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Tsagaan Sar

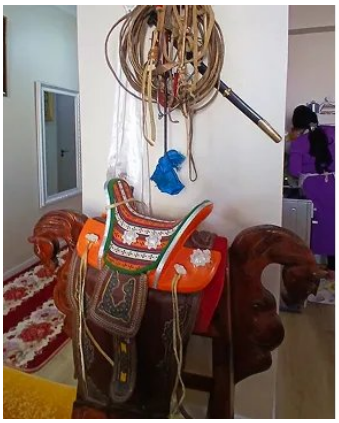
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Tsagaan Sar originates in the religious traditions of the Mongolian peoples and has been celebrated since ancient times. It symbolizes the renewal of man and nature, openness and purity of thoughts, hope and good expectations. The name of the holiday comes from the Mongolian words “tsagaan” (white) and “sar” (month). The “White Month” was originally considered a festival of dairy products and was celebrated in the fall. During this time, the preparation of dairy products for future use, which were consumed during the holidays, was completed.





The Italian traveler and historian Marco Polo, who lived in Kublai Khan's palace in the late 14th century, described Tsagaan Sar as follows:

"Their year begins in February; the Great Khan and all his subjects celebrate in this way: according to custom, everyone dresses in white, both men and women, as best they can. White clothing is considered lucky among them, so they do this, dress in white, so that there will be happiness and prosperity throughout the year... They bring him great gifts... so that throughout the year the Great Khan will have abundant wealth and be joyful and happy. I'll tell you more: princes and knights, and indeed all the people, give each other white things, embrace, rejoice, and feast, and this is done so that they will live happily and well throughout the year.

On this day, you should also know, they give the Great Khan more than one hundred thousand glorious and expensive white horses. On the same day, they lead out five thousand elephants under white animals and birds. Embroidered, blanketed; each elephant carries two beautiful and expensive chests on its back, containing the Great Khan's utensils and the rich trappings for this white gathering. A great number of camels are also brought out; they, too, are blanketed and laden with everything needed for the gift. Both the elephants and the camels pass before the Great Khan, and such beauty has never been seen anywhere!

...And when the Great Sovereign has reviewed all the gifts, tables are set, and everyone sits down... And after dinner, jugglers arrive and entertain the court, as you have already heard before; when all this is over, everyone returns home."

Today, the Mongols continue the wonderful traditions of their Great Ancestors and celebrate Tsagaan Sar widely and solemnly.

In 2011, the holiday was nominated for the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Prepared by Ts. Bayarthetheg