

of events from memory. Although he had a very good memory (a fact that can be gathered from the diaries), it happens that some of the dates and facts are incorrect. Fujiko Isono often has to correct them in the footnotes. Similarly, the dialogues and quotations that occur frequently in the (two) texts cannot be regarded as direct reports, for they have been reconstructed decades after they were actually spoken. Some of his impressions have blended with other memories. For example, he calls Ts. Jamsrano (born 1880) whom he met in 1929 at Ulaanbaatar, "a man over seventy" (177), although Ts. Jamsrano was only four years older than Diluv and had not yet reached his fiftieth year at that time.

Diluv's political diaries open with a description of a confidential mission entrusted to the Lama Badamdorj who in 1895 was sent by Javzandamba Khutagt of Urga to the Czar of Russia. Other sources do not speak of this event, or, more accurately, postpone it to the year 1900. Most probably Diluv's memory is again at fault here. The diaries' description of events continues until 1931, at the end of which the author briefly reports a few later happenings up to the year 1937.

The autobiography of the Diluv Khutagt starts out by presenting the circumstances of his birth and then relates how he was acknowledged as the reincarnation of his defunct predecessor. He was born into a nomad family when his father was already sixty-seven and his mother forty-eight. Diluv's father was also supposed to have been born when his father was eighty-six, a most improbable occurrence. Although Diluv's autobiography contains a wealth of facts about his life and activities, it is weak in giving detailed information on the Narobanchin monastery. But this omission is compensated for by a several-page description of the monastery found at the end of the book. The autobiography includes other descriptions not directly related to Diluv's life. The third chapter, for example, is devoted entirely to the infamous Ja Lama (Dambijantsan), one of the bloodiest figures of those times.

Diluv Khutagt wrote his diaries and the autobiography in a very detached manner. He reports even the extreme cruelty of Ja Lama or Ungern without comment. He tries to restrict himself to the facts as he knew them, what he had heard or could recall. The affairs of the Lamaist Church, whose representative he was, were closest to his heart. But here, too, he refrains from judgment. We should note in passing that he considers real facts and supernatural phenomena on equal footing.

It is impossible to evaluate precisely all the facts that appear in this text in a short review. As mentioned above, it is not unusual that Diluv's memory fails and that Fujiko Isono has to straighten out such mistakes in her footnotes. There are possibly even more such flaws, but to correct them much more research is needed, especially a search of archive sources.

Stanisław Kałużyński  
University of Warsaw  
Warsaw

NEKLJUDOV, S. JU. and Ž. TÖMÖRCEREN. *Mongolische Erzählungen über Geser. Neue Aufzeichnungen* [Previously Undocumented Mongolian Narratives of Gesar]. Translated from the Russian by Jörg Bäcker. *Asiatische Forschungen*, Band 92. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1985. Vii+326 pages. One photograph, glossary, dictionary of Mongolian texts, bibliography. Paper DM—., ISSN 0571-320X, ISBN 3-447-02505-5.

Notwithstanding concentrated efforts of an international group of Mongolists to shed more light on the Mongolian epic literature and its traditions, there still exists a certain imbalance in the geographical distribution of the material available, because of the dearth of material from south and east Mongolia. The fact alone that the five texts of this book all originate from that area earmarks them as a precious addition to the field, but they are important for still other reasons. They constitute instances of epic oral narratives about Gesar which as such are very rare in Mongolian oral literature. And, finally, they add to our general knowledge concerning the Gesar cycle as it exists in folk literature.

The volume under review is the German translation of an earlier book in Russian, *Mongol'skije skazanija o Gesere*, published 1982 in Moscow. It brings together five epic songs, four of them taken from materials which had been collected during two expeditions to Mongolia in 1974 and 1976, expeditions which were organized by the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of Mongolia. The fifth song had been collected earlier from the Üjümüčün by Tömörčeren and was included here for the sake of making comparisons, and because the Üjümüčün epic was hitherto unknown. The texts include "The song of Gesar's battle with Gilben Šar," "The song of Gesar's battle with the Galdan-Mangus," "The lamentations of Rogmo-goa," "The song of Gilban Šar's birth," and "The Golden Mount Sumeru." The translation appears to be well done as far as this can be judged without having seen the Russian original. It reads pleasantly, with some very few exceptions, and makes one almost forget that it is a translation.

There can be no doubt about this book's value as a document of Mongolian folk literature. And yet, it exhibits certain features which, to my mind, make the factual documentary aspect come to life. First is the fact that these texts have been recorded directly from their singers. But the editors were not content with this. They introduce the singers giving their biography, describing their character and career and their individual way of reciting the songs. Nekljudov has done an excellent job in pointing out and illustrating the salient features of Čojnhor and Sambudaš, the two singers who contributed the first four songs of this collection. Consequently, the reader can taste and appreciate the atmosphere of the songs even in this translation. I found it particularly rewarding that Nekljudov does not restrict himself only to relating the biographies of the singers in bare facts, but often reports their personal recollections concerning the circumstances under which they had heard a song themselves. In this manner we get to learn for instance that the singers consider reciting the Gesar cycle a magico-religious act granting protection against or expulsion of evil spirits. And he also lets us know the situations in which the singers volunteered to sing a particular song.

Next to providing pieces of circumstantial information concerning the songs and their collecting, Nekljudov also has done the reader a great service by his informed and lucid exposition of the history of Mongolian epic research and of the texts' general background. This compact introduction to the volume will certainly be appreciated especially by those not familiar with all the subtleties of Mongolian studies, but who would still want to place the songs within the larger Mongol tradition, or for that matter wish to be quickly informed about the most important literature concerning the field.

Tömörčeren has contributed a short piece in which he discusses the Qaračün, Bačarin and Üjümüčün dialects. He comes to the conclusion that besides their distinct traits the dialects exhibit many mixed forms which makes them understood to some extent by non-speakers. In analyzing the songs he finds that such mixed forms are very prominent in them. He further points out that the singers make ample use of neologisms and show a good deal of instability in their expression. One might like to

keep these observations in mind, if one wants to make use of the last section of this book, namely a dictionary of all the words that appear in the Mongolian original, which I hasten to add, is printed facing the translation of the texts. This dictionary, as the compilers warn, lists only those meanings which are relevant in the text, no matter whether they are direct translations, or dependent on the circumstances in which the term is used, or whether they are even specifically determined by the singer at a particular point. Hence this dictionary is not meant as a document for dialect studies, but as a tool to understand the texts. However, to give some idea of the peculiar changes of forms and other particulars of this text, the compilers add the forms of written Mongolian.

This book does more than let us have another glimpse at Gesar's heroic fights with Galdan-Mangus and the evil witch Gilban Šar. It succeeds in giving the reader a chance to form his own idea of what these songs represent in a living epic tradition.

Peter Knecht

POPPE, NIKOLAUS, translator. *Mongolische Epen XI* [Mongol epics]. Asiatische Forschungen, Band 89. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1985. Vii+209 pages. Paper DM 84.—, ISSN 0571-320X, ISBN 3-447-02480-1.

It is almost ten years since Nikolaus Poppe published in the same series the German translation of a collection of Mongolian folk epics which originated from the Oirats and some of their neighboring areas, mainly in western Mongolia (Poppe 1977). The epics in that collection belonged to a cycle centering around the hero Džangar, his companions and their numerous heroic feats. As a matter of fact, the first contact of the West with Mongol folk epics was a summary of a Džangar epic found among the Kalmucks of the Wolga. Benjamin Bergmann, who had traveled among them, had attended a recitation of an epic of this cycle, which he reported in his travelogue (Poppe 1977: 1). While Bergmann had assumed that the epics had been created shortly after the greater part of the Kalmucks has returned to their ancestral lands in central Asia, i.e. some time after 1771, Poppe is of the opinion that by that time a number of formerly independent episodes of Džangar's feats had been brought together to form the Džangar cycle, and that the parts themselves were much older. He further thinks that individual epic songs had been given their basic form in Mongolia after the arrival of Buddhism, since, they include Buddhist terms and names, and that later they traveled to the shores of the lower Wolga.

One year after Poppe had translated this collection of Džangar epics found in Mongolia, a Kalmuck text of the Džangar cycle was published in Moscow in two volumes: *Zaŋh'r Chal'm'g, baat'rl'g duulv'r|25 bölgiiñ tekst*. It was originally planned that Nikolaus Poppe would translate the Kalmuck collection for the present series, but unfortunately his failing health allowed him to finish only the translation of nine epics out of a total of twenty-five. These are the songs no. 11 to no. 19 in the second volume of the Moscow edition.

The present volume contains only the German translation, together with a very short introduction explaining the circumstances of the translation. There are no notes to the text. In places where some further explanation seemed appropriate, Poppe adds a word or two in brackets. Where he had to resort to a free translation in order to aid in the understanding of the text, he inserts the verbatim translation in brackets.

This faithfulness to the text sometimes interrupts the flow of the sentence, but allows for at least some, if only limited, possibility to grasp something of the character of the text or the suitability of a particular translation.

As a whole the smoothness of the translation gives further testimony to Poppe's expertise. Yet I felt a certain unevenness between parts, especially in epic no. 16, which happens to be the longest of all. By a simple reading of the text one gains the impression that in comparison with other epics in the volume the rhythm has shifted. It is however difficult to judge whether this is the result of the special character of this one chapter or rather a sign that the translator is growing weary. Unfortunately, one encounters irritating errors in grammatical relationships (gender and number) in practically all the texts, but in chapter 16 they appear to be more frequent. Sometimes it is as if the translator in the course of his labors has forgotten how the words had to be related to one another over the length of a sentence. Thus one ends up having to read a sentence more than once in order to see what belongs to what. Were it only a technical translation, such errors could be largely disregarded, but in a poetic work such as this the language itself is part of the experience, and so a careful proof-reading of the final text would have been a valuable and necessary service to the readers.

Although he does not state it explicitly in this volume, Poppe follows a policy applied in his earlier translation and therefore leaves technical or untranslatable terms as in the original. In contrast, however, to the former translation, there is no glossary in this volume where some of the more important terms are described and some of the frequent names and their epithets explained. Yet a good deal of this sort of information can in fact be gathered from the earlier volume's glossary. The reader might therefore like to have the former volume close at hand while he reads the present one, also for reasons of comparison with the Mongol tradition of the texts.

The epics in this collection are not only interesting for a reader concerned with epic poetry; they also yield much information in religion and other customs. A heavy Buddhist coloring is evident from the outset, but at the same time the epics reveal a rich array of folk conceptions in such things as the role allotted to demons, the importance of numbers and directions, and so forth. In this way the texts present us with a precious document of a living epic tradition and at the same time with a rich source for the study of a number of other aspects of Kalmuck culture, and last, but not least, they make us wish that the translation of all the songs in this collection may be completed in the near future.

#### REFERENCE CITED:

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1977 *Mongolische Epen V*. Asiatische Forschungen, Band 50. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Peter Knecht

#### PHILIPPINES

WEIN, CLEMENT. *Raja of Madaya. A Philippine Folk-Epic*. Cebu City / Philippines: Folklore Studies Program, University of San Carlos. 180 pages. Text and translation. Paper US\$4.25 (postage included).

The volume under review is a monument to the efforts of Clement Wein, SVD, who spent a large block of his years in the Philippines undertaking research among the