

Preface

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the peak of the era of Western imperialist expansion and the rise of nationalism in Asia. By the middle of the century, the high tide of world communism had arrived. However, toward the later part of the century, communism began to collapse. Mongolia, even though located in the heartland of Asia, landlocked between Russia and China, found it impossible to avoid the impact of these great world events.

In the winter of 1911, just before the collapse of the Manchu Empire and the formation of the Republic of China, Outer Mongolia declared its independence, but because of the changing world political climate, it soon had to give up its independence and accept autonomy within China. Under Chinese pressure, even autonomy was soon abrogated. In 1921, Outer Mongolia expelled the Chinese military occupation force and declared its independence a second time. Soon, however, due to the infiltration of international communism and outside pressure, Mongolia transformed its traditional nomadic, feudalistic institutions into a communistic-style society, and in 1924, it established the world's first people's republic. After the Second World War, the Chinese Kuomintang government, and later the communist regime, recognized Outer Mongolia's independence. Eventually, following the world-wide current sweeping away socialism, the Mongol people awoke and Outer Mongolia was able to avoid violence and bloodshed to become the first Asian country to transform a communist regime into a free, democratic, peaceful, independent state.

Inner Mongolia, on the other hand, because of its geopolitical situation and the international balance of power, had to accept the slogan "the commonwealth of five nationalities" (Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Muslims, and Tibetans), and became a part of the Republic of China. During this period, movements to unify the two Mongolias were tried and abandoned. Not only did these movements all fail, but Inner Mongolia also came under the maladministration and extortion of Chinese warlords and suffered Japanese occupation. After the Second World War, the Mongolian unification movement was revived. Because of the Yalta Agreement and the shifting international balance of power, however, the Mongols again failed to achieve their goal. At present, Inner Mongolia is a kind of province within the People's Republic of China—the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. Outwardly and politically, it seems to fulfill the desire of the Inner Mongolian people to enjoy a unified, autonomous governing structure. But the Inner Mongols are now a minority in this large part of their own original native land, representing only twelve percent of the population.

The political impulses of Inner Mongolia in the first half of this century were to protect its own territory, and under Chinese suzerainty, to avoid non-Mongolian rule and establish a unified Inner Mongolian political body. The leader of this movement was Demchugdongrob (1902-1966), the thirty-first generation descendant of Chinggis Khan. His life embodies the history of the Inner Mongolian struggle for national survival during this century. Of course, no truly important historical event can be the creation of just one person. Any movement must also have the general support of the people. Nevertheless, even today, a discussion of modern Inner Mongolian history, no matter what its political

slant, cannot neglect the existence of Demchugdongrob and his contribution to modern Mongolian history. Moreover, a discussion of this great man that emphasizes one kind of political propaganda over another and deliberately distorts history will have the opposite of the effect intended. It can only increase the honor paid to and the reputation of this tragic national hero in the hearts of the Mongolian people.

According to the accepted version of Mongolian history, from the day that Chinggis Khan ascended the throne in 1206 until the last day of Demchugdongrob's political leadership—seven and a half centuries—the “Golden Descendants” of Chinggis Khan ruled Mongolia. This extended historical period witnessed the downfall of the Mongolian empire, internal feudalistic wars, the Ming Chinese invasions, the several centuries of Manchu domination, Russian communist control of northern Mongolia, and Japanese occupation of southern Mongolia. However, the western half of southern Mongolia, or Inner Mongolia, was continually ruled by the clan of Chinggis Khan. Consequently, the day when Demchugdongrob lost his freedom was also the end of the leadership of the Chinggisids.

The goal of the historian is to be objective and faithful; history must be recorded in an environment of free thought and free speech. However, in China, from ancient times to the present, literary inquisitions and persecutions have usually begun with the supposed “crimes” of the historians; hence students of Chinese history must learn to read between the lines. The historians of Outer Mongolia, now that they have been liberated from the yoke of despotic communist control, have already forsaken the fabricated history that was invented during the dark days, and started to rewrite Mongolian history from the perspective of free Mongols.

As for Inner Mongolia, regardless of whether it was under Chinese warlords or Kuomintang domination, and especially after the establishment of communist rule, all historical records had to be written within definite political guidelines. Even the so-called autobiographies, or personal memoirs, had—without exception—to fit political orthodoxy's requirements. Authors, writers, and editors, in order to protect themselves, dared not ask what the real truth was. The circumstances of these writers warrant our compassion, but from the perspective of honest historical work, what they were forced to do was regrettable. The work they produced could mislead readers who had not personally experienced the historical events in question. Unfortunately, many eyewitnesses of these events have passed away without leaving their testimonies, a fact lamentable to those dedicated to writing the history of the time.

I, fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, personally experienced the great historical drama of the Mongols' struggle for survival in this century, not only observing but also following the leading players throughout their performances, while playing a minor role myself. Today, after the curtain has fallen on these sad events, I have survived. Even after all the years that have passed, I still feel the pains of yesteryear. At the same time, I feel that since I now enjoy liberty in a free world, I am obliged to record the true story that I myself experienced, and hence this life of Demchugdongrob. In order to record the truth of the past so that future historians will not be misled by fabricated writings, I have written my story from the first person point-of-view. Though nearly half a century has gone by since these events occurred, I still cannot overcome the emotions evoked by my memories. For this, I apologize.

To avoid confusing the non-specialist reader I have employed a kind of lowest common denominator transliteration of Mongolian language words into the Latin alpha-

bet. I have also omitted all umlauts and the "h" following some instances of "g" in transliterated Mongolian words. The task of transliterating Chinese and Mongolian proper names is complicated. One problem is that during the tumultuous period under discussion here, many place names underwent changes, often more than once. I have tried to stick to one name per place even for times when a place was known by another name. For example, I have mostly referred to the Khalkha region as Outer Mongolia, even though it has not been officially called by that name since 1924. Nor have I routinely employed the name Mongolian People's Republic (1924-1990) nor the subsequent label, Mongolian Republic as it has been known since then.

Similarly, I have employed the current official spelling, Hohhot, for the capital of Inner Mongolia, rather than a more elaborate transliteration (Köke-khota, or Koke-khota) or the city's somewhat condescending old Chinese name, Kueihua (Guihua). For the name of the capital of Outer Mongolia and sometimes as a shorthand reference to the whole country, I consistently employ Ulaanbaatar (not Ulaanbaator or Ulan Bator) or its pre-1924 names Ikh Khuree, or Urga. Wherever possible, my editors and I have settled on a single spelling for any given locality.

Chinese names often have three or more alternative spellings. The case of the present Chinese capital is typical. English-language publications will have Peking (the so-called postal spelling introduced during the time of Western imperialism in China), Pei-ching (Wade-Giles spelling), and lately Beijing (Chinese Communist *pinyin* spelling).

To compensate for these somewhat arbitrary and sometimes ahistorical simplifications and to ward off the objections of the specialists, we have cross-referenced many of these alternate spellings of names in the index. My thanks for their hard work in preparing the manuscript for publication to the editorial staff of Western Washington University's Center for East Asian Studies, Henry Schwarz, Wayne Richter and Edward Kaplan.

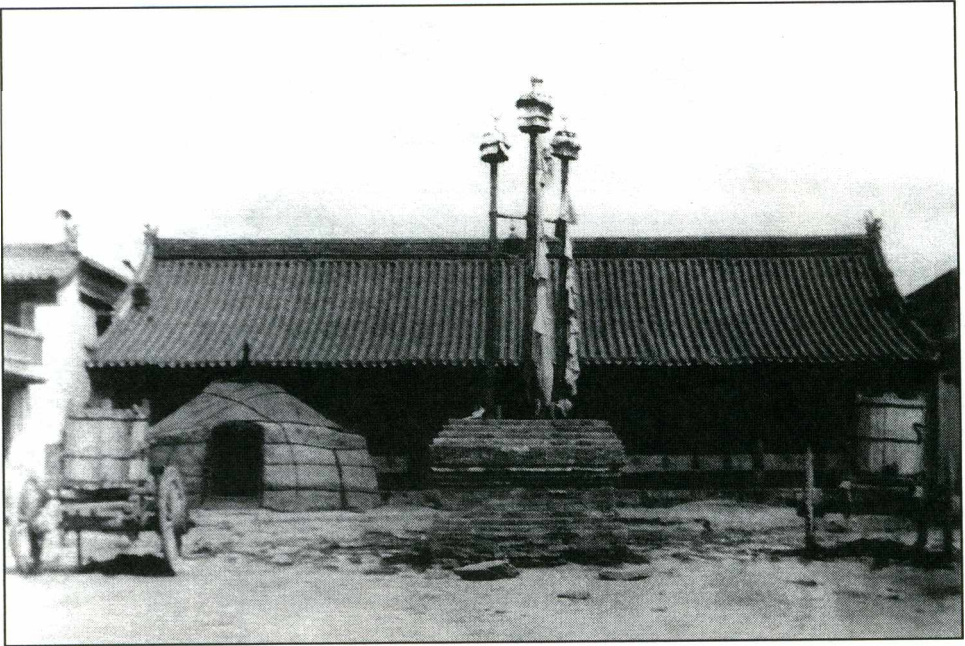
Sechin Jagchid
San Jose, California
June, 1999

ILLUSTRATIONS



1. Prince Demchugdongrob, 1902-1966.

(Plates 1-15 are from the author's collection.)



2. The Yongrong Hall of Beile-yin sume – the conference room for the 1933 Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement.



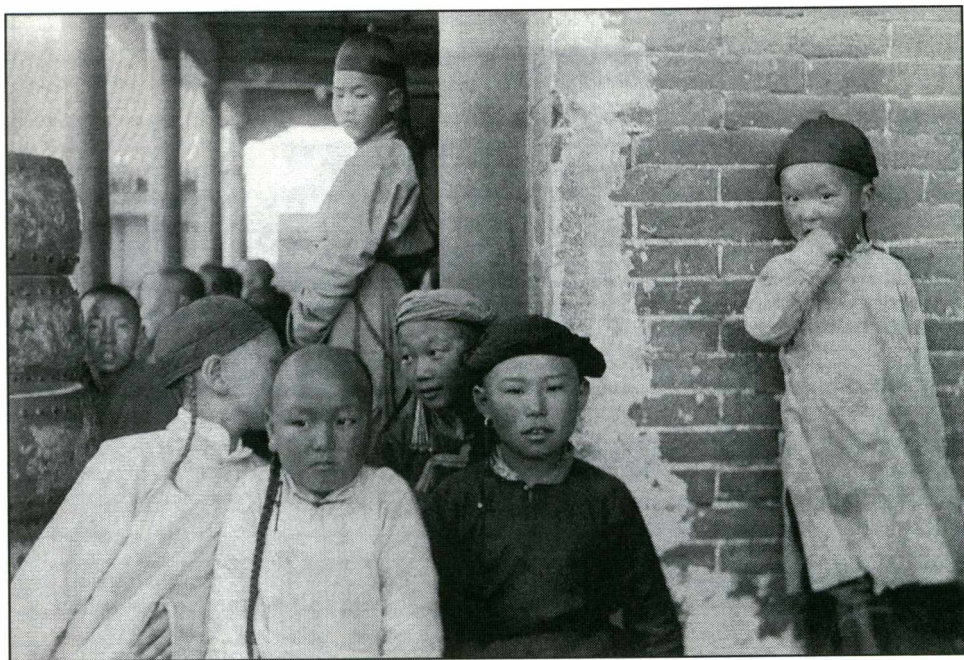
3. The Japanese army in Manchuria special envoy's visit to the leaders of Western Inner Mongolia in Ujumuchin, July 1934. Front row, left to right: Prince Sungjingwangchug, Prince Badmarabdan, Wu Guting, the author, Sungdui, and Ujumuchin official.



4. The Ulanhab League Conference at Bat-khaalag, 1943. Left to right, first row: 3rd, Rinchinsenge, the *jasag* of Urad Middle Banner; 4th, Shirabdorji, the Deputy League Head; 5th, Prince Sungjingwangchug; 8th, the author; 10th, Dewagenden, the *tusalagchi* of Dorben-Keuked Banner.



5. Prince Sungjingwangchug lecturing on "Mongolian Self-determination" at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan, October 1940. The author was the interpreter.



6. The students of the Abkhanar Left Banner Primary School, Shilingol League, 1940.



7. The farewell party for Kanai Shoji, the outgoing Japanese Supreme Advisor, Beijing, early December, 1941. Second row, left to right: 1st, the author; 2nd, Jirgalang; 5th, Kanai; 6th, Prince Sung.



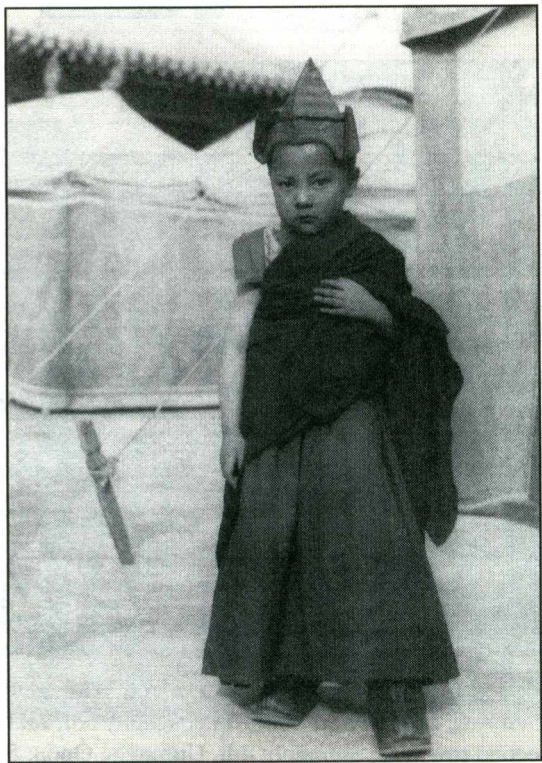
8. New Year's Day celebration at Prince De's Sunid residence, January 1, 1942.
Front row: 1st, Dugursurung, son of Prince De; 2nd, Prince Sung; 3rd, Prince De;
4th, Ohashi; 5th, Jirgalang. Second row, right end, the author.



9. Prince Sung's visit to his old friend, Lubsangchoijur, the author's father, at Kharachin Right Banner, June, 1942.



10. The author and his wife, Oyongerel, at Shilingol League Office, July, 1942.



11. The young reincarnated head lama of the Kholtu Sume, Ujumuchin Right Banner, 1943.



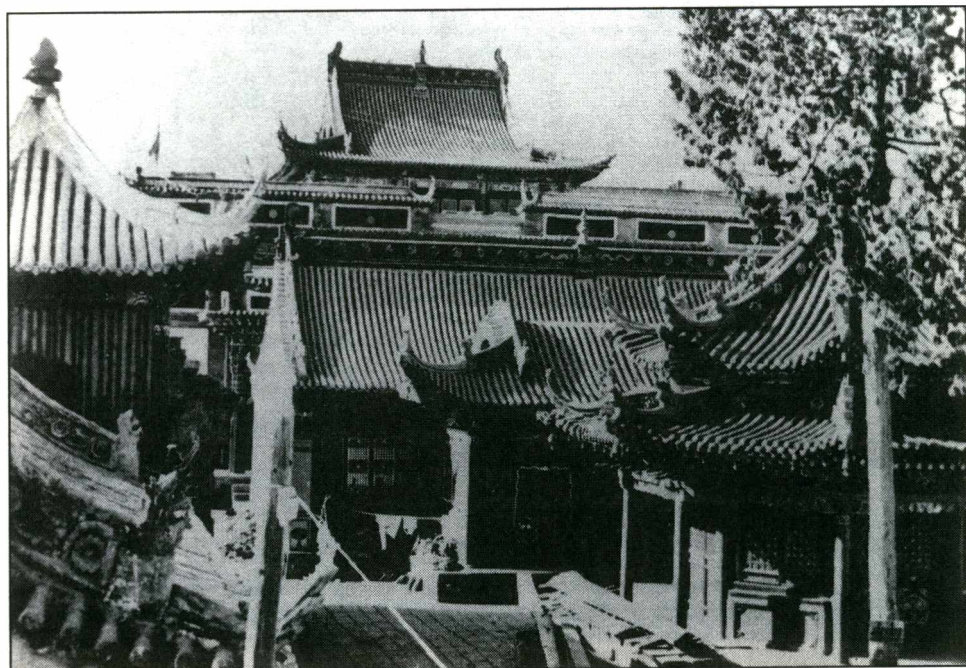
12. Prince Budabala and his younger brother, Abagha Left Banner, 1943.



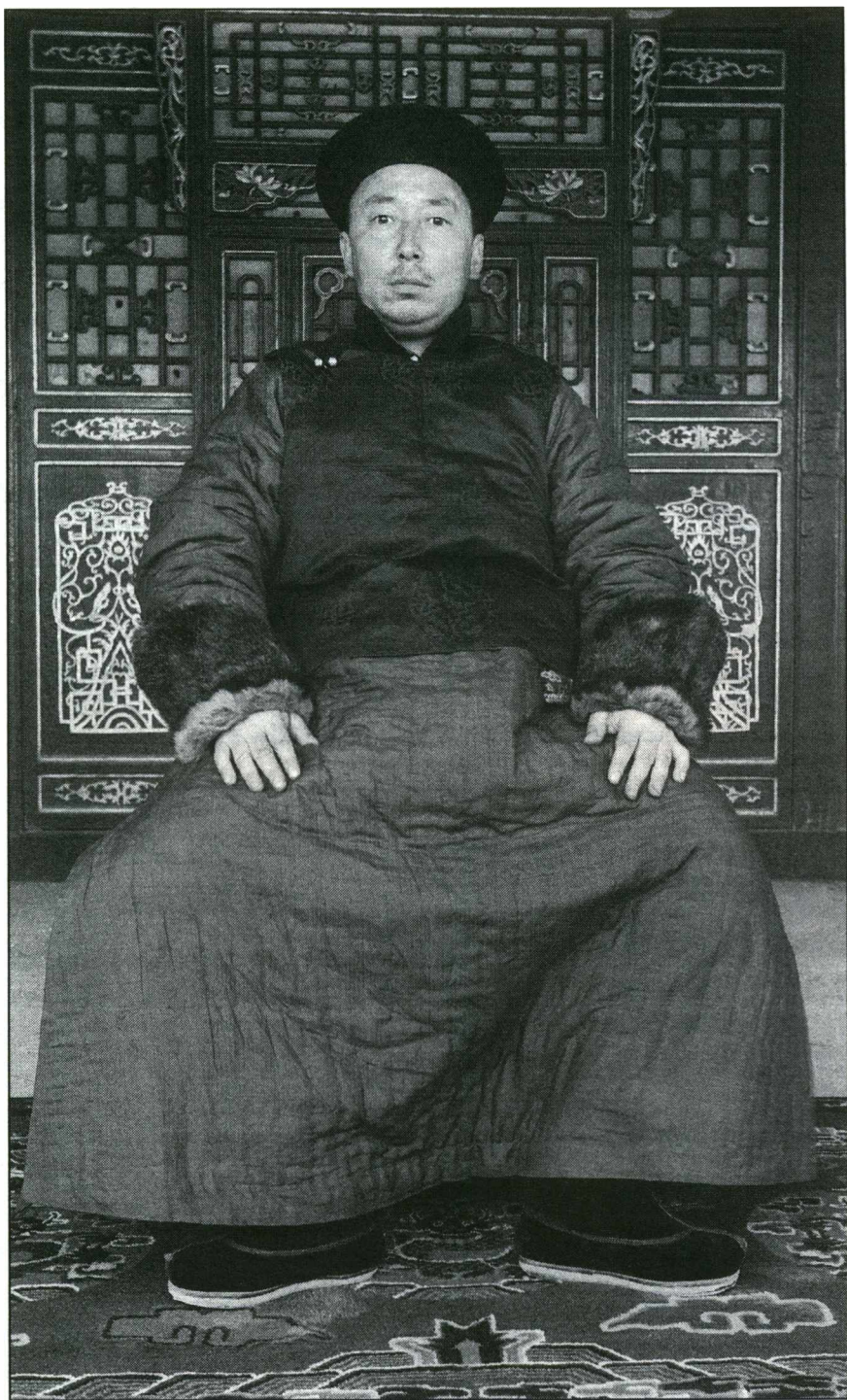
13. The founding of the Mongolian Youth Alliance, Nanjing, China, January 1, 1947.
First row, right to left: 2nd, Kokebagatur; 3rd, Jakhunju; 4th, Rashidondog;
second row: 3rd, Shongno; 4th, Urgungge Onon; 5th, the author; 6th, Qi Quanxi.



14. The author delivering the Inner Mongols' demand for the amendment of the Constitution to protect their right of autonomy. At the Chinese National Assembly, Nanjing, April, 1948.



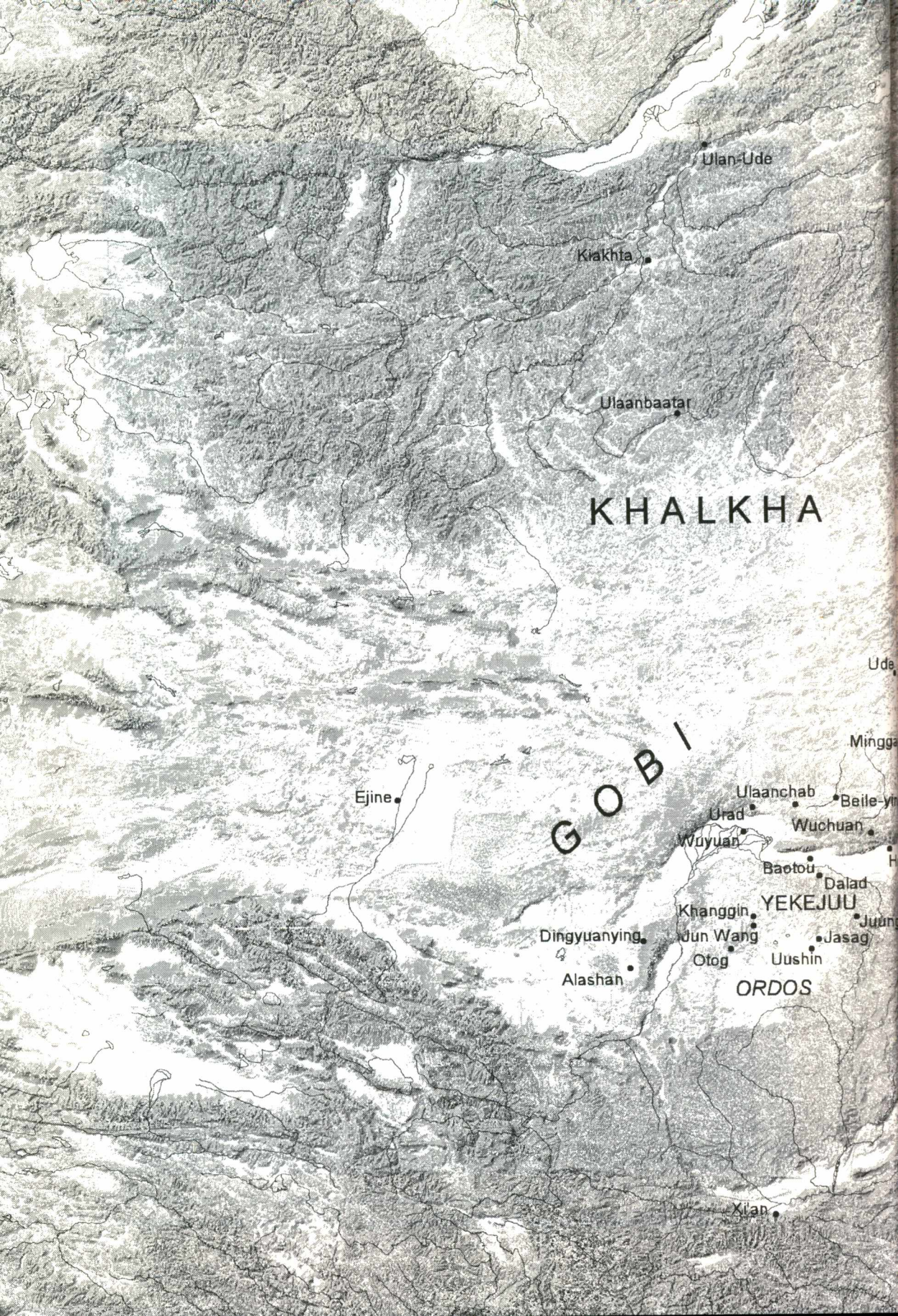
15. The Alashan Banner Temple in Dingyuanying, 1949.



16. Prince De. Reprinted by permission from Walter Bosshard, *Kühles Grasland Mongolei* (Zurich: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1950), plate 53, p. 53.



17. Prince De and his short wave radio. Reprinted by permission from Walter Bosshard, *Kühles Grasland Mongolei* (Zurich: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1950), plate 68, p. 112.



Ulan-Ude

Kiakhta

Ulaanbaatar

KHALKHA

Uda

Mingga

Ejine

G O B I

Ulaanchab

Urad

Beile-yin

Wuchuan

Wuyuan

Baotou

Dalad

YEKEJU

Khonggin

Dun Wang

Juon

Dingyuanying

Otag

Uushin

Alashan

ORDOS

Xian

