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Political parody: The new image of Mongolian contemporary art

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Abstract

This research investigates the paradigm of parody in Mongolian political art through its connection with the mythological figure of the *mangas*. The *mangas* is supernatural mythological creature in Mongolian epics, typically depicted as a many-headed giant beast which swallows every living being. Originating from the earliest nomadic Mongol animist fear of Black Cruel Heaven, the *mangas* incarnated various forms of resistance to emerge in twentieth-century Mongolian visual art as forms of parody. In contrast to Western perceptions of parody, the Mongolian form lacks superficial sense of humor. Instead, in visual art it connects various historical forms together--the *mangas*, the Buddhist *Choijin* and the Communist *mangas*--to expose dense and complex cultural roots in contemporary Mongolian caricature.

This exegesis explores how Mongolian caricature functioned as parody during periods of tight social control. Ridicule of the American capitalist *mangas* later gave way to ridicule of the shortcomings of socialist living after the collapse of the Soviet-influenced regime in the 1990s. Subsequent political parody has thrived in Mongolian art as a modern critical re-coding of the present in characterizations of the failing figures of the post-communist political system. This exegesis therefore expands the concept of parody in Mongolian contemporary art to encompass political parody that subverts the former policies of socialist realism in Mongolian modern art—where my artwork is also partly situated. In this way my experience of post-communist Mongolian cultural identity is empowered by conceptual art strategies that allow the critical reworking of Mongolian national art forms—the encoding of imagery, deconstructing of forms, symbols, motifs and styles to parodic effect.

By tracing parody as a political rather than social or cultural phenomenon, my contribution to discourse is a study that shows Mongolian political parody gives form to and thus codifies an enduring core value of opposition: of the elements of nature for shamanism, of sin for Buddhism, of capitalism for the socialist government and socialism and corruption in the post-communist period. My body of artwork investigates these factors by further visually deconstructing the *mangas* paradigm in Mongolian contemporary art. The ultimate goal of this exegesis is to elicit the national sensibility for expressing parody in Mongolian art as a response to disgust and mode of resistance—a new investigation of Mongol identity and art in academic scholarship.

Note on Transcription

For the transcription of Mongolian words and names into English I followed the western simplified phonetic system, notably that used by Christopher Atwood (2002: xv-xvi). For the term *manggus* but I followed the modern Khalkh pronunciation and simplified the form of *mangas* and *tengre* instead of *tengri*. Long vowels “ii” of case suffix for person’s surname are written doubled.

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Chapter ONE – Theories of Parody

1.1 Introduction

During the socialist period in Mongolia (1924-1991), Russian Communist leader Vladimir Lenin was an icon of Socialism and Communism to the Mongolian people. Children sang “dear Lenin is a teacher for everyone and dear Lenin is my teacher’s teacher,” and his portrait could be found everywhere.¹ One such portrait was displayed on a huge billboard on the building in front of the Central Post Office in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia, from the late 1970s until the beginning of 1980s.² The red and white poster (Figure 1.1) depicted Lenin speaking on the podium at a conference and declared “the party is the intellect, honour and conscience of our epoch.” Overlooking Sukhbaatar Square and Government House, the portrait was a dominant feature of the visual culture of the city. Its location was such that authorities could see it from their office windows in Government House. Many people, from the first secretary of the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP) to ordinary civilians, passed near the billboard on their daily commute to work. I too, walked past this billboard every day on the way to Art College.



Figure 1.1 The poster of Lenin and Party. Photo: Children in Mongolia. Anastasia Tsendenbal Filatova, 1982, 87

¹ This song “Teacher Lenin,” was written by composer Dagviin Luvsansharav in the 1950s. It became one of the most popular songs among Mongolian children during the 1950s and 60s.

² This two storied building was used by Ministry of Transport and Agriculture in the 1950s and became the main office of the Mongolian Democratic Party in the 1990s.

One day after class in the spring of 1982, I walked past the billboard while talking with my classmates. Batbileg,³ one of my youngest teachers, pointed at the poster and said, “do you know who that is? It is the ‘rock star Lenin’.” At first we were all shocked but then we laughed. I had never noticed before that Lenin did indeed look like he was singing. I thereafter always giggled when passing the billboard and this incident marked the inception of my interest in parody.

Batbileg’s joke hinges on a self-consciousness that was otherwise concealed during this period in Mongolia. For seven decades Mongolians had applauded “Lenin’s rock songs.” Mocking Lenin as a rock star showed a disinclination toward socialist ideological art and the communist regime it represented. Naturally, Batbileg confined his expression to our small group. In retrospect, Batbileg’s parody was a sophisticated form of communication. It expressed a truth of personal opinion, which greatly appealed to me. I was prompted to rethink how parody could be a means for individual criticality to overcome collectivity, significantly influencing my artwork during the subsequent years.

1.2 Research aims/question & Exegesis structure

In Mongolian art and culture the relationship between political authority and personal expression has a complex history, but this exegesis proposes that dissent has predominantly registered in one motif, the mythological *mangas* which has been deployed repeatedly throughout Mongolian culture to mock authority. The trope of parody throughout Mongolia is linked to a sense of disgust. This mentality is found throughout the Mongolian art traditions in the mythological image of the *mangas*. The *mangas* figure initially appeared as an ancient animist perception of the forces responsible for natural disasters, but this figure survived in the Mongol mentality until modern times as a representation of revulsion expressed in Mongolian parody. Mongolian parody gives form to, and thus codifies, an enduring core value of resistance. This exegesis

³ Batbileg Budbazaryn (1960-) a son of artist Budbazar, trained in poster art at the Fine Art College of Ulaanbaatar from 1976 to 1980. After working as an assistant art teacher at the college for two years, he pursued further study in industrial graphic art at Surikov Art Institute in Moscow.

establishes the identity of Mongolian political parody as, in fact, typically *encoding* a form of *mangas*—as the predominant cultural form.

This exegesis establishes the identity of Mongolian political parody is a double coding of the *mangas* as a cultural form. This ridicules negative aspects of society by allowing exploration beyond the conventional limits of oral transmission. This coded *mangas* is an intellectual maneuver identified here as an original form of parody. This thesis will also show how the image of the *mangas* is a form of parody persisting also in post-communist Mongolian political art.

Parody, postmodernism and cultural studies dovetail here to allow a critical reworking of historical change in both the prevailing political conditions and visual art. The unfolding and revealing of events, stories and experiences visually—subversion included—take identifiable and recurrent forms. My theoretical writing traces the historical development of parody and expands this discussion into an account of Mongolian contemporary art, particularly examining political parody that subverts the former policy of Socialist Realism—where my artwork is also partly situated. My experience of post-communist Mongolian cultural identity is as such empowered by postmodern art strategies that allow the critical reworking of Mongolian national art forms—the re-coding of imagery, deconstruction of forms, symbols, motifs and styles to parodic effect explained herein.

The internal deconstruction of political parody (involving the use of double coding) develops into my own creative contribution (a series of paintings and supporting documents) to diasporic Mongolian contemporary art discourse. To be specific, I execute parodic contemporary paintings on this subject as a way of enacting a critical reworking of Mongolian history in the socialist period. As a major theoretical concept of the creative component of this study, “critical reworking” is concerned with interweaving the historical past with the lived present—an exercise that superimposes questions of Mongolian visual art, art history, politics and identity. In doing so, layers of my political reality as a current Mongolian contemporary artist outside Mongolia are revealed. My work is therefore also an intervention in the historical development of parody in Mongolian art.

This exegesis analyses and deconstructs the paradigm of parody in Mongolian political art, identifying the mythological figure of the *mangas* as a key motif in Mongolian political parody.

The development of the *mangas* figure in Mongolian parody is traced from the ancient past to the present. The overarching research question of this study is: “How have the *mangas* figure and parody been combined throughout Mongolian history as a strategy to resist hostility?” In order to answer this question, this exegesis addresses the following objectives:

1. The features, origins and history of parody in Mongolia are examined;
2. The transformation and evolution of the mythological character of the *mangas* in Mongolian art from past to present is investigated; and
3. The development of my personal artistic practice, which is invested in this Mongolian cultural imagery and creates a new reading of images of political resistance, is discussed.

The rest of Chapter One describes the various methods used in this research and provides a review of historical and conceptual understandings of parody in order to compare between the historical roots of Mongolian and western parody. Chapter Two investigates the *mangas*, a mystical creature in Mongolian folktales and epic stories, and a representation of resistance in Mongolian visual art forms. I specifically locate the origins of this figure in the Shamanist period. The *mangas* subsequently appears as the defenders of Dharmapala⁴ such as *Mahakala* and *Jamsran*, in the Buddhist period that exposes a fear of sin. Finally, I discuss the manifestation of the *mangas* as a capitalist during the socialist period. Chapter Three discusses parody in Mongolian modern art during the Soviet period. Parodic works, including propaganda leaflets of the early 1920s and caricatures produced during WWII and the building of the material-technical base of Socialism are analysed. The re-emergence of parody in Mongolian contemporary art after the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1990 is analysed in Chapter Four. The relevance of the *mangas* motif in the contemporary artworks of Mongolian diasporic artists is also discussed, and in the final section of Chapter Four, I discuss my own art practice, extending an interpretation of contemporary image making.

⁴ Dharmapala (sans. Dhar-ma teaching pala-a defender, Tib, Chos skyong, Mong. nom-un sakiyulsan) wrathful deities of Buddhism that protect it from evil spirits. It is often depicted as the eight fearful deities in Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism. Vajrayana Buddhism revived in Mongolia with ties between the Dalai Lama in Tibet and Mongolian princedoms in the 17th century.

1.3 Research Methodology

This study aims to investigate the role of the mythological *mangas* figure in the development of parody in Mongolian modern and contemporary visual art. The concept of *mangas* is deeply linked with Mongolian history, culture and art. Therefore, in this study I use interdisciplinary research methods such as autobiography; ethnography, including interviews and linguistic and cultural motif analysis; art historical research including museum and archival research; aesthetics; and practice-led art making. Each method provides a rich and diverse context for the historical evaluation of the *mangas* figure and forms the framework for contextualised theories of parody in contemporary Mongolian art.

1.3.1 Autobiography

I am an eye witness to the socialist period in Mongolia: I was born and raised there as mentioned in the Preface to this exegesis, and I trained there as a Socialist Realist artist. Therefore, my background and personal life experience informs this study. I have included several personal accounts of events in order to add depth to my analysis.

1.3.2 Art historical research

This method includes the accessing of sources in archives, museums and libraries, as well as personal observation of Mongolian artworks from different periods. Archival research was a core element of this study due to its focus on the historical metamorphosis of Mongolian art and culture. During visits to Mongolia in 2011, 2012 and 2013, I viewed invaluable resources from the Central Archive of Mongolia, the Museum of Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the Museum of Victims of Political Persecution, the State Library of Mongolia, and the Collection of the Union of Mongolian Artists. Notably, I found an ancient image of the *mangas* tengre from the private collection of Mongolian artist Badral, used here for the first time. Other sources such as research papers and Mongolian literature were sourced from the Mongolia Society at Indiana University (USA) and the Australian National University. More readily available English text sources related to theories of parody and Mongolian art and culture were available from Curtin University as well as online.

1.3.3 Ethnography

More than forty interviews with individuals from three different groups and ages were conducted in Mongolia between 2011 and 2013. The first group of interviews were with Mongolian contemporary artists, including Bu Badral and Bo Badral, well-known, young contemporary artists who make critical artworks about current socio-economic issues. I also accompanied S. Mashbat, a pioneer artist of Mongolian art in the late 1980s and one of the founders of *Green Horse* modern art association, to the international art workshop *Art Under the Roof* held in Vietnam, October 2012. Baidi and Tsogtbayar, famous caricaturists in the socialist and post socialist period of Mongolia, who were cautioned by the socialist regime, were among those who agreed to be interviewed. These artists' interviews are valuable sources for the visual analysis of the role of *mangas*-parody in Mongolian contemporary political art. The second group of interviews were with Mongolian art historians and scholars, including Ch. Boldbaatar, art critic and head of department of Mongol studies at the Mongolian National University; L. Batchuluun, art scholar; and S. Badral, on Mongolian art history. In addition, an interview with Baasansuren, a museum researcher, explained some sources such as the "serial leaflets of Petrograd" that lack clarity in existing scholarship.

Finally, contemporary Mongolian parody actors and actresses were interviewed, including L. Chaminchuluun, a famous female parodist in the 1980s and 1990s; J. Oyundari and Ts. Demidbaatar, actors of comic group *Colourful Smile*; and Ihbayar (Chupee), a well-known comic actor who founded the duo *Parody*. These figures provided wide-ranging data relevant to the study and shed light on different constructions of the *mangas* motif in current Mongolian political art.

1.3.4 Linguistic and cultural motifs

This exegesis refers to proverbs and phrases that exist in Mongolian colloquial language. Often meaning and identity is expressed through orally-transmitted cultural knowledge, hence, proverbs inform an understanding of the Mongol psyche, world view and core values. Proverbs and phrases connected to shamanist and Buddhist rites and customs describing the motif of the *mangas* and the variety of visual forms of the *mangas* motif as a representation of resistance originating from traditional epics and folktales, were important references. Furthermore, more

than 20 DVDs and CDs of contemporary Mongolian comic theatre produced between 2000 and 2012 were reviewed as significant sources for studies of parody.

1.3.5 Practice-led research

Throughout my research, I made many visual investigation diaries and created more than twenty experimental paintings in different styles and sizes in the search for a means to investigate the motif that persists under the conditions of postmodernism and diaspora. In 2012, I began a series entitled *The Mongols*, which marked a phase of resulting resolution. In these works, I developed a parodic narrative of Mongolian art and culture during the Soviet regime—foregrounding a fusion of aspects of personal experience and artistic investigation. *The Mongols* series is encoded with traditional Mongol nomadic symbols and the legacy of Socialist Realism, the falsities of propaganda and ideologically controlled folk traditions.

In making these works, I was inspired by several non-Mongolian artists, in particular Gordon Bennett and Takashi Murakami. The artworks of urban Indigenous Australian artist, Gordon Bennett,⁵ are often politically motivated and borrow images from other cultures, decontextualizing them in order to challenge the viewer and provoke questions.⁶ Like Bennett, I use illustrations from the art history books of my country. I employ these elements as evidence of Mongolian Soviet-styled political art and critically displace them from their context to allow them to communicate contrary to their original usage. I also select familiar and recognisable images from the Socialist period that were part of Mongolian consciousness, as well as symbolic forms of traditional nomadic life. Together with Soviet-styled propaganda art, my recombination of these sources is self-conscious and self-referential, uninhibited about “quotation”—a facet of the postmodern concept of parody—that allows a “critical reworking of history.”

⁵ Gordon Bennett (1955-) is a notable contemporary Indigenous Australian artist. He grew up in Victoria and studied at Queensland College of Art from 1986 to 1988. www.greenaway.com.au accessed 12 February 2012.

⁶ Gordon Bennett, www.ngv.vic.gov.au accessed 12 February 2012.

1.4 Theories of Parody

The concept of parody in this study is explained here in four sections. The first provides a brief outline of different European approaches to parody. The second section discusses western postmodern theories of parody. The third section describes the linguistic problems of translating parody and provides an etymological analysis to address this disjuncture. English and Mongolian terms for “parody” are contextualised in relation to one another. The final section discusses the historical pattern of parody and its related forms in Mongolian folklore and the re-emergence of parody in Mongolia after the democratic revolution of 1990. This discussion provides the context for introducing an original view of parody in Mongolian contemporary art.

1.4.1 European historical approaches to parody

Parody is not a new cultural phenomenon. It has certainly existed since literature began and can be traced as far back as ancient Greece. Etymologically, parody is derived from the Greek noun *parodia*, a counter song or a song existing *beside*.⁷ Early use of the word parody describes an imitation of Homeric epics—a “mock epic.”⁸ The epic is a form of long narrative poem in lofty language celebrating the adventures of a legendary hero, common in the culture of Ancient Greece. Fred Householder describes the parody of Homer’s time as a “long moderate poem,” a mocking instrument using light satire.⁹

Onward to English medieval literature, parody also mocked with comic effect the style of another author, again commonly in epic drama. Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1390s) is the notable example from this period. A collection of stories of pilgrims, each tale is narrated in the third-person, providing the reader with thoughts as well as actions of the characters. The *Tales* tell of the struggles between characters, largely involving their differing social classes and tastes. For example, in *The Friar’s Tale* Chaucer mocks real figures in English society of the time, in particular portraying religious characters, such as “the Pardoner” and “the Summoner,” as deeply

⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth – Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 32.

⁸ Margaret Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post – Modern* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 11.

⁹ Fred Householder, *ПАРОДИЯ* (1944), no.1, 39.

corrupt, greedy and abusive.¹⁰ However, Bakhtin argues that such medieval parody treated everything as comic and was not concerned with using parody as a critical tool.¹¹

Parodic imitation was popular in many Renaissance societies. Parody of this period had characteristics of textual imitation, improvisation and ambiguity for freedom, creativity and play. Thomas Greene suggests that imitation at that time was widespread not only in literature, but also in pedagogy, grammar, rhetoric, aesthetics, the visual arts, music, historiography, politics and philosophy.¹² Korkit proposes that Renaissance parody was directed especially towards classical texts, reflecting the Renaissance interest in the art and culture of antiquity.¹³ Parody of this time was linked to the Renaissance spirit of creating a new literature dependant on the social and structural conventions of the past. ‘Renaissance mock intellectualism’¹⁴ marked a significant change in parody from the ancient Greek and medieval English forms.

Burlesque emerged as the dominant form of parody during the 1730s in England.¹⁵ The term initially described literary forms and later became the general term for different kinds of comic writing.¹⁶ High burlesque mocked the heroism of chivalric romance, while the low form mocked ordinary people’s lives using vulgar language.¹⁷ Burlesque also described a theatrical work that contained humorous mimicry. Dentith points out that burlesque theatre was a forerunner of the modern music hall.¹⁸ Rose notes that after the 17th century, burlesque became the definition of parody¹⁹ and the contemporary dictionary definition refers to burlesque as a synonym of parody.²⁰

¹⁰ Lillian Bisson, *Chaucer and the Late Medieval World* (New York: St Martins Press, 1998), 67- 68.

¹¹ Michael Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press, 1968), 74.

¹² Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 1.

¹³ Nil Korkit, *Kind of Parody from the Medieval to the Postmodern* (Peter Lang, 2009), 127.

¹⁴ Eugene Kirk, *Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism* (New York, 1980), 253.

¹⁵ The word “burlesque” derives from the 16th century Italian ‘burla’ meaning to ridicule, then appears in France and England in the 17th century.

¹⁶ Simon Dentith, *Parody* (Routledge, 2000), 191. Dentith reached this description from Bond’s work (1964).

¹⁷ Richmond Bond, *English Burlesque Poetry 1700—1750* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 4-5; M. Rose, *Parody//Meta-Fiction: an Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 40.

¹⁸ Simon Dentith, *Parody* (Routledge, 2000), 190.

¹⁹ Margaret Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post – Modern* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 195.

²⁰ See Beckson and Ganz, *Literary terms: a dictionary* (3rd ed) (New York: Noonday), 1989.

Parody was a literary fad in the 19th century. Socio-economic changes resulting from the industrial revolution, including modernisation and urbanisation, forced critical thinking about the world and humankind. Writers began to revisit parodic poems of the previous century. Priestman describes this period as “the age of parody” and states that parodic poems and novels of the Romantic and late Romantic periods are major contemporary phenomenon.²¹ The mixture of praise and blame in these works led readers to critically evaluate their particular content. Parody shifted from being merely ironic and playful to *ridiculing*, as parodists broke strict rules prohibiting the use of canonical texts such as the scriptures or the classics.

Historically, the development of parody stagnates during periods of tight social control—authoritarianism. In a closed society, claims to particular ideologies such as proletarian internationalism, Socialism—led to the imposition of a single version of reality because these ideologies were based on epistemologies held to be intractable. For instance, in the Mongolian case, parody expressed only a form of caricature during the socialist period and its development was stagnant due to the impossibility of critical thinking. In Karl Popper’s concept of the open society, each citizen has the right to openly criticise those who hold authority.²² In such an open society, parody is a critical tool that enables an individual to reveal social offences through ridicule unavoidable in periods of tight social control.

Parody was often thought to involve no greater creativity than that required to borrow or steal an original idea. Hassan describes parody as “insane”²³ and Tatham parodically refers to parody as “playgiarism.”²⁴ However, most contemporary parody theorists agree that parody is not as parasitic²⁵ as once thought. Parody plays a pivotal role in debates of the postmodern period by helping the audience come to terms with the texts and discourses of the past.²⁶

²¹ Judith Priestman, “The age of Parody: Literary Parody and Some Nineteenth Perspectives” (PhD diss., University of Kent of Canterbury, 1980).

²² The concept of the open society was originally suggested by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and developed during WWII by Austrian philosopher Karl Popper (1902-1992). Popper defines the open society as one “in which individuals are confronted with personal decisions” as opposed to a “magical or tribal or collective society” (2009).

²³ Ihab Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn. Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* (Ohio, 1987), 40-47.

²⁴ Campbell Tatham, “Mythotherapy and Postmodern Fictions: Magic is Afoot.” (1977), 146.

²⁵ A. Martin described parody as parasitical in his 1896 book “On Parody.” M. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post – Modern*, 281.

²⁶ Hutcheon (1985); Rose (1993); Dentith (2000); Bakhtin (1981); Gong and Yang (2010); Crapanzano (1991); Harimen (2008); Ryan (1992).

1.4.2 Parody and postmodernism²⁷

Scholarly studies of parody are abundant and include a variety of perceptions and descriptions spanning different historical periods. Postmodern parody theorists suggest however, that the nature and function of parody significantly changed during the second half of the 20th century, due to post-industrial development and postmodernist cultural practices. This section discusses these changes suggested by the following major contemporary postmodern parody theorists: Linda Hutcheon, Margaret Rose and Simon Dentith, and references a number of other relevant articles, in order to contextualise my discussion of contemporary Mongolian political parody.

Linda Hutcheon's important text *A Theory of Parody: The Teaching of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (1985) has a broad scope and academic rigour that has been invaluable to this study. The author has devoted much of her life to exploring parody in postmodern art. For Hutcheon, parody is a "perfect form" of postmodernism, unique in the postmodern era because it comes to mean an "imitation with critical character."²⁸ My research extends Hutcheon's Western-centric theory to understand Mongolian contemporary political art that aims to ridicule political structures and develop a new critical perspective.

Margaret Rose has produced two authoritative books: *Parody/Meta Fiction: An Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction* (1979) and *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-Modern* (1993). Her research is directed at German Romantic literature of the 19th century that she maintains is heavily comprised of irony and parody. *Parody/Meta-Fiction* (1979) outlines Rose's theory of literary parody as self-reflexive and as both comic and "double-coded"²⁹ which enables it to be used for more than mere ridicule. Rose argues that parody is metafictional (self-conscious, self-depicting and self-reflexive fiction) and a critical quotation of literary language with comic effect.³⁰ My interest here is in Rose's discussion of the self-

²⁷ Postmodernism is a general term to describe changes in philosophy, literature, art, architecture and music in Europe and the United States since the 1950s. Characteristics of postmodernism such as eclecticism, irony, parody, quotation, self-referentiality and indeterminacy are often perceived as a reaction against modernist traits such as order, representation, narrative, system and signification. Allan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (2000), 647.

²⁸ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 11, 26.

²⁹ According to dictionary definition double coding describes any sign or text which opens two different interpretations depending on the frame or reference which is used to interpret it.

³⁰ Margaret Rose, *Parody/Meta-Fiction: an Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 59.

referentiality and criticality of parody rather than its comedic quality, as parody in Mongolian visual art has not tended to be of a comic character.

Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-Modern (1993) continues and expands Rose's analysis with significant research on modern and postmodern theories in particular. Her work contains a vast theoretical study and a systematic overview of the most frequently occurring signals of parody. Rose's discussion derives from scholars such as Malcolm Bradbury,³¹ Umberto Eco³² and David Lodge,³³ from which she synthesises a view on "postmodern parody."

Another source important to this study was Simon Dentith's *Parody: The New Critical Idiom* (2000). Dentith creates a general overview of parody from Ancient Greek drama through to postmodernism. He explores parody as a subversive or conservative mode of writing, reflecting his heavy involvement with English poetry and burlesque dramas. Dentith argues against Frederic Jameson's popular opinion that parody is the uncritical, culturally dominant form of postmodernism. Jameson criticises postmodern literature, film and architecture as lacking historical perspective, describing them as blank postmodern pastiches.³⁴ Dentith shows the situation to be that parody is not fully recognized in postmodern culture. Rather, it flourishes during other historical moments and is connected with particular socio-political issues.

Robert Harriman discusses the important role of political parody in sustaining democratic public culture in *Political Parody and Public Culture* (2008). He explains the nature of parodic language as consisting of an initial source of humour.³⁵ He establishes four different related comic operations: doubling, the carnivalesque, (social) levelling, and transforming of the word of speech. For him, these comedic strategies are essential functions in establishing a public culture. Although the medieval Mongolian *manggus*-parody figure is not based in humour, I use Harimen's analysis to discuss contemporary Mongolian political parody.

Allan Ryan provides an interesting discussion of Canadian cultural issues in terms of parody in his 1992 article, *Postmodern Parody: A Political Strategy in Contemporary Canadian Native*

³¹ See Bradbury's articles "An Age of Parody Style in the Modern Arts" (1980), *No, not Bloombury* (1987).

³² See Eco's article The Frames of comic "Freedom" (1984).

³³ David Lodge, *Changing Places. A Tale of Two Campuses* (1987), 130. also see his *A Tale of two Campuses* (1975), After Bakhtin's *Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (1990).

³⁴ Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." (London, 1985), 114.

³⁵ Harriman notes his own experience of having his table manners parodied by his ten year old daughter.

Art. Canadian indigenous artists have used strong satirical elements in their works since the 1980s in order to negotiate their self-determination and civil rights. According to Ryan, artists such as Bill Powless, Carl Beam, Shelley Niro and Jane Ash Poitras believe that parody is a critical tool for the individual's expression and protestation of social inequity. He suggests that postmodern parody can be one of the most appropriate ways to approach, better understand and solve political issues between the government and in this case, the native Canadian people. This shows how artists intersect parody with culture for political critique.

The 2010 article by Haomin Gong and Xin Yang, *Digitized parody: The Politics of Egao in Contemporary China*, argues that *egao* (online parody) is an important new cultural intervention into post-communist Chinese society. Bearing in mind the above discussions that describe parody as a vital device in maintaining the balance of power between authority and the public sphere, digitized parody encourages the cultivation of individual freedom in contemporary Chinese society. Digital parody has become an increasingly accessible mode for urban Chinese citizen to express individual freedoms due to rapid increases in the number of internet users in China since the 2000s.

Such theorists suggest that parody during postmodernism has separated from the comedic framework that distinguished it during modernism. Some of these theorists argue that postmodern parody has a negative function and the others argue that it has a positive function. The negative functionalists, including Jean Baudrillard, Ihab Hassan, and especially Fredric Jameson, describe postmodern parody as a pastiche, a 'blank' form of parody which lost its sense of humour. The positivists include Malcolm Bradbury, Margaret Rose, Umberto Eco, and David Lodge, who describe postmodern parody as more creative, comic and metafictional. According to the negative functionalists, postmodern culture is without norms, a hybrid of eclecticism and mixed codes, and therefore causes the degradation and breakdown of parody as a social device. Jameson, for example, proposes that parody is almost unnecessary in postmodern culture because that culture has lost its sense of humour.³⁶ He thus argues a new kind of parody has emerged as a result—pastiche.³⁷ By Jameson's definition, "pastiche is like parody, the imitation of peculiar or

³⁶ Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." (London, 1985), 114.

³⁷The word *pastiche* originates from the Italian "*pasticcio*" which means a pastry dish contains different ingredients.

unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask”³⁸ For Jameson, however, pastiche lacks the satirical impulse, the laughter; the secret motive of parody. Similarly for Baudrillard, pastiche is both destructive and lacks intentionality, rendering it blind.³⁹ In *The Orders of Simulacra*, Baudrillard describes Andy Warhol’s modern pictures as such unintentional and blind pastiche.⁴⁰

Positivists consider that postmodern parody consists of a combination of metafiction and comic effect. Metafiction involves a story that is not quite “real.” It refers the reader to the technique of the writers own desired fictional effect and technique—its artifice. It emphasises the nature of fiction as a deliberate construct, and so the voice of the author acquires a greater degree of self-consciousness. As such, it is an intellectual rather than an emotional device. The writer’s desired fictional effect and technique is transparent to the reader. For example, Italo Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller*, uses metafiction as a device to provoke the frustration of the reader. The criticality and self-referentiality of metafiction allows exploration beyond the conventional limits of fiction. Malcolm Bradbury is a contemporary writer and theorist who has created numerous parodic novels including *Eating People is Wrong* (1959), *Who Do you Think You Are?* (1977) and *My Strange Quest for Mensonge, Structuralism’s Hidden Hero* (1989). In these works, Bradbury developed a post-modern concept of parody which is both metafictional and comic.⁴¹ Similarly, David Lodge uses both metafiction and comic effect in his works, clearly showing evidence of postmodern parody, particularly in *Changing Places* (1987). Margaret Rose’s concept of parody is based on Bradbury and Lodge’s ideas, but she adds that parody is not only metafictional and comedic, it can also be metafictional and non-metafictional with comic effect.

The characteristic of parody as double-coded is an important point in this study. Derived from the works of Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin in the early 1970s, the term “double-coding” has several meanings for postmodern theories of parody. Bakhtin’s *double coding* referred to the *double voice*, which describes the integration of opposite meanings through combining two hostile voices.⁴² Charles Jenks, an architectural historian and critic suggests in his article *Late Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, however, that by the 1980s, *double coding* resulted from

³⁸ Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society.” (1985), 114.

³⁹ Jean Baudrillard (1984), 38-39.

⁴⁰ Baudrillard, “The Orders of Simulacra.” (1975), 150.

⁴¹ Malcolm Bradbury, “An Age of Parody. Style in the Modern Arts.” (London, 1980), 52.

⁴² Michael Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (Mich: Ardis, 1973), 156.

the anti-humour of hybrid expressions of postmodern parody.⁴³ Jenks has listed thirty characteristics to distinguish the modern and postmodern styles of architecture, using the term “code” to describe the style of architecture, and *double coding* is a modernist technique that combines “quotation” of tradition. For Jenks, *double coding* is similar to Linda Hutcheon’s phrase of “double voiced parodic form” that emerged as a process of transfer and reorganisation of the past.⁴⁴ But it is different from Bakhtin’s double coding heteroglossia which Bakhtin defines as “another’s speech in another language” serving to express authorial intentions.⁴⁵ It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions. So, Bakhtin’s theory is more linguistic than Hutcheon’s. Hutcheon discusses the notion that postmodern parody consists of ‘shared codes’: one pertaining to *encoding* and the other to *decoding*. Rose suggests that parody is both a comic and “double-coded” device which refers to both the original “code” or voice and a *metafiction*.⁴⁶ For Rose, the voice of *metafictional* parody is often critical. Unlike Hutcheon however, Rose’s “double-coding” is not essential for postmodern parody.

In this study, the term “double coding” draws from Hutcheon’s theory of shared codes that *encode* and *decode*. This study emphatically focuses on the contemporary artist’s encoding of the parodic image of the *manggus* and the decoding that is required by the viewer (an effect my art seeks to enact). Literally, *encoding* involves converting a message into code, while *decoding* is to understand an encoded message. Therefore, making parody is clearly a process of encoding.

⁴³ Charles Jenks, *Late-Modern Architecture and Other Essays* (London and New York, Towards Radical Eclecticism, 1980), 32.

⁴⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth – Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 4.

⁴⁵ Michael Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 324.

⁴⁶ Margaret Rose, *Parody//Meta-Fiction: an Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

1.4.3 Linguistic problems in translating “Parody”

Before discussing Mongolian instances of parody, it is crucial to note that there are a number of linguistic problems in translating terms relating to parody between English and Mongolian. Parody as a cultural phenomenon of the postmodern world is similar across several European languages as it has its roots in Greek culture, for example, *parodie* – in France and Germany, *parodia* – in Spanish and Portuguese, and *пародия* (pronounced *parodia*) – in Russian and Bulgarian. While this word has similar meaning and form in some of the Altaic languages closely related to Mongolian language, such as *parodi* in Turkish and *parodia* in Hungarian, in Mongolian, parody is a loanword directly borrowed from English and has only been widely used in the Mongolian language since the 1990s—largely owing to the rise of comedy performances, popular in the new democratic Mongolia.

Interpretation and translation of related terms of parody to and from the Mongolian language is complicated. Synonyms such as apology, burlesque, pastiche, derision, farce, jest, irony and persiflage quite dramatically misalign with Mongolian equivalents in their meanings. The meaning that relates to a certain kind of ridicule, imitation and irony is problematic to appropriately translate with the existing parlance. The Russian language became a filter for terms entering Mongolia from the outside world after it was officially declared the second language for the Mongols during the Soviet period, which may explain some of the variation. Most English-Mongolian dictionary definitions of parody mention “mocking” (*eleglel*). Famous linguist and writer, Lodongin Tudev, suggests in his book *Making Art by Words*, that the phrase *duurian elegleh* may have the closest meaning to parody in Mongolian language.⁴⁷ While this is reasonable, the phrase may also suggest other synonyms such as “mocking”, “humour”, “grotesque” and “sarcasm.” Mocking carries particularly negative connotations in traditional Mongol culture.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Lodongin Tudev, *Making Art by Words* (1983), 357.

⁴⁸ A frequently used proverb about parody demonstrates how it and related ridiculing forms are considered negatively by Mongolians:

If a person is afraid, he scares horses,

If a person is ashamed, he will kill someone

A literal English explanation of this proverb is difficult to relate to the original Mongolian idiomatic meaning (*mangus*) and Westerners may find it difficult to understand. For example, Janice Raymond explains that this proverb is used in a situation when a person kills someone for mocking them, or when a thief kills an eyewitness of

In contrast to other nations with a more sedentary culture, Mongolian nomads, living in isolated groups with limited social communication, take mocking very seriously. If a person is embarrassed while in the company of others, that embarrassment will often be felt by the other people in the group, detected in the change in the person's facial expressions (for example, blushing), or they may detect anger at being humiliated. The Mongolian may then say that this facial expression would scare a horse—defusing the situation—as indeed, horses are never scared by human faces. Accordingly, I focus on the broader postmodern concept of parody, with an understanding that the two meanings of its prefix *para*—"beside", and "counter" or "against"—may be largely untranslatable with the existing Mongolian language.⁴⁹

1.4.4 Mongolian Parody

This exegesis is the first study of parody in Mongolian culture and art. Sh. Gundalai is the only other scholar of Mongolian humour, having presented an overview of the development of Mongolian modern satire in "The History of the Mongolian Humorous Story" (2001). His dissertation introduced a theory of humor and related genres specific to Mongolian modern literature. He did not address parody however, which as I show has been vital to Mongolian culture. This exegesis also demonstrates the unique nature of Mongolian parody, and as such is one of the pioneer works in Mongolian cultural studies and parody theory more broadly, extending understandings of parody outside a Western frame of reference.

In this section, I introduce an overview of parody related forms of humour in Mongolian literature and culture. There is no doubt these forms emerged simultaneously with the appearance of folklore, which is infused with what Mongols regard as a ridiculing sense, with particular affection for witty sayings, allegory, irony, jest and jokes. Due to the traditional respect for authority and state, the ridiculing of authority arose in Mongolian nomadic society much later than for Europeans. Mongolian linguist H. Sampildendev notes that mocking speeches emerged in Mongolian folklore in the 17th century due to political instability and a

his crime in order to keep it secret. J. Raymond, *Mongolian Proverbs: A Window into Their World* (Alethinus Books San Diego, CA, 2010), 16.

⁴⁹ Robert Harimen, "Political Parody and Public Culture." (2008), 249.

perceived moral degradation of the nobility.⁵⁰ During this time Mongolia lost its independence and came under the domination of the Manchu. Mongolian society was very chaotic, endless wars plunged the country into crisis. Such ridiculing speeches are usually orated by the character *Dalan Hudalch* (multi-liar or multi-fibber), the recurring hero of humorous folktales, or appear in stories about *Badarchin* (clever and wily wandering monks). *Badarchin* are folkloric characters who deliver information to isolated camps. The following is one of the well-known folkloric jests of *Dalan Hudalch*.

Once I [Dalan Hudalch] was tending to the grazing of my grandfather's camel herds before my father was born. A female camel gave birth to a calf and I wanted to take them back home. I mounted the mother and lifted her calf up. Unfortunately, it did not work; the mother could not carry us. However, when I mounted the new born calf holding his mother, the calf carried us home without trouble.

Literally impossible, this exaggerated tale is a mocking reversal of reality, where truth becomes falsehood, clever becomes mad and social hierarchy is inversed. *Dalan Hudalch* used the metaphor of the camels to criticise state chaos and the wrongdoing of rulers: the female camel represents state nobles and the new born calf is the mass of commoners. The tale is a subtle parody of the conquest of Mongolia by the Manchu, using symbols and metaphors that are distinctive to Mongolian nomadic culture.

The mocking speeches of the *badarchin* were gentle and comic because they were performed as a means of survival. The majority of *badarchin* had escaped from monastic or feudal oppression. They travelled everywhere and met with people from all levels of society, delivering information and rumours about social affairs through jest. These mocking speeches were easy to remember, and were for entertainment and communication between isolated communities, similar to the operation of travelling bards in Europe. Like the *Dalan Hudalch* story, the *badarchin* tales use symbols and metaphors distinctive to Mongolian nomadic and Buddhist culture.

In the beginning of the 19th century, Mongolian literature changed significantly due to the appearance of a group of satirical writers, including “lawyer” Sandag, Agvaanhaidav, Ishsambuu, Haidav and Danzan Ravjaa. A new style of Mongolian poem emerged, named *Word*, which reflected traditional folklore, and was characterized by social and religious criticism

⁵⁰ Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 3, 22.

expressed through the mocking speech of an animal.⁵¹ Such *Word* poems include *Words of Orphaned Baby Antelope*, *Words of Chamois being Chased by Wolf*, *Words of Marmot*, *Words of Old Cow* and *Talk of Cow, Goat and Sheep*. Agvaanhaidav's *Talk of Cow, Goat and Sheep* criticises the ethical and moral degeneration of Buddhist monks (lamas).⁵² This poem tells of a conversation between a cow, goat and sheep hitched to the wood of a Buddhist lama's fence, awaiting their slaughter for the winter meal. They ask the lama: "Why are you killing us?... killing animals is sinful, and you purport to be a pupil of Buddha." The Lama answers: "I am not the only one, all monks do this. Since I am not going to kill you by myself—the butcher will do it—I am doing no wrong and god should forgive me." The sheep responds, declaring: "You monks are killers who wear the lama's shawl".⁵³ Through the voice of the animals, the underlying character of a lama who ignores religious tenets is criticised. The *Word* style imitates the style of a folktale with comedic qualities with a critical purpose—exposing fallible human constructions of morality, qualities of parody described above.

It is necessary to note that parody and related forms in Mongolian folklore and literature were quite different from their manifestation in traditional visual art. Parody images have less comic effect in Mongolian visual art⁵⁴ because they relate to ridiculing portraits of evil used in shamanic acts for healing people (related to Black Heaven) and called a *dom durs*⁵⁵ ([Дом дүрс]). During the act, a shaman offered *dom durs* to evil on behalf of the sick person in order to save his or her life. Later, this rite incorporated with Buddhism in the 18th century, in particular in the Tasm ceremony.⁵⁶ Tasm ceremony was often ended by the act of lama destroying a statue

⁵¹ Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 3, 57.

⁵² Agvaanhaidav (1779-1838) was a Mongolian Buddhist who wrote five famous volumes in Tibetan.

⁵³ Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 3, 59-60.

⁵⁴ Here, I do not mention parody in traditional painting style *Mongol Zurag* pre-revolutionary period, particularly Sharav's *One Day of Mongolia*. This work was fully characterised comic because it was created by the order of Bogdo Khaan for the purpose of amusement. See L Batchuluun (2009). The parodic form of adverse character in Mongolian epics and folklore may be seen in the use of the *mangus* motif—as it has been used to ridicule negative aspects of life.

⁵⁵ *Dom durs* is a human figure made by clay or dough for offering. It is used in shaman healing which involved the use magic remedy. It is also called "black dom".

⁵⁶ *Tsam* (in Tibetan Cham means masked dance) is a Buddhist festival held annually of the year to exorcise evil. It consisted of a series of masked dances and often had a narrative content.

of evil (called a *lingka*⁵⁷ [Линга]). These parodic images functioned to exorcise evils in shamanist and Buddhist rites.

Following the People's Revolution of 1921, ridicule was a common method of visual communication used by the new Mongolian government. Mimicking Soviet-styled propaganda art, it was direct in its attacks (typically on capitalism, which it saw as archaic, exploitative and even evil). Viewers required little education to understand the messages expressed this way and so ideology and propaganda went hand-in-hand during the Socialist period. Mongolian political art after 1921 mobilised parody's ridiculing rather than comic effects. In most political leaflets from 1921 to the 1940s, figures of the old society such as religious nobles, monks and feudal lords were visually depicted as ridiculous beastly, folkloric monsters in order to encourage the public to feel disgust towards them. The main goal of the new regime was to build a radically new society, which required eliminating religious faith and the feudal system, and strengthening the communist government, economy and culture. Political leaflets with simple, humorous and easily understood parodic images played an important role in educating the *ard* masses and reforming the feudal society into a Socialist society. Although it involved a *double coding*, Mongolian Socialist parody art had less comic effect as this might have depicted the socialist masses as backward in comparison with the western world. L. Sonomtseren's *Mongolian Modern Fine Art* (1976) details the development of Mongolian art during the socialist regime. Caricature emerged in Mongolian propaganda art after the 1940s under the influence of Soviet art. Although technically not parody, Mongolian caricature of this period ridiculed the capitalist style of living and important capitalist political figures. For instance, during the cold war period of the 1960s, Mongolian caricatures ridiculed American imperialists using *mangas* imagery.⁵⁸

Humorous anecdotes that used parodic phrases began to appear in public conversations at the beginning of 1980s, activated by realisations of the fault and defects of the communist system, its utopian dogma, rigid censorship and authoritarian ideology. However, such political jokes were considered anti-Communist and were potentially dangerous. Examples of such parody

⁵⁷ *Лунга* (Lingka in Tibetan) is a doll made with dough which imitates portrait of evils such as *albin*, *mam* and *ad*. Damdinsuren reports in his reminiscence book *Outstanding Masters of Ikh Khuree* that *lingka* was used as a form of portrait of evil at the Tsam ritual in the beginning of 20th century. It was a kind of ridicule portrait (caricature) made on paper by 40x40cm. See Dulamjaviin Damdinsuren, *Outstanding Masters of Ih Huree* (1995), 18.

⁵⁸ The *mangus* is a fearsome, mythological character, discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

include use of the word BAM⁵⁹ (*Брежнев Обманул Молодёжь* in Russian), which suggested that Brezhnev⁶⁰ had tricked the students into building the railway; “labor stock” (*ajlin mal*) as a mocking name for artists who were working permanently on visual political propaganda; and “doctor of private minds” (*amini uhaani doctor*) as a similarly mocking name for communist flatterers or career chasers. The influence of Soviet perestroika after the mid-1980s allowed such parody to be expressed more openly. These and similar phrases were the foundation for the development of Mongolian comic theatre in the post-communist period.

After the collapse of the Socialist regime in 1990, parody flourished with the establishment of democracy and freedom of expression. Many sought to reveal defects in politics and the society via comedic theatre. Young actors and actresses developed private businesses, providing greater artistic freedom after the State Theatre of Youth and Children collapsed in the early 1990s. These performances were popular, humorously relating previously unseen problems of social and everyday life. All these parody shows were well prepared and well performed, causing audiences to adopt phrases used in the shows into daily conversation. Soon, these comedic shows became a popular relief from the post-revolution turmoil of the 1990s.⁶¹ Parodic theatre has become an important feature of post-socialist Mongolian culture, as the establishment of several permanent parody groups suggests.⁶² This comedic theatre has similar qualities to the European burlesque form of parody discussed previously.⁶³ Mongolian burlesque theatre manifests in two forms: firstly, as a mixture of drama and musical theatre,⁶⁴ and secondly as a style of parodic speech within a theatrical performance that addresses serious social issues. This dominant form of

⁵⁹ BAM refers to the Baikal-Amur Mainline, a broad gauge railway line (4324 km) built in Russia during the 1970s and 1980s parallel to the Trans-Siberian railway. BAM was one the biggest Soviet projects of the period and many international students, including Mongolian students studying in Russia, worked to build it in difficult weather and geographical conditions.

⁶⁰ Leonid Brezhnev (1906-1982) was the general Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, governing the country from 1964 until his death in 1982. The Baikal-Amur Mainline was constructed under his governance.

⁶¹ Between 1992 and 2009 many such private comedy groups were founded, including *Solo Theatre of Sosorbaram* (1991), *Batzaya and His Friends* (1993), *New Generation* (1992), *Colourful Smile* (Ungut Ineed) (1995), *X-TUTS* (1997), *Sir Courier* (Erhem Elch)(2000), and *MaxProduction* (2008).

⁶² The parody duo *Chupee and Suuri* was founded in 2009, comprising actors Ikhbayar (Ikhbayar’s nickname Chupee is inspired by famous comedian Charlie Chaplin) and Batsuuri. Their performances mock the styles of leading Mongolian politicians and businessmen. Another parody group founded by Bulgan-Erdene in 2010 imitates renowned Mongolian singers and actors.

⁶³ As such it differs from the contemporary western perception of burlesque as striptease.

⁶⁴ Some shows adapted high literature for popular consumption. For example, Natsagdorj’s famous opera *Three Significant Knolls* (Uchirtai Gurvan Tolgoi) was produced as a new musical in 2009.

critical playfulness (intellectual mocking parody) is important for establishing personal liberty and freedom of speech in post-Socialist Mongolian society.

Parody is a complex device that manifests in different styles throughout Mongolian history. It is not only a cultural phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon that emerges in periods of changing political and social systems. A particular kind of parody, unique to Mongolia - *mangas*-parody has persisted throughout Mongolian history. The origins of the *mangas* figure are discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter TWO – The development of the figure of the *mangas* as a symbol of revulsion through Mongolian history

To begin, I offer a personal experience as a vivid illustration of the grip of cultural myths on modern experience, critical to my written thesis and creative production. One weekend in the autumn of 1971, when I was seven years old, I went with my mother to see the Choijin Lama Temple⁶⁵ in the capital city Ulaanbaatar.⁶⁶ The visit was very entertaining but aroused strange and unexpected feelings in me. Many pictures covered the fresco of the monastery that horrified me, including human figures that had been cut up and disembowelled by devils, flayed human skin, goggling eyes and men sliced into pieces and pierced with knives. I had never seen such images and they have been unforgettable.

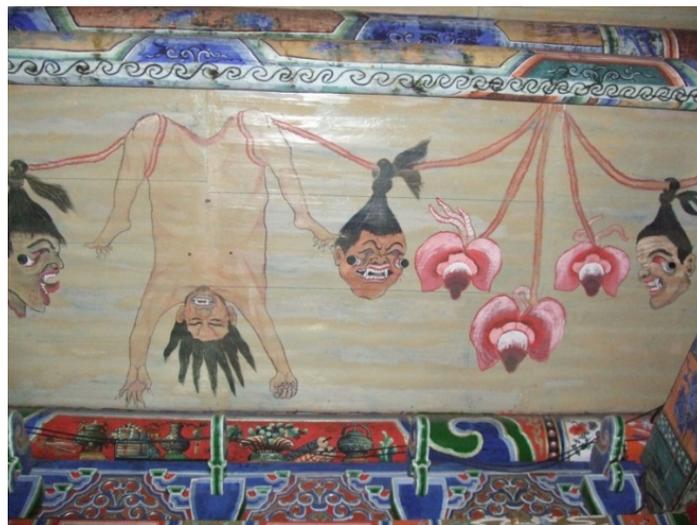


Figure 2.1 Fresco on the ceiling of the Choijin Lama Temple Museum, Ulaanbaatar. 1908. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, June 2011.

⁶⁵The Choijin Lama Temple Museum was erected between 1904 and 1908 and dedicated to the younger brother of the Eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutagt, Luvsanhaidav, who was considered to be the Mongolian State oracle. Luvsanhaidav was the first and last State oracle in Mongolian Buddhist historiography. Original name of the temple was Developer of Amnesty in Tibetan but name changed to Temple of Choijin after the independence movement of Mongolia in 1911. Dashdulam and Naranchimeg (2011), 111. The temple is one of only a few that survived the great Purge of the 1930s and was restored in 1961, 1988 and most recently, in 2011.

⁶⁶ In 1924, after the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic, the name of the capital city was changed from "*Ikh Khuree*" to "*Ulaanbaatar*" which means Red Hero. This ideological name was suggested by Comintern representative Turar Reskulov (1889-1937) to symbolise the first communist city in Asia accepted by the Mongolian leaders, who had worshipped Jamsran - Red Protector (Ulaan Sahius).

Fearful, I asked my mother what had happened to bring about these tortures. She kindly said, “if you do bad things such as lie, be lazy, envy others, and so on, you will be reborn in this evil world. But if you obey your parents then you will not have to worry.” She then pointed to another picture of a sinner whose stretched tongue was being tilled by demons [*albin*] with ploughs and explained that this person had sworn a lot in his mortal life, and thus deserved such punishment. Of course, my then-naive mind took this advice very seriously.

This chapter discusses the cultural and iconographic development of the figure of the *mangas* in Mongolian history. The *mangas* is a magical, supernatural creature, common in Mongolian epic tales. It is typically depicted as a many-headed and multi-coloured (mainly black, grey, yellow) gigantic beast that travels between land and sky, and launches attacks to seize the treasure, livestock and (typically beautiful) wife of the human hunter or herdsman. Usually, the narrative ends with the victory of the human hero over the *mangas*, in keeping with optimism, a core Mongolian value.⁶⁷ Here, I trace the persistence of the *mangas* as an incarnation of various forms throughout Mongolian cultural history, concluding that its coded appearance in contemporary Mongolian artworks is a response to oppression.

In Section 2.1, I discuss the etymology of the word *mangas* and the characteristics of the figure within Mongolian epics and folklore. I introduce its dual symbolism as cruel warrior and as a beast that swallows everything in its path. In Section 2.2, I discuss the eastern black *tengres* (44 Savage Cruel Heavens) prevalent in Mongolian shamanism, with particular reference to the *mangastengre*. I suggest that the *mangas* during the shamanic period is a representation of the natural strength and power of warrior *tengre*. Section 2.3 traces the *mangas* figure through Mongolian Buddhism, arguing that the *mangastengre* of shamanism transforms into the malevolent Buddhist figure of Dharmapala’s *Jamsran*. Finally, in Section 2.4 I discuss the shift of the Buddhist *Jamsran mangas* to its symbolic incarnation as Red Communism during The Great Purge of the 1930s.

⁶⁷ Optimism is a key feature of the traditional Mongol mentality; it is widely considered that optimism (hopefulness) is the foundation of a good life and fortune. A conversation usually starts with an Амны бэлэг [*Amni Belege*] that wishes good fortune to a household.

2.1 Etymological origins and cultural depictions of the *mangas* in Mongolian epic tales

2.1.1 Etymological origins

Mongolian folklorists explain that the *mangas* as a vicious, gigantic creature derives from a number of sources.⁶⁸ O. Jagar suggests that the *mangas* originates from *muus* or *magus*, the name of a four-breasted witch in ancient Mongolian folklore.⁶⁹ Tsevel explains that the word *mangas* denotes a human-formed ugly beast, while Dulam suggests that the word *mangas* originates from the Mongolian word *magu*, meaning bad.⁷⁰ Enkhbat proposes that the root of *mang* implies a meaning of “large, sizable” or “strong.”⁷¹ Katuu agrees, but argues that the *mangas* is a giant creature with weak intellectual capacity.⁷² Amitan supports this claim, suggesting that *mangas* is the plural of *mangar*, *manguu*, and *mangaa*, all of which refer to a fool.⁷³ Amitan also notes that a wild male camel on heat is also called a *mangas*, due to its foolish behaviour. In many Mongolian epics, however, the *mangas* invades the territory of the human hero and loots the hero’s property—variously livestock, servants and wife. Clearly, the *mangas* is not just a foolish, giant beast. It is rather more like a cunning and dangerous raider from a foreign clan.

⁶⁸ The pronunciation and spelling of *mangas* differs between Mongolian speaking clans of Central Asia: *mangas* or *mangaa* (Khalkha), *mangadhai* or *mangad* (Burayat), *mangus* (Oirat), *mange* (Daguur), *mangai* (Ordos), and even *mani* (found in Chinese folktales). These phonetic variants derive from the ancient pronunciation of *mangas* as *mangud*. The pronunciation *mangaa* is wide spread in modern Mongolian language. However, as it is an informal form, I have selected the formal and written form, *mangas* as well as for ease of reading.

⁶⁹ O. Jagar, *Study of Jangar Epic* (Inner Mongolia, 1993), 361.

⁷⁰ Ya. Tsevel, *Thesaurus of Mongolian language* (Ulaanbaatar, 1966), 330; S. Dulam, *The Characters in Mongolian Mythology* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing House, 1989), 170.

⁷¹ Dashjamtsyn Battsoigt, *The Meaning of the Name of Mongol* (Ulaanbaatar: Sorhon Tsagaan, 2009), 210.

⁷² Balchingiin Katuu, *Structure of Characters in Mongol Epic* (Ulaanbaatar, 2004), 250.

⁷³ H. Amitan, “Thought on Characters of the Mangus and Shulmas in Western Mongolian Epics, Geser and Jangar.” *Study of Jangar* (Bibliotheca Oiratica, vol XXII, 2011), 94.

2.1.2 The *mangas* in Mongolian epic tales: the cruel warrior

As a largely nomadic society oral story-telling was historically important for transmitting cultural knowledge from generation to generation. Epic tales and the folklore genres of myth and legend evolved into four main forms, two of which are pertinent here: those addressing problems of everyday life such as Badarchin told (see Chapter 1), and those relating to magical beings such as the *mangas*.⁷⁴ Mongolian epics and folklore as an important form of Mongolian literature began to attract the attention of scholars in the late 18th century,⁷⁵ especially after the discovery in 1856 of the manuscript, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (hereafter SHM) believed to have been written in 1240.⁷⁶ The SHM is a Mongolian epic chronicle which narrates the myths and legends of Chinggis Khaan's life, including events leading to the establishment of the Great Mongol Empire in the 13th century, and the earliest recorded imagining of the *mangas*. It is a recurring symbol in the SHM, particularly used in descriptions of strong and/or cruel human warriors. Human warriors are either called *mangas* or are described as having *mangas*-like qualities, illustrating an understanding of the *mangas* as a huge, powerful, cruel and voracious warrior. A particularly striking analogy occurs in §195, where Chinggis Khaan's brother Jorch Hasar, a powerful warrior, is described as being a *mangas* by Jamukha the Clever:

Hasar is the son whom Oelun–eke brought up on the meat of men. He is three spans in height, he can eat a three-year old cow without being sated, he wears armour of triple spans in height, he comes dragged by three bulls. He can swallow an archer with his bow without their sticking in his throat. Though he

⁷⁴ M.O. Sarlagtay, "Mongolian Folklore and perception of space." *Indian Folklife* 21 (2006). indianfolklore.org/journals/index.php/IFL/article/download/334/364

⁷⁵ The folklore collections of Russian and Finnish scholars such as G. Ramstedt (1900), B. Vladimortsov (1926) N. Poppe (1927, 1932) and S. Kozin (1935) were early sources that illustrated the morphology of the Mongolian epic form. G. I. Michailov's *Treasure of Mongolian Literature* (1969) traced the evolution of various mythological figures, arguing that Mongolian literature has its origins in Mongolian mythology. Studies in this field by Mongolian scholars began in the late 1950s when Ts. Damdinsuren completed his doctoral dissertation on the *Mongol Geser* epic in 1957. Scholars such as B. Rinchin (1960), P. Horloo (1967), J. Tsooloo (1967), R. Narantuya (1988), S. Dulam (1989) and B. Katuu (2004) further developed the field in Mongolia. In Inner Mongolia, this study thrived in the late of 1980s and 1990s with the work of H. Buyanbat (1985), Burenbeki (1997), and Gejin Chao (1997). German Mongolists W. Heissig (1955) and Erika Taube (2002), and Japanese Mongolist Mako Fujii (2001, 2003) introduced Western readers to Mongolian epic tales.

⁷⁶ *The Secret History of the Mongols* (SHM) was first described by Russian Sinologist Pyotr Kafarov in 1856, after he discovered a manuscript in a Manchu dynasty library in Beijing. He first transliterated the text into Mongolian using Chinese characters, and then into Russian in 1866. Since then, it has attracted close attention from numerous western and Mongolian scholars such as V. V. Bartold, B. Ya. Vladimirtsov, S.A. Kozin, P. Pelliot, L. Ligeti, Igor de Rachewiltz, Ts. Damdinsuren, and Sh. Gaadamba. The SHM contains various influential proverbs, aphorisms, wise sayings, folksongs, ballads and fragments of epic cycles. Bira, Tsedev, and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 3, 30.

gulps down the whole body of a man, his belly is still empty...He is Jorch Hasar and they call him Gurelgu Mangas.

In this extract, the description of Hasar is exaggerated; he is associated with characteristics similar to the folkloric *mangas* and finally, is given its name. Hasar, the most powerful warrior of Chinggis' army, mythologised as able to shoot an arrow 1700 metres, becomes a *mangas*, and through him the *mangas* becomes a gigantic, strong and insatiable warrior. This analogy is later reinforced when Jamukha calls Chinggis' military leaders Zeb, Subeedei, Zelme and Hubilai, "cruel *mangas*-dogs".⁷⁷

Gejin suggests that representations of the *mangas* in SHM are not related to any particular villains or heroes of Mongol historical periods, but rather refer to anything of a negative nature.⁷⁸ Reference to specific historical figures however, assigns *mangas* qualities to them while also changing the mythology of the *mangas* to include its characteristics and actions. In fact, §46 of the first chapter of SHM reports that *mangas* was the tribal name of the Mangud clan that originated from Mangudai, son of Nachin Baatar, clearly connecting the word with these real people and their activities. The name of a clan usually holds symbolic meaning that indicates its power and character, suggesting that the Mangud was one of the most violent and well-defended of the nomad tribes. Additionally, Western medieval historical sources report that the Mongols were barbarians, demons and "ghosts," traits analogous to the *mangas*.⁷⁹ Baabar notes that the word *ragshis* (demon/*mangas*) was used to refer to Chinggis Khaan and his invasion of Islamic nations.⁸⁰ S. Badral goes so far as to suggest that Chinggis Khaan's name might be linked to the root of the word *mangas* (which implies the meaning "enormous" or "titan"), as Chinggis is phonetically similar to *Tenggis* (sea).⁸¹ In each case, the etymological development of the idea of *mangas* is consistent with an enormous, viciously cruel being symbolically related to demonic oppression.

⁷⁷ SHM §195.

⁷⁸ Chao Gejin, "Mongolian Oral Epic Poetry: An Overview." *Oral Tradition*. 12, no.2 (1997), 335.

⁷⁹ Kevin Stuart, *Mongols in Western/American Consciousness* (Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 5-22.

⁸⁰ B. Baabar, *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), 27.

⁸¹ Sukhbaatariin Badral, *Chingiss Khaan and Mongolian History-Art Heritage* (Ulaanbaatar, 2011), 8.

2.1.3 The *mangas* in Mongolian epic tales: tales of swallowing

The most distinctive characteristic of the *mangas*, other than being a vicious warrior, is as an oversized creature swallowing all living beings. Several Western Mongolists suggest that *mangas* derives from enormous snakes: the Chinese word for boa (a giant snake),⁸² a Gurelgu-serpent, another kind of “great snake”,⁸³ a “great serpent”,⁸⁴ and Sh. Gaadamba, a famous Mongolian scholar of SHM, reads it as Gurelge-*mangas*, or “dinosaur-*mangas*.”⁸⁵ Many epic tales consistently describe the main characteristic of the *mangas* as swallowing everything. A significant example of the *mangas* as a swallowing beast occurs in §78 of SHM: Chinggis Khaan’s mother Oelun-Ujin uses the phrase “*Amidu zalgisu Kegy Manggus metu* [like a blue *mangas* swallowing its prey alive]” to harshly condemn her sons Temujin⁸⁶ and Khasar for the brutal murder of their younger half-brother, Bekter.⁸⁷ Oelun-Ujin compares them in ancient proverbial terms with a *mangas*: they had “swallowed the head” of their brother.

Charles Bawden called Mongolian epics, “tales of swallowers.”⁸⁸ Although 273 different versions of 72 epics exist,⁸⁹ they all narrate a struggle between a human hero and a *mangas* which swallows (at least) the possessions of the hero. For example, in the famous Khalkh-Mongol epic, *Khan Kharanhui*,

The ninety-headed, purple-faced⁹⁰ *Mangas* suddenly appeared to Khan Kharanhui and Uladai Mergen on their way and stood between them. Then he swallowed the younger brother before the eyes of the elder one and fled away. Then Khan Kharanhui followed the *Mangas* all over Hindustan and at last he overtook him and shot him through the head and killed him. When he cut open the *Mangas*’s stomach

⁸² Paul Pelliot, *Histoire Secrete des Mongols* (Paris, 1949), 136.

⁸³ Gaadamba cites “The Problem of Interrelation Between the “Secret History of the Mongols” and Mongolian Folklore” from Eric Haenisch’s “Die Geheime der Mongolen,” (Leipzig, 1948), 83.

⁸⁴ Nicolas Poppe, “The Heroic Epic of the Khalkha Mongols.” (Bloomington. IN: The Mongolia Society, 1979), 134.

⁸⁵ Shanjmyataviin Gaadamba, “The Problem of Interrelation Between the “Secret History of the Mongols” and Mongolian Folklore.” *The Second International Congress of Mongolists* Ulaanbaatar, vol. 1(1973), 99.

⁸⁶ Temujin is a childhood name of Chinggis Khaan.

⁸⁷ Bekter had the same father as Temujin and Hasar, but a different mother.

⁸⁸ Charles Bawden, “Some Recent Work in Mongolian Studies.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. no. 23 (1960), 530.

⁸⁹ Radnaabazariin Narantuya, “Mongol Tuuljin Burtgel.” *Studia Folclorica* 18, (1988), 82.

⁹⁰ In some versions of this legend, the *mangas* has fifteen heads and yellow faces.

whole families of people appeared, camels with their loads and other living beings in crowds and there was his younger brother Uladai Mergen with his horse.⁹¹

The metaphoric concept of “swallowing” in Mongol folklore is very different from that of western classical mythology. This is apparent in Saturn’s devouring⁹² as an action of eating as *killing* the victim, with the victim not expected to ever reappear, especially not from an opened stomach. Swallowing in Mongolian mythology is instead representative of power, a process of putting victims into the *mangas*’s stomach as though it were another kind of space of oppressive containment, restricting their liberty. An element of the narrative’s plot, the stomach is a place for storage rather than digestion. Victims only remain there until the end of the story.

2.1.4 The *mangas* swallower in Mongolian folklore

Folklore has been important for widely circulating stories and legends about the beliefs and customs traditionally inherited by a society and in earliest times, transmitted orally. It includes myths such as those about origin or creation, as well as legends as forms of knowledge about “evil forces”, aimed at maintaining a “culture of fear”.⁹³ In the Mongol origin myth, the Earth is totally dark after having just been created; there is no sun or moon. Eighteen men and eighteen women are sent from Heaven to the Earth to live, illuminated by their own bodies and movements. However, their light (a symbol of the sun) is eaten by the *mangas* (a symbol of night and darkness).⁹⁴ A contemporary Mongolian aphorism is derived from this myth, portraying the night as a darkness that swallows everything on earth. Similarly, an eclipse was considered to be a *mangas* (in some sources, “Rah dragon”) swallowing the sun and moon. Friar Willhelm of Rubruck (also William of Rubruk), a 13th century Flemish Franciscan missionary to Mongolia, reported that during an eclipse, shamans used drums and other instruments to make a tremendous noise to frighten away evil spirits (*mangas*). When the eclipse was over, the Mongols had a great

⁹¹ G. Sanjiev, *Khan Kharan-hui*. Collection *Turkish-Mongolian Linguistics and Folklore Study*, (1960), 333.

⁹² In Greek mythology, Saturn devours his own children out of fear of losing his reign. Western artists Peter Paul Rubens (1636) and Francisco de Goya’s (1821-22) made artworks each entitled “Saturn Devouring His Son”. Ruben’s Saturn commissioned on religious subject matter of the Roman Catholic Church, while Goya’s Saturn shows a horrific action that reflected his isolated life and existence at the time. Descargues, *Goya* (London: D.R.Books, 1979), 135.

⁹³ Linda Degh, *Legend, Belief: Dialectics of a Folklore Genre*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001), 4-5.

⁹⁴ Dulam and Vacek, *Mongolian Mythological Text* (Prague: Charles University, 1983), 165.

feast.⁹⁵ Buddhist Lamas still performed this ritual into the late 1920s, and such is its popularity it is mentioned in modern literature and appears in the 1995 Mongolian movie, *The Tree Sprouted in Fall*.⁹⁶

Another Mongolian folktale, *Rah is Tamed by Ochirvaani*, narrates that once Buddha used to have eternal water for living men and animals. However, the *mangas* drunk it and run away. The Buddha ordered defender deity of Buddha Ochirvaani (sanskrit Vajrapani; Tibetan Chagdor) to catch the *mangas* and return the eternal water. With assistance of the Sun and Moon, Ochirvaani eventually caught the *mangas* and cut its body into two pieces. The upper body remained in the Sky to become a beast called Rah, while lower piece of the body fell into the ocean. The Sun and Moon escaped from Rah's stomach without any struggle because Rah has no bottom which people call an eclipse.⁹⁷ Even today the Darkhad Mongol ethnic group call the eclipse of the moon a *mangas* with seventy five heads swallowing it. In other words, they have given cultural meaning to the *mangas* forces to explain cosmological phenomena, as well as those associated with their animist and shamanist beliefs.⁹⁸ Thus the next section takes into further consideration ancient Mongolian cosmology and black shamanism

⁹⁵ Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 197; Mazhar Ipsirogle, *Painting and Culture of the Mongols* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1967), 23.

⁹⁶ In this movie shows short action about Buddhist rites of eclipse when it happens.

⁹⁷ *Myth and Folktales of Mongolia* (Ulaanbaatar, 1989), 152.

⁹⁸ To give further meaning to ideas of 'swallowing' in the Mongolian nomadic context, the words "kill" or "slaughter", are replaced with the phrase "produce a sheep", a colloquial euphemism still in common use. Sendenjaviin Dulam, *A Mongolian Mythological text* (Charles University Prague, 1983), 141. Explicit references to killing, death and the spilling of blood were avoided because of taboos associated with these acts under their shamanistic and animistic belief system. Igor Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*. BRILL. Leiden-Boston vol. 1, 2 (2004), 368. Mongols substituted words such as "*Zalgih*" (swallow) or *Tolgoi zalgih*" (to swallow the head), and "*swallowing*" also implied that a person had died or been murdered. Idioms from "swallower tales" still exist in contemporary Mongolian: "*Ehunhe tolgoig zalgisun huuhed*" [a baby who swallows its own mother's head] is a harsh proverbial expression for example, to describe when a new-born baby survives its mother's death during childbirth.

2.2 The *mangas tengre* in Mongolian black shamanism [*Buu*]

2.2.1 *Buu*, the ancient Mongolian cosmology.

This section traces the origins of the *mangas* represented in Mongolian epic tales and folklore to the black *tengre* of the ancient Mongolian shamanistic belief system. Shamanism (Бөө [*Buu*]) is an ancient religion venerating ancestral spirits (*ongon*, pl; *ongod*) that emerged in Mongolia between five and seven thousand years ago.⁹⁹ Similar to the Mongol origin myth motifs mentioned earlier, the Mongol *Buu* universe consisted of upper, middle and lower worlds. The *tengre* of the upper, celestial world (*Tenger* [Eternal Heaven]) were engaged in constant struggle against those of the lower world to protect the middle from misfortune and calamity. The middle terrestrial world (*Etugen Ekh*) belonged to people, animals and plants. The lower world (*Дод муѳ*) was dark and populated by deceased souls,¹⁰⁰ *ad* [Ад]¹⁰¹ and *albin* [Албин]¹⁰² who cause all the evil in *Etugen Ekh*.¹⁰³ *Tengerism* [Тэнгэрүзм], the worship of Eternal Heaven (*Deed Tenger* [Дээд Тэнгэр]), the supreme power or ruler of the Universe,¹⁰⁴ is a core tenet of *Buu*. Both male (*Buu* [Бөө]) and female (*Udgan* [Удган]) shamans mediated between *Etugen Ekh* and *Tenger*. They accessed the worlds of ancestral and origin spirits during ecstatic rituals in order to communicate with good spirits and pacify evil spirits.

By the 17th century, Mongol *Buu* asserted that the human world was continuously impacted upon by 99 *tengres* forces of “good” and “evil” (or “white” and “black”), that originated from *Deed Tenger*.¹⁰⁵ There are a few versions of shaman legends regarding 99 *tengres*. By Buryat legend,

⁹⁹ B. Rinchen (1962), S. Badamhatan (1965) and H. Buyanbat (1985), 92. characterise shamanism as a religion.

¹⁰⁰ A deceased soul is called a wandering spirit or bad spirit who seeks the next life. Shamans believed a troubled spirit exists in the lower world (as do some contemporary Mongols). These spirits had a harmful influence on the health of people, especially children and the elderly. Although able to appear in terrifying physical forms in *Etugen Ekh*, they would have been unable to instil the powerful fear of a *mangus*.

¹⁰¹ *Ad* are evil spirits, quite similar to the Christian devil. There are many types of *ad* in Mongolian shamanism and traditional folklore. They are not *tengre*, however, as they come from the lower world, so further discussion of them is outside the scope of this study.

¹⁰² *Albin* are like demons. They do not have the magical abilities of a *mangas*. Folktales say that an *albin* cannot do anything to young men or if a person is not afraid. Hence, they are not considered to be very powerful.

¹⁰³ Chuluuni Dalai, *Brief History of Mongol Shaman* (Ulaanbaatar, 1959), 41, 42.

¹⁰⁴ Called various names including Heaven Above, Eternal Heaven, Lofty Heaven, Heaven Lord, Blue Heaven and Han Tengre.

¹⁰⁵ Dorji Banzaroy, *The Black Faith, or Shamanism among the Mongols*, trans D. Badarch (Ulaanbaatar, 2011), 14. *Deed Tenger* is the eternal ruler of the Universe; it is how the world came to exist. See also Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 1, 281.

initially 99 *tengres* were a united group of Heavens led by Asranga *tengre* (*Deed Tenger*)¹⁰⁶ and after the death of Asranga they separated into 55 “good” (white) *tengres* of the west and 44 “bad” (black) *tengres* of the east.¹⁰⁷ Dulam proposes that these *tengres* were the children or relatives of *Deed Tenger* and were engaged in constant competition.¹⁰⁸ With their original natural strength and power *tengres* soon came to be viewed as human heroes of old times. Legends explain how each *tengre* had its duty and function tied to the natural phenomena and events of nomadic life. So: “The legend, even if not founded on reality can create reality ... The legend has power, the nature of which is unknown and dangerous”.¹⁰⁹ Generally speaking Mongol shamans practiced either “white” *Tsagaan tenger* [Цагаан тэнгэр] or “black” *Khar tenger* [Хар тэнгэр] shamanic rituals. “White *tengre*” (*Tsagaan tengre* [Цагаан тэнгэр]) blessed and protected people, and existed for families, husbands,¹¹⁰ wives, children,¹¹¹ as well as livestock. These white *tengres* protected steppe nomads from various kinds of evils caused by “black” *tengres*, including curses, envy, war and so on. “White” rituals invoked the peaceful *tengre* to promote good deeds, habits and thoughts, to heal and to protect.¹¹² “White” shamans encouraged people to associate with nature, water and earth *tengre*, and to pacify and undo damage caused by “black” *tengre*.

In addition, in the Mongol view, the colour black symbolised the root of all negative things and was used to represent disgust and aversion. Consequently, “bad” *tengres* were described as “black” and depicted using black or other dark colours. Such nocturnal rituals are described by western sources such as Friar Willhelm: “some of the soothsayers (shaman) invoke demons (black spirits) and they assemble in their dwelling by night time for consulting them...the devil

¹⁰⁶ Asranga *tengre* (Asrang, Acrya, Asara) name derives from Indian Buddhist mythology. It is known as Asar *tengre* or Brahma in Mongol epics.

¹⁰⁷ T. Mihailov, *From History of Buryat Shamanism* (Novosibirsk, “Science” Printing, 1980), 148.

¹⁰⁸ Sendenjaviin Dulam, *The Characters in Mongolian Mythology* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing House, 1989) 72. The Buryat (Buriat) chant of *Heaven Above* describes the major black *tengre* such as Miliyan, Hero, Envy and Zayagach being summoned to appear before *Deed Tenger* before the white *tengre*. This suggests that *Deed Tenger* thought that the black *tengre* were much more powerful than the white.

¹⁰⁹ Linda Degh, *Legend and Belief: Dialectics of a Folklore Genre*, (Indiana UP: Bloomington), 5.

¹¹⁰ Mongolians say that a man with a beautiful and kind wife has a “*Tengre* of wife,” whereas a woman with a kind husband has a “*Tengre* of husband.”

¹¹¹ The children’s white *tengre* protected them from evil, and newly married couples prayed to this *tengre* to help them conceive.

¹¹² Otgoni Purev, *Mongolian Shamanism* (Ulaanbaatar: Munkhiin Useg, 2010), 29.

[*albin*] comes in the darkness and gives meat and utters oracles.”¹¹³ For Plano Carpini: “The Mongols had a wondrous fear and reverence for him (*Black tengre*) and offer him many oblations and the first portion of the food and drink and they do everything according to the answers he gives”.¹¹⁴ “Black” rituals tended to be much more complex and cruel than those of “White” shamanism as the “black” *tengre* were more difficult to control.¹¹⁵ The symbolic relationship between dark and light reflects the extent to which the origin myth in Mongolian folklore mentioned in Section 2.1.4 cannot be divorced from explanations of neither the *mangas* nor *mangas tengre*.

2.2.2 *Mangas tengre*

As one of the components of 44 eastern black *tengres*, *Mangas tengre* is the theme of many scholarly studies across various Mongol ethnic groups.¹¹⁶ With the resurgence of Mongolian Buddhist and shamanist faith since the collapse of the socialist system, numerous books have been published. Sh. Sukhbat mentioned *mangas tengre* in his list of 44 east *tengres*¹¹⁷ which are identical to those in Mansan and Yonsog’s work. D. Bayambadorj’s *Shamanism and Eternal Heaven* (2013)¹¹⁸ also introduces some modern versions of *tengre*’s names such as “black” debt *tengre*, “black” waste *tengre*, ill fated *tengre* and so on. While the origin and concepts of eastern black *tengres* are still unclear and there is lack of data regarding the *mangas tengre*,¹¹⁹ the fact

¹¹³ Christopher Dawson, (1980), 200. Plano Carpini’s *The Mongol Mission* included Rubruck’s *Mission to Asia: Narratives and letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* edited by Christopher Dawson. See also Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts* (Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1988), 200.

¹¹⁴ Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia* (University of Toronto Press, 1980), 12.

¹¹⁵ Black shamanism was still practiced among the Darkhad people in northern Mongolia at the beginning of the 20th century. Otgon Purev, *Mongolian Shamanism* (Ulaanbaatar: Munkhiin Useg, 2010), 278.

¹¹⁶ Scholars such as D. Banzarov, M. Hangalov, D. Mansan, Yonsog and Erdemt studied *mangas tengre*. It primarily reported scholarly by Buryat scholars, Banzarov’s *The black Faith, or Shamanism among the Mongols* (1864) and Hangalov’s study, see M. Hangalov *Selected Works*, vol. 1, (Ulan-Ude, Buryat Printing, 1958), 403-17. Since 1990s, Inner Mongolian researchers began to study shaman *tengres*, clarified the number and functions of them. D. Mansan, *Mongol Shamanism* (1990), 65. Yonsog, *Review of Religious Belief of the Mongols* (1992), 117. Erdemt, *Historical Concepts of Mongolian Shamanism* (1995), 168.

¹¹⁷ Sh. Sukhbat, *The Idol Eternal Heaven* (Ulaanbaatar: Munkh Dardas Printing, 2014), 155-57.

¹¹⁸ Dondogiin Bayambadorj, *Shamanism and Eternal Heaven* (Ulaanbaatar, 2013), 119-24.

¹¹⁹ S. Dulam defines briefly that *mangas tengre* is a fatal *tengre* for human being which from “bad” direction. Sendenjav Dulam, *The Characters in Mongolian Mythology* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing House, 1989), 170.

Here, the bad direction is supposed to be north-east. The Mongols is considered the north-east is bad direction of the universe. Also, in many Mongol epics narrate that all types of *mangases* live and come from the north east.

that *mangas* in any of its manifestations is still researched and discussed confirms its importance as a symbol of revulsion throughout Mongolian history.

Because this thesis is concerned with the contemporary parodic nature of *mangas* representation an interesting pictorial aspect is that *mangas tengre* was Mahakala's companion in Tibetan Buddhism.¹²⁰ Of the 10 *tengres* for directions of the universe one of them is *mangas tengre* who possesses the north east. It is depicted as a red and black figure riding a hungry ghost and his right hand wields a sword while the left is on his hip.¹²¹ By Tibetan Yellow sect Buddhism, *mangas tengre* is an oppositional divine force because it originated from the dark underworld. But later as a patron of Mahakala he became a relative of virtue, a listener of Mahakala's decree and supporter for ten directions of the universe. The ferocious appearance of *mangas tengre* represents a positive force in this world committed to destroying evil and safeguarding the Buddha Dharma. So it is quite different than the *mangas* in Mongol mythology which swallowed every living being. Although pictorial representations of *tengres* emerged in Mongolia quite late with the spread of Buddhism and ideological changes discussed in section 2.3, these representations nonetheless refer to the "black" *tengre* from this period, clearly showing the eastern *tengre* as a Mongolian ideal of courage, strength and power; a figure that disregards the fear of death during times of conflict.

Images of "black" *tengres* (Figure 2. 2.1) form part of Sukhbaatarin Badral's¹²² private collection of folk paintings, but have yet to be the subject of scholarly study. Within the large number of shamanist *tengres* and Buddhist deities, the eastern 44 *tengres* were often depicted as a horseman. Erdene, for example, notes that *Dayan tengre* is one of the ninety-nine *tengres* and is depicted as an ordinary Mongolian herdsman.¹²³ Dulam describes *militant tengre* as horse-riding warriors, carrying a sword, bow and arrows,¹²⁴ whilst Tsendenjav suggests that a "black"

¹²⁰ Mahakala (Sanskrit Dharmapala, Tib Gombo, Mong Black Trust) one of eight (Chojjin) protector of Buddhist teaching. It is considered incarnated fierceful image of Avalokiteshvara in Tibetan Buddhism and depicted multiple versions but all with dark blue. Mahakal is also called 75 Mahakala due to having 75 companions

¹²¹ Sh. Bayasgalan, *Offering Sacrifices for Ten Ferocities* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 2015), 170.

¹²² Sukhbaatariin Badral (1963-) is a Mongolian sculptor and art critic. He has taught at the Mongolian Art Institute since 1991. In 2008, he opened the private museum, "The treasures of Chinggis Khaan," in central Ulaanbaatar.

¹²³ Ch. Erdene, *Big Triangle* (Ulaanbaatar: The Limited Editions Club, 1999), 40.

¹²⁴ Dulam (1989), 167.

tengre always rides a black horse.¹²⁵ The horse is an essential element in the depiction of *tengres*, reflecting the important role of horses in nomadic life. As most *tengres* are portrayed as horse riders or warriors, identifying the specific *tengre* depicted can be difficult. However, slight differences, especially in colour, between horses, dress and accessories can assist.



Figure 2.2.1 *Mangas tengre*. ca. late 17th, early 18th century. Ink, water colour, paper, 10x10cm, Photo from collection at Badral's private museum, 2012.¹²⁶

The *tengre* depicted at Figure 2.2.1 could be either the *mangas tengre*, or a *Suld tengre*. The pose is similar to Heissig's description of a *Suld tengre*: riding a black velvet horse, armed with a bamboo whip and a sword, wearing a helmet, chainmail shirt and long boots, and a tiger skin apron around his waist. Typically, a falcon is pictured flying above his head.¹²⁷ *Suld tengre* (*Suld* [Сүлд])¹²⁸ had the power to dishearten vengeful enemies and encourage the bravery of soldiers.

¹²⁵ Saharov Tsendenjav, *Historical Paper of Borjigon Buryat* (Ulan Ude, 1992), 22.

¹²⁶ It is possibly produced by an anonymous artist based on oral or written description of the *mangas tengre*.

¹²⁷ Heissig's description was in German, therefore I retrieved a translation from Dulam's book. S. Dulam, *The Characters in Mongolian Mythology* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing House, 1989), 175.

¹²⁸ *Suld tengre* is a military idol from the early and medieval period. *Suld* was a powerful protective force ordained by Heaven. Rachewiltz (2004), 329, 330. Each warrior had a *Suld tengre* that controlled their destiny as ordained by *Deed Tengre*. In the Mongolian language, *Suld* implies several meanings such as splendour, protector of the home and military banners, or military might.

A soldier believed that a *suld tengre* gave him a fearless heart, extraordinary power and speed akin to a horse, as well as protection in battle.¹²⁹ Death was not feared when blessed by *Suld tengre* and *Black Suld* (black war banner of Mongol army). Human sacrifices were often offered to the *Black Suld*, most commonly by removing the hearts of prisoners during times of war. Steppe nomads lived under the threat of many dangers, including assaults from foreign clans, wild animals and hazardous natural forces, and courage often played a decisive role in coping and surviving. Mongols gained courage from their *Suld tengre*. Purev emphasises that “Black” shamanism was a “religion of courage.”¹³⁰ The absence of the falcon in Figure 2.2.1 suggests that this figure is probably not a *Suld tengre*, but rather a *mangas tengre*. Although there is a shortage of academic sources on the *mangas tengre*, it clearly symbolises an ancestral soul and icon of power of ‘ancient’ savage Mongolian warriors as an organic evil phenomena.

2.2.3 Evil spirit *mangas*

In relation to Mongol perceptions of their world as nomadic herders it is helpful to elaborate on the relationship between notions of *mangas* and the concept of evil spirits in shamanism such as an *ad*, *albin* and *savdag* (Савдаг),¹³¹ the spirits of the outdoors. Michialov and Sampildendev have argued that the image of *mangas* emerged from the feared and secret power of natural phenomena.¹³² In their daily lives, nomads anxiously dealt with the impact of natural forces: they perceived nature to be a wild beast, a *mangas*.

Black *tengres* are celestial bodies, while evil spirits are terrestrial bodies. The evil spirits were fear of harm for herdsman’s living. For example, an *ad* flies everywhere threatening people, spreading disease and raising greed, *albin*¹³³ wanders the steppe misleading people especially for travellers, to lose their way. *Savdag* was responsible for natural disasters such as drought, floods,

¹²⁹ Sendenjaviin Dulam, *The Characters in Mongolian Mythology* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing House, 1989), 74.

¹³⁰ O. Purev, *Mongolian Shamanism* (Ulaanbaatar: Munkhiin Useg, 2010), 38, 286.

¹³¹ The word *savdag* derives from the Tibetan word “sa-bdag” (land-master). It seemed to be adopted into Mongolian language since spreading Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia.

¹³² See Georgy Mikhailov, “The Myths in the Heroic Epic of the Mongolian Nations” (in Russian). KSINA. 83 (1964), 83; Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 3, 25; Katuu (2004), 251.

¹³³ Dorji Banzarov, *The Black Faith or Shamanism among the Mongols* (Ulaanbaatar, 2007), 55.

extremely cold winter (*zud*) and disease among people and livestock.¹³⁴ Worshipping the spirit of the land is deeply connected with the adoration of *Etugen Ekh*, and has long been part of the Mongol psyche. According to historical sources, ritual offerings to *Etugen Ekh* were prolific, and some still exist.¹³⁵ The *ovoo tahih* [Овоо тахих] ceremony continues as the modern form of this ritual directed towards pacifying malevolent earth spirits and requesting clemency from natural disasters.

Adoration of the *spirits* still remains in contemporary language expressed by the word *mangas* in order to scare small children. A phrase frequently used today is “*mangas of rock comes*” (*Hadni mangaa irlee*), a motherly expression used to discourage the misbehaviour of small children. Mothers and grandmothers (but seemingly not fathers) say to children, “do not do that, if you do not stop, the *mangas of rock* will come here and take you away!” In this context, it seems that the *mangas of rock* suggests implement of upbringing however emerging time in using colloquial is still unclear. As part of a child’s upbringing this is intended to guide them to avoid sinful behaviour for the rest of their life and deeply connected to the teaching of sin in Buddhism. The phrase “rock *mangas comes*” presumably originated from the evil character of *mangas* in traditional heroic epic and folktales, an important form for enlightening and upbringing of young generations. The characters of the epics were perfect models for forming an individual’s world view of positive heroes and disgust toward negative *mangas*. Metaphors common are expressed in Mongol spoken language, such as ‘he is merciless as a *mangas*’, ‘his mind is black as a *mangas*’, ‘greedy as a *mangas*’ and so on. The *mangas* is a complex symbol of all negatives of being human.

All harms and misfortunes of children are usually explained by shamans as a revenge of evil spirits. The parents believed many evil spirits like *ad, albin* wandered outdoors causing children sickness. A word “rock” is a key point here, because it indicates the outdoors in which evil spirits live. Evil spirits are creatures of the lower world so their revenges are nasty for humans. Consequently, using the idiomatic expression *mangas of rock* has mixed the *mangas*,

¹³⁴ Sh. Sukhbat, *Traditional Rites in Worshipping Mountains and Rivers in Mongol Shaman* (Ulaanbaatar: Bishreft Tenger Printing, 2012), 86.

¹³⁵ Gunjiin Sukhbaatar, *Mongol Nuryn State* (Ulaanbaatar, 1992), 126-127); See also G. Ayurzana’s *A legend of Shaman* (2010). Worship *Etugen Ekh* later turned *ovoo tahih*. *Ovoo* is a mound of rough stones, woods and various other natural materials found on a mountain. Travellers added stones to the mound and asked for good fortune from the spirits during the journey. *Ovoo* is a sacred place for the Mongols they believed that it is place of *savdag*.

(component of all wrong deeds) adverse characteristics in epic tales and the shaman concept of the evil spirit. That is why mothers say “*mangas of rock*”, rather than the single word “*mangas*”?

That it survives in present-day Mongolian life is evidence of shamanic veneration being deeply embedded in Mongolians’ psyche. I recall in kindergarten I used to play the game “*mangas of rock comes*” with other children, frightening one another in a darkened room. The player who chose the role of *mangas* mimicked the facial expressions of the ugly monster, enjoying the imagining of terror inflicted on the others (see Bu. Badral’s painting Fig 4.1.10, 4.1.11, Chapter Four). A game such as this might also derive from shamanist belief of spirits and the traditional folklore that illuminated the myth about the *mangas*.

In order to further understand the persistence of the *mangas* metaphor in Mongolian history, the next section traces its relationship to *Jamsran*, the protector deity of the Buddhist dharma during the development of Mongolian-styled Tibetan-Buddhism.

2.3 The *Jamsran mangas* in Mongolian Buddhism

Tibetan Yellow sect Buddhism (*Vajrayana*) introduced the eight *Chojjin*¹³⁶ (Чойжин [Dharmapala]) to Mongols. These deities were guardians of the teachings of Buddha, defenders of faith and protectors from evil spirits. They had such a terrifying appearance¹³⁷ that the Mongols called them *Dogshid* (Ferocities). *Jamsran*¹³⁸ (Figure 2.3.1) is the protector deity of Buddha Dharma replacing the Shamanist “black” *tengre* of nomadic *Buu*. In this section, I trace this transformation through the origin of *Jamsran* following the fall of the Great Mongol Empire (1368), throughout the introduction and development of Tibetan Buddhism during the Manchu

¹³⁶ Sanskrit *Dhar-ma-pala*, Tibetan *Chos-skyong*) The eight *Chojjins* are Gombo (sansk *Mahakala*, a protector of Buddhist teaching), Gongor (sansk *Sita Mahakala*, God of Prosperity), Damjinchijil (sansk *Yama*, a lord of Hell), Baldan Lham (sansk *Sri devi*, a female protector of Buddhism), Shalshi (sansk *Caturmukha Mahakala*, a protector of *Vajrayana*), Namsrai (sansk *Vaihsravana*, Lord of Wealth), *Jamsran* (sansk *Begtse*, mon Ulaan Sahuia a protector of Buddhism) and Tsamba (sansk *Brahma*, a supporter of wisdom).

¹³⁷ Deflet Ingo Lauf, *Tibetan Sacred Art: The Heritage of Tantra* (Shambhala Berkeley& London, 1976), 169.

¹³⁸ *Jamsran* (sansk *Begtse*, tib T.ICam sring, mon Ulaan Sahuia-Red Protector) one of the most popular deities of 8 *Chojjin*. It is also known *Lord of Dear Lord*, *Jamsran* was primarily worshiped as a Mongol shaman *tengre* then became a defender of *Vajrayana*.

occupation (1648-1911) of Mongolia, ending with the People's Revolution (1921) and subsequent creation of the Socialist Mongolian People's Republic (MPR). I argue that *Jamsran* is a successor of the mythical *mangas* that occurred in response to the Buddhist introduction of the notion of sin.



Figure 2.3.1 *Jamsran*. 18th century, 153x108cm, Buddhist iconography (tang-ka), mineral paints, Photo: N. Tsultem, *Development of the Mongolian Style Painting "Mongol Zurag" in Brief*. 1986, plate number 22.

2.3.1 The transition from Shamanism to Buddhism

After the fall of the imperial Chinese Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) established by Chinggis Khan's grandson Khubilai, Mongol Khaans and noble princes were banished to their native lands and Chinggis' descendants struggled between themselves for power.¹³⁹ Eventually, those nobles re-embraced a traditional nomadic lifestyle and by the late 15th century, some were

¹³⁹ B. Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia, The Mongols: Migration, Settlement* (Uaanbaatar: Nepko, 2009), 117.

excited by the prospect of Tibetan Buddhism¹⁴⁰ for the possibility of strengthening their power and notoriety. In 1577, Altan Khaan of Tumed,¹⁴¹ and ten years later Abutai Sain Khaan of Khalkha,¹⁴² turned to Buddhism to re-establish stability and prevent internal conflicts. This process was supported by the Chinese Manchu Dynasty (Qing)¹⁴³ who employed it in the formation of the Manchu state itself as well as for defining Mongol identity in the pre- and post-Qing period.¹⁴⁴

Significantly, in order to gain Mongol support Manchu rulers used numerous political tricks such as “threaten by *mangas*”¹⁴⁵ with particular reference to nobles such as Ligden (a king of Chahar), as a *mangas* who wished to conquer eastern Mongolia.¹⁴⁶ Later, they reused the same strategy against Khalkh nobles such as Galdan, a king of Oirat, as a *mangas* who prepared to destroy the majority Khalkh. These uses of the *mangas* motif reflect my earlier discussion of Mongol epic tales, one of which has been referred to as the ‘battle-motif series’ in which *mangas* is a basic constituent.¹⁴⁷ Deployments against nobles causing similar internecine strife were successful and influenced by shamanism and folklore, the transformation of Tibetan Buddhism over the next three hundred years developed uniquely Mongolian qualities.

Despite *Buu* or “Black” shamanism being considered primitive, ignorant and anti-Buddhist¹⁴⁸ many *Buu* rituals and practices were incorporated into Mongolian Buddhism, including “black” rituals and *Buu tengre* (including *mangas tengre*) were incorporated into the Buddhist cosmology, becoming *Jamsran* and other deities.

¹⁴⁰ Attempts to introduce Tibetan Buddhism into Mongolia had occurred previously, the most recent during the Yuan Dynasty when *Sa-skya* Buddhism was declared a state religion. Bira, Tsedev and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 1, 295.

¹⁴¹ Tumed was a plural name of the three *Tumen*, which divided into the six *tumen* Mongols (Khalkha) and three *tumen* western Mongols (Oirat). Bira, Tsedev, and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 1, 298. The word *tumen* implies the meaning tens of thousands.

¹⁴² The Khalkha consider themselves direct descendants of Chinggis Khaan. They have dominated the ruling class for many centuries.

¹⁴³ Most scholars of Qing period are agreed. J. Elverskog, *Our Great Qing* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁴⁴ Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 169.

¹⁴⁵ Yo. Ganhuyag. “Mangaa of Rock”. <http://gantulga.wordpress.com> accessed 3 July 2011.

¹⁴⁶ In 1636, The Manchu conquers the southern Mongolia creating Inner Mongolia.

¹⁴⁷ Rinchindorji, *Mongolian-Turkic Epics: Typological Formation and Development*, *Oral Tradition* 16/2 (2001), 383.

¹⁴⁸ Dorji Banzarov, *The Black Faith or Shamanism Among the Mongols*. trans D. Badarch (Ulaanbaatar, 2011), 9.

2.3.2 The transformation of *Buu mangas tengre* into the Buddhist *Chojjin Jamsran*

Various scholars tracing the origins of *Jamsran* propose that the third Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso (Mongolian: *Sodnomjamts*), transformed a Mongolian war-lord into the Buddhist Bodhisattva Avalokiteshavara in 1577¹⁴⁹ and that *Jamsran* originated as a cruel, savage Earth *tengre* pre-Buddhist Mongol god of war who later became a defender of Buddhism.¹⁵⁰

In appearance *Jamsran* is depicted as a large, red deity, usually stepping on the corpses of a man and a horse, in his copper mountain rising above the sea of blood. In his right hand, he wields a flaming sword with a scorpion tail, while his left, armed with a bow and arrow, lifts the fresh heart of the enemies of Buddhism. He is angry: his three wide-open eyes roll wildly and four fangs are visible in his opened mouth. He wears a chainmail shirt,¹⁵¹ an undergarment of red silk and high Mongolian boots, with a garland of fifty blood-dripping heads around his neck. *Jamsran* is depicted with his siblings: his sister *Rikpay Lhame* (*Regvii Lham*) is on his right and rides a bear,¹⁵² chewing on a corpse and *Laihansorogdog* is on his left, mounted on a crazed wolf holding a banner.¹⁵³ All *mangas*'s are mentioned through their representation as a horseman except *Jamsran* because he is a tool for religious and political interventions in Mongolia in the 17th century.

Various versions of *Jamsran*'s origin reveal similar characteristics which collectively suggest a lineage from the *mangas tengre*. For instance in Buddhist mythology he was son of father *Yagchis*¹⁵⁴ and mother *mangas*.¹⁵⁵ Although the legend originated from Indio-Tibetan, in the Mongolian offering prayer to *Jamsran*, "The offering to the Red Protector" *Jamsran* is invoked as *yaschis*, the same as in the shaman ritual incantation summoning an ancestor's soul. *Yaschis* is

¹⁴⁹ *Begtse* <http://Buddhism.about.com/od/tibetandentities/tp/Dharmapalas.htm> accessed 25 November 2013. See Carole Pegg, *Mongolian Music, and Dance and Oral Narrative: Performing Diverse Identities* (University of Washington Press, 2001), 158f. Elisabetta Choido (2000, p.149) cited in the footnote from Nebesky Wojkowitz's *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* (London: Mouton&Company's Gravenhage: Hague, 1956), 88.

¹⁵⁰ Dashdulam and Naranchimeg (2011), 167.

¹⁵¹ Inspiring his other name "Hidden Sheet of Mail."

¹⁵² NyamOsoriin Tsultem, *Outline of the Development of Mongolian Painting* (Ulaanbaatar, 1988), 44.

¹⁵³ *Begtse*'s attendants are explained variously, for instance in some sources they are his consort and assistants.

¹⁵⁴ *Yagchis* (Sanskrit *Yaksa raja*) is a half demon half god king. In Hindu it is a mountain demon while in Buddhism it is a god of fertility living in eight spaces of the universe. In an old Mongol source *yagchis* is interpreted as a *mangas*.

¹⁵⁵ *Handbook of Ulaan Sahuis: Protector and Supporter for Dharma* (Beubum)(Ulaanbaatar, Shambala Society, 2005), 42, 101. trans from Tibetan to Mongolian Cyrillic by Samdan and Batsanaa in 2015. It is also popular knowing *Beubum of Jamsran* which was highly tabooed scripture (sutra) of *Jamsran* for many years. This has been transferred orally by most trusted lama to next generation. Origin of this scripture was kept in the secret cave.

Jamsran's father. Amongst the eight *choijin*, only *Jamsran* holds a fresh heart to his chest representing the blood sacrifice for the Black banner of the Mongol army. For instance the Mongolian "Hymn of Praise to Jamsran" in part states

I extol you, the fierce, red Lord of life,
A consumer of the warm blood of the enemy's heart,
[...] Who joyfully consume the flesh and blood of the enemy,
And exhibit various frightening, magic transformations!¹⁵⁶

Jamsran is also called a "swallower of dear life" and in *Jamsran's* heart mantra he is invoked as a "Life devourer deity who roared to smash and injure every adversary,"¹⁵⁷ a guardian warrior and unforgiving swallower of enemy's heads for protecting Buddha and his teaching.

As a protective deity, out of the eight Mongolian Jebtsundamba Khutagtus (incarnated religious leaders)¹⁵⁸ *Jamsran* came to be popularly worshipped in the 19th and early 20th century and characterised the Mongols' long struggle for independence from the Manchu Qing and China. After the 1911 Mongolian independence movement against the Manchu Qing, the last Khutagtu decreed *Jamsran* to be the chief deity of the Ministry of Defense of the Mongol state,¹⁵⁹ revolutionary members took oaths to him and on the 29th day of each month *Jamsran* was worshipped in the central monasteries of Da Khuree (later Ulaanbaatar)– a practice that continues today in Ulaanbaatar's major monasteries such as the Gandan and Dashchoilon. With this date coinciding with the invocation of *Buu Ongod* the relationship between pre-Buddhist reverence for nature, Buddhism and re-emergent interest in shamanic beliefs and practices suggest the *mangas* phenomena continues to be manifest from a very long lineage¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Culture, and Society* edited by Vesna Walleca (Oxford University Press, 2015), 206.

¹⁵⁷ *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Culture, and Society* edited by Vesna Walleca (Oxford University Press, 2015), 210. In part 11 article "What Do Protective Deities, Mongolian Horses, and Fast Steeds in Common?" In the footnote Walleca attached heart mantra of *Jamsran* in sanscrit.

¹⁵⁸ Bogdo, or Eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutagt (1870 - 1924) was the last king of Mongolia. He was born into a family of Tibetan high officials and came to Mongolia when he was four years old. Despite his role in the 1911 independence movement, he was vilified during the Socialist period. For example, in the movie "Sukhbaatar" (1943), the Eighth Bogdo sent his doctor to poison the Mongolian revolutionary leader Sukhbaatar. Some referred to the Bogdo as "Blind Tibetan", or "syphilis Tibetan".

¹⁵⁹ Dashdulam and Naranchimeg (2011), 167.

¹⁶⁰ Otgoni Purev, *Mongolian Shamanism* (Ulaanbaatar: Munkhiin Useg, 2010), 260.

Jamsran manifested in various of divine and human emanations of warrior heroes such as Geser Khaan, Chinggis Khaan and more recently, Magsarjav. It has been suggested that Khatan Baatar Magsarjav the Mongol army commander of the 1911 independence movement was an incarnation of *Jamsran*.¹⁶¹ As the “Hymn of Praise to Jamsran” mentioned above extols, inculcating the fear of death to an enemy was a vital element of Mongol belief in manifestations of the successor to *Buu mangas tengre*, Jamsran.

2.3.3 The *Jamsran mangas*: the evolution of a fear of nature and death into a fear of sin

Derived from the teachings of karma (*Uilin ur* [Уйлийн Үр]),¹⁶² Tibetan Buddhists preached the notion of sin to the Mongols, which was punishable by a large number of wrathful deities, the most popular being the Dharmapalas (*Choijin*).¹⁶³ With wide fiery wide rolling eyes,¹⁶⁴ the terrifying appearance of these wrathful deities was intended to frighten evil forces and threaten sinners with retribution, even into the next life.¹⁶⁵ Because Buddhism was spread among the Mongols in the Tibetan language, nomads did not always clearly understand the original meaning of the mantras and religious rituals, which became interwoven with shamanism and superstitious beliefs. Even Mongolian performers of Buddhist religious rites did not necessarily understand the deeper intellectual and spiritual aspects of Buddhist philosophy. Consequently, as Tudev argues, Mongolians have a stronger consideration for sin and the punishments for sinning

¹⁶¹ *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Culture, and Society* edited by Vesna Walleca (Oxford University Press, 2015), 211-15. Magsarjav Sandagdorjin (1877-1927) was a military commander, who played a vital role in the successful Mongolian Independence movement in 1911. He was awarded the title *Khatan Baatar Van* (Indomitable Hero) from the Eighth *Bogdo* Jebtsundamba Khutagt. After the revolution, he was appointed Minister for War. Onon, *Mongolian Heroes of the Twentieth Century* (1976), chap 4. Also, several mountains in Mongolia including Bulgan mountain in Arhangai province, Hugnu mountain in Bulgan province are entitled Jamsran worshipped mountains.

¹⁶² *Karma* teaches that the actions in this life will determine the nature of rebirth; if a person commits a sin (including pride, envy, temptation, anger, ignorance, greed and hate) in his or her life it brings bad punishment and low rebirth.

¹⁶³ <http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism> accessed 7 November 2012.

¹⁶⁴ Enraged bull eyes seem to have originated from India, with particular reference to the Hindu god Shiva. Cow worship may also have occurred in ancient Mongol culture: The totem of Hunnu king Modun was a bull. Ch. Erdene, *Big Triangle* (Ulaanbaatar, 1997), 60.

¹⁶⁵ Karma (“action”) – the term is used specifically for the action which derives from the intention of an enlightened being in Buddhism. It is the engine which drives the wheel of the cycle of present life and future rebirth. Karma is explained the connection between cause and effect. Lobsang Dargyay, *Tsong-Kha-Pa’s Concept of Karma* (State University of New York Press, 1986), 176.

than they do for other tenets of Buddhism, including the figure of *Burhan* (Buddha) himself.¹⁶⁶ The superstitious belief of ‘ten black sins’ guiding nomads’ lives is why they still fear *Jamsran mangas* and other Choijins.

Although most Mongols born in the 1960s, like myself, were raised as atheists, the traditional mentality, belief systems and cultural values were not entirely destroyed by Socialism and Russian modernization. Although Buddhism had been banned for over seven decades, some Socialist-educated intellectuals and Party members were either jailed or exiled when they were caught performing or celebrating traditional practices.¹⁶⁷ And traces of the religious respect for *Choijin sahuis* still remained in the minds of people, demonstrated by a rally to revive Mongolian Buddhism in front of the Choijin Temple held just two days after the resignation of the Politburo in March 1990 and organised by the Mongolian Democratic Association.¹⁶⁸

As my own experience suggests, the concept of sin persisted even in the Socialist period, when such beliefs were regarded as superstitious by authorities. Mongolian parents taught children about sin to discourage bad behaviour. They consider life runs by the karmic cycle. The contemporary poem “*Kiddy Snake*” is an interesting example of the complexities of karma, sin and punishment.¹⁶⁹ “*Kiddy Snake*”¹⁷⁰ tells the story of a young lady who gave birth to a tiny snake. As a result her clan, including her husband, shunned her as this was widely regarded to be a bad omen. Leaving the woman to endure a harsh winter alone the whole clan fled, as they were concerned the snake may bring evil to them. The new mother had no way of feeding the newborn snake and consequently decided to feed her blood to him so he could survive. The snake grew from day to day and in the end, swallowed its mother from hunger. The snake here represents the woman’s karma, and the consequences of poor decisions and actions in this and previous states of existence. “Swallowing” is connected to karma and resonates with the mythical *mangas*.

¹⁶⁶ Lodongiin Tudev, *It Might be Encountered by Evil Spirit* (Ulaanbaatar, 1996), 109. The concept of sin is associated with awareness of soul. The Mongols believe that soul is immortal and passes from good to better and bad to worse. That is to say, if he/she has behaved well and done many virtues, he/she will be reborn after death in paradise or as an honourable person. But if he/she has behaved badly or made wrongdoing, will be reborn in hell.

¹⁶⁷ Christopher Kaplonski (2004), 155, n.31.

¹⁶⁸ Christopher Kaplonski, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 67.

¹⁶⁹ Written by B. Lhagvasuren, a famous Mongolian modern writer in 1989. See. Bavuu Lhagvasuren, *Selected Works: Bitter Grass*. vol. 2 (Ulaanbaatar, 2009), 139-147.

¹⁷⁰ The term “kiddy snake” is a colloquialism for karma.

In summary, a fear of *Choijin* in general and *Jamsran* in particular related from the Buddhist concept of sin and the conditions of one's next life. They merged with the pre-existing Mongolian belief system and innate strength and power represented by *mangas tengre*, which re-manifested as a fear of sin represented by the large fearsome red deity—*Jamsran*. He was the dominant visual form of the main protectors of Dharma and Mongol State in the Buddhist period, to be replaced by what I refer to as the red communist *mangas* in the socialist period.

2.4 Red Communist mangas in the Socialist period (1921-1990)

The worship of the *black mangas tengre* and *Jamsran mangas* was replaced by resistance to Socialist dictatorship, reconstituted in the figure of the *communist mangas*. Most historians from the Socialist period agree that the victory of the 1921 People's Revolution and the Socialist development path throughout the twentieth century assisted in modernising Mongolian society from its previously primitive conditions.¹⁷¹ However, this *mangas* society destroyed (devoured) three rights held important to human life by the capitalist West: the right to own property, the right to proclaim religious faith and the freedom of thought, systematically removing these rights using violent means.

Early campaigns for establishing the new Socialist / communist society in the late 1920s reveal how those in charge of this shift could be considered to be a *mangas* act of swallowing. The first communist campaign openly set out to destroy private property, holding to the belief that a classless society does not allow citizens to own property. This campaign began with an agreement made at the 7th MPRP Congress in October 1928 to confiscate the property of feudal nobles and lamas. This radical policy of the Leftist Deviationists¹⁷² was not physically “brutal” in itself but was enforced by violent means. More than 600 of the 729 feudal estates, including herds and fixed property, were confiscated and given to lay people in 1929.¹⁷³ Between 1931 and 1932, approximately 800 religious leaders were arrested and more than 700 heads of households were killed or imprisoned after hidden animals and property were discovered, including my

¹⁷¹ B. Shirendev, Sh. Natsagdorj, Sh. Bira and post-Socialist researchers Batbayar (Baabar), and Tsedendambin Batbayar.

¹⁷² The Leftist Deviation was a powerful faction in the MPRP in the late 1920s.

¹⁷³ Shirendev and Sanjdorj, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic* trans William A Brown, and Onon Urgungu (Ulaanbaatar: The State Publishing Committee, 1969), 254.

grandfather who was a high-ranking monk. One-third of stock was forcibly collectivised, causing bloody uprisings, including the so-called “anti-revolutionary revolt of Lamas” in 1932. This Socialist / communist socialization process accelerated until 1959 when the successful collectivisation of Mongolia property was declared.

The next Socialist / communist campaign aimed to destroy religious faith and build an atheistic society. This antireligious campaign was three-pronged: ordinary monks were forced to be laymen and enter the army, monks of middle status were put in prison camps, and the highest ranks were killed. As a result, the number of Lamas dropped from 72,000 to 15,000 between 1937 and 1939.¹⁷⁴ The main campaign, referred to as The Great Purge, began 10 September 1937¹⁷⁵ and sixty five military leaders, including Darizav, Malj, Dashzeveg, Gonchigsharav, and members of the Presidium of the State Baga Hural, Ulziibat, Choidogsuren and Battumur, were arrested on the first night.¹⁷⁶ In subsequent months 17,335 monks were killed and 5,953 buildings, including 767 temples, were demolished,¹⁷⁷ and an enormous quantity of cultural artefacts and books were destroyed. Records of trials held at Ulaanbaatar’s Memorial Museum of Victims of Political Persecution in 2012 show that 20,988 people were shot between 1937 and 1939, including 1,129 aged over 70 and 12 women. These figures suggest that about 20 per cent of adults were killed during this campaign, and almost every family suffered losses during this massacre.

My paternal grandfather, Nyamtarin Sharav, was a head lama (*Hamba*) of the local Buddhist monastery of Sumba Lhundev, located 240 km east of Ulaanbaatar. On 23 November 1937, he was arrested by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (aka KGB) and shot under the 7th resolution of the Supreme Power Commission on 17 December 1937. His arrest led to the pronouncement of a false sentence of a “counter revolutionary” crime, similar to sedition, for which he was executed.¹⁷⁸ His property was confiscated under the counter-revolutionary order of the Inner Defence Department. In order to survive in the “non-religious” society, my father annulled his father’s name and adopted his brother’s first name, Baldan.

¹⁷⁴ Robert Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century* (Indiana University Publications, vol 37, Part 1, 1964), 244.

¹⁷⁵ Mongolia’s Great Purge was inspired by the 1937 Soviet Great Terror which started three months after Moscow’s Third Great Trial.

¹⁷⁶ Baabar, *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), 359.

¹⁷⁷ Baabar, *Baabar Also Said .., Three Fools of Hentii* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2007), 283.

¹⁷⁸ My father, Baldan Naidansuren, was able to access the records of Sharav’s trial after the Mongolian government issued the law, “Exoneration and compensation of Political Repressed People,” in 1997.

The Great Purge instilled bitter umbrage and despair in the Mongolian psyche, which still exists.¹⁷⁹ Figure 2.4.1 shows a hand-drawn sketch of Stalin depicting him as a beast, was displayed at a political gathering in Sukhbaatar Square during the spring of 1990. Similar hand-drawn sketches rapidly emerged in public meeting places during this revolutionary period. Drawn by unknown artists, as well as indicating hidden resentments these sketches supported the public movement to embrace new freedom in the post-communist world. . In this sketch, Stalin is depicted as a man-eating monster with blood on his chest, appearing pleased with himself after swallowing a human being – a dictator/*mangas*.¹⁸⁰



Figure 2.4.1 Hand-drawn sketch of Stalin/*Manggas* distributed during revolutionary gatherings in 1990, unknown artist, Photo: www.news.mn accessed when??

¹⁷⁹ The Mongolian Government apologised to the people for the political repression during the Great Purge in 1996. By the 33rd resolution of the Mongolian Parliament (29-08-1996) it was declared that a memorial day of victims of political persecution would be held on 10th of September of every year. Chunt Boldbaatar, *Mongol State 100 year* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko Publishing, 2012), 203. More than 30,000 people have cleared their names through the 1997 “Exoneration and Compensation of Politically Repressed People” law. The government has provided grants from US\$500 to US\$1,000 to survivors or to the families of the dead, which was the annual income of an average family at the time.

¹⁸⁰ Recently discovered documents have revealed that the 1930s massacre in Mongolia was executed following Stalin’s instruction. Additionally, two former Mongolian Prime Ministers (P. Genden in 1937, A. Amar in 1941) were executed by the Russians for not complying with Stalin’s demand to destroy Buddhism and liquidate the religious faith of Mongols. Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia, The Mongols: Migration, Settlement* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2009), vol.2, 455.

The final Socialist campaign was against intellectualism: freedom of thought and political criticism were restricted during Mongolia's Socialist era. Under threat of arrest, imprisonment and exile, strong opinions had little chance of survival and any fight against dictatorial leadership in the authoritarian system was quashed. Numerous high profile intellectuals including Tsogt-Ochiryn Lookhuus, Daramyn Tumur-Ochir, Baldandorjin Nyambuu, scholars Byambyn Rinchen, Naidangyn Dangaasuren and the poet Renchingyn Choinom criticized bureaucratic inefficiencies and communist leaders for meddling in public affairs. They promoted the reawakening of Mongolian language and culture during the 1960s, which had been forbidden in the previous decades. Unfortunately, they were labelled "anti-party activists" and "excessive nationalists."¹⁸¹ All lost their jobs and were exiled or jailed at one time or another. The same surveillance occurred for artists, as visual art forms were restricted to Soviet-styled socialist propaganda.

The *mangas* "swallower's tale" persisted throughout the socialist period, as an unforgettable scene in the 1959 Mongolian movie *Awakening*, indicates.¹⁸² This anti-Buddhist movie depicts the life and times of a young Russian nurse sent to Mongolia to set up a rural hospital in the early 1930s. The movie begins with the nurse's struggle to gain the trust of the locals. Eventually, she treats Suren, a Mongolian herdsman who had contracted smallpox. Believing Suren to be dead, her distraught father accuses the Russian nurse, angrily saying "you are an animal (*mangas*)...where do you come here to swallow my daughter's head." The *mangas* reference "from where do you come to swallow my daughter's head" became a famous colloquialism to refer to foreign oppressors.¹⁸³ The Mongolians spirituality, traditional customs, nature behaviour were swallowed by the Soviets and his obedient follower of Mongolian communist government in the period of socialist regime.

¹⁸¹ B. Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia, The Mongols: Migration, Settlement* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2009), 875.

¹⁸² Directed by actor and producer, Sangjaviin Genden.

¹⁸³ Unforgettable Mongolian Movies <http://boldhuyag.niitlech.com/context/4800> accessed 27 March 2013.

2.5 Conclusion

The *mangas* has various manifestations in Mongolian history and culture. The *mangas* primarily emanated from the super powers of nature, later mythologised as great Mongolian warriors from old times. In Mongolian epic tales, the *mangas* is an adverse character depicted as a many-headed monster mercilessly swallowing herdsmen's property, livestock and servants. This *mangas* personifies the enemies (foreign invaders) of Mongol clans or Manchu oppression. Mongolian epic tales from 17th to 19th centuries narrated the struggle between hero herdsmen and *mangas*, reflecting nomad's life, wisdom and desire to be liberated from Manchu colonial power.

The powerful *Mangas Tengre* of the 44 Cruel Heaven Tengres emerged during the yellow shamanist period (17th century) as a local ancestral cult of the Mongols in times of war. In this period yellow shamanism incorporated with Buddhism with worship of fierce protective deities related to political and military activities of the state. Additionally, ancient war tengre, Jamsran, transformed into the punisher of sin as wrathful deity protector of Buddhism,. Unlike other types of monsters, Jamsran was a guardian of the Mongol state, its people and their religious beliefs. Jamsran *mangas* is a more purposeful and functional image of phenomena that serviced religious and political affairs by rejecting the foreign enemies of the Mongol state and Buddha Dharma.

Following the victory of the People's Revolution in 1924, the Socialist regime became a *mangas* for Mongolian citizens, unforgiving in its punishment of those who were against state authority. During and after the 1930s Great Purge, violence, massacres and political repression (*mangas* behaviours) caused the fear of the *Jamsran /mangas* to transform into a resistance against the socialist/communist/*mangus*. *Mangas* manifestations are social phenomena that appeared in response to the ideological demands of religious and political affairs in Mongolian history. Chapter Three incorporates these ideas into descriptions of how caricature and parody were employed to both reinforce and relieve this resistance. These artistic devices offer a unique portal into the contemporary reconstitution of the *mangas* motif.

Chapter THREE -- Parody in Mongolian Modern Art under Soviet Rule (1921-1990)

Following on from the idea that Socialism was an ideological *mangas*, this part of my study examines traces of parody in Mongolian modern art during the Soviet period and is spread across three sections. The first section investigates traces of parody in the propaganda leaflets from the early years of the People's Revolution, beginning in the 1920s. These leaflets were intended to appeal to the masses to adopt the new lifestyle, whilst also criticizing the drawbacks of the former social structure. Called "serial posters of Petrograd," they were considered to be the work of Baldoogyn Sharav. I focus my discussion on three of these Petrograd posters that rely on the "swallowing" metaphor from Mongolian folklore. I also investigate the problem of establishing the original author of these posters. Parody in this period operated as propaganda for the People's government and Comintern¹⁸⁴ and is considered the foundation of political Mongolian art. The parodic use of the *mangas* motif in political cartoons of the period is central to this study.

In the second section, I introduce political caricatures from the Socialist Realism period, established between 1940 and 1960 and continuing until 1985. During this time, Mongolian art was fully censored by the MPRP and caricature was the only art form which had permission to publicly criticise. Caricature of this period focused on imitating or ridiculing nationally and internationally famous figures and warning against life in a non-Socialist state. I examine several caricatures by Mongolian artists that use *mangas* symbolism to mock Adolf Hitler in the Second World War period and Imperialist Americans during the Cold War period. These *mangas* caricatures experiment with the styles and techniques of Buddhist iconography and Mongol *Zurag*, uniquely combined with a European caricature style. I also explain the related so-called "friendly humorous portrait," which derived from Russian caricature.

Finally, I discuss political parody during the period immediately prior to the dissolution of the Socialist regime (1985-1990). In the mid-1980s, the MPRP adopted more open and flexible policies that reflected the political movement for reform in the Communist Party (*Perestroika*) in the Soviet Union. I examine the works of Baidi that were published in the newspaper

¹⁸⁴ Comintern is an abbreviation of Communist International, initiated by Lenin in 1919 by the name of the Third International. The Comintern was an international revolutionary organization that aimed to export the Socialist revolution throughout the world. The activities of Comintern officially dissolved at the end of the 1930s.

Woodpecker. These caricatures courageously criticised the bureaucratic system and the socio-economic stagnancy of the country, whilst calling for youth to be emancipated from the rigid ideological bonds of the Party. These works laid the foundations for the emergence of a more sophisticated parody style that allowed individual artistic imagination and social critique.

3.1 Parody during the People's Revolution (1920-1924)

The People's Revolution of 1921 significantly changed the landscape of Mongolian art. Prior to this, religious iconography was the basic form of classic Buddhist art that had developed in Mongolia from the 16th century onwards. Such iconography defined the school of Mongolian classical painting (its compositional structure, drawing and curving to form a spiral pattern), symbolic signs, shade and technique.¹⁸⁵ Besides iconography, folk painting existed among people but it was not in the official canon.

Art published in early modern Mongolian leaflets distributed during and after the Revolution was political propaganda aimed to appeal to the struggle for national independence, and it attempted to reveal the exploitation effected by local and foreign bourgeoisie. The artwork in these leaflets, such as that shown in Figure 3.1.1, relied heavily on parody.

¹⁸⁵ NyamOsoryn Tsultem, *Development of the Mongolian Style Painting "Mongol Zurag" in Brief* (Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1986).



Figure 3.1.1 Unknown artist, *Brutality of Baron Ungern*, 1921. Photo: Luvsangin Sonomtseren.¹⁸⁶

The earliest example of this style of parody appeared in the leaflet entitled *The Brutality of Baron Ungern* (Figure 3.1.1), published in the secret underground newspaper *The Truth of Mongolia*¹⁸⁷ in February 1921.¹⁸⁸ Ungern was a particularly cruel lieutenant-general in the Russian army who liberated Mongolia from Chinese hegemony in 1920.¹⁸⁹ Considered “a turning point in the history of Mongolia,”¹⁹⁰ Ungern’s invasion provided an opportunity for Mongolian independence. Under Ungern, Mongolia became a sanctuary for anti-revolutionary “White Guards.”¹⁹¹ The Russian Bolshevik Party sent the Red army into Mongolia in 1921 in order to drive out Ungern and the White Guards. *The Brutality of Baron Ungern* appeared around this time. In it, Ungern is portrayed as a dog-headed commander, sitting comfortably on thick

¹⁸⁶ Luvsangiin Sonomtseren, *Modern Mongolian Fine Art* (Ulaanbaatar, 1976), 75. in illustration.

¹⁸⁷ *The Truth of Mongolia* was founded by Mongolian revolutionaries with support from revolutionaries in Russian Siberia. Six issues were published between 11th November 1920 and 19th April of 1921, with 3,000 copies printed. G. Deleg, *Historical Notes of Mongolian Regular Publishing* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing Committee, 1965), 187-190; Baabar, *Baabar Has Said ... Order Warming After Selling House* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2007), 95; Rupen (1964), 331.

¹⁸⁸ The text that accompanied this image in *The Truth of Mongolia* argued that Ungern’s request to the Japanese for support of the Mongolian re-independence movement should not be accepted because of Japan’s aggressive actions against the Siberian Far East and colonization of countries such as Korea and China see G. Deleg (1965), 211.

¹⁸⁹ Ungern’s brutality resulted in him being named the *Bloody Baron*.

¹⁹⁰ Baabar, *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), 207.

¹⁹¹ The White Guards were the main opposition to the Russian Bolshevik (Communist) Party between 1917 and 1922. Their chief aim was to destroy Bolshevism and re-establish a Russian monarchical government.

mattresses in a cart pulled by Mongolian nobles, over the bodies of people.¹⁹² Ungern holds a bag full of money and a whip, and livestock follow his cart. This portrait ridiculed Ungern as a cruel fugitive and obedient servant of the bourgeoisie as well as local nobles who obediently served him.

Regarding Ungern's portrait in *The Truth of Mongolia*, Sodnombaljiriin Buyannemekhu¹⁹³ wrote in his 1935 article, *What does caricature mean?*, that the image of a dog or pig represented human characteristics such as greed, flattery, selfishness and obedience. He argued that an animal's features can be used to insult another: a cow-headed figure indicates foolishness, a dog head indicates dishonesty, a fox head indicates cunning, a snake head indicates spitefulness, and a pig-headed figure indicates laziness.¹⁹⁴ Buyannemekhu later emphasised that caricature requires a good knowledge of politics and public affairs and analytical skills to logically connect events. He suggested that at *The Truth of Mongolia*, ideas for caricature often originated from political staff and artists would develop the ideas and convert them into a visual language.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² The names of the nobles pulling the cart are written on their bodies identifying them as Tseveen Terguun, Togtoh Taij and Dugar Meeren. Deleg (1965), 210. Tseveen Terguun (Luvsantseveen) was a *taij* of the first rank said to have been primarily responsible for inviting Ungern to support the Bogdo against the Chinese. Lattimore and Fujiko, *The Diluv khutagt of Mongolia: Political Memoirs and Autobiography of a Buddhist Reincarnation* (Ulaanbaatar: Polar Star books, 2009), 218. Narangin Dugarjav (also called Dugar Beis) trained at Khujirbulan military school under the Bogdo's government, served in Ungern's army and fought against the Chinese. During the people's government he was appointed commander of the south eastern frontier. Lattimore and Fujiko (2009), 209.

¹⁹³ Buyannemekhu Sodnombaljiriin (1902-1937) was a famous writer, intellectual and chairman of League of Mongolian Revolutionary Youth and Union of Mongolian writers. He was considered one of the founders of Mongolian modern literature and criticism, and an important political and cultural figure. He studied Manchu, Chinese and Mongolian literature. In 1919, he met with Mongolian and Russian revolutionaries in Khiagt, enrolled in a secret group and published *The Truth of Mongolia* under the guidance of Elbegdorj Rinchino. In 1921, after the provisional government of Mongolia was established, he worked as a secretary of foreign affairs and information. Between 1924 and 1926, he lived in Inner Mongolia and used a secret penname to criticize the government, which may have resulted in political persecution in 1937. He was still considered an enemy of the people in the early 1950s Rupen (1964), 331. Buyannemekhu's works published a book by named "Selected works of Buyannemekhu" in 1968.

¹⁹⁴ Sodnombaljiriin Buyannemekhu, *Selected works of Buyannemekhu* (Ulaanbaatar: The State Printing, 1968), 246.

¹⁹⁵ Buyannemekhu (1968), 248.



Figure 3.1.2 Buyannemekhu. S, *Trumpeter*, 1920. 5th October, first issue of the newspaper *Truth of Mongolia*. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren (from original newspaper), July 2013.

Although at least two studies¹⁹⁶ suggest that some of the caricatures in *The Truth of Mongolia* were created by Buyannemekhu, it is likely that he did not draw *The Brutality of Baron Ungern* as there are striking stylistic differences between this image and other works openly credited to Buyannemekhu, such as *Trumpeter* (Figure 3.1.2), a simple sketch of a trumpet-blowing horseman printed in the first issue of the newspaper.¹⁹⁷ These stylistic differences are especially apparent in the figurative poses, facial expressions and cloth creases. If compared with the image and drawing of Mongolian classical Buddhist painting, Ungern's body and the Mongolian noble figures are depicted in a typical Russian style, and may have been painted by a Russian or Buryat artist trained in European artistic styles. However, the human bodies smashed under the cart clearly reference Buddhist images of the *Dogshid* (Ferocities) (discussed in the previous chapter) standing on human skeletons or bodies. Buyannemekhu may have been involved in the conceptual development of the portrait of Ungern as a tail-less, dog-headed-*manggus*, as suggested by his discussion in *What does caricature mean?*, but it is likely that it was not drawn by him.

¹⁹⁶ Sonomtseren (1976), 75; Deleg (1965), 187.

¹⁹⁷ The words emerging from the trumpet translate as "let's develop education and culture while taking authority."

3.1.1 Parody in the “Serial posters of Petrograd”

After the victory of the 1921 Mongolian People’s Revolution, in the 1920s leaflets with political content emerged in Mongolia. These colourful leaflets are referred to as the “Serial posters of Petrograd” because they were printed in Saint Petersburg.¹⁹⁸ The name was likely given by Sonomtseren, because not all of them were titled. Although not studied in depth, most researchers consider that twelve agitation leaflets were printed in Petrograd by order of the Central Committee of the MPRP in 1924.¹⁹⁹ Although Sonomtseren suggests that only copies of the leaflets that were published in newspapers and books exist,²⁰⁰ nine of the leaflets have been in the MPRP museum collection since 2000.²⁰¹ Two others are in the Mongolian National Museum archives and another is kept at the Museum of Victims of Political Persecution in Ulaanbaatar. All the same size (40 x 50 cm), they are offset-printed by two different printing houses of Petrograd. In this section, I discuss three of the “Serial posters of Petrograd” that relate to the notion of *mangas* parody central to this study.

Entitled *Religious Education and Public Faith* (Figure 3.1.1), the first of these posters depicts a giant Buddhist monk swallowing a procession of nomads and their possessions. This poster is quite famous, and demonstrates one of the key characteristics of the *mangas*—that of *swallowing*. It attacks Buddhist monasteries and high rank monks through representing a giant monk. Buddhist monasteries and monks owned considerable wealth and materials of the state and were seen to be feeding off the people. Posters such as this were part of a campaign by the newly founded People’s government against the oppression of nomads by monasteries and monks.

¹⁹⁸ Saint Petersburg was the capital of the Russian Empire. The name was changed to Petrograd in 1914. The name was changed again to Leningrad after the death of Lenin in 1924. It was changed back to Saint Petersburg in 1991.

¹⁹⁹ L. Batchuluun (2009), 245; B. Rinchen (1969); Ts. Damdinsuren (1969). Sonomtseren however, claims that thirteen leaflets were printed in Petrograd between 1922 and 1923. Sonomtseren (1976), 65. but I disagree. On the top-right hand corner of the leaflets the date is written in Mongolian as “*arvan gurbadugaar on*,” which denotes the thirteenth year. On the other side, “issued from the MPRP Central Committee” is written in Mongolian. When State independence was declared in 1911, the MPRP introduced a new calendar starting in the “the year Elevated by All.” The thirteenth year from 1911 is 1924. Therefore, the leaflets were surely printed in 1924, not 1922 or 23 as Sonomtseren suggests.

²⁰⁰ Luvsangiin Sonomtseren, *Modern Mongolian Fine Art* (Ulaanbaatar, 1976), 62.

²⁰¹ These leaflets were shown to me by Byambin Baasanjargal (1976-), who has been the curator of the Museum of Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party since 2009.



Figure 3.1.1 Sharav, B.[?] *Religious Education and Public Faith*, 1924. Offset print on paper, 40x50cm, Museum of MPRP, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, October 2012.

Figure 3.1.2 Gonchigjalzangin Badamdorj. Photo: Baabar.²⁰²

Buyannemekhu writes in the aforementioned article that the image of the greedy monk in *Religious Education and Public Faith* is a portrait of Shanjobda Badamdorj²⁰³ (Figure 3.1.2). As the Prime Minister of Bogdo Khaan’s government, rumours spread that Badamdorj accepted bribes from Chinese authorities and “sold” the independence of Mongolia. He was considered a traitor for his acceptance in 1920 of the Chinese general Xu Shu Zeng’s request to abolish Mongolian autonomy. Disgraced, Badamdorj hid from the public, dying in the countryside shortly thereafter.²⁰⁴ The poster, *Religious Education and Public Faith*, depicts Badamdorj as a greedy *mangas*, swallowing Mongolian property and prosperity.²⁰⁵

The swallowing symbolism in Figure 3.1.1 clearly derives from the *mangas* motif in Mongolian folklore, and thus it would have been easily understood by the Mongolians of that period—an

²⁰² Baabar, *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), vii.

²⁰³ Badamdorj Gonchigjalzangiin (1862-1920) was a leader in the Bogdo’s government and one of the closest people to Bogdo Khaan. During the 1915 administrative reforms, he became *Shanjobda* (Minister) of the Interior and later Prime Minister.

²⁰⁴ Baabar, *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), 189.

²⁰⁵ He was mocked in parody song that became wide spread among the public at the time:

The ministers sold the Bogdo for a great amount of money

The ministers sold the World for the greatest amount of money

My translation from the text book S. Sodnom *Reading of Mongolian History* 4, (Ulaanbaatar, 1969), 46.

efficient form of educating the illiterate masses in the early years of the People’s Revolution.²⁰⁶ These leaflets were clear visual messages of the policies and solutions offered by the MPRP aimed at the illiterate general public, similar to Russian “Lubok prints.”²⁰⁷ “Lubok prints” typically combined illustrations with text and their subject matter included folklore as well political and social issues. White proposes that early Lubok often drew from figures of Russian folklore such as Baba Yaga, the witch, or the knightly hero, Ilya Muromets.²⁰⁸ Such similar characteristics suggest that the Mongolian posters were heavily influenced by Lubok prints. The visual trope of swallowing recurs in the second of the “Serial posters of Petrograd” discussed here (Figure 3.1.3). This leaflet consists of three different pictures, with all of the images made for the masses to easily understand the message. The bottom picture shows “black” feudal prince’s enormous belly cut open by the Mongolian soldier’s sword and the trapped people being freed. Unlike Western parodic pictorial depictions, the pose and face of the prince looks like a beast or animal that represents a negative character.



²⁰⁶ At the time illiteracy was common in Mongolia, as monastic education was privileged, although I have already raised the issue of statistical accuracy. Compare *Truth*, 1927, no, 69; R. Rupen (1964, 206, 209); I. Maiskiy (1921, 303); S. Purevjav (1978, 111); G. Ramstedt (1908, 1-2).

²⁰⁷ Lubok were popular Russian publications characterised by simple graphics and derived from popular tales and religious stories. Initially printed from woodcuts (*lubok* refers to the bark of the linden tree), then engraved, in the mid-19th century they became lithographic prints.

²⁰⁸ Stepten White, *The Bolshevik Poster* (Yale University Press, 1988), 2.

Figure 3.1.3 Sharav, B.[?] *A Propaganda leaflet of the “serial posters of Petrograd”*, 1924. Offset print on Paper, 40x50cm, Museum of Victims of Political Persecution, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, June 2012.

Mongolian communist ideology and historians have asserted these are Sharav’s²⁰⁹ original works. Yet my research shows there is another side to the story. During this study, I have located research to suggest that Sharav was not the author of the “Serial posters of Petrograd”. I will discuss the following points of view, firstly to make a comparison between the above leaflet and Sharav’s style of drawing, secondly to examine Sharav’s background and finally to analyse other scholars’ ideas on this issue, especially that of Rinchen.

Firstly, the drawing style of the “Serial posters of Petrograd” is dissimilar to Sharav’s artworks. Sharav’s works are dominated by a contour line drawing that represents the shapes and forms of the objects, with the field being an iconographic background (Figure 3.1.4).



Figure 3.1.4 Sharav, B. *Bugler of Revolution*, the first issue of the newspaper *Appeal* printed on 10th July 1921. Photo: Luntun Batchuluun, *Lyric Creation of Marzan Sharav*. Marzan Sharav Art Academy. Ulaanbaatar, 2009, 223.

Figure 3.1.5 Sharav, B.[?] *Greedy Monk’s Mouth is Locked*, 1924. Offset Print on Paper, 40x50cm, Museum of MPRP, Ulaanbaatar, Photo: Naidansuren October 2012.

²⁰⁹ Sharav Baldoogiin ((known as Marzan (Busybody) Sharav)) (1869-1939) was a founder of Mongolian modern depictive art. He was a well-known artist in Da Khuree pre-People’s revolution. In 1923, he created a portrait of Lenin by commission of the newly founded People’s government. Sharav’s *Portrait of Lenin* is considered the first realist painting in Mongolian modern art G. Lovor (2000), 53. Since 1923, Sharav began to work at State Printing house continuing for the rest of his life.

We can see how the line was drawn in Sharav's painting *Bugler of Revolution* in the first issue of the newspaper *Appeal* in June 1921 and a leaflet *Greedy Monk's Mouth is Locked*²¹⁰ which shows the closed mouth of a Lama driving back a procession of people (Figure 3.1.5).

In *Bugler of Revolution*, Sharav uses symbolism as metaphor in traditional painting. The sun rising over the mountain represents the revolution of 1921 bringing new life to Mongolian people. The soldier's rifle muzzle pointing upwards indicates the instability of country life. Generally, in peace-time, the Mongolians carry guns with the muzzle pointing downwards. Printed in *The Appeal*, just eight days after the establishment of People's government, it was a deliberate symbolisation of the unstable political situation of the time. As much as suggesting military power, the image of a soldier blowing a conch symbolised a revolutionary call to urge an isolated population to move toward modern life. The conch, one of Buddhism's Eight Treasures, was an object used to signal military gathering as demonstrated in Tsultem's famous work, *The Appeal* (sometimes known as *The Call*). Furthermore, Mongolian traditional artists painted flowers and leaves for the purpose of symbolic meaning in their artwork. Sonomtseren for example states a closed bud of flower represents people, a just-opened bud signifies a wish of the people and an opened bud expresses people's realised desire.²¹¹ In *The Appeal*, Sharav depicts the opened bud of a young plant, hence signifying the Mongolian people's obtaining independence would be desired for a long time.

The *Greedy Monk's Mouth is Locked* (Figure 3.1.5) is extremely different in character and style to Sharav's previous artworks because it does not incorporate symbolic Buddhist elements. On the panel are three concise figures. Separately enclosed at the top right-hand is a figure of a Lama. A giant monk and procession of people dominate the panel. Obviously someone well versed in European art (particularly poster art) has edited this artwork, as propaganda art requires clear, compact visual language for leaflets. L. Sonomtseren, B. Badrah and L. Batchuluun agree these works may have been edited by Russian artists in the printing house before pressing in order to suit their printing technology; to convert qualities of contour drawing, typical of

²¹⁰ *Greedy Monk's Mouth is Locked* and *Religious Education and Public Faith* were pressed in different printing houses but in the same year. *Religious Education and Public Faith* was printed by the Printing House of Ivan Fyodorovich in Petrograd while *Greedy Monk's Mouth is Locked* was published by the State Publishing House of Eugene Sokolov of Petersburg.

²¹¹ Luvsangiin Sonomtseren, *Modern Mongolian Fine Art* (Ulaanbaatar, 1976), 77.

Mongolian iconographic art traditions of this period, to the conventions of the printed poster. Sonomtseren suggests that the Russian poster masters, D. Moor and V. Deny, possibly edited them.²¹² In relation to this, Vandagyn Odgiiv, a pioneering caricaturist, confirmed in an interview on Mongolian national television (MNB, 21-01-2011) that Mongolian artworks were usually edited by the Russians at that time. However, I am not convinced by these views and maintain that Sharav was not involved in the creation of the “serial posters of Petrograd” even in the capacity of providing the source image.

My second point of discussion concerns Sharav’s background and education. He was not an intellectual, however he did possess a basic monastic education. Brought up in a pastoral herdsman’s family, he learnt to make religious tsam masks at a local monastery in his adolescence. In Da Khuree, around the 1890s Sharav studied iconography with the famous iconographer, Gendendamba and quickly achieved some success. Subsequently, Sharav created his most famous paintings, *One day in Mongolia* and *Feast of Kumis* by the order of Bogdo Khaan. He also produced several photo-based portraits such as Bogdo Khaan and his consort, Eh Dagina and other famous personages of this time, bringing him fame. Sharav was a court artist and the head of artists at Bogdo’s palace.²¹³ Nonetheless, Sharav’s education, in particular his religious faith, was rarely mentioned in Socialist scholarship.

Sharav’s personal commitment to religious faith is doubtful. Some sources report he had an unusual attitude. His nickname is “Marzan” (Busybody or Funny Sharav).²¹⁴ Sharav’s sense of humour is present in his painting, *One day in Mongolia*, which enabled him to betray the conventions of the canon of Buddhist iconography. Mongol-Buddhist iconographic artists believe that creating iconography is a confessional process, and so if they depict honestly and with a true heart, it should bring good luck and accumulate rewards or “merit” for them in the next life; breaking this taboo was seen as a grave offence. Sharav overcame this taboo. His religious knowledge was not respectful to others and he seemingly lacked commitment to religious faith.

²¹² Sonomtseren (1976), 62.

²¹³ Luntengiin Batchuluun, *Lyric Creation of Marzan Sharav* (Ulaanbaatar: Soyombo Printing, 2009), 225.

²¹⁴ L. Sonomtseren (1976), 46.

Like many other Lamas, Sharav had poor Mongolian literacy. He was not able to read old Mongolian script (Cyrillic-Mongolian became the official alphabet in 1944), 14 years after the “serial posters of Petrograd” were published. Mongolian literacy was the main tool in distributing the news of the government to the educated minorities. The leaflets visually displayed Comintern policies carried out in Mongolia, focusing on the propagation of the proletariats’ “world revolution”. But Sharav and other Mongolian artists had little knowledge about external political affairs, unless they had been sent to Russia or other socialist states for education.²¹⁵ Although Sharav had worked as an artist at the state printing house for a long time, his folklore and iconographic drawing style did not change, for example, (Figure 3.1.6 a, b) two illustrations for the 1936 translation of Daniel Defoe’s “Robinson Crusoe”.²¹⁶



Figure 3.1.6 a, b. Sharav, B. *Robinson meets with wild man*, 1937. A book illustration, 10x15cm, Ulaanbaatar, Photo: L, Sonomtseren, *Mongolian Modern Fine Art*. Ulaanbaatar, 1976, in plate.

In the two pictures shown above, on the left, Sharav depicted Robinson meeting with a wild man he called Friday and on the right is Robinson and Friday travelling by boat. Here, Sharav utilised elements from traditional folk art and Buddhist iconography, especially in the drawing of ocean

²¹⁵ Rinchen notes that Sharav incorrectly painted the World map on the background of the painting “Portrait of Lenin” because he had no geographic knowledge. In 1938, the correction of the World map was repainted by artist Luvsannamjil who studied at printing in Germany in the 1920s. B. Rinchen, *Mongolian “Yes” is Supposed To Be an Oath* (Ulaanbaatar: Interpress Printing, 2000), 53.

²¹⁶ Translated by Erdenebatyn Oyun from Russian into Mongolian, Rinchen had Sharav illustrate it. L. Sonomtseren (1976), 106.

waves. In contrasting these waves, Sharav's curly lines are strikingly different from these when drawing images of mountains, water, plants and humans, indicating his flexibility in art practice. However, these elements of national folk art are not found in the images of the "Petrograd leaflets".

Now, I move to the final point of discussion which concerns other ideas on the issues of authorship of the "Petrograd leaflets". Most Mongolian art critics such as B. Badrah, L. Sodnomtseren, L. Batchuluun and Ts. Damdinsuren agree that Sharav did create the idea and sketched the Petrograd leaflets.²¹⁷ However, other researchers B. Rinchen²¹⁸ and U. Dashnyam disagree. To me, Rinchen's view seems reliable. Rinchen wrote²¹⁹ about the revolutionary posters, suggesting their creation was by the Buryat artist Sampilov.²²⁰ He wrote in his article *First Posters of the Mongolian Revolution* that Sampilov gifted him with 40 sheets of sketches of the twelve leaflets upon his return to Buryatia, telling Rinchen they were original drafts of the first Mongolian revolutionary leaflets. Rinchen also verifies that on each corner of the sketches were either comments for change or added ideas from the Central Committee of the MPRP written in the old Mongolian vertical script.²²¹ Unfortunately, the original sketches of serial posters of Petrograd that Sampilov gave Rinchen have not survived our time. They were destroyed during the years the Great Purge when Rinchen was imprisoned from 1938 to 1943.

Another study by Dashnyam, who worked as a researcher at the National Museum of History, suggests in his article "On One of Sharav's Paintings" that Sharav did not paint them. Dashnyam

²¹⁷ Badrah, Batchuluun., and Erdenetsog, *Science of Mongolia*. vol 21 (Ulaanbaatar: Sogoo Nuur Printing, 2009), 43; L. Sonomtseren (1976), 35, 62. In Rinchen's article "It Is Supposed to Be True." that Soviet linguist Blohin's article "Propaganda Posters of the Mongolian Revolution" first reports that the artist Sharav created the twelve leaflets. Rinchen (2000, 186). This may have caused the spread of misleading information, with researchers such as Lomakina and L. Batchuluun continuing in this vein.

²¹⁸ Rinchen Byambyn (1905-1977) was an outstanding scholar, writer and translator and a tireless critic of socialist system of Mongolia. During the Great Purge Rinchen named enemies of the people see Rupen (1964, 234) and was imprisoned as a "foreign spy" (1938-1943). When released in 1943 he continued his artistic and scholarly career. Later in an intellectual purge he was condemned as a "bourgeois nationalist" (1960s and 1970s). His published works are well known internationally but some were denounced.

²¹⁹ These articles "The First Posters of People's Revolution." *Truth of MPRP* (1968, 11, 10. no. 315), "It is Supposed To Be True." in *Literature and Culture* (1967, n. 10), then in the Buryat journal *Baikal* (in Russian) in 1969 (no. 3, 147-149) were published.

²²⁰ Sampilov Tserenjaviin (1893-1953) was an honoured People's artist of the Buryat Russian Federation. Herdsmen's life and country scenes were to become the main subject in his art. While working at a soup factory in Chita he studied art under sculptor Innokentii Jukov. However, Buryatian sources report Sampilov was self-trained. From 1923, Sampilov was employed at the newspaper *Truth of Buryat*. Between 1925 and 1927 Sampilov worked at the Training and Political department of the Mongolian Revolutionary army.

²²¹ B. Rinchen, *Mongolian "Yes" is Supposed To Be an Oath* (Ulaanbaatar: Interpress Printing, 2000), 195.

was of the opinion that the Petrograd leaflets sketchily depict original nomadic life—skimming the surface of Mongolian culture. He reasoned that European art training was unheard-of for Mongolian artists, and that Sampilov had known only the Mongolian herdsman's life and custom. Nonetheless the fact remains that Sampilov did obtain his art education from Europe as well as being well-acquainted with Russian posters of the October Revolution.

Locating the 'truth' of the authorship is more complex than can be fully examined here. I offer my view on this issue that it is possible that the printing of the "serial posters of Petrograd" reflects the initiative and participation of Rinchino Elbegdorj,²²² the most influential man in the Mongolian government. He was a representative of the Comintern and served as a chief member of the political department of the Mongolian Military Council. Baabar ironically states that Rinchino was a "king" of the newly founded revolutionary government of Mongolia²²³ and conducted the activities of the MPRP under the guidance of the Comintern. The Comintern's policy on the "theory of Socialist revolution and ideology" in Mongolia was rapidly activated due to the abolition of the limited monarchy after the death of Bogdo Jebjundamba, the last king of Mongolia (on 20 May 1924). This political situation was a potential chance to raise Rinchino's career in the Mongolian government as well as to fulfil a plan of the Comintern without obstacle. In order to increase his influence in the political sphere, Rinchino required more ideological works to be done. In particular, he needed the power of visual language for propaganda and clear messages of the resolutions and policies of the Comintern and People's party to the illiterate public. He too was an artist who retained knowledge of European-style poster art, as well as knowledge of Mongolian life and language. Sampilov was the most suitable person for this task. For this reason Rinchino offered him the chance to work in Mongolia by official invitation of the political department of the Mongolian Military Council,²²⁴ where Rinchino was the chief figure.

²²² Rinchino Elbegdorjiin (1888-1938) a Buryat politician born into a herder's family. After studying at university in Saint Petersburg, he became a communist. He was as a translator of most of the documents that the Russians had written for the Mongolian People's Party. In the 1920s Rinchino served in a high position and conducted the activities of the party under the guidance of the Comintern and was virtual dictator of Mongolia from 1921 to 1925. See Rupen (1964, 236). He was executed in Russia in 1938.

²²³ Baabar, *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), 260.

²²⁴ Badrah, Batchuluun., and Erdenetsog, *Science of Mongolia*. vol. 21 (Ulaanbaatar: Sogoo Nuur Printing, 2009), 46; L. Sonomtseren (1976), 35, 62. See previous comment

There may have been another process underway that led Sampilov to create these leaflets under the instruction of Rinchino and his team. As I mentioned before, Renchin's report had stated that on each corner of Sampilov's sketches of Petrograd leaflets there were written comments and ideas for change in old Mongolian handwriting. If we consider this advice was made by Elbegdorj Rinchino, it is conceivable that the Comintern's participation in printing the Petrograd leaflets was collective work.

To add to the complexities, at the time other artists and iconographers were also working at the Training and Political department of the military and State Printing.²²⁵ Here, we can question why only Sharav was supposed to have created the leaflets. Communist historiography often focused on idealising "super heroes" from the proletariat for public propaganda purposes.²²⁶ My own opinions aside, this ideological notion, successfully reflected in Mongolian art studies, had appointed Sharav as the founder of Mongolian art, a "model person" who could paint in all styles and genres, including European art.

In summary, the leaflets were the product of a collective team of Comintern members and leaders of the Government, likely Buryatian Elbegdorj Rinchino, who had considerable reason for fulfilling the required ideological expectations. However, my focus in writing this chapter is not aimed at identifying the main author of these leaflets. Rather, the significance of this discussion is indicating that the ideological changes were underscored by complex Mongol values and belief systems out of which the *mangas*, a traditional archetypal element in folklore, is used in parody. The metaphor of the *mangas* played a vital role in establishing parody during the early years of the People's Revolution in the 1920s. In the leaflets, foreign invaders and internal feuding princes and religious lords were portrayed as a *mangas* borrowed from Mongolian epic and folktales. It was the most efficient visual language to convey government policy, an appeal to the illiterate masses to become involved in building socialism in the MPR.

²²⁵ See further G. Deleg (1965), 325.

²²⁶ A good example is the personal portrait of Sukhbaatar, a leader of Mongolian revolution. In Socialist ideological history Sukhbaatar is the founder of everything: of the MPRP, an initiator of public media and so on. He is a genius and all good things are related to his name. But people believed this fictional image and learnt from him.

3.2 Parody in Socialist Mongolia (1940-1985)

As I have shown, Mongolian parody developed from the folk epic motif of the *mangas*, the fearful *Choijin Sahuis* in Buddhist iconography and the propaganda graphics during the early Socialist period. One of the problems of dealing with parody in Mongolian Socialist art is that it manifests as caricature, which was the only type of critical art²²⁷ allowed by the authorities during this time. Visual propaganda became an essential instrument in revealing “good” and “bad” characteristics of society. “Good” herdsmen and herdswomen aspired to move toward a new mode of life, that surpassed their backwards life. “Bad,” traditional and disgusting aspects of society were shown in caricature. Socialist caricature also aimed to rescue society from the immoral influence of imperialism and capitalism. A “neutral zone” did not exist. The public were meant to laugh mockingly with pride and be disgusted with the “backward.”

From the late 1930s to the beginning of the 1940s, many Mongolian artists were influenced by and learnt from Russian artworks. Young amateur artists attended art classes in the Central Theatre and Teacher’s Training School under the guidance of Mongolian Aguulin Soyoltoi²²⁸ and Russian painters including K. I. Pomerantsev, N. N. Beliski and S. A. Bushnev.²²⁹ Artists such as Urjungiin Yadamsuren,²³⁰ Luvsangiin Gavaa,²³¹ Ochirhuyagiin Sanjjav, Dodiin Choidog, Ochiriin Tsevegjav, and Vanjiliin Odgiiv emerged from these circles, becoming notable figures

²²⁷ The ideology and function of Mongolian caricature was directly influenced by the Soviet caricature. During the period, publication of caricature was considered “Socialist criticism” in the Soviet Union. S. Levitsky *Copyright, Defamation and Privacy in Soviet Civil Law: vol. 22 (1)* (The Netherlands, 1979), 208. The Soviet “*Journalist’s Handbook*” pointed out that caricatures “help in the fight against survivals of capitalism in the consciousness and in the daily life of the Soviet people, against all that is stagnant, backward and obsolete, the caricature must possess a deep ideological content.” See Bogdanov and Viazemskii, *Journalist’s Handbook* (Leningrad, 1961), 284, 619.

²²⁸ Soyoltoi Aguulyn (1902-1937) was one of the founders of Mongolian Modern art. He came to Ulaanbaatar from Inner Mongolia after the People’s Revolution in the 1920s. Some sources report he previously studied in Japan. He was an art teacher at the Teacher’s Institute and taught European painting styles. He was executed in 1937. Despite his significance, Soyoltoi has not been widely studied.

²²⁹ Tserenchimediiin Erdenetsog, *Color of Painting* (Ulaanbaatar: T&U Printing, 1999), 76.

²³⁰ Yadamsuren Urjungiin (1905-1984) came to Ulaanbaatar as a member of the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth in 1930. After working as a typesetter at State Printing he studied at the faculty of the “Workers of Eastern Countries” in Russia (1931-1934). His later studies at the Surikov Art Institute in Moscow (1940-1941) were interrupted by WWII. Yadamsuren worked as an artist at the Historical Museum of Science Academy, establishing his career. Working in European and traditional Mongolian styles, Yadamsuren adapted traditional Mongolian painting. His work, including Mongolian national costumes and ornaments, is little studied and is open for future research.

²³¹ Gavaa Luvsangiin (1920-1991) was one of the founders of Mongolian theatre and cinema stage art. He began work as an assistant artist at the Central Theatre (also called Green Domed Theatre) at age 15. Between 1946 and 1952 he studied to be a theatrical stage artist at the Repin Academy in Leningrad. He was awarded the title of “Honoured Artist” in 1945 and “People’s Artist” in 1963.

in Mongolian modern art. *Crocodile* was the dominant satirical magazine in Mongolia between 1941 and 1958.²³² The name directly referenced the famous Russian satirical journal *Crocodile*. After 1958, the magazine *Crocodile* became the newspaper *Woodpecker*. *Woodpecker* is symbolic name that suggests that just as a woodpecker heals trees by removing insects, a community can recover from harmful things by exposing them. Several political caricatures that depicted Socialism defeating German Fascism during WWII appeared in *Crocodile*, two of which are discussed here.



Figure 3.2.1 Gavaa, L. *Fascist German*, *Crocodile*, no. 3 (1944), State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, June 2011.

Gavaa’s *Fascist German* (Figure 3.2.1) depicts Hitler as a dog-headed beast,²³³ perhaps inspired by the mocking expression of “dog-headed” used to describe foreigners in political leaflets during the early years of People’s Revolution. The artist depicts sharp swords of the Red army cutting off the heads and paws of the Fascist Germans. Mongolians proverbially deem ruthless men to be animals, calling them “tail-less dogs”. Therefore, the phrase emerged that a misfit is a “dog-headed” person. A frequently used proverb claims that “a man needs a moral while a dog

²³² Before 1941, the journal was called *Education and Aversion*. In *Crocodile*, numerous satirical stories were published alongside caricatures.

²³³ Interestingly, Hitler’s dog-head is white. Mongolians do not accept a white dog due to associate with their nomadic animal husbandry life style. Typically the dogs of Mongolian herdsman were black or dark brown so as to more easily differentiate between guard dog, wolves and white livestock.

needs a tail,” or “it looks better if a man has a moral, it looks better if a dog has a tail.”²³⁴ The American Mongolist Nicolas Poppe reported hearing the phrase “dog headed people” in a meeting with the head monk of Erdene Zuu monastery. The head monk said he had passed through the “‘dog-headed’ people’s land” after hearing the news of Poppe’s journey through northern China and Mongolia.²³⁵

Yadamsuren’s series of caricatures entitled *Monster*, one of which is shown in Figure 3.2.2 was published in the third volume of *Crocodile*. Yadamsuren’s images include elements of Mongolian mythology and Buddhist iconography. Hitler is depicted as a three-headed black monster (*mangas*) enhanced with common elements of Buddhist *Choijin*, such as a neck-garland of severed human heads (Figure 3.2.3).

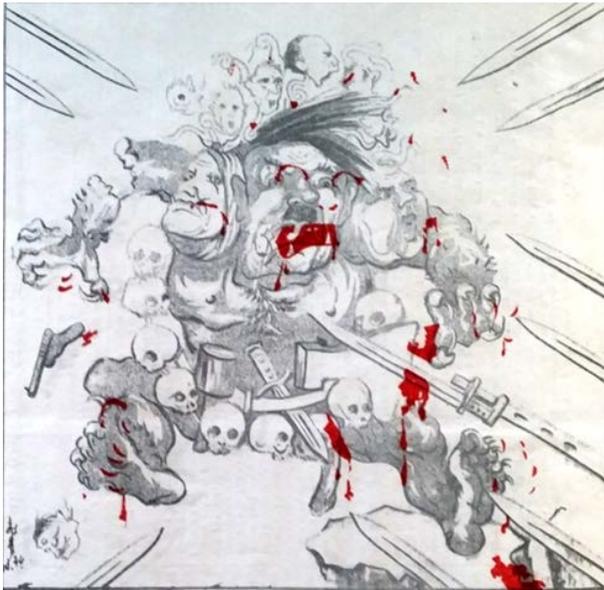


Figure 3.2.2 Yadamsuren, U. *Monster*, Caricature, journal *Crocodile*, no.6 (1944). The State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, June 2011.

Figure 3.2.3 Author unknown, *Mahakala*, 18th century. Painting, mineral paints, 111x165cm, Bogd-khan Palace Museum. Photo: N. Tsultem, *Development of the Mongolian Style Painting “Mongol Zurag” in Brief*. 1986, plate number 26.

Yadamsuren’s *Monster* is a striking example of the parody of this time, as it constitutes a three-pronged attack on the foreigner Hitler, on traditional folklore and on Buddhism, which the

²³⁴ Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 2, 240.

²³⁵ Nicolas Poppe, *Reminiscences* (Bellingham: Western Washington University Press, 1983), 87.

MPRP was attempting to eradicate (refer to Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion). Although Yadamsuren's monster is painted in a totally different style to Gavaa's dog-headed Hitler,²³⁶ the conceptual similarities between the *mangas*-themed artworks show that Soviet-styled propaganda art became synonymous with Mongolian modern art.

After WWII, the *Crocodile* magazine became a podium for policies and ideologies of the MPRP. Caricature became the main ideological weapon of the MPRP to mock “backwards” attitudes of members of the community. In the years 1943 to 1958, all caricatures were published in the journal *Crocodile*. Most were produced following the order of the magazine director or Ideological Department of the MPRP Central Committee, rather than from the personal ideas and world-view of the artist. Mongolian artists became an executive “machine” of the ruling party. Sonomtseren compared the role of Mongolian artists with front-line soldiers: as militant agitators ideologically struggling for the MPRP to build socialism.²³⁷ Apart from political themes, the caricatures of the *Crocodile* had a strong moral tone, dominated by social and family issues which aimed to form a new Socialist consciousness. Therefore, the caricatures were powerful devices for fulfilling Party campaigns such as the “Cultural attack” of the 1940s and the “Collectivisation” of the 1950s (See Chapter Two). *Crocodile* became the medium to publicly announce personal faults and shortcomings. Some studies claim that *Crocodile* was an official discrimination device against dissenters, thus playing an important role in the formation of the Mongolian Socialist regime.²³⁸ I can personally attest to this: everyone was afraid of being denounced publicly in the magazine. It was an authoritative machine for the mass.

The development of Mongolian caricature was limited to three genres, such as political caricature, topic of the day and friendly humorous portrait.²³⁹ The first two genres aimed to ridicule and the last one aimed to satirise. According to a dictionary definition,²⁴⁰ caricature is a comic exaggeration that draws the essence of a person or thing to create an easily identifiable

²³⁶ Yadamsuren was educated at a monastery and likely learned to paint there. Gavaa had no religious background and worked with Russian specialists and artists employed at the Central Theatre (better known as the Green Domed Theatre).

²³⁷ Sonomtseren and Batchuluun, *A Brief History of the Mongolian Fine Art* (Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1989), 18.

²³⁸ Tsevegiin Baidi, *Our Team* (Ulaanbaatar: Munkiin Useg, 2005), 47.

²³⁹ Friendly humorous portrait (Хөхөпсөр мior in Mongolian directly translated from Russian *druzheskie sharshi*) is a genre of cartoon in Mongolian caricature from the Soviet caricature since 1940s. Friendly humorous portrait usually portrayed famous personage of culture and art.

²⁴⁰ ENCARTA World English Dictionary (Pan Macmillan Australia, 1999).

visual likeness. This definition fits perfectly with the character of the friendly humorous portrait. It described by Soviet critics by the time that the friendly humorous portrait aimed to praise the “positive heroes of our times.”²⁴¹ However, ridiculing was the main function of ideology of the system. It served political aims of fighting against the external enemy, capitalism, (via political caricature) and against internal moral shortcomings of the builders of Socialism (via topic of the day). This forms the connecting link between caricature and parody (as a post-modern device for ridicule) in this study, even though they are different genres.

During the Cold War period, the United States of America became the focus of Mongolian caricature.²⁴² Americans were styled as imperialists in Mongolian political parody, which mocked American attempts to constrain the build-up of nuclear weapons in the 1960s and 1970s. Caricature may have been associated with the adoption of the *MPRP's New Program* at the 15th Party Congress held in June 1966. The *Program* officially declared the Mongolian People's Republic to be an inseparable part of the World Communist Movement and the MPRPs main task was to resolutely struggle against world imperialism headed by the USA.²⁴³ Therefore, political art was to educate workers in Marxist-Leninism, praise patriotic behaviour, the proletarian-internationalist outlook and Socialist achievements, and denounce the *mangas* American capitalists.²⁴⁴

Nyamsuren's²⁴⁵ caricature, *The Struggle of Greece*, (Figure 3.2.4) published in issue 5 of *Woodpecker* in 1967, is a strong example of the mocking critique of this time. On 21 April 1967, an anti-Communist military coup occurred in Greece, ending two decades of struggle between Communist and anti-Communist forces. The coup leaders took power quickly and control of the country overnight. Many leading Communist politicians and ordinary citizens were arrested, and a military regime was established, despite criticism that the action was rumoured to be supported

²⁴¹ Bogdanov and Viazemskii, *Journalist's Handbook* (Leningrad, 1961), 288.

²⁴² The term of Cold War is described the global confrontation between two superpowers the USA and Russia that appeared after WWII. They competed against each other and developed distinct ideological, political and economic policies together with their allies from 1945 to 1989.

²⁴³ The MPRP Program (1966), 33.

²⁴⁴ Important political events such as the new MPR Constitution (adopted 1960), the MPR's admission into the United Nations (UN; 1961) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA; 1962) resulted in socio-economic development and improvement, raised MPR's foreign relations profile, and the development of political propaganda art. As a result, the MPR's international reputation increased.

²⁴⁵ Nyamsuren Oidoviin (1930-1967) is a graphic artist. After studying at the Repin Art Academy in Leningrad between 1958 and 1963, he worked at *Crocodile*. During this time he made numerous lithographic works, a new genre in Mongolian art.

by the USA.²⁴⁶ In *The Struggle of Greece*, the artist combines traditional Mongolian iconography and colour symbolism with a depiction of the classical sculpture *Laocoön* (Figure 3.2.5), which depicts the Trojan priest Laocoön and his two sons being punished, his warning against accepting the Greek “Trojan Horse” unheeded (refigured as the struggle for triumph of the Greeks). The figures of Laocoön and his children are painted reddish-yellow, whilst the snakes are a cool blue. Traditionally, for Mongols, reddish-yellow represents gold which, unaffected by corrosion, never changes: it symbolises male qualities, spirit (*hiimori*), splendour, courage, and immortality. In the background, many ‘anti-Communist’ snakes emerge from the mouth of a giant ‘American’ *mangas* to threaten ‘Communist’ Laocoön. At the bottom of the caricature is written (my translation):

In the country of Acropolis a danger has arisen,
 However, heroes of Glezos and Greece never lost their home
 And the attempt by the black poisoned snake was never realised.

Nyamsuren denounces the Imperialists supported by the USA, depicting them as a threat which has been stored in the belly of the American *mangas*.



Figure 3.2.4. Nyamsuren. O, *The struggle of Greece*. 1967, lithography, 24x35cm, *Woodpecker*, State Library of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, October 2012.

²⁴⁶ Phillips Talbot, the US ambassador in Athens declared the incident to be a “rape of democracy” D. Ganser *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe* (London: Cass, 2005), 220-223.

Figure 3.2.5. *The Laocoön Group*. Roman copy, 1st century A.D., marble, height 7', Vatican Museum, Rome, Photo: Janson.²⁴⁷

The Struggle of Greece was likely made at the order of the authorities. Nyamsuren was employed as an artist for *Crocodile*, a Party magazine. The MPR was a Soviet client state and all information about the world was provided via the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) and the Soviet Party's newspaper, *Pravda*.²⁴⁸ Most articles of the MPRP newspaper *Truth* were directly translated from *Pravda*. Numerous articles about the Greek coup appeared in *Truth*, headed "We are firmly resisting the reaction of the US" and "Release Manolis Glezos."²⁴⁹ In "The Announcement from the Public Labour Union," Communist parties including those of Austria, Argentina and Italy condemned the involvement of the USA with the Greek coup and argued that if the USA had not supported the Greek military, the coup would not have happened.²⁵⁰ This denouncement stoked the ire of Mongolians, who considered that the Imperialists had demolished the freedom and peaceful life of Greek citizens. However, although all caricatures faced multiple stages of editing and censorship before publishing, the use of *mangas* and colour symbolism and the Laocoön undoubtedly originated from Nyamsuren. Nyamsuren had a good knowledge of ancient and classical artworks, gained during his study at Leningrad's Repin Academy. So *The Struggle of Greece* attempts to combine the uniquely Mongolian figure of the *mangas* with classical sculpture.

The American *mangas* is also illustrated in Odgiiv's caricature, *NATO*²⁵¹ (Figure 3.2.6) where a giant American soldier devours the territory of Cyprus, a Catholic-Greek/Islamic-Turkic island, and a strategic link in NATO's defence. During the 1974 Cyprus general election, the Communist Party took power, exacerbating ethnic conflicts. The USA and its NATO allies stepped in to pacify regional tensions. The USAs involvement in the Cyprus incident was a hot

²⁴⁷ Anthony Janson, *History of Art by H. W. Janson* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1986), 146.

²⁴⁸ *Pravda* (*Truth* in Russian) was the official newspaper from 1918 to 1991. First produced in St Petersburg in 1912, it was published secretly until 1918. *Pravda* was an important media of the Bolshevik (Russian revolutionary) movement, edited by Lenin. During the Soviet period, *Pravda* indoctrinated the masses on Communist theory and policy www.britannica.com accessed 11 October 2013.

²⁴⁹ Manolis Glezos (1922-) is a Greek left wing politician and writer, awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1963. On April 21, 1967, he was arrested along with other political leaders, imprisoned for four years and released in 1971 as a result of international public outcry www.mlahanas.de accessed 04 September 2013.

²⁵⁰ *Truth*, 30 May 1967, no. 4.

²⁵¹ NATO (Cyrillic spelling is HATO) founded in 1949, is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also called the Atlantic Alliance. It formed as a military union of the Western (capitalist) countries to defend against Communist bloc and the Warsaw Pact military force during the Cold War.

subject at the time and many articles about it appeared in the political section of *Truth*. Communist bloc countries led by the Soviet Union denounced the policy of the USA and NATO, and united in the struggle against them. Odgiiv's caricature is evidence of the foreign policy of the MPRP, implied by the characteristic swallowing by the *mangas*.



Figure 3.2.6. Odgiiv, V. *NATO*, 1975. Photo: Vandag Odgiiv.²⁵²

Numerous caricatures with moral subjects were produced at the request of the MPRP to strengthen its ideological work in raising the working people's consciousness and heightening their enthusiasm for labour. These caricatures identified and criticised societal faults including laziness, alcoholism, carelessness and theft of state property. The government focused on formulating mass socialist ideals to produce the “new man”—the fabled builder of Communism. During the 1960s, the party continued to insist that caricaturists should study the artworks of Soviet artists.²⁵³ Caricatures by artists such as Ts. Dorjgotov, Ts. Badrah, D. Pushkin, B. Sodnom, B. Baldanvaanchig, Yo. Jigjiddulam, N. Tumurbaatar and D. Mihlai were published in the renamed *Woodpecker*,²⁵⁴ and they were strongly influenced by cartoons from the satirical Soviet newspaper *Crocodile* and those of Soviet cartoonists such as Boris Efimov, Michial

²⁵² Vandagyn Odgiiv, *Caricature* (Ulaanbaatar: State Printing House, 1975), 23.

²⁵³ Tsend Dorjgotov, *Let Me Victimised* (Ulaanbaatar: Uralah Erdem Printing, 2007), 120.

²⁵⁴ *Woodpecker* was the main satirical magazine that criticised and revealed shortcomings of MPRs socialist society between 1958 and 1999.

Abramov and Nicolai Krilov, and Bulgarian Tenny Pendarov. Soviet influences on MPR culture such as these deepened under Premier Yumjaagin Tsedenbal.²⁵⁵

This shift is visible in Odgiiv's caricature *Forbidden Swearing* (Figure 3.2.7), which criticises the degeneration of the Mongolian vocabulary following the introduction of the Russian language into Mongolian schools at the instigation of Tsedenbal. In May 1963, Tsedenbal announced that study of the Russian language was a necessary condition for the construction of Socialism and communism,²⁵⁶ which then became compulsory for Mongolian school children. Coarse Russian words entered Mongolian vocabulary, such as *durak* (silly), *pizda*²⁵⁷ (offensive slang for vagina), *gavno* (shit) and *lapotka* (shovel-alcoholic). These swearwords had not been used by Mongols prior to Russianisation. As described in the anecdote at the beginning of Chapter Two, traditionally swearing for Mongols was one of the ten sins in mortal life. A black-mouthed person, or a 'bad mouth,' becomes a *mangas*,²⁵⁸ such as that clearly depicted in *Forbidden Swearing*.



Figure 3.2.7 Odgiiv, V. *Forbidden Swearing*, Caricature, Journal *Woodpecker*, no. 2 (1967).
Photo: Sonomtseren and Batchuluun.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ Tsedenbal Yumjaagiin (1925-1991) was the first secretary of the MPRP and Central Committee Chairman of the Presidium of the People's great Khural between 1952 and 1984. He was Moscow's most trusted man and an obedient executor of Soviet colonial policies in Mongolia. Tsedenbal was a Soviet educated disciple of the Party and the main opponent of Mongolian nationalism that appeared in the 1960s.

²⁵⁶ R. Rupen (1964), 330.

²⁵⁷ *Pizda* is the most offensive Russian swear-word, still in common use by males but rarely by females.

²⁵⁸ Lodon Tudev, *It Might be Encountered by Evil Spirit* (Ulaanbaatar, 1996), 129.

²⁵⁹ Sonomtseren and Batchuluun, *A Brief History of the Mongolian Fine Art* (1989, illustration in this book).

Mongolian caricatures draw from many aspects of social and cultural life in order to ridicule. For instance, Dorjpalam's (Figure 3.2.8) portrait of poacher-deerstalker depicts the offence of ignoring the official protection of deer hunting. A clever visual pun, the figure's hands imitate the horn of a deer and the moment of being caught by the police. Traditionally, the deer is a sacred animal for the Mongols and part of the origin myths: in SHM, the Mongols originate from the deer, *Hoa maral* (mother) and the wolf, *Burtu chono* (father). All shamans wear deer-skin boots and use a drum covered by deer skin during their rituals; the deer is the shaman's steed which connects them to ancestors²⁶⁰ in order that their message be sent to the spirit world.

The boasting text at the bottom of the caricature reinforces unpleasant behavior, ostentation and bragging (my translation):

*I have shot two bucks with twelve branched horns
I have knocked two bucks lined up in a row.*

Immoral and rude behavior is openly criticized in this caricature and the punishment for lying, boasting and defying public responsibility is clear. For Dorjpalam, these behaviors are wicked, committed by an immoral *mangas* and punishable by the law. Dorjpalam's "poacher" was part of the ideological campaign of the Party to educate workers about good Socialist behavior and strengthen morale.

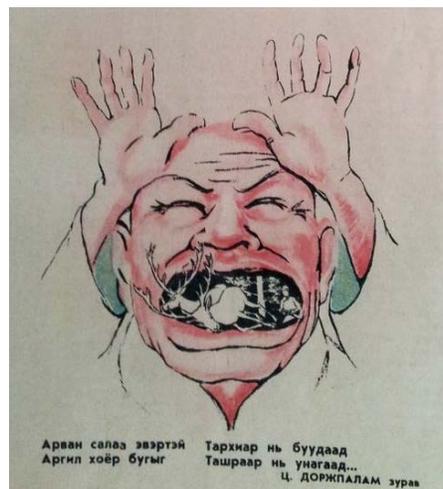


Figure 3.2.8 Dorjpalam, Ts. *Untitled*, Caricature, Journal *Woodpecker*, no.1 (1967). The State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren, June 2012.

²⁶⁰ Luntengiin Batchuluun, "Meaning of Shaman's Cloth and Instruments" *Mongolica*, vol 1(2012), 45.

The image of *mangas* is in Mongolian caricature and visual art in the 1970s as well as parody. It was directly associated the resolutions of the Party congresses. In the MPRP Sixteenth Congress,²⁶¹ Yu. Tsendenbal states in his speech that party organization and communists should irreconcilable fight against any religious attempts and strengthen the ideology of scientific atheism for the masses.²⁶² In order to fulfill his task the Joint meeting of Union of Mongolian creative workers issued a resolution changing the policy for literature and artworks such concentrating them on old cultural themes, attempts toward nationalism, and constant reliance on the methods of socialist realism.²⁶³

Moreover, MPRP Seventeenth Congress²⁶⁴ issued a new teaching for the Mongolian public “the Communist way of living”. Its tasks were that all people should work for development of socialist society, to be sincerely loyal to Marxist-Leninism and encompass proletarian internationalism and friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, to struggle uncompromisingly with anti-Soviet ideologies and nationalism. The MPRP considered that the main obstacle building socialism in the country is nationalism which encouraged reviving traditional culture, custom and belief. Censorship and ideological workers’ campaigns of the MPRP were activated, hunting out any nationalist attempts. Thus, traditional culture such as the image of *mangas* in folk painting was labelled as a “religious backward subject” and rejected. The MPRP had appealed to the youth tirelessly to learn from progressive world art and culture led by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Finally, *mangas* parody occupied a particular space in Mongolian modern art between 1940s and the 1970s. These images were close linked with character of *mangas* in traditional Mongolian mythology and the Buddhist belief system. Although they were illustrated in different styles, they became a popular character in propaganda art of the closed society for ridiculing the American capitalists and backward immoral behaviour of people during the socialist era. Caricature brought stagnancy in developing parody in Mongolian modern visual art and persisted till the middle of the 1980s. Although the visual image of *mangas* almost disappeared in art, it

²⁶¹ Sixteenth Congress of the MPRP was held between 07 and 11 June 1971.

²⁶² The journal *Culture* 1972, no.1, “Works for atheistic propaganda”, U. Burnee.

²⁶³ The journal *Culture* 1972, no. 2, “The resolution of the Joint Meeting of the Union of Mongolian Art Creative Workers.”

²⁶⁴ Seventeenth Congress of the MPRP was held between 14 and 18 June 1976. The congress defines it’s the main task that development of the country to get closer to other socialist countries by spheres of living standard, cultural level and working forces.

still remained in the Mongol psyche and fear of authority. This chapter of the exegesis investigated the historical process shaping Mongolian political parody in this stage until the reemerging *mangas* as a dictatorship to which I now turn.

3.3 Parody during *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* (1985-1990)

Reforms of the Ninetieth Party Congress, held in March 1986, created a positive atmosphere for reviving parody in Mongolian art. Directly influenced by Gorbachev's²⁶⁵ *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* in the Soviet Union, issues of openness and transparency in the MPRP were addressed. As a moment of ideological housekeeping, the Congress reforms were not intended to be the beginning of the end of Socialism (that it became).²⁶⁶ The main government media and newspapers such as *Truth* and *Labour* published a summary of Batmunkh's speech announcing the new policies.²⁶⁷ It had significant impact and injected some fresh air into the stagnant publication style of the government media. Simultaneously, caricatures by artists such as Tsendiin Dorjgotov, Tsevegiin Baidi,²⁶⁸ and Shagdayn Tsend-Ayush, that ridiculed the MPRP and socialist life, were published.

Baidi's *Rotten Potatoes* (Figure 3.3.1) depicts the contamination of an entire supply of potatoes by a single rotten potato and provides insights into the changes taking place a few months before the Ninetieth Congress,²⁶⁹ when the Mongolian population became aware of problematic government policies. This caricature was praised by the censorship office and middle-rank party leaders, because of its alignment with Party policies for the economic management of socialist

²⁶⁵ Gorbachev Mikhail Sergeevich (1931-), awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, was the last leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and initiated reforms which resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communist bloc. *Perestroika* was the political reformation movement in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the 1980s. *Glasnost* called for increased transparency in government institutions in the Soviet Union.

²⁶⁶ Kaplonski, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 51.

²⁶⁷ Batmunkh Jambyn (1926-1997) was a Mongolian Communist leader during its transition to democracy. In March 1990, Batmunkh's government resigned at the request of the Democratic revolution.

²⁶⁸ Baidi Tsevegiin (1941-) was a notable Mongolian caricaturist who studied at Stroganov Institute in Moscow between 1969 and 1974.

²⁶⁹ Nineteenth Congress of the MPRP was held from 28 to 31 May, 1986.

property.²⁷⁰ However, the original meaning of the caricature was completely different. For Baidi, the potatoes represented the members of the MPRP Central Committee's ideological department, suggesting that the members of MPRP Central Committee are like rotten potatoes (in terms of the knowledge of theory building Communism). He suggested they never read the original theory of Marx and that they blindly followed the Soviets. Erdene notes that the majority of Mongolians were unfamiliar with Marx's *Das Capital*, as it was not published in Mongolian. Many Mongolians attended the Communist Party Academy of Social Science, where they studied Marxism from the perspective of the Russian scholar, Afanasev.²⁷¹ Hence, few read the primary sources of the philosophical origins of Marxism.

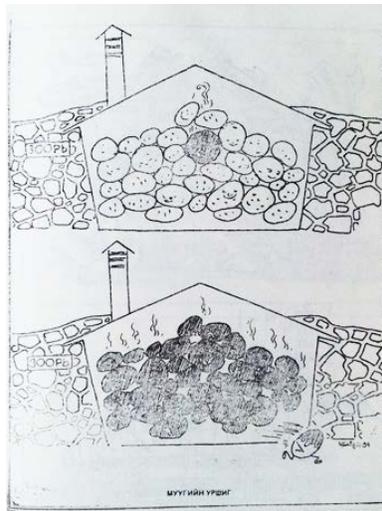


Figure 3.3.1 Baidi, Ts. *Rotten Potatoes*, 1985. Photo: Tseveg Baidi. *Caricature Album*. Ulaanbaatar 1992, 61.

Developments in *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* were carefully watched by the members of the MPRP, who waited for instruction from the USSR. The leaders of the MPRP understood that Socialism was faltering, however they did not know how to fix it. Indeed, the Mongolian leaders were almost unable to manage the country. Simultaneously, the masses lost their trust in

²⁷⁰ The MPRP had issued a resolution to manage socialist property in 1979. Simultaneously, two famous slogans related to keeping socialist property appeared. My painting *The Mongols-2*, discussed in chapter 4 responds to this resolution.

²⁷¹ Ch. Erdene, *Big Triangle* (1997), 268.

authority, as campaigns such as the “Youth of Assignment”²⁷² engendered public opposition, and people sang parodic popular songs like “Erdenet Heap.”²⁷³

Baidi’s 1988 caricature, *Authoritarian whips Freedom of Thought* (Figure 3.3.2), ridicules the conservative mentality of the Party. Following an observation that the human brain looks similar to sheep skin, Baidi suggests that communism produces a “herd of sheep-people,” that has lost the ability to think independently. Control of speech and suppression of government criticism was a central part of the authoritarian Soviet system and people were threatened with discrimination and rejection by their community if they rebelled.



Figure 3.3.2 Baidi, Ts. *Authoritarian Whips Freedom of Thought*, newspaper *Woodpecker*, no.17 (1988). The State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Ochirbat Naidansuren October 2012.

How then was Baidi’s *Authoritarian Whips Freedom of Thought* able to escape such strict censorship? Firstly, the community was waiting for a certain change. A feeling of hesitancy

²⁷² During the 1980s, the Mongolian Union of Revolutionary Youth had appealed for young men and women to work at the collective farms and factories, and classes of high schools graduates were sent to work. These workers called themselves “Members of Assignment” (*ilgeeltiin ezen*). Later, many of them understood that they had been misled by false promises.

²⁷³ *Erdenet Heap* was one of the most popular songs at the beginning of 1980s. It glorifies the achievements of the construction of Erdenet mining town. Ideologically, it aimed to appeal the youths to go there. However, the public parodied the original song due to their disillusioned life as “Members of Assignment”:

Erdenet heap is looking dull,

Members of assignment have had no money

Liver paste is not in a shop

Youth Union has misled us.

Ch. Boldbaatar, *Mongol State 100 year* (2012), 164.

about socialism in all spheres of society had emerged. In the more open socialism, the MPRP authorities had become more tolerant of criticism generally and caricatures which ridiculed them. Simultaneously, a new atmosphere had appeared in public media. Social reformists such as writer Lodongiin Tudev and journalist Horloogiin Tsevee, the directors of *Woodpecker* and *Truth* respectively, had the courage to publish sharp content in critical articles which played a vital role in psychologically preparing the masses to move towards social change and forming freedom of thought. Finally, the policy of the censorship department of the MPRP had loosened. Jargaliin Baramsai, a well-known satirist, worked at the department and allowed the caricature to be published. The conditions were therefore ripe to establish a new, more critical form of parody in Mongolian political art.

3.4 Conclusion

The image of *mangas* had been ideologically used in Mongolian propaganda art in the Socialist period. The ridicule target of the *mangas* was disparate in each stage of development of the country depending on policies of the MPRP.

In the “Serial posters of Petrograd” of the early years of the People’s revolution (1924), feudal princes and high rank lamas were depicted as a greedy beast *mangas* hence the policy of the MPRP to impair the influence of ruling class of old society, particularly a power of Buddhist monasteries. Then during the Second World War period, the *mangas* turned fascist Germany and Hitler into a hell king from Buddhist iconography. The hell-oriented *mangas* was associated with the policy of MPRP against religion and public faith.

In caricature of the Cold War period, the *mangas* form targeted struggle against the external Capitalist enemy and against internal moral shortcomings of the society. The Americans were depicted as a *mangas* that swallowed the independence and liberty of countries that developed a Socialist path. Since the 1970s, by the resolutions of the MPRP congresses, in caricature, traditional forms including the *mangas* theme all but disappeared. However, the *mangas* was revived again by the influence of *Perestroika* in the 1980s but in a different form. Thus, all these

images were ideological forms of educating the public in the government and party as well as reflecting policy of the MPRP.

In chapter 4, I explore how the collapse of the Soviet regime and the emergence of a liberal democracy in Mongolia brought about significant freedom for practising Mongolian artists at home and abroad and allowed a more critical and self-reflexive parody to emerge.

Chapter FOUR—The Role of Parody and the *mangas* in Post-Revolution Mongolian Contemporary Art (after 1990)

This chapter examines the emergence of political parody in Mongolian contemporary art following Mongolia's liberation from the Soviet-influenced regime in 1990, and its thriving in the 21st century. Contemporary Mongolian artists critically engage with the residues of the communist era in the present by representing past and present political figures as a *mangas*. These *mangas* figures are mobilised in contemporary Mongolian art through parody as a mode of resistance to political oppression and corruption, which asserts autonomy and empowers citizens.

As has been established, historically Mongolian parody is inseparably linked to resistance. This feeling was both expressed as and alleviated by *mangas* iconography. My exegesis has traced the relationship between power of opposition and the *mangas* motif through different historical periods: the “*mangas tengre*” in the shamanist period; the “*Jamsran mangas*” in the Buddhist period; and the “capitalist *mangas*” in the Socialist period. This chapter identifies a two-fold shift in the cultural expression of resistance (disgust) since the 1990 revolution. This shift has involved firstly, a re-imagining of the capitalist-*mangas* of the Socialist period into a Communist-*mangas* or Corrupt Government Official-*mangas* and secondly, a move from caricature to a more sophisticated form of parody.

Here, I discuss the motivations behind the shift from caricature to parody, and the potential it offers for contemporary artists, both within Mongolia and for those of the Mongolian diaspora. I begin by tracing the emergence of the new form of parody in the caricatures of the early post-Socialist period (1990-1995). The dramatic socio-political changes generated by the Democratic Revolution in 1990 had a significant influence on art produced during this period: in particular, the government could be critiqued without fear of retribution. Caricatures of Mongolian political figures appeared in the press, criticising previously forbidden themes, including the bureaucracy of Tsedenbal's regime, his inner circles and the oppressive over-representation of the country's ethnic minorities. Following this, I introduce Enkhee, the dominant figure in Mongolian political art of this period, and examine the influence of his political life and art on the development of contemporary Mongolian parody. I explore his re-imagining of the *mangas* as a communist figure

between 1996 and 2009, and the importance of *mangas*-parody for the younger generation of artists such as A. Bayarmagnai, Bu. Bold and E. Naidandorj.

Further, I consider the use of the “*mangas*” motif as a political expression for contemporary diasporic artists living in Australia, the United Kingdom and the USA, with particular focus on artworks of T. Otgonbayar, M. Tsogtsaikhan and Kh. Hosnaran. I argue that their deployment of this motif is linked with their ties to Mongolia, and explore the different ways that the *mangas* and parody are activated in the artworks of the diaspora from those of artists living in Mongolia.

Finally, I consider the importance of the *mangas* motif and parody to my own work as a Mongolian artist born, raised and trained under the Socialist regime, who then immigrated to Australia after the Democratic Revolution. The works discussed here were produced during the last four years of living in Australia and attempt to articulate the complex influences of nomadic tribalism, Buddhism, socialism, democracy and Australian culture on my identity and feelings about my country of origin. I conclude with a reflection on the importance of postmodern self-criticality and its influence on *mangas*-parody within my work.

4.1 *Mangas*-parody in post-revolution Mongolia

The Democratic Revolution of 1990 is a key event in recent Mongolian history, ending nearly seven decades of Socialism. The Revolution was inspired by reforms in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, and other similar revolutions that occurred in Eastern Europe in 1989. At the end of 1989, Mongolians began demonstrating for social, political and economic reform, and public associations were founded not only in Ulaanbaatar city, but also in Erdenet and Hovd province.²⁷⁴ On 4 March 1990, democratic forces organised mass demonstrations demanding the resignation of the government. Authorities did not immediately respond, causing the Mongolian Democratic Union to hold a hunger strike in Sukhbaatar Square in central Ulaanbaatar on 6 March 1990. After three days, the Political Bureau of the MPRP Central Committee conceded and all members resigned. The Mongolian Democratic Revolution had achieved its goals without bloodshed.

²⁷⁴ These associations included the Mongolian Democratic Union, Democratic Socialist Movement, New Democratic Association and Mongolian Student Association. Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia, The Mongols: Migration, Settlement*, 2 vols (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2009), 953.

Following the Revolution, the highly ideological and legally mandated forms of Socialist art, favoured by the Mongolian ruling class, were no longer appropriate for the new social circumstances. Artists were at liberty to find a more suitable visual language—one that relished a new, freer public voice. The democratic revolution provided an opportunity for parody to appear in public discourse. I offer the idea that parody developed amidst the socio-economic changes after the Democratic Revolution in three stages, associated with broader political situations. The “turmoil period” between 1990 and 1995, immediately following the Revolution, was a time of great instability as new political, social and economic structures were established. The “recovery period” of political, social and economic life which occurred between 1995 and 2005, and the subsequent stabilisation which resulted in the current “thriving period.”

Prior to 1990, the Mongolian economy and domestic industry were under Soviet-centralised control and subsidised by the USSR. The collapse of the Socialist regime changed Mongolia’s political relationship with the USSR and their economic support in the form of loans for building Socialism was withdrawn. In September 1990, a multi-party parliamentary republic was established in Mongolia, consisting of three political parties, but dominated by the MPRP.²⁷⁵ The government membership remained 60% communist after the 1992 election. In the 1996 election, the Democratic Party took state power for the first time and governed for four years. The MPRP was re-elected in the subsequent 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections. Independence from the USSR meant that existing governmental structures were abandoned. The government changed three times during the first four years and the nation endured a period of political turmoil and economic depression.²⁷⁶ Living conditions rapidly deteriorated due to a shortage of basic supplies and consumer commodities. Rationing continued until 1993 and social problems such as homelessness, begging, alcoholism and criminal offences increased dramatically. Aid for vulnerable groups was provided by foreign partners and international organizations through humanitarian programs and as the situation worsened rapidly aid increased from US\$4.7 million in 1990, to US\$80.8 million in 1991, to US\$299.2 million in 1992.²⁷⁷ Accordingly, this is considered among the worst periods in Mongolian modern history. Nonetheless, freedom of

²⁷⁵ Baabar, *Baabar Also Said .., Three Fools of Hentii* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2007), 289.

²⁷⁶ During the governance of the Democratic Party from 1996 to 1999, the government changed three times and the following prime ministers led the country: M. Enkhsaihan (19 July 1996–22 April 1998), Ts. Elbegdorj (23 April 1998–24 July 1998) and J. Narantsatsralt (9 Dec 1998–22 July 1999). Ch. Boldbaatar (2012), 201–211.

²⁷⁷ Keith Griffin, *Economic Strategy During the Transition in Poverty and the Transition to a Market Economy in Mongolia* (New York and London: St Martin Press, 1995), 6.

public expression, forbidden in the past, bloomed, and opportunities to criticise the old regime opened up, especially of Yumjaagyn Tsendenbal's authoritarianism and the behaviour of Anastasia Filatova, his Russian wife.

4.1.1 Caricature in the “turmoil period” (1990-1995): setting the stage for *mangas-parody*

As leading figures in the former socialist regime, Tsendenbal and his wife Filatova²⁷⁸ were prime candidates for ridicule and caricature in the new democracy. As discussed in Chapter Three, Tsendenbal was an authoritarian a puppet of the USSR. Filatova was politically influential in her own right. Mongolian political leaders feared Filatova as she was highly influential with Tsendenbal, and had a reputation for threatening to report activity she thought might be against Soviet interests.²⁷⁹

As discussed in Chapter Three, caricature was the only form of critical art allowed under the Socialist system and it continued in the early years of the Democratic Revolution. A caricature entitled *No comment* (Figure 4.1.1) by the artist Baidi was published in *Woodpecker* just three weeks after the hunger strike of the Democratic Revolution in 1990. In this caricature, a large fat woman follows a small man with glasses on all fours like a dog, which she has on a leash. According to Baidi, the picture depicts the female-dominated family that emerged in Mongolia as a result of Soviet-styled urbanization.²⁸⁰ However after its publication, former leaders of the MPRP Central Committee and residents of Uvs province complained that the picture mocked Tsendenbal and Filatova. Given their resemblance and the timing of its publication, it seems reasonable that the figures in the caricature are indeed Tsendenbal and Filatova. The female figure looks like Filatova and is clearly dominant over the male figure, just as Filatova was thought to be dominant over Tsendenbal.

²⁷⁸ Filatova Anastasia Ivanovna Tsendenbala (1920-2001) was the Russian wife of Yumjaagin Tsendenbal. She lived intermittently in Mongolia between 1947 and 1984 and during the 1970s, she became involved in Mongolian social-political life. Her “Children’s Fund” and numerous development projects for Mongolian children accelerated a “personality” cult. Filatova moved to in Moscow in 1984, where she lived until her death in 2001. Baabar (2009).

²⁷⁹ Leoned Shinkarev, *Tsendenbal and His Time* (Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar Printing, 2006), vol. 2, 329.

²⁸⁰ In an interview with Baidi on 14 September 2012, he told me this image was not a parody of Tsendenbal and Filatova. He was very cautious during this conversation, so it is possible that the aging artist said this to avoid a scandal. His claim may be a response to his bitter experiences with the old bureaucracy, a fear of retribution. Baidi worked under the strict control of authority as he had been reprimanded for his caricatures several times in the 1980s.



Figure 4.1.1 Baidi, Ts. *No comment*, Caricature. *Woodpecker*, no. 3(1990). The State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Naidansuren, October 2012.

*Back off, Small Ethnic*s (Figure 4.1.2), also by Baidi and published in the same volume of *Woodpecker*, depicts two dinosaur skeletons: the larger dinosaur is saying “Back Off! Small Ethnic,” as the smaller bites off the end of its tail. According to Baidi, the larger skeleton represents the Khalkha people who constitute the majority of the Mongolian population, whilst the small, aggressive skeleton represents the minority Durbet ethnic group, which although just four per cent of the population, held the balance of power in Tsedenbal’s government.²⁸¹ Ethnic conflict was not considered to exist in Mongolia under Socialism, however the Durbet were over-represented in government positions, and more politically and economically powerful than the Khalkh. Tsedenbal and his successor, Jambyn Batmunkh, were Durbet and governed Mongolia for approximately five decades. Durbets were appointed to high-ranking posts in the Party and State during Tsedenbal’s period, especially his close relatives.²⁸² This nepotic process was conducted openly in the 1980s, particularly after Tsedenbal’s health declined.²⁸³ Khalkha talked secretly about this imbalance, but could not address the issues openly for fear of reprisal.

²⁸¹ The Durbet are one of the four tribes of Oirat (the people of the western region of Mongolia). Unlike the Khalkh, the Oirat are not descended from Chinggis Khaan, which has been the cause of much conflict between the Khalkh and the Oirat over the centuries. Baatarhuyag claims in his article *History of Mongolia for the Mongolians* that this conflict was latent during the Socialist period www.baatarhuyag.niitlelch.com accessed 20 August 2013.

²⁸² All important State positions, including Inner Defense, diplomatic representatives and staff of the Council of Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA) were held by Tsedenbal’s relatives. Shinkarev (2006), 306.

²⁸³ L. Shinkarev (2006), 307.



Figure 4.1.2 Baidi, Ts. *Back off, Small Ethnic*s, Caricature. *Woodpecker*, no.3 (1990). The State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Naidansuren, October 2012.

Attempts to remove Tsedenbal from power did occur during the 1960s, when his opponents accused him of working for a foreign power and claimed that his requests for Soviet loans had caused the MPRs political and economic problems. However, these Khalkh opponents were victimized during the 1960s campaign, *The Illusion Among Intellectuals*.²⁸⁴ Similarly, Batmunkh promoted Durbet people in all community spheres.²⁸⁵ Consequently, an idiom that mocked the Durbet emerged among the Khalkh public: “Durbet is not a person; a tibia is not meat.” The Durbet responded with “Durbet rules Mongolia, tibias carry a body.” These inferences are clear within Baidi’s caricature, which mocks the hegemonic ambition of the Durbet.

The first openly derisive caricature of an individual of the ruling elite appeared in the newspaper *Word* in 1992, created by Luvsanjalbuugiin Munkhbat.²⁸⁶ This caricature depicted the then Prime

²⁸⁴ *The Illusion Among Intellectuals* was a repressive campaign of the MPRP against Mongolian intellectuals and cultural endeavours in the 1960s. It started in 1958 when Dashiin Damba was purged of many intellectuals including scholars, university lecturers and politicians. Bandiin Surmaajav, Baldandorjiin Nyambuu and Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuus, members of the Central Committee of Daramyn Tumor-Ochir, were persecuted in 1964 for “anti party crimes” stripped of party membership and their jobs, and exiled to the countryside. See Alan Sanders, *Historical Dictionary of Mongolia* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2010), 110, 696.

²⁸⁵ For example, Horloogyn Bayanmunkh, a grand champion in national wrestling and Gomboyn Tumendemberel, a folk singer, among others.

²⁸⁶ Munkhbat Luvsanjalbuugiin (LUMO) (1964-) was a caricaturist for several newspapers in the 1990s, including *Word*, *Sport News*, *Health*, and *Grindstone*.

Minister Puntsagyn Jasrai as a monkey (Figure 4.1.3),²⁸⁷ and supported an article, titled *Mongolia and Four Seasons*, in which the author Tsenddoo asked Jasrai how Mongolian herders could successfully prepare for the 1992 “Year of the Monkey” winter. Mongolian herdsman believe that a ‘monkey year winter’ will be particularly harsh, with *zud*²⁸⁸ conditions occurring. Munkhbat’s caricature suggested that Jasrai’s economic reforms would be as disastrous for herders as a monkey year winter. Jasrai’s facial features such as his protruding ears and bald head, lent themselves to this caricaturisation as a monkey. Republished in several Mongolian newspapers and foreign magazines including *Witty World*,²⁸⁹ the caricature encouraged debate, especially among older members of the MPRP. The Council of Govi Altai Aimag (Jasrai’s birth region) insisted that Munkhbat be prosecuted for humiliating a head of state. Democrats, on the other hand, praised the caricature. Jasrai himself did not complain about the portrait and even encouraged Munkhbat to do similar works.²⁹⁰



Figure 4.1.3 Munkbat, L. *Portrait of the Prime Minister Jasrai*. Caricature. *Word*, no.34 (1992). The State National Library, Ulaanbaatar. Photo: Naidansuren, October 2012.

²⁸⁷ Jasrai Puntsagiin (1933-2007) was the third prime minister of Mongolia (1992-1996). Jasrai was a leading economist in Mongolia in the Socialist and post-Socialist periods, and introduced economic reforms that were a distinct shift from the Soviet-styled central planning economy toward a free market. He was often called a monkey who had lost his way in the jungle. However, Jasrai’s economic reforms had positive effects after several years.

²⁸⁸ *Zud* a term refers to a condition of extremely cold winter that causes the death of many livestock. There is four types of *zud*: abundant snowfall (white *zud*), the formation of an impenetrable ice layer over pastures (ice *zud*), lack of sufficient winter fodder following a summer drought (black *zud*) and soil compaction by grazing animals (trampling *zud*). Siurua and Swift “Drought and *Zud* but No Famine (yet) in the Mongolian Herding Economy.” *IDS Bulletin* 33/4 (2002), 82. Approximately six million animals died in 1944 and one million animals died during the winter of the 1956/57. Rupen (1964, 298). 1944, 1956 was the monkey year in lunar calendar for Mongols.

²⁸⁹ *Witty World* is an international cartoon magazine. It was founded by the initiative of a former Hungarian newspaper editor, political refugee Joseph George Szabo in the USA in 1986. During the year *Witty World* published cartoons and reported from 110 countries in the world. Activities of the magazine ended in April 2002 due to it published on the World Wide Web. *A fascinating Story that Mirrors Life Itself* <http://joeszabo.us/wittyworld/history.html> accessed 13 September 2013.

²⁹⁰ Personal communication with Munkhbat, 21 September 2012.

Munkbat's mocking portrait was in absolute opposition to the Mongolian tradition of worship in the painted portraits of ancestors, reflecting the belief that this worship supported the soul (*suld*) of the ancestors. Such a tradition protected the state against its enemies and gave legitimacy and authority to the ruling Khaan.²⁹¹ Chinggis Khaan was considered to be ordained by Heaven and was officially regarded as the superior Lord of the Great Mongol Empire.²⁹² Later, in the twentieth century, Bogdo Jebzundamba, the last king of Mongolia, was highly venerated as a "Living Buddha" and his portrait was worshipped among the Mongols. This traditional mentality remained during the early Socialist regime, demonstrated by the adoration of Choibalsan's portrait. Individual portrait worship was repressed during the later governance of Tsendenbal, due to the influence of Soviet reform, in particular Khrushchev's denouncement of the "cult of personality." Hence, Munkhbat's caricature broke with the tradition of portrait worship.

In this early period of the Democratic Revolution, caricature still functioned as a critical tool in political parody. However, public criticism targeted the previous authoritarian regime and its policies. The expression and power of these caricatures was similar to the parody of the revolutionary leaflets at the beginning of the 1920s. The caricatures were polite and their meaning was indirect, (notably in Baidi's works). Political artists of the "turmoil period" lacked the confidence to assertively express their ideas because they still had mental barriers from their art training and fear of repercussions under the old system. The most courageous attempt was Munkbat's mocking caricature of Prime Minister Jasrai as a monkey in 1992. The figure of the *mangas* is not explicitly employed during this time, but is implicitly drawn upon as a manifestation of resistance. This period provided a platform for the emergence of a new form of political parody between 1995 and 2009, as I discuss in the next section.

²⁹¹ Tatiana Skrynnikova, "Suld - The Basic Idea of Chinggis Khaan Cult." *ActaOrientalia Hungaricae Academiae Scientiarum* 46/1 (1992-1993), 51-60.

²⁹² P. Carpini (1988), 45.

4.1.2 The recovery period (1995 to 2009): stabilising the platform for *mangas*-parody in Mongolian Contemporary art

The social and political system in the country eventually began to stabilise. Living situations improved, due in part to brave economic reforms including privatization, deregulation of some previously cost-controlled commodities, changes to the banking system, and the recuperation of local industries.²⁹³ Inflation, which had averaged more than 50 per cent in 1995 and 1996, fell to 20.5 per cent in 1997 and 6 per cent in 1998.²⁹⁴ Moreover, in 1999, 70 per cent of GDP was produced by the private sector, as opposed to just 10 per cent in 1990.²⁹⁵ These positive changes stabilised the economy and gave the government the opportunity to develop a strategy for progress. However, foreign currency reserves and the state budget were tight, so life was still hard for Mongols.

During this period, caricatures continued to target politicians, but in increasingly innovative ways by cartoonists such as Lhagvagyn Ulziibat.²⁹⁶ One such caricature was published in the newspaper *Ulaanbaatar* during the 1997 presidential election campaign (Figure 4.1.4).



Figure 4.1.4 Ulziibat, L. *No comment*, 1997. Caricature. Photo: Baidi, Ts, *Best Works of Mongolian Caricature*.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Baabar (2009), 43, 159.

²⁹⁴ Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 1999; National Statistical Office 2000.

²⁹⁵ *Information of Mongolia* www.asia-planet.net/mongolia/government.htm, accessed 23 August 2012.

²⁹⁶ Ulziibat Lhagvaagyn (1952-) is a cartoonist and engineer. He was awarded a *Silver Woodpecker* in 1989 and selection of his artworks were published in the newspaper *White Crow* in 1994.

²⁹⁷ Bolor Sudar & Munkiin Useg (2006), 115.

Here, President Punsalmaagyn Ochirbat²⁹⁸ is depicted as a tiger cub and is saying: “I want to be a president again, so what kind of animal would I be if I am re-elected in the next election campaign?” The artist mocks Ochirbat’s unfulfilled promise of 1992 that Mongolia would be one of the “Asian Tigers,” alongside Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Ulziibat emphasizes the failure of Ochirbat’s big promise, playing on the ambiguity of the word “bar,” as literally, the English word *tiger* is pronounced *bar* in Mongolian. The artist refers to the proliferation of bars and nightclubs throughout the country in the 1990s, and the widely-used phrase “Mongolia is a country of Bars”.²⁹⁹ Ulziibat’s portrait mocks the failure of Mongolia, under Ochirbat, to become a political power in the region.

Another interesting caricature of this period reveals the disorder of society and culpability of politicians, through the use of the traditional *mangas* motif. Cartoonist Tsogtbayar³⁰⁰ criticizes the increased corruption and fraudulence of politicians and members of parliament involved with Western aid organizations, savings and credit cooperatives and state banks.³⁰¹ Tsogtbayar’s caricature, *Many Headed Parliament* (Figure 4.1.5) depicts a fully armoured warrior of Mongolian folktale escaping from a multi-headed *mangas*.

²⁹⁸ Ochirbat Punsalmaagyn (1942-) was the first president of Mongolia (1990-1997).

²⁹⁹ Togtbayar created a caricature entitled *Bar State* in 1998.

³⁰⁰ Tsogtbayar Samandaryn (1964-) is one of the well-known caricaturists in Mongolia. He worked as an artist for *Woodpecker* and *Truth*, later becoming a freelance artist, with his caricatures attracting the interest of foreign researchers. See Gen Ki Matsubara, *Mongolian Caricaturist Tsogtbayar’s Artworks*. Tsogtbayar was awarded the title *Honoured Artist of Mongolia* in 2011.

³⁰¹ In 2002, Denger, Mongolian ambassador to the USA announced at the Mongolian parliament meeting that bribery has risen in Mongolia. Ganhuyag, *Even Deceased Can be Talked*, 2013. www.ganaa.mn accessed 5 Feb 2014. According to survey by *Transparency International* 2013, Mongolia is placed second after Nigeria in the world for corruption.



Figure 4.1.5 Tsogtbayar, S. *Many Headed Parliament*, 2005. Caricature. Photo: <http://tsogtbayar.niitlech.mn>.

Here, the Mongolian Parliament is a multi-headed *mangas* looting the state's prosperity. Running away, the hero exclaims: "In folktale, *mangas* has usually fifteen heads but here it is 76 headed...no matter what, I cannot fight and defeat him." Corruption and bribery are shown to be a serious problem and the caricature appeals to the people to fight it. The folkloric characteristic of swallowing is also apparent here, suggesting that bribery and corruption are consuming social resources.

During the "recovery period," parody emerged as a form of painting and conceptually broadened, shifting from ridiculing caricaturisations of former Communist leaders to a more expansive cultural critique, led by artist Chimeidiin Enkhee.³⁰² Enkhee's paintings were significant to the development of political parody in this period, as they revealed distorted incidents in Mongolian history and criticised the violent authoritarian policies of the old regime. Deeply influenced by Surrealism, Enkhee abandoned his early art practice in the 1970s due to intimidation by the Socialist police,³⁰³ and pursued journalism. In 1988, the Communist

³⁰² Enkhee Chimeidiin (1958-), journalist, artist, private advocate and free thinker, grew up in an intellectual family. He was one of the founders of Mongolian Democratic Union in 1990.

³⁰³ As a teenager Enkhee was taught watercolours by the famous artist Odon. One day, he found a book about the surrealist artist, Salvador Dali on his father's bookshelf. The strange pictures, like a human chest doubling as a cabinet with open drawers fascinated Enkhee. He began to draw privately, very freely, inspired by Dali's style: Buddha wearing jeans, a skeleton playing a guitar of its own bones and so on. In one work, he depicted a man walking in the street of Ulaanbaatar, whose open chest contained screws, bolts and nuts instead of organs, obviously inspired by Dali's painting *The Anthropomorphic Cabinet*. This painting was bought by Zoltan, a Hungarian specialist. The police found the work and questioned both Enkhee and Odon. Fortunately, the officials relaxed after

government suspected Enkhee of being a Chinese spy and of establishing a secret anti-government organisation when working as a journalist at the newspaper *Truth*. He was arrested and imprisoned.³⁰⁴ Later exonerated, he asserted a desire to express himself without censorship.³⁰⁵ Consequently, he became a founding member of the regulation council of the MDA (Mongolian Democratic Association) in 1989, established after artists, architects, writers and movie producers agreed to oppose and challenge the regime.³⁰⁶

Enkhee began painting again in 2003. Soon after, his work *Universe of Red Wine* was displayed for the first time in *Autumn*, the annual exhibition of the Union of Mongolian Artists (UMA). Enkhee held a solo exhibition in 2008 at the Exhibition Hall of the Mongolian Advocate Association and was included in the exhibition *Surrealism in Mongolia* in 2010.³⁰⁷ Although Enkhee's work is usually considered to belong to Surrealist thought, he also uses parody as a political device. Enkhee's works are anomalous in Mongolian art, where the ambitious development of drawing techniques and skills are favoured over content. His work opened the field for art to express ideas over technique. Here, I discuss two of his most influential works: *Historical Meeting and Speech of White Parrot* (2008), and *Re-emerging Fear* (2008).

Enkhee's next work, *Historical Meeting and Speech of White Parrot* (Figure 4.1.6), painted in 2006, parodies Tsultem's painting *Eternal Friendship* (Figure 4.1.7) made in 1967³⁰⁸ and is an important example of humorous political painting. Tsultem's painting depicts Lenin offering

Odon explained that it was painted in a style that had been adopted by some Soviet artists. Enkhee and Odon were released with a caution but this incident caused Enkhee to abandon painting until 2004 (personal communication, 2011).

³⁰⁴ Five people imprisoned for political issues between 1959 and 1989 Baabar (2009), 222. Enkhee was one of them, the last victim of political persecution under the Socialist regime. His photo is displayed at the Memorial Museum for the Victims of Political Repression in Ulaanbaatar.

³⁰⁵ Chimidiin Enkhee, *Right to Choose* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2006), 11.

³⁰⁶ Ch.Enkhee (2006), 51. In his book, *The Right to Choose* (2006), Enkhee emphasises that Mongolian artists played a vital role in setting up the democratic movement in Mongolia.

³⁰⁷ *Advocate Enkhee's Art Exhibition*. <http://www.olloo.mn/article&Sid=40654> accessed 14 October 2011.

³⁰⁸ Tsultem painted several versions of the meeting of Lenin and Sukhbaatar, the first of which is entitled *Historical Meeting* (1967).

advice to Mongolian revolutionary leader, Damdini Sukhbaatar³⁰⁹ in the 1921 “Soviet-Mongol friendship talks,”³¹⁰ and was an icon of Socialist Mongolian culture and art of that time.



Figure 4.1.6 Enkhee, Ch. *Historical Meeting and Speech of the White Parrot*, 2006. Oil on Canvas, 60x40cm. Photo: “Surrealism in Mongolia 2” exhibition catalogue.³¹¹

Figure 4.1.7 Tsultem, N. *Eternal Friendship*, 1967. Oil on Canvas, 137x109cm. Photo: www.art-gallery.mn

Enkhee’s *Historical Meeting and Speech of the White Parrot* depicts a meeting between Sukhbaatar and the American president George Bush.³¹² This scene suggests the foreign policy and international relationship ambitions of the current Mongolian government, and implies similar ambitions were behind the historical meeting of Sukhbaatar and Lenin.³¹³ The white parrot perched on the chair at the front right of the work symbolises the propaganda used during the Socialist period, referring to a person who repeats the words of another without thinking.

³⁰⁹ Sukhbaatar Damdini (1892-1924) was a military commander and one of the leaders of Mongolian People’s Revolution in 1921. Soviet propaganda claimed Sukhbaatar to be the founder of Mongolian modern history.

³¹⁰ The meeting between Lenin and Sukhbaatar aimed to recognise the independence of Mongolia by Soviets and establish friendly relations with Russia. However, the Soviets recognised the Mongolian People’s Government, rather than Mongolia’s independence. Baabar (1999), 226.

³¹¹ (2008), 8.

³¹² Bush officially visited in Mongolia in November 2005, which was an important incident in the history of relationships between the USA and Mongolia.

³¹³ There is some dispute that Mongolian revolutionary leader Damdini Sukhbaatar met with Lenin alone in Moscow in 1921. Baabar for instance, emphasises that most Mongolian historians consider that the meeting of Sukhbaatar and Lenin to be a legend Baabar, *Sukhbaatar Should not a Victim of Political Debates* www.baabar.niitlech.mn accessed 3 February 2013. However, Mongolian historian Otgoni Purev argues that they did in fact meet, as it was noted in the calendar of Lenin’s secretary, Fatieva www.borolzoi.blogmn.net accessed 14 August 2010.

Enkhee's 2008 painting *Reemerging Fear* (Figure 4.1.8) provides a chance to analyse the memory of contemporary Mongolian history, as the image is inspired by the true story of a public protest that occurred after the MPRP victory following the 2008 election.³¹⁴ Several thousand protesters gathered outside the MPRP building, violently confronting police and setting the building on fire. The communist authority gave permission for the police to open fire on the rioters. Four people were shot and killed, and approximately one thousand people involved in the protest were arrested.³¹⁵ Ganhuyag states that the supposed "democratic" Mongolian government carried out a policy of dictatorship against protesters on that day.³¹⁶ This incident was evidence that government policies reflected those of the Socialist period, because they did not want to deal with opposing viewpoints that arise in a democratic society.³¹⁷ Completed just after this protest, *Reemerging Fear* denounces the retaliatory measures of the MPRP government against the civil rights movement, comparing them to the terrorist attack in New York on 11 September 2001. In *Reemerging Fear*, Choibalsan, Mongolia's first communist leader, emerges from a city sewer, with the twin towers of New York burning in the background. This painting attacks the current MPRP as a terrorist machine and accuses them of operating a purge campaign similar to that of Choibalsan's Great Purge of the 1930s. The imagery is also suggestive of the mythological "mangas" that emerges from the underworld to inflict suffering and terror. Enkhee's work warned of the re-manifestation of the violent "Communist mangas."

³¹⁴ Following victory by the MPRP Baabar emphasised the elections of 2000, 2004 and 2008 were corrupted. Baabar, *Baabar Has More Said...*, *Family and Politics* (2009), 25; *Baabar Ordered Game* (2009), 17, 173, 209. It is generally accepted that the corruption in 2000 and 2004 was the cause of the election riot of 1 July 2008. www.24tsag.mn, accessed 16 June 2013.

³¹⁵ Ch. Boldbaatar, *Mongol State 100 year* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2012), 238.

³¹⁶ D. Ganhuyag, *Aah...*, *Fear*. www.dayarmongol.com accessed 29 May 2011.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*



Figure 4.1.8 Enkhee, Ch. *Reemerging Fear*. 2008. Oil on Canvas, 45x70cm. Photo: Naidansuren, June 2011.³¹⁸

The transition of caricature to parody painting in this decade may be due to four factors. Firstly, the social role of caricature declined. Advanced advertising media such as the Internet appeared and the public demanded more intellectual and powerful political art than was expressed in conventional caricature. Increased openness allowed for new forms of criticality. Secondly, the satirical newspaper *Woodpecker* collapsed in 1995, due to a financial crisis.³¹⁹ *Woodpecker* was republished under the name *Huree and Woodpecker* in 2001, however it did not last long. Thirdly, newspapers could no longer pay the caricature artists. Artists were only paid MNT 5000 (approximately US\$ 4)³²⁰ per caricature in 2005.³²¹ Finally, artists responded to the diversity of Western contemporary art and postmodernism and became aware of their contribution to a changing society.

³¹⁸ From the artist's collection.

³¹⁹ *Woodpecker* separated from the newspaper *Truth* in 1991, and published as a private newspaper. However, the staff had no experience in a free market economy as the journal had been supported by the government since it was established in 1935. Baidi (2005), 17.

³²⁰ Annual average rate of 1US\$ was equalled with 1205 MNT in 2005. Mongolian Statistical Yearbook (2007), 166.

³²¹ Tsogtbayar (personal communication, 2013)

4.1.3 *Mangas*-parody in contemporary Mongolia (since 2009)

Bu. Badral, A. Bayarmagnai, E. Naidandorj, E. Lhagvadorj and B. Orhontuul are a group of young parody artists that emerged in contemporary Mongolian political art recently. Mongolia's rapid social change is the cause of the fast growing economy. Their artworks address the most important associated social issues, such as social and financial inequity, poverty and corruption.

Since 2006, the Mongolian state budget rapidly increased as a result of the soaring price of natural resources, in particular copper.³²² The Gross Domestic Product of the country increased five-fold between 2006 and 2011. The country faced tough challenges in the form of corruption (the benefit of the boom economy was not being shared equitably). Mongolian parliamentarians and politicians continue to be accused of corruption and misconduct.³²³ The government responded by establishing a "State Charity" in 2009, which disseminates monthly support payments to all citizens. The complex economic situation provoked social and political movements in which young artists played an active role, curating exhibitions focusing on unfairness and fraud, including the *New Century Art* association and *Blue Sun*.³²⁴ Simultaneously contemporary artists artworks³²⁵ influenced young artists who began to seek new opportunities to participate in international contemporary art exhibitions.³²⁶ These social situations impacted the opportunity to create a *mangas* parody for young artists in Mongolian political art that has followed.

³²² Copper reached its highest price of US\$9,000 in May 2006 (Dow-figures.net accessed 6 May 2013). Previously, Mongolian copper sold for between US\$1500 and US\$2000 Baabar (2009), 106, 111. The coalition government signed an agreement with foreign investors to exploit Mongolia's mining resources.

³²³ Kateryna Rolle (2014), 5 <http://www.eias.org/sites/> accessed October 8, 2014.

³²⁴ More than 60 solo and joint exhibitions were held between 2009 and 2011; 70% of the artists in these exhibitions were under 30 (Annual report of the Union of Mongolian Artists, 2011). Young artists projects received government, corporate and private funding, including from the Art Consul of Mongolia (ACM), *Red Ger Art Gallery* and *Xanady ART Gallery*, Khan bank and Elizabeth Koppa's *Valiant Art Gallery*. Notably, the XanaduART gallery has provided financial support for emerging and political artists since being founded in 2006 and the *Blue Sun Contemporary Association* provides discounted studio rental. Yo. DalkhOchir a founder of the *Blue Sun* contemporary art association mentioned about this too (personal communication, 2012).

³²⁵ 25th *International Asian Contemporary Art Exhibition*, organized with assistance of the Prime minister Mr S. Batbold, in the Mongolian at the Modern Art Gallery in 2010. Works by 150 contemporary artists from 12 countries including Japan, South Korea, China, Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan, Thailand, Philippine, Hong-Kong and Singapore were displayed.

³²⁶ Such as artists E. Lhagvadorj awarded third prize from the North Asian International art exhibition in Changchun, China and B. Orhontuul won *Gran Pri* prize from *Tiger International* competition, in New Zealand in 2010. Bayarmagnai *DuCIEL a la Steppe* joint exhibition Paris, France in 2009, and Ghuanzhou *International Triennial -3*, 2008, Bu. Badral, A. Bayarmagnai attended foreign sponsored projects such as *Perception & Utopia* 2006, the art symposium 'Art and Politics' 2010, 2011, and *Time & Space* Nomadic Residency Program 2008, 2009, 2010.

Avirmedin Bayarmagnai's portrait *Will Live to Make for Open Space* (Fig 4.1.9) greatly differed from the traditional Mongolian realist portrait. By morphing, melting faces with objects in his portrait, he illustrates the mental state of suffocation and depression due to corruption, bribery, poverty and struggle leading to hatred of Mongolia. Depicting two blending faces denotes the conflict of two major political forces of the Mongolian parliament: the MPRP and the Democratic Party. The symbolism of the meat grinder blade represents the MPRP as a violent apparatus recalling a cruel *mangas*.



Figure 4.1.9 Bayarmagnai, A. *Will Live to Make for Open Space*, serial, 2009. Oil on Canvas, 110x130cm. Photo:from found of the Union of Mongolian Artists, June 2011.

The reason for using the meat grinder in this panel is associated with the abbreviation of letters of the MPRP. The first three letters of the MPRP (MPR-MAX in cyrillic) implies the meaning of meat in Mongolian language and so the people called it “Meat Part”. *Will Live to Make for Open Space* is also double coded. One code, the meat grinder, indicates that the MPRP restricted the people's freedom of voice and thought. The other code is the artists self- awareness in exploring the boundaries of personal and artistic identity; his morphed faces bear the psychological implication of Mongolia's rapid social change. Bayarmagnai's *Will Live to Make for Open Space* subverts the powerful tradition of Mongolian optimistic thought and realist portraiture through his adaptation of a mode of contemporary critical art. As postmodern parody theorists Malcolm

Bradbury and Linda Hutcheon³²⁷ identified, parody is a major form of creative play and artistic self-discovery in our time seen here.³²⁸

Bayarmagnai's self-portraits display spreading social fear and depression of the people. Ganhuyag believes that Mongolians are feeling fear because it is a phenomenon of modern social unfairness in society. The essence, ideology, working methods and activities of the Mongolian government are themselves a *mangas*.³²⁹ Not only that, ordinary people are frightened by many things such as: being dismissed from their job without reason, the danger of food insecurity, traffic accidents, being robbed by strangers, losing money in bankrupt savings agencies, and the surveillance of phone and computer activity.³³⁰ Bayarmagnai's portrait reveals social injustice and fear although the artist visually attacks himself in these portraits.

Young artist Bu Badral's³³¹ parody serial portraits are suitable examples to explore this subject (Figure 4.1.10) and (Figure 4.1.11). The artist made several works depicting himself making an ugly face by stretching his upper eyelids. These were displayed in *The Excursive Grey Palace*, a joint exhibition with artist B. NandinErdene, in the exhibition hall of UMA in April 2010.



Figure 4.1.10 Badral, Bu. *The Holes Under My Eyes No 1*, 2010. Acrylic on Canvas, 150x110cm. Photo: from digital found of Union of Mongolian Artists, June 2011.

Figure 4.1.11 Badral, Bu. *The Holes Under My Eyes No 2*, 2010. Acrylic on Canvas, 100x150cm. Photo: from digital found of Union of Mongolian Artists, June 2011.

³²⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth – Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 2.

³²⁸ Malcolm Bradbury, *No, Not Bloomsbury* (London, 1987), 64.

³²⁹ D. Ganhuyag. *Aah., Fear* www.dayarmongol.com accessed 29 May 2012

³³⁰ G. Galbadrah. *Fear and Pressure* www.swemon.inf/mongol/articles accessed 14 April 2013

³³¹ Badral Buyantogtokhiin (1985-) a contemporary artist. He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts with a painting major in 2007 and has participated in UMA's annual exhibitions since in 2005. His first solo show, *The Extra Object* was displayed at the *Hanuda Art Gallery* in Ulaanbaatar in February 2009.

Bu. Badral's self parody focuses on the issues and situations that he and others encountered in contemporary Mongolian society. He explains that art is a reflection of society and because he is a part of the community, through his self portrait he aims to question when and how the negative society will be changed.³³² Although Bu. Badral did not talk much to me about his artworks, it is possible that this parody concerned the scandal attributed with the banks' and Saving and Credits Cooperatives' (SCC) bankruptcy³³³ in the middle of 2000s. Because the agencies could not pay, hundreds of people lost their savings. Regardless of actual numbers, these losses increased social depression among the masses in a transitional period, to the extent that several people died of heart attacks caused by stress during the disputes.³³⁴ If we use Ganhuyag's data that 22,000 people lost money it is possible that Bu. Badral's references this. *The Holes Under My Eyes* parodied oligarchs as a *mangas* of the MPRP and Mongolian Democratic Socialist Youths that looted peoples' private property. In addition, Bu Badral's self-portraits remind me of the Mongolian children's threatening game 'coming *mangas*', which I played when I was a child.

Another appropriate example of *mangas* parody is Enkhbaatarin Naidandorj's *Red, Blue and Yellow* which was displayed at the exhibition *Lost Children of Heaven*³³⁵ at 976 Art Gallery in July 2013 (Figure 4.1.12). Naidandorj³³⁶ asked unsettling social questions regarding the dilemmas within Mongolia's rapidly developing society. Ian Findlay-Brown, editor and publisher of *Asian Art News* magazine, notes in the exhibition catalogue that these works resemble clowns or actors in odd make up. That is true, if we see this at a surface level but to me it is a bit different. Here, the artist aimed to reveal the genuine face of the politicians looting state prosperity behind a mask. The mask is their political post that covers their real character. Inspirational speeches, nice smiles, enthusiastic slogans, false promises and political humbug are characteristic of their behaviour. As Naidandorj himself mentioned, the politicians are all the

³³² In interview (02 July 2013)

³³³ Mongolia's *Saving and Credit Cooperative* is private bank that accumulated people's money by promising extremely high rates of interest of 45 to 55 per cent per month. Ganhuyag, *Even Deceased Can be Talked*. www.ganaa.mn accessed 5 February 2014.

³³⁴ Batbayar, D. *SCC: Life, Living* <http://batbayar.niitlech.mn/content/5196.shtml> accessed 9 November 2013.

³³⁵ The exhibition *Lost Children of Heaven* run between 6 June and 7 July 2013 at 976 Art Gallery. This is a part of project *Promoting Democracy through Art* which fund by US State Department and Mongolian Contemporary Art Support Association.

³³⁶ Naidandorj Enkhbaataryn (1984-) is a contemporary artist. He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts with a traditional painting major in 2001 and has participated in UMA's annual exhibitions since then. His first solo show, *The Drop*, was displayed at the *Fine Art Museum of Zanabazar* in Ulaanbaatar in 2009.

same characters everywhere and it was the sensations of his experience he was trying to convey. These triptych portraits are almost the same but use different colours. He used the primary of red, blue and yellow, the colours of the Mongolian national flag. The question he asks in his work are informed by his indictment of Mongolia's changing political life.



Figure 4.1.12 Naidandorj, E. *Red, Blue and Yellow*, 2013. Oil on canvas, 180x140cm.
Photo: By Naidansuren from the exhibition *Lost Children of Heaven*, July 2013.

It is possible Naidandorj approaches the symbolism of traditional art. Three colours allegorically implies the historical periods such as red indicated a period of Soviet regime that built Socialism, blue represented traditional colour of Mongol nation that symbolises Eternal Sky and yellow is a period of yellow sect of Tibetan Buddhism which dominated for more than two hundred years. One difference occurs in the blue portrait where the eyebrows are located on the forehead but pointed down. With this overlooked signal, Naidandorj parodied an egotistic character of current politicians.

In conclusion, rapid Mongolian social-economic change brought a new parody *mangas* into political art. The image of *mangas* in young artists' paintings is a hybrid, not so strongly linked with the traditional character of drawing (figuring the *mangas* as a swallower). However, it is a critical moment in Mongolian political parody, breaking away from the style of conservative mocking caricature. It has been hailed as the paradigm of a new critical mode in Mongolian contemporary art. Reflecting on the historical study of parody, it appears that parody is a critical device in representing historical events and the legacy of this. It was also reflected in the artworks of expatriate of Mongolian artists, which I explore in the following section.

4.2 *Mangas* “corrupter” in artworks of expatriate Mongolian artists

This section analyses political and social artworks by Mongolian artists who live outside Mongolia and that use the *mangas* motif.³³⁷ The artists are from two generations and have different immigration stories. Todiin Otgonbayar (UK), Mijidiin Tsogtsaikhan (USA) and Khurelbaatariin Khosnaran (Australia) immigrated to English-speaking Western countries after the collapse of the Socialist regime in the 1990s.³³⁸ Unlike Khosnaran, Otgonbayar and Tsogtsaikhan were trained in the former Soviet Union and Poland during the late 1970s and mid-1980s. I was particularly interested whether ten years in the Western postmodern world had influenced the *mangas* imagery in their art. I was also interested in the differences in the *mangas* motif between Mongolian locals, expatriates and myself.

Todiin Otgonbayar is a London-based Mongolian artist, who trained in Poland in the 1980s and immigrated to London when he was in his forties.³³⁹ His monochromic painting *Modern Dance* (Figure 4.2.1), exhibited at the *Barbican Theatre* in London in 2008, is an example of the dark images of the *mangas* drawn from Shamanist and Buddhist symbolism in Otgonbayar’s works that are connected to his feelings of uneasy nostalgia towards his homeland. As a political immigrant, Tod feels naturally drawn to politics and creates unique paintings that parody the “corrupted-*mangas* government.” The artist became so concerned about ordinary Mongolians drowning in corruption that he could not draw bright paintings of a happy life.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ The expatriate history of Mongolia is short, starting in the mid-1990s, particularly during the “turmoil period” following the revolution. Many professional artists sought careers outside Mongolia in Western countries. Approximately 20 Mongolian expatriate artists live in Western countries including the USA (5), UK (3), Australia (3), Holland (2), Germany (3), Japan (3) and South Korea (3). However, because their immigration stories are different, some of them have had no opportunity to make art. The Mongolian artists living in Japan, Korea and Holland make commercial art which is not politically themed. The works of the artists that live in Germany is not relevant to the *mangas* theme of this research.

³³⁸ Non-English speaking countries, such as France and Germany, belonged to the Western Capitalist world, but the USA and UK, English speaking countries, were portrayed as the Capitalist-*mangas*.

³³⁹ Otgonbayar Todiin (1959-) worked as a chief stamp designer at the Mongol Post Company until the 2000s. He sought political refuge in England in 2003.

³⁴⁰ Tserenbat, D. *Tod “Modern Dance”* www.tsahimurtuu.mn, accessed 15 May 2013.



Figure 4.2.1 Otgonbayar, T. *Modern Dance*, 2005. Acrylic on Board, 112x124cm. Photo: www.tod-otgonbayar.com³⁴¹

Modern Dance appeared on Facebook during the 2013 presidential election campaign, accompanying an appeal by Otgonbayar to Mongolians to vote for candidate Ts. Elbegdorj.³⁴² According to Otgonbayar, Elbegdorj would stop the booming corruption and rescue the country from the danger of the bribery-*mangas*. Otgonbayar explains that *Modern Dance* represents the ugly beast that appears in Mongol epics and folklore. This so-called bribery-*mangas* was revealed during the 2000 election campaign in which Enkhbayar’s opposition claimed that he was the “godfather” of Mongolian corruption.³⁴³ Through his artwork Otgonbayar attempts to reveal a conspiracy in the election count. The snake winds around the body of the *mangas*. For

³⁴¹ *Modern Dance* may refer to former president Nambarin Enkhbayar. Enkhbayar (1958-) was Prime Minister (2000-2004) and President (2005-2009). He is the only person in Mongolian history who has occupied three seats in the government. However, during his 10 years in government, corruption flourished in Mongolia. On 13 April 2012, he was arrested by the IAAC (Independent Authority Against Corruption) on corruption charges, sentenced to four years prison and fined over MNT1.7 billion (equivalent US\$1.4 million).

³⁴² Tsahiagin Elbegdorj was one of three candidates and won the election by 68 percent.

³⁴³ Researchers such as Baabar, B. Tsenddoo, B. Ganhuyag wrote numerous articles that Enkhbayar created and expanded system of corruption in Mongolia. See Baabar *Baabar Has Again Said.., The Ordered Game* (Ulaanbaatar, 2009), 147, 156. G. Galbadrah. *Corruption-Multiple Thoughts*. <http://olloo.info/writers/galbadrah/> accessed 3 July 2013.

Otgonbayar, the snake represents the bribery that already infects the whole country.³⁴⁴ On the right, he depicts a crane with a hook that lifts up a portrait of fraudulent politicians who obtain a high-ranking state post by bribery. The mobile phone in the monster's hand represents Enkhbayar's government, which controlled public media and technology. Otgonbayar's *Modern Dance* mocked Enkhbayar's operational methods and corrupt practices during his rule. For Otgonbayar, Communist ideology is a *mangas* that restricts human freedom. Otgonbayar felt that he had never had artistic freedom in Mongolia and had always faced strict censorship.³⁴⁵ He dreamt of freedom while working as a postage stamp designer at the Mongol Post Company.

Otgonbayar engaged with contemporary, public technologies by placing the painting shown in Figure 4.2.2 on Facebook in June 2011. He requested a title and aimed to encourage discussion amongst the Mongolian public regarding the painting's meaning.³⁴⁶ Clearly referring to the Cruel Heavens of Mongolian shamanism, Otgonbayar depicts a *Buuman tengre*, one of the 44 Eastern hostile *tengre*,³⁴⁷ with a follower. The artist uses dark colours to represent negativity to connect with the "Black" *tengres*, particularly *Buuman*. In this painting, the *Buuman tengre* carries a sinner's soul between land and sky. At the top right, the eyes of *mangas tengre* watch us.



Figure 4.2.2 Otgonbayar, T. *Untitled (Eye of mangas)*, 2010. Acrylic on Canvas, 120x90cm.
Photo: from Facebook

³⁴⁴ Tserenbat D, *Tod "Modern Dance"* www.tsahimurtuu.mn accessed 15 May 2013.

³⁴⁵ Interview with Otgonbayar via Skype in 15 June 2012.

³⁴⁶ Many titles were offered and my suggestion was *Eye of Mangus*.

³⁴⁷ Western *tengres* were usually blue or white, but Eastern *tengres* were black, blood red, brown, spotted or variegated. See Bira, Tsedev., and Tserendorj, *History of Mongolian Culture* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon Printing, 1999), vol. 2, 282.

The next expatriate artist is Denver-based Mijidiin Tsogtsaikhan (preferred name Tsogo).³⁴⁸ Of the next generation of Otgonbayar, Tsogo was trained in traditional Mongolian art at the Fine Art College of Ulaanbaatar in the early 1980s and then studied graphic design at the Art Institute in Kiev, Ukraine. He immigrated to the USA in 1998. Tsogo's artworks portray a combination of Mongol culture (a sense of Mongolness) and Western-styled expressionism. Buddhist iconographic details and folklore elements are often found in his works. Tsogo's *Mongolian Folktale* (Figure 4.2.3) emanates from Mongolian legends and folktales that refer to giant monster, such as the legend of "Taikhar Rock."³⁴⁹ This legend tells of a enormous *mangas* (in some version it is snake) that comes from under the ground to devour people and Bilegt, a young wrestler, who kills the *mangas* with a large rock and saved its victims.



Figure 4.2.3 Togtsaikhan, M. *Mongolian folktale*, 2010. Acrylic and Oil Pastel on Paper, 38x48cm.
Photo:www.tsogoart.com³⁵⁰

Tsogo's *mangas*-image is also a nightmarish monster crawling out to capture victims and is a typical Mongolian motif which has strong animalistic and decorative style. He used a traditional

³⁴⁸ Tsogtsaikhan Mijidyn (1965-) trained in traditional Mongolian art at college of Fine Art (1981-1985) and then graphic design at Art institute in Kiev, Ukraine (1985-1990). In 1998, Tsogo moved to Denver, USA.

³⁴⁹ Taikhar rock is a huge 25m pinnacle that is located in the Arkhangai province of Mongolia. Locals still worship the rock as sacred. It is a tourist attraction for local and foreign tourists.

³⁵⁰ accessed 5 February 2012.

horn pattern *ugalz*³⁵¹ on its nose, as well as the popping eyes of the Buddhist *Choiijins*. Tsogo portrays the culture of his homeland to Western viewers while also introducing the origin of the mythological character of the *mangas*.

Finally, I refer to the artworks of the Mongolian artist, Melbourne-based Khurelbaatarin Khosnaran (nicknamed Heesco). Born in Mongolia in 1982, Heesco grew up during the *Perestroika* years of Socialism and the early democracy. Initially travelling to Australia to study business, he became disinterested in that and studied printmaking and illustration at Sydney College of the Arts instead. Now a prize-winning street artist, he has participated in several exhibitions and festivals since graduating in 2007. Heesco's artworks are dark and foreboding images of monsters. His illustration entitled *Mr Demberel* (Figure 4.2.4), created for the *Koast* Show in 2010, depicts corrupt Mongolian bureaucracy as a filthy, disgusting phenomenon. In *Mr Demberel*, slimy saliva running from the beast's mouth parodies the covetousness and corruption that causes Mongolia moral damage. Demberel is a quite common Mongolian personal name, even belonging to one of the present Mongolian parliamentarians, suggesting that the work was a response by Heesco to the corruption in Mongolia.



Figure 4.2.4 Khosnaran, Kh. *Mr Demberel*, 2010. Ball point Pen on Paper, 45x70cm. Photo: www.heesco.net³⁵²

³⁵¹ Ugalz is term of curving or winding pattern inspired by the curled horns of the wild ram or winding horns of the animals. So, it is used several names such as horn pattern, nose pattern etc. L. Batchuluun, *Felt Art of the Mongols*. Sec ed, trans into English by Eric Thrift (Ulaanbaatar: Bembi San, 2009), 199.

³⁵² Accessed 18 April 2012.

When interviewed by *Koast* during the show, Heesco explained that he was fascinated by the monster's wrinkled and ugly facial expression.³⁵³ Later, he told me that his dark monster images are inspired by Polish artist Zdzislaw Beksinski's³⁵⁴ artworks. However, he has been influenced by both Mongolian iconography as well as Beksinski. Heesco and his generation were brought up during the transition from the Socialist to the capitalist system, a tumultuous period as I explained earlier. Although Heesco's generation grew up in a more open society, listening to hip-hop music and seeing Western movies and culture through public media which broadened their understanding of life, Heesco still remembers waiting in line for hours for monthly coupons for necessities like flour, sugar, rice and bread.³⁵⁵ Just before leaving Mongolia for Australia, Heesco and his friends Unenuu and Bilguun, self-published the book, *Caffeine Deficiency*, a collection of short stories, poetry and illustrations that depicted and celebrated drug culture.³⁵⁶ At that time Anydari's postmodernist book *Four is not Four* was also passed around secretly, and the radical content of Heesco's was in some ways similar to Choinom's 1970s antagonist poems.³⁵⁷ *Caffeine Deficiency* found its way to government officials and resulted in Heesco being investigated by the police. At the same time, the article *Drug Advertising Book Entitled "Caffeine Deficiency" Distributed among High School Students* was published in the newspaper "Yellow Paper."³⁵⁸ Although Heesco's book was juvenile immature creation, officials condemned him for promoting antisocial behaviour amongst adolescents.

³⁵³ *Koast* Interviews Heesco www.heesco.net accessed 18 April 2012.

³⁵⁴ Beksinski Zdzislaw (1929-2005) was a Polish fantasy artist, photographer. His creations show scenario of catastrophic landscapes, surreal humanoid figures and utopian realism. Beksinski was a very innovative artist especially for one working in a Communist country. *Dark Art* <http://art.vniz.net/en/beksinski/> accessed 12 December 2013. Moreover, Heesco's father was an artist who studied at the Fine Art College of Ulaanbaatar in the late 1970s.

³⁵⁵ Kish, A. *Heesco Mongo Hustle* www.heesco.net accessed 12 October 2012.

³⁵⁶ The book was produced after Heesco returned from four years living in Poland with his mother. Whilst in Poland, Heesco became familiar with East European postmodern culture, including heavy metal music, comics and surrealist paintings.

³⁵⁷ Choinom Rinchingyn (1937-1978) was a poet. His poems fearlessly unfolded real life of people during the Socialist period. He was sentenced to four years in prison from 1968 to 1972 due to creating anti-society poems. Choinom's poems were secretly spread among the youths in the 1970s.

³⁵⁸ The newspaper *Yellow Paper*, 1999, no. 85 (183).



Figure 4.2.5a, b Khosnaran, Kh. *Untitled (Mangas)*, 2011. Graffiti murals in Prahran, Melbourne. Photo: www.heesco.net³⁵⁹

Shown in Figures 4.2.5a and b, the figures in Heesco’s street murals have similar characteristics to the swallowing *mangas*. Although Heesco humbly suggests that he recreated the visual representation of *mangas*, it has in fact been refreshed. For example, in the mural shown in Figure 4.2.5b, the *mangas* emerges from its own mouth. Here, the corruption-*mangas* is reborn from inside society. Heesco’s *mangas* keeps many others inside, emerging only when the mouth opens. This expression of *mangas* is a powerful re-interpretation of the traditional multi-headed version, a new contribution to Mongolian art. It overtly re-imagines the *mangas* motif from traditional Mongolian folktales into a different socio-political context. His *mangas* is not only a childhood memory, but is a stylistic confrontation, a postmodern recoding of the Mongolian diasporic public art.

Heesco has further blended the Mongolian *mangas* motif with Australian political life in a portrait of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, drawn on a wall in Prahran, Melbourne in 2011 (Figure 4.2.6). This portrait is double coded: both *mangas* and devil. Abbott is depicted with the horns of a devil and the hair of a *mangas*, suggesting a devious, corrupt “swallower.”³⁶⁰ Young expatriate Mongolian artists such as Heesco have successful, ambitious art practices, exhibiting widely and becoming immersed in the wider art world. Heesco’s career is on the rise.

³⁵⁹ accessed 14 May 2013.

³⁶⁰ Heesco explained in phone interview with me (03 Sep 2014) that the image of the devil depicts Abbott’s character as devious, his right-wing conservative attitude is deemed not beneficial for the future of middle class Australians. He added that because Abbott is Catholic he painted him as a devil. To me, thus the double code suggests that Abbott is two faced. Political critics such as Waleed Aly define Abbott as the “conviction politician” who frequently changes his mind. Aly Waleed, *Inside Tony Abbott’s Mind* <http://www.themonthly.com.au/> assessed 25 May 2014.

He enters street art competitions and organises similar projects in Mongolia. His and Ganbold's (another emerging Mongolian Australian artist) careers have been more successful than Mongolian expatriate artists who live in other countries. This success is closely linked to their immigration to Australia, a "Lucky country" that allows their talent and encourages them to express their point of view without barriers or rules.



Figure 4.2.6 Khosnaran, Kh. *Mangas*, 2011. Graffiti mural in Prahran, Melbourne. Photo: www.heesco.net³⁶¹

The *mangas*-parody works of Mongolian expatriate artists are of importance to this exegesis because their *mangas* is deeply connected with Mongolian mythology, while simultaneously offering a new mode of criticality influenced by their adopted nation. They never fail to remember who they are and where they came from. Mongols strongly feel their cultural identity when they are away from Mongolia. Affected by nostalgia, the images of *mangas* in the artworks of expatriate Mongolians more strongly reference traditional iconography than those of local Mongolian artists. However, these artists are also able to observe the Mongolian situation from outside, from an alternate perspective. In the next section, I reflect on my own practice as a Mongolian born and trained artist who now lives and works in Australia. My artwork and studio-led research incorporates *mangas*-parody to critically engage with my personal and cultural history.

³⁶¹ Accessed 14 May 2013.

4.3 The role of *mangas*-parody in self-critical art practices: Reflections on my position as a contemporary Mongolian artist

I was born (1964) and raised in Mongolia and obtained a primary art education at the Fine Art College of Ulaanbaatar in the early 1980s. I studied poster art at the Bulgarian Art Institute for 3 years and returned to Mongolia in 1988, where I studied painting at the Art University of Mongolia for another 4 years. After completing this training, I was employed between 1992 and 2003 as an assistant lecturer, lecturer, and then head of the Art Department at the State Pedagogical University. I immigrated to Australia in 2005. My art has changed significantly from Social Realism to embrace other intellectual notions of art as a result of studying at Curtin University in Western Australia since 2009. In this section, I discuss three works that I developed during this research project, describing their influences, symbolism and style, and their relationships to Mongolian art history and *mangas*-parody. The work *Mongols-1* was produced in 2012, *The Mongols-2* in 2013 and the *Mongols-3* in 2014, each reflecting on the influence that being an artist of the diaspora has on my artwork.

I use *mangas* figures to represent figures/instances of great revulsion for myself and other Mongolians. *Mangas*-parody allows me to symbolise the causes and consequences of this feeling and dissipate it with emotional distance. I have found *mangas*-parody to be a useful mode within my own art practice to re-read images of Mongolian Socialist propaganda and traditional folk art, brought together through collage and poster styles. I am interested in exploring Mongolian history and the effects of the Socialist regime on Mongolian art and culture. Parody enables me to do this in the following ways: as a “critical reworking of history”, as a device for comic quotation reflecting on cultural change, in particular for self-reflection, and as a double coded device of *mangas* perception in contemporary Mongolian art.

The Mongols-1: Propaganda Art (Figure 4.3.1) is a panoramic landscape investigating the Mongol condition and was painted in 2012 in the middle of this research project. Almost four metres long, it uses collage to form a complicated and layered narrative within a single work. It is panoramic and expansive, including representations of each of the historical periods described in this exegesis, and drawing stylistically on aspects of traditional Mongolian *zurag* painting and

Socialist propaganda poster art. This mixed style allows me to construct a new paradigm in contemporary Mongolian political art.



Figure 4.3.1 Ochirbat, N. *The Mongols-1: Propaganda Art*, 2012. Acrylic on Board, 396x84cm.

The background of *The Mongols-1* is a panoramic Mongolian landscape, painted in traditional Mongol *zurag* style, with an ochre ground, through which I refer to the early 20th century depictions of nomadic Mongol life in Balduugin Sharav's paintings *One Day in Mongolia* and *Guunii Urs Garch baina (Letting the Mares Go)* (Figure 4.3.2).³⁶² Sharav's works are considered to be the most famous folk art in Mongolia, and have become key representations of Central Asian nomadic culture and art abroad since the 1970s. They show the autumn labours of Mongolian nomads such as migration, *ovoo* (mountain) sacrifices, hay mowing, felt making, marriage, and hunting.³⁶³ I have re-interpreted Sharav's works using my own style and colours, with the intention of introducing Western viewers to the national style of Mongolian painting, Mongol *zurag*, and traditional customs. I also juxtapose this style with the modern Mongolian propaganda art that was influenced by that of the Soviet Union.

³⁶² *One Day in Mongolia* (1912) is Sharav's most popular painting, created by order of Bogdo Jebzundamba Khutagt. *Autumn* is another famous work created in the same period. Its original name was *Guunii Urs Garch baina* (roughly translated as *Letting the Mares Go*), but scholars such as Tsultem have suggested that it be renamed *Autumn*, because it shows the autumn labours of herdsmen N. Tsultem (1971), 221.

³⁶³ L. Batchuluun, *Lyric Creation of Marzan Sharav* (2009), 145.



Figure 4.3.2 Sharav, B. *Guunii Urs Garch baina (Letting the Mares Go (Autumn))* 1914. Mineral paints, 135x170cm. Photo: N. Tsultem, *Development of the Mongolian Style Painting “Mongol Zurag” in Brief*. 1986, plate number 161.

In *The Mongols-1*, groups of people similar to those portrayed in *Letting the Mares Go* are depicted in the background, undertaking the different activities of a nomadic Mongolian household. In the front-left, I show the labour of stockmen, such as breaking-in young horses, milking mares and lassoing a fast horse. At the centre-front, a group of herdsman celebrate the *Airag* Feast, the festival celebrating the importance of fermented mare’s milk. Further, in this panel, I reference two scenes of herdsman’s life quoted from Sharav’s *One Day of Mongolia*: the birth of a baby and a funeral ceremony (Figure 4.3.3a and b). Birth and death are significant concepts for understanding the Mongol nomads’ universe, who believe that human destiny is ordained by Eternal Heaven. At the top-left, I depict a woman giving birth in her *ger* (felt tent) and her husband slaughtering a sheep to make fresh mutton stock for the new mother.³⁶⁴ A typical funeral is depicted at the top-right of *The Mongols-1*. People gather to mourn after returning home from a funeral. Here, I show the ‘open burial’ of an ordinary person, where the corpse is left in an open space.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ A continuing traditional practice, a new mother immediately drinks a freshly slaughtered mutton soup and it is a nutrition source to recuperate her strength after giving birth.

³⁶⁵ A funeral style depended on the social rank of the deceased: entombment, cremation, mummification or burial. The practice of open burial originated in Tibetan Buddhism, as an act of generosity on the part of the deceased to



Figure 4.3.3 a, b. Sharav, B. *One Day of Mongolia* (detail, scenes of giving birth and funeral ceremony) 1913. Mineral paints, 135x170cm. Photo: Lunteng Batchuluun.³⁶⁶

The foreground of *The Mongols-1: Propaganda Art* is dominated by two opposing characters from MPRP propaganda art. The figure on the right is that of a working class hero who builds the Socialist country, taken from the poster *For Fulfilling and Over Fulfilling of the 1984 Tenth, Progressive Plan* by the artist Darambazar (Figure 4.3.4). Common to all Socialist depictions of young workers on posters, a man holds up his right arm appealing to the people. All socialist workers were to emulate this new man of Socialism—as empowered agents of history. The figure on the left is another highly recognisable image from the Socialist period: an American imperialist who wears gloves to hide his bloodied hands. This was a common depiction of capitalism in Soviet and Mongolian art in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At that time, tensions between the USA and the Soviet Union ran high due to the Soviet presence in Cuba, the stationing of Soviet missiles in Europe and the targeting of the Eastern bloc by USA missiles. Soviet political propaganda strongly attacked the USA through such figures. The figure in *The Mongols-1: Propaganda Art* originates from the work of Soviet caricaturist Kukryniksy³⁶⁷ (Figure 4.3.5), which criticized the aggressive operations of the USA in the Caribbean regions in 1980. Unusually for Mongolian art, the work is predominantly achromatic, with the only colour

provide food to sustain other living beings and was common in nomadic life. Considered an out-dated and primitive custom, it was prohibited by the Communist government during the 1950s.

³⁶⁶ Luntengiin Batchuluun, *Lyric Creation of Marzan Sharav* (2009), 47.

³⁶⁷ Kukryniksy is the pseudonym of three caricaturists: Mikhail Kupriyanov, Porfiri Krylov and Nikolai Sokolov, who produced works between 1930 and the 1980s. Kukryniksy is considered to be the most famous Soviet caricaturist, receiving international recognition for attacking Third Reich leaders Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Joseph Goebbels and Benito Mussolini during WWII. History Lesson <http://www.klinebooks.com/cgi-bin/kline/33880.html>. Kukryniksy's works were very familiar to Mongolian viewers, especially to artists who were trained in Soviet political art. For instance, three Mongolian artists, L. Sukhbat, N. Sandagdorj and S. Natsagdorj, imitated Kurkrnisky as a name "Sanalbat" in the late 1970s.

being the red blood dripping from the gloved hands. Historically, grey and black were used to depict witches, ghosts and evil.³⁶⁸



Figure 4.3.4 Darambazar, O. *For Fulfilling and Over Fulfilling of the 1984 Tight, Progressive Plan*, 1984. Poster, 60x90cm. Photo: Erdenetsog and Saruulbuyan.³⁶⁹



Figure 4.3.5 Kukryniksy, *Terror of the USA*. 1980. Caricature. Photo: <http://shurigin.livejournal.com>.³⁷⁰

I use these political posters to question the way history is represented and interpreted, drawing on my own training as a graphic and poster artist.³⁷¹ Darambazar's 1984 poster was typical of the coercive methods used by the bureaucratic, authoritarian State to fulfil their social and economic objectives. Mandated slogans and mottos were laid over increasingly 'empty' aesthetics, which I appropriated in *The Mongols-1: Propaganda Art* to suggest the mottos were part of the visual order of the central planned Socialist economy for the working class. It was demanded by the authorities that the people would follow these slogans, as well as repeating Buddhist teaching-scripture of the past. High-ranking Lamas conduct a ceremony under a luxury tent. I have portrayed the Lamas as teachers of the Art Department of the State Pedagogical University

³⁶⁸ Grey is related to the leftover ash from a fire, which symbolises disappearance, the end of life and the trace of a soul Tudev (1996), 103. Sumbe Hamba Ishbaljir, a great scholar and Mongolian Buddhist iconographer in the 16th century, wrote in his manuscript, *Garland of Flowers*, that ash grey was the servant-colour and that primary colours such as blue, green, yellow, red, brown, orange were father-colours. White was the mother-colour because it produced other colours when mixed with them Ts. Erdenetsog (2006), 8. Kukryniksy's work also resonates with "ash gamin," the name given by Mongolians to Chinese soldiers in 1920, when Xu Shu Zeng's troops invaded Mongolia and imprisoned Bogdo Jebzundamba Khutagta.

³⁶⁹ Erdenetsog and Saruulbuyan, *Agitation Posters of Mongolia* (Ulaanbaatar, 2011), 124.

³⁷⁰ Accessed 01 November 2011.

³⁷¹ Since 1976, poster artists were officially trained at Ulaanbaatar's Fine Art College under Soviet-trained artist Tsultemin Munkhjain. The first 14 artists graduated in 1980, and I belonged to one of the second graduating classes. My posters *Europe is Threatened by Nuclear Danger* (1983) and *Quality is an Exact Gauge* (1985) were awarded prizes in different poster competitions in the 1980s.

where I used to work. I parodied the teaching staff and their teaching methodology, which was dogmatic and rigid under Socialist Realist requirements. This training method is similar to the Buddhist teaching methods of previous centuries. My own portrait, looking down, is the only individual face in this group. I look down, reminiscing on my art teaching experience at the Mongolian University. I wear a white shirt with an Australian emblem in reference to my status as a Mongolian expatriate artist living in Australia.

The purpose of this work is to mock the failure of the Socialist regime. This government wanted to build a collective paradise, however this utopia was never realized. Empty icons of Socialist propaganda sit on top of the nomadic landscape suggesting that Socialism was an absurd and temporary imposition on an ancient culture. Ultimately, traditional customs and Buddhist beliefs are deeply embedded in the life of Mongolians despite the interloping Socialist ideology.



Figure 4.3.6 Ochirbat, N. *The Mongols-2: Filatova's State*, 2013. Acrylic on Board, 240x120cm.

The second painting, *The Mongols-2: Filatova's State* (Figure 4.3.6) was produced in 2013 as the result of investigation of Tsendenbal and Filatova's personal life that was hidden during the period of the Soviet regime. It is a large symmetrical painting that again combines the Mongol *Zurag* and Soviet-styled poster art techniques. Similar to *The Mongols-1*, the background of the work is a landscape in the *Mongol Zurag* style. Here however, Mongolian life during the 1970s

and 1980s is depicted rather than a traditional nomadic life. This time period was the pinnacle of the Socialist / communist regime and when I was attempting to understand my own place in the world as a teenager and into my early twenties. This painting explores my personal history.

Instead of horses, births and funerals, the background of this work (Figure 4.3.6) is dominated by political billboards with that on the left in the process of being made. Political ideology and campaigning boomed throughout the country during the 1970s and 1980s, because the ideological struggle of the Cold war was at its peak. Consequently, much of the subject matter of Socialist art during this period was Soviet-styled propaganda. The production of oversized billboards, posters, slogans and portraits of political leaders was the main work for artists, regardless of what they had studied in art school. This was a compulsory condition of Communist propaganda and an artist's creative work; we referred to ourselves as the 'labour stock' of political ideology. All works were made by hand and were typically required to be completed in a short period of time. It was common to stay at the workplace for weeks without going home. At the right of this work is a depiction of the anecdote that "Lenin as a rock star" which introduced this exegesis: a few figures (including myself wearing blue jeans) stand in front of the famous poster of Lenin.

The monumental figure in the centre foreground of the painting is Anastasia Filatova. Seated on the ceremonial chair of the last king of Mongolia,³⁷² the top half of Filatova's body is depicted in a king-like Chinggis Khaan's pose as a supreme protector of the Mongols. The lower half is portrayed in a typical pose of protector deities of Buddhism in particular Jamsran. Filatova stands on the meeting table of the Presidium of the MPR People's Great Khural (parliament) and its members. So, Filatova's portrait represents a power holding foreign ruler with rude attitude. She holds a tiny Tsendenbal with her left hand, implying she has total control over her husband.³⁷³ Lenin³⁷⁴ and Nikolai Vajnov³⁷⁵ are depicted as two slightly larger men standing behind Filatova.

³⁷² This throne is at the Bogdo Khaan Palace Museum in Ulaanbaatar.

³⁷³ Baidi parodied Filatova's attitude in his caricature in 1990 that is discussed early in chapter 4.

³⁷⁴ Lenin was an important icon of communism in Mongolia and considered to be a model communist citizen. Prime Minister Genden compared him with Buddha at the 1936 Party conference Baabar. *History of Mongolia: from World Power to Soviet Satellite* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999), 322. Mongolian Marxist historians agree that Socialist Mongolian art began with Sharav's 1922 portrait of Lenin. Dashnyam Otgontugs, *Mongolian Modern Art History 1911-2011* (Ulaanbaatar: Bamby San, 2012), 14. Lenin's portrait was displayed everywhere in Mongolia: in homes, classrooms, work places and offices.

³⁷⁵ Nikolai Vajnov was political advisor to Choibalsan in the late 1940s and organized Tsendenbal and Filatova's marriage. Vajnov introduced his relative Filatova to Tsendenbal in Moscow in 1947, then reported Tsendenbal's

These two figures represent Filatova's Soviet backing, suggesting that the USSR, through Filatova, was the actual ruler of Mongolia at this time. As with the propaganda figures of *The Mongols-1*, Filatova sits on the background, suggesting that she was a supreme Russian dictator-*mangas* with no regard for national Mongolian culture.

The key concepts of this artwork are expressed in two transgressions against Mongolian values. The first is in the depiction of Filatova's left foot standing on the conference table of Mongolian leaders. From a traditional Mongolian perspective, a man's head under a woman's skirt or underwear is considered to be seriously humiliating, even obscene. Traditionally, women were seen to emanate from evil because they menstruate, and a woman in a position of power would deteriorate the *suld* (soul) of a man, without which he would not be protected by *Heaven Above*.³⁷⁶ The second transgression is shown by the little boy at Filatova's feet, carelessly slopping his milk. Here, I criticise the disposable attitudes of younger generations raised under the Socialist regime. There is much historical evidence to suggest that nomads considered wasting any food or drink to be a great sin. They believed that horses and herds would be struck by lightning if dairy products, considered the basis of nomadic life, were wasted.³⁷⁷ The Socialist society produced an atheistic generation who lacking knowledge about their original culture and traditional customs.

My final painting, *The Mongols-3: Corruption* (Figure 4.3.7) produced in 2014, parodies the Petrograd serial leaflet *Religious Education and Public Faith* (Figure 3.1.1) discussed in Chapter Three. The *Religious Education and Public Faith* image portrays a giant Buddhist monk swallowing a procession of nomads. Here, I replace the Buddhist monk with a huge statesman wearing a cowboy hat and devouring cars, trains, buildings and other symbols of state prosperity. *The Mongols-3: Corruption* aims to reveal the danger of political corruption and depicts corrupt

acceptance of Filatova to the USSR Central Committee of the Communist Party. It was a politically motivated arrangement, Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia, The Mongols: Migration, Settlement* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2009), vol. 2, 901.

³⁷⁶ Men never store clothes for their upper body, such as a hat, shirt and belt, with their wife's underwear. National wrestlers devoutly believe and follow this dogma: women cannot touch a wrestler's body during the *Nadaam* (Three Manly Games) training period because it is considered to be bad luck. This belief originated from Tibetan Buddhism in the 17th century.

³⁷⁷ Plano Carpini (1988, 11) reports that apart from ritual offerings, a person found purposefully pouring milk, food or drink upon the ground could either be put to death or fined a large sum of money. Traces of this custom still survive in herding families today. If someone accidentally sheds dairy products on the ground, he or she anoints his or her forehead with the index and middle fingers.

politicians as *mangas* who swallows the country. I connect the face of the corrupt politician with the Buddhist *Chojin*, in order to build upon his *mangas* behavior. *Chojin* eyes are usually portrayed as rolling and blood-shot. Corruption involves and evokes greedy behavior so I have illustrated the politician's eyes like a *mangas*. Gluttony is expressed by the eyes (Mongols frequently refer to the proverb that money is white, eyes are red). The politicians are willing to do anything for money.



Figure 4.3.7 Ochirbat, N. *The Mongols-3: Corruption*, 2014. Acrylic on Board, 480x210cm.

Corruption is a most serious issue at the political and economic level in Mongolia today. It flourished during the 1990s when the economy transformed from central planning to a free market and became worse during the mining boom of 2009. The majority of political representatives own or manage powerful and successful Mongolian companies and legislate to protect their own interests. In numerous cases, the new laws have contravened other major laws and have been repealed shortly after enactment. Corruption is also used for competition between political parties in the election campaigns.³⁷⁸ Corruption is not only one of the main obstacles to the development of the country's economy, but it also inspires mistrust, suspicion and fear. It damages people's common rights and liberties too. In 2012, Mongolia ranked 94th of 176

³⁷⁸ For instance, US\$17 million was found in the apartment of former State Secretary of the Ministry of Health and MNT14 billion (approximately US\$8.5 million) was recovered from an account of the former department head of the Tax Authority. See Mongolia's War Against Corruption www.mongoliaeconomy.blogspot.com.au accessed 11 October 2013.

countries on the World Corruption Index.³⁷⁹ Just one year later, its ranking had increased to 83rd out of 177 countries, with a score of 38 out of 100. However, Transparency International found that 86 per cent of Mongolian citizens believe that their government officials are corrupt,³⁸⁰ placing Mongolia as the second-most corrupt country according to its citizens—just behind Liberia.³⁸¹ I created *The Mongols-3: Corruption* in response to these horrifying figures, and regard it as a criticism of the development of the country's economy and an attempt to bring social justice to Mongolian society as a mode of resistance.

Corrupt politicians (here shown to be *mangases*) not only swallow the prosperity of the state, but entirely devour the hard won benefits of democracy. The Mongolian national flag in the background of the painting shows that corruption has become a state problem spread throughout the country. It indicates to viewers that corruption is a “catastrophic disaster” to the Mongolian state and signals that fighting corruption must be prioritised as the central issue to conquer in the Mongolian state. Framed at the right of the panel, a small, obese man glares at the sky and seems to ask Eternal Heaven for help. This figure represents the entire Mongolian political system which has experienced serious difficulties in the transparent and coherent implementation of government programs because of the lack of competent staff. Government ministers are elected by unfair competition and inequitable acts, and pass weak laws. The judicial system contradicts the legitimate rights and interests of Mongolian citizens and needs to be reformed.

The Fedora hat³⁸² worn by the politician in *The Mongols-3* indicates a new passion for Westernization by the ruling class. This hat (which I refer to as a cowboy-style hat) initially appeared in Mongolia in the late 1920s and early 1930s, part of the new phenomenon of Western culture that penetrated Mongolia at the time. Intellectuals and politicians began to wear Western styled clothes, particularly young men who had studied in Germany and France,³⁸³ including

³⁷⁹ Mongolia's “Wolf Economy” Wary of “Resource Curse” www.mongolia-web.com/aggregator accessed 7 October 2013.

³⁸⁰ Rolle, K. The Mongolian Political Administration: Effectiveness and Corruption [//www.eias.org/sites/default/files/EIAS_Briefing_Paper_2014-1_Kateryna_Rolle.pdf](http://www.eias.org/sites/default/files/EIAS_Briefing_Paper_2014-1_Kateryna_Rolle.pdf) accessed 8 October 2014.

³⁸¹ Mongolia's War Against Corruption mongoliaeconomy.blogspot.com.au/ Accessed 11 October 2013.

³⁸² The Fedora is a felt hat with a medium brim and lengthwise in the crown. The hat first appeared in 1889, when Sarah Bernhardt wore a soft felt hat in Victorien Sardou's play “Fedora.” The hat rapidly gained popularity for women and became known as a Fedora.

³⁸³ Since the middle of the 1920s the Mongolian government had an intensive policy to maintain contact with Western countries other than its two big neighbours, Russia and China. In 1925, the Ministry of Enlightenment sent more than 50 students to Germany and France. Unfortunately, this policy encountered strong resistance from the Soviets and they prohibited Mongolian leaders to contact Western countries without their permission. The

Dashdorjin Natsagdorj³⁸⁴ a famous writer and poet (Figure 4.3.8). Later, in the 1940s, Mongolian politicians and state officials began to wear the Fedora (in Russian *шляпа*). The Soviet-style Fedora had a medium crown and brim and became a sign of prestige. During the 1970s and 1980s, this was a common everyday hat for men so that form turned ordinary, less fashionable. The Indiana Jones Fedora is one of the most famous hats in Western cinema³⁸⁵ (Figure 4.3.9). The wearing of this kind of hat again became fashionable after the 1990 Democratic Revolution when Mongolian policies aimed to deepen its cooperation with other western countries and sought to expand cultural and economic ties with a third neighbor.³⁸⁶



Figure 4.3.8 Natsagdorj, D. 1931. Photo: www.elibrary.mn

Figure 4.3.9 Indiana Jones. Photo: <http://indianajones.wikia.com/wiki/Fedora>³⁸⁷

Since the middle of 1990s, Mongolian businessmen and politicians have been fascinated with the American cowboy hat with its high crown and wide brim. It has become a symbol of the desire for a Western lifestyle: purchasing real estate abroad and having children study in the USA, UK

Mongolian government recalled the students in 1931. Soon after all were imprisoned. See, Baabar, *Baabar Also Said ... Three Fools of Hentii* (Ulaanbaatar: Nepko, 2007), 282.

³⁸⁴ Natsagdorj Dashdorjyn (1900-1936), writer and poet, is considered a founder of Mongolian modern literature. He studied in Russia and Germany between 1926 and 1930.

³⁸⁵ Hollywood stars such as Harrison Ford popularized the Fedora in Western cinema and popular culture during the 1980s www.port-magazine.com/fashion/the-hats-heads-up/, accessed 10 may 2014. Indiana Jones's nickname was "Fedora." <http://www.indygear.com/igfedora.html> accessed May 20, 2014.

³⁸⁶ Mongolia has only two neighbours: Russia in the north and China in the south. National interest and independence of Mongol State had been highly dependent on these nations over the last few centuries. For example, the proclamation of Mongol State after independence movement of 1911 and Mongolian government after the People's Revolution of 1921 were not fully recognised by these two. For this reason, Mongolian leaders were sought to establish diplomatic "third neighbour" relationships with other countries for accepting their independence. Prohibited under socialism, this policy was revived after 1990, and a new phase of political and economic relations with the Western world was undertaken. Today, Mongolia has formal diplomatic relations with 181 nations.

³⁸⁷ A scene from *Indiana Jones and Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, 2008.

and Australia. The recent fascination for the cowboy hat may also be the result of the addiction of some members of parliament to horse racing. Politicians can be seen wearing this style of hat during the annual *Naadam*- national festival.³⁸⁸ Therefore, in *The Mongols-3*, the cowboy hat represents the desire among current Mongolian politicians for an indulgent Western life-style. *The Mongols 3: Corruption* is a double coded parody: corrupt *mangas*-politicians are swallowing democracy and Western culture, in particular an American life-style swallows the traditional Mongolian psyche.

Each of my artworks responds to parody in Mongolian art in different periods that I have described in section 3.4 and 4.1. *The Mongols 1: Propaganda Art* represents the American Capitalist *mangas*, *The Mongols-2: Filatova's State* represents Communist *mangas* during the Soviet regime and *The Mongols 3: Corruption* shows *mangas* government official in the post socialist period. My serial paintings, *The Mongols*, are distinct from artworks of Mongolian local and diaspora artists. There are three differences. First of all, they have solid contexts and based on extensive theoretical research of parody and historical sources of Mongolian culture and art. Secondly, in technique and style each *The Mongols* work is a visual narrative created using acrylic paint on board. Making artwork on wood board is relatively rare to Mongolian artists today, most preferring to draw on canvas because it easy to roll for storing as well as transporting. I used an old Mongol *zurag* technique by leaving unpainted spaces, in a new way; I allowed the original wooden surface of the board to be seen, particularly in *The Mongols-2* and *The Mongols-3*. It is an exploration of materiality. Finally, my serial paintings stylistically hybridise the highly decorative character of national art (Mongol *zurag*) with propaganda poster art of the soviet period. My art works over all parodied the history of Mongol art in the twentieth century. This collection is the first to introduce to scholarly circles Mongolian nation parodic art and culture in the socialist period. They not only criticise socialist realism and soviet-styled ideological art but they reveal the contested variations of “historical truth” to Western viewers previously distorted by Mongolian chroniclers during the soviet regime, notably *The Mongols-2: Filatova's State*. Therefore my art works are a significant contribution to the development and theoretical orientation for analyzing political parody in Mongolian contemporary art and

³⁸⁸ Naadam (known the “Three Manly Games”) is the most popular festival held from 11 to 13 July of every year. Horse-riding, wrestling, archery are main entertainment of the *Naadam*.

deconstruct the models of contemporary Mongol perceptions of *mangas* and the legacies of Socialist realism.

4.4 Conclusion

In the early years after the Democratic Revolution, political caricature still served a public discourse associated with socio-economic concerns. Communist leaders of the old regime were politely and indirectly ridiculed. Apart from beneficial social and economic achievements, the Revolution introduced disparities between rich and poor, bribery, corruption and depression. A new, more critical form of parody emerged from these changes, shifting from ridiculing caricatures to the painting of social and cultural conditions.

A group of young parody artists emerged at the end of 2000s, whose art was influenced by contemporary post-modernism rather than Socialist Realism. These artists use *mangas* narratives to voice the anguish of people in democratic Mongolian society and address the changes of the country. The *mangas* imagery in these paintings is not closely connected with the traditional character of the *mangas*. In contrast, the *mangas*-parody artworks of expatriate Mongolian artists are much more deeply linked to shamanist and Buddhist beliefs.

My own artworks attempt to explore my personal experiences as a Socialist and diasporic artist using contemporary art methods that involve appropriation and the dislocation of the self. Such pastiche is evident in the motif of *mangas*-parody within my works. *The Mongols* series of paintings are a visual resolution of my doctoral study, which traced the image of *mangas*-parody through Mongolian art history.

Chapter FIVE Epilogue

This exegesis has traced the development of parody from past to present in Mongolian art through the iconographic connection with the mythological *mangas*. Fundamental to this are the features of Mongol parody-resistance *mangas* and their influence on the evolution of my art practice. The outcome of self-reflective criticism in my art practice is a new parodic form in Mongolian contemporary visual art that originates from the earliest animist beliefs of mobile Mongol nomads, in particular the ancient Cruel Black Heaven.

As I explored in Chapter Two, the development of the *mangas* idea changed from early animist and shamanic belief, through the Buddhist period [1577-1937] and into and beyond the socialist period [1924-1990]. The depiction of each *mangas* in each stage has responded to different political ideologies and social circumstances. Although the idea of *mangas* prior to and in the Buddhist period shares similarities, in the latter it became infused with stronger ideological forces. The frightening image of the Buddhist deity *mangas* was intended to educate the nomads about sinful behavior and to obediently follow Buddhist teachings. Then, in the socialist period, the *mangas* term used in Mongolian caricature served the political aims of fighting against the external enemy, symbolised as the American capitalist, as well as against the internal moral shortcomings of the society of socialism builders. Since 1990 collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a market economy in the democratic Republic of Mongolia, the *mangas* image has become a device for ridicule in Mongolian contemporary political art, criticizing corruption and fraudulent politicians. This exegesis has explored *mangas* imagery in each of these periods to argue that it was persistently used as political parody.

As Dentith claims, particular “social situations or historical moments can cause parody to flourish.”³⁸⁹ Parody seemed to appear a few times in Mongolian history. By scholarly source, in the 17th century when Mongolia lost its independence under Manchu oppression, parody emerged in the form of mocking folklore jokes of Badarchin and Dalan Hudalch’s humorous speeches. The second instance took a literary form in the series of poems, “Word”, at the beginning of 19th century which was directed at the moral degradation of Buddhist monks and nobles. The third blooming of parody came at the beginning of the 20th century with the victory

³⁸⁹ Simon Dentith (2000), 31.

of the 1921 People's Revolution. In Chapter Three I explained how parody in the form of political leaflets in this period operated as ideological propaganda for the newly established People's government. From the 1940s, parody was a device used to caricature "criticism of communism" (for example Figure 3.2.7, 3.2.8). Finally, parody re-emerged, along with *mangas* imagery (for example Figure 4.1.5) after the 1990 collapse of the Socialist regime and in the works of young Mongolian contemporary artists. Therefore, this exegesis has argued that *mangas* parody is a social phenomenon reflecting modes of resistance to socio-political change in Mongolian history into the post-socialist period.

It is need to say that *mangas* parody is very difficult to explain in Western terms of humorous imitation; definitions are etymologically difficult to even satisfactorily translate to and from the Mongolian language. As I drew attention to in Chapter One, parody expressed in Mongolian proverbs has idiomatic meaning that even modern Mongolians find difficult to define in the unique context of *mangas*. The parodic form of *mangas* is double coded: coding and encoding. My personal experience of understanding *mangas* originated with the coded images of the Choijin temple murals that terrified me. My mum explained the encoding this way: "if you do bad things such as lie, be lazy, envy others and so on, you will be reborn in this evil world. But if you obey your parents then you will not have to worry". I also used to play *mangas* games with other children which also transformed my [earlier pre-teens] idea of *mangas*. Encoding that horrific image of *mangas* in my body of artwork has been explained by some viewers as being depicted in a "gentle and pleasant manner". This distinguishes my works from those of Mongolian diasporic artists such as Tod (Figure 4.2.1, 4.2.2) and Heesco (Figure 4.2.4, 4.2.5a, b, 4.2.6) as well as other local young Mongolian artists examined in Chapter Four. My works parody the politicians and social-political life in Mongolian history using a different aesthetic ideology. They not only ridicule targeted incidents and politicians (Figure 4.3.6) but introduce a feature of *mangas* parody through the legacy of Mongolian traditional art (Figure 4.3.2) and visual culture of the Socialist period (Figure 4.3.7) to Western viewers.

So there is a second dimension to the outcomes of this research. I have been exposed to and challenged by the need to critically reflect upon my socialist upbringing and education as a Socialist Realist artist (where one of our obligations was to produce propaganda posters such as Figure 1.1). My interest in political parody began in the 1980s when my colleagues and I

mocked the “Lenin rock star.” This oral joke (which we called “anecdote”) I now understand was parody. However, my journey as a researcher of parody as well as a parody artist has been a struggle because I have had to change my way of thinking. As an eyewitness to the final decades of Mongolian-styled Socialism, an autobiographical approach was necessarily one of my research methods. This came to be reflected in and influential for the process of my own development as a contemporary Mongolian artist now living in Australia. To the extent that I offer alternative conceptual strategies to visually engage with the new image of Mongolian contemporary art, in the theoretical component of this exegesis I have also opened a new field of political parody.

Parody is a complex device, manifest as a cultural and social as much as a political phenomenon. *Mangas* parody, although unique to Mongolia, may emerge as resistance-parody elsewhere. This will provide to further studies of the significance of art forms (theatre, literature and so on) exploring the coding and encoding of imagery, the deconstruction and re-interpretation of symbols, motifs and styles to parodic effect.

Acronyms

ACM: Art Consul of Mongolia

AIB: Art Institute of Bulgaria

AIK: Art Institute of Kiev

ANU: Australian National University

BAM: Baikal-Amur Mainline

BRF: Buryat Russian Federation

CAM: Central Archive of Mongolia

CLTM: Chojjin Lama Temple Museum

COMINTERN: Communist International

CPASS: Communist Party Academy of Social Science

CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union

DID: Department of Inner Defence

FACU: Fine Art College of Ulaanbaatar

FAIM: Fine Art Institute of Mongolia

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GME: Great Mongol Empire

GP: Great Purge

HMMPRP: Museum of Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party

HMSA: Historical Museum of Science Academy

IAI: The Illusion Among Intellectuals

MA: Members of Assignment

MAA: Mongolian Advocate Association

MDA: Mongolian Democratic Association

MDP: Mongolian Democratic Party

MDR: Mongolian Democratic Revolution

MDSY: Mongolian Democratic Socialist Youths

MDU: Mongolian Democratic Union

MIA: Ministry of Internal Affairs
MMVPP: Memorial Museum of Victims of Political Persecution
MNU: Mongolian National University
MPRP: Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party
MPR: Mongolian People's Republic
MTA: Ministry of Transport and Agriculture
MURY: Mongolian Union of Revolutionary Youth
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PBMPRP: Political Bureau of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party
PGH: Peoples Great Hural
PR: People's Revolution
QCA: Queensland College of Art
RAAA: Repin Academy of Art and Architecture
RBP: Russian Bolshevic Party
SAI: Surikov Art Institute
SCA: Sydney College of Art
SLM: State Library of Mongolia
SPH: State Printing House
SR: Socialist Realism
SHM: The Secret History of the Mongols
SPC: The Supreme Power Commission
STYC: State Theatre of Youth and Children
SCC: Saving and Credits Cooperatives
SPU: State Pedagogical University (The Educational University now)
TASS: Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
TB: Tibetan Buddhism
TI: Transparency International
TPDMRA: Training and Political Department of the Mongolian Revolutionary Army
UMFA: Ulaanbaatar Museum of Fine Art

UMA: Union of Mongolian Artists

UMW: Union of Mongolian Writers

USSR: Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic

WCI: World Corruption Index

WCM: World Communist Movement

WWII: The Second World War / World War two

Glossary

Амны бэлэг [*Amni Belege*]- is oral symbolism in Mongolian culture, an optimistic thought expressed through speech. Mongolian conversation usually starts with *amni belege* that wishes a good fortune for their everyday household.

Аймаг [*Аймаг*]- is an administration unit in Mongolia. After 1940s, Mongolian territory was divided into 18 aimags.

Айраг [*Airag*]- a drink made from fermented mare's milk.

Бадарчин [*Badarchin*]- a wandering monk. The word *badarchin* derives from “patra”(badar in Mongolian) which implies a person collecting charity from others for virtue.

Богд [*Bogdo*]- it is the title given to a sacrosanct leader who was exceptional superior to all others. Chinggis Khaan used to be referred to as the Bogdo Khaan. Later, eight Mongolian Buddhists leaders used to be referred to the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutagts.

Бөө [*Buu*]- a male shaman and shamanism. Shaman is an ancient religion of the Mongols which venerates ancestors' spirits. The date shamanism emerged in Mongolia is thought to be between seven and five thousand years ago.

Буряад [*Buryat*]- is one of the ethnic groups of Mongolian nation. It was become a part of the 13th century Mongolian Empire (R. Rupen1964, 103). In the 17th century, Buryat inhabited both sides of Lake Baikal. In close contact with Russians since this time, they were technically more advanced than the Khalkh. In the early years of the Mongolian Revolution, many Buryats played important roles in the People's Party. In 1923, an Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Buryat-Mongolia was established in Ulan Ude.

Бурхан [*Burhan*]- Buddha, it initially derives “Bur” from the root of word *Burgas* (wicker) that implies a master of tree or wicker or “an old man's spirit in a tree”. In the 16th century, it changed to Buddha when Buddhism spread in Mongolia. The Buddha and *Burhan* have almost the same understanding for the Mongols.

Гэр [*Ger*]- a traditional Mongolian specific felt tent. Known as “yurta” in Russian.

Дөрвөд [*Durbet*]- a Western Mongolian clan. The name appeared in the 15th century when Durbet became part of the Four Oirats. *Durbet* live in Uvs *aimag* (province) which is located in the west region of Mongolia, about 1300 km away from the capital Ulaanbaatar. Since 1759, *Durbet* started to dwell in Uvs by the order of Manchu king after the fall of the Zunghar Khanate (Literally “left hand”) (Gerelbadrah 2002, 127). *Durbet* constitute about 4 percent of population in Mongolia.

Доромј шог [*Doromj shog*] **Parody**- standard definition of parody (western) is a mock imitation a literary or artistic work that imitates the characteristic styles of an author or a work for comic effect or ridicule. However, there are many synonyms in the Mongolian language, such as **Хошин элэглэл** [*Hoshin eleglel*]-a humorous imitation, **Хошигнол** [*Hoshignol*]-grotesque, **Элэглэл** [*Eleglel*]-

mocking, **Энгүүн шог** [*Enguun shog*]--sarcasm, **Шоглоом бадаг** [*Shogloom badag*]—epigram, **Алиа шог** [*Alia shoglol*]--humor, **Егөө** [*Yuguu*]—Irony to mock, **Зугаа шог** [*Zygaat shog*]--joke, **Тохуу дүрслэл** [*Tokhuu durslel*]--caricature, **Хошин наадал** [*Hoshin naadal*]—vaudeville, and so on.

Дээд Тэнгэр [*Deed tenger*]-- a supreme power, a ruler of the Universe. It is a Heaven Above *tenger* but called in variety names such as an Eternal Heaven, Lofty Heaven, Heaven Lord, Blue Heaven and Han Tengre in the historical resources.

Дээл [*Deel*]-- a traditional long coat made from cotton, silk or brocade. In the Soviet period, *deel* were used in the countryside but, since the 2000s, wearing *deel* became a new trend among the Mongols.

Жавзандамба Хутагт [*Jebtsundamba Khutagt*]-- known as a living Buddha, and leader of Mongolian Buddhism. Eight Jebtsundamba Khutagts incarnated between 1639 and 1924. The First Jebtsundamba Khutagt who was Undur Gegeen Zanabazar was incarnated in 1639. First two Jebtsundamba Khutagt were Mongolian from Chinggis's descent but the other six were incarnated from Tibet and they were Tibetans.

Зуд [*Zud*]-- a term of harsh winter conditions that threatens the survival of humans and livestock. There are a few types of *zud* including white *zud*, ice *zud*, black *zud* and trampling *zud*. The Mongolian herdsmen believe that *zud* occurs with an average frequently in monkey years (by Eastern calendar).

Лус [*Lus*]-- a protector of water or spirit of rivers and lakes. Mongol shamanism considers there are 33 Lus's whose belonging to Etugen Tengre (middle world *tengre*). These Lus's found generally eight different colours that indicate their duties. Blue Lus a protector of water and animals live in water, green Lus a protector of plant, brown Lus protector of river soul. Black Lus is believed the most powerful and is a master of the reptiles (Sh. Sukhbat 2012, 44). Therefore, Mongols consider the snake is a lord of the underworld and forbid killing them.

Лусын хорлол [*Lus Harm*]-- a principal fear of the Mongolians, and a bad karma who offends taboo of water such as killing fish, polluting river water.

Махгал [*Mahakala*]-- one of the eight protectors of Vajrayana Buddhism, usually portrayed with a ferocious blue face, body with six arms.

Мангас [*Mangas*]-- a mythological figure that inflicts suffering on humans. It derives from old Mongolian word “magu”- bad. *Mangas* is usually an anti-hero of Mongolian folktales and epics and is portrayed with an ugly image with many heads, and swallows every living being.

Монгол зураг [*Mongol zurag*]-- a general name of Mongolian traditional national painting. There are a few types such as an iconography, folk painting, pictures of shaman rite and ornament. The term emerges in Mongolian art study since 1950s.

Овоо [*Ovoo*]-- a mound of rough stones, wood and other assorted items raised on the top of a mountain or high ground in order to worship land spirits. It originated from shaman rite worship of Etugen *Tengre* and later in Buddhist period, turned to worship *ovoo* for coaxing *Savdag*. It also is connected with ancient Mongolian philosophy *Sumber Uul* (Universe existence) which builds a mountain on the mountain.

Онгон [*Ongon*, pl. *Ongod*]*--* a symbolic image of a dead shaman's spirit and land. In the shamanist period, every family had their own ongon so called "gerin ongon" (house ongon). It protects family from great wickedness and depravity. The word implies a meaning untouched, virgin (Ya. Tsevel, 1966, 415) Marco Polo reports in his book "Travels of Marco Polo" the ongon called Natigai (1968, 98).

Ойрад [*Oirat*]*--* a general name of the western group of the Mongols. It appeared much earlier than the name Khalkh. It also called "Four Oirat" which originated by four tribes including Tsoros, Hoshuut, Torguud and Durbet. Since 15th century, Mongolia splited into two parts; right and left. Oirat is called left hand in Mongolian.

Өндөр Гэгээн [*Undur Gegeen*] "High Saint Zanabazar" (1635-1723)*--* the first reincarnation of Jebtsundamba Khutagt and first Bogdo Gegeen of Mongolia, also called him "Lofty Rinpoche" in Tibetan. He is a religious leader in eastern Mongolia who played major role in adopting Yellow sect of Buddhism in Mongolia in 1691.

Савдаг [*Savdag*]*--* a spirit of land, the word derives from "sa-bdag" (land-master) from Tibetan. The Mongols believe that savdag is owner of the certain areas of land such as mountains, hills, rocks and sheds for cattle.

Сахиус [*Sahuis*]*--* a worship idol (Lit Mon, to adhere, to keep). Sahius is a necklace amulet within scriptures that thought to give protection against evil or danger.

Сүлд [*Suld*]*--* a concept of shamanism, a vital force of a person that ordained by Heaven. Kowalewski explains that in the Mongolian language suld has a few meanings: splendour, house idol protector, military banner, military might. See Kowalewski. J. E. Dictionaire Mongol-Russe-Francais. KASAN, Imprimerie DeL' University 1844, 1428.

Сум [*Sum*]*--* a district (intermediate administrative level above *bag* and below *aimag*)

Сүнс [*Suns*]*--* a soul. Some believes the word comes from Altaic languages (su-water, liquid) Dulam 1989, 175.

Тэнгэризм [*Tengerism*]*--* derives from *tenger* (blue sky), and originated with Shamanism. It is the ruling concept of the Mongolians that worship an Eternal Heaven or Blue Sky.

Удган [*Udgan*]*--* a female shaman.

Үйлийн Үр [*Uilin ur*]*--* karma, the universal law of cause and effect.

Халх [*Khalkha*]*--* general name of the Mongolian people, since XV century the name emerged. Khalkha formed the ruling class of Mongolia prior to the 20th century and believe themselves the descendants of Chinggis Khaan and his 'golden kin' and constitute about 80 percent of population in Mongolia.

Хамба [*Hamba*]*--* a religious title of Buddhist high rank lama

Хошуу [*Hoshuu*]*--* an administrative unit (banner) of the pre-Revolution period

Хутагт [*Khutagt*]*--* a Buddhist title granted to a high reincarnated lama. In the beginning of 1920s, 20 Khutagts (so called Khalkha's twenty attested Khutagts) lived in Mongolia (Lattimore 2009).

Цагаан хар хэл ам [*White and Black Tongue*]*--* a positive (white) or negative (black) rumour about an individual's affairs.

Чойжин [*Chojin*] (sanskrit *Dhar-ma-pala*, Tibetan *Chos-skyong*)*--*a general name of eight wrathful deities of Dharmapalas (sans. dhar-ma is a defender of the Law) and is considered a guardians of teachings, defender of faith, and figure of Buddhist protection from evil spirits. These were often depicted in eight dreadful religious figures (Tib, *Drag-gshed-brgyad*), and have a terrifying appearance so that the Mongols call them *Dogshid* (Ferocities). They are Mahakala (a protector of monastery and nomads), Yama (a lord of hell), Yamantaka (a supporter of wisdom), Hayagriva (a protector from disease, in Mongolia protector of horse), Vaisrana (Hindu god of Wealth), Palden Lhamo (a female protector of Buddhist state), Tshangspa (known in Mongolian *Esrung tengre* which originated from Hindu god Brahma), and Begtse (a war god). Each Buddhist monastery has its own Chojin protector.

Шог зураг [*Shog zurag*]*--* a caricature emerging as a new genre of art in Mongolia by influence from Soviet caricature in the 1940s. It developed to three genres: political caricature, topic of the day and friendly humorous portrait. Except the friendly humorous portrait, it was functioned to ridicule defaults of the society.

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