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"Seeing Environmental Violence in Deep Time: Perspectives from Contemporary Mongolian Literature and Music"

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What does it mean to do violence in deep time? How is deep time evoked in our understanding of environmental harm? Environmental transformations have figured prominently in the recent history of Mongolia. Shifts in land use have been associated with severe pasture degradation, and the precarity of herding livelihoods has been a factor accelerating urbanization. Most recently, the intensification of mining activity has been a particular source of social and economic change. These contexts have led to a political and religious reevaluation of human relationships with the land. This article focuses on literary and musical interventions (particularly rap music in the first part of the article and the literary work of G. Mend-Ooyo in the later part) that draw attention to this changing relationship with the environment, which the article portrays as a potential rupture. We explore how these works domesticate deep time, nesting personal histories within the temporal depth of the landscape and crosshatching biographical, mythological, and geologic understandings of time. Yet we then see how this domestication comes to be threatened by developments that sever the relationship between people and land, leading to the disturbing prospect of being left stranded in the face of an inhospitable deep time. (Text from author's abstract)

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