

CHANGES AND TRENDS IN MONGOLIA'S ANIMAL PROTECTION ETHICS

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Abstract: Mongolians are people who have created a culture and history that is exemplary to other nations in terms of respect for nature, mountains, water, plants and wildlife. In addition, it has been reflected in the written laws issued by the state and has been passed on to future generations by loving wildlife and nature. Mongolians have long protected animals in all possible ways, including quarantine, compassion, worship and state law.

Our people have long been one of the few nations in the world to have regarded nature as the basis of existence, to observe its laws, to understand its natural evolution, and to have mastered and passed on to nature the animals, grasses, and the environment. However, the decline of endangered species and ecological imbalances in recent years is due not only to global problems but also to the immoral activities of citizens. We tend to believe that it is our duty today not to destroy animals, not to change the environment, to love and learn from traditional teachings, to understand that they are an essential part of our lives, and to love the environment and learn about sustainable development.

Keywords: animal ethics, animal worship, animal rights, traditional teachings, sustainable development.

ИЗМЕНЕНИЯ И ТЕНДЕНЦИИ В ЭТИКЕ ЗООХРАННОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ В МОНГОЛИИ

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Аннотация: Монгольскому народу удалось создать культуру и историю, которая может стать примером для многих других наций в том, что касается защиты природы, гор, воды, растений и диких животных. Указанные вопросы отражены в законодательстве страны, проводится работа по передаче будущим поколениям любви к дикой природе. Монголы всегда защищали животных, используя для этого разнообразные средства – карантинные мероприятия, эмоциональные контакты, поклонение животным, создавали правовые основы для такой защиты. Наш народ долгое время был одним из немногих в мире, рассматривающих природу в качестве основы существования, исследующих ее законы и особенности

развития, овладевающих знаниями и охраняющих животных, растения, окружающую среду. В то же время, сокращение численности вымирающих видов животных и растений, экологический дисбаланс, происходящие в последние годы, вызваны не только глобальными проблемами, но и в значительной степени неподобающим поведением граждан. Мы искренне верим, что наш долг сегодня не допустить уничтожение животных, не разрушать окружающую среду, любить и учиться у народных традиций, понимать, что они являются важной частью жизни, рассматривать экологические проблемы в контексте устойчивого развития.

Ключевые слова: *этические основы защиты животных, поклонение животным, права животных, традиционные методы обучения, устойчивое развитие*

For the last 30 years of the twentieth century, countries around the world have been debating the model of human development as sustainable development. Sustainable development is the principle of meeting one's needs following the capacity of the ecosystem. This means that we have the right to live well and that future generations have the right to live well so that we can meet our own needs without destroying the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, sharing the best practices of each country with the environment will be important for the realization of the concept of sustainable development.

For Mongolians, «environmental protection» means protecting the environment from external influences, preventing potential degradation rather than rehabilitating it in the event of degradation, living in harmony with the environment wisely, worshipping and respecting the motherland and treating it humanely. It involves the idea of loving animals and plants and conserving their resources. Mongolians have taught their descendants that the earth and the sky are complex and that human beings, who are part of the world, should live in harmony with it rather than possessing everything, which can be seen as a fundamental principle of sustainable development in many parts of the world. Many researchers have studied the traditions of the environment and animal customs, including O. Amarkhuu's work which divides the principles into five main categories¹: compassion; prohibition; doctrine; religion; observations.

¹Amarkhuu O. Mongolian customs and laws to protect the environment. UB., 2000.

From this, it is possible to elaborate on the traditional concept of animal protection in each of these areas and see how it is evolving from today's perspective.

Mongolians' tradition of protecting the environment and animals includes attitudes and behaviors towards animals, and they have experience in hunting, recognizing and managing their lives. Because of the precise timing of the animals' reproduction as well as knowledge of hair, skin, and fattening, they are hunted during the day for meat and skin with great respect and it is considered a «natural endowment.» From ancient times, Mongolians have enacted and implemented several laws to protect the environment and wildlife, and the main ideas reflected in these laws are: love for nature, protect life and prevent its extinction, follow the rules of hunting, take care of mountains and water while avoiding water pollution, rational use of land and pastures, love, and ownership of pastures.

We have inherited the teachings of fire prevention and forest protection. As a result, everyone adhered to a culture of never hunting or even disturbing infants, offspring, lactating animals, pregnant animals and endangered or newly introduced animals. Mongolians also taught their children not to kill birds in their hibernation, to destroy their nests, to dig up the nests of shy animals, and not to disturb or demolish the nests of ants. All of these are wonderful traditions of caring for and using wildlife, providing ecological education and maintaining the balance of nature. Because the vast majority of Mongolians are Buddhists, Buddhist teachings on animal protection have been important. The Buddhist ethic is based on the principle of compassion, which teaches us to love and protect all beings, from insects to the six mother species, for the benefit of all beings. We talk a lot about human rights, but we need to talk about animal rights. «Human beings and other non-human beings depend on the well-being of the environment, so we must take stock of the losses caused by our negligence in the past and take bold and decisive steps to protect the environment,»² as seen in the Buddhist declaration of nature. This seems to be the common denominator of the three concepts of Buddhism, traditional Mongolian teachings and the concept of sustainable development.

Buddhist ethics teaches that animals should be treated as human beings, which is in line with Mongolia's traditional concept of animal

² Bayarchimeg, Ch Zolzaya. M Oyungerel. D Moral tradition and modernity of Mongolian animal protection. UB, 2020. P. 143.

protection. For example, if an animal or ant's nest is destroyed, the house will be destroyed later. It is explained in connection with the suffering of human beings through the torture of animals, such as the loss of the endowment of the Khangai /spiritually natural world / world if animals are disturbed during pregnancy.

The teachings of Buddhism on love, compassion and nonviolence are important in protecting the natural rights of animals. Buddhists prefer the non-violent (ahimsa) practice, which is to refrain from killing without a reason and to create the best possible environment for animals.

The list of endangered species is growing every year, and the ecological patterns are being lost. All of this is ultimately the result of human error. As long as our greed, compassion and ignorance continue, the future of our planet will only get worse.

Respect for livestock is the basis of many forms of nomadic culture. It has been in line with Buddhist teachings to promote a more environmentally friendly way of life. For example, we have a tradition of treating animals in a timely and humane manner, such as removing hair, wool and cashmere on time, not enclosing them in manure when they are hot, preparing warm beds in cold weather, and raising orphaned offspring like children.

Animal worship and symbolism. The worship and symbolism of animals is rooted in the idea of protecting them. From ancient times the mainstay of human life has been hunting, so people have been constantly accumulating knowledge about food and essential animals. Mongolians have always loved and protected the animals of their meadows, and there have been various ways to show respect for some species. Another way to protect animals, such as deer, bears, wolves and white falcons, is to show respect and compassion when hunting.

It is claimed that the ancestral idols of nomadic Mongols are wolves as they are descended from them. Wolves are constantly attacking herders. It is customary to offer sacrifices and offerings to the gods, but it is a feature of steppe life that an idol attacks the flock of devotees. For example, there are many historical facts, fairy tales, legends and old sayings that Mongolians revered deer and wolves for their origins, patronage and virginity. The fact that the Mongols depicted animals such as deer in petroglyphs and paintings can be considered as a sign of respect.

Mongolians have always respected birds as their ancestors. Birds are rarely hunted, and their eggs are not allowed to be shaded or touched because they are believed to curse the birds and shorten their

lifespan. Birds are said to lay their eggs in the shade, so they teach their chicks to do so. There are 21 families, 204 species and 472 species of birds registered in Mongolia. There are 260 species of birds that lay their eggs in Mongolia, 49 species that migrate north and south every spring and autumn, 8 species that do not lay eggs, and 64 species that occasionally come and spend the summer.³ Therefore, bird-related rituals are quite common. For example, some tribes associate their origin with the name of a bird. The crane is one of the most cherished birds, not only in Mongolia but also in the Altai language. Mongolians observe dance-loving behaviors and rush to shout, «Cranes are cute, vultures are ugly». Teachings such as, «You can't break a crane's egg, and that bird can curse a horseman's iron pedal until it breaks,» are another way to protect animals, using real-life examples to illustrate the crane's ability to protect its offspring.

It is believed that the chirping of magpies speaks of both good and bad. That's why when the magpies are chirping, they say: «Magpies, magpies, listen to the good news». Probably, in order not to turn the news of the magpie into a bad one, people might say it softly. People who talk nonsense are told to «scream like magpies».

Kh. Nyambuu, an ethnographer, noted in his work that Mongolians have always loved and protected fish and respected the highest symbolic values.⁴ He noted that fish never close their eyes, have many offspring, and reproduce very quickly, so it is common for a Mongolian woman to create a pair of fish figures, such as earrings and ankles. In the center of the Soyombo letter, a symbol of the sovereignty and independence of the Mongolian people, there is an image of a male and a female fish, symbolizing the fish's vigilance and reproduction.

Another way of protecting animals is to give another respected name for it. For example, Mongolians call snakes «Urt Khairkhan»/long creature/, «Khairkhan»/wild life creature /, «Urt Khorkhoi»/long insect/, «Lusyn Animal», /sea creatures/ and «Unbreakable Ereen Dees»/printed rope/. There is a similar mentality among some ethnic groups that the Mongols worship the snake as a sea animal.

Abstinence. It is a tradition of quarantine and a way of instilling compassion in the minds of our descendants to make them aware of what they have to endure in dealing with nature and to maintain nature's ability to regenerate itself. Mongolians consider animals such

³ Wealth flying through the skies of Mongolia. <http://tsagtur.mn/2010-03-05-02-15-01/>. 2021.05.02

⁴ Nyambuu H. The most honorable UB, 1991.

as snakes and fish to be sea creatures. Hunting, poisoning, and trapping deer, bex, migratory birds and other rare animals were strictly forbidden.

They also avoid destroying bird nests and casting shadows on eggs. The first prey of an eagle must be caught by an elder. Eagles are released back into the wild after 10–11 years, and if they die in the ger before that, they are buried at the peak they first took. It is a popular taboo. It is considered a sin to injure and kill a hunter. Animal-related abstinence is important to protect the natural rights of animals. Scientist Sh. Choimaa commented that it is a hunter's taboo to « Hunt endangered animals and herd leaders, exterminate or over-hunt animals, hunt animals that have rare colors, hunt pregnant, young or migrating animals or to hunt wolves». It is also seen as a negative action to « capture animals during breeding and grazing, capture herd leaders, contaminate soil with the blood of slaughtered animals, make places red with blood where animals gather near water and salt marshes, torture animals while killing them and to disturb their hibernation to kill them»⁵.

Endangered species in our country are rapidly declining in number due to human activities. For example, the endangered species of Przewalski's horse, saiga, and Gobi bear are on the verge of extinction. Since 2012, the Law on Animals (revised version) and, in 2017, the Law on Animal Health are in force in Mongolia. Therefore, it is clear that legal measures have been taken. It is important to increase the legal knowledge of citizens, promote the provisions of the law, and provide ethical education to children and youth on animal protection. However, the Przewalski's horse is a good example of the recent reintroduction of an endangered species. From all this, it can be seen that Mongolians have a history of protecting their wildlife through their legal documents. We just need to follow the law, understand the details of its provisions, introduce children and young people to very rare and endangered species, and provide people with a systematic knowledge of ways to protect them in a process of lifelong education.

In recent years, the issue of animal rights, which is used in scientific experiments in the field of animal protection ethics, has received a lot of attention. In the interests of human health, many animals are tested every year and their lives come to an end. In order to determine the toxicity and effectiveness of new drugs, injections and preparations in humans, first testing them on animals is an act for the

⁵Buddhist studies. Series I. UB, 1998. 150th party.

good of man. Mongolians have a long history of respecting animals, and a modern example of this is the world's first white rat statue in 2019. The statue also reminds us that in the future we should use animals less in experiments and instead rely on human intellectual resources and new opportunities.

To protect animals, we humans need to fight climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the use of renewable energy, supporting environmentally-friendly policies, actively participating in the protection of wildlife, protecting biodiversity, supporting and disseminating ethical training and research on animal protection. There is a need to take measures to promote compassion for animals.

Animals have their possessions, just as everyone has their own space. Therefore, we, as human beings, have a responsibility to understand this and to constantly study environmental and ecological education. Traditional customs, traditions, knowledge and laws to protect the environment and animals are becoming more valuable and meaningful today. Based on the progressive approach of traditional ideology, we believe that the following measures should be taken to improve the ethical education of citizens on animal protection:

1. Promote legislation governing the protection, sustainable use and reintroduction of animals.
2. Be able to name the animals and plants of the area where they live and be able to explain the customs that have protected animals based on certain sources.
3. Incorporate environmental traditions and their advances into ecological education curricula at all levels.
5. Disseminate knowledge and information about the characteristics of pets and their protection to the public.
6. Encourage the creation of works that are important for the development of animal protection thinking.
7. Establish procedures to protect the natural rights of animals during the activities of tourism organizations.
8. Tax exemptions for business entities and individuals who have contributed to animal protection.
9. Intensify the activities of civil society organizations working to protect animal rights.
10. Prevent the degradation of wildlife, protect their native lands and provide favorable conditions for their natural reproduction.

To expand conservation work, the government needs to support research to protect wildlife, pastures and health, and develop ways for

rangers and citizens to work together to help animals affected by climate change. There is a need to reintroduce endangered species globally and nationally, and to provide regular training and awareness-raising on endangered species. Finally, I would like to conclude with the idea that all animals exist in their natural order and must fulfill their role.

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