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TYPES OF BRANDS (TAMGA) USED BY MONGOLIANS ON HORSES AND THE BRANDING TRADITIONS

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The horse has been the best friend of nomads since ancient times. During ancient nomadism, the horse was a tool that would take people to wherever they wanted, and it was a sacred animal that gave strength and spirit to its owner. For this reason, all nomadic peoples especially respect horses. Mongolian people also treat horses with special respect. They also attach great importance to the care, condition, and health of their racehorses. Like Turkic peoples, Mongolians also make kumiss from mare's milk. One of the most basic drinks of Mongolians in summer is kumiss. *Goals and objectives.* Horse branding is a long-standing tradition among Mongolian peoples. Among the Mongols, there are various traditions related to marking horses. All Mongolian people have followed these traditions since ancient times. Today, such traditions continue. Our article describes these issues in more detail. *Results.* Branding a horse with iron was not only to mark the owner of the horse but also to protect it from various evils and calamities (trouble), according to Mongolian beliefs. The horse was generally marked by the time it was foal. Special traditional events and festivities were held during the process of branding horses. Apart from a few books and some articles written in Mongolian, there is little research in other languages about the Mongolian horse branding tradition. No specific scientific study has been conducted. *Conclusion.* In our article, we aim to discuss the subject in more detail by making use of some sources and scientific research on the Mongolian horse branding traditions. In addition, the Mongolian respect for horses, their traditions, and beliefs are also discussed.

Keywords: Mongols, horse, stamp, tradition, nomad

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МОНГОЛДАРДЫҢ ЖЫЛҚЫҒА ҚОЛДАНАТЫН ТАҢБАЛАРЫ ЖӘНЕ ТАҢБАЛАУ ДӘСТҮРЛЕРІ

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Аңдатпа. *Kipicne.* Ежелден – ер қанаты болған жылқы көшпенділердің ең жақын серігі. Иесін қалаған жеріне жеткізетін сенімді көлігі, жауынгерлерге күш-жігер беретін, рухы мен намысын оятатын қастерлі жануар. Сондықтанда көшпенді халықтар жылқыны ерекше қастерлейді. Моңғол халқы да жылқыға айырықша құрметпен қарайды. Сәйгүлік, жүйрік аттарының бағым-күтіміне, оның бабына және денсаулығына да назар аударады. Түркі халықтары сияқты Моңғолдарда бие сүтінен қымыз жасайды. Моңғолдардың жаз мезгіліндегі ең негізгі сусынының бірі осы қымыз болып саналады. *Зерттеудің мақсаты мен міндеттері.* Жылқы таңбалау – Моңғол халықтарында ежелден бері жалғасып келе жатқан дәстүрлердің бірі. Моңғолдар арасында жылқы таңбалауға байланысты түрлі дәстүрлер қалыптасқан. Барша моңғол халқы ежелден бұл дәстүрлерді ұстанып келген. Бүгінде осындай дәстүрлер жалғасын тауып келеді. Мақаламызда осы мәселелер толықрақ баяндалады. *Нәтижелер.* Жылқыға өз әулетінің таңбасын басу тек ғана жылқыны иемдену мақсатында ғана емес, оны отқа қыздырылған ыстық темірмен таңбалау моңғолдардың сенімі бойынша жамандықтан және түрі бәле-жаладан қорғайды. Жылқыны құлын, тай кезінен бастап таңбалайды. Жылқыны таңбалау барысында арнайы дәстүрлі шаралар ұйымдастырылып соңы мерекелік жиынға ұласады. Моңғолдардың жылқы таңбалау дәстүріне байланысты моңғолша жазылған кейбір мақалалармен бірнеше кітаптардан басқа, өзге тілде жасалған зерттеулер өте аз. Ғылыми түрде арнайы зерттеулер жасалған жоқ. *Қорытынды.* Мақаламызда Моңғолдардың жылқыға және таңбалау дәстүрлеріне байланысты кейбір деректер мен ғылыми зерттеулерді пайдаланыла отырып, бұл тақырыпты тереңірек қарастыру мақсат етілді. Сонымен қатар Моңғолдардың жылқыға деген құрметі, әдет-ғұрпы, наным-сенімі де баяндалады.

Түйін сөздер: Моңғолдар, жылқы, таңба, дәстүр, көшпенді

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МОНГОЛЬСКИЕ КЛЕЙМА ДЛЯ ЛОЩАДЕЙ И ТРАДИЦИИ ДЕЛАТЬ КЛЕЙМА

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Аннотация. *Введение.* С незапамятных времен лошадь занимает особое место в жизни кочевников, служа надежным транспортом и вдохновляющим союзником. Это почитаемое животное придает силу воинам, пробуждает их дух и честь. Кочевые народы, в том числе и монгольский, глубоко уважают лошадей, уделяя особое внимание их уходу, состоянию и здоровью. Как и тюркские общины, монголы изготавливают кумыс из кобыльего молока, рассматривая его как один из основных напитков в летнее время. *Цель и задачи исследования.* Традиция таврения лошадей представляет собой древний обряд монгольского народа. У монголов существуют различные традиции, связанные с мечением лошадей. Все монгольские народы соблюдают эти традиции с древних времен. Сегодня такие традиции продолжают. В нашей статье эти вопросы описаны более подробно. *Результаты.* Процесс клеймения, при котором на лошадь наносится особый знак своего рода с использованием раскаленного на огне железа, имеет не только функцию владения, монголы верят что оно защищает от зла и клеветы. Лошадей подвергают таврению с момента их рождения, включая возраст жеребенка и годовалых (тай). Сопровождающие этот процесс традиционные мероприятия завершаются праздничным сбором. Несмотря на ограниченное количество книг и статей на монгольском языке, посвященных данной теме, научных исследований на других языках о монгольской традиции клеймения лошадей проведено мало. *Выводы.* В статье предпринимается попытка более глубокого обзора этой темы с использованием доступных данных и научных исследований, связанных с монгольскими традициями клеймения лошадей. Особое внимание уделяется уважению монголов к лошадям, а также их обычаям и верованиям.

Ключевые слова: Монголы, лошади, клеймение, традиции, кочевники

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Introduction

There are a lot of historical information about the practicing of markings on animals by countries engaged in nomadic cattle breeding since ancient times. It is unknown from which language the words *tamga*, *tamaga*, *tamka*, *damga* entered from which are used interchangeably among the Turkic and Mongolian peoples.

The symbol name appears for the preceding all others in the Kultegin inscription of the Old Turkic period in the form of *tamgaçı* (Tekin, 2017: 50). According to historical data, it is written in historical sources and epics called *Diuanu Lugati't-Turk* by Mahmud al-Kashkari (Kaşgarlı, 2005: 525), *Jami' u't-Tawarih* (Fazlullah, 1998: 32; 232; 602) by Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Tevarih-i Al-i Selchuk* (Bakır, 2009: XLVI) by Ali Yazyzhioglu, *Shejere-i Terakime* by Ebulghazi Bahadır Khan (Bahadır Han, 1996: 425), *The epic of Oghiz Khan* (Ağca, 2019: 85), *The book of Korkyt* (Gökyay, 2007: 260), *Kudatgu Bilik* (Has Hacib, 2006: 258–259). And the exact facts about the marks used by the Mongols on the animal can be found in the work *Tarikh-i Jihan Gusha* written in Persian in 1259 by the famous historian Alaaddin Ata Melik Juvein. In the mentioned work, "Genghis Khan with his servants and sons all gathered in one place in the spring months of 1220 and held a conference on the shore of the *Fenaket* river in the territory of today's Central Asia. When they came to the place called *Kulanbasi*, Genghis Khan gave his order to hunt to Shagatai, Ogedei and Jochi. It is written that his sons hunted as many wild onagers as they could in the place of *Utuka* and finally caught the weak and emaciated onagers and left them alive with their marks (Cüveyni, 2013: 158–159). Based on these facts, it is clear that during the time of Genghis Khan, the tradition of marking cattle among the Mongols was the most developed,

and it is a tradition that has been going on since ancient times.

The tradition of marking livestock among Mongolian peoples has been continuing since ancient times. There is written evidence that the symbols were often used on the cattle of feudal lords (wealthy people), the church, and the *jas*¹². Among the Mongolian herders, there are various methods of looking for lost cattle, asking others, and reporting the lost cattle to the owner. In such a case, in order to ask others about the color and number of livestock such as stallions, male camels, and bulls, in addition to asking them about the immediately visible colors of horse herds, its mottled, white, brown, dun collared, with a face-mole (Choisamba, 1974: 4).

As we mentioned above, the appearance of the symbol is also related to the acquisition of property or livestock. The original feudal classes used special symbols to own their main property, and herdsmen used different symbols to distinguish their cattle from other herds. Cattle theft has been minimized by using these symbols. In the 13th century, there was a law called *Ikh Zasag* approved by Genghis Khan himself about the social structure of the Mongols. The Law of *Ikh Zasag* has the following articles. It is said that if someone steals one's cattle, the owner should return nine cattle in same outward appearance of the stolen cattle to the owner, and if he cannot give them, he should give his children instead, and if he does not have children, he should be beheaded as a sheep (Choisamba, 1974: 20–21). That's why Mongolians have paid great attention to branding animals, especially horses, since ancient times.

It is well known that the most important way to find your own horse, besides asking others about its color and number, is to put a *mark/stamp* on the horse. In Mongolia, everyone uses their own individual property symbols. In the era of socialism, in the period of *negdel* (union), the local administration of the herdsmen used to individually examine and determine where the horse needs to be marked. Mongolians can own their cattle with their own property marks, which they call *im tamga*. The sign is of great importance for the restoration of violated property and non-property rights of citizens, for resolving criminal or civil cases related to cattle theft through court. Cattle theft or personal trade of herdsmen was the main fact of animal marking.

Materials and research methods

This article briefly describes the origin of the term stamp/mark and the use of livestock (horses, cows, camels, sheep, goats) among Mongolians. Mongolian horse marking traditions and types of marks were studied in depth based on scientific research. Various historical data, literary and scientific books, personal collections, fundamental research works were used in the article. Analytical, retrospective, narrative, historical-comparative, description, summary methods of conducting historical research were used in the course of scientific work.

The symbol is used everywhere in Mongolia under the same name. Assembling and researching symbols used by Mongols began in the 1950s. B. Rinchen, a famous Mongolian writer and scientist, in the 22nd issue of the scientific journal *Oriental Archive* of Czechoslovakia listed 210 symbols, 9 *im*¹³ (*tamga*) and published them in 1954.

Researcher Ts. Gochoo in the 4th issue of 1958 of *Science and Life* magazine published a collection of 360 characters and 14 stigma. G. Sukhbaatar's scientific article "Darganga's symbols" contains pictures of 124 symbols. This article was published in 1960 under the title "O Tamgah i imnah Tabunov Darigangi" in volume 1, issue 6 of the scientific journal published by the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, Ethnology. Furthermore, the work entitled *Animal Marking and its Legal*

¹²«Jas» - temple farm. That is, some who is responsible for the local church (dugan sum), religious funds and property. In particular, an economic institution that provides the expenses necessary for the dedication or reading of holy books.

¹³ "im" - The Mongols called the stigma symbol as a "im tamga". The word "im" means "en" (stigma/mark) in Kazakh. It is not known from which language the word "im" originates. Among the Turkic peoples, especially in Anatolia, the word "im" is used. They also call the symbol "im damga". The term "en" was first written in the form of "ene" or "enet" in Divanu Lügati't-Türk, written by Mahmut Kashkari in the 11th century. That's why the origin of this word may come from the Turkic language.

Significance (Mongolchuudiin Maliin im tamga tuunii khuul tsaaznii ach kholbogdal) written by D. Choisamba in 1974 is being the most important and valuable scientific work on Mongolian animal markings. This book clearly shows the types and forms of markings used for animals in each area of land of Mongolia and regional districts. It was proceed scientific studies of the importance of the mark and its use.

Historian H. Perlee is one of the scientists who deeply engaged in the study of Mongolian symbols in general. The famous work of this man entitled *Mongol tumnii garliig tamgaar khaij sudlah ni* [Research on Mongolian surnames by symbols] was published in 1978 by the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of Mongolia. This book is considered to be the most important and valuable work in the study of Mongolian symbols. In addition to these works, several works and scientific articles were written about the different tribes living in each territory of Mongolia and the symbols used for animals in the districts and regions. Among them, it should be noted that the research-based works written in 2008 by G.Purevdorj entitled *Oyrat Mongolchuudiin maliin im tamga* [Oirat Mongolian animal/livestock marking] (in the end of the XIX century, beginning of the XX century), and L. Tudev *Mal tamlahui* [Animals/livestock marking] (2001), J. Saruulbuyan, A. Davaasambuu *Mongol aduunii tamganii oilogo* [Understanding the marks of the Mongolian horse] (2008), written with an introduction by G. Tserenkhand, D. Bum-Ochir and other scientists *Mongol yos zanshil zan uyliin tovchoon* [Collection of Mongolian customs and traditions] (2009), M. Tumorjav, N. Khurelbaatar *Mongol malchnii erdem uhaanii deej orşvoi* [Scientific concept of Mongolian herdsman] (2017) are important.

In addition to the mentioned Mongolian scientists, the British scientist Caroline Humphrey provides important information in her research on the Mongolian tradition of marking horses and the types of mark/brands. Humphrey's "The Semiology of Horse Brands in Mongolia". *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* (Berghahn Books). 1973; "Horse brands of the Mongolians. A system of signs in a nomadic culture," *American Anthropologist*, 1974. 1(3); "Horse Brands of the Mongolians, A System of Signs in a Nomadic Culture" *Traditional Marking Systems, A Preliminary Survey*. London: Dunking. 2010. pp. 291-309 scientific articles such as these provide important new data on the Mongolian horse marking tradition and mark/stamps.

Discussion

Mongolians often mark their horses during the autumn. This also has its own reason. First of all, in the spring, when the sun warms up, the wool on the horse starts shedding. Horses in cold mountainous regions do not shed their wool until summer. By autumn, it is suitable to mark the new short fur. Secondly, the Mongols do not stamp on a skinny horse. An emaciated horse manifests very painfully. Therefore, at the end of summer, by autumn, when the horses are full, and foals mark when they became adult. This is also a respect for the horse. And some yearling foals, which have not been lost weight by winter and have not been affected by the winter cold, are marked even in spring.

According to the long-standing tradition, the Mongols use iron to make the mark used for the horse by expert smiths. After using the symbol, it is cherished and kept. The symbol was well wrapped and kept near the house or, according to their beliefs, near the adored object in the house. Nowadays, the horse symbol is usually placed in a felt box, hung on the wall of the house, on a higher place, or wrapped in a *khadag*¹⁴ and kept in a dower chest. When the animal gets fat, the mark is cleaned with fire, poured with milk, and used while carrying it with *khadag*. Nevertheless, there is a tradition that only the owner of the house carries the symbol around his waist to carry it to one side. It is not tied to the saddle of the riding horse.

In ancient times, when the number of cattle, as horses, reached *tum*¹⁵, they were marked with the

¹⁴It means "khadag" in Mongolian, "hada" in Tibetan, and "harimj" in Chinese. It is believed that the word "Khadag" entered Mongolia through China and Tibet in the 13th century. "Khadag" has been revered and valued by Mongolians since ancient times and is considered to be the most valuable thing.

¹⁵1 *tüm* – ten thousand in Mongolian (10,000).

word *tum*. Families who had a lot of livestock and measured their horses and cattle with a funnel used the symbol *bum*¹⁶ to designate the size of their livestock. The symbol was specially prepared for smiths in their clans to increase the number of cattle, increase prosperity, and avoid evil (Tomorjav, Khurelbaatar, 2017: 149–150). A valuable and special gift was given to the person who is preparing the *tamga* or treated in hospitable way. According to the Mongolian tradition, on a holy, blessed day, the symbol is brought home.



Fig. 1. Mongolian stamps (tamgha) for horses: 1-olom, 2-chandman, 3-dorom, 4-dun, 5-uul. Source: National Museum of Mongolia.

While marking horses, it is being carried out after trimming the fur to be branded or moistening it with water of that area, and a hot mark is pressed on the fire. The symbol is not overheated, it is heated with dung and wood fuel. If the stigma is very hot or if it is pressed too much, it will burn the horse's skin as deep as to its meat and if it is pressed too little, it will fade and become invisible, so it is pressed correctly and in a special way.

As a horse is a spirited animal, it is believed that if a mark is placed on its face or nose like other animals, it will lose its beauty and greatness. The horse is a very smart and intelligent animal. That's why Mongolians usually press the symbol on the right side. Marking the negative side will be uncomfortable and difficult. Most of the Mongolians, when they mark a foal or colt, do not put it on the ground, but several people hold it from all sides and press it while it is standing.

The Mongols strictly forbade stepping over the symbol. In addition, during animal marking, the top of the mark should not be placed facing down. In particular, it is superstitious that if you press the mark of an animal on the ground, the animal will decrease and die. There is a tradition of cutting hair from the manes and tails of horses for sale and tying them to the handle of the stigma. This means that the wealth and spirit of the sold cattle will not be lost, and it will be passed on to the next cattle to be marked. When the last horse is marked: *Tamgalsan aduu min tal бүрhej, Temdegalsan aduu min tsybarin od shig үрзhejlej* (May my marked horses fill the field, may my marked horses be multiplied like stars in the sky) (Tomorjav, Kurelbaatar, 2017: 150). After the horses are marked, the owner of the horse invites all the people who helped in the marking to his house, prepares a special meal and organize a festive feast (Bayanbat, 2016: 203–204). This tradition is one of the oldest traditions among Mongolians.

Khalkh¹⁷ (халх) – mongols stamp their foals. And other clans make a mark on the yearling (foal).

¹⁶1 bum – one hundred thousand (100,000).

¹⁷ “Khalkh” is the majority of the ethnic group that makes up the bulk of the population of Mongolia. The ancestors of the

Commonly, Mongolians make so called tying the mares to prepare kumiss (horse milk) on bar odor (barys) day in the first months of summer. At the base of the halkhas, towards the end of autumn, when the sun starts to cool down, “mares are untied and foals are marked”. This tradition is performed on a good day in their calendar called “nohoi odor” (dog day). On this foal marking day, a traditional festival called Unaga Tamgany Nair (Feast of Foal Marking) is organized, special national food are prepared, and the end is followed by singing and dancing.



Fig. 2. Festive event following the Mongolian horse marking tradition. Source: Arvaikheer sum (district) of the Uverkhangai region. URL: 2023.08.22. Taken from the website

For the Khalkh Mongols (Borzhgin), the festival of stallion matchmaking and yearling (foal) marking in autumn is a long-established tradition. On this day, early in the morning, horses are collected and mares are milked. During lunch, food is placed on the mare's peg (milk, butter). Then dung is lit on the fire, the mark is heated and marked starting from the first born foal. After the foals are marked, the mark is soaked in qymyz. Regardless, it is necessary to apply qymyz to the stigma. If there is no qymyz at home, then it is necessary to go to where the mare is kept, to a village where there is qymyz, and after the foal is marked, they wet the stamp on the qymyz. After the stamp is dipped in kumiss, there is a custom Tamgany hishig (gift of the stigma/mark) of putting a drop of kumiss on the palm of each person. After performing these rites, everyone bents three times and bows unaga tamgany gurav (Tserenkhand, Bum-Ochir, 2009: 289).



Fig. 3. The Mongolian tradition of dipping the mark into the kumiss after making a yearling (foal). Source: J. Bat-Ireedui: "Tamgany Khishig", (Institute of Mongolian Studies), 2011/10/02. Taken from personal information page

In this way, the celebration of the marking continues with the melodic lyrics. Also, the guests who came to the celebration are encouraged to drink a lot of kumiss. It is considered a good ritual if it glows and vomits. Furthermore, if it vomits outside, it is superstitious that the mare will be weak next year (Tserenkhand, Bum-Ochir, 2009: 289). As we mentioned above, Mongolians use marks to recognize and distinguish their animals from other tribes, that is, to prove that their horses are owned, they need to have a mark that is not similar to others. However, since most of the population is engaged in livestock farming in one area, the number of ownership marks of one person is recognized by many people, so their number is limited. In other words, it is forbid for someone else to use the same or similar symbol as the next person.

Results

Mongols used the symbol called *im tamga* mainly for small animals, sheep and goats. *Im* (en) was also used for animals among the Turkic peoples. Furthermore, the Anatolian Turks put a mark called *im tamga* on four livestock. This tradition is also widely used among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia. The earmarks of small cattle are put on 2–3 months after birth. In the work of the scientist, Altaiologist Bazylkhan Buqatuly, the word *im* in the Old Mongolian language has two different meanings: 1. An livestock's noble genetic (gender) sign. 2. He wrote that "inji" (enchi – the share of cattle marked for the children of a family) and "imnekü – imneh" means to marking (Buqat, 1973: 70).

The great British scholar Caroline Humphrey provides important information in her research on the Mongolian tradition of marking horses. According to her, Mongols only use symbols for horses and camels. Amongst the Mongols, who herd the "five domestic animals" (horses, camels, cattle, sheep and goats), only horses, and occasionally camels, display the *tamga* (plural: *tamaga*). The other animals have ear incisions (Humphrey, 1974: 477–478). They put *im* on other small livestock/animals, especially sheep and goats. It is believed that this name is used for animals with low value and low quality. The Dariganga Mongols of eastern Mongolia set a lucky, holy day according to their own calendar or as directed by a lama to mark the horse. The horses are brought to the ground away from the women in the house, and there they hold each one in turn, put them on the ground on their right side, and tie their legs. The horses and the horse specialist, the marker, and everyone else were first banished by juniper smoke (Humphrey, 1973: 24). Although this tradition of banishing is related to the religious beliefs of the Mongols (shamanism), this custom is not practiced today.

Mongolians do not completely change the symbol of the horse, according to the tradition passed down from father to son. The son is forbidden to change his father's symbol according to his own wishes. Cattle given to newly married families may be subject to additional changes in markings as per the father's instructions. Since ancient times, nomadic Mongols have used the symbol of their clan from generation to generation. To create a new symbol, it was used with the permission of *hoshuu noyon* or a symbol provided by them. For example, when a horse reaches a thousand: *Urt holiin mal myanga hurlee, Mal khairakh temdeg khairlana uu* (Our livestock has reached a thousand, let us to endow our about livestock a favorable mark) – it was used to go towards noyon and ask for a mark (Tserenkhand, Bum-Ochir, 2009: 286).

Nomadic Mongols have very rich images (types) of animal symbols. But since they usually add new symbols based on the symbols of the same house, use the same symbol in different ways, or use the same symbol on the right or next side of the animal, the symbols of local herdsmen are never confused with each other.



Fig. 4. Stamps (tamgha) of Mongolian horses. The riding side (right) is pressed against the thigh. Source: Photos taken by Hungarian researcher, Mongolologist Obrusanszki Borbala



Zurhen tamga – (heart mark/brand).

The heart is a vital organ of humans and animals. A person can live without hands, eyes, teeth, but it is impossible to live without heart. That is why the heart symbol is used as a symbol of a horse. Heart symbol was also called *buivan* symbol. Inner Mongolians usually call the heart symbol *Buivan* symbol (Saruulbuyan, Davaasambuu, 2008: 164).



Has tamga – (Has-swastika mark/brand).

Has – the word samgard. The digital figure with four ends bent at a right angle has various features and intuitive secrets. Means peace and energetic movement (Saruulbuyan, Davaasambuu, 2008: 343).



Fig. 5. Mongolian horse with Has symbol/mark (Kıdıralı, Bazylkhan, vb. 2018: 112).



Fig. 6. Similar symbol/marks used for horses in different regions of Mongolia. 1. Nalaiykh district, 2. Bayan-Olgii region (Alylmaz, 2016: 623–624).

Mongolians often mark a horse above its hind legs, over its thighs and over its forelegs. Since the horse is ridden by the right side, most of the symbols are marked on the seating (right) side. And if it is similar to someone else's symbol, it is put on the next side of the horse according to different characteristics to make it different from the same symbol. In the work of researcher D. Choisamba, it is shown in more detail how and in which places the Mongols put marks on their skins.

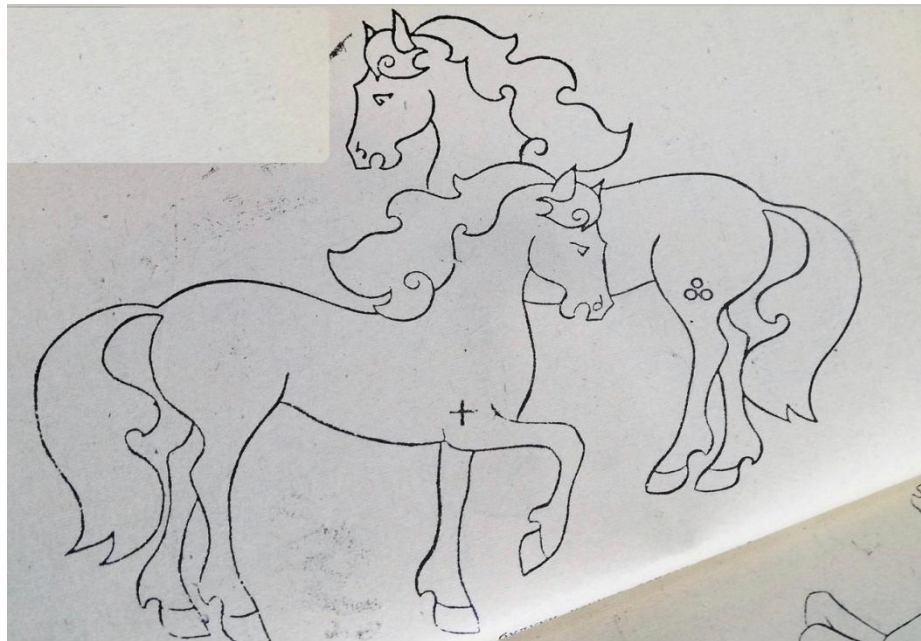


Fig. 7. Mongols often make marks on the horse's thigh and forehead (Choisamba, 1974: 4–6).

The Mongols used two main types of marks for horses: 1. *Usen tamga* (skin or hair mark). 2. *Mahan tamga* (meat mark). *Usen tamga*. It is slightly heated by burning dung on the fire and pressed on the animal. The *Usen tamga* is not pressed as deep as the *mahan tamga* and does not burn the skin very much. When the *mahan tamga* is not printed, a temporary *usen tamga* is printed.

A *mahan tamga* horse manifests itself very painfully. The healing of the mark's wound will also continue for some time. Therefore, in cold weather, only *usen tamga* is printed instead of *mahan tamga*. Since *usen tamga* reaches the horse's skin and cannot be burned off, the fur of cattle falls off and becomes invisible when the new fur matures (Purevdorj, 2008: 17–18). That's why herdsmen don't use *usen* symbol a lot. It is used only for temporary identification of a horse taken from someone else. However, if the *usen tamga* is used on a horse and is pressed deeper into the skin, then this mark is called *khursuon tamga* (ground mark). The differences between *mahan* and *Khursuon* marks differ in the way they are printed on the horse (Tserenkhand, Bum-Ochir, 2009: 287). A *Khursuon* mark may fade in a few years and become invisible to the naked eye. And because the skin of the *mahan* mark is deeply burned and pressed, it never fades and does not grow in its place, only the mark remains clearly visible.

There are many types and names of horse symbols used by Mongolian peoples. Although horse symbols are divided into central, west-east or *khalkh*, *oirad*, *Altai Uriankhaylar*, *Bayad*, *Durved*, *Zakhchin*, *Ould* tribes used similar symbols close to each other. Among them, *Altai uranhai*'s used *numan tamga* (a bow symbol), *Bayads* used “*olmon tamga*”, *Durvds* used *saran tamga* (moon symbol), *Zakhchins* used *devree tamga* (letter symbol), *Uoldder* used *gal tamga* (fire symbol).



Fig. 8. Stamps (tamgha) of Mongolian horses: 1. Nüdtey zagasan gal-saran tamga (fish and fire, moon symbol). 2. Lanzan tamga (Lanzan damga (Lanzan symbol). 3. Dörvöljin kureetei, çoyunjin tamga (four-cornered chainzon symbol).

Source: Photos taken by Hungarian researcher, Mongolologist Obrusanszki Borbala



Gal-saran tamga (fire and moon symbol). The Mongolian tradition of considering fire as the highest symbol of existence dates back thousands of years.



Gal tamga (fire symbol). Fire is an eternal symbol of the strength and steadfastness of the family and the nation. Fire is a symbol of warmth and light. Mongols used fire as a symbol of many things in life, one of them is this fire symbol (Saruulbuyan, Davaasambuu, 2008: 80).



Zagas tamga – (fish symbol). In ancient times, fish was the main food of poor Mongolians. Later, when the number of horses increased in the Mongols, people used this symbol for their horses. This symbol is also included in the national flag of Mongolia, it means a symbol of peace and unity (Perlee, 1976: 176).



Lazan tamga – (Lanzan symbol). Tibetan word. An ornate form of Nagara script used among Nepalese Buddhists. Patterns of Lanz inscriptions are found in many Mongolian jewelry, boxes and chests. It is also used for horse symbols (Saruulbuyan, Davaasambuu, 2008: 171).



Doorvooljin khureetei choinzon tamga – (four-cornered chainzon symbol). The exact origin of the word Choinzon is unknown. Probably it might be Tibetan word. Among the Mongols, it is found in people named Choinzon.

Some of the types of symbols collected by T. Gochoo on Mongolian horse symbols are presented in Caroline Humphrey's article (Humphrey, 2010: 292). The full version of these symbols is given in the article *Mal Tamgalakhui* (Marking of livestock) prepared by L.Tudev (Tudev, 2001: 18–22; Tudev, 2003: 189–193).

In 1954, the well-known scientist B. Rinchin published a list of 210 characters and 9 names in the XXII issue of the scientific journal *Oriental Archive* of Czechoslovakia (Choisamba, 1974: 18). B. Renchin's article provides information about the symbols marked on the sides of horses and camels. For example, names such as tawaan hoshuu (five corners), num, sum (bullet, bow), noyon tama (symbol of power) etc. are given (Tezcan, 2010: 383).

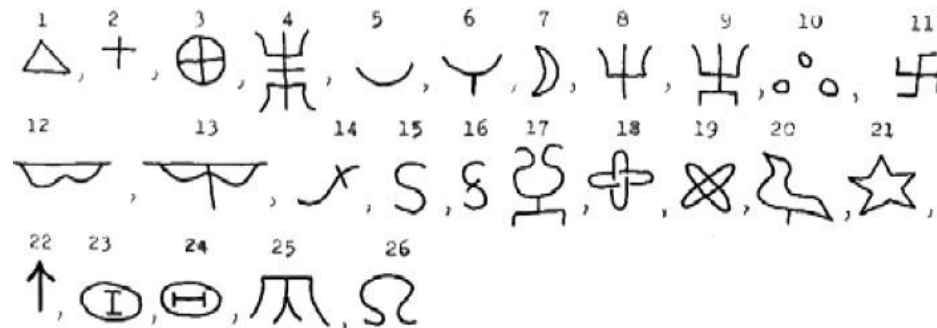


Fig. 9. Tamgas collected by B. Rinchen in various regions of Mongolia (Tezcan, 2010: 383).

Humphrey's article contains important information related to Mongolian horse brand-marks. According to his research, the types of symbols used by Mongolians for horses are as follows:

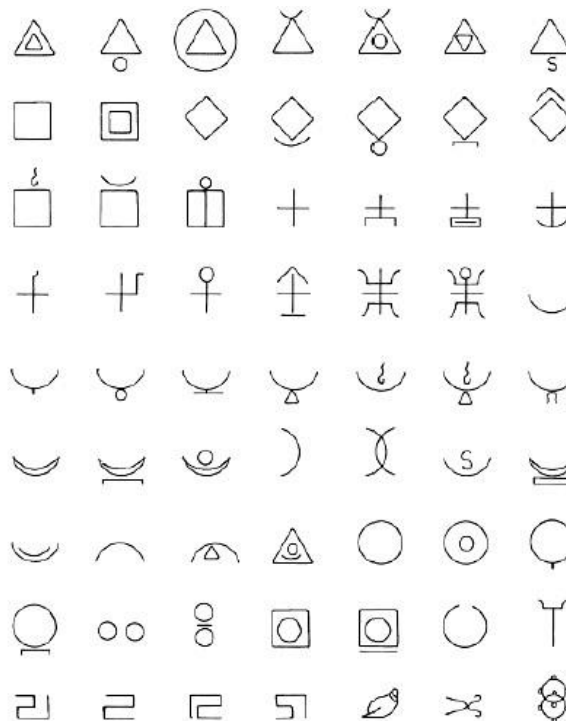


Fig. 10. Mongolian Horse mark-brands (in Ts. Gochoo's Studies) (Humphrey, 2010: 292)

Brand-marks, which the Mongols call *tamaga*, ostensibly have the purpose only of indicating difference, i.e., a man only has to give his horses a sign which is not the same as anyone else's to mark his ownership. But since it is important that ownership signs be recognized by a large number of people in the course of everyday herding life, there is in fact only a limited number of them. Gochoo collected his signs all over Mongolia and found 360; yet a study of one small group of Mongols, the Dariganga of the East Gobi, has shown that at least half of Gochoo's *tamagas* are in use in this region. Therefore, we can suppose that there is a common stock of brand-marks that can be used by different people simultaneously, as long as contiguity does not cause confusion (Humphrey, 2010: 292). There are many other types of symbols that Mongolians use for horses.



Fig. 11. Complete version of symbol/marks collected by Ts. Gochoo.

These marks were published in 1958 in the journal *Maliin im tamganii tukhay* (About Marking of Livestock) Mongolian names of symbols (Tudev, 2001: 18–22; Tudev, 2003: 189–193). The symbol/brands names are as follows:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Şoynzon | 40. Dörvöljin küreetei şagt | 76. Saran devsgertey hayruul |
| 2. Heltei şoinzon | 41. Saravştai şagt | 77. Söntey jinstey davhar sar |
| 3. Ebertei şoinzon | 42. Evertay tuuhay | 78. Heltey savhan hayruultay sar |
| 4. Sartai şoinzon | 43. Lanz | 79. Ongitoy sar |
| 5. Dörvöljin Jinstei şoinzon | 44. Jinstei Lanz | 80. Zuuzaytay sar |
| 6. Shireetei choinzon | 45. Hevtee havirgan sar | 81. Belli deġil |
| 7–9. Shireetei höltei choinzon | 46. Höltey sar | 82. Gurvaljin hüreetey nar sar |
| 10. Davhar choinzon | 47. Ongitoy sar | 83. Ongi |
| 11. Ongitoy choinzon | 48. Shireetey sar | 84. Hüreetey ongi |
| 12. Dügreg küreetei choinzon | 49. Söntey sar | 85. Höltey ongi |
| 13. Ongitoy şoinzon | 50. Galtay sar | 86. Nüdtay ongi |
| 14. Zuuzaitay gurvan hoġuu | 51. Hömörsön bumbatai sar | 87. Shireetey ongi |
| 15. Nudtei şoinzon | 52. Galtay söntei sar | 88. Shireetey heltey ongi |
| 16. Tal gurvaljin | 53. Uulitay sar | 89. Örüü ongi |
| 17. Baydiin tamga | 54. Nar saran, jistey sar | 90. Tasalgatay ongi |
| 18. Davhar gurvaljin tamga | 55. Saran devsgertei (a) tamga | 91. Dörvöljin hüreetey ongi |
| 19. Dörvöljin | 56. Bosoo habirgan sar | 92. Dörvöljin hüreetey shireetey ongi |
| 20. Davhar dörvöljin | 57. Solbison havirgan sar | 93. Zadgai ongi |
| 21. Shovh dörvöljin | 58. Adı belli deġil | 94. Chandmant zadgai ongi |
| 22. Saran devsgertei dörvöljin | 59. Holboo habirgan sar | 95. Gurvan nüdtay zadgai ongi |
| 23. Ongitoy dörvöljin | 60. Hövchtoy bosoo habirgan sar | 96. Zooson tamga |
| 24. Saravştay dörvöljin | 61. Hövchtoy hevtee sar | 97. Embüü tamga |
| 25. Shireetey dörvöljin | 62. Nartay hövchtey hevtee sar | 98. Erdene |
| 26. Galtay dörvöljin | 63. Galtay hövchtey sar | 99. Buyl |
| 27. Sartay dörvöljin | 64. Shireetey hövchtey sar | 100. Buyl tamga |
| 28. Jinstey olom | 65. Dörvöljin shireetei sar | 101. Doġoo harsan ats |
| 29. Tuuhay | 66. Onist sar | 102. Tovhtoy buyl |
| 30. Jinstey tuuhai | 67. Alman sar | 103. Deeree tovhtoy buyl |
| 31. Shireetey tuuhai | 68. Shireetey alman sar | 104. Dooġoo harsan buyl |
| 32. Dörvöljin hüreetey tuuhai | 69. Ongitoy hövchtey sar | 105. Evertay buyl |
| 33. Saran devsgert tuuhai | 70. Shireetey hövchtöy sar | 106. Dugui hüreetey buyl |
| 34. Zeteretey tuuhai | 71. Saran devsgertey | 107. Dörvöljin hüreetey buyl |
| 35. Serevştay shireetei tuuhai | 72. Davhar havirgan sar | 108. Sarab hüreetey buyl |
| 36. Chagt | 73. Hömörsön sartay sön | 109. Saran devsgertey buyl |
| 37. Davhar tuuhai | 74. Luvsandashiin tamga | |
| 38. Dügreg küreetey tuuhai | 75. Shireetey hövchtöy sar | |
| 39. Shireetei şagt | | |

Several kinds of objects are thought suitable for *tamaga* signs. The most common, perhaps, are religious symbols common to the whole area of North Asian Buddhism. These symbols are also used in astrology, where they are given precise meanings. For example: *čindamani* (чандмань), which is represented as a brand-mark like this meaning ‘the jewel which satisfies all desire,’ and which in astrology is the symbol of the day when happiness is established; *saran* (саран), moon, represented as a brand like this, astrologically, the symbol of the day the ‘powerful ones assemble.’ *sa*, the Tibetan letter, written as a brand in the same way, and symbol of the day the spirit-lords of the earth assemble (Humphrey, 2010: 294).



Fig. 12. Types of mark used for horses among the Mongols (Saruulbuyan, Davaasambuu, 2017: 152).

There are many types of mark/stamp used by Mongolians on horses. Therefore, it is not possible to cover all types of symbols in this article. However, according to G. Sukhbaatar's research, the most common types of symbols used by Mongolians for horses are as follows:

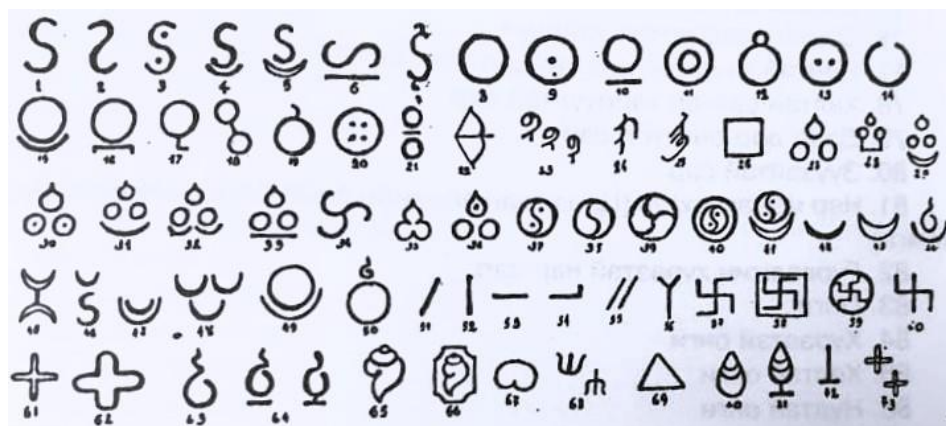


Fig. 13. According to the research of G. Sukhbaatar, horse symbols that were regularly used in the Mongols (Tudev, 2001: 22–24).

Mongolian names of stamps: (These marks are also used for “five domestic animals” (horses, camels, cows, sheep, and goats, which are livestock).

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Zöv harsan zuuzay (Зөв харсан зуузай) | 7. Çireetey ongi (Ширээтэй онги) |
| 2. Buruu harsan zuuzay (Буруу харсан зуузай) | 8. Davhar ongi (Давхар онги) |
| 3. Nüdtei zuuzay (Нүдтэй зуузай) | 9. Senjtey ongi (Сэнжтэй онги) |
| 1. Sartai zuuzay (Сартай зуузай) | 10. Hoыр нүдтеу ongi (Хоёр нүдтэй онги) |
| 2. Gövchtei sartay zuuzay (Гөвчтэй сартай зуузай) | 11. Zadgay ongi (Задгай онги) |
| 3. Shireetei zuuzay (Ширээтэй зуузай) | 12. Sartay ongi (Сартай онги) |
| 4. Erhiitei zuuzay (Эрхийтэй зуузай) | 13. Shireetey ongi (Сартай онги) |
| 5. Ongi (Онги) | 14. Süültei ongi (Сүүлтэй онги) |
| 6. Nüdtei ongi (Нүдтэй онги) | 15. Holboo ongi (Холбоо онги) |
| | 16. Ebertei ongi (Эвэртэй онги) |

17. Dörvön nüdtei ongi (Дөрвөн нүдтэй онги)
18. Höndöltei hoyr ongi (Хөндөлтэй хоёр онги)
19. Numan tamga (Нуман тамга)
20. 'Bii' tamga (üseg), («Бий» тамга (үсэг))
21. 'Ma' tamga (üseg), («Ма» тамга (үсэг))
22. Jiva tamga (üg), (Жива тамга (үг))
23. Dörvöljin ongi (Дөрвөлжин онги)
24. Chandman (Чандмань)
25. Shireetey chandman (Ширээтэй чандмань)
26. Gövchtey chandman (Гөвчтэй саран чандмань)
27. Ноур нүдтеy chandman (Хоёр нүдтэй чандмань)
28. Sartay chandman (Сартай чандмань)
29. Saran chandman (Саран чандмань)
30. Shireetey chandman (Ширээтэй чандмань)
31. Zadgay chandman (Задгай чандмань)
32. Zadgay chandman (Задгай чандмань)
33. Nüdtey chandman (Нүдтэй чандмань)
34. Zagas tamga (Загас тамга)
35. Nüdgüi zagas (Нүдгүй загас)
36. Gurvan nüdnii zagas (Гурван нүдний загас)
37. Hüreetey zagas (Хүрээтэй загас)
38. Gövchtey saran zagas (Гөвчтэй саран загас)
39. Dan sar (Дан сар)
40. Gövshtey sar (Гөвчтэй сар)
41. Galtay sar (Галтай сар)
42. Tushaatay sar (Тушаатай сар)
43. Saran zuuzay (Саран зуузай)
44. Davhar sar (Давхар сар)
45. Örөө gурvan sar (Өрөө гурван сар)
46. Nar sar (Нар сар)
47. Galtay sar (Галтай сар)
48. Tashuur hayrlaga, (Ташуур хайрлага)
49. Bosoo hayrlaga (Босоо хайрлага), (Tudev, 2001: 22–42)

Conclusion

There are very few scientific studies on the Mongolian horse branding traditions. There are no scientific studies conducted by foreign scientists on these subjects. Only a few articles have been written. Therefore, it is very important to conduct scientific research on the Mongolian animal branding tradition. Although there are many historical sources indicating that people engaged in nomadism or animal husbandry have used stamps since ancient times, it is controversial from which language the words *tamga*, *tamaga*, *taḡba*, *damga*, which are commonly used among Turkish and Mongolian people, are derived. In addition, the word *tamga* has been used in the same sense with different names such as *belgü*, *tuyray* (*tuyra*), *mühiir*, *mör*, *tamya*, *tavro*. It is understood that these words mentioned in the sources were used a long time ago. The tradition of animal branding among nomadic Mongolian peoples has persisted since ancient times. Although there is information that the history of the stamp/branding's emergence began in the Bronze Age, it is not possible to find out when the Mongols used stamps on animals. This issue still needs scientific research. Nomadic people living in Central Asia used stamps to protect their animals, valuables and property. The primary feudal classes created special stamps and symbols to identify their basic property, and shepherds used various marks to distinguish their animals from other herds. With the use of these stamps, animal theft between shepherds and tribes decreased and various disputes were easily resolved. Animal theft among the Mongols has been regulated by law since ancient times. However, since this law protects the interests of high-ranking officials and the rich, it also had many unfair aspects, such as blaming or punishing innocent people, discrimination and public humiliation.

It is known that during the time of Genghis Khan, each Mongolian tribe had its own stamp. In the 13th century, a law called *Ikh Zasag*, approved by Genghis Khan himself, emerged regarding the social structure of the Mongols, state affairs and human rights, and with this law, animal theft was prohibited. Therefore, the tradition of using stamps to easily distinguish one's own animals from other people's animals has become quite widespread. If we take into account the information in the work of Ata Melik Cuveyni (2013: 158–159) that Genghis Khan's soldiers in the 1220s stamped the wild horses that were weakened or captured during the hunting season and later released them, we see that the Mongols had a tradition of using marks on their animals and also on their horses and it emerged in the beginning of the 13th centuries or earlier.

There are many traditions related to horses among Mongolian peoples. Among the animals, they especially respects the horse. Horses are considered sacred animals. Importance is also given to the branding tradition, and traditional events are organized after the foal is branded. Each tribe, clan or ethnic group has its own unique markings. The stamp is considered important for resolving any property-related

disputes and detecting animal theft. Among nomadic peoples, *en* (mark) is generally applied to small cattle (sheep, goats). It is made by cutting or slicing a little from the side and tip of the animal's ear. This sign is called *en-tanba* among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, and *im tamga* among the Mongolians. In addition to the tradition of branding, Mongolians regard the brand iron (stamping tool) as sacred and show special respect for it. Such traditions and customs are discussed in more detail in our article from a scientific perspective. Additionally, new data about the Mongolian horse branding tradition is included. At the end of the article, the most commonly used stamp / *tamga* types for Mongolian horses were also examined scientifically.

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