

# 11

## Daur

### Size and Location

There are presently some 94,000 Daur 达斡尔 in China, a sizeable increase from the 55,000 reported in 1958.<sup>1</sup> Pre-war figures were, however, much higher. Around 1930, by their own estimate, there were at least 100,000 Daur in the Nonni River area alone. This figure did not include sizeable populations around Hailar and along the Amur River.<sup>2</sup> Poppe, in 1928, surmised that there might be up to 300,000 Daur in Manchuria,<sup>3</sup> but in 1935 he said that he did not know the total size of the Daur population.<sup>4</sup> Similar sharp discrepancies between the pre-Communist and Communist periods have been found with other minorities in China. There are usually several reasons accounting for these differences, including the haphazard nature of earlier estimates, different classification criteria, long periods of war and natural disasters, and emigration.

Of the present total, only 4,369 live in the Gurbansher Daur commune near the city of Qoqek in Xinjiang.<sup>5</sup> The great majority of China's Daur lives in Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia, especially in the Morindawa (cf. mong. *mori*, 'horse', and *davaa*, 'ridge, hill') Daur autonomous banner, and around the city of Qiqihar in Heilongjiang. Other Daur live in Fuyu, Longjiang, Nenjiang, Nehe, and Aihui (Aigun) counties and in the Hulunbuir league of Inner Mongolia, particularly in the Chen Bargu banner and the Evenk autonomous banner (see Map 11).



Map 11. Daur

The Morindawa banner, named after a mountain, covers 11,943 square kilometers. Its seat is in the town of Nirji 尼尔基 (Daur: flourishing, prosperous). To the north is the Great Xing'an range, to the south the Nonni River plain of Fuyu county. The Nonni and its tributaries Gan, Horli, Arong, and Yin water this vast territory. It has a relatively cold climate, with only about four frost-free months a year.

### History

The origin of the Daur is unknown, but there are several clues. The earliest description of this nationality is contained in a report by the Russian explorer Spathary who referred to some unspecified Chinese source according to which the Daur is said to be the "remnants of the Chinese garrison" in today's Manchuria "left by the Tan tai-tszui (618-626)."<sup>6</sup> According to this source, a portion of that garrison force had been detailed for fox hunting and was called dahuli, 'those who hunt foxes.' Another source maintains that after the Jurchen had defeated the Liao state in 1125, some Kitan settled on the left bank of the Amur and there became the ancestors of the present-day Daur.<sup>7</sup> Lattimore relates a story which claims the Daur as the descendants of Habto Hasar, the brother of Chinggis Khan. Lattimore seems to accept this story because he concludes that it would relate the Daur to the Mongols of the Jerim League, the largest Mongol group in Manchuria. He speculates that the Daur, perhaps in the fourteenth century (because Mongolian words in the Daur language are archaic), pushed up the Nonni into the Amur valley and there came to rule over the Tungus.<sup>8</sup> Another Russian explorer, Palladius, claimed that the Daur descended from a mixed Mongol-Chinese garrison during Yuan times.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, a Daur legend tells of an original home in the area of the Shira müren and the Hara müren in today's Liao River drainage basin. At some unspecified time, these original Daur were led by their khan, named Sajihaldi, to the upper reaches of the Amur River. There he left half of his tribe because provisions had been exhausted and their strength was down. He is said to have continued on with the remainder of his tribe in a westerly direction. Those who stayed on the Amur set up various settlements, with wooden palisade walls and buildings.<sup>10</sup>

The first of these hypotheses should be ignored. One cannot "discover" the roots of a smallish nationality some 1,300 years ago without any documentary evidence along the way. Perhaps most incriminating is the use of the term dahuli which is the modern pronunciation and not that of the Tang dynasty. Likewise, Palladius' notion should be dismissed.

The other claims have a ring of plausibility about them. Ever since Poppe's first work on the Daur language in 1930,<sup>11</sup> we have known that Daur



contains some Middle Mongolian words, i.e. Mongolian as spoken in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. This linguistic fact proves that the Daur nationality's roots can be traced at least as far back as the fourteenth century, but it does not prove that the Daurs began to exist as a distinct nationality at that time. This could have happened either before or after, as well as during the time when Middle Mongolian was spoken. This problem of ethnogenesis deserves further study, but we will need much more ethnographic material than we presently have before we will be able to pinpoint the beginnings of the Daurs.

Meanwhile, I would suggest that the Daurs can be traced as far back as the twelfth century. The Daur legend mentioned earlier speaks of their ancestors as living along the Shira mūren and Hara mūren, in other words, along the headwaters of the Liao River in the eastern foothills of the Great Xing'an Mountains. That area was the Kitan heartland, where the Liao dynasty's supreme capital was located.<sup>12</sup> It was then populated mostly by Kitan, with an admixture of Parhaes (Bohai), who had been resettled there after the Kitan had defeated their state, and some Chinese. Linguistic evidence rules out the Parhaes as the Daurs' ancestors, which leaves the Kitan. Shiratori and Pelliot, among others, have stated that the Kitan language was largely Mongolian with an admixture of Tungusic words.<sup>13</sup> The Daur language has this same characteristic.

The Daur legend refers to an exodus to the Amur River. Like most legends, it does not offer any dates for this move, but judging by the few details it does offer, I would place this migration around the time when the Jurchens defeated the Liao dynasty in the early twelfth century. Only an actual or perceived catastrophe of major proportions would have induced an entire tribe or, at any rate, a sizeable group of people, to uproot itself and trek almost the entire length of the Manchurian Plain to its northernmost terminus on the Amur River. It is most unlikely that a natural disaster was the cause. A flood or drought in the foothills of the Great Xing'an Mountains could indeed have caused people to move, but not all the way to the Amur. After all, climatic conditions get worse, not better, the farther north one moves. Even if, for argument's sake, we assume that some natural causes did force the Daurs to move northward, the Daurs would have been much more likely to resettle in the river valley of the Nonni rather than of the Amur. It is in the Nonni River valley that the majority of Daurs have been living since the seventeenth century (see below), proving that the area is quite capable of supporting a sizeable population. Since we know of no major climatic changes that far back, we can assume that the area could have supported the fleeing Daurs in the twelfth century, had they chosen to settle there. Yet the legend suggests that the Daurs did not even stop in the Nonni valley or anywhere else long enough to restock their diminishing supplies, so that by the time they reached the Amur, their chief was forced to leave about half of his group there before continuing his flight in a westerly direction.

I believe we are justified in deducing that the Daurs did not flee from any natural disaster but from a man-made, political disaster. There were only two major political catastrophies between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The first occurred in the early twelfth century when the Jurchens destroyed the Kitan state, and the second one took place in the early to mid-thirteenth century when the Jurchens, in turn, were defeated by the Mongols. All historical sources tell us that the Mongols, so far from persecuting the Kitans, were friendly toward them.

I would conclude, therefore, that the Daurs were either Kitans, or a tribe closely associated with the Kitans, who, living near the Kitan supreme capital, came under immediate attack by the Jurchens and then fled as far north as the Amur. They did not settle down along the Nonni because the northern border of both the Kitan and then the Jurchen state of Jin ran through the Nonni River plain. Quite clearly, the Daurs wished to put as much distance between themselves and the Jurchens as possible. In fact, as the legend suggests, had it not been for a lack of supplies, the entire tribe would have fled still farther in a westerly direction. One is tempted to speculate that their ultimate destination was Central Asia where another group of Kitan refugees under Yelü Dashi, resettled and established the Karakitai state.

If the Daurs in the twelfth century had fled to the Amur River valley to escape an encroaching enemy, they were destined to do so again in the seventeenth century. Then, however, escape was not possible for long as Qing China and Tsarist Russia were simultaneously expanding their control into the Amur valley.

During Nurhaqi's rule over the Manchu state (1616-1627), the Daurs were still in the Amur valley.<sup>14</sup> In 1639 and for several years thereafter, Russian pioneers reported meeting Daurs on the upper Shilka River and in the valleys of the Argun and Zeya Rivers.<sup>15</sup> Almost from the first sighting of a Russian, however, some Daurs packed their gear and moved south and east in a vain attempt to avoid all contact with alien, sedentary groups. As early as 1634, some Daurs paid tribute to the encroaching Qing state.<sup>16</sup> Caught in an ever tightening vise, it was perhaps inevitable that the Daur nationality was split, with some clans opting to come under Russian control while the others submitted themselves to the Qing. This split is illustrated in the careers of two Daur chiefs, Gantimur and Bardaqi.

According to Russian sources, before 1654 Gantimur lived along the banks of the Ingoda River. When the Russians requested *yasak* (tax) from him in 1654, he took his clan and fled across the Argun River where Qing officials received them and settled them on the Nonni River Plain. Gantimur, however, disliked life there so much that in 1666 he and a group of more than 300 persons returned to their homeland, now under Russian domination.<sup>17</sup> Until well into the



twentieth century, Gantimur's homeland was known to the Russians as Dauria. In 1882, Gantimur's descendants numbered 10,489 persons, most of whom had converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

Bardaqi was another Daur chief whose clan lived on the Zeya (Jingqili) River north of the Amur. Between 1634 and 1643, Bardaqi led twelve tribute missions to the Qing.<sup>19</sup> After the Manchus invaded China, they invited Bardaqi to Beijing in 1649 where they bestowed on him the title of *ashan i hafan*.<sup>20</sup> Bardaqi never returned to his clan; he remained in Beijing where in 1654 he died. No explanation is given for Bardaqi's failure to return to his clan. It is most improbable that the Qing forcibly detained him since they tried hard to win the support of all the tribes in Northern Manchuria. Bardaqi could have lost standing with his own clan, possibly for being too friendly to the sedentary Qing, prompting the Qing to give him an honorable retirement. In that case, Bardaqi's tribe may have decided to throw in its lot with the Russians.

We may never find out, but we do know that around the time of Bardaqi's death in far-away Beijing the Qing began to resettle some Daurs who did not wish to come under Russian domination in their homelands. It was at that time that Gantimur and his clan were resettled in the Nonni River plain. In 1652 some 478 Daur families, comprising 2,051 persons, were resettled in the Butha (Manchu *butha*, 'hunting and fishing') *fudutun*,<sup>21</sup> the present-day city of Nehe. In 1689 the treaty of Nerchinsk, *inter alia*, fixed the border between the Russian and Chinese empires along the Argun river, and this is said to have caused another stream of Daur refugees to flow into Manchuria.<sup>22</sup>

In 1698 the Qing brought all Daurs into the eight-banner system and called the Daurs, Evenks, and Oroqens "New Manchus."<sup>23</sup> With the Daurs now firmly under their control, the Qing began to levy tax obligations on them. Every man over 1.67 meters (5 *chi*) in height had to pay an annual tax of one good marten (some sources say sable) pelt and perform military service. The Daurs proved to be loyal and trustworthy subjects.<sup>24</sup> During the remainder of the Qing dynasty, they were called up a total of sixty times.<sup>25</sup> Their assignments would take them into China proper but also, in the 1750s, into faraway Xinjiang where some of their descendants still live.

The treaty of Nerchinsk did not bring the Qing dynasty the security along the northern frontier it had hoped for, especially in the area between the Argun River and the Great Xing'an Mountains, sometimes called Barga. The Qing court's demand for the return of Gantimur, made in 1670, remained unanswered, and it was feared that Russians, now sighted in increasing numbers along the Argun River, might conduct raids into Barga or entice the native population to follow Gantimur into Russian territory. The Qing government finally decided to strengthen its guard along the frontier, and in 1732, it dispatched some 730 Daurs, along with Barguts, Evenks, and Oroqens to Barga. Two years later these

migrants found a settlement which later became the city of Hailar.<sup>26</sup>

### Language and Literature

The Daur language belongs to the Mongolian group of the Altaic language family. Over ninety percent of all Daur still use their own language, the only exception being the Daur living in Aihui and Hulan counties who switched to Chinese in the 1930s and 1940s. Moreover, many members of other nationalities living in the Morindawa Daur autonomous banner use Daur when conversing with Daur. The four main dialects are Qiqihar, Butha, Ili, and Hailar. The Qiqihar dialect is spoken in and around Qiqihar city, in Fuyu and Longjiang counties, and in Arong and Butha banners. It numbers about 35,000 speakers, and it has been less influenced by Manchu-Tungus languages than the Butha dialect. Its vernaculars include Jiangdong, spoken in Fuyu county east of the Nonni river, Jiangxi in the area north of Meilisi, west of the Nonni river, and Fularji. Another 35,000 Daur speak the Butha dialect, principally in the Morindawa autonomous banner, as well as in Nenjiang, Nehe, and Gannan counties. Its vernaculars are Nawen, in the western part of the Butha area, Nemor, Aihui, and Mergen. The Nemor vernacular was originally spoken in Nehe, east of the Nonni river, but during the past several decades its speakers have moved to western Butha where it is gradually fusing with the Nawen vernacular. The Aihui vernacular is also called Darbin, after a locality north of Aihui. The Mergen vernacular is spoken in settlements near the Nenjiang county seat. Differences between the Qiqihar and Butha dialects are sufficiently minor so that Daur from these two groups can easily converse with one another.<sup>27</sup>

The Hailar dialect has about 15,500 speakers, who are divided into the Nantun and Mokertu vernaculars. The former is spoken in the city of Hailar and in Nantun, the seat of the Evenk autonomous banner, and the latter in Bayintala and Mokertu villages, also in the autonomous banner. This dialect is characterized by many Mongolian loan words. The Ili dialect is spoken by about 4,500 Daur in Xinjiang. It is strongly influenced by Kazak, and its vernaculars have not yet been determined.

The Daur language has twelve vowels and twenty-one consonants. The vowels are divided into six short and six long vowels.

a as in ariljigu 'to exchange'  
e as in emel 'front, south'  
i as in ire 'ninety'  
o as in onugu 'to ride'  
u as in hundur 'high'  
ü as in mürgaan 'painting'

aa as in baatur 'hero'  
ee as in meemee 'Mom'  
ii as in miniig 'my'  
oo as in boolk 'throat'  
uu as in duurku 'full'  
üü as in düüdun 'fire match'



Like other Mongolian languages, Daur has near-homophonous words which differ only in their vowel length but have different meanings. For example, tos 'oil', but toos 'strength, power; dust', hag 'split, crack' but haag 'sugar'.

The consonants are:

<u>b</u> as in <u>balge</u> 'earth'	<u>z</u> as in <u>ziliao</u> 'material'
<u>p</u> as in <u>pabun</u> 'discipline'	<u>c</u> as in <u>cidian</u> 'dictionary'
<u>m</u> as in <u>madgen</u> 'interest' (money)	<u>s</u> as in <u>som</u> 'arrow'
<u>f</u> as in <u>forgun</u> 'current situation'	<u>j</u> as in <u>jawus</u> 'fish'
<u>w</u> as in <u>warkel</u> 'clothing'	<u>q</u> as in <u>qaaq</u> 'day after tomorrow'
<u>d</u> as in <u>aldar</u> 'news'	<u>š</u> as in <u>šolbor</u> 'rope'
<u>t</u> as in <u>tergul</u> 'road, way'	<u>y</u> as in <u>yawdel</u> 'thing; conduct'
<u>n</u> as in <u>namer</u> 'autumn'	<u>g</u> as in <u>garge</u> 'earring'
<u>l</u> as in <u>lonk</u> 'bottle'	<u>k</u> as in <u>keqig</u> 'day before yesterday'
<u>r</u> as in <u>huar</u> 'rain'	<u>h</u> as in <u>hamer</u> 'nose'
	<u>ṇ</u> as in <u>sangluu</u> 'incense burner'

The consonants z, c, and ṇ are used only in Chinese loan words.

Daur is phonologically close to Middle Mongolian, as attested by many old words, like āgū or āγū, cf. Mong. agu, 'to be'.<sup>28</sup> It also contains many words which are either identical to or close to words in modern Mongolian and other Mongolian languages.<sup>29</sup> Some examples include Daur nar, Mong. nara, Tu nara, Eastern Yugur nanan, 'sun'; Daur galj, Mong. yal, Tu gal, Eastern Yugur gal, 'fire'; and Daur morj, Mong. mori, Tu morə, Eastern Yugur moorə, 'horse'. Its lexicon also contains a sizeable number of Manchu and Tungusic words. Examples are gurun < Man. gurun, 'country'; ḍak < Man. ḍaka, 'thing'; kumun < Man. kumun, 'music'; ilgaa < Man. ilha, 'flower'. Tungusic, specifically Evenk, loan words in Daur include ergəl 'bullock', bireṅkw 'rolling pin', xweəs 'pus', and waalgeṇ 'echo'.

As expected, Daur also contains many loan words from the Chinese. Older loan words include dəṇ dʒen < Chin. deng 'lamp', gjaə < Chin. jie 'street', and waas < Chin. wazi 'sock'. Words borrowed after 1949 are mostly political in nature, such as danʒan < Chin. dangyuan 'party member', tugai < Chin. tugai 'land reform', and ganbul < Chin. ganbu 'cadre'.

In most phonological and morphological respects, Daur is close to Mongolian. Its vowel harmony, however, is more complicated than that in modern Mongolian. There are six categories of vowels, as follows: (1) aa, au, ai, a are masculine in any syllable. When they are in the first syllable of a word, they must be followed by either other masculine vowels or by neuter vowels of the fourth or sixth category (see below), e.g. kaalaa 'to change', dauree 'to imitate', sai/ee 'to praise', akaa 'elder brother'. (2) oo, oi, o are also masculine



in any syllable, and they must be followed either by another masculine vowel or a neuter vowel of the fourth or sixth category, e.g., oiloo- 'to dig', and olees 'white poplar'. (3) əə and əu are feminine in any syllable and must be followed by another feminine vowel or a neuter vowel of the fifth or sixth category, e.g. əərəl 'spinning wheel', səudər 'shadow', dəəlbər 'horse's mane'. (4) ee and e are masculine in the first syllable and neuter in subsequent syllables. They must be followed by masculine vowels or neuter vowels of the fifth or sixth category, e.g. feeruu 'rainbow', geegin 'copper', dəəblaa- 'to sit cross-legged'. (5) əi, ə, uu, ui are feminine in the first syllable and neuter in subsequent syllables. They must be followed by feminine vowels or neuter vowels of the fifth or sixth category, e.g. əidəə 'hither', əməəl 'saddle', xuulu- 'to blow', and kuitur 'cold'. (6) u, ii, i are neuter in any syllable and may be followed by masculine or feminine vowels, e.g. dulaan 'warm', tiidaa 'thither', ritaa- 'to ignite', gurəəs 'wild animal', ʃiikəə 'to whistle', kixəə 'saw'.

The Daur do not have their own writing system at present, but there were two attempts earlier in the twentieth century to introduce one. In 1920 Merse (Guo Daofu) created a script based on the Latin alphabet, but it failed to win acceptance.<sup>30</sup> On December 20, 1956 a conference convened in Hohhot and passed a draft plan for a Daur script. It was based on the Nawen vernacular of the Butha dialect, spoken in the Nonni River Plain. The new alphabet was Cyrillic in form and consisted of thirty-two letters.<sup>31</sup> Except for the omission of shch (щ), the Daur alphabet was identical to the Russian alphabet. A few pamphlets were published in the new script and schools introduced it, but in 1960 this script, like a similar script for Mongolian, was abandoned for political reasons. During the Qing period, the handful of Daur who were literate used the Manchu script, but after 1911 Chinese quickly replaced Manchu.<sup>32</sup> In recent times Daur everywhere have used Chinese, but quite a few Daur living in the Hailar area and other parts of Inner Mongolia are also proficient in the Mongolian script. At present most Daur can converse in Chinese. With the ever increasing number of Han people settling in their midst, the Daur have found it both a practical and, at times such as the "cultural revolution", a political necessity to speak Chinese. Besides, it is quite common to find Daur also being able to converse in Mongolian, Evenk, Uigur, and Kazak, depending on where they live.

The Daur have a rich heritage of oral literature, some of which has been published. Poppe was the first to transcribe and translate into Russian some stories, poems (songs), and shamanist incantations.<sup>33</sup> In 1957 two booklets presented in the then newly created Daur Cyrillic script contained eighteen folk tales<sup>34</sup> and eighteen songs.<sup>35</sup> Both uqun and jaandal are said to be extremely popular and practically everyone can sing them.<sup>36</sup> Another collection of folk tales was published in 1960 in Mongolian.<sup>37</sup> In the last few years translations in

Chinese have also been published. The popular Hohhot journal Caoyuan has published several modern short stories and one discussion of Daur folk tales by the Daur writer Sanaa.<sup>38</sup> Another, rather well-known, Daur writer is the forty-seven year old Uyunbat, who presently works at the cultural palace of the Evenk autonomous banner in Hulunbuir league. After publishing several short stories in Mongolian, he has recently switched to Chinese.<sup>39</sup> Finally, the largest collection to date of Daur folk tales, albeit in Chinese, is the Daurzu minjian gushi xuan, which forms part of a huge project currently in progress and which will eventually have published at least one volume of folk tales for each of China's fifty-five minorities. The Daur volume's stories were mostly recorded in the Morindawa banner.<sup>40</sup>

### Society

Daur society is divided into hala and mokon. A hala is a surname group whose members are distributed over several villages (ail).<sup>41</sup> Each hala is divided into several mokon, clans or localized kin groups, whose members have a common surname based on common patrilineal descent and live in one village.<sup>42</sup> Since virtually all inhabitants of a village belong to the same mokon, the terms mokon and ail are usually used interchangeably. But a few exceptions exist. An occasional Han merchant will be found in a village or there will occur some matrilineal arrangement whereby a Daur family will take in a strong but poor man as son-in-law. In these relatively rare cases, a distinction is made between ail and mokon.

In the Morindawa banner the size of villages runs between ten and fifty households with populations of about seventy-five to 350 persons.

Daur society is governed by exogamy. Brides are acquired from outside one's own hala, but in virtually all cases, they are still Dairs. Only in the twentieth century have a few Dair intellectuals married Han or Mongol women, and hardly any marriages take place with the neighboring Evenks and Oroqens.<sup>43</sup>

Inheritance rules have been rather lax, with neither the oldest nor youngest son necessarily obtaining the parents' house.

### Economy

Except for the Dairs in the Hailar area of Hulunbuir league, who are principally engaged in herding, farming is the main Dair occupation. Their main crops are millet, buckwheat, oats, and barley. In recent decades, Dairs have also sown large fields to soybeans, gaoliang (Chinese sorghum), and corn. In the past, rotation cropping and extensive cultivation were practiced but no fertilizer was applied and no tilling was done. This resulted in low yields.<sup>44</sup> In addition to



*Daur*

these field crops, most Daur also raise a wide variety of vegetables in gardens next to their houses which at least since the time of Spathary's mission in 1676, have been of "Chinese" adobe type.<sup>45</sup>



Illus. 20. A Daur Woman

Hunting used to be a primary economic activity, but during the last two centuries, virtually all Daur have restricted hunting to a subsidiary status. So-called lordly animals, like the bear and tiger, are generally not hunted. Economically the most important game is the elk whose antlers are highly prized by the Han for medicinal purposes. Roedeer are hunted for their skins which are made into a variety of bags, leggings, and reins. Leg bones are used for pipe stems. While these animals are hunted by parties on expeditions sometimes lasting several weeks, other animals are hunted close to home. These include squirrels, wolves, foxes, and rabbits.

Fishing in the Nonni river and its tributaries is a year-long pastime but occasionally is done on a commercial scale. One noteworthy form of ice fishing is by use of a long-handled mallet. As the mallet strikes the ice, the resulting concussion stuns the fish whose upturned white bellies are readily visible through the ice.

## Chapter 11

Other sideline activities include gathering of firewood and mushrooms, making charcoal, and the construction of the so-called Daur cart (see Illustration 21),<sup>46</sup> which is widely used throughout the Nonni river valley not only by Daur but also by Han, Mongols, Oroqens, Evenks, and Manchus. Except for very heavy objects for which a Chinese cart is used, this Daur cart has been used for a wide variety of purposes. They include bringing in the harvest, hauling farm implements and furniture, bringing home new brides, carting away manure, taking corpses to burial grounds and, in the past, transporting criminals to the execution grounds. The cart is also used for personal travel which sometimes takes several weeks. At night the detachable top part is placed on the ground and serves as shelter. During lumbering (see below), the cart is used for hauling logs to the river and, after rafts have been built, the entire cart is placed on a raft, with the top part serving as a temporary home for the rafting crew.



Illus. 21. A Daur Cart (1935)

Toward the end of the Qing dynasty, the Daur started lumber production. In good times, close to one-third of the families have relied on this activity for their livelihood.<sup>47</sup> Lumbering requires careful planning and execution and usually takes two months or more. Toward the end of each winter groups of young men travel to the upper reaches of the Nonni river and its tributaries. At that time of year the ground is still frozen, thus enabling the lumberjacks to drag



the heavy logs from the forests to the riverbanks. If properly timed, the logs usually arrive at the river just as the ice is breaking up. Then a number of rafts are constructed, tied together in convoys and floated down the river. As these convoys pass cities, logs are sold, most of them in Qiqihar. Rafting requires great skill and close coordination because of the swift currents, whirlpools, and sandbars, and sometimes takes as much as three weeks.<sup>48</sup>

### Religion

Lamaism never quite reached most Daur communities, so that only relatively few Daurs were ever converted to Lamaism. The great majority continued to adhere to shamanism. The Daurs' cosmology is dominated by two central concepts: tenger, heaven or sky, and gajir, earth. All humans and animals are believed to have a sumus, spirit, which at the time of death, leaves the body and is presented to Irmu Khan, the lord of the underworld. He decides how each spirit will be reincarnated. Those whose owners behaved best might become barkans (gods) while those with the worst record are condemned to perpetual hell. In between these two extremes are reincarnations as humans or animals.<sup>49</sup>

There are five main types of gods.<sup>50</sup> The most important type comprises the tenger gods, to wit, Aqaa tenger, father sky, Ege tenger, mother sky, Daliee Hatun tenger, princess sky, and Noter Noyen tenger, official sky. This type of god is not represented by any idols and in normal times receives an annual sacrifice of a two-year old ox or pig. During a major drought the entire clan would offer nine oxen. The Boguol 博果勒 god category includes twenty-four spirits (shen) and has two assistants, Keyideng 克依登 and Maluo 麻罗. He is represented by a colored painting, his assistants by human figures made of gold foil and by dragon paintings. Occasionally they are also represented by wooden images which can reach a height of 11.6 meters (three zhang, five chi). Pigs are normally sacrificed to gods in this category. According to old folk tales, when the Daurs still lived on the Amur they had only this type of god.

The Huolieri 霍列日 god category includes seventeen spirits which are believed to reside in fifty-eight kinds of animals and objects. Fifteen of these spirits are represented by wooden images, the other two by colored paintings. Sacrificial animals are a red ox, a chestnut-colored cow, and a yellow cock. During the ceremony, nine men offer wine and tobacco while another nine men and nine women perform dances. Huozhuori 霍卓日, the ancestral god, is worshipped by each hala and mokon. This god is believed to be not only the god of any given hala or mokon but also to be the spirit of a particular ancestor. Among the presently available case studies, most are females who died under unusual circumstances, such as being killed by lightning or who died uncleared of

false charges brought against them. This god's idol is a human figure made of cloth. During the sacrifice, nine cups of wine are offered as well as the meat of a small pig or roedeer, and buckwheat and porridge. Jiyaqi 吉亚其barkan, the god of cattle, sometimes called Jiyaqi dailal 带拉勒, is represented by a man and woman facing each other, made of white cloth or gold foil, affixed on a piece of cloth. If a family should own a snow-white colt, called a wengu 温古 horse, he is considered this god's personal steed and only men of that family may ride it.

Hunters and loggers worship Bonacha 白那查, the mountain god, whom they believe lives on a precipice deep in the mountains, bringing joy to men and creating all the trees and wild animals. Bonacha decides whether game will be plentiful and logging will be safe. Therefore, during meals in camp, hunters and loggers always offer some food and drink to Bonacha. Rafters and fishermen venerate Birge,<sup>51</sup> the river god, as the guarantor of safety and plentiful fish.

In addition to these "native" gods there are four "imported" gods brought home by Daurs military personnel from China proper during the Qing dynasty. They are Aolei 敖雷, also known as the Husan taiye 胡三太爷; Niangniang 娘娘, the empress goddess; Kuotong 阔通, the city god; Kuareng 夸仍, the army camp god; and Woxi 巫西, the god of widows. These four are represented by colored paintings and are offered pork, chicken, wine, and fruit.

Two other gods are worth noting. Najil is the ancestral god of married women who, upon marriage, take with them a small human figure made of leather and called a halai, which is believed to represent this god.<sup>52</sup> Huami, whose function I do not know, receives offerings in the shape of the sun, moon, worm, and snake made of birch bark or some other wooden material. These objects are placed inside small wooden boxes which in turn are placed inside small caves. Unlike the others mentioned earlier, these two gods are not found in every hala.<sup>53</sup>

Every mokon has its own shaman called the yadagan. When sickness strikes, a home has domestic problems, pregnant women have difficult labor, or a person dies without saying his last words, Daurs ask a shaman to communicate with the spirits. Both men and women serve as shamans, with women in the majority in ancient times. During their performance shamans wear a special dress and hat. They sing and dance and beat a drum while in touch with the spirits.

Besides the yadagan, there is the bageqi whose functions are limited to praying, seeking rain, and offering sacrifices to oboos. The customary price for a yadagan's services was the hide of a slaughtered animal.

When a person dies, the body is usually placed in a coffin and then buried in the cemetery of the deceased person's own mokon. The graves are arranged from north to south, with the oldest grave being the northernmost. Burial gifts are items the deceased used during his lifetime, such as a tobacco pouch, a snuff box, or a spoon. Sometimes a horse would be buried alive.<sup>54</sup>





Illus. 22. A Daur Shamaness (1931)

#### Recent Developments<sup>55</sup>

Like other people living in the Northeast, the Daurs came under Communist rule much earlier than inhabitants of the rest of China. Some Daur communities began land reform as early as 1947. Several years passed, however, before the first autonomous areas for Daurs were established. Between 1952 and 1957 seven autonomous townships were created, and the largest area, the Morindawa autonomous banner, was officially established on August 15, 1958.

The banner is said to have about 1,000 Daur Party members and over 740 Daur cadres. Some industrial development has taken place, principally repair shops and soap factories. Industrial production increased more than five times between 1952 and 1982, while food production increased 2.8 times during the same period. There are now fifty-eight middle schools in the autonomous banner, with a reported ninety-four percent school enrollment. About 170 Daur graduates from schools in the various Daur autonomous areas have gone on to higher education at Inner Mongolia University and the Central Nationalities Institute in Beijing. More than 100 health stations look after the Daurs' medical needs.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Minzu yanjiu 23 (1983), 81.

<sup>2</sup>Lattimore, 182.

<sup>3</sup>Poppe 1930, 5.

<sup>4</sup>Poppe 1934-35, 2.

<sup>5</sup>Minzu tuanjie 150 (1983), 10. According to Jiankuang, v. 1, 27, in the Daur language gurban means 'three' (identical to Mongolian) and sher means 'spring,' hence Gurbansher, 'Three Springs.'

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Baddeley, v. 2, 446. Actually, it was Gaozu, not Taizong, who ruled during those years!

<sup>7</sup>Zhao and Wu, 48.

<sup>8</sup>Lattimore, 183.

<sup>9</sup>Baddeley, v. 2, 446.

<sup>10</sup>Mergendi 1980a, 69.

<sup>11</sup>Dagurskoe narechie.

<sup>12</sup>See folding map in Feng and Wittfogel.

<sup>13</sup>Shiratori Kurakichi, "Tōko minzoku kō," Shigaku zasshi 24 (1913), 884; Paul Pelliot, "À propos des Comans," Journal Asiatique, sér. 11, v. 15 (1920), 146ff. and 174.

<sup>14</sup>Lattimore, 183-4.

<sup>15</sup>Jernakov, 407.

<sup>16</sup>Qing shilu, juan 17, 5a, entry for January 31, 1634. Chinese records of the time made no distinction between Daur and neighboring Evenks and called both of them Solons.

<sup>17</sup>Baddeley, v. 2, 428.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Zhao and Wu, 49. Given their great frequency, these missions probably went no farther than the nearest Qing military outpost. All information about Bardaqi presented here is taken from an inscription on his tombstone which in 1976 was accidentally discovered in the course of a construction project in Beijing.

<sup>20</sup>Zhao and Wu, 47. The title means baron, according to Norman, 20.

<sup>21</sup>Jernakov, 408. "The Daur," 73, mentions 1654 as the time of resettlement.

<sup>22</sup>Lattimore, 183-4. Lattimore also claims that the word Daur was adopted, presumably by the Qing, at that time. Judging by the Qing shilu, the Qing at that time designated various nationalities rather inconsistently. They had previously lumped together Daur and Evenks under the name Solon (see note 16) and would soon call both groups New Manchus (see below), but the first reference to Daur did not appear until 1758 (see Qing shilu, juan 571, 11b, entry



for October 25). The first clear distinction between Daur and Evenk, the latter still called Solon, appears in the entry for February 16, 1759 in Qing shilu, juan 579, 6b-7a.

<sup>23</sup>Qing shilu, juan 188, 1b-2a, entry for May 14, 1698.

<sup>24</sup>Lattimore, 184, claims that the word Daur "is traced to the Mongol verb dagomoi, vernacular dagama, 'to follow'." The closest word in Mongolian is dagamai, which is not a verb but an adjective and means 'trustworthy'. See Monggol-hitad toli, 1124-1125; Tsevel, 174; Lessing, 217.

<sup>25</sup>Jiankuang, v. 1, 28.

<sup>26</sup>Lindgren, 521; Jernakov, 409.

<sup>27</sup>Zhong 1982, 1. "The Daur," 72 also lists Hailar as a separate dialect.

<sup>28</sup>Poppe 1934-35, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup>The following linguistic information is adopted from Ujuur 1981, currently the most comprehensive study of the Daur language.

<sup>30</sup>"The Daur," 73.

<sup>31</sup>Ujuur 1981, 2.

<sup>32</sup>Poppe 1964, 137, is mistaken in stating that the Daur still used the Manchu script in the 1950s.

<sup>33</sup>Poppe 1930, 15-64.

<sup>34</sup>Daur urgil.

<sup>35</sup>Daur uqun boloor jaandal. Uqun < Manchu ucun, 'song, ballad.' The etymology of jaandal is unknown to me.

<sup>36</sup>Jiankuang, v. 1, 27.

<sup>37</sup>Dagur arad-un üliger-üd.

<sup>38</sup>See bibliography. Sanaa's article reviews the collection Daurzu minjian gushi xuan, cited in the text. See also note 40.

<sup>39</sup>See two entries in the bibliography.

<sup>40</sup>Of a total of forty-nine tales, thirty-five came from Morindawa, three from Qiqihar, two from Hailar, one each from Tarbagatai and Fuyu county, and seven from unspecified locations.

<sup>41</sup>Hala is a Manchu word meaning 'clan, family name.' Norman, 123. Urgunge Onon's hala was spread over seven villages. See his account in Vreeland, 237-238.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Ma. mukūn, 'clan, extended family; fleet, herd.' Norman, 206.

<sup>43</sup>"The Daur," 79.

<sup>44</sup>Jiankuang, v. 1, 28-29.

<sup>45</sup>Baddeley, v. 2, 316.

<sup>46</sup>Information on the "Daur cart" is largely based on Stötzner.

<sup>47</sup>Jiankuang, v. 1, 29.

<sup>48</sup>Zhongguo, 91.

<sup>49</sup>Urgunge Onon, in Vreeland, 268.

*Chapter 11*

<sup>50</sup>Information about gods is taken from Mergendi 1980b, 193, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Ma. birgan, 'creek.' Norman, 30.

<sup>52</sup>As reported by Urgunge Onon, in Vreeland, 268-269.

<sup>53</sup>Zhongguo, 91.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Zhongguo, 95-96.