel oyuuḡ gaḡıj ewdrex, aaš jan balairan xuwirax)⁴⁶
adtai awxaalḡtai, cowoo sergelen; *adtai* хүүхэд; 2. šurguu; *adtai* šardax⁴⁷
adlax 1. öwčın xürsen xün soliorox; 2. uur xilen töröltei awır jan gargax.⁴⁸

Inner Mongolian languages:

ada kümün-ü bey-e-dü orosıju qoor könögel kürgeḡči geḡü šasintan-u üjedeg nigen čitkü: *a. nököčekü*; 2. ḡajıyü doysın jaḡ: *a.tai* kümün, *a-tai* mori; 3. yerü-eče ončayai: *a.tai* dayulaqu; *a.tai* medekü;⁴⁹

Kalmyk data:

ad Wahnsinn, Verrücktheit; der böse Geist, der den Wahnsinn verursacht; *a. gem* Epilepsie; *adtee*, *attee* vom bösen Geist besessen, Epileptiker, epileptisch⁵⁰

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46 CEWEL, *Mongol xelnii* p. 22.

47 CEWEL, *Mongol xelnii* p. 23.

48 CEWEL, *Mongol xelnii* p. 23.

49 *Mongyol kelen-ü toli* pp. 131-132.

50 RAMSTEDT, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch* p. 1.

- *The religions of Mongolia*. London-Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980.
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