

***Agri-culture* and its association with the non-human World: A comparative study of India and Mongolia**

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, it is assessed that Mongolia and India are not just spiritual neighbours, the unforeseen cross-culture resemblance do exist which could be seen in the form of, immensely devotional place for the non-human world, traditional animal cults, fire worshippers, feeling of togetherness and a strong sense of community, all could be purely associated with the *Vedic* culture and cults, which are still practiced and are alive in India. The folk songs, folk dances, playing of musical instruments, traditional and folk medicine practices and other professions are also innate part of Indian culture, specifically in villages. In this article vital aspects of spiritual and cultural association of India and Mongolia was explored and deep interconnectedness is established especially in terms of agricultural knowledge, practices and ethical orientation for the non-human world. The ethical treatment of the non-human world, as a part of culture and everyday life, bluntly indicates an embedded thoughtfulness for sustainable agriculture, which could be seen in the form of deep-rooted cultural restriction imposed against the over exploitation of natural wealth of the non-human world.

Key Words : Non-human world, Sustainable agricultural knowledge and ethics, Cross-culture resemblance, Horse cult, *Hayagriva*, Vedic culture

INTRODUCTION

Everything exists for a reason, but if we don't understand that doesn't mean that their existence is not there or without any value. Human world attaches value with every existence as per their need, their convenience or desirability. Similarly, an innate association exists between human and the non-human world. The existence of human world depends entirely on the non-human world, and agriculture is best way to represent this relation. *Agri-culture*, here means there is a deep cultural content in cultivation of plants or animal husbandry, it requires an innate involvement of human world and is completely becomes a part of culture of everyday life, of every representation of human life that even every piece of art and culture remained immersed in its color, and its music as well. That is how I feel that it is really true to say that, 'agriculture is a way of life' and sustenance of livelihood is a part it.

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In few of the most ancient civilizations and vibrant culture, India and Mongolia, both are deeply associated with the *agri-culture* and their sense for the realization for the non-human world. In Mongolia, history remained studded with enthralling events. The past of the Great Mongols, a tribal nomadic community who expanded its empire to a geographical stretch which no one ever be able to establish. Ironically, they are the one who were considered obsolete, semi-barbaric in nature, lacking all sort of modernity, and modern technologies, yet they were invincible in terms of their warrior skills and art of military strategies which made a mark in the history of mankind. Mongolia and Mongols remained jolted with their transition to diverse and completely contrasting political and economic system. From traditional system to the state controlled command economy in the socialist era, and after the collapse of Soviet Union, it transformed in a new system based on market economy with newly felt democratic political system. After 1990s, colossal changes impacted every day and every sphere of life, beginning with political, economic, social cultural and spiritual aspects of the Mongolians.

India, which appeared to be a distant neighbor of land locked country of Mongolia, but deeply connected in the form of spirituality and much of the culture of both the spiritual neighbors are found to be astonishingly similar and sometimes even superimposed on each other as if there lies a deep interconnect between both the ancient cultures. The fire worshippers, the horse cult, special place for non-human world etc., are few of the examples which gives us vital clues that these ancient civilizations and their cultures are at some point in the history were part of a single system surviving on similar value system. Similarities were also found in terms of the principles followed for maintaining the environmental sustainability and the way it was deeply embedded in traditional cultural practices.

Concept of sustainability and its in-depth association with the non-human World:

The traditions which are followed from ages are now assessed for its deeply embedded concept of sustainability and its supreme level of scientific explanations and temperament. Similarly, when we come across with the divinity of the non-human world in some ancient cultures and traditions, deep connection was observed between the role of nature and dependence of human world on it. An ancient system or tradition cannot be discarded or termed obsolete as against the fast paced highly modern technological system, but immense thoughtfulness is required for establishing the embedded value system in every traditional knowledge system.

In case of Mongolia, the nomads remained deeply associated with the non-human world, especially their grazing land and the concept of five animals, the mountain where they perform *oboo*, a mountain cult, and every entity of the non-human world, for instance rivers, fire, etc., has been given a divine status, and fused in diverse cults, customs, and traditions associated with it. The concept of breeding of five types of animals by every nomadic family and the composition of herd, seasonal movements and the altitudinal movements of the nomadic herders, all are highly scientific in nature and purely followed the path to sustainability. Agriculture remained always the first love of Mongols and played significantly role in the economy, but now things are changing and mining has overtaken the agriculture, and emerged with immense magnetism to attract huge sum of foreign investments (Soni, 2015, 45).

Buddhism is considered as a major realm immensely influenced the Mongols, so much

so that now Buddhism is the state religion or better called national religion of Mongolia. It was observed that India and Mongolia have had civilization links as old as over a period of 2,700 years and 'these links are fascinating, intense and inseparable; transcending all human activities from language, literature, religion, medicine and folklore to culture and tradition' (Soni, 2015, 44). It indicates that many traditions are much older in nature and were practiced even before the spread and rise of Buddhist influence in Inner Asian region.

In India, from ancient *Vedic* and post-*Vedic* periods, agriculturists had developed a sustainable, highly balanced system with their local natural space. The deep association of the *Vedic* culture with non-human world still remains as one of the most significant area of research and many western concepts like deep ecology, Gaia hypothesis, principles of sustainability, all are considered to be innately connected with the traditional knowledge system associated with the *Vedic* and post- *Vedic* periods. Agriculture is one of the prime activities in India and mainstay of life and livelihood. In essence agriculture preserves the *Indianness* of India, and a major share of population still primarily depends on agriculture for making their living they perform cultivation. Hence, the practices of ancient agricultural knowledge are still alive and most of them are performed by small and marginal farmers as they are not in a state to afford expensive inputs of highly modernist agricultural technologies.

The highly scientific nature of ancient Indian soil classification which was practiced during the Vedic period identified to be very much similar to the modern soil classification. The animal science was highly developed; the different divisions of veterinary sciences were well established. Different branches of Ayurveda were devoted for the treatment and cure of humans and the non-human world of plants and animals. Few of the renowned works from ancient India includes '*Vrkshaayurveda*' (plant-ayurveda) of Surapala/Varahmira, '*Asva Ayurveda*', '*Gajaayurveda*', etc., all are praised for its deeply embedded concept of sustainability (Majumdar, 1971, 254-261; Raychaudhuri and Kaw, 1964, 144-151).

Mongolia, on the other hand, has a vast extent of delicate steppe grassland and their animals. From land to the people, music, art, culture, cults, and the economy and even the currency of exchange, all remained intensely associated with animals. According to Montagu (1956: 64), 'Mongolia is the land of five animals. These are the animals emblazoned on its emblem . . . On these animals depends the prosperity of the country'. The five animals include the horse, cow or yak, sheep, goat and camel. Two animals which are considered 'traditionally foreign to the Mongolian diet are pigs and poultry' (Montagu, 1956: 72). It is remarkable feature that tribes, neighboring the Mongols to the east and to the north-east, the Manchu, the Chinese and Russians, all kept pigs, 'but the Mongols never' (Montagu, 1956, 72). The food system of Mongols has been altered and pigs, poultry and vegetables are included and considered new for the Mongolian diet.

Breeding of five animal species with a defined portion of mixed herd composition by the nomadic herders of Mongolia is now recognized as one of the key factor in maintaining the sustainability of the sensitive and pristine grasslands of steppe. The frequent seasonal and altitudinal movements of the herd added high mobility which is one of the most sustainable and highly scientific traditional agricultural practice followed by these nomadic herders.

Horse as a part of culture: Innate cross-cultural resemblances between India and

Mongolia :

Domestication of horse was considered as major activity which revolutionized the lifestyle and added mobility to the mankind with much greater speed and immensely contributed in increasing the interaction of humans with new world or the unknown, and the unexplored world. Starting with horse, its evolution had taken place in the northern America and during the quaternary period, the horse migrated to the land of Eurasia. The true horse *Equus* is believed to be appeared during the Pleistocene period. The Narmada river valley in Madhya Pradesh and Shivaliks above Chandigarh region in India, examined as the places where *Equus namadicus* has been found in the Middle Pleistocene alluvium (Randhawa, 1980, 283). Tarpan, a wild of south Russia become extinct in 1851 in Ukrain. And Przewalski, the wild horse, till the Russian revolution in the twentieth century, was able to survive, sustain and could be seen venturing primarily in Mongolia (Randhawa, 1980, 283).

In India animals have always remain an intrinsic part of their culture and animal cults enthralled no other culture as much as the ancient cultures in India. In the history of mankind, Aryan nomads remained deeply associated with horse and horse chariot. They used horse as a source of entertainment in the form of chariot race, a sporting activity for enhancing their warrior skills, and in war-time, they use them as their weapons. In Vedic culture horse was considered sacred as well as symbolic of god form. In studies it was observed that, ‘. . . in major Vedic rituals, horse was considered as a symbolic of *surya* and *Agni*’ (Sridhar, 2001, 683).

In Rgveda, a detailed description of horse of various kinds, colors and breeds were given. The seers recognized the horse as those who draws the chariot of god and goddess through the air and it was strongly believed that around seven horses were yoked in the chariot of Sun-god. It was further observed that, ‘*Vedic* people offered prayers to their anthropomorphic gods to bestow them the herds of healthy horses and implore them to use a diseased horse’ (Rgveda, 1.17.117.4 and Sridhar, 2001, 682). Since the *Rgvedic* period, the horse remained as the most favored among the other animals in the mythological and religious rituals and events of Hindus. Horse played significant role in *Rgvedic* times, as the one who draws god’s-chariot but also praised as a sacrificial animal, for instance *Asvamedha* sacrifice, it was observed that, ‘in *Vedic* sacrifices, horses were symbolic of sun and fire. For *Vedic* people horse were the emblem of war, and was identified with rain god’ (Rgveda, 1. 64. 6; Sridhar, 2001: 700). During the post-*Vedic* period, horse mainly became symbolic of sexual power (Sridhar, 2001: 700). Vedic and post-Vedic people are deeply immersed in the animal world and observe them not as a separate entity but as a unifying link between the human and the non-human world. It was established in studies that, the Vedic and post-Vedic people ‘. . . viewed the animals from the cosmic and temporal planes, trying to classify them based on their habit and habitat in a broad way . . . Around 260 animals names was identified by Mcdonnell and Keith in the entire *Vedic* literature’ (Sridhar, 2001, 680).

Horse always been considered as one of the important animals for the Mongols, which is engraved in every piece of art and culture in Mongolia. Beginning with the horse-headed divine musical instrument ‘*Morin khuur*’ to the traditional food preparation from the mare’s milk ‘*airag*’, a highly valued drink made from mare’s milk, horse still remains innate part of Mongols everyday life and livelihood. We cannot imagine Mongolia and Mongols without a

horse, and that is why they are better known as the 'horse nomads'. Horse added the real strength and speed to the Mongols. Mongols, the 'horse nomads' are praised for their horse breeding, riding and warhorse skills.

If we deeply reassess the spiritual sphere of interconnect and interaction, it could be bluntly observed that in both India and Mongolia, the non-human world, and especially the horse and other animal figures was not just involved in various traditional cults, but were spiritually of high esteem.

The horse cult and horse-headed figure: *Hayagriva* :

In both India and Mongolia, many horse-cults exist even today as they were practiced in the early history. It clearly indicates that an innate relation shared by humans with the non-human world. *Hayagriva* is considered as a form of Vishnu, a *Vedic* deity, having an immensely important place and is closely associated with the god of knowledge as he fought back and restores the *Vedas* from the demon. An in-depth study by Gulik (1935, 28) examined diverse facets of the horse-headed figure *Hayagriva* and its wide spread appeal beginning with India, China, Japan, Tibet and as far as Mongolia. Both in Hinduism and Buddhism, the horse-headed figure god was given immense respect and central place in religious sphere. It was observed that, 'the figure of *Vishnu-Hayagriva* was taken over in the Mahayanic pantheon as a *Vidyaraja*' (Gulik, 1935, 28). *Hayagriva*, remained as few of the figures which was closely related with the sacred word written in *Veda*'s. In fact, it was observed that no one reached such a prominent position as *Hayagriva*, and his qualities gave him a new transformational role of *Vidyaraja* (Van Gulik, 1935, 28).

Hayagriva, the horse-headed idol is one of the most fascinating figures with its exceptionally widespread followers beyond the boundaries of nation-state. Borderless followers beginning with India, to China, Japan and even in a land locked and distant country of nomads like Mongolia, *Hayagriva*, the horse-headed deity is everywhere left its deep imprint with its divine presence. The Mahayanic of *Hayagriva* was extensively explored by Van Gulik (1935, 2). In Hinduism, *Hayagriva* is considered to be the restorer of *Veda*'s and associate him with as 'god of knowledge'. Although, historians differ in opinion about the horse-headed figure, *Hayagriva*, and reexamined that, *Hayagriva* as a tribal deity. In Assam, specifically in Manikutta hills horse-headed figure was worshiped by tribal community pray to horse-headed figure and was believed to be fused in Mantrayana Buddhism, a 7th -8th century Buddhist text, and later transformed and infused in pan-India Hindu text (as both demon and deity) as well as into the *Vaisnava* traditions (Jaiswal, 1987,40-57 and Nayyar, 2004, 16).

Even in scientific studies, horse is having amazingly characteristic of understanding human signals, their positive (happy) and negative (anger) responses, and are considered exceptionally intelligent minded animal which could read human emotions (Smith *et al.*, 2016). In Mongolia, horse is considered as a versatile part of their culture and everyday life. Mongolians are also known as the country of nomads and Mongols are considered to be the 'best horsemen on the earth' (AMNH, 2016). For a nomadic community, like Mongolia, horse remains as an integral part of Mongols life and livelihood. *Takhi*, the wild horse, also known as Prezwalski horse, considered to be the most important among all of their animal wealth, although it was never domesticated and had gone extinct during 1960's. *Takhi* means

‘spirit’ or ‘spiritual’ in Mongolia and represented as a symbol of national heritage. It has been observed that, ‘the history of Mongols is closely related to horse and ... *Takhi* are still worshipped by Mongols’ (AMNH, 2016). It signifies that horse has always remained as an integral part of nomadic culture in Mongolia, so much so that it attained a status of local horse-deity. After coming in contact with Buddhist religion, horse-headed deity *Hayagriva* was instinctively get included and accepted as horse-headed figure deity without any cultural or religious resistance. The animal headed figures have an intrinsically unique place in both Hinduism and Buddhism. The elephant-headed figure and the horse-headed figures, both are deeply infused in the traditional art, culture and religion in India and Mongolia as a part of deep rooted homage to the non-human world. Gulik (1935, 28) identified that, ‘... his continually increasing importance is moreover aided by the fact that as the horse-headed one, or to be amalgamated with local horse-gods. This last appears to have been the case in Tibet and Mongolia’. *Hayagriva*, all through its existence in the past and present always remained associated with the horse-headed figure, which in a way given him a widespread appeal and acceptance as horse-god or horse-headed figure in local cultures, especially among the horse nomads.

Whether it is Aryan horse nomads from ancient period to the present horse nomads in Mongolia, horse and horse cult still hold a pivotal position in both the cultural and spiritual sphere which remained an enigma, yet a deep connecting line between India and Mongolia. And could be further explored to strengthen the India - Mongolia relation and there is immense possibilities to make this friendly relation to reach to a new pinnacle in the emerging global politics in this highly disturbing phase for humanity. India and Mongolia could set a new trend for the globe to follow the innate light of knowledge with praises not just for humans but for the non-human world too. However far the distant one is from each other in terms of their physical appearances of maps, boundaries, frontiers and the buffer zones, etc., if we follow the innate and intrinsic interconnect between us, the cross-culture depth must be explored, and then nothing would matter before humanity.

Divine musical instruments: Comparing Indian ‘*Veena*’ with Mongolian ‘*Morin Khuur*’ :

Musical instruments have a true cultural resemblance as music represents the sound of nature which deeply touches the inner core of every soul, both human and the non-human world. In India, music and musical instruments are deeply associated with the meditative state or a state of trance where one can connect with its inner core. Music purely impacts our conscious and sub-conscious mind, and is well represented female deity of knowledge ‘*Saraswati*’, which embraces a musical instrument ‘*Veena*’. Goddess *Saraswati* holds the predominant position in Hindu religious activities specifically related to knowledge, music, art and culture and for attaining ‘*moksha*’, a divine state where person liberate itself from the cycle of life and death, which is considered as the utmost state of knowledge. ‘*Veena*’ is not just a musical instrument but an instrument to attain divinity, the supreme state of knowledge and before playing *Veena* goddess *Saraswati* is worshipped to seek her blessings. Therefore, *Veena* is a divine instrument and even the scholar like C.V. Raman deeply observed the construction and musical over-tones and found that *Veena* closely resembles the human-

voice which can regenerate overtones up to sixteenth harmonic (Pisharoty, 1982).

'*Morin Khuur*' (horse-headed fiddle) is a musical for the Mongol's just like *Veena* in India. Horsehair is used strings and made in the shape of a scoop. The significance of *Morin Khuur* in the life of Mongols couldn't be equated with any other any other thing it is irreplaceable from their nomadic origin and considered as one of the most sacred instrument to communicate with the other world, the spirit world or with the world of ancestors. In studies it was found that, '. . . it (*Morin Khuur*) occupied and considered to occupy a special place in the life of nomads. . . ' (Nikolaeva, 2013, 64). It basically acts as a medium to connect the mortal world with the immortal world, the world of ancestors with its frictional sound. That is why it is considered sacred and associated with attaining divinity. The most fascinating part is that, *Morin Khuur* is also dedicated to a female deity and '. . . was a mean of communicating with the other world by older, knowledgeable, and skillful women (*udagan*)' (Nikolaeva, 2013, 63).

If we compare both the musical instrument we found surprising cross-culture resemblance. In both the musical instruments, the portion of the head is represented by an animal which bluntly indicate a strong inclination for the non-human world and their deep connect with divinity. In case of *Morin Khuur* it is a horse headed fiddle whereas in case of *Saraswati Veena* it is mythological animal called *Yali*, dragon-headed figure which represents the presence of *Visnu*. Both the musical instruments produce enigmatic sound and act as a medium to connect with the spiritual world. It is observed that the two worlds could be interconnected with sound, the music and mantras (holy words). In close examination in a research study it was observed that, 'the instrument (*Morin Khuur*) performs the role of a mediator between the worlds through sound' (Nikolaeva, 2013, 64). In no other culture musical instruments have attained such a supreme divine stature as in India and Mongolia.

Association with the non-human World: Vedic culture and its World view :

In the *Vedic* world view, the non-human world has been considered an intrinsic part of the human life and also finds closeness to divinity. A balance of inter-dependent relationship was shared by humans with the non-human world, and by assigning a spiritual value to every single non-human entity. Here the concept of 'deep ecology' finds its roots and a reason for its origin and importance. The intrinsic value assigned or attached to every single natural entity was evolved as a knowledge system in its purest form where every traditional cult, customs and rituals are threaded around the principles of 'oneness', oneness of very single natural entity. The concept of sustainability is an outcome of this very balanced relationship between human and the non-human world.

The notion that people started worshipping natural entities like sun, water, fire etc., because of fear was accepted an explanation. But is it the real cause or are there any other facet attached to it, if we try to deeply assess the true cause for it then it is actually the deep intrinsic and priceless value of any natural entities which elevate it to a level of divinity and people start paying respect in the form of idol worship. The Vedic and the post-Vedic people 'viewed animals from the cosmic and temporal place' and classified them according to their habit and habitats (Sridhar, 2001, 681). In *Rgveda*, horse was classified on the basis of their color, kind and several breed of horses were known to them. Horses were designated with

different names based on their qualities, the best types were called *svasvaha*, *hari* and *indrahari* (the horse of *Indra*), *niyuta*, *pr sati* and a special horse type capable of charging quickly and *rohita* was included in this category. *Vrsasva* (a young stallion), *Ayava* (well trained horse), *Aryavaji* (the horse with gentle gait) are few of the different names used by *Rgvedic* people for a well-trained horse (Sridhar, 2001, 681).

The horse power added mobility and strength to the Aryan nomads who were considered as the excellent warriors. It is observed that, “the *Vedic* people proclaimed that they were desirous of facing the enemies with the help of horse ...” (Sridhar 2001, 681-682). One of the most fascinating horse-cult of the Vedic period was *Asvamedhayaga*, an auspicious sacrificial ceremony. In Ramayana, the earliest reference to the *Asvamedhayajna* was performed by Dasaratha and his wife Kausalya who performed the horse sacrifice by killing him in three strokes (Ramayana, Balkandam, 14-33; Sridhar, 2001, 682). In Satapatha Brahmana (XIII.3.3.3) the mystery behind the auspicious number ‘*Ekavimsa*’ (Twenty-one numbers in Sanskrit language) observed to be significantly associated with the *Asvamedha* (Prakash 1965, 100). It has been assessed that when the four-year cycle of *yuga* ends, ‘they represented the deficiency of twenty one days during which the *Asvamedhayajna* was performed’ (Satapatha, XIII 5.1.13-15 and Prakash, 1965, 101). Numerous astrological phenomena, the movement of celestial bodies, all are also deeply linked with a unique symbol in the form of an animal figure. For instance, the twelve ‘*rasis*’ (zodiac signs), and the cycle of *yuga* of four years, all were represented as different animal figures. Even many celestial phenomena associated with time were also represented with the animal’s figures. The twelve *rasis* (signs of zodiac) are represented as different animal figure like Capricorn, lion, fish (cancer, leo, pieces, etc.). Similarly the cycle of *yuga* of four year was divided into twenty one (21) stakes and figures were associated with them (Prakash, 1965, 100). The movement of sun within a period of four-year cycle was believed to pass through twenty-one points (or stakes) in the sky, all of which was represented by different animal figures. And, ‘the solar cycle was divided into about 600 divisions, at which were placed about 600 animals’ (Prakash, 1965, 100).

Fascinating analogy had also drawn between the time and the horse chariot. The supreme *purusa* (human being) possesses a chariot which is drawn by seven horses, or seven mouthed single horse. And the ‘seven wheels of the great time were also known as the seven sons of the sun (saptaputra)’, and these are the smallest cycle of time: i) *kala*, ii) *muhurata* iii) *dina* (day), iv) *Ardha masa* (half month), v) *masa* (one month, vi) *Rtu* (season), and vii) *chaturmasya* (four months season) (AsyaVamasys Suktam, 107; Prakash, 1965, 100-102). The horse chariot possesses two yokes (Dhirh), one of them being the *uttarayana* (the period of summer solstice), and *daksinayana* (the winter solstice) a remarkable and highly scientific way of communicating every bit about the celestial bodies, their phenomena, and movements, as every celestial event was threaded around everyday life and livelihoods of the society. In the ancient Indo-Germanic conceptions, horse remained deeply associated with sun, a supreme source of energy and power which still holds the pivotal position among the *Vedic* deities or horse, which is also closely associated with ‘all fertility and fecundity rites’ (Gulik, 1935, 9). Different treaties on horse sciences relating to medical treatments of horse, and a separate field of study had been developed on horse science that is known as

Asvasastra purely devoted on horse studies as horse was immensely important strategically, especially for excelling in the martial skills. In the work of Jadudutta, a complete account of the medicinal treatment of horse was given (Raychaudhri and Kaw, 1964, 145). Just like humans, three humors were also considered as the main cause for all the diseases related to horse and a separate field of Ayurveda, known as *Asvaayurveda* (Equine Ayurveda), was exclusively designated for horse medicinal treatments. Such a level of involvement with veterinary science is rare in the history of mankind which was purely devoted for the non-human world. It certainly signifies that there are deep rooted cultural and traditional interconnect and simultaneously interdependence between human and the non-human world in India.

The ‘Fire Worshipper’ and fire cults :

Fire is thought as one of the most sacred element and considered as the purifier, which has the capability to purify everything. Out of the five main natural elements, *Agni* is considered as the image of the natural element of fire, a ‘terrestrial god and son of *Dyaus* and *Prithivi*’ and *Agni*-cult was strongly practiced in Vedic India (Roy, 2001, 41-43). In *Vedic* and post-*Vedic* period fire holds the pivotal position among deities, worshipped and offerings were made into ‘*Agni*’ (meaning fire) called *yajna*. In Vedic rituals horse was as the symbol of sun and fire, and in Rgvedic period was used as a sacrificial animal in the *Asvamedha yajna* in Ramayana (Rgveda, 1.64.6; Sridhar, 2001, 683, 700). Fire is equated as the ‘... the child of wood, mother of the earth, and enemy of all the metals, plays a very important part in several of Asia’s, ancient religions’ (Haslund, 1949, 121). In India, fire is worshipped even today and sun is considered analogous with fire, or a form of fire.

In Mongolia, fire is considered sacred and Mongols are well known as the fire worshippers. Fire is deeply associated with the worship of sun. It was observed that, fire is a dwelling place of a divinity, and is in itself a divinity. It is for the fear of insulting the divinity of the hearth that one may not through nails, hair and other ‘unclean’ things on fire (Haslund, 1949, 125). Therefore, fire is divinity and its divine presence could be seen in the form of hearth, and it has a special place in Mongolian *Ger* (traditional Mongolian tent) and Mongols life. It was even believed that the fire on the hearth has a control over the thoughts, ideas, admirations and desires and its negativity is suppressed by the beak-shaped tops of the four legs of the hearth which symbolize Vulture ‘before they have found their way into the Mongols heart’(Haslund, 1949, 124). It was observed that not just in Mongolia but in the Central Asia also fire is considered sacred and ‘... throwing cut-off nails, hairs and other “unclean” things on to the fire or by putting their feet against the hearth’ was forbidden (Haslund, 1949, 121).

Both in India and Mongolia, a cross-culture resemblance strongly exists and both are well known as the ‘fire-worshippers’. Fire is the most sacred and an integral part of their culture and has a special place in their life. In *Vedic* culture, throwing of nails, hairs or putting feet against the traditional hearths made up of mud, or putting consumed food and water on fire was forbidden and considered to be disrespectful. These customs are practiced even now and are very much alive as a part of culture among the followers of *Vedic* traditions and rituals.

In Krisiparasara, different hymns in the form of prayers and offerings to offerings to numerous deities were observed. It was strongly believed that 'agriculture bestows wealth and is sacred as it is the mainstay of life on earth' (Vasudeva, 1997, 161). Following mantra was recited in which fire worshipping attain a special place in agriculture:

smartavovasvahsukrahprthuramahparasarah
sampujayagnimdvijayamdevamkuryadadhahlprasarnamm

Before the commencement of plowing *Indra* is to be thought of with reverence following prayers to other deities and after worshipping *Agni* (fire) and *Brahmana* the plough can be drawn (Vasudeva, 1997, 164).

The agriculturist during the Vedic period and even now worship fire before any other ritual. Sun, the most important Vedic deity and *Agni* is considered as the purifier of all sins in the form of *yajna-aahuti* (offerings to fire in the form of food etc.) the holy fire purifies everything, traditionally the practice of offering of prayers and worshipping of hearth are still alive as an important part of human life among the fire worshippers.

It is well established in the foregoing discussion in this research study that there are intense cross-culture similarities between India and Mongolia. Apart from being a spiritual neighbor of Mongolia, India shares innate relationship, especially in terms of agriculture, and within it, the non-human world which includes animals, plants and every single natural entity. One interesting feature is the presence of the horse-cult and the invincible regards for the horse-headed figure *Hayagriva* in both the countries and its imprint can be seen in the form of every piece of art and culture as well as maintaining a pivotal position in the spiritual sphere.

Food connects us all, and love and respect for animals and their importance in the everyday life and livelihood of the people in India and Mongolia, deeply connects both the countries and their cultures. Animal food have a special place in both the countries and in daily life of people, especially among the population performing agricultural work, crop cultivation and pastoral system of herding. The fire-worshippers of Mongolia and most widely worshipped *Vedic* deity, "the Sun", a celestial body, a form of *Agni* (fire) which still holds a central position among the *Vedic* deities. Fire is having a divine presence, and a form of natural entity which is still now immensely respected and considered as the most sacred.

There are close connection between two completely different cultures, which made India and Mongolia closer in terms of their association with the non-human world. There is possibility that Mongols could be an extended clan of the Aryan horse nomads, and possibly migrated to the Central Asian region. As there is intense cross-culture resemblance between both the cultures. Although diversion do exist but it also paves the way for a stronger strategic ties in terms of social and cultural terms with a much concrete spiritual ground. This innate relationship between the two countries which still remain unexplored and could become one of the vital areas for strengthening the environmental and agricultural sustainability much beyond its political, geographical and economic space.

Conclusion :

With this research study it could be concluded that, Mongolia and India relationship could reach to a new pinnacle if their traditional cultural roots concerning agriculture and its

deep association with the non-human world was given a special place. This bluntly indicates a cultural aspect in *agri-culture* which remained deeply connected and associated with the non-human world and is still alive in both India and Mongolia.

In Vedic period, Aryan nomads and their horses were considered as their real strength and power. Similar situation was repeated during the Mongolian history, and the horse nomads fascinatingly extended the Mongol empire to a widespread geographical area. And yet again, horse was believed to be as one of the major reason behind their strength and power. In a way, Mongols and Aryans resemble a strong horse culture and close cross-culture resemblance in many ways. A deeper historical exploration is suggested which could possibly identifying the underlying truth between the civilizations of India and Mongolia.

Lastly, the traditional agricultural knowledge and practices, specifically concerning the innate relation of the human with the non-human world is astonishing and certainly gives a new hope to revive this dying relation, at least for sustaining agriculture and the life and livelihood of people closely dependent on it.

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