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Ágnes Birtalan

The representation of the Mongolian shaman deity Dayan Deerh in invocations and in a Buddhist scroll painting

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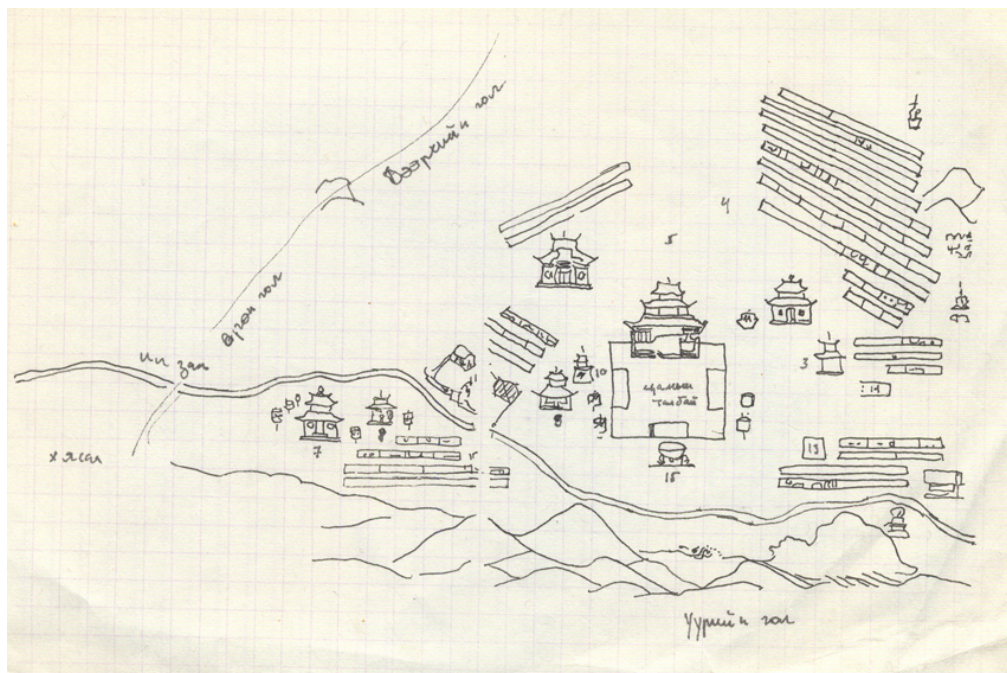
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Ágnes Birtalan

The representation of the Mongolian shaman deity Dayan Deerh in invocations and in a Buddhist scroll painting

- 1 As a member of the Hungarian-Mongolian Expedition for the Research of Dialects and Folk Culture,¹ I have had the chance on several occasions to collect material about the cult of Dayan Deerh² (Mong. Dayan Degereki), perhaps the best-known Mongol shaman deity. Mythological, folkloric and textual material concerning Dayan Deerh have been touched on by several papers, focusing primarily on the deity's myth of origin (Birtalan 2001, pp. 967-969) and on the related ritual texts.³ Interlaced with Dayan Deerh's cult is a fertility rite attached to a cave, in Cagaan Üür district (Hövsgöl province). Also linked to this cult are an initiation rite for yellow shamans (shamans with Buddhized rites) and part of an initiation ritual for black shamans, as well as the worship of the protector the Buddhist doctrine. This complex and manifold cult renders the associated traditions particularly interesting and is detectable in sacred texts of different genres, in myths of origin and legends living on in the oral tradition.
- 2 Similarly to all other deities pacified by and converted to Buddhism, Dayan Deerh has preserved a number of important original characteristics besides its Buddhist attributes, epithets and motifs. He was included as a shaman deity at the Buddhist monastery erected in the location of his former cult, called Deerhiin hural (Rinčen 1979, map Nr. 27, Nr. 100; the informants called it Deerhiin hüree, fig. 1 and fig. 2). The shamans (though only the yellow shamans) were initiated in front of his original statue in the monastery's sanctuary that was devoted to him as late as in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴

Fig. 1. Outlines of the former Deerhiin hüree, the Buddhist monastery dedicated to Dayan Deerh



Drawn after a newspaper article; materials of the Expedition 1998

Fig. 2. The blue silk scarves (*hadag*) offerings commemorate the past at the place of the ruined monastery



Cagaan Üür, Aug. 1998

Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 3 Nowadays, Dayan Deerh is rather popular both among the shamans performing Buddhicized rituals and among the yellow-hat Buddhist monks in Mongolia – foremost those who have been active in and around the former Dayan Deerh monastery.⁵ The majority of ritual texts addressed to Dayan Deerh are Tibetan invocations of the *sādhana* type, listing the invited deities together with their retinues, the associated ritual activities and the ritual and sacrificial objects.⁶ A first group of Mongolian texts among those available to me (most of which I collected myself) conform to the Buddhist text type, presenting the transcendental beings to be invited to the ritual, as well as the sacrifices to be offered to them (Sárközi 2004). On the whole, the second group of texts resemble shaman invocations, and comprise fewer details about the listed deities, spirits, offerings, and requests to be asked.⁷

Types of mythological and visual representations of Dayan Deerh

- 4 Before embarking on the exploration of traditional and Buddhist representations, let me briefly touch upon the question of the rank of Dayan Deerh in pre-Buddhist beliefs, in Buddhism, and in syncretic folk religion. As the title of this paper shows, I regard Dayan Deerh as a deity. Some of the Buddhist features embodied by this figure originate from the traditional belief system (e.g. protector spirits *ongon*). The presumably pre-Buddhist mythological stories, the characters of which are sometimes historical figures (for example Chinggis Khan), ascribe a high social rank to Dayan Deerh; as the possessor of sacral power, he is the rival of the ruler Chinggis Khan himself, even though at the end of each story he surrenders and promises to take care of the destiny of all Mongols.⁸ In myths that display a more marked Buddhist influence, the opponent of Dayan Deerh is the Dalai Lama himself who, like Chinggis Khan, is forced by Dayan Deerh's strength to retreat. As I have already explained in previous papers, the figure of Dayan Deerh is complex just like other spiritual beings or deities canonized by Buddhism. From the tradition surrounding his figure and on the basis of the ritual texts, we can reconstruct several layers of beliefs and religious ideas in which Dayan Deerh and his female counterpart appear as fertility spirits; in addition to this, he is given a role as the forerunner of shamans. As a fertility spirit, his cult is alive at the Dayan Deerh cave (*Deerhiin aguī*) to this day.⁹ He still plays an important role in the initiation of shamans not only in Hövsgöl province

but also in areas populated by Oirats (in Oirat Öörd) and Halh (Khalkha) (Birtalan 1996a, pp. 85-105), and even as far as the neighbouring south Siberian region of Tuva (Kenin-Lopsan 1993). His function in Mongolian Buddhism is clearly revealed by mainly Tibetan sacrificial texts developing intricate rituals around his figure.¹⁰

- 5 In parallel to the oral tradition, the original pre-Buddhist representation of Dayan Deerh, a man-shaped stone figure, played a salient role for believers. Unfortunately, it fell victim to the ideology of the socialist period when attempts were made to eradicate all manifestations of the traditional beliefs (i. e. Pre-Buddhist, animist religious ideas), Buddhism and the syncretic folk religion, causing damage to Mongolian culture. The whereabouts of the statue is unknown, it is said to have disappeared in the 1950s (Galdanova, Zhukovskaya, Ochirova 1984). In the early 1990s, when there was room again for religious beliefs and practice, there was such an ardent need for representation that a new stone statue was erected without knowing the original. It is not known where the old statue used to be located (that was on the territory of the former Deerhiin hüree, the Buddhist monastery of the district), but rather in a former hotel converted into a shrine in the centre of Cagaan Üür district in Hövsgöl province (fig. 3 and fig. 4). A face was drawn on a boulder and a symbolic war helmet of metal was put on its top.

Fig. 3. Dayan Deerh's shrine converted from a hotel room in the centre of Cagaan Üür district



Cagaan Üür, Aug. 1998
Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 6 **Fig. 4. The entrance of the new Dayan Deerh Temple (rebuilt form a former Hotel)**



Cagaan Üür, Aug. 1998

Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 7 The story of the original stone statue appears in sacral texts. The following excerpt gives an account of how the warriors of Chinggis tried to destroy the statue that Dayan Deerh had allegedly turned himself into.

Örgöö goliin [...] adagt Öngön biyee xuwilgaĭ Xürel čuluun ceeĭtee, Xüder čuluun bögstee, Xöšöö čuluu bolon xuwilaxda, Ejen Čingisiin baatruud, “Ergüü teneg goliison tärxiig !” – geed, Egclen urdaas n’ selmeeree, Er čadlaa meden cawčixad Ild selemnii ir enterxed, “Id šid üjüülew” – geed. “Yüriin xereg biš Yoriin muu üjegdel” – geed bucaw.	At the head of [...] the Örgöö river When you transformed your body Into a stone statue Of bronze and stone chest, Hard stone bottom, The warriors of Lord Chinggis said: “[Smash] his unruly, damned skull !” From the front they hit at him With their sabres with full force, Swords and sabres got blunted. “He shows magic power” – they said. “This is no ordinary thing, This is an omen of ill luck !” – they said and left.¹¹
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- 8 In Inner Asia, the pre-Buddhist belief systems were based on animist ideas. One of the most typical manifestations of Mongolian animism and the basis of the religious practice of shamanism is the protective spirit or *ongon*.¹² The *ongon* is a highly complex phenomenon, most importantly for the topic of our paper, the depiction of *ongon* by shamans, using most diverse materials and techniques, constitutes the central piece of their ritual practice (Birtalan 1996b, pp. 28-46). The *ongon* is then preserved in the place of honour of the abode (be it a yurt or a house). Sometimes an *ongon* is placed in nature, and even a natural phenomenon can be designated as the emanation of a protective spirit. Although Dayan Deerh is also venerated as a protective spirit and a shaman-initiating spirit, I had not come across his pre-Buddhist *ongon*-like representation during my research until now.
- 9 But several representations of Dayan Deerh with a Buddhist background are known. They include multi-figural scroll paintings, textile prints of one or three figures (fig. 5), and the statue of Dayan Deerh as a Buddhist dharma-protector war god erected in the cave of the fertility magic. This statue, which we have been fortunate enough to document during our expedition, had already been described and reproduced as a hand drawing in the early 1980s by Galdanova, Žukovskaya and Očirova (1984, pp. 2-3), the co-authors of a study on the cult of Dayan Deerh.

Fig. 5. Nowadays the local lamas spread Dayan Deerh's depiction printed on a piece of textile



Birtalan's possession

- 10 We found the statue in a rather deteriorated state, but it is enjoying extraordinary reverence, as indicated by the blue *hadags* (Mong. *qaday*, Tib. *kha btags*, a sacrificial silk scarf) that covered it almost entirely (fig. 6). It is not easy to describe the statue, as the attributes are missing from its hands and its left one is even broken. It is wearing a war helmet; this detail is also clear on the drawing in the above mentioned study by the three authors. Originally, the statue might also have been the depiction of Beg-tse or a *dalha* (see below for details).

Fig. 6. Dayan Deerh's statue in the cave of fertility magic (Deerhiin agui)

Deerhiin agui, Aug. 1998

Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 11 Several museums and private collectors have drawings or paintings in which the main or only figure is said to be Dayan Deerh. What all of them have in common is that the figure is an equestrian deity whose apparel may include some typical Mongolian garments (primarily the boots). I have briefly reviewed the reproductions of figures which have been identified as Dayan Deerh or another war deity (*Sülde tngri*, *Dayičin tngri*) by researchers and I have compared them to a modern scroll painting documented by our expedition and examined below. The drawing that resembles most closely the main figure in this scroll was published by Walther Heissig (1980, p. 92). The deity appears as a mounted war god with a shamanic feather crown on his head. The two secondary figures were distorted in the reproduction but their position and their outline suggest that they are identical to the figures in the scroll picture presented below. Another picture of a war deity with a feather headdress has been identified as Dayan Deerh by Judit Vinkovics in the catalogue of the Ferenc Hopp Museum's exhibition *Demons and Protectors*.¹³ The picture, dated to the twentieth century, shows three figures with the equestrian deity Dayan Deerh (in the middle) wearing a feather crown, holding attributes in his hand which are also held by the figure in the *Mörön* scroll picture examined below. The two side figures are almost wholly identical to the male and female figures identified as the son and daughter of Dayan Deerh, except for the attribute held in the man's right hand which is an arrow. In the catalogue its identification as Dayan Degereki is question marked, but the feathers arranged in sets of three behind tiny round mirrors confirm that the deity is indeed Dayan Deerh. The geographical area where depictions of Dayan Deerh can be found is not limited to the *Hövsgöl*, and it is known also among the Buryats. A Buryat representation of similar structure has been presented by Gerasimova (1999, fig. 7). In it, Dayan Deerh wears a war helmet adorned with feathers; his mount, his attributes and the secondary figures are also identical to those in the scroll picture. Rinčen (Rintchen 1955, pp. 8-16) has also published the drawing of a figure that he identified as Dayan Deerh, although his main distinguishing attribute, the feather crown, is missing and is replaced by a pointed cap. His armament is similar

to that of the figures discussed so-far, but he has a whip in his hand; there are no secondary figures in the picture, and the background is a monastery entrance.

Fig. 7. The scroll painting of Dayan Deerh in the possession of Galbaabadrah



Mörön, Aug. 1998
Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

Representations of war gods and equestrian deities

- 12 A common feature of Mongolian martial god depictions is that they show various “enemy-defeating” protector deities or *dalha* (Tib. *dgra lha*) who, through their name and partly in their function, demonstrate a Tibetan origin.¹⁴ Their appearance is similar to Mongolian war gods: their accoutrement includes an armour, a helmet, a bow in a bow case, arrows in a quiver, and a sabre or a sword, while their attributes and horse equipment are similar to those of Dayan Deerh. There is a 33.8 cm tall bronze figure labelled “war god” (*Kriegesgottheit*) in the catalogue *Die Mongolen*; it is the largest figure of a group of nine (*Bronzgruppe von neun betrittenen geharnischten Krieger*) and presumably the leader of the *dalha* group as the other members are all smaller (according to the catalogue).¹⁵ The fact that the nine *dalha* share a lot of Dayan Deerh’s armament and horse equipment can be seen even more clearly from a Buryat scroll picture made at the turn of the 19-20th centuries (Baldanžapov 1995, p. 148). In this scroll, the main figure wears a tiger skin bow holder and a sword on the left side, his arrow quiver worn on the right cannot be seen; his horse furniture is adorned with similar tassels to Dayan Deerh’s. His attributes are different: he holds an arrow in his right hand and a demon-catching lasso in his left. Similar *dalha* representations were on display in the Ferenc Hopp Museum’s exhibition entitled *Demons and Protectors* (Vinkovics 2003a, p. 85, 2003b, p. 90).
- 13 The depictions of Dayan Deerh can be compared to those of *goviin lha* (Mong. *gobi-yin lha*, Tib. *’go ba’i lha* or *’go ba’i lha lnga* “five *go ba’i lha*”) and Beg tse (Halh Begj, Tib. Beg tse), which abound in areas populated by Mongols. The function of the *goviin lha* is to protect individuals. It is held by traditional folk religion that the five deities are born together with the person and occupy different parts of his/her body.¹⁶ In their depictions, all of the five *goviin lha* are sat on saddle animals. The female goddess *mo lha*, often in the middle, rides a mule; the four male deities ride horses adorned with harnesses similar to Dayan Deerh’s. The weapons of three of these five deities (*srog lha*, *dgra lha*, *yul lha*) are similar to Dayan Deerh’s: a bow case carried on the left and a quiver for arrows on the right. A *yul lha* has a bow in his right hand and arrow in his left, a *dgra lha* carries an arrow with a ribbon in his right hand and a tether in his left, a *srog lha* has a lance with a pennon in his right hand and his horse’s rein in his left.

Their representation and detailed analysis appeared, among other places, in the aforementioned catalogue of the Ferenc Hopp Museum (Vinkovics 2003b, pp. 90-91) and in a publication of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (Berger, Bartholomew 1995, pp. 228-229). The attributes and appearance of the central figure in the scroll picture analyzed below are similar to those of Tibetan mountain deities as well.

Parallels between the scroll picture of Dayan Deerh from Mörön and the ritual texts

- 14 The photographic documentation of our expedition contains the image of a Buddhist scroll picture featuring Dayan Deerh as a dharma-protecting war god (fig. 7). Here, apart from the Buddhist traits of his representation, he also displays shamanistic attributes such as the feathered headdress. Some auxiliary figures in the picture can be associated with ritual texts and myths associated with Dayan Deerh while others depict the outstanding personages of Buddhist conversion and philosophical teaching, such as Padmasambhava (fig. 8) and Tsong kha pa. In this paper, I compare the items of this multi-figural scroll picture with details of sacrificial texts in Mongolian. The scroll picture is new, and it is owned by the monk Galbaabadrah who lives in the town of Mörön in Hövsgöl province. He commissioned a painter of Buddhist images to make it on the basis of traditional representations¹⁷ for ritual purposes in the shrine he was heading.¹⁸ We recorded three ritual texts addressed to Dayan Deerh in Galbaabadrah's recitation, and we received his permission to photograph the picture kept under glass in a frame in his wooden house.¹⁹

Fig. 8. Padmasambhava's image in the top right corner of the scroll



Cagaan Üür, Aug. 1998
Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 15 Before embarking on the interrelationships between the texts and the picture, I find it necessary to review the main data of earlier text editions. Shamanic texts of various genres addressed to Dayan Deerh were collected by Rinčen (Rintchen 1975, pp. 89-94), translated into French and annotated by Marie-Dominique Even (1988-1989).²⁰ One of the best-known invocations to Dayan Deerh in written literature was published by C. Damdinsüren (Damdinsüring 1959, pp. 127-131) in his collection of *One-hundred Mongolian literary treasures*. Alice Sárközi (2004) compared Damdinsüren's text with an Oirat text variant collected during our expeditions. In his afore mentioned study Róbert Török began to elaborate on the ritual texts in the Tibetan language collected by the expedition (Török 2009). I have examined the aspects of performance, genre and sacred communication of all the Mongolian texts about Dayan Deerh, with detailed philological apparatus, in my unpublished monograph on Darkhad shamanic texts. On the basis of the known textual tradition, the texts addressed to war gods of a protective function such as Dayisun and Dayičin tngri (cf. Tib. *dgra lha*) and Sülde tngri are also to be

examined. Walther Heissig (1964, pp. 190-202) published a study on the martial god Dayisun tngri contributing important clues concerning the cult of Dayan Deerh as well. The ritual texts usually contain a brief description of the appearance of the invited deity, its attributes and escorts, but some give a detailed spectacular account of the transcendental being descending to the venue of the ritual – Walther Heissig (1964, pp. 200-202) published such a text about Sülde tngri. In Heissig's monograph on folk religious texts (1966, pp. 157-163) there are three invocations to the war gods Dayisud tngri, Sülde tngri and a Qara Sülde ritual with a Mahākāla invocation.

- 16 The central figure of the Mörön scroll picture is Dayan Deerh (fig. 7 and fig. 9), he is represented as an equestrian war god (cf. Sülde tngri, Dayisun or Dayicin tngri as well as the *dalhas*, the *goviin lha*, Beg ce and the Tibetan mountain deities). The most characteristic iconographic feature of Dayan Deerh is the feather headgear evoking his shamanic identity, which – as far as I know – is particular to him and differentiates him from the rest of the above-mentioned war gods depicted with helmets.

Fig. 9. Dayan Deerh, the central figure of the Mörön scroll picture



Mörön, Aug. 1998

Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 17 On the painting, Dayan Deerh's complexion is pale, he wears a finely designed beard and moustache, his ears are elongated and ringed to meet the iconographic requirements of beauty. The headgear he wears on the top of the head consists of three bronze mirrors attached to a red band and of a triple plumed crest, in agreement with the text.

<i>Gurwan tol't titemtee,</i> <i>Šiir suwdaar čimeglesen,</i> <i>Šijir altan daruulagtae,</i> <i>Šar šuvuunii ödön goyiltoe, [...]</i>	Comprising three mirrors, Adorned with coral and pearls, With a pure gold aigrette, With owl feather ornament, [...] (D.D.1)
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- 18 In Mongolian and Tibetan popular beliefs the owl (Halh *šar šuvuu*) keeps away demons²¹ and may appear as the herald of shamans. The headdress of Darhad (Darkhad) shamans sometimes includes owl feathers (fig. 10), too, in addition to the feathers of daytime birds of prey (mainly the eagle). The feathers worn on the head and all over the garments indicate the close relationship between the shaman and his/her animal ancestor or assistant spirit. This shamanic headdress is the closest analogy to Dayan Deerh's feather crown (fig. 9). Among the Mongols, superimposed on the original stratum of beliefs, is a Europe-wide known view – probably mediated by the Russians – that the owl is the herald of death. However the owl feather mentioned here in the text has a protective function among both the Mongols and the neighbouring Kazak people.

Fig. 10. Shamaness Baljir's feather headdress worn during the night ritual

Ulaan Uul district, Hövsgöl province, Aug. 1992

Photo: Gergely Bolya

- 19 The mirror hanging around Dayan Deerh's neck (fig. 9) is not only an attribute of Buddhist iconography but also one of the most important ritual objects of shamans and which they use to foresee and keep track of the moving of harmful, destructive spirits. Tradition has it that the shamanic mirror is often made of a meteoric metal; it is a round metal sheet resembling the Chinese bronze mirror. The mirror of Mongolian shamans is embellished with a dragon pattern or the animal signs of the twelve-part zodiac.²²

<i>Šaagiṭṣ̌ šaḡignasan duutae,</i> <i>Xüünii bodol sanaag</i> <i>Xürelcelgüi medregč,</i> <i>Xürel tol' seltiig,</i> <i>Xüjüündee jüüsen, [...]</i>	His ringing and jingling Bronze mirror That learns everyone's thoughts From far away Was hung round his neck, [...] D.D.1
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- 20 Next to the shaman's mirror there is also a string of beads around Dayan Derh's neck (fig. 9), which indicates the coexistence of Buddhism and shamanism, the fusion of the two in his figure. The shamaness Balžir, who is a black or non-Buddhicized shaman of Darhad origin (Halh *har zügiin böö*) also uses a rosary (Halh *erh*) for fortune telling.²³
- 21 The red gown of the central figure is held together with a blue sash. Behind him a white cloud-like mantle is hovering. In Mongolian Buddhist representations, cloud patterns on mantles are frequent.

<i>Ar bii n' üülen cagaan nömrögtee, [...]</i>	A cloud-white mantle on his back, [...] D.D.1
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- 22 In his right hand he is holding a white banner (Halh *cagaan darcag*, Skr. *dhvaja*) similarly to other Dayan Deerh pictures. In his left hand there is a jug full of gems (Halh *erdniin bumb*, Skr. *Ratnakalaśa*, fig. 9).

<i>Baruun gartaa cagaan darcag xüsgesen,</i> <i>Jüün gartaa erdniin bumb düüweljsen, [...]</i>	He is fluttering a white flag in his right hand, And waving a vase of precious stones in his left, [...] D.D.1
---	--

- 23 Dayan Deerh is a martial god, with weapons and armour (although the suit of armour is missing in the Mörön picture, it is an important motif in the shamanic texts). When a shaman invites him in the ritual, he lends him his body and the deity speaks through him. The shaman's clothing and accessories become identical to Dayan Deerh's paraphernalia. The next section presents the shaman's transfiguration.

<i>Dalan jingiin ömsgölöö</i> <i>Dal möröndöön xömöldörglööw.</i> <i>Daldiin ödön malgaegaa</i> <i>Dux magnaed dugtuulaaw.</i> <i>Xurda num sumaa agslaaw.</i> <i>Xurc bold ildee jüüleew.</i> <i>Ejen Čingisiin sülded mörgölööw.</i> <i>Ene biyee xuyiglalaaw.</i>	I put my cloak weighing seventy <i>jins</i> ²⁴ On my shoulders and shoulder blades. I set my concealing feather headdress On my forehead and temples. ²⁵ I got my quick bow and arrow, I girded my sharp steel sword on. I bowed to the sacred soul of Lord Chinggis, I dressed my body up in armour. D.D.1
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- 24 Dayan Deerh's mount (Halh *hölög*) is a white steed with highly ornate horse harness (fig. 9). As the sacrificial text addressed to him reveals, it is as fast as whirlwind (Halh *hui salhi šig hurdan*).

<i>Budan, manan üülen xölögtee,</i> <i>Bul čuluun uulan suudaltai,</i> [...] <i>Armag cagaan xölögtee,</i> [...] <i>Xue salxi šig xurda cagaan xölögtee, [...]</i>	Your mount is like mist and cloudy haze, Your seat is a mountain rock, [...] Your wild white mount, [...] Your white mount swift like whirlwind, [...] D.D.1
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- 25 The minutely elaborate horse equipment has salience in the scroll picture but the texts do not mention it. The characteristics of the saddlery of protective Buddhist deities and local spirits converted to the protection of the dharma are more or less identical to that of the Inner Asian warriors, as Katalin Uray Kőhalmi pointed out in her study on the representation of goddess Lhamo (Uray-Kőhalmi 1987, pp. 233-249). The armament of Dayan Deerh is identical in the visual representations and the ritual texts: his leopard skin bow holder and tiger skin quiver are visible in the picture (fig. 9, the design is recognizable in the picture exhibited in the Ferenc Hopp Museum as well). In the text, the material is lion skin and tiger skin, for the sake of alliteration. Deities equipped with similar weapons can be found among the *dalha* and *goviin lha*, as well as among the Tibetan mountain gods.

<i>Arslan, barsiin ar'san dugtuutai,</i> <i>Altan num sumaa agsan,</i> <i>Xurc ild selmee jüüsen, [...]</i>	He put on his golden bow and arrows, Being in quivers of lion and tiger skin He girded on his pointed sword and saber, [...] D.D.1
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- 26 Beside Galbaabadrah's scroll picture, I know of only one other representation in the upper third of which dharma protectors and famous teachers of Buddhism are depicted. The picture is owned by a Mongol family in Cagaan Üür district (fig. 11).

Fig. 11. A depiction of Dayan Deerh with photos of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva and the 14th Dalai lama



Cagaan Üür, Aug. 1998

Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 27 It is framed and displayed so that only the centre of the upper third can be seen, with its depiction of Vajrapāṇi. In the upper right and left corners the owner has placed two other pictures: on the right side, the photograph of an Avalokiteśvara statue, and on the left side a picture of the 14th Dalai Lama. Two figures in the upper third of Galbaabadrah's scroll picture are meant to reinforce the Buddhist nature of Dayan Deerh and to legitimize its place among the Buddhist dharma protectors. On the right is Padmasambhava (fig. 8) who tamed the local spirits and put them into the service of Buddhism. In this picture Padmasambhava is shown with the attributes and attire of the "precious master", with a double *vajra* in his right hand, and a skull cup filled with blood (Mong. *γabala*, Skr. *kapāla*) and the magic rod (Skr. *khaṭvāṅga*) in his left hand, indicating that he is a tantric master. His headgear is that of the high-ranking masters of the Nyingma order (rNying ma) and his clothing is a monk's gown.²⁶ In the upper left corner is a familiar depiction of Tsong kha pa, the founder of the yellow hat Gelug order: he wears a lama's frock; he has a lotus flower in his right hand (Mong. *badam*, Skr. *padma*) and a book (Mong. *nom*, Skr. *pustaka*) in his left hand. The text also pays tribute to both Buddhist masters, stressing that Dayan Deerh was initiated by them. Although they are not included in the scroll picture, the text mentions the Dalai and Panchen lamas, revered by the Mongolian church as the greatest authorities, as well as the head of the Mongolian church, the Bogd gegegen (Mong. Boγda gegegen), all featuring as the initiators of Dayan Deerh.

Bum jīwaa nōxōr selteegee

Badamsambu bagšaas jarligtae,

Bogd Junxaawaagaas liindentee,

Banč'in bogd, Dalae lamaas jaalttae,

Bogd ejnees Geneenčinboo sanwaartae.

With millions of your fellows

You follow Padmasambhava's commandment,

Holy Tsong kha pa's revelations,

The guiding of the Dalai and the Panchen lamas.

You pledged the vow of the pure believer to the Exalted Saint.

D.D.1

28 The two secondary figures in the lower third of Galbaabadrah’s scroll picture are identified in Mongolian tradition as Dayan Deerh’s son and daughter. The hoary old man in the bottom right corner (who appears much older than Dayan Deerh) is Dayan Deerh’s son Saraitan²⁷ (fig. 12).

Fig. 12. Saraitan, the son of Dayan Deerh, the wise augur and healer



Mörön, Aug. 1998
Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

29 He has a lotus flower in his right hand and a book in his left (Skr. *pustaka*). On his left side, there are a couple of roe-deer, a pair of fish in a pond and the masculine symbol called “khan bracelet” (Halh *haan buguivč*). In the texts, Saraitan is the sage who takes pity on the orphan, makes the poor rich, and has healing powers. It is among Saraitan’s shamanic features that he is the seventieth generation in a line of shamans. His healing powers reside in his thumb and index finger; this motif is frequent in Buryat shamanic texts, e.g. “Invocation to the spirits of Oihon island” (Oihonii *duudlaga*):

<i>Dol’oobor soorxoi domšonornuud,</i> <i>Erxei soorxoi emšenernüüd, [...]</i>	Healers whose index fingers are punctured, Doctors whose thumbs are punctured, [...] D.D.1
---	--

30 Saraitan is described in Dayan Deerh’s invocation in the following way:

<i>Önčin xüniig öröwdögč,</i> <i>Öglöggüe xoosniig bayijuulagč,</i> <i>Erdem nomoor tögs,</i> <i>Erxiidee emtee,</i> <i>Doloowortoo domtoe,</i> <i>Daldiig medegč</i> <i>Dalan üyiin</i> <i>Domč Saraetan.</i>	You protect every orphan, You enrich every poor man, Your knowledge is perfect, You have healing powers in your thumb, Your index finger heals, You know everything that is hidden, Saraitan, you are a healer To the seventieth generation. ²⁸
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31 In the bottom left corner Dayan Deerh’s daughter Saraimoo is shown. She is said to be the one who subdued the wild unruliness of the world (fig. 13).

Fig. 13. Saraimoo, the daughter of Dayan Deerh, who ensures offspring and tames the wildness of the world



Mörön, Aug. 1998

Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

- 32 Similarly to the goddess of eloquence Sarasvatī, she holds a string instrument (Mong. *biba*, Skr. *vīṇā*) in her left hand,²⁹ lifting high a cymbal (Halh *can*) with her right. Saraimoo is connected to Dayan Deerh's fertility aspect as she is credited with granting children to those who long for them. On her right figures a pair of swans swimming in a lake, a pair of cattle/yak, and the feminine symbol called "queen earring" (*xatan süix*).

<i>Uran čawxdast xögjmööröo</i> <i>Ulaan galjuug uyirulagč,</i> <i>Uuliin caadxiig tol'dogč,</i> <i>Ūr xiisegčded</i> <i>Ūriin jayaa xaelragč Saraemoo.</i>	You put a curb on the reckless, With sounds of music on the strings of your lute, You show what the mountain hides, You grant fine offspring to all Who yearn for them. You, Saraimoo. ³⁰
---	---

- 33 In the scroll picture, similarly to the *goviin lha* representations, beasts and domestic animals depicted in pairs play salient roles. The pairs of animals refer to fertility magic, with some also mentioned by the texts and oral tradition, which ascribe special significance to them (fig. 9).
- 34 To the right of Saraimoo, there is a pair of swans in a pond (fig. 13). The swan – the heavenly swan maiden descending from the upper world – is the ancestress of several Inner and Eastern Asian peoples. It plays a central role in the eastern Buryat mythology and folk religion, but it is also worshipped in Mongolian areas and its hunting is taboo (Birtalan 2001, p. 1037). The invocation Nr. 3 to Dayan Deerh includes several prohibitions aimed at protecting nature, and also mentions the defence of swans.

<i>Castiin orond min' jočilson</i> <i>Cen šuwuu galbirtae,</i> <i>Cereg mongol nutagtae,</i> <i>Cagaadae böögöös udamtae,</i> <i>Canxilan udganaas ugsaatae,</i> <i>Yürün yüsüin šošoolgoos ug garaltae.</i> <i>Xun šuwuug biü cočoo !</i>	It visits my snowy country, It has the shape of a swan. Its home is the martial Mongol [land], Its ancestor is shaman Tsagadai, Its ancestress if shamaness Tsankhilan, ³¹ It comes from a clan of ninety-nine <i>shoshologs</i> . Do not frighten the swan ! D.D.3
--	---

- 35 In the middle of the scroll picture there is a fox on the right facing a wolf on the left. Both are couriers in Mongolian shamanism. The fox is usually associated with the lower world; in Buryat mythology it is the messenger of the lord of the netherworld, Erlicg khan; killing the fox brings ill luck to the whole clan.³² In addition to the wolf,³³ a frequently called messenger of the shamans is the raven, also symbolizing the shaman's strength. Among the *ongons* of Darhad shamans both its ornithoid and anthropo-ornithoid forms are prevalent. Oral tradition says that

the most powerful shamans have nine ravens to help them. In the scroll picture, there are three ravens flying around Dayan Deerh's head; this motif can also be found in pictures of *dalha*. The fox is missing from the texts, but the wolf and raven are included:

<i>Xöx čonoor</i>	I won't turn the blue wolf
<i>Güelgelgüe,</i>	Into a runner,
<i>Xon xeregeer</i>	I won't turn the raven, the crow
<i>Xelmerčleelgüe,</i>	Into messengers,
<i>Xüder bawgaagaar</i>	I won't turn the strong bear
<i>Unaa xiilgüe,</i>	Into a mount,
<i>Xaliun bugaar</i>	I won't turn the stag of otter colour
<i>Unaa xiilgüe, [...]</i>	Into a mount, [...]
	D.D.3

In this list the bear and stag (fig. 9) also appear and they are included in the scroll picture, too. In shamanic songs and mythology the bear is often found in the role of the avenger: the offended local spirit assumes the shape of the bear to take revenge for the affronts (Birtalan 2001, p. 947). The stag is the mount of the Sun and the animal ancestor of some Mongolian clans.³⁴ About the two fighting yak bulls (fig. 9) depicted on the left of the scroll picture in the middle, Galbaabadrah noted that they reminded the viewer of Buha noyon baabai, who was the animal ancestor of the western Buryats. In their myths of origin the fighting bull is also included.³⁵

In the scroll painting, Dayan Deerh is surrounded by the "four strong ones" (fig. 9, Mong. *dörben küčüten*), the ritual prayer flag or the "wind horse" (Mong. *kei mori*, Halh *hiimor'*, Tib. *rlung rta*),³⁶ the four mythic animals are symmetrically arranged: the Garuda in the top right corner, the snow lion bottom right, the tiger bottom left and the dragon top left (fig. 14). The four strong ones are saddlers for four armoured male figures. There is no mention of these four riders in the traditional texts.

Fig. 14. The dragon from the "four strong ones" and its rider



Mörön, Aug. 1998
Photo: Zsolt Szilágyi

Concluding remarks

In the present study I have compared textual and pictorial traditions of Dayan Deerh, a well-known deity in Mongolian Buddhism, shamanism and folk religion. The texts (shamanic invocations) and the tangkha painting have been collected during a field research in Hövsgöl province in Mongolia. In sacred texts influenced by Buddhism several shamanistic and Buddhist features are intertwined, which I have analyzed in detail in my former studies. Here I dealt only with the connections between the texts and the pictorial representation analysing the motifs in the tangkha that appear in the invocations as well. In order to comprehend Dayan Deerh's place in the Tibeto-Mongolian tradition I outlined the larger context of the

worship of warrior gods in Mongolian Buddhism, and made references to the mythological background of Mongolian shamanism and folk religion. Nevertheless, some problems remain unsolved: the extent of the Tibetan influence upon Mongolian practices, the preservation of pre-Buddhist layers (prior to the Buddhist conversion of the Mongols), the problem of borrowing or maintenance of certain mythemes and the origin of the depiction of weaponry in these pictures. The further exploration of the connection between this scroll painting and the Tibetan traditional depiction of warriors and mountain deities will be the topic of another study.

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Notes

- 1 Summaries of the research carried out during the expedition have been published in numerous studies devoted to the elaboration of the collected material (recently on a DVD: Birtalan 2008). At present, this research is supported by the Hungarian National Research Fund (OTKA) as project Nr. 62501 (supervisor: Ágnes Birtalan).
- 2 Unless otherwise specified, the Mongol Halh (Khalkha) Cyrillic is transliterated using EMSCAT rules of equivalence.
- 3 Galdanova, Zhukovskaya, Ochirova (1984), Even (1988-1989), Sárközi (2004), Török (2009). In my monograph devoted to Darhad shamanic texts, I give a multifaceted analysis of all the shamanic texts about Dayan Deerh that were collected during the expedition: Birtalan, *Darkhad Shamanic Texts. Performer, Genres, Communication* (manuscript).
- 4 This fact was mentioned by several respondents during our expedition. Cf. Expedition sound archive: recordings of 1998.
- 5 See Birtalan 2005a for details.
- 6 For the analysis of a Tibetan sacrificial text see Török 2009.
- 7 I analyzed such a text in another study (Birtalan 2005a).
- 8 Birtalan 2001, pp. 967-969; for a detailed bibliography see p. 969.
- 9 The data collected on this phenomenon during the 1998 expedition (cf. sound and photo archives of the expedition), will be analyzed in a separate study.
- 10 The mythological role of Dayan Deerh will be analyzed in a separate study, which will present the religious and mythic context of the deity on the basis of the related textual tradition.
- 11 *Dayan Deerhiin Duudlaga* “Invocation to Dayan Deerh [deity]” (informant: monk Galbaabadrah, Mörön, Aug. 1998, sound archive of the expedition). Hereafter I refer to this text as D.D.1. The transcription of these fragments is meant to render the Darhad pronunciation of the informant. In the transcription of Darhad texts the following symbols are used: *ǰ* (voiced palato-alveolar affricate as English *j*) *j* (voiced alveolar affricate as English *ds, dz*) and *x* (voiceless velar fricative as German *ch*).
- 12 The concept of *ongon* and its role in Mongol beliefs and folk religion are discussed in several studies; for a summary of the theories and a detailed bibliography, see Birtalan, Sipos, Coloo 2004, pp. 25-62.
- 13 The study uses the written Mongolian variant (Dayan Degereki), see Vinkovics 2003a, p. 84.
- 14 The armour of the Tibetan warrior gods might be interpreted as of Inner Asian origin; however the present article does not intend to discuss this problem. A recently published series of studies offers good perspective on this question, see La Rocca 2006.
- 15 Heissig und Müller 1989, p. 160. The statue is also reproduced in the catalogue of an exhibition held in South Korea: *Mongolia* (1996, p. 63).
- 16 The Tibetan names of the five deities: *mo-lha* “goddess”, *pho-lha* “(male) god”, *srog lha* “deity responsible for life”, *yul lha* “deity protecting the area”, *dgra lha* “deity protecting from enemy”; for details on the latter see above. On the *goviin lha* deities, see Vinkovics 2003b, pp. 89-92.
- 17 Galbaabadrah did not mention his name.
- 18 Galbaabadrah established a small shrine in his house for the local believers.
- 19 Sound and photo archives of the expedition, 1998.
- 20 Even (1984, pp. 12-18) analyzed a text variant as a preliminary to her book.
- 21 For details, see Birtalan 2002, pp. 69-88.
- 22 Birtalan 1996a, and for a detailed study on the role of the mirror in Mongolian shamanism see Humphrey 2007.
- 23 Balžir’s ritual accoutrement is presented in Birtalan 1993, pp. 1-10.
- 24 Halh *žin* = 0,6 kp.
- 25 The figure of the shaman’s headdress *ödön malgai* “feather cap” is mixed up with the “secret” cap (*daldiin malgai*) that makes one invisible in the tales. The headgear of Darhad black shamans is called *böö malgai* “shaman’s cap”, that of the yellow shamans is called *orgoi*.
- 26 Its detailed analysis, Essen und Tsering 1991, pp. 113-115. This type of depiction can also be found in the catalogue of the Ferenc Hopp Museum, p. 88. Further similar representations: e.g. the central figure of the thangka in which Padmasambhava is depicted in another eight forms (Essen und Tsering 1991, p. 65).
- 27 The name is obviously of Tibetan origin, derived from *sras* “boy”, its Halh pronunciation is *sarai*; the Tibetan original of the last syllable is still to be explored (I am indebted to Judit Vinkovics for pointing this out to me.).
- 28 D.D.1. and its similar motif in D.D.3, too.

- 29 The lute is the attribute of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the protector of east among the four *mahārājās* guarding the cardinal points, and of the celestial fairies, the *gandharvas*.
- 30 This passage can be found both in D.D.1. and in D.D.3.
- 31 Cagaadai (Halh) and his spouse Canhilan/Sanhilan (Halh) were considered to be shamans and protectors of fire, see Birtalan 2005b, pp. 299-311.
- 32 Birtalan 2001, p. 1037.
- 33 For a detailed analysis of the mythic role of the wolf, see Birtalan 1995, pp. 99-111.
- 34 For a detailed analysis of the role of the stag, see Birtalan 1995, pp. 99-111.
- 35 This motif can be compared to the Hungarian folk belief involving the fighting miraculous bull (Hung. táltos). For an analysis of the bull and Buha noyon baabai, see Birtalan 2001, pp. 954-955.
- 36 For a detailed analysis of “wind horse” representations and texts, see Kelényi 2000, pp. 79-102; Kelényi 2003, pp. 47-78.

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À propos de l'auteur

Ágnes Birtalan

Docteur (habil.) de l'Université ELTE (Département d'Etudes de l'Asie Intérieure), et Directrice du Département et de l'Ecole doctorale de philologie mongole, ses recherches sur les études mongoles concernent les langues et cultures, et principalement la tradition textuelle des religions populaires chamanique et bouddhique, de différents groupes ethniques de Mongolie. Terrains: Mongolie (Régions du Nord et de l'Ouest), Mongolie Intérieure (Ordos, Üüshin), Xinjiang (Bortala), Bouriatie (Ulan-Ude).

Page personnelle: birtalan.innerasia.hu

e-mail: birtalan@hotmail.com

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Résumés

The material discussed here is part of the records of the Hungarian-Mongolian Expedition for the Research on Dialects and Folk Culture. One of the main aims of the expedition was to investigate the relics of the traditional Mongolian folk culture and to document its present-day transformation. The folk religious practices are vivid among many ethnic groups in Mongolia and their pantheon is a remarkable cultural phenomenon. Dayan Deerh is one of the best known deities, even beyond the boundaries of the region where it is worshipped (Cagaan Üür in Hövsgöl province). The present paper is based on fieldwork material and investigates the living tradition of Dayan Deerh's worship, comparing an illustrated source (a Buddhist thangka painting) and the oral tradition (shamanic invocations).

La représentation de la divinité chamanique Dayan Deerh dans les invocations et dans un rouleau peint bouddhique

Les matériaux discutés ici font partie des résultats de l'Expédition Hongroise-Mongole pour la Recherche sur les Dialectes et la Culture Populaire. L'un des principaux objectifs de cette expédition est d'explorer les vestiges de la culture populaire mongole traditionnelle et de

documenter son évolution à l'heure actuelle. Les pratiques religieuses populaires sont très vivaces parmi les groupes ethniques de Mongolie, et leur panthéon est un fait culturel notable. Dayan Deerh est l'une des divinités les mieux connues, même au-delà des frontières de la région où elle est vénérée (Cagaan Üür, Province du Hövsgöl). Cet article est basé sur des matériaux de terrain, et explore la tradition vivante du culte de Dayan Deerh, en comparant une source illustrée (un thangka bouddhique) et la tradition orale (invocations chamaniques).

Entrées d'index

Mots-clés : religion populaire, bouddhisme, chamanisme, syncrétisme, thangka, invocation chamanique, Dayan Deerh, mythologie

Keywords : folk religion, buddhism, shamanism, syncretism, thangka, shamanic invocation, Dayan Deerh, mythology

Géographique : Mongolie, Hövsgöl