

= Burkhan Khaldun =

The Burkhan Khaldun ( Cyrillic : ?????? ?????? ) is one of the Khentii Mountains in the Khentii Province of northeastern Mongolia . The mountain or its locality is believed to be the birthplace of Genghis Khan as well as the location of his tomb . It is also the birthplace of one of his most successful generals , Subutai . The mountain is part of the 12 @, @ 000 square kilometres ( 4 @, @ 600 sq mi ) Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area established in 1992 . It had strong religious significance before Genghis Khan made it a powerful landmark , but is considered the most sacred mountain in Mongolia since it was designated as sacred by Genghis Khan . It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on 4 July 2015 under the title " Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape . " Under a Presidential Decree of 1955 the worship of this mountain has been formalised and the mountain declared a national monument . Its ecosystem is complex with unique biodiversity with flora of the Central Asian steppe . It has 50 species of fauna and 253 species of birds .

= = Location = =

Burkhan Khaldun is situated in the north @-@ east of Mongolia in the middle of the Khentii mountain range . The mountain is integral to the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area established in 1992 and which extends over an area of 12 @, @ 000 square kilometres ( 4 @, @ 600 sq mi ) .

= = Geography = =

Burkhan Khaldun means the " God Mountain " ( in Cyrillic ) and is also called Khentii Khan ( The King of the Khentii Mountain range ) . It is one of the Khentii Mountains in the Khentii Province of northeastern Mongolia . It is the highest mountain of the region , rising to an elevation of 2 @, @ 362 metres ( 7 @, @ 749 ft ) , and is crescent @-@ shaped . It is the source of several rivers : the Onon and Kherlen rivers flow into the Amur , which has its outfall in the Pacific Ocean ; and the rivers Tuul , Kharaa and Yeruu flow northwards to join the Selenge , which empties into the Arctic Ocean . It is in a complex ecosystem with unique biodiversity which is defined as a " transition zone from Siberian permafrost land forms to great steppe " .

= = History = =

Genghis Khan ( also known as Chinggis Khan ) lost his battle against the Merkit ( one of the major tribal confederations ( khanlig ) of the Mongols ) and escaped death by seeking protection in the sacred precincts of the Burkhan Khaldun mountains . An old woman saved him and a few others . As mark of great reverence to the mountain , which in Mongolia is considered a highly sacred mountain of spiritual significance , and to the sun above , he offered his respects to the spirits of the mountain around him , sprayed milk into the air and sprinkled it on the earth . He removed his girdle strap , unwinding it from his outfit , and then put it around his neck . Symbolically by this act he surrendered his Mongolian man 's pride and expressed his submission to the gods . He also took off his hat , crossed his hand across his chest and knelt in obeisance nine times offering worship to the sun and the mountain . He spent three days in the mountain offering prayers and thus established a strong bond of spirituality with the mountain and derived special strength from it . In the Secret History of the Mongols , Genghis Khan , who later became the " World Conqueror " believing in his own destiny , had said :

Genghis Khan then started his campaign to unify the land and people of Mongolia as a strong force . He gave the Burkhan Khaldun the status of a royal sacred mountain . The history is chronicled in the ? Secret History of the Mongols ? , which UNESCO recognised in 1990 as a " literary creation of outstanding universal significance " . In this document Burkhan Khaldun is described in detail and finds mention 27 times , which signifies the unique position of the mountain in Mongolia 's heritage . This document establishes the authenticity of the site , stating :

A Presidential Decree of 1955 formalised the worship of the Burkhan Khaldun Mountain as a national monument . Special worship is offered to the mountain according to a prescribed procedure at the Main " Ovoo of the Heaven " ; it is reserved for a few officials of the state and local administration , shamans and a few Buddhist lamas ( monks ) .

= = World heritage status = =

Burkhan Khaldun was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee on 4 July 2015 under the title " Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape " , covering an area of 443 @,@ 739 hectares ( 1 @,@ 096 @,@ 500 acres ) and an additional buffer zone of 271 @,@ 651 hectares ( 671 @,@ 260 acres ) , categorised under Criterion ( iv ) for its unique cultural tradition of mountain worship and nature worship of past several millennium , and ( vi ) for its universally known historical and literary epic of immense importance .

= = Religious significance = =

This mountain has a spiritual significance unmatched by any other mountain in Mongolia , and is given the symbolic status of the ? cradle ? of Mongolia 's nationhood fully representing the " heritage and traditional ways of life of nomadic people of Mongolia " . The ( unconfirmed ) Mongolian belief that Genghis Khan was born here and is buried somewhere in this mountain has added to the sanctity of the mountain , particularly since Khan offered worship here and declared the mountain as the most sacred in the country . It has given authenticity to the spiritual nature of the mountain , and as a result regular pilgrimage is under taken by the people to the three sacred major ovoos or stone cairns fixed at the sacred sites along a specified route where Mongolian shamanic worship is offered . The specified route is unique and covers : Main Ovoo of Heaven at the pinnacle of the mountain via Gurvan Khoriud ( " Three Forbidden Precincts " ) ; the Uud Mod ( " Two Trees of Entrance " ) ; the Bosgo Tengeriin Davaa ( " Threshold Pass of Heaven " ) ; the catchment of the Kherlen River and the Sacred Bogd Rivers ; and finally to the Beliin ( " Lowest " ) Ovoo .

= = Flora = =

The flora found in the mountain belongs to the Central Asian steppe and consists of coniferous forests of the taiga . The plant species reported are 28 listed in the Mongolian Red Book , 15 very rare species , and 28 species listed as rare species . The species listed in the IUCN Red List are also found here and these are : 2 critically endangered species , 4 endangered species and 8 vulnerable species .

= = Fauna = =

In the faunal geographical province of the Burkhan Khaldun Mountain in the Khentii district the fauna reported are more than " 50 species of 27 genera of six orders including five species of mammals / insectivores , 4 species of hymenoptera , four species of lagomorpha , 19 species of rodents , 13 species of predators , five species of ungulate , one species of reptile , and 253 species of birds . According to the Mongolian Red Data Book : the very rare mammal species are musk deer ( *Moschus moschiferus* ) and moose ( *Alces alces* ) ; the very rare bird species are the Siberian white crane ( *Grus leucogeranus* ) , Greater spotted eagle ( *Aquila clanga* ) , Pallas ' s fish eagle ( *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* ) , white @-@ naped crane ( *Grus vipio* ) and hooded crane ( *Grus monacha* ) ; the fish species is the Amur sturgeon ( *Acipenser schrenckii* ) .