

THE ROLE OF INNER MONGOLIA IN THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, 1911-1914

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In 1911 the Mongols declared their independence from China under the Manchu-Ch'ing dynasty and were thus one of the first non-Western nations in modern times to escape alien subjection. They strengthened their nation through the following decades, were admitted to the United Nations and recently celebrated their fiftieth anniversary with broad recognition in the world community. But the independence movement fell short of success for more Mongolian territory remained part of China and more people were eventually left under Chinese domination than successfully escaped.

This especially important aspect of Mongolian history has been obscured. Most historians have concentrated on the event's international aspects, emphasizing the fate of the new Mongol state as it was subordinated to Russia and China, or they have concentrated on the complex developments within Outer Mongolia, the focal point of the independence movement. The role of Inner Mongolia has been ignored almost as an irrelevancy.

The Mongols originally intended to create a new empire, a Greater Mongolia (*Bügdü Mongghol*) under a new holy emperor, the Jebtsundamba Khutughtu who, by the way, was actually a Tibetan. The new state was to encompass the huge areas of Inner Mongolia extending from Hulun-buir (Buteha and Barga) on the Siberian border to Ordos in the southwest on the border of Chinese Turkistan.

Specialists at least are familiar with the general reasons for the failure of Inner Mongolia as a whole to become unified in an independent Mongolian state after 1911. But the story has still never been told in all its detail and complexities, nor will this narrative entirely clear up this obscured event.¹

The factors working for independence are quite clear. A common language and culture, a consciousness of past empire and glory, vague desires for a broader Mongolian political association and antipathy to Chinese exploitation were integrating elements for the Mongols. These factors prompted a widespread, spontaneous, favorable response for independence from the Manchu empire or from any revolutionary Chinese regime that might replace it. But this response was not unanimous or without hesitation on the part of many important leaders, a circumstance which requires further explanation.

To begin with, there was virtually no effective cohesion between the various Inner Mongolian regions--administratively, economically or in general. While certain broad generalizations may be made regarding them as a whole, one must penetrate beyond the superficial and analyze the situation and response of each region individually to gain a true perspective. Although Mongolia was more than a decade into the twentieth century, national consciousness was weak. A small group of the elite had begun to think of the fate of their country and people but the old cohesion of the empire, limited as it had been, was long gone and

the new cohesion of modern nationalism was just beginning. One was soon to hear of pan-Mongolian sentiments, but from the beginning these were but romantic notions, impossible of realization within the geopolitical context of Northeast Asia. There were no mass media, no modern transportation, nor other cohesive factors to coordinate groups in an integrated movement and offset the strong regionalism which fragmented the Mongols and which was characterized by divisive stereotypes and prejudices.²

To understand Inner Mongolia's role in the Mongolian independence movement, one must see the great difference in the various regions collectively referred to as Inner Mongolia.³ The Hulun-buir region had a historical experience and geographical situation very much different from the Kharachin and East Tumed region (Josoto league) in the southeast near the Great Wall, and different again were the western regions of Shilin-ghol, Ulanbataar and Ordos.

If an understanding of the final settlement for Inner Mongolia in the independence movement requires a region-by-region analysis, then also within each region the reaction of key leaders was an important factor. The matter was not decided by a plebiscite or a public opinion poll in each banner. Needless to say, these leaders made their decisions on the basis of their perception of such overriding factors as geography and military power, political and economic ties. Examples will be given here of a variety of responses of particular leaders to the momentous event of Mongolian separation from China. The response and motivations of certain other leaders is unclear. The Inner Mongolian hero, Togtokh *taiji* for example, fled to Khalkha and was valiant in the fight, but one wonders what his true, most basic motivation may have been.⁴

In sorting out the complex responses of people in the various regions to the announcement of independence, first to be noted was the strong emotional support for the movement. But intellectually the response was more complex. While there was a momentary joy and excitement on the part of most people throughout Inner Mongolia, there was not a simple reaction to this momentous event. Among the leaders there was soon a general consternation and ambivalence as the various areas each received communications and official documents from Urga setting forth the reasons for Mongolia breaking its ties with Peking and calling for broad support and unity throughout Mongolia.

A tentative assessment points to the conclusion that the majority of the leadership of the ten regions of Inner Mongolia--six leagues with forty-nine banners plus four related regions (the *aimaghs* of Chakhar, Hulun-buir, Alashan and Echina, and the Kokonor Torghuds)--initially showed spontaneous support for independence.⁵ Most banners apparently sent word confirming their approval of the movement. According to the scholar Sh. Sandag of Ulaanbaatar, there is evidence that thirty-five of the forty-nine banners sent communications of support for the Jebtsundamba's new government. The thirty-five Sandag lists include all banners of Shilin-ghol league (10), seven of Jerim (10), six of Juu-uda (11), five of Ulanbataar (6), two of Josotu (5), and five of Yeke-juu league (7).

The real problem comes in weighing the actual substance of this support, for even a cursory examination of this list immediately points up problems. Shilin-ghol, for one, was certainly not united, as will be seen. Moreover, the list does not include Barga (Hulun-buir), where possibly the greatest sustained support arose, nor does it include Echina and Alashan, led by Prince Tawangburijala, which seem to have been greatly influenced by the independence movement. The

list also omits the Torghud banners of Kokonor whose Prince Palta reportedly saved the day during the siege of Khobdo by warning Urga's forces of Chinese reinforcements being sent from Shara-sume in Sinkiang to augment their forces in the city.⁶

Some banners openly favored the movement while others were more cautious and secretly sent representatives to check on the new development. Most leaders were pleased and hopeful for the move but at the same time were reserved and adopted a wait-and-see policy. Wise and farsighted leaders saw the threat of Chinese colonization of Mongolia, but they also saw the dangers inherent in an attempt to break away from their Chinese overlords. Emphasis here will focus on the two most crucial areas of Shilin-ghol and Kharachin; the first because the key military campaigns were decided here, the second because of its decisive role in the political settlements with Peking.

Situation in Shilin-ghol

The situation of Shilin-ghol league (region) in the trauma of the independence movement was one of the most critical. Of all the regions, Shilin-ghol, along with Jerim, seems to have been the most divided internally as to what course to take. It did not move decisively for independence like Barga nor was it so reluctant as the Ordos, Chakhar or Western Tumet (Kueihua). Shilin-ghol was caught in a true dilemma. It was special because, like Ulanab, it was the most exposed of the ten subregions (leagues and *aimagh*), having the longest border with Outer Mongolia. Traversed by the main trade routes, Shilin-ghol was the crossroads between China and Outer Mongolia. It was also the largest region, the most nomadic in life style and, in this respect, the most similar to Outer Mongolia.

The split in Shilin-ghol is confirmed in a unique oral history account of the situation from the Kanjurwa *khutughtu* (Living Buddha), who lived most of his life in Shilin-ghol.⁷ He reports that there was a complex situation in his region with a great many debates among the princes and banner leaders and, to some degree, among the lamas about what should be done regarding the independence and the appearance of a new government in Urga. The Kanjurwa says that there was no consensus in the banner. Some leaders strongly opposed any support to the new government in Urga while others fled north with many of their people to join the movement. It would seem that support among the common people surpassed that among the elite.

The Kanjurwa notes that after a period of chaos the Chinese were soon able to again take full control of Inner Mongolia. He says that "in those days the lamas had no objection to developing a Greater Mongolia and supporting the Jebtsundamba as *Bogdo Khan* (holy emperor)." He continues, "I heard many stories of how the lamas felt that the new Mongolia would be a Buddhist nation, a thing they all greatly desired," particularly in view of the fact that the rising Chinese *geming* (radical revolutionaries) were determined to tear down their Buddhist religion and destroy the faith.⁸

An example of a simple positive response for independence was the case of the two Khauchid (Hochit) banners of Shilin-ghol league. The Prince of East Khauchid gathered about half of the banner population and migrated to Outer Mongolia, followed by a large part of the population of the neighboring banner, West Khauchid.⁹

Here the break was definite and permanent and the refugees made a new life in Khalkha territory. Moving the Khauchid population en masse was traumatic but was easier than the problem facing the Barga Mongols whose case is better known but less successful. The tension was compounded in central Shilin-ghol when part of the two Khauchid banners fled north, because neighboring banners were also affected due to the lack of a clear-cut boundary separating the two eastern-most Abagha and Abaghanar banners.

An important factor in the tension or trauma of the split was caused by the conservative opposition--some would say realism--of Prince Yangsanjab against independence and the new Urga regime. Yangsanjab was the hereditary ruling prince (*jasagh*) of the Abagha left banner, neighboring the Khauchid groups that split off. He was also head of the entire Shilin-ghol league. He was capable, influential and inclined to be more loyal to the Manchu-Ch'ing dynasty. While most other Shilin-ghol leaders were for unification with Khalkha, he was skeptical about the Greater Mongolia movement and accordingly argued for neutrality or maintaining connections with Peking. He had a rather strong mental fixation on the legitimacy or continuity of the Middle Kingdom with Inner Mongolia as part of it.¹⁰

Since Shilin-ghol was the mainline of confrontation, Yangsanjab was captured by invading Outer Mongolian forces in 1913, imprisoned in Urga but later freed.¹¹ Yangsanjab remained conservative throughout his life. He boycotted the important autonomous movement launched in 1933 at Batu-khalagha (Pailingmiao) by Prince Demchugdongrub, and he remained aloof from the Japanese all during their long occupation until 1945.¹²

1913 was a critical year in Shilin-ghol and most of western Mongolia when Outer Mongolian troops invaded Inner Mongolia. This was known locally as the *ukher jiliin uimeen* "disturbance of the year of the cow." According to popular slogans and folklore the disturbance was for the "unification of the Mongolian people and the protection of the faith." One important leader of the invading Mongolian troops was Jalkhantsa *gegen*, a powerful lama and intimate friend of the famous Dilowa *khutughtu*. There were stories abroad in those days of great miracles performed by Jalkhantsa and other powerful lama generals of the independence movement. It is of interest that the previous incarnation of the late Kanjurwa *khutughtu* met this famous Jalkhantsa *gegen* in Shilin-ghol during one of the incursions of Khalkha troops.¹³

But the independence movement was a personal tragedy for the fourth incarnation of the Kanjurwa Living Buddha for it directly caused his death. He was an influential and powerful ecclesiastical figure and rather inclined to be involved in politics. He was sympathetic to the independence movement and welcomed the troops from Outer Mongolia. However, the Jangjiya *khutughtu*, a famous incarnation and rival of the Kanjurwa, together with his advisors and staff were tied to Peking and exploited the situation to gain advantage in the religious competition between the two men. The disciples of the Jangjiya and his pro-Peking supporters made secret accusations to Peking that the Kanjurwa was disloyal and sympathetic to the rebels. As a consequence, when the tide turned and Chinese troops arose to force out the invading Mongol troops, the Kanjurwa was killed, his temple center at Dolonor on the border of Shilin-ghol and Chakhar was burned, and many other lamas were killed or mistreated. One of the reasons motivating the Kanjurwa's support of Urga was the fact that he had many patrons and considerable wealth including thousands of horses in Khalkha and Barga, particularly

concentrated in San-Beise banner in Sechen-khan *aimagh* (province).¹⁴

The Battle for Shilin-ghol

The battle for Inner Mongolia in the independence movement was very largely determined in the frontier area of Shilin-ghol, and it is fitting here to give the essentials of the struggle.¹⁵ The main leader was Damdinsüren of the Barga area in eastern Inner Mongolia. He was early recognized as a hero of the independence movement for his valor in the successful Khobdo campaign of 1912. Indeed, after a half century he is still viewed as one of the most outstanding political and military leaders of the entire period. He has been eulogized by his biographers as being a "true son of Hulun-buir [Bargal]," who had the "most advanced ideas of his time." He was regarded as one of the best educated among the nobility of his period and wrote his own official letters in excellent Mongolian or Manchu. Those who knew him said he was close to the common people, had their respect and love and was comparatively democratic in his manner. Not least, he is praised as having "revived once more the old glory of the Mongols' superiority in military arts."¹⁶

Damdinsüren was appointed by Urga as the commander-in-chief of the great campaign into Inner Mongolia. The climax came in 1913. Comparatively well-trained and equipped Chinese troops had earlier looted much of Shilin-ghol, burning temples and generally creating havoc. By the autumn of 1913 Damdinsüren, commanding some 1,000 men including an estimated 300 from Barga and an additional 700 drawn variously from the Inner Mongolian areas of Sunid, Khauchid, Abagha, Ujumchin, and Chakhar, had cleared the Chinese troops from most of Shilin-ghol. The Chinese were making sorties from their main base at Dolon-nor into the Mongolian hinterland, and the first big battle came at Khoshmog, Chagaan-nor, a sandy steppe area northwest of Dolon-nor.

Until then the Chinese had been defeated in virtually every encounter. The important Inner Mongolian leader Babujab from the Mongoljin-Tumed banner was involved in this crucial campaign and was later to gain considerable notoriety for a major uprising which he led in 1915-16. Another important compatriot of Damdinsüren in the battle for Inner Mongolia was Magsarjab. He occupied Dolon-nor for a time, destroyed the Chinese garrison at Darkhan-uul and led an attack on Chinese troops stationed at Byaruu (Chin. Ching-peng).

The last great contest between the Mongols and the Chinese came at Dolon-nor in September and October. Damdinsüren and his troops fought valiantly but were forced to withdraw after nine major battles, the last of which came at Jun-naiman Temple not far from Dolon-nor. From the beginning Mongol supplies, guns and ammunition were low and Urga had found it impossible to replenish them. The end came in October 1913 when supplies were gone and heavy snow and bitter cold set in. The protracted nature of the war wore the Mongols down, and they became a heavy burden on the local population in Shilin-ghol where they were quartered. It was impossible to continue the struggle to regain or hold Inner Mongolian territory as the ammunition and supplies ran out and as the troops were unfed and suffering.

Apparently the problems of the Mongolian patriots increased when Nasanarbijkh (Na Wang) "turned traitor." According to Mongolian accounts, his defection to the Chinese induced other Mongolian troops to flee or to submit as Chinese

propaganda took effect. Meanwhile Chinese leaders in Kalgan (Chin. Chang-chia-k'ou) sent two Inner Mongolian officials under their influence to negotiate and win over Damdinsüren with promises of rank and rewards from Yüan Shih-k'ai, the new president of the Republic of China. Needless to say, the Mongolian commander remained true to the cause. After the withdrawal from the battles in Inner Mongolia Damdinsüren reportedly relocated some one hundred Chakhar men in his native Barga in eastern Inner Mongolia.

In 1914 Magsarjab campaigned against Khökhe-khota (Huhehot = Kueihua), a strategic center more distant from China's center of power, and in 1915 he was about to take this city when the Khiakhta Tripartite Treaty was signed and the entire attempt to include Inner Mongolia in a Greater Mongolia became a lost cause.

Situation in Chakhar

Chakhar *aimagh* was shielded from much of the conflict after 1911 since it had Shilin-ghol as a buffer between itself and the forces of Urga. Nevertheless, Outer Mongolian troops struck through Ujumuchin to the important temple and trade center of Dolon-nor on the eastern border of Chakhar.

Noteworthy in Chakhar was an incident involving Jodbajab,¹⁷ a senior among the various *ambans* (officials) in the region. He had had close contact with the Manchu court and was recognized for his support as early as 1900 when during the Boxer Rebellion Tz'u Hsi and the court fled west to Wu-t'ai-shan near Chakhar as allied expeditionary forces invaded and occupied Peking.

Jodbajab was above all else a conservative man but, like most Chakhar leaders, he also saw the folly of joining the cause of independence when Chakhar was so overshadowed by China. To support Urga would have been the kiss of death unless they were willing to leave everything and flee north to Khalkha as some individuals and groups in other areas did. But there was more. Jodbajab was not only *amban* over the Mingghan area of Chakhar, he was also responsible for the famous Darighangha imperial pastures on the border between Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia. When this strategic area was occupied by the Urga forces, Jodbajab led a military campaign in 1912 or 1913 to recover Darighanghai but was wounded, captured by Khalkha forces and hauled north to prison in Urga.

As in other areas, the dramatic case of Jodbajab was not typical of the general feeling among the common people. Long threatened by Chinese officials and settlers and now by radical Chinese revolutionaries, they were much more inclined to separate from China and unify with a new Greater Mongolia.

Jodbajab, whether realist or opportunist, has been greatly criticized by Mongolian nationalists. Eventually he was repatriated to Chakhar, made a general by Yüan Shih-k'ai and became head of the various *amban* of the eight banners and four pastures of Chakhar. He was cooperative with the Japanese when they occupied Inner Mongolia during World War II, and was again captured by forces of the Mongolian People's Republic in 1945, taken to Ulaanbaatar and executed.

Situation in Ulanhab

While our assessment is still incomplete, it appears that the initial

spontaneous response in Ulanhab was an enthusiastic support of the movement. The league's head at the time was Prince Lhawangnorbu, ruling *jasagh* of Durbed banner, and his lead was followed by neighboring banners. The three Urad banners did not have distinct borders and tended to be united in sending emissaries and messages of support to the new regime in Urga. In western Inner Mongolia, one cause of Mongolian alienation was the activity of I-ku, a Manchu governor-general who actively promoted the Chinese colonization of Mongolian land, killed a Mongol noble who opposed him, and generally distressed the people and leaders of the Ulanhab and Yeke-juu leagues. After I-ku was removed in 1905, his successor, the governor-general of Suiyüan, Chang Shao-tseng, continued to seize land for Chinese settlement.¹⁸

As initial enthusiasm subsided, the leaders of Ulanhab realized that they had to reckon with certain confrontation with the Chinese. The main figure of concern was Governor-General Chang, stationed in Suiyüan with security forces. During the transitional period following the proclamation of independence, the Ulanhab princes drew up a document that was critical of Chang's rule of the Mongol-China border region, particularly his continuation of the land grabbing policy of I-ku who had been dismissed and even imprisoned for his exploitation of the Mongols in Ulanhab and Ordos. Finally, on orders from Yüan Shih-k'ai in Peking, Governor-General Chang called a conference of the various leaders in western Mongolia in an attempt to resolve the problems.

The meeting was a sobering occasion for the princes as it was made clear to them that Chang's strategy was a steel hand in a velvet glove. They soon learned that if they remained within the Chinese sphere, they would be rewarded by a promotion in princely rank and an annual salary (*feng-lu*) or financial grant. But if they chose to leave they would inevitably meet the determined military power of General Chang and the Chinese troops at his disposal. In view of the overwhelming forces against them, the main result of the conference was the "pacification" of the Mongols or rather an intimidation of their leaders, effectively neutralizing their move to independence.

Settlements in Western Mongolia

For most of western Inner Mongolia, the areas of Shilin-ghol, Ulanhab, Chakhar and Ordos, the crucial time was not 1911 when independence was declared but rather 1912-13 when the real political and military contest came between the Mongols and Chinese forces for a final settlement to determine control over the border areas. Most banners with their sparse population were not prepared to defend themselves when set upon by military forces from both Outer Mongolia and China.

The Ujumuchin banner of Shilin-ghol league may be taken as an example. It was one invasion route of Outer Mongolian forces, and the particular threat here was the proposed stationing of Chinese military forces to guard against further incursions of Khalkha troops, but also to intimidate the Mongols and neutralize continuing sentiment for a separation and alliance with a Greater Mongolia. Such an occupation by a large number of undisciplined Chinese troops would indeed have been a great plague to the area, but it was avoided through the mediation of Kharachin leaders in Peking who were able to obtain a special ordinance from President Yüan Shih-k'ai. This document confirmed that the Mongol leaders and their people were not involved in any political movement and that Chinese

military occupation was thus unnecessary. This measure avoided certain suffering of many Ujumuchin Mongols.¹⁹

The neighboring banner of East Khauchid (Hochit), whose ruling prince had migrated with many of his people into Outer Mongolia to join the independence movement, was left without any administration. The most pressing problem in this banner, after Shilin-ghol's failure to break away from China, was to restore order and to create a new administrative structure recognized by Peking, since the area was to remain within the sphere of Chinese power. The task fell to Sungjingwangchugh, younger brother of the *jasagh* who had fled. Again through the mediation of the Kharachin, Lobsangchoijur, the young prince Sungjingwangchugh was recognized by the Peking government and confirmed as the new *jasagh* of the banner.²⁰

The Key Role of Kharachin Banner and Prince Gungsangnorbu

In any assessment of Inner Mongolia's response to the Mongolian independence movement, a key role is played by the Kharachin banner of Josotu league. Its leaders were among the most experienced and sophisticated. They had the longest contact with the Chinese and had good connections in Peking. These factors which made the Kharachin prominent were resented by other Mongols but were important in each crisis when the necessity arose of dealing with the Chinese. In this quarter of Mongolia the situation was particularly complex. And primary focus is best given to Gungsangnorbu, prince of Kharachin, head of the Josotu league and the most progressive prince in Inner Mongolia. He was the first to establish modern schools, visited Japan in 1903 and was generally a pioneer in the modernization of Inner Mongolia.²¹

In the crisis which was mounting in the fall of 1911 with Outer Mongolia moving toward independence and with increased Chinese revolutionary activity, Gungsangnorbu was caught in a dilemma. He was concerned with Mongolia's fate, but he was naturally even more concerned for the people of his own banner and the surrounding region of southeastern Mongolia--Josotu, Juu-uda, and Jerim. Here the image of the Chinese revolutionaries was most radical, and he was decidedly opposed to any new regime in China dominated by revolutionaries.

The Wuhan mutiny on October 10, 1911, which sparked the revolution, was followed by discussions at court regarding the fate of the Manchu dynasty. The Mongol princes, mainly Ghonchoghsurung of Bintu, Palta of Torghud and Bodisu of Khorchin, Gungsangnorbu, Nayantu of Khalkha, representing the sentiment of many Mongols, strenuously opposed a Manchu abdication. Gungsangnorbu made it known that if the Manchus surrendered to the revolutionaries, he would seriously consider proclaiming the independence of eastern Inner Mongolia. When the Manchu abdication and Outer Mongolian independence became a reality, Prince Gung realized that foreign assistance was absolutely necessary for the Mongols to resist Chinese forces. There were but two possibilities, Russia or Japan.

Before seeking Japanese aid, Prince Gung, together with Prince Ghonchoghsurung of Bintu banner (Khorchin league), visited with the Russian deputy minister resident in Peking and discussed the possibility of Russian assistance for Inner Mongolian unity in a Greater Mongolia. This diplomat explained that Russia was sympathetic to Inner Mongolian independence but that Russian assistance was out

of the question--because of geopolitical factors Russian assistance would be limited to Outer Mongolia. Prince Gung immediately contacted the Japanese to gain their support. His liaison was Naniwa Kawashima, advisor to his Manchu brother-in-law, Prince Su.²²

Kawashima was a special agent of the Japanese military, and through him Gungsangnorbu was successful in gaining the support of the Japanese foreign minister Yasuya Uchida and General Yasumasa Fukushima of the Japanese general staff, whose contact with the Mongols extended back at least to 1900. Prince Gung arranged to borrow 200,000 yen from Japan, secured on the development of the mineral resources of Josotu league. Following Gungsangnorbu's lead, Prince Jaghar of Baarin right banner (Juu-uda league) and Prince Ghongchoghsurung of Bintu sought similar agreements with the Japanese.²³

While it is not possible to follow the day-to-day actions and decisions of Gungsangnorbu, it is clear that he had two major priorities. First, he wanted to develop a new unity integrating the banners and leagues of southeastern Mongolia (Josotu, Juu-uda, and Jerim) preliminary to some greater alliance, and second, to negotiate the support of Japan.

Immediately following the Manchu abdication on February 12, 1912 Prince Gung returned to Kharachin and convened a conference at Ulaan-khada (Ch'ih-feng) with leaders and delegates from the various banners of the three leagues of southeastern Mongolia. As a key leader and spokesman in the discussions he made it clear that he favored separation from China and unification in a Greater Mongolia.²⁴ Another strong leader at the conference was Yao-shan, a commoner from Keshigten banner (Juu-uda league), who also supported a move for independence.²⁵

Fragmentary reports of the conference confirm that most of the Inner Mongolian princes were ambivalent about independence, more precisely that they were apprehensive about separation from China. If such a move were successful and all lived happily ever after there would be virtually no objection. But if a Greater Mongolia (*Bügüde Mongghol*) was to be a romantic dream crushed by Chinese armies all would be lost, including their official rank, personal wealth and the luxurious life most had gained from their economic contacts with the Chinese world, mainly from the lease or sale of land. They were emotionally attracted to a united Mongolia but restrained by rational considerations which were usually overriding. Their natural impulse was to pursue independence as proposed by Prince Gung. At the same time they realized that such a move was dangerous because their territories were in southern Inner Mongolia, close to the political seat of Chinese power and such military garrisons as Mukden and Cheng-te.

They favored establishing close relations with the Urga government. A unification of all Mongolia on the cultural basis of language, religion and tradition appealed to them but their national consciousness was weak. The independence movement predated the real rise of a Mongolian nationalism, and narrow, regional loyalties exhibited themselves. The concept of a unified nation state was foreign to them. The Naiman prince, among others, voiced the opinion that Prince Gung or he himself should become *khan* (emperor) of Mongolia and not a Tibetan monk like the Jebtsundamba Living Buddha. The Ulaan-khada conference failed to produce any definitive agreements, and action was suspended until it was clear as to what support was forthcoming from Japan.

Prince Gung was disappointed at the indecisive action of the Ulaan-khada

conference; nevertheless he dispatched a personal emissary, Lobsangchoijur, to Outer Mongolia to establish contact with the new government.

Meanwhile Altanochir (Chin-yün-ch'ang) was sent to the Japanese base at Dairen to obtain weapons according to agreements made in January 1912. Altanochir was successful in obtaining military supplies which were transported by railroad to Cheng-chia-t'un. From here the materiel was to be further transported by oxcarts, but the operation was almost immediately attacked by Chinese forces, several men were killed and Altanochir barely escaped after a harrowing experience.²⁶ This was but one of a series of events that scuttled further attempts to effectively unite and arm the Josotu, Juu-uda and Jerim leagues for the crisis and to take them out of China's orbit and into a new Mongolian state.

A most serious problem was the loss of Japanese support that was crucial for the success of any movement. The Japanese were initially skeptical of Yüan Shih-k'ai and the new Republic of China but soon moved to support his plan for a new imperial dynasty. At the same time, the Japanese were also involved with Chang Tso-lin, soon to emerge as the strongman over eastern Inner Mongolia and all Manchuria. A course of action supporting either Yüan Shih-k'ai or Chang Tso-lin was inconsistent with a policy of supporting Mongolian separatist movements. Ambitious lower-level Japanese like Kawashima continued to support the Mongols, but that was not enough to tip the scales in favor of Mongolian independence.

Meanwhile, Gungasangnorbu was indirectly associated with the Tsung-she-tang, the Manchu restoration movement of his brother-in-law, Prince Su, but this was a peripheral movement which needs no detailed description here. It is reported that even Prince Gung's relations with his wife were strained because he was interested in Mongolian independence while she was more interested in a Manchu restoration.

As Yüan Shih-k'ai consolidated his control in China, it soon became unavoidable or expedient for Gungasangnorbu to respond to Yüan's summons to go to Peking. With this move and Prince Gung's immediate involvement in Peking political life although continuing his efforts for the welfare of the Mongols, the chances of the three southern leagues of eastern Mongolia to join with Khalkha and the Jebtsundamba's new government virtually evaporated. First Japanese support was lost and then the major leader of the Inner Mongolian movement.

One key was that the mainline of Japanese policy was still controlled by cautious elder statesmen and senior officers; the young officer expansionists had not yet come on the scene. Actually Japan's relations with Gungasangnorbu and the Mongols in 1911-12 foreshadowed their policy in the 1930s and 1940s. But in both situations Mongolia was subordinated to Japan's interests in China and Manchuria.

Other Kharachin Leaders Involved in the Movement

At least three prominent Kharachin Mongols were directly or indirectly involved in the Outer Mongolian movement. The first to leave Kharachin and eventually become a sojourner in Urga was Sodnam, who had broken with the banner head over problems arising from Chinese settlement of Mongolian land. He then became involved as a reporter and editor of a Mongolian newspaper in Hailar.²⁷ Sodnam

was followed by Khaisan, a strong promoter of Mongolian independence, and then by Lobsangchoijur, representative of Prince Gungsangnorbu.

Khaisan's departure for Outer Mongolia was symptomatic of the problem of several Inner Mongolian leaders. He held an official position in Kharachin (*meiren?*) and became involved in the confrontation between the Mongols and the Chinese settlers over land problems. It must be borne in mind that as recently as 1891 there had occurred a major uprising of the Chinese Chin-tan-tao, resulting in the massacre of tens of thousands of people in Kharachin, Tumet and neighboring areas of the Josotu and Juu-uda leagues. In this conflict the influential Chinese leader Chang Lien-sheng was arrested and apparently quite brutally interrogated by Khaisan. Subsequently Chang committed suicide, and officials in the neighboring Chinese districts brought charges against the Mongols. Khaisan, fearing for his safety, fled to Urga.

While in Urga Khaisan became an active promoter of Mongolian independence and later deputy war minister under Prince Khandadorji, the real spirit behind the move for independence. Because of his excellent command of the Chinese language Khaisan, assisted by a fellow Kharachin, Sodnam, drafted many official memoranda for the new government's correspondence with the Chinese.²⁸

Later, as factions and problems arose in the politics of Urga, Khandadorji was poisoned and Khaisan returned to his native Kharachin and eventually took up residence in Peking. Here Yüan Shih-k'ai, new president of the Republic of China, awarded him the rank of *beise*, one grade higher than the rank of *kung* conferred upon him in Outer Mongolia. In his later years in Peking he was noted for his scholarly work, particularly a Chinese-Mongol dictionary published under the title *Wu-fang yüan-yin*, a rather complex dictionary that classified Chinese characters according to their sound and tone pattern.

*Lobsangchoijur's Mission to Urga*²⁹

Prince Gung's envoy to the new Urga government and the story of the mission itself are both worthy of note. Lobsangchoijur was no ordinary figure when he was welcomed in Urga by the new khan. His family had served the Kharachin banner as an administrator (*jakiraghchi*) for eight generations. Lobsangchoijur himself had been a lama leading a monastic life until he was in his forties, and he was the temple abbot (*da-lama*) when he left the monastery to take up a secular career. He soon became well known through his negotiations with the *Li-fan yüan*, as an interpreter and advisor to the prominent Manchu Prince Su, and as an advisor and representative of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet. He also became prominent in Peking in later years as an appointed member of various parliamentary assemblies.

After the Ulaan-khada conference, in order to keep open various options and courses of action, Prince Gung dispatched Lobsangchoijur as his personal representative to establish ties with the new Urga government and to officially offer his regards to the Jebtsundamda as the new chief of state. Traveling through Harbin and Siberia he arrived in Urga and immediately contacted an intimate friend and fellow bannerman, Duke Khaisan who, as already mentioned, then served as deputy war minister to the famous Khandadorji.

Lobsangchoijur was welcomed by the Jebtsundamba and other officials in a

series of important talks and ceremonies. The most significant outcome of the meetings was a proposal by the Urga government to appoint Gungsangnorbu of Kharachin as governor of the six leagues and forty-nine banners of Inner Mongolia. Lobsangchoijur was requested to transmit the official seal of appointment and office back to Prince Gung, but he hesitated. His observations of the situation during his stay in Urga had left him with very negative impressions and a pessimistic view of the future of the new regime. He was also certainly aware of the dilemma of the Inner Mongolian banners and the unpromising outcome of the Ulaan-khada conference. Consequently, while it would be an honor for his banner head to have a prominent position in a new Greater Mongolia, he diplomatically declined the delicate responsibility. He informed the Boghdo Khan's government that he would convey their wishes to Gungsangnorbu and persuade him to come personally to accept the seal or to make some other arrangement.

While in Urga Lobsangchoijur lost hope that a new day was really dawning for the Mongols after having witnessed the disunity among the leaders and the general political and economic chaos in the capital. An added factor in his particular case was his impressions of the Lamaist church. Having spent much of his life as a lama, he felt a strong commitment to Buddhism. But he was disillusioned and critical of the Boghdo Khan who was supposed to be a holy lama, but who had a wife, was too political and generally had a bad reputation for being involved in scandalous activities.

His friend Khaisan, who was much more committed to the cause of independence and the new government, was very eager for Inner Mongolia to be involved in the movement, and it was apparently on his recommendations that the new government proposed to give official seals to Prince Gungsangnorbu as head of Inner Mongolia.

Thus while Khaisan and some other Inner Mongolian patriots stayed on in Outer Mongolia, Lobsangchoijur returned to his native area. In time he became involved in the life of the community of Mongol officials and leaders in Peking while maintaining his strong concern for the welfare of the Mongols. He realized that it was necessary for those Mongols close to China to accommodate to the economic and political realities in their relationship to China. In a sense he personified the problem of most of Inner Mongolia, attracted to a new hope but eventually forced to accommodate to China.

The international context of the Mongolian independence movement was decisive, as Russia and China blocked the legitimate interests of the Mongols and as Japan failed to be supportive, but the internal military, political and economic factors noted above were also crucial though less well known.

With Inner Mongolia's failure to join a new independent Mongolia, settlement with the Chinese was negotiated mainly through Kharachin leadership. It was these Mongols who tended to be most important in many key institutions and movements concerned with Inner Mongolia in this century. While they have been criticized at times, it was this group of Mongol leaders who won many important concessions from the Chinese and continued to speak for the Mongols under overwhelming difficulties.

Kharachin Mongols became the leaders of the Mongolian-Tibetan Ministry in Peking, set up soon after the revolution of 1911 to administer affairs in China's border areas. They were also successful in organizing the Mongolian-Tibetan Academy in Peking which trained hundreds of leaders for all of Mongolia. Much

of Kharachin lobbying was done through the Mongolian Association of Allied Princes and Nobles (*Meng-ku wang-kung lien-ho-hui*), a quasi-political organization in Peking. In the mid-twenties a Kharachin Mongol, Pai-yün-ti, was the head of the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (*Nei-Meng-ku kuo-min-tang*), and a capable representative of this group, Wu-ho-ling, led the Mongolian delegation in 1928 to negotiate a new policy or settlement for Inner Mongolia with the new Nanking government and the leaders of the ruling Kuomintang. In the 1930s and 1940s men from this same group were strong supporters of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement led by the Shilin-ghol prince Demchugdongrub, and they held important positions in the Kalgan Mongolian government until its demise in 1945.

Notes

1. This conference working paper is part of a research project on Modern Inner Mongolia being conducted by Brigham Young University's China-Mongol Border Area Studies (CMBAS) group. Much of the material is based on oral history work pursued over the last two decades in Mongolia, China and Japan.
2. See Paul Hyer, "Mongolian stereotypes and images: Some tentative observations," *Mongolian Studies* 5 (1979).
3. For the various Mongolian subregions see Chang Mu, *Meng-ku yu-mu chi* (A Record of Nomadic Mongolia), reprint Taipei, 1965 [1859], pp. 11-284.
4. G. Naraangnamjil, "A brief biography of the Determined Hero Togtokh," translated by Urgunge Onon, in *Mongolian Heroes of the Twentieth Century* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), pp. 43-76. Onon also notes an article on Togtokh by L. Jamsran, "He was one of the most determined men to fight against the Manchus and the Chinese," *Shinjlekh Ukhaan, Am'dral* [Sciences and Life], Ulaanbaatar 1970, no. 4.
5. Sh. Sandag, *Mongolyn uls toriin gadaad kharittsaa, 1850-1919* (Ulaanbaatar, 1971), Vol. I, pp. 302-303.
6. Charles Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), p. 197.
7. Autobiography of the Kanjurwa *khutughtu*, recorded in Taiwan, 1972, unpublished manuscript, pp. 142-144.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Oral report of Shilin-ghol officials, Prince Sungchingwangchugh and others.
10. Mongolian biographical file of BYU's CMBAS; also observation of S. Jagchid during residence in Shilin-ghol during early 1940s.
11. Reported in Chinese newspapers of the period, and Mongolian biographical data file, BYU's CMBAS.
12. Paul Hyer, "Biography of Prince Demchugdongrub," unpublished manuscript.
13. Autobiography of the Kanjurwa, p. 144.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.
15. Most of the information summarized below is taken from Sh. Natsagdorj, "Brief biography of the Forefront Hero Damdinsüren" (Ulaanbaatar: Committee of Sciences, 1946). This very informative article has been made available in English by Urgunge Onon in his *Mongolian Heroes of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 77-104. Onon also recommends D. Dandingav's "Those struggled for our sake" (about Forefront Hero Damdinsüren), from *Utga Zokhiol, Urlag* (Ulaanbaatar, May 22, 1970).
16. Damdinsüren was a representative at the important Khiakhta conference in

1914, but he was forced to withdraw by the Chinese and Russian representatives because of his uncompromising championing of the Mongolian cause. He was distressed at the failure of the negotiations because he had dedicated himself to a unified, independent Mongolia. In 1920 at the age of forty-nine, he was arrested by the Chinese with Magsarjab and tortured to death.

17. Jodbajab, Mongolian biographical data file, BYU's CMBAS.

18. See Paul Hyer, "Comparative frontiers: China and the West," in *Essays on the American West, 1974-75* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1976), p. 143.

19. Unpublished biography of Lobsangchoijur (1866-1944).

20. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

21. On this man see Sechin Jagchid, "Prince Gungsangnorbu: Forerunner of Inner Mongolian modernization," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 12 (1978), pp. 147-158. This is a summary of a more detailed unpublished study.

22. *Ibid.* See also Aida Tsutomu, *Kawashima Naniwa* (Tokyo, 1936), p. 162.

23. For a very interesting study of the relationship of Prince Gung and the Japanese, drawing largely upon Japanese Foreign Office documents, see Robert Valliant, "Inner Mongolia, 1912: The failure of independence," *Mongolian Studies* 4 (1977), p. 56-92.

24. Oral report of Sechinchoghtu (Yang Tsun-sheng) whose father attended the conference. See also Jagchid, p. 150.

25. Oral report of Yao-shan's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Rashidungdug.

26. Oral report of Altanochir; see also Robert Valliant, *op. cit.*

27. Oral report of Ogodei (Wu-ku-t'ing), Sodnam's son, who accompanied him to Urga; also report of Urgumbo, another of Sodnam's sons.

28. *Ibid.* Also Mongolian biographical data file on Lobsangchoijur, BYU's CMBAS.

29. *Ibid.*