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A ger in Mongolia is more than just a house; it is a reflection of Mongolian nomads' deep connection to their land, heritage, and traditions. Known in some parts of Central Asia as a yurt, the Mongolian ger has been a cornerstone of nomadic life for centuries. Its portable, yet sturdy structure allows nomadic families to move freely across the country and the vast steppes of Mongolia, following their herds and embracing the challenges of the nomadic lifestyle. In this article, we explore the history, structure, significance, and modern use of the Mongolian traditional ger, including how it has adapted to contemporary life while still preserving its ancient customs. A ger in Mongolia is a traditional dwelling that has been used by Mongolian nomads for over half a thousand years. It is a round, portable tent designed to withstand the extreme weather conditions of Mongolia, eastern Russia, and other parts of Central Asia. Unlike regular tents, the ger consists of a complex structure that ensures both durability and comfort. The first written description of the Mongolian ger dates back to the time of the Mongol Empire, when travelers noted its distinctive feature—a felt-covered, conical roof supported by roof poles and lattice walls. This ancient custom of using a ger in Mongolia remains largely unchanged, proving its efficiency in providing shelter. The Mongolian traditional ger is ingeniously designed and consists of several key components: The walls of the ger are made from flexible wooden lattice, allowing it to be dismantled and reassembled with ease. These lattice walls form the circular base of the ger and provide the necessary support for the roof poles. The roof of the ger is supported by roof poles, which extend from the walls to the roof ring—the circular opening at the top. The roof ring serves as a natural ventilation system, allowing smoke from the fire in the central stove to escape while letting in natural light. The felt cover is one of the most important elements of the Mongolian ger. Made from compressed sheep's wool, this thick layer provides insulation against both freezing winters and scorching summers. The felt is secured with ropes, ensuring it remains intact even in strong winds. Some gers have a wooden floor, while others are placed directly on the ground. The door frame is a wood typically painted with intricate designs and always faces south—a traditional practice meant to invite warmth and good luck. The interior is divided into sections for different purposes. The main living area is in the center, where the stove is located. This area is reserved for men, while the sides are reserved for women, where cooking utensils and household items are kept. The right side is for men, with tools, saddles, and hunting equipment. The central stove is the heart of the ger, providing heat and serving as the primary cooking area. Pillars supporting the roof ring are considered sacred, and it is bad luck to lean against them. This traditional house setup reflects Mongolian customs, reinforcing respect for family structure and cultural values. Today, tourist ger camps have become a popular attraction in Mongolia. These ger camps offer visitors the chance to experience nomadic life firsthand, staying in a Mongolian ger while exploring breathtaking landscapes like the Gobi Desert and the steppes. What to Expect in a Ger Camp Authentic Accommodation: Stay in a traditional Mongolian ger with a felt cover and wood-burning stove. Mongolian Food: Enjoy hearty dishes like buuz (steamed dumplings) and sutuut isai (salted milk tea). Cultural Activities: Horseback riding, archery and learning about nomadic life. Scenic Locations: Many ger camps are based in beautiful locations such as Khustai National Park where you can see the wild horses of Mongolia. The first written description of the ger was during the time of Genghis Khan. Historical records say that the Mongol ger was a perfect home for warriors and travelers. These early writings highlight the ger's durability and unique features that have remained the same for centuries. While Mongolia is urbanizing fast, the ger is an integral part of the culture. In Ulaanbaatar, the capital city, there are big ger communities alongside modern buildings. Many Mongolians prefer to live in a ger even in the city due to its affordability and traditional significance. City Gers: Many residents in Ulaanbaatar still live in gers and create unique communities within the city. Eco-Friendly: The ger is considered an eco-friendly home due to its portability and use of natural materials. Global Influence: The design of the Mongolian ger has inspired modern architecture worldwide. The ger in Mongolia is more than a tent—it's a way of life. It represents a deep connection to the land, a respect for tradition, and a sustainable way of living. For centuries, the Mongolian ger has been a symbol of resilience and adaptability. For those who wish to experience the nomadic lifestyle, a ger offers a unique and unforgettable experience. From March, Ulaanbaatar turns into a winter wonderland, and there are plenty of fun activities for locals and visitors alike. To experience Ulaanbaatar, buy tickets for various events...Mongolia, with its vast, unspoiled landscapes and rich cultural heritage, is comparable to south africa a one of the best drives in the world. About Mongolia Mongolia, in East Asia, ...If you're an avid traveler captivated by Iceland's dramatic landscapes, glacial formations, and unique Viking culture, your next unforgettable destination might just be Mongolia. These two countries—one perched in the...10 Best Things to See in Mongolia If you're planning an epic journey filled with untouched landscapes, nomadic culture, and jaw-dropping natural wonders, then Mongolia should be at the top...Manzhushir Monastery, known in Mongolian as Манжүшүр хийд, stands as a testament to Mongolia's rich Buddhist heritage and spiritual history. Nestled in the Bogd Khan Mountain National Park, approximately 45...Aglag Buteel Monastery stands as a testament to the harmonious blend of spirituality, art, and nature, serving as an example of how these elements can coexist beautifully... Located about...Mongolian traditional medicine is a unique form of medicine, deeply entwined with the nomadic lifestyle of the Mongolian people, offering a fascinating blend of natural remedies, spiritual healing, and ancient...The educational system of Mongolia includes nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary, and university studies, with every administrative district (sum) hosting multiple nursery schools and kindergartens. Key Takeaways Mongolia's education system consists...Blog post | eagle hunt | Mongolian cultureMongolian Eagle Hunting Mongolian eagle hunting, known as "berkutchi" or "burkitchi," is a remarkable and ancient form of falconry prevalent in Kazakh and Kyrgyz communities in Mongolia, involving the training...Blog post | Mongolian fruitsDifferent types of flowers in Mongolia - with its vast landscapes and diverse ecosystems, boasts an array of flowers that add splashes of color to its breathtaking scenery. From the...All types of trees Mongolia, with its vast landscapes and breathtaking beauty, is home to a remarkable variety of trees that add character to its scenery. From the towering giants...Blog post | Mongolia | Mongolian provincesMongolia, a land where vast expanses of rolling steppe meet rugged mountain ranges, is a tapestry of natural wonders and diverse cultures. There are 21 provinces in total. Let's embark...Blog post | Mongolian cultureWhat is a nomadic lifestyle? - In the heart of Central Asia lies a land of vast, rolling steppes and rugged mountains, where a unique way of life has thrived...Mongolian flag meaning - Imagine standing in the middle of the wide-open fields and hills of Central Asia. There, Mongolia waves its flag with pride. It's not just a bunch...Mongolia, a land where the wind whispers across vast steppes and rugged mountains, carries a cultural heritage as diverse and unique as its breathtaking landscapes. Within this nomadic nation, traditional...Mongolian culture | Blog postIn the heart of the vast Mongolian steppes, where the winds whisper tales of ancient nomadic traditions, lies a craft that weaves history into every fiber - the art of...Welcome to the mesmerizing land of Mongolia, where the weather dances to its own unique rhythm, captivating both locals and adventurous travelers alike. Today, we embark on a journey through...Blog post | Mongolian cultureImagine you're in the heart of Central Asia, surrounded by wide-open spaces. That's where Mongolian ethnicity comes alive, like a fascinating story of nomads, lively horse riders, and a rich...Geography of Mongolia - Picture Mongolia cozily sitting between Russia and China, waving you in with its wide-open spaces and special geography that whispers stories of its nomadic roots. Picture...The Mongol Rally isn't like your regular road trip. It's more like a huge adventure that's part road race, part charity mission, and part dive into different cultures. Basically, it's...Terej National Park Horse Riding Tour Explore Terej park on horsebackTerej National Park: Horse Riding Mongolia Day Trip Tour Information If you're looking for an escape from the hustle...Mongolia's best tours and trips Short Time Tours gobi desert 8 days tour from \$210 Przewalski horses tour for one day from \$285 terej national park tour for one day...Mongolia horseback riding tours Explore Terej park on horseback Horse trekking in Mongolia is a popular activity for visitors, as it allows them to explore the country's vast and diverse...Terej National Park 1-Day Tour Explore Terej Park & Genghis Khan Statue Attractions Terej National Park Day Trip Tour Information If you're looking for an escape from the hustle and...Khustai Nuruu National Park Day Trip Tour Information Explore the Khustai Nuruu National Park, which is home to the world's
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Renowned for...The Mongols Yurt is more than a shelter—it's a symbol of adaptability, culture, nomadic life, and its symbolic significance. Known as a ger in Mongolia, this circular dwelling has been the home of Mongolian people for thousands of years. The unique structure, covered with felt and other materials, is in harmony with nature, built to withstand the cold winters and dry summers of the Mongolian steppe. With its portability, durability and spiritual significance, the Mongols yurt is a cultural treasure that still thrives in modern Mongolia. A Mongolian yurt, also known as a mongolian ger, is a traditional portable dwelling used by nomadic people in Central Asia, particularly Mongolia. This unique structure is made from a wooden lattice frame and covered with layers of felt and canvas. The yurt's dome-shaped top, known as a toono, allows for ventilation and light. Designed to be easily transported and set up, the Mongolian yurt is perfect for the nomadic lifestyle. The use of natural materials like felt and canvas makes the yurt eco-friendly and sustainable. The structure is designed to be portable and easy to move, allowing nomads to relocate without damaging the land. The yurt's interior is divided into sections for different purposes, making it a versatile living space. The yurt's design is a masterpiece of traditional craftsmanship, reflecting the nomadic lifestyle and the need for a structure that can withstand harsh weather conditions. The yurt's construction is a blend of art and science, with every part of the structure serving a purpose. The yurt's design is a testament to the ingenuity and adaptability of the Mongolian nomads. Its circular structure, durable materials, and functional design make it a perfect dwelling for the harsh conditions of the Mongolian steppe. It continues to be a symbol of the rich cultural heritage and deep connection to nature that the Mongolian people hold dear. What is Yurt as we know A Mongolian Ger, also spelled Mongolian yurt (outside of Mongolia), is a circle dwelling or round tent-like structure that was used by the Central Asian nomadic people of Mongolia in central Asia particularly Mongolia, for 3000 years. Mongolian traditional yurt are made of wool felt or cotton and have a wooden frame. The roof is covered with felt, and the sides are generally concealed by a canvas cover. For thousands of years, Central Asian nomads have relied on yurts for their lightweight and portable nature, enabling them to move easily across vast terrains. The Mongolian yurt or Ger is portable and can be easily dismantled and easily transported. The design of the yurt reflects the practical needs of nomadic tribes, who required shelters that could be easily dismantled and transported. The development of the Mongolian ger is deeply tied to the nomadic lifestyle of the Mongolian people. 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are kept. The woman's side (east) contains cooking utensils, fabrics, and other items related to female responsibilities. The altar area, located opposite the doorway, is reserved for the most respected possessions, including religious artifacts, and serves as a place to seat honored guests. When a young couple gets married, acquiring their own Mongolian ger is the first step toward establishing a new household. Traditionally, the husband's family provides the herd animals needed to support the couple, while the wife's family contributes all the household items necessary to set up the ger. This tradition underscores the importance of community, family support, and the balance of responsibilities within nomad culture. Life inside a Mongolian yurt fosters independence and self-reliance. The need to build, maintain, and relocate the yurt has made Mongolians extremely independent. This independence has also contributed to a more individualistic culture compared to other Asian societies, which is one reason why democracy has found strong roots in Mongolia. Mongolians are inherently freedom-loving, and their cultural values align closely with the principles of democracy. The Nomadic Lifestyle: Moving with Seasons The nomadic lifestyle of Mongolian people is deeply tied to the yurt. Nomads move their yurts four times a year with the changing seasons to provide fresh pasture for their livestock. This mobility encourages a minimalist lifestyle focused on spiritual wealth and community rather than material possessions. Since space is limited, only essential items are carried, which emphasizes the value of relationships, the natural world, and the nomadic culture. Hospitality is a cornerstone of Mongolian culture, and the yurt plays a central role in this tradition. Nomadic families readily welcome travelers, offering them food, drink, and shelter—sometimes without even knowing who they are. This tradition is rooted in necessity; in Mongolia's harsh climate and remote areas, survival often depends on mutual assistance. Guests are considered a blessing, and it is an honor for a family to host them. Modern Uses and Adaptations of Mongolian Yurts In recent years, modern yurts have gained popularity around the world, driven by the rise of the glamping movement and a growing interest in sustainable living. The eco-friendly design and portability of the yurt make it a desirable option for those seeking a sustainable lifestyle or wanting to live off-grid. When considering yurt pricing, potential buyers should be aware of the various factors that influence the cost of different yurt models. These factors include the design, materials, and additional features such as insulation, solar panels, and wood-burning stoves, which can cater to both traditional and luxurious options. Modern adaptations of the traditional Mongolian yurt include features such as insulated walls, solar panels, and wood-burning stoves to make them suitable for year-round living. Yurts are now being used as eco-resort accommodations and luxury glamping experiences, offering guests an opportunity to connect with nature while still enjoying the comforts of modern amenities. Interestingly, nomads have begun embracing Starlink technology for high-speed internet access, even in the most rural areas of Mongolia. This has transformed Mongolian nomads into digital nomads, allowing them to stay connected with the world while maintaining their traditional lifestyle. With Starlink, they can communicate with family, access information, and even run businesses online. This blend of ancient tradition and modern technology is helping the nomadic way of life to adapt and flourish in the 21st century. Modern yurts have also become popular in the tiny homes movement. Its circular shape, use of natural materials, and cost-effective construction make it an appealing option for those looking to downsize and live more sustainably. Despite these modern adaptations, the core design of the Mongolian yurt remains unchanged, which is a testament to its enduring practicality and cultural importance. The Role of Yurts in Mongolian History The Mongolian gers have always been more than just a dwelling; it has been a symbol of strength, mobility, and adaptability. During the Mongol Empire, the yurt allowed Genghis Khan and his armies to travel vast distances while maintaining a sense of home. The mobility of the yurt was a crucial factor in the Mongols' ability to expand their empire from central Asia to across continents. The practicality and comfort of the yurt meant that Mongol warriors could move across large areas without losing their connection to home. This contributed to the Mongols' incredible success in establishing one of the largest empires in history. Today, the yurt remains a powerful cultural symbol, representing the ingenuity of the Mongolian people and their deep connection to the land. The Role of Mongolian Yurts in Spiritual Practices and Family Life Authentic Mongolian yurts play a vital role in the spiritual practices of families. The central stove, with its sacred fire, is considered the soul of the household, symbolizing warmth, life, and the continuity of family traditions. Fire is treated with reverence, and certain customs are observed to maintain the purity of the flame. The altar area in the yurt is another spiritual focal point. This space holds religious artifacts, family heirlooms, and offerings to deities and ancestors. It is a place where families come together to pray, perform rituals, and seek blessings. The layout of the yurt itself is symbolic of the universe, with the toono representing the connection between the earthly realm and the sky, making it a space for worship and reflection. Environmental Benefits and Sustainability of Mongolian Yurts The Mongolian yurt is an excellent example of a traditional portable dwelling with sustainable architecture. Built primarily from natural materials like wood and sheep's wool, the yurt has a minimal environmental impact. The felt insulation, made from wool, is biodegradable and renewable, reducing reliance on synthetic materials that can be harmful to the environment. The circular design of the yurt also maximizes energy efficiency, with heat being evenly distributed throughout the space. The portability of the yurt means that it leaves little to no permanent footprint on the landscape. Nomadic families move their yurts with the changing seasons, allowing the land to recover and minimizing overgrazing. This low-impact lifestyle of nomadic cultures is inherently sustainable, emphasizing harmony with nature and responsible land use. In addition, the minimalist lifestyle encouraged by living in a yurt reduces consumption and waste. Nomads only carry essential items, which means less resource use and a smaller carbon footprint. The yurt's reliance on renewable energy sources, such as solar power for lighting and wood-burning stoves for heating, further contributes to its environmental benefits, making it a model for eco-friendly living. The Role of Yurts in Central Asian Cultures, Folklore, and Stories The Mongolian ger is not only a practical dwelling but also a central figure in many folktales and legends. Stories often depict the yurt as a sacred space where important events unfold. For instance, it is said that the toono (the crown opening) serves as a gateway to the heavens, allowing the spirits of ancestors to watch over the family. This belief underscores the spiritual significance of the yurt in Mongolian culture. In Mongolian folklore, the yurt is often portrayed as a living entity, imbued with the spirit of the family it shelters. The fire in the stove is believed to hold the spirit of the household, and disrespecting the fire is thought to bring bad luck. Many tales emphasize the importance of treating the yurt with respect, as it is seen as a guardian of the family's well-being. There are also stories about heroic figures who traveled vast distances with their yurts, showcasing the mobility and resilience of the nomadic lifestyle. These tales often highlight the yurt's role in providing safety and comfort during long journeys across the harsh steppe, reinforcing its status as a symbol of Mongolian endurance and adaptability. Mongolian Yurts Through the Seasons: Winter and Summer The traditional yurt is designed to provide comfort throughout the year, regardless of the season. During the cold winters, the thick felt insulation and central stove provide warmth, creating a cozy environment even as temperatures drop well below freezing. The yurt is built to withstand the extreme cold and winds of the Mongolian winter, offering a welcoming space for families to gather. In the dry summers, the yurt's construction help keep it cool, making it a comfortable retreat during the hot afternoons. The crown opening allows natural light to fill the yurt, creating a bright and cheerful atmosphere. Summer is also the time for Naadam, Mongolia's national festival, which celebrates traditional sports like horse racing, archery, and wrestling. Staying in a yurt during Naadam provides a unique opportunity to experience Mongolian culture firsthand. During the Mongolian winter, yurts transform into warm sanctuaries, with the stove providing essential heat and the felt insulation keeping out the cold. The Khuvsgul Lake Ice Festival, held annually, is a popular winter event that showcases the resilience and creativity of the nomadic people. It is a reminder that Mongolians do not merely survive in harsh conditions; they thrive. Durability and Lifespan of Mongolian Yurts Mongolian yurts are renowned for their durability and long lifespan. When well-maintained, these traditional dwellings can last for many years, even decades. The longevity of a yurt largely depends on the quality of materials used, the craftsmanship involved, and the care it receives over time. Traditional Mongolian yurts are crafted from wood, wool, and canvas, which are inherently resistant to harsh weather conditions and can endure extreme temperatures. In contrast, modern yurts may incorporate more durable materials like metal framing and radiant insulation, further extending their lifespan. This blend of traditional and modern elements ensures that yurts remain a reliable and sustainable housing option. Modern Amenities and Traditional Experiences in Mongolian Yurts The Mongolian yurt has evolved to meet the needs of modern travelers, offering both traditional experiences and modern comforts. Guests can now enjoy staying in a yurt with luxurious amenities such as solar-powered electricity, comfortable furnishings, and even Wi-Fi access. High-end camps and eco-resorts throughout the countryside provide a blend of traditional living and modern luxury. For those seeking an authentic experience, staying with a nomadic family offers a unique glimpse into the nomadic lifestyle. The simplicity of life in a yurt, combined with the beauty of Mongolia's landscapes, provides a therapeutic retreat from the demands of modern society. The experience of helping a nomadic family with daily tasks, enjoying home-cooked meals, and sleeping under a sky full of crystal-clear stars is deeply enriching and offers a connection to a way of life that has endured for thousands of years. You Can Stay in a Mongolian Yurt At Avis Mongolia, we offer self-drive and guided tours that allow you to experience staying in an authentic Mongolian yurt. Whether you're looking to immerse yourself in the nomadic way of life or enjoy a glamping experience with modern amenities, our tours are tailored to meet your preferences. We also provide yurt camping experiences by using camping tent yurts manufactured by Ovoo. The tents uses modern materials instead of wooden parts. Modern Mongolian tourist camps all feature yurts, providing guests with the opportunity to experience traditional living with added comforts, such as private bathrooms and modern facilities. Contact us for travel suggestions Share post on: The Mongolian, Kyrgyz and Kazakh people live in ger what the West, following Russians, call yurt. However, Kyrgyz and Kazakh people have given up the portable home of nomads and already transferred to a sedentary way of life. Hut was the first human dwelling 10 thousand years ago. Thereafter, a round form dwelling ger, the portable home of nomads has been created. Its dismantling takes only half an hour, erection takes about an hour. The "khana" (wooden wall shell) is erected and the "uni" (rafters) are set and only then is the covering felt laid. The girth-ropes express future, present and past times, and the three generations. The valuable objects and religious altars are kept in "hoimor" opposite the door. Male belongings, including saddle and bridle as well as Morin Huur (horse-head fiddle) are kept in the western section, as it is occupied by men. Women occupy the eastern section, where they keep kitchen utensils in a rack. Ger looks like the terrestrial globe. Due to its round-form, it does not store bad energy in its corners. People who live in ger easily get asleep. And spending a night in ger quickly removes one's agitation and anger. Frequently Asked Questions A yurt is the traditional home of nomads? A yurt, also called Ger, is the traditional home of the nomads in Mongolia. These round, portable structures have been an essential part of their lifestyle for thousands of years. What is a ger in Mongolian? A yurt (from the Turkic languages) or ger (Mongolian) is a portable, round tent covered and insulated with skins or felt and traditionally used as a dwelling by several distinct nomadic groups in the steppes and mountains of Inner Asia. Is it ger or yurt? The correct name for the Mongolian nomadic dwelling is Ger. Yurt is a Turkic word for the Ger. Local Mongolians never say yurt, but some foreigners say. Mongolian ger is more than a tent. Why do Mongolians live in Gers? But its origin lies in central Asia, particularly across the steppes of Mongolia. Set up to be a portable home, the ger has been a traditional part of the life of nomadic herders here for millennia. How many people live in a ger in Mongolia? Ger districts are home to a significant part of the Mongolian population. Nearly 800,000 people live in Ulaanbaatar's ger districts alone. That's more than 25 percent of all Mongolian citizens. PAGES OF THE PICTURE ALBUM The Mongolian traditional dwelling "Ger" The Mongolian traditional dwelling, known as the "Ger" (also spelled as "Yurt" in Russian and other languages), is an iconic symbol of nomadic culture and a practical solution to the challenges of Mongolia's climate and lifestyle. Here's a detailed exploration of the Ger: Structure and Design: Circular Design: Gers are circular tents with a wooden frame, traditionally made from lattice walls (khana) of wood or bamboo, and covered with felted wool. The circular shape is not only efficient in terms of materials but also helps with wind resistance and heat retention. Portability: One of the defining features of the Ger is its portability. The structure is designed to be easily assembled, disassembled, and transported. This mobility is crucial for nomadic herders who move seasonally with their livestock in search of pasture. Roof Structure: The roof of the Ger forms a crown (toono), which is often decorated and has a central opening (khana) for ventilation and to allow smoke from the stove to escape. Insulation: Felted wool, usually from sheep or goats, is the primary material used for insulation. Layers of felt are tightly bound together to provide excellent insulation against Mongolia's harsh winters and hot summers. Interior Layout and Functionality: Central Pillar: The interior of the Ger is centered around a stove (brazier or "dokhio") placed on a hearth at the center, often fueled by dried dung or wood. This stove not only provides warmth but also serves for cooking and boiling water. Multi-functional Space: The Ger's interior is a single, open space that serves multiple purposes: sleeping area, living room, kitchen, and sometimes even a workspace for crafts and activities. Furniture is minimal and portable, such as low tables and beds. Decor and Personalization: Gers are often decorated with colorful textiles, carpets, and sometimes painted wooden furniture. These decorations not only add warmth but also reflect the cultural aesthetics and personal tastes of the inhabitants. Cultural and Social Significance: Symbol of Nomadic Life: The Ger symbolizes the nomadic lifestyle that has been central to Mongolian culture for centuries. It represents independence, resilience, and adaptability in harsh environments. Community and Hospitality: Gers are central to Mongolian hospitality traditions. Guests are traditionally welcomed into the Ger with great respect, offered food and drink, and invited to share stories and experiences around the warmth of the stove. Modern Adaptations and Challenges: Urbanization: While many Mongolians still live in Gers, especially in rural areas, urbanization has led to some challenges. In cities like Ulaanbaatar, Gers are sometimes seen in ger districts (peri-urban areas) where infrastructure and services can be limited. Technological Integration: Modern Gers may incorporate solar panels for electricity and other modern conveniences, adapting to changing lifestyles and environmental concerns. Preservation and Revitalization: Efforts are underway to preserve traditional Ger craftsmanship and promote its cultural significance both within Mongolia and internationally. In summary, the Ger embodies the resilience, adaptability, and cultural heritage of the Mongolian people. Its design and functionality have sustained nomadic life for generations, while its symbolism continues to play a vital role in defining Mongolian identity and community life.

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