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MONGOLIAN SHORT STORIES

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SON OF THE OLD WORLD by D. Natsagdorj</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A SWIFT-FOOTED HORSE by D. Natsagdorj</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BITTER TEARS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE by D. Natsagdorj</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE GREEN KNOLL by J. Pürev.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARADISE by Sh. Natsagdorj</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MILLER by D. Myagmar</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTHER by J. Damdindorj</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF TO BATTLE by Ch. Lkham Süren</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNNY CRANES by S. Erdene</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO WHEN WILL DADDY COME HOME? by L. Choijil Süren</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN by D. Garmaa</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOLVES by R. Saija</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SWALLows by S. Erdene</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MOTH AND THE LAMP by D. Myagmar</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE RUNAWAY by S. Dashdoorov</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE KERCHIEF OF LOVE by S. Badraa</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A NEW DEEL FOR SEVJIDMA by Sh. Gaadamba</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A FUNNY WOMAN by D. Garmaa</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT THE PASS by D. Garmaa</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHULUN by Ch. Lodoidamba</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Illustrations shown on pages 7, 11, 36, 69, 77, 85, 105, 110, 129, 145, and 166 have been reproduced from Mongolia magazine; ornamental designs shown on pages 3, 13, 37, 53, 59, 64, 71, 101, 108, 117, 123, 134, 139, and 150 have been reproduced from D. Maidar, Arkhitektura i gradostroitels'tvo Mongolii (Moscow, 1970).
INTRODUCTION

This volume is the product of student discontent. In my undergraduate survey course, East Asian 310: Mongolia and the Mongols, my students and I have been annoyed by the extremely uneven quality of reading materials available in English. The historical sections of the course are adequately covered in works by Bawden, Grousset, and many others. Even art and architecture are not entirely without some available readings in English, but literature is poorly served.

There is at present only one book-length work on Mongolian literature available in English. Gerasimovich's *Literatura Mongol'skoi Narodnoi Respubliki, 1921-1964* (Leningrad, 1965) has been translated by the Mongolia Society, but it has its serious shortcomings. The book was published shortly after the author's death in 1964 and thus contains nothing about Mongolian literature during the past ten years when it has been particularly flourishing. Moreover, Gerasimovich's portrait of Mongolian literature follows closely the guidelines laid down by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Thus it shuns certain early literary figures who had not yet been rehabilitated by the time Gerasimovich wrote her book. It also discusses Mongolian literary works along Marxist-Leninist lines. While such a book is useful for an understanding of Communist literary policies and objectives, what is needed for perspective but does not exist is an equally comprehensive history of modern Mongolian literature that does not adhere to Communist literary criteria. Finally, Gerasimovich's book does not give its readers anything but the shortest excerpts from various types of literature.
My students rightfully complain that they need an anthology of unabridged and representative samples of Mongolian literature. There is at present only one source for such materials, the magazine Mongolia. Unfortunately, the magazine, like most other periodical publications of its kind, scatters its literary samples across scores of issues. Moreover, it is probably true that this useful magazine is still little known in the United States where I would guess fewer than ten university libraries have complete sets.

To meet my students' legitimate demands, I have selected some twenty-one short stories from the pages of this magazine, and have attempted to edit them into acceptable contemporary American English. I have endeavored as much as it is feasible to make the selection representative of different generations of writers and of different themes. Some, if not all, of these stories have been shortened by the editors of Mongolia magazine, as suggested by several dots at the end of paragraphs but omitted in this selection. So far as it can be determined, these omissions were made for brevity's sake rather than to tamper severely with content or style. A close comparison with titles listed in Gerasimovich also occasionally suggests minor title changes. Thus, D. Myagmar's The Moth and the Lamp seems to be his White Moth (Огүүлэгүүд), published in 1962, Sh. Gaadamba's A New Peel for Sevjidma is probably identical to his Ill-fitting Deel (Elbeg deel), published in 1957, and the original title of S. Erdene's Kulan was Khulan and I (Khulan bid khoer).

The virtual absence of any Mongolian literary works in English translation is certainly puzzling when we remind ourselves that modern Mongolian literature has been in existence for some fifty years and, judging by Gerasimovich's account, that its many contributors have been extraordinarily prolific. Thus, a probing of the possible reasons for this regrettable lacuna is in order.
One possible reason is the relatively late start of modern Mongolian literature. Although writers produced works from the very beginning of the revolutionary period, by far most presently extant works were not written until the mid-fifties. Moreover, most Russian translations of the earlier works did not come out until that time.

In light of this information, it may be tempting to lay blame on the unavailability of materials, but this is not really the case. After all, a few Mongolian works, including short stories, were in fact available to Westerners, at least in Russian translation if not in the Mongolian original, as early as the thirties. The real reason probably lies elsewhere, and when we look at the large number of published (and often translated into Russian) literary works of more than fifty authors, that reason becomes clear: lack of interest.

Scholars have translated much of modern Mongolian literature into Russian but almost nothing into any other language. This lacuna is found not only in translation but even in the general treatment of contemporary Mongolian literature. There is to date not a single history or survey in any language except Russian, and there only two names stand out, those of G. I. Mikhailov and L. K. Gerasimovich.

Few Mongolists in North America and Western Europe concern themselves with today's Mongolia, and even fewer universities are offering as little as a single course on any aspect of Mongolia. In the United States where, as far as I know, no recent census has been taken, I would guess that perhaps twenty universities offer at least one course on Mongolia, but only half a dozen of them teach what may be described as a comprehensive set of area and language courses. Moreover, it is fair to say that the few Mongolists that there are in the West have so far restricted their writings to the period prior to the present century. A striking
example is the recently published *opus magnum* of one of the most prominent living Mongolists, Walther Heissig, whose massive two-volume *Geschichte der mongolischen Literatur* ends in the early years of this century.

Closely linked to this apparent scholarly disinterest is a public ignorance of truly astounding magnitude. We could document this abysmal ignorance by a tediously long list of examples, but perhaps some personal experiences will do. When in the spring of 1973 my wife and I made preparations for our visit to Mongolia, we sought information on visas, vaccinations, and the like. We discovered that one of the standard reference works in the travel industry, a massive tome published by Pan American World Airways, which claims to contain all countries of the world, did not in fact have an entry on Mongolia. Perhaps the global experts at Pan American think that Mongolia is out of this world! Likewise, anyone who should have an occasion to mail to Mongolia anything other than a letter will discover, as I have, that the regulations of the United States Postal Service literally do not mention Mongolia but only "Outer Mongolia" which, of course, was never a country but had been a part of Ch'ing China until 1911. Another sample of American knowledge about Mongolia was offered in a television special, shown nationwide in 1974, about the capture of the U.S.S. Pueblo. As the North Korean gunboats were closing in on the American spy ship, the actor playing Captain Buecher was heard screaming: "Those Mongolian savages ..."

I trust that readers of this volume already know that Koreans and Mongolians are as related to each other as Spaniards and Bulgarians, that Mongolians are no more savage than Americans, and that Mongolia has been in existence since the early twenties and has now diplomatic relations with more than sixty other countries.

The history of Mongolian literature is conventionally thought to have begun around 1240 when the *Secret History of the Mongols*
was written. Very little else has come down to us from the next two centuries, the period sometimes referred to as the post-classical period. We know a great deal more about Mongolian literature after Buddhism was reintroduced into Mongolia. From then until well into the eighteenth century, Mongolian literature was dominated by religious works and, consequently, the greatest influence was Indian and, more directly, Tibetan in origin.

By the end of that period, another foreign cultural influence made itself felt. As a consequence of political decisions, beginning with the compact of Dolonor in 1686 and ending with the Ch'ing court's policy of allowing Chinese colonization of Southern and Eastern Mongolia (roughly equivalent to the territory of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region prior to the first cultural revolution of 1966-1970), Chinese literature, especially the great novels, such as Shui Hu, Chin P'ing Mei, and Hsi Yu Chi, exerted a tremendous influence upon Mongolian literature. They inspired, inter alia, the creation of what Mongolians like to call their first historical novel, the Köke Sudur (The Blue Chronicle) by Injannasi.

That we have few extant works of the earlier period and a heavy preponderance of religious works from later centuries was, of course, largely determined by the nature of Mongolian society. A nomadic life style made it virtually impossible to maintain bulky paraphernalia, such as printing presses and libraries, that are necessary for creating and preserving a major written literature. It was not until large monasteries were built on Mongolian soil that an extensive body of literature was written and preserved, and it was naturally almost entirely religious in nature. Still later, many of the secular hereditary rulers, especially in Southern and Eastern Mongolia, having become sedentary, began to write works that drew heavily upon the secular Chinese masterpieces of the day.
We must add to the corpus of written literature a very large and extremely well developed oral literature of which only a fraction has survived to the present century. Researchers of several countries, particularly the Mongolian academician B. Rinchen, have recorded relatively small portions of this oral literature, but virtually nothing has been translated into English. It would, however, be wrong to conclude, as is frequently done, that the written literature was read by a small literate minority and that the oral literature was the exclusive preserve of the illiterate masses. In traditional Mongolia, as much as one-third of the total male population was at any given time resident in monasteries. Most of their inhabitants were literate even though some of them were literate only in Tibetan and not in Mongolian. Moreover, not only the secular aristocracy but many commoners were literate, and they shared the written word with the Buddhist monks. At the same time, the oral literature was the property of all Mongols, literate and illiterate alike.

Throughout most of the twenties, literature continued along traditional lines. Most themes were religious in nature or about the exploits of famous khans, most notably, of course, Chingis Khan. The Communists, or more specifically the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP), did not immediately challenge the virtual monopoly of traditional forms and theories but instead concentrated on producing short theatrical plays, posters, and songs. While these new songs had new themes, such as the exploits of the partisans and the Revolutionary Army, they retained the form of traditional folk songs. They consisted of couplets or quatrains, usually three words per line and lines related by alliteration. Among the first Communist ventures into literature must be listed the journal Revolutionary Youth League, established in 1925. It published the first short stories. They were didactic and moralistic, condemning the religious establishment and large landowners, both still quite
strong in the twenties, and praising a new positive hero. These first short stories still used traditional styles; for example, "the heroes of A New Tale (Sonin üliger) were... a snow leopard, a hare, a wolf, and a frog. Their actions portrayed allegorically the overthrow of the feudalistic order."

After 1929, the MPRP greatly increased its attacks against the old order, especially Buddhism. In fact, it went so far as to "mechanically transplant... the socialist structure of the Soviet Union," a policy now officially denounced. As a result, all traditional culture was condemned as "feudal" and a demand went out to destroy it. Party zealots in many parts of the country obeyed the call literally and actually destroyed many monuments and artifacts. The period of tolerance in literature came to an abrupt end and the scope of permissible themes was sharply reduced. For about twenty years, from 1936 until at least 1955, nothing was taught about traditional Mongolian literature in middle schools. Several writers, among them S. Buyannemekh, who resisted this policy and demanded that literature not be shackled by political dogma were purged and later, in the trials of 1937, killed on trumped-up charges.

The emphasis throughout the thirties was on the final destruction of the Buddhist church and the perceived threat by Japan's aggression in China. More journals were published, among them New Mirror, Revolutionary Literature, and The Way of the National Mongolian Culture, for the dual purpose of combatting the still strong influence of traditional forms and themes and of providing guidance to and publicity of new, Party-approved literary works. Theatrical productions continued to receive strong encouragement. The State Theater was established in 1930. At first, most of its productions were one-act plays and pantomimes, but gradually more substantial works were performed. The titles of some of these, "Right-and Left-Deviation," "Dark Power," and "New Path," clearly
indicate the official line of that time.

Poetry and prose also developed during the thirties, but at uneven rates. Of those poets cited approvingly today, G. Ser-Od (1917-1940) and D. Tsevegmid (b. 1915) were among the major figures. What is remarkable about their poetry is that it was at times wholly devoid of political themes. While the theater and prose (see below) toed the official line extremely closely, themes such as the seasons and motherhood appeared to be quite common in the poetry of the thirties.

By all accounts, prose continued to be the weakest part of the new Mongolian literature. Not a single novel was produced during the entire decade. Shorter works, of which three samples are included in this volume, were almost always about the bad old days and the glorious present. Anti-clerical writing was at its height, of which Paradise, written much later, is an example. Still, traditional forms were permitted and the use of fairy tales to drive home a political point was fairly common.

According to contemporary literary historiography, the Mongolian literary world of the twenties and especially of the thirties was dominated by D. Natsagdorj who, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his birthday in 1956, was posthumously elevated to a position in literature comparable to that of Sükhbaatar in politics. In that same year, a large statue of him was erected in Ulaanbaatar's main park and, so far as I know, Natsagdorj remains the only literary figure so honored.

Although he met an untimely death in 1937 at the age of thirty-one, Natsagdorj accomplished much. At age nine, he began to be tutored in reading and writing, and only two years later he was given a job as clerk in his father's office in the war department in Urga. He declared himself for the revolution immediately upon the entry of Mongolian and Red Russian troops into Mongolia in
1921. His rise within Party and government was meteoric; within a few years, he was made chief secretary of the Revolutionary Military Council, chairman of the Young Pioneers, and a candidate of the MPRP presidium. In 1924, when he was only eighteen, he was entrusted with the important task of organizing the first Great Khural (national assembly).

The years 1925 to 1929 he spent abroad. He first went to Leningrad where he attended the military academy and learned enough Russian to begin translating major Russian works into Mongolian. In the following year, he joined about forty other young Mongolians on a journey to Germany. Once again, D. Natsagdorj displayed his genius for languages by learning German in very short time. He graduated from the School of Journalism in Leipzig, probably in 1929, when he and all other Mongolians were recalled to Mongolia.

This abrupt recall was occasioned by a sudden shift in Party policy in both Moscow and Ulaanbaatar toward isolation in international affairs and excessive dogmatism at home. Like so many others, Natsagdorj was arrested and detained for six months. He lost all of his Party and government posts and, upon his release, was assigned as a historian to the Science Committee, the fore-runner to the present Academy of Sciences. He was extraordinarily prolific and versatile as a literary figure. So far, 104 poems, thirty-one short prose works, five plays, and several translations have been collected; most of these works were written in the six or seven years before his death in 1937.

Perhaps his most celebrated work is the poem "My homeland" ("Minii nutag"), a song in praise of Mongolia's natural beauty. Except for a brief reference to a red banner and people's power, the poem is devoid of political overtones. A similarly lyrical, and wholly non-political, poem of his is "The Four Seasons" in which he portrays quite expressively the entirety of Mongolian
pastoral life. Natsagdorj also produced many poems strongly supporting the Party on contemporary issues, be it by stridently attacking the lamas during the anti-Church campaigns or by lavishly praising the Soviet Union or by attempting to foster public acceptance of modern health measures.

D. Natsagdorj's contribution to modern Mongolian prose is the development of the short story. His short stories are extremely brief, as the three examples in this volume demonstrate. Some are prose poems, like A Swift-Footed Horse, in which Natsagdorj would sketch a landscape, a character, or some typical episode in the everyday life of rural Mongolia. Other short stories, like Son of the Old World, resemble political pamphlets in which the characters represent entire social classes or historical periods. Later, Natsagdorj's style changed and he began to write short stories with a plot. Bitter Tears on New Year's Eve is representative of this type of story which almost always dwells on conditions in prerevolutionary Mongolia.

Despite Natsagdorj's pioneering efforts, however, the short story and prose literature in general fell on hard times after his death. Not a single novel was produced during the forties and, as Gerasimovich observed, "short stories covered an extremely restricted sphere of subject matter." The situation became so bad that ten years after Natsagdorj's death, the Central Committee of the MPRP was moved to complain that "the slighting of prose, which provides every opportunity to portray all aspects of our times, is the main shortcoming in the development of our literature." The periodurgings of the MPRP deserve some credit for the eventual flourishing of the Mongolian short story, but three other factors were...
probably of equal importance. By the mid-fifties, a whole new generation of writers had grown up who had no personal recollection of life in the thirties and whose attitudes were thus perhaps less encumbered by the excessive caution typical of many older writers. Moreover, the writers of this new generation were, on the whole better trained and were thus perhaps feeling more secure than their elders in the exploration of new themes and techniques. The thirteen biographical sketches included in this volume reveal substantial educational backgrounds. Whereas D. Natsagdorj, as the sole representative of the older generation in our collection, was somewhat unusual for his group in that he had some higher education, all but one of the remaining twelve writers went to college and most received specifically literary training. The third and probably closely related factor was the easing of the heavy hand of political controls, a trend influenced by the de-Stalinization drive in the Soviet Union. In combination, these factors largely account for the fact that of the eighty literary figures for whom relevant information is listed in Gerasimovich, only twenty-four began publishing in the more than three decades before 1955, but fifty-six, or exactly 70%, did so in the nine years between 1955 and 1964, the terminal year of Gerasimovich's survey.

If the MPRP allowed a certain degree of relaxation and posthumously rehabilitated some earlier purge victims, its official literary policy seemed to have changed little. The following resolution, passed by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee in 1953, i.e., before the thaw, was approvingly reprinted in 1959:

The central duty of our writers consists in writing, on the basis of socialist realism, of the tenacious and selfless labour of our herdsmen and popular intelligentsia, who are building socialism in their own land, of the role of the Mongol People's Revolutionary Party in encouraging and organizing all the victories of our people in this great struggle, of the great and
truly inexhaustible significance of the friendship established between our people, the great Soviet people, and the peoples of the popular democracies, and of the struggle being waged by the whole of progressive mankind, headed by the USSR, for the establishment of peace throughout the whole world.\(^{21}\)

Official policy seems to have changed little in the meantime, and as late as 1973, statements such as "present-day Mongolian literature is developed on the basis of the Mongolian people's progressive literary heritage and under the fruitful influence of the literature of socialist realism of the USSR" and "the new Mongolian literature is now ... loyally helping the MPRP to build up a socialist society in Mongolia" are commonplace.\(^{22}\)

If the MPRP's literary policy sounds severe and restrictive, the short stories in this volume give the reader a rather different impression. Perhaps the most remarkable discovery is that no single theme predominates. Absent, for example, is the incessant invocation of Mao's name and sayings, so typical of what has passed for literature in China these past eight years. One might be tempted to dismiss this observation by pointing out that Mongolia has for an even longer period been closely allied with the Soviet Union against China and, therefore, not likely to copy the Chinese experience. But how, then, is one to explain the fact that present-day Mongolian literature glorifies the Soviet Union relatively little? There are, of course, such stories in Mongolia, and two of them, *Mother* and *Off to Battle*, are included here, but they are of an earlier time, and very little of this sort of thing is being written nowadays. In fact, the short stories in our collection have an amazingly low political content. No mention of Party and government leaders, no mention of national policies or economic plans. This is not to say, of course, that somehow Mongolian authors ignore the Party's guidelines and get away with it. Rather, it appears that the MPRP, unlike the Mao faction currently in
China, allows writers considerable freedom in the choice of subject, form, and style, provided that they support, even if only subtly and indirectly, the Party's various objectives.

The little there is in these stories of the kind of explicitly political formulas one readily associates with Stalinist Russia and Maoist China is confined to praise of the Soviet Union and condemnation of all other foreigners as well as the Buddhist Church. The most heavy-handed example of praise for the Soviet Union is *Off to Battle*, a story about the second world war and perhaps written as much as twenty years ago. The hero, a Soviet pilot, is outmanned by the Japanese, but his plane is faster, and when his machine gun gives out, it is not because it had jammed but because he had run out of ammunition. Selfless heroism and faultless equipment are the two aspects of the Soviet Union that Lkhamsüren drives home relentlessly.23

The other example of praising the Soviet Union is gentler and more convincing. Dr. Vera Poblovnna who saves a young boy's life in *Mother* symbolizes another aspect of the Soviet Union the MPRP wishes Mongolians to remember. The story evidently takes place a long time ago, probably before the second world war, when Mongolia still had very few physicians of its own.24

Aside from the Japanese who in a wartime story like *Off to Battle* are naturally cast in the villain's role, the only other foreigners portrayed in these short stories are the White Russians and the Chinese. Both form a major portion of *The Green Knoll* and, like the Japanese, they are cast in entirely negative roles. The story takes place around 1920 when the Chinese army of occupation under Hsü Shu-tseng, that had descended upon Mongolia the previous year, was forcibly replaced by the ragtag army of the "Mad Baron" von Ungern-Sternberg. Judging by various eyewitness accounts that are neither Communist nor Mongolian, the period was fraught with extreme cruelty and suffering. Incidents such as the Chinese
soldiers terrorizing Dansaran's family or Colonel Sipailo coldbloodedly killing Delger were sufficiently commonplace to give to Purev's story the ring of authenticity.

These are the only two stories in this volume that deal with foreigners and, so far as one can detect from the titles listed in Gerasimovich, very few stories appear to have been written in which foreigners play a substantial role. Only two stories, by L. Lkhamsüren and B. Baast, were written about China, both in the late fifties and presumably friendly. Since the cooling of relations between the two countries, no short stories about China have come to my attention.

All in all, it may be said that foreigners, both good and bad, as a theme are no longer predominant in Mongolian short stories. This theme reached its peak of popularity during the war and the following decade and, unless the current hostility with China should get much worse, it is not likely to flourish again soon.

Another theme of the past is Buddhism in all of its aspects. Its high point coincided with the MPRP's all-out attack against the religious establishment in the thirties, and it has been almost abandoned by now. The official policy in Mongolia, as in the Soviet Union and in China, has been the destruction of a once powerful religious institution and a concerted campaign against religious beliefs and practices while at the same time it has promised freedom of religion for individual citizens. This is not the place to discuss the position of the Church before the thirties and the methods the Party used in smashing institutional Buddhism. Suffice it to say that the Party acted severely and often brutally but also that Buddhism had been a tremendous burden on Mongolian society and many of its clergy had been utterly corrupt. We begin to understand why as much as one-third of the entire male population ended up as lamas when we read in Sh. Natsagdorj's *Paradise* how Sanjid's father asked him point-blank "whether I preferred to
eat my fill and have all the boiled rice and meat I wanted or al­
ways go hungry." As to corruption, the monk Shagdar in Paradise
had countless parallels in real life and the greedy lama in Mother
who exploited his own sister's credulity was the norm rather than
the exception in what passed for medical treatment as late as the
1920's.

Most stories in this collection deal neither with the past nor
with explicitly political themes but with many different facets of
the contemporary social milieu. It would be tedious to go over them
here one by one; I am certain that the reader can do this equally
well. Yet, in view of a certain degree of popularity in the United
States, it might be instructive to see how the theme of woman's role
is handled in Mongolian short stories, and especially in the last
six of our collection.

First of all, not only the heroines but all female characters
in these stories are portrayed positively. No malice, no cruelty,
not even jealousy mars these noble creatures. The closest thing to
human failing is a brush with infidelity (Dulma in Chulun), but it
is ultimately blamed on the husband. Furthermore, all but one of
the heroines are occupationally "liberated": Buma (in A Funny Woman)
works as a mechanic, Sevjidma and Dolgorsuren (the latter in At the
Pass) devote their lives to herding, and Dulma is a professional
reporter. Even Tsetseg (in The Kerchief of Love), after moping
around for a while, yearns to become a harvester combine operator.
Only Kulan, lovely, flirtatious Kulan is not gainfully employed
outside of her home, and S. Erdene, without ever saying so, leads
the reader to believe that the root of her anomalous status rests
with a cruel and possessive husband.

Up to this point, the characterization of woman's role -
essentially, the good woman at the labor front - is entirely formu­
ulaic, and it should not be surprising because the Party has re­
peatedly urged all women to take on full-time jobs outside their
homes. We should keep in mind, however, that in so doing, the Party has been motivated not so much by notions of equality (although a long-established state policy) as by a severe and persistent labor shortage.

There are other major differences on this subject between Mongolia and the United States. Mongolians try to obscure or argue away neither the differences in physical strength between men and women nor the manifest social consequences deriving therefrom. In these stories, the Mongolians are saying that women should participate full-time in as many occupations as possible, and they poke fun at men like Chalkha (in At the Pass) who do not accept this trend. But they are also saying that there are nevertheless occupations in which either men or women ought to predominate. Even the cases of Buma and Sevjidma, who clearly perform the most arduous tasks, subscribe to this view. Buma got herself into the business of a truck mechanic only at a time of extreme national emergency, i.e., during the war, and so her case is quite comparable to the contemporary "Rosie the riveter" in the United States. Even during that crisis, however, Buma was assigned to heavy labor only because "I was young and strong." This crusty and domineering woman not only does not demand that in peacetime more women should follow her example but insists that her son who "lost his purpose" when he became a hospital nurse should be given a job as mechanic so as "to make a real man out of him." Likewise, Sevjidma works hard on the range not because she somehow believes that housework is inferior (which she also performs, naturally and devotedly) but because her husband Senge has become lazy.

This clear-cut preference for economic sex differentiation is complemented by social ideals which have come under attack in the United States. In Chulun, Dulma's husband Dorji does all the housework besides a full-time career at the hospital. He would be ideal from the standpoint of many American feminists, yet in our story...
he is found wanting. Dulma yearns for and falls in love with a man like Chulun who wants "to escort a pretty girl," who pats girls on the head, playfully orders them not to yawn in his presence or to comb their hair, and who brings them gifts like lipstick from the big city. At every turn, Chulun takes the initiative, and Dulma and all the other women in the story, charmed by him, play passive roles. Likewise, in Before the Sun Goes Down, Dolgor, a middle-aged widow, feels youthful again in the presence of the ruggedly masculine Dendev who impresses her with his ability to split a tree trunk with one blow.

It is my hope that in spite of its imperfections and shortcomings, this collection of short stories will stimulate more interest in Mongolia and more translations in English of that country's literature.

Finally, it is my pleasure to thank my students for stimulating me into editing this volume and the State Committee for Information, Radio, and Television of the Mongolian Council of Ministers for granting permission to edit and publish these short stories.
NOTES


2. The magazine has been published bi-monthly by the State Committee for Information, Radio, and Television in Ulaanbaatar since June 1971. Its predecessor was Mongolia Today, published by the Information Section of the Mongolian Embassy in New Delhi.


9. Literacy statistics are virtually useless because it was the practice to record as literate only those who could read and write. Because literacy thus defined made a person liable for government service, many helped to push the official literacy figures still lower by pretending an inability to write. See B. Rinchen, Folklore Mongol (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), IV, viii.

10. The following summary remarks about literary activities in the post-revolutionary period are largely based on Gerasimovich.


14. Buyannemekh was posthumously rehabilitated in 1962.

15. The battle of Khalkhin Gol of 1939 in which Mongolian and Soviet troops cooperated in defeating Japanese forces is mentioned to this day.

16. The following description of D. Natsagdorj's life is mainly based on Gerasimovich and the recent study by Klaus Sagaster, "Der mongolische Dichter D. Nacagdorž (1906-1937)," Zentralasiatische Studien, VII (1973), 525-543.

17. Gerasimovich, 133.

18. Published in Tsog, 1947, Nos. 2-3, p. 3, as quoted in Gerasimovich, 133.

19. Six graduated from Mongolian State University and three from the Pedagogical Institute in Ulaanbaatar. Of these nine, three went on to the Gorki Literary Institute in Moscow, and two others evidently had no higher education in Mongolia before entering the Gorki Literary Institute directly.

20. Quite a few of them were older persons who had died before 1955.


23. The story also reveals an apparently widespread custom of not taking prisoners when the Japanese pilot gets killed the moment he parachutes to the ground.

24. D. Natsagdorj's poster-like sketch of "the marvelous man [who] had made a revolution in the north," in Son of the Old World, is rather incidental to the story which dwells mostly on the hopeless monotony that the writer saw in pre-revolutionary Mongolian society. Likewise, in The Green Knoll, Dansaran's and his daughter's refusal, at the risk of death, to reveal the whereabouts of the Red soldier is only a fleeting episode in that story.
While the official Mongolian attitude toward the present Chinese leadership is uncompromisingly hostile (see, e.g., the article, "The Peking chauvinists' words and deeds," originally published in the September 3, 1973 issue of Utga Zokhiol Urlag and translated in the supplement to Mongolla magazine, No. 2 (17), 1974), popular attitudes toward China seem to range from indifference to mild friendliness. In talks with Mongolians from many walks of life in the summer of 1973, I did not detect any trace of hostility toward either China or the Chinese people.