

STUDIES ON MONGOLIA

*Proceedings of the First North American Conference
on Mongolian Studies*

Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University

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Editor:

Professor Henry G. Schwarz

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HENRY G. SCHWARZ
Editor



WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

It is my pleasure to present to Mongolists and other interested readers the proceedings of the first North American Conference on Mongolian Studies, held in Bellingham on November 25-26, 1978.

The idea for such a conference occurred to me about two years ago. As I recall, it was not some specific event that prompted my decision to organize the conference; rather, it probably was disappointment, slowly accumulating over the years, at seeing North American studies on Mongolia lagging behind those on China, Japan, and Korea in this respect. True, larger conferences, like those sponsored by the Association for Asian Studies and the American Oriental Society, have often included panels dealing at least partially with Mongolia, and the Mongolia Society has done a signal service by holding its annual meetings in conjunction with those conferences. Yet I felt that the time had come to give Mongolists their own conference. The experiences of our colleagues in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean studies clearly pointed out the main advantage of holding a conference devoted to a single country or culture. It could provide a setting in which Mongolists felt "at home," undisturbed by the clamor of the bazaar-like atmosphere often prevailing at the larger all-Asian conferences.

With this goal in mind, I started my preparations on May 1 of last year by sending out a first call for papers. The response was much greater than I had expected and dashed my rather modest hopes of having one day of sessions. The result was a busy schedule from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday with only two short breaks, and from 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday without any breaks. An equally pleasant surprise was the great distances traveled by many participants, coming as they did from Southern California and New England, the Middle Atlantic states and the Canadian prairies, the Rocky Mountains and the Midwest. Professor Kimura hastened from Tokyo on his first journey to North America, and Mr. Dashtseren, the Mongolian ambassador to the United Nations, was all set to come but pressing business forced him to cancel at the last moment.

The verdict on this conference was passed in the concluding session in the form of two resolutions. One called for making such a conference an annual event. I stressed the importance of moving future conferences around the United States and Canada, and the idea was accepted. A committee, composed of Professors Larry Clark, Paul Hyer, Keith Scott and myself, was elected and given the task of selecting the site of the second conference, scheduled for this year. The other resolution instructed me to edit and publish the conference papers. The result is this book.

While I planned and hosted the first conference, its success could not have been achieved without the help of many individuals and organizations. My thanks go to all participants for their fine scholarly papers, lively discussions, and enthusiasm. Professors Samuel E. Martin of Yale University, John Masson Smith, Jr. of the University of California at Berkeley, and John Street

of the University of Wisconsin gave their wholehearted support to the conference even though they were unable to attend. The National Endowment for the Humanities granted timely and generous financial assistance. Also supportive were grants from the Mongolia Society and from Dean James W. Davis of the College of Arts and Sciences at Western Washington University. The Canada-Mongolia Society cooperated from the very start and repeatedly advertised the conference throughout Canada. Many of the technical chores were competently handled by Joseph Cucco, Bruce Ream, Linda Kaplowitz, Mary Crompton, Richard Chesmore, and Sharon Edinger. Finally, Mrs. Florence Preder once again produced a meticulous manuscript. To all these individuals and organizations I wish to extend my gratitude for their trust, support, and assistance.

Henry G. Schwarz

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