2. REAL-LIFE LEGENDS

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

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

• ETHNOGRAPHIC LEGENDS

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

THE LEGEND OF ALUNGUA

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

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

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

Before long, Doo-bu mernge died. After his death Alungua was a widow, but she bore three sons. They were named Buha khatagi, Buhatu-salji and Bodochnar-munbagh.

Biiyniidei and Biiyniidei, the two sons begotten of Doo-bu mernge, talked with each other secretly about their mother, Alungua, saying that even though she had no husband she bore three sons. In this house there was only man, Malig-bayaguudai. They must be his sons, they decided. The mother Alungua learned of her sons’ surreptitious talk about her.

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

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

LEGENDARY NAMES OF PLACES OR RIVERS

The legendary names of places are linked to historical events. For example, there are many names or places in central Mongolia which are mentioned in the Secret History of Mongols. The name of Mt. Burkhan Khaaldun started including Tsenkeriin gol, khar Züreheni Khök nuur, Bürig erig, Khorihanag Jubur ancient Kharkhorum city, Khöödo aral, Avarga bolgas, Tuulilin khar shugui, Mt. Lakh (battle place where the battle between Tayan Khan from Naiman and Chinggis Qahan fought). These names written in these chronicles are still in active usage. These legendary names of places and rivers are connected with local scenery, resources, and places of worship.

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

THE LEGEND OF MT. EEJ KHAIRKHAN

Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl whose name was Eej Khairkhan, which means mother mount. Her beauty illuminated nearby places. But one day Burkhan buudai khan from a far country abducted her and took her to his birth place. Burkhan buudai khan was fierce and mean, and his subjects were scared of him greatly. After her abduction, Eej Khairkhan lost her appetite and became sleepless and was gloomy day and night as she yearned for her parents and birth place. So her beauty disappeared and she pined for this distant place.

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