

The Yigu Episode and Its Repercussions

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Introduction

With the "eastward blowing of the Western wind" and the expansion of Western imperialism during the nineteenth century (particularly during the second half of the century), historical currents in Asia changed courses. The dramatic power struggle between the north Asian nomadic peoples and the sedentary peoples of the East Asian continent drew to a close during this century,¹ with the heyday of the Manchu domination of Mongolia during this period and the change in Manchu policy vis-à-vis the Mongolian ruling class further occasioning the decline of nomadic power. These topics and events are, of course, beyond the scope of this short paper.

After the Opium War (1840-1842), Christian missionaries from Western countries streamed into Mongolia under the protection of provisions contained in the unequal treaties concluded with the Manchu court. These missionaries met with precious little success in their attempts to convert the devoutly Buddhist Mongols. In order to establish a foothold for their proselytizing work in Mongolia, they decided to recruit "displaced people" (*liumin*) from Han Chinese regions to cultivate and settle in Mongolian grazing lands. The settlers thus recruited were called "church people" (*jiaomin*), and the ecclesiastical districts they inhabited eventually became, in effect, concession areas in the territories of the Mongolian banners. The inhabitants of these districts refused to be ruled by the Mongolian or Chinese administrative apparatuses, and this was, of course, deeply resented by the Mongolian banners, especially those in western Inner Mongolia.² These anti-foreign sentiments were soon to bring great

¹ See Sechin Jagchid, "Reasons for the Nondevelopment of Nomadic Power in North Asia Since the Eighteenth Century," in *Proceedings of the Second East Asian Altaistic Conference* (Seoul, 1968).

² This is according to a discussion I had with the scholarly Catholic priest Van Heoken in Belgium in 1980. Van Heoken informed me that Wang Tongchun (see note 19) was in the Jungghar Banner during the Boxer Uprising and led anti-Christian Mongolian officials on a massacre of one hundred and fifty Christians,

misfortune to these Mongols.³ During the late nineteenth century, the top priorities of the Manchu Qing court were the meeting of Western demands for reparation, making compensation for the losses of Christian churches and ecclesiastical property, increasing court revenues, and settling the displaced people of northern China. The Qing court eventually began squeezing wealth out of the Mongolian banners in order to achieve these financial objectives, and it was against this background that the Yigu incident occurred.

The Beginning of the Episode

The Boxer Uprising of 1900 led to the occupation of Beijing by the allied forces of eight nations. The Dowager Empress Cixi kept the Guangxu Emperor under her thumb and fled in great haste to Xian in Shaanxi Province. It was during this flight, which was euphemistically called the "westward hunting expedition of the two Courts," that Yigu,⁴ through sudden happenstance, came under the favor and good graces of the Dowager Empress and was subsequently elevated to the position of Vice Minister in the Ministry of War (*bingbu shilang*). In 1901, Cen Chunxuan,⁵ the Governor of Shanxi Province, submitted to the Court a memorial in which he advocated that national revenues be increased by cultivating and settling the uncultivated areas along the border between Shanxi Province and the two leagues of Ulanchoo and Yekejuu. He further suggested that high-ranking Manchu officials be dispatched to supervise this new cultivation. In early 1902 Yigu was

whose bodies were subsequently thrown into the Yellow River. The Jungghar Banner officials were later punished for their complicity in this massacre, and the banner was compelled to make compensation. Wang Tongchun, however, escaped all punishment for his part in this atrocity.

³ See *Qing shilu* (Qing Veritable Records; hereafter cited with the conventional abbreviation CSL), Dezong [Guangxu], *juan* 478, Guangxu 27, month 1, *wuyin* day; month 2, *juan* 480, month 2, *yichou* day; *juan* 481, month 3, *xinwei* and *xinsi* days; *juan* 483, month 5, *yichou* day; *juan* 486, month 8, *bingshen* day; *juan* 490, month 11, *gengchen* and *guiwei* days; *juan* 497, month 2, *xinwei* day; and *juan* 506, month 10, *xinhai* day.

⁴ See Yigu's biography in *Qingshi* (Qing History; hereafter cited with the conventional abbreviation CS), Taipei 1961, *zhuan* 240, *juan* 454. This biography is also contained in the *Qingshi gao* (Draft Qing History), Taipei 1989, annotated edition. The CS biography of Yigu contains only a few sentences pertaining to the events discussed in this paper.

⁵ The CS contains no biography for Cen Chunxuan. See the English-language biography in Howard L. Boorman, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, v. 2, pp. 305-08.

appointed Superintendent of Cultivation Affairs, and in the fall of that year he was again appointed General of Suiyuan City. Yigu commanded much prestige because of his weighty responsibilities and the trust shown him by the Dowager Empress. He utilized carrot-and-stick tactics to "persuade" the princes of the Mongolian banners to be submissive and present their territories to the Court in order to lessen the national calamities.

After taking up this new position, Yigu immediately submitted a memorial to the Dowager Empress concerning the state of cultivation in Mongolian territories. In this memorial he brought up some of the ideas of Cen Chunxuan, who had previously suggested that

Several percentage points of the revenues from Mongolian land rentals should be designated as contributions to Shanxi Province [to defray the costs of] starting up the entire enterprise and dispatching officials and troops to Mongolia. These funds would be obtained from the Han Chinese people and not from the Mongolian tribes, so the Mongols should have no reason to say a word [in protest]. This is how the annual rental income from the grazing fields put under cultivation should be managed [and allocated].⁶

From this it is evident that the authorities of Shanxi Province had already made plans to rearrange the land provided to Chinese settlers by the Mongolian banners and to assess some additional percentage points to bolster the Shanxi revenues. They also apparently wanted to establish administrative organs in Mongolian territory in order to erode Mongolian administrative authority and impose Han Chinese administrative practices through military force, while not allowing the Mongolian authorities any voice in these matters. Yigu recognized that all these measures would need to be undertaken in order to begin cultivating Mongolian territories. He also utilized his

⁶ See Yigu's memorial entitled "The Joint Investigation and Administration of the General Situation in the Mongolian Banners and the Cultivation Affairs," in his *Kenwu Zouyi* (Memorials and Documents on Cultivation Affairs). This book, and another entitled *Suiyuan Zouyi*, were probably compiled by Yigu after his 1908 punishment, and they were published during the reign of the last emperor, Xuantong (r. 1909-1911). These two books have been reprinted in the *Jindai Zhongguo Shiliao Congkan* (Compendium of Materials on Modern Chinese Culture), Supplement 11 of the *xubian*, compiled by Shen Yunlong, and published by the Wenhai Shuju in Taipei (no date). All subsequent citations to these two books are from the Wenhai edition. The abbreviation "g.p." will be used to indicate the modern pagination (*zongye*).

prestige and special position to pressure many Mongolian ruling princes into relinquishing grazing areas, which were the public property of all of the people in a banner, and present them to the Court as "expressions of gratitude for the Imperial favor." In so doing, the Mongolian banners were no longer entitled to the rents from Chinese settlers who had put Mongolian territory under cultivation. Needless to say, this was much resented by the Mongolian ruling princes, banner officials, and common herdsmen.

In this same memorial, Yigu also commented on the shadiness, strife, and illegal activities in these areas as follows:

Most of the cultivated land in the Mongolian banners is privately rented; very little [cultivation of such land] has been approved [by the Court]. The *taijis* and Mongolian officials often contribute to the instability of [the rents and] the rental contracts in order to secure private gain. If [these rental lands] were officially managed, land rental prices would be stabilized, the settlers would have permanent estates, and the aforementioned tricks [for securing private gain] could no longer be used. [The Mongolian officials know this and] consequently have no choice but to play tricks, obscure the difference between right and wrong, and give out bribes in order to stop these plans [for official management of rental lands]. When the league heads and the banner *jasaghs* first heard about the [Court's] orders concerning cultivation and [land] rentals, they all happily went along [with these orders]. When they later heard reports from Mongolian officials of plundering the land and damaging the pasture areas, they could not avoid changing their attitudes and began voicing their strong opposition [to these abuses]. This has led to much worry and concern among the Mongolian tribes. Of course, the greater part of the banner land is still uncultivated, but the amount of land [currently] under cultivation is still considerable.

When the [Chinese] cultivators of [Mongolian] land heard that [these orders] were going to be carried out, they also grew apprehensive that land would be taken away from the old settlers and passed on to new settlers, and an uproar arose among them. Among [these Chinese cultivators] there are good and bad people unevenly. The customs [of these Chinese settlers] also vary, and the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger has become commonplace [among them]. Hiring hit-men and keeping weapons for self-defense are ordinary occurrences. Rumors flourish during times of bandit depredations, and out of fear many [of these settlers] band together and create trouble.

There are currently several Christian churches scattered throughout the Mongolian banners, and the amount of land that they rent out increases daily. Complaints [about church rental practices] can

eventually lead to trouble or even to [major] church incidents (*jiaonan*) which can prove especially damaging to our relations with foreign countries.⁷

Yigu was correct in pointing out in this memorial that there were many selfish and money-hungry Mongolian ruling princes and officials who had illegally recruited Chinese cultivators to rent Mongolian lands. His memorial also shows that during this period the Mongol officials were able to conclude rental and cultivation contracts at will. If cultivation and land rents were officially managed, the power to conclude such contracts would have been in the hands of the Manchu-Chinese Qing officials. Such a development was against the hopes of both the Mongolian officials and the Chinese settlers because it would have denied profits to the Mongolian officials and increased the tax burdens of the cultivators. Yigu's claim that the league heads and *jasaghs* "happily went along" with the Court's orders was perhaps a self-serving misrepresentation of his success in persuading the Mongolian princes to relinquish their territories to the Court. Such actions were, in reality, clearly against the real interests of the Mongolian princes, and they would not have gone along with them willingly. It was, furthermore, only natural that the Mongol authorities would express their opposition to Yigu after hearing the complaints of the common herdsmen against him and his policies. Yigu's description of the conflicts among the Han Chinese settlers was accurate. It is important to note that ever since the Ming dynasty, many displaced Chinese people had been fleeing to these areas to escape heavy taxation, and many of them subsequently became adherents of the White Lotus Sect.⁸

The existence of several Christian churches in the Mongolian banners was another problematic issue that grew out of the Boxer Uprising. Yigu made the following report on the church situation as it existed in the banners of the Chakhar Right Flank:

In the four banners of the Chakhar Right Flank, the property of the Christian merchants and churches increases daily. The churches have also cultivated land without the approval of the Mongolian banner [authorities]. There are also tenants who cultivate land [without any

⁷ Kenwu Zouyi, p. 21.

⁸ See the "Account of the Dadan" in *Mingshi* (Ming History), *juan* 322, pp. 20A-21B.

approval] and then occupy it as their own. Powerful [tenants] occupy more than their rightful share [of land] without any inhibitions because they are supported [by the churches]. If people do not join a church, they [often] cannot obtain land. Once they do join a church, they are able to oppress others. Quite a considerable number of these oppressed people join churches in order to secure protection for themselves and their families. Many of the church people do know right from wrong and behave themselves. There are, however, many shameless rogues who use their talismans [i.e., their church affiliation] to secure personal gain, defy Chinese and Manchu officials, and manipulate Mongolian authorities. There is no end of frivolous lawsuits. The lawsuits with some merit usually involve murders. . . . Both the Christians and the [non-Christian] commoners are the Court's innocent children [i.e., subjects] and should be treated equally. It is not necessary to hinder them in their attempts to obtain land. [The fact remains], however, [that] most of these quarrels [in these banners] have been started by [unscrupulous] Christian merchants and involve church properties and assets. Some limitations [to these lawsuits and quarrels] should be established.⁹

Yigu had clearly pointed out the evil activities of the Christian churches, members, and merchants, but he was still unable to impose any restrictions on the Christian churches during his management of cultivation affairs. He was simply afraid of offending the foreigners. As a result, the Mongolian banners suffered greatly.

Soon after Yigu made this report, he sent officials to various Mongolian banners in an attempt to persuade the banner leaders to go along with his goals. In this, however, he was unsuccessful. His next move was to summon the league heads of the Ulanhab and Yekejuu Leagues to a face-to-face discussion, but this was rejected by these league heads, who gave the following explanation for their rejection: "The Mongolian banners . . . have been accustomed to the traditional pastoral way of life for many generations, and it is very difficult to consent to cultivation [in these banners]."¹⁰ In the wake of this rejection, the Qing court sent the Ministry of Subordinates (*Lifanyuan*) the following directive:

⁹ See Yigu's "Secret Report on the Joint Investigation with the Chahaer Commander-in-chief on the Situation in the Land Occupied by Church People," in *Kenwu Zouyi*, pp. 163-64.

¹⁰ Yigu, "Memorial on the Disobedience of the Mongolian Subordinates and Request for Imperial Instructions to the Ministry of Subordinates to Sternly Order [the Mongols] to Proceed to Guisui for Consultation," *ibid.*, p. 41.

Because the cultivation of frontier regions of Shanxi Province has a bearing on the livelihood of [some] Mongols, Yigu was sent to supervise and implement [this cultivation]. The Mongols were notified of this. It has recently been learned that the heads of the Ulanhab and Yekejuu Leagues have defied the summons [to come] for consultation. This has led to many difficult problems. The Ministry of Subordinates is hereby directed to command these two league heads in unmistakable terms that they must immediately obey the order to proceed to the city of Suiyuan . . . and discuss every matter [pertaining to cultivation in their leagues]. They are not to create pretexts for more delays or delay the cultivation affairs [any longer]!¹¹

Such strong-arm tactics did not help Yigu achieve his goals; only one or two *jasaghs* from the Yekejuu League came to discuss cultivation affairs with him. Even so, the arrival of any Mongolian official for consultation was, in some sense, a victory for Yigu and a vindication of his attempts at judicious application of "carrot and stick," or "Heavenly benevolence and Heavenly coercion" (*tianen tianwei*), as he called it. Yigu used such methods in order to divide the banners of the Yekejuu League and prevent them from taking uniform action. His report was immediately approved by the Dowager Empress.¹²

Yigu also used the seriousness with which the Court viewed "church incidents" to cow the banners of the Yekejuu League into submission. A memorial of his to the Court claimed that "The banners of the Ulanhab League are treacherously resisting payment of compensation [for church incidents]. Please instruct [them] to forward [these payments]." The response from the Court was as follows: "[We] demand that the yamen [of the Suiyuan General] sternly command [the banners] to obey and implement [all requirements for forwarding compensation]."¹³ The Qing court was, at this time, doing its best to curry favor with "friendly nations" to resolve the "church incidents," and it was eager to reach compromises with foreign nations. Yigu had only to mention the church incidents in connection with his Mongolian policy objectives to bring imperial pressure to bear on the ruling princes of the Ulanhab banners.

¹¹ CSL, Dezong [Guangxu], *juan* 504, Guangxu 28, month 8, *dingwei* day.

¹² *Ibid.*, Dezong [Guangxu], *juan* 523, Guangxu 29, month 9, *jiawu* day. See also Yigu, "Secret Memorial on how the Head of the Yeke-juu League Resisted and Failed to Respectfully Carry out the Petition for [Appointment to] the Position of League Head and Appointed Another [Man] Temporarily," in *Kenwu Zouyi*, g.pp. 155-60.

¹³ CSL, Dezong [Guangxu], *juan* 523, Guangxu 29, month 11, *renyin* day.

Collusion Between Officials and Merchants

Yigu's ostensible objectives were to facilitate cultivation through official supervision and expel the "land merchants," or land speculators who bought and sold land in Mongolian territories. In reality, however, his interests were inextricably tied to those of the land merchants, although he had his own style of pursuing these interests. In the fall of 1902, he sent the following memorial to the Qing court:

The cultivation companies of the eastern and western routes have all been established as joint ventures between officials and merchants. The Western Route Company is located in Baotou to implement the cultivation affairs of the banners of the Ulanhab and Yekejuu Leagues. The Eastern Route Company [has facilities] located in Kalgan [Zhangjiakou], Fengzhen, Doloonor, and Dushi[kou] for implementing the cultivation affairs of the two banners of the Left and Right Chakhar Flanks. These arrangements have been made in order to surmount long-standing problems and deal with issues that could not be resolved by the official powers.¹⁴

In this memorial, Yigu used the innocuous term "joint ventures between officials and merchants," but in reality this was nothing more than a new euphemism for the old practice of collusion between officials and merchants. The merchants in this memorial were the same old land merchants condemned by Yigu in other memorials for engaging in illegal activities. In 1908, Yigu's collusion with these merchants was exposed by his fellow officials, who noted that Yigu had "illegally received several million [taels of silver from land merchants]."¹⁵ In the same year Grand Secretary Lu Chuanlin,¹⁶ who was in charge of the investigation into Yigu's conduct, reported in a memorial that

The revenues from the sales of Mongolian [territories to Han Chinese settlers] were almost entirely eaten up by these companies . . . Yigu shrewdly set up the names of these companies. Under the pretext of borrowing money [from these companies], Yigu placed all of the

¹⁴ Yigu, "Memorial on the Effectiveness of the Eastern Route Cultivation Affairs Company Petitioning to Draw Funds and Allocate the Money from the Interest of the Official Stocks, Twenty-ninth Year of Guangxu," *Kenwu Zouyi*, p. 235.

¹⁵ *Mengken Xugong* ("Continued Depositions Concerning Mongolian Cultivation"), editors unknown, p. 1. This book is also in Shen Yunlong's *Jindai Zhongguo Shiliao Congkan*, #11.

¹⁶ For Lu Chuanlin, see the biography in CS, *juan* 439, *zhuan* 225.

cultivated lands in the hands of the companies, and then he and his associates pocketed the money [from the sales of these lands by the companies to Han Chinese settlers; no money from these sales was forwarded to the Court]. It is obvious that he stole national funds but did not allow others to criticize him for his wrongdoing. The revenues received by these companies [from the sales of lands to Han Chinese settlers] were national funds, [but] they went into the pockets [of Yigu and his associates] . . . Both the Mongols and the Han Chinese have been victims of this [chicanery], and the State has not received a single penny.¹⁷

Earlier, Yigu himself had commented on the evil deeds of an unscrupulous land merchant as follows:

The unscrupulous merchant Cui Weixian . . . has illegally occupied more than one hundred ten square li [of land]. He often gives bribes in order to secure official support [for his illegal deeds]. He hires hit-men to oppress and intimidate law-abiding people and constantly occupies other people's land by force. For these reasons he is constantly involved in legal cases, and warrants for his arrest have been issued. . . He manages to live outside the law and secure secret control [of the officials who would prosecute him] by giving bribes inside and outside the capital [i.e., in Beijing and Zhangjiakou]. Although his land rights have been [officially] cancelled, he still occupies land and gathers hoodlums [about him] to brandish weapons and prevent others from taking possession of [their] land. Yamen runners are unable to arrest him. If [government] troops come [in pursuit], they [i.e., Cui and his minions] flee . . . and search for more hoodlums [to join them]. There is no end to his resourcefulness in trickery and scheming.¹⁸

In reality, this Cui Weixian was likely no more than a defiant land merchant who had refused to collude with Yigu and his associates. This memorial is insufficient evidence to prove that Yigu had the will to get rid of all the evil land merchants. Yigu's treatment of the regional bully Wang Tongchun¹⁹ is a case in point. Lu Chuanlin later made the

¹⁷ *Mengken Xugong*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁸ Yigu, "Petition for Efforts to Capture Cui Weixian, the Notorious Land Merchant," *Kenwu Zouyi*, p. 125.

¹⁹ On Wang Tongchun, see Gu Jiegang's brief account "Wang Tongchun's Development of the Hetao Region," *Yugong Banyuekan* v. 2, no. 12, (Feb. 1935). Wang Tongchun committed many evil deeds in Hetao and became the hegemon of the area. For a time following his death, his son, Wang Ying, maintained a stranglehold on the area.

following comments on Yigu's deliberate overlooking of Wang Tongchun's crimes:

The guilty party in the Chen Si murder case was Wang Tongchun, a wanted criminal who had long avoided capture. Yigu appointed Wang as a commissioner in the Cultivation Bureau, and [consequently] the local officials dared not pursue him until last year, when the entire case went to court. [By this time] Wang had already served as an official in the Cultivation Bureau for five years . . . Merchant Li Jiasan [and others] all depend on official prestige to scheme for [their personal] gain, and they depend on [official] authority to engage in evil activities.²⁰

These comments suggest that the evil deeds perpetrated by the local bullies and land merchants trusted by Yigu were no less than those of the "unscrupulous merchant" Cui Weixian so vilified by Yigu. All of this evidence leads one to conclude that Yigu and his coterie of Manchu and Han Chinese officials collaborated illegally with unscrupulous individuals to swallow up Mongolian territory and the possessions of upright Han Chinese landowners.

Lu Chuanlin described the "capable officials" employed by Yigu in these terms:

There should be some gentlemen among the two hundred or more officials in the Bureau [of Cultivation Affairs] . . . but these incorruptible ones are unable to oppress the people and flatter [their superiors], and because of their honesty they are pushed aside and given insignificant tasks. Persons trusted by Yigu as "capable officials," such as Yao Xuejing of Shanxi, are [in actuality] covetous and ruthless . . . Jingti, [another so-called "capable official"], is an impatient and ill-tempered man who creates trouble on the slightest pretext . . . [persons] such as Chen Guangyuan [and others] respectfully receive instructions [from Yigu] but collude together to do evil things.

Lu Chuanlin's description of Yigu's "capable officials" continues as follows:

The Cultivation Bureau officials most trusted by Yigu are those most excoriated by both Mongols and Han Chinese. . . Binyi collects money with limitless covetousness . . . Jingti is harsh, violent, dangerous, and treacherous and is hated by [Chinese] merchants and farmers alike . . .

²⁰ See note 15, p. 7.

Yue Junglin hates the Mongols and has falsely accused them of sedition, and [his anti-Mongolian actions] have almost destroyed the entire frontier region. Wu Difen oppresses the people with military power and is no different than robbers and bandits. . . Zhiliang uses inhuman and illegal torture to dun land debts. . . Yao Xuejing is covetous, merciless, and careless in deciding lawsuits. Tan Yongfa makes false reports in order to achieve merit, and he has unleashed his troops to plunder [wealth from] the people . . . Chen Guangyuan . . . [and others] engage in arrogant and obsequious behavior in order to flatter their superiors, and [in so doing] they bring calamity to the people. Even so, they are awarded for their diligence and efforts year after year . . . and are repeatedly commended by the Court.²¹

Extortion and Temptations for Gain

Yigu and his above-mentioned evil cohorts pressured Mongolian princes and officials into turning over pastoral land (which was the common public property of all herders) to the Court and receiving recognition for "merit." He also practiced extortion on the Han Chinese settlers and eroded land prices in order to satisfy his own selfish desires. He was not completely unsuccessful in these high-pressure tactics and he was able to use threats and promises of imperial favor to persuade some Mongolian princes to turn over tracts of Mongolian territory to the Qing court, for which they were rewarded with promotions, ranks, and titles. Arbinbayar, the *jasagh beize* of the Khangin Banner and Head of the Yekejuu League at this time, had the Mongolian interests at heart. He was discharged from his position as League Head for his refusal to cooperate with Yigu. Lwangnorbu, who hated the Christian churches, and was punished for his refusal to give away land as compensation for alleged wrongs committed against Christians. Chaghdursereng, the *jasagh beize* of the Ugushin Banner and Deputy Head of the Yekejuu League, was appointed as the head of the league to replace Arbinbayar, and Shaghdurjab, the *jasagh* first-ranking *taiji* of the Jasagh Banner, was appointed as the deputy league head *pro tempore*.

The Mongols were truly threatened by the dismissal of Arbinbayar and had little choice but to submit to Yigu's "persuasions" and send delegates to the city of Suiyuan for "consultation." There were, however, many Mongols who remained unhappy with Yigu. After some delegates were sent to Suiyuan city, the Head of the Ulanab League and the six banners under his authority convened a

²¹ Ibid., pp. 6, 16-17.

conference in Batukha'alagh (present Bailingmiao) to discuss Yigu's demands.

Chaghdursereng, the newly-appointed head of the Yekejuu League, and Shaghdurjab, the deputy head, gained imperial favor by "respectfully meeting with the long-lived Mother Queen on the occasion of her birthday," and announcing to her that

All of the people in our land wholeheartedly . . . and willingly present local products in tribute . . . [among which] are the public lands of our two banners . . . seventy or eighty li [approximately one-third of an English mile] in length from north to south . . . and forty to fifty li in width from east to west; [these lands] we present to the officials for cultivation, [and we agree that] the proceeds from the sales of these lands should be submitted [to the imperial court].²²

For this "loyalty" and "diligence," these two princes received the following Vermilion Endorsement from the court: "Shaghdursereng is hereby promoted to the prestige rank of *junwang*. Chaghdurjab is hereby granted the prestige rank of *zhenguogong*."²³

Temptations and incentives of this kind eventually led Arbinbayar, who had just been discharged from his position as league head, to alter his hard line. Yigu reported this change of heart to the Court as follows:

The Khangin Banner has altered its land cultivation policy; in addition to presenting half of the rent revenues to the Court, it will also submit thirty thousand taels of silver to the Court. Please register the *jasagh beize* of the Khangin Banner, Arbinbayar, as a candidate for the position of league head. If there is a vacancy for the position of league head in this league, [Arbinbayar] should be appointed [to this position] in accordance with the memorial of the Ministry of Subordinates.²⁴

²² Yigu, "Report on how the Mongolian Subordinates Zealously and Wholeheartedly Offer Up their Land in Celebration of the Imperial Birthday [of Her Majesty the Mother Queen]," *Kenwu Zouyi*, p. 259.

²³ Yigu, "On Behalf of the Head of the Yekejuu League and the Vice-Head of the same League, [I] Express Gratitude to the Court for Being Granted the Titles of *junwang* and *zhenguogong*," *ibid.*, p. 317.

²⁴ CSL, Dezong [Guangxu], Guangxu 31, *juan* 549, month 9, *yiyou* day.

Altanochir, the son of Arbinbayar, also received an award for presenting five thousand taels of silver to the Court for the purchase of weapons.²⁵

These documentary excerpts suggest that many Mongolian princes yielded to the temptations and threats posed by Yigu and went to any length to regain the official positions they had lost. They did not hesitate to sacrifice the rights and privileges of the Mongolian herders by submitting enormous tracts of pasture land in celebration of the birthday of the "Mother Queen" (Dowager Empress), and they also had no qualms about submitting the public revenues of the banner offices to Yigu or squeezing large amounts of money from the herders for presentation to the Court. Gonchugjab, the *amban* of Ukhurchin and Khonichin (later the Minghan Banner) of Chakhar, would not be outdone by Chaghdursereng and Chaghdurjab. He was rewarded with a third-degree Rank Button (*dingdai*) for his financial contributions to the Yellow River dike repair projects in Shandong, and for his efforts at furthering cultivation in Chakhar, Yigu recommended that he be given a second-degree Rank Button.²⁶ These rewards were given as incentives for other Mongolian officials to achieve vainglorious recognition by sacrificing the privileges and rights of the herders and submitting funds from public properties to the Court.

In his report on Yigu's criminal conduct, Lu Chuanlin commented that Mongolian "*Wang, gong, and beize* sometimes receive Imperial favors and awards, [while] the *jasaghs* and officials under them receive nothing. How can this lead to a resolution of the Mongolian situation?"²⁷ The dark and evil deeds of Yigu and his coterie were often at the bottom of much of the defraudation and extortion of the Mongolian people. Lu Chuanlin also criticized the "contributions" of Arbinbayar and his son in these terms:

It is observed that the contributions of 30,000 taels of silver by the *beize* of the Khangin banner and five thousand taels by his son are recorded and on file. The price that the land of this banner should have fetched, however, is 112,000 taels of silver. Yigu skimmed off 68,000 taels from this amount. 35,000 taels were left, [and this is the amount given by Yigu].

²⁵ Yigu, "Petition for an Award for Altanochir," in *Suiyuan Zouyi*, p. 195.

²⁶ Yigu, "Petition for an Award for Ghonchugjab," *Kenwu Zouyi*, p. 233.

²⁷ *Mengken Xugong*, p. 18.

Lu pointed out further that

Each thousand *qing* [Chinese hectare] of land they received were counted as one hundred *qing*, and the Mongolian banners received rent only from these one hundred *qing*. This situation was especially bad in the Dalad Banner.²⁸

Resistance and Its Suppression

Immediately after his arrival at his position, Yigu pointed out the failures of Hu Pinzhi, the former governor of Shansi, in Inner Mongolian cultivation affairs:

Hu Pinzhi's efforts to open up Mongolian land [to cultivation] failed because the rent prices he decided upon were too low and unstable, and because of insufficient protection of grazing lands [on the one hand] and his failure to persuade the Mongols [to assent to cultivation on the other]. Instead, he [simply] approached them with armies. Consequently, his efforts [at cultivating Inner Mongolian lands] were blocked by the Mongolian banners.²⁹

The errors committed by Yigu were, nonetheless, much greater than those committed by Hu Pinzhi.

The Mongols opposed cultivation mainly because they feared that it would lead to a reduction in prime grazing lands and adversely affect their livelihood. Under pressure from Yigu, the banners of the Ulanhab and Yekejuu Leagues and the Chakhar tribe had lost many of their best grazing pastures to cultivation. The losses were especially serious in the Chakhar area. That these Mongolian concerns were well-placed is evidenced even by some of Yigu's own documents. Two of his documents are of particular interest in this connection:

- 1) A report on how "[In the Areas of] the Chakhar Pure Yellow Banner and the Two Tribes of Ukhurchin and Khonichin, Land has been Opened up [to Cultivation], and There Remains not Enough for Pasturing [the Mongolian animals, so these Two Tribes and the Banners of these Areas] have now Moved to the [Territory of] the Aduchin Tribe," and

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3. The arithmetic here is ambiguous.

²⁹ See note 9.

- 2) A report on how "[Various] Types of Grazing Land have been Reduced Because the Number of Han Chinese Settlers has Surpassed the Limitation for [Effective] Cultivation; Please Allow that they [the Mongolian herdsman] be Removed."³⁰

Lu Chuanlin also made the following observations in his investigative reports:

The cultivation of Mongolian territories was not originally the wish or desire of the Mongol people. When the [various] *wang*, *gong*, and *beize* presented Mongolian territory to the Court, their people usually complained that "Our Qilian Mountain Range has been taken away, and our six kinds of domestic animals cannot flourish." This is an old poetic verse. The members of the Cultivation Bureau are insatiably greedy, and as a result the Mongols have come to regard [dealing with] the Bureau as a trap [to be avoided]. The members of the Cultivation Bureau also view the Mongols as [their] enemies.³¹

These comments clearly suggest that confrontation between the two sides was inevitable.

The principle of "jurisdiction by ethnicity" (*shuren zhuyi*) as practiced by the Qing court created much friction between the Mongols and the Han Chinese, and there was also confrontation between the Han Chinese administrative apparatuses (subprefectures [*ting*], departments [*zhou*], and districts [*xian*]) on the one hand and the Mongolian leagues and banners on the other. This friction worsened towards the end of the dynasty. Yigu claimed to understand the seriousness of this friction, but his actions showed that he was not really interested in reducing it. He decided to empower the Wuyuan Subprefecture, a Han-Chinese administrative district that he had recently created, to deal with the confrontations between the farming and pastoral peoples. He falsely claimed that this arrangement was "agreed to by the Mongols." In a report, he wrote that

A common complaint of the Jasagh and Junwang Banners adjoining the territory of the Shaanxi area has been that they are manipulated by the Shaanxi people. Prior to the present, they had suffered for a considerable length of time . . . The Wuyuan Subprefecture has now been established outside the Shaanxi area and inside Mongolian territory. The magistrate of this subprefecture, Yao Xuejing, is the

³⁰ Yigu, *Kenwu Zouyi*, p. 267, 73.

³¹ *Mengken Xugong*, p. 12.

superintendent of the Cultivation Bureau of the Western Leagues . . . Everyone usually agrees that he is fair-minded in judging Mongol-Chinese legal cases. The Mongols are happy [with this arrangement] and feel that it is convenient . . .

According to the reports of Shaghdurjab, the Deputy Head of the Yekejuu League, there have been many legal cases between [Han] Chinese and Mongols in recent years. The Shaanxi officials sometimes sided with the Han Chinese, and the Mongols of the two banners have complained [about this] . . . Mongolian-Chinese legal cases were usually dealt with by the Shenmu Subprefecture [in northern Shaanxi] . . . the officials and the corrupt [yamen] runners were as terrible as tigers and wolves and cheated and disturbed the poor Mongols unbearably. [But] the Wuyuan Subprefecture has now been established in Mongolian territory, and its magistrate [Yao Xuejing] is a fair and upright official who has the interests of the people at heart. It is hereby requested that this [new prefecture be allowed to] adjudicate [Mongolian-Chinese legal cases.]³²

The same Yao Xuejing praised by Yigu in this report as a man of fair and reasonable judgement was condemned by Lu Chuanlin as a man who had a covetous heart and used ruthless tactics. How could Yao, an official who had energetically imposed cultivation on the Mongols, have fairly judged legal cases in which the Mongols, as the party opposed to cultivation, were involved? How could he have been more fair than the Shaanxi officials in addressing the grievances of the Mongolian multitudes? It is important to note here that because this Wuyuan Subprefecture had been established in the territory of the Yekejuu League, political struggles between Mongolian and Chinese administrative apparatuses were inevitable.

Lu Chuanlin and his fellow investigators had correctly observed in their memorials that the Mongolian princes had become more compromising in their dealings with the Chinese authorities in order to curry imperial favor. The livelihood of the Mongolian multitudes became increasingly difficult as more and more prime grazing land was plowed under by Han Chinese cultivators. Under such circumstances, how could they avoid complaining? Their rights and privileges were being chipped away, and their grazing lands were growing smaller by the day. Their ruling princes, swayed by temptations for personal gain and threatened by high-handed tactics, were unable to protect their own subjects. There was no way for the Mongols to prevail in legal cases

³² Yigu, *Kenwu Zouyi*, p. 337-38.

because adjudicatory powers were completely in the hands of the Han Chinese subprefecture, department, and district administrative offices. The only way for the Mongols to make their grievances known under such circumstances was to launch the *Duguilang* movement, which involved taking direct action and initiating scattered acts of resistance.³³ The grievances which gave rise to these incidents of popular resistance were utterly ignored by Yigu, who brutally crushed the movement. People who had been involved in these acts of resistance were denounced by Yigu as "Mongolian bandits" and were dealt with harshly. These actions served only to aggravate the situation and increase Mongolian animosity towards the Han Chinese.

The resistance grew more intense during the fall of 1904. Dampil, who had been the *tusalagchi taiji* of the Junghar Banner prior to being discharged for his opposition to cultivation, now grew so resentful of the unreasonable attitudes of the Cultivation Bureau officials that he arose in rebellion and led a resistance movement. Dampil had much personal prestige and charisma in the eyes of the Mongolian multitudes.

It was during this same time that a group of militant anti-cultivation herders under the leadership of Monggunjiya destroyed the Bureau of Cultivation Affairs and put its officials to flight. Yigu accused Dampil of being the ringleader of this action and mobilized troops from all directions against him. Dampil's eldest son, some of his family members, and many of his fellow anti-cultivation activists were all murdered. Afterwards, Yigu reported on this incident to the Qing court: "Mongolian bandits stirred up trouble in the Junghar Banner, and [I] dispatched troops, crushed the rebellion, captured the leaders and followers, and punished them appropriately." The response from the Qing court to this report was a terse "let it be as you have petitioned."³⁴ Yigu was, at this time, under the good graces of the Dowager Empress, and from time to time she bestowed upon him large rolls of satin and personally written calligraphy scrolls of her auspicious wishes for him.³⁵ He was so favored that whatever he petitioned for,

³³ Buyantu, "Brief Account of Wangdannima," in *Neimenggu Wenshi Ziliao* (Inner Mongolian Literary and Historical Materials), v. 19 (Hohhot, 1985), p. 37. This article describes the *Duguilang* movement, which covered almost all of the Yekejuu area.

³⁴ CSL, Dezong [Guangxu], Guangxu 32, *juan* 555, month 2, *wuxu* day.

³⁵ Yigu's *Kenwu Zouyi* and *Suiyuan Zouyi*, *passim*.

be it right or wrong, was always approved with the phrase "let it be as you have petitioned."

Aftermath

Far from halting the anti-cultivation movements, the murder of Dampil actually inflamed anti-cultivation passions. Popular sentiment in the Ulanhab and Yekejuu Leagues was volatile and almost led to a larger political upheaval. It was only when matters had reached this critical level that the Qing court took notice of this political issue. It was also at this time that Wenjehun, one of Yigu's Manchu assistants, accused Yigu of embezzling national funds and engaging in corrupt activities for his own private gain. The Qing court responded by dispatching Lu Chuanlin, an Assistant Grand Secretary and Minister of the Ministry of Rites, and Shaoying, a Vice Minister in the Ministry of Revenue, to launch an investigation into Yigu's conduct. The final conclusion of the Qing court concerning Yigu's conduct was as follows:

[Yigu] gave his soldiers free reign in indiscriminately killing and burning to death five members of taiji Dampil's family. [Yigu] later used trumped-up charges to sentence Dampil to death. These were extremely cruel and inhuman actions . . . [Yigu] squeezed money out of the Mongolian banners and did not pay them for the purchase of their lands . . . he continually demanded large quantities of silver from them . . . and was covetous and cruel again and again. He destroyed the Cultivation Affairs Bureau and used threatening words to squeeze money from the people. These [actions] constitute truly disgraceful betrayals of the Imperial favor and treason against the State . . . Apprehend him immediately and bring him to the capital for interrogation . . . and then imprison and punish him for his crimes!³⁶

With Yigu's dismissal and punishment, the volatility of the situation was somewhat reduced, but the continuation of cultivation in Mongolian territories did not cease despite Mongolian opposition. The only significant result of Yigu's dismissal was his replacement by one Hsinqin³⁷ in the post of Supervising Minister of Cultivation Affairs and General of Suiyuan City. Arbinbayar, who, at Yigu's request, had been

³⁶ CSL, Dezong [Guangxu], Guangxu 34, *juan* 589, month 4, *bingchen* day.

³⁷ For Xinqin, see the very brief biography attached to Yigu's biography (see note 4).

removed from his post as head of the Yekejuu League was restored to his original position. Chaghdursereng and Shagdorjab, who had been Yigu's appointees to the posts of league head *pro tempore* and vice league head respectively, were dismissed to appease the local Mongolian nobles and people.³⁸

The vitality and constitution of the Ulančhab and Yekejuu Leagues, the Tumed Banner, and the Right and Left Chakhar Flanks had been severely damaged after six or seven years of Yigu's oppression. All Mongols, from the highest nobles down to the multitudes of common herdsmen, had grown suspicious of the Qing court and its attitudes and policies towards the Mongols. The common herdsmen had also lost all confidence in, and affection for, their own princes and *ambans*.

Long-term Repercussions

Although Yigu's oppression ended with his dismissal and punishment, its effects lingered long afterwards. Hsinqin, who succeeded Yigu in the posts of Superintendent Minister of Cultivation Affairs and General of Suiyuan City, was a careful and prudent man, but he too followed in Yigu's footsteps. The only significant difference between Hsinqin and his predecessor was that Hsinqin was much more moderate.

The Khalkha Mongols declared their independence in late 1911, and in early 1912 the Republic of China was established. Most of the nobles and officials of the six banners in the Ulančhab League turned their attention and hearts toward Urga (Ulan-bator). The Peking Government in China dispatched Zhang Shaozeng³⁹ to take up the post of General of Suiyuan City. On the occasion of the Northwestern Conference, Zhang used various tricks, bribes, and temptations for promotions and rank and title advancements to place the Mongolian nobles in the palm of his hand and defeat their ambitions of unifying with Urga. Towards the Yekejuu League, Zhang used mild threats in addition to temptations for private gain and advancement. The Urga regime was not, of course, powerful enough to manipulate Inner Mongolian political affairs. The seven banners of the Yekejuu League

³⁸ CSL, Dezong [Guangxu], Guangxu 34, *juan* 589, month 4, *yichou* day.

³⁹ Zhang Shaozeng, a native of Hebei, graduated from the Japanese Army Cadet School. In 1913, he was appointed as the General of Suiyuan City, but he left the post the next year. In 1923, he was made the Prime Minister of the Peking Government.

were cut off from the north by the Yellow River, and this geopolitical reality probably worked to the advantage of Zhang Shaozeng.

The Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party⁴⁰ was born in the 1920's, but this deeply revolutionary political organization was for the most part unable to extend its influence beyond the southern banners of the Yekejuu League. Although the birth of this party was a later development, the historical roots of its formation and the hatred of the Mongols for their own ruling class can probably be traced to Yigu's high-handed policies, and also to the Mongolian ruling noble class's negligence of the rights and privileges of the common Mongolian herdsmen and the compromising agreements with oppressive alien powers. Many of the Mongolian nobles and officials had grown accustomed to assuring their own self-preservation through acting as yes-men and giving in to pressure and temptation from above.

The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement broke out in the 1930s. Although Shaghdurjab (hereafter referred to as Prince Sha), Altanochir, and others sincerely hoped that the Mongolian banners would gain autonomy and freedom from political interference by the Han Chinese provincial and district governments, they did not dare to stand as Mongols in open opposition to the deceptive and oppressive policies of the Suiyuan provincial government. On the contrary, in order to preserve themselves, they threw themselves into the arms of Governor Fu Zuoyi. This desire for self-preservation was the mentality with which they entered into the political world, and this capitulationist mentality had been created by their experiences during Yigu's heyday.

The Suiyuan-Mongolian Local Autonomous Political Affairs Committee⁴¹ was organized in the 1930s as a response to the Japanese invasion of western Inner Mongolia. The Nanking Government appointed Prince Sha as the Committee Chairman, but the real power was wielded by Fu Zuoyi, the main opponent of Mongolian autonomy. In an effort to make known the supposed successes of his Mongolian policies, Fu persuaded Prince Sha to go to Nanking and tell the

⁴⁰ The Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party is also known as the Inner Mongolian Kuomintang in Chinese Kuomintang materials. See Sechin Jagchid, "The Inner Mongolian Kuomintang of the 1920's," in *Proceedings of the Conference on Dr. Sun Yat-sen and Modern China*, v. 3 (Taipei, 1986), pp. 178-208.

⁴¹ See Sechin Jagchid, "The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement of the 1930's," in Sechin Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1988), pp. 281-95.

Kuomintang authorities what he (Fu) wanted them to hear. In Nanking, Prince Sha stated that:

League and banner autonomy is about to be instituted. We should realize that the implementation of this autonomy will be most difficult . . . as far as cultivation and agriculture are concerned, [we should realize that] there is plenty of land in Mongolia that is suitable for plowing and planting. Because Mongols are not skilled in agriculture, land that had previously been cultivated is now lying fallow. We should now promote large-scale cultivation, promote agriculture, and compel the Mongols to plant [crops] to increase the sustenance of the people.⁴²

Needless to say, these words were completely at variance with the real interests and desires of the Mongols, and they were more than likely very distasteful to Prince Sha as well. The misrepresentations in these comments are similar to Yigu's claim in his memorial to the Dowager Empress that the Mongols had "happily gone along with" the cultivation of their territories.

These capitulationist attitudes hindered the development of political opposition groups in the Yekejuu League and created great misfortune. On March 26, 1943, Chen Changjie,⁴³ who was the Garrison Commander of the Yekejuu League and a supporter of Fu Zuoyi, used military force to occupy Mongolian grazing pastures, the economic lifelines of many Mongolian herdsmen. Chen was under the impression that the Mongols were too weak, divided, and unable or unwilling to offer effective resistance to such a move, but his actions triggered direct reactions and led to a bloody resistance movement.

The Chungking authorities realized that the southern portion of the Yekejuu League was joining with northern Shaanxi Province, a stronghold of the Chinese communists. Fearing that Yan'an's influence might penetrate into Inner Mongolia in the wake of this incident, the Chungking authorities minimized the seriousness of the Mongolian

⁴² For Prince Sha's speech in Nanking, see *Zhonghua Mingguo Shishi Jiyao* ("A Compilation of Important Historical Materials of the Republic of China"), 1937, Jan.-June (Taipei, 1985). This was originally published on April 7, 1937 in the *Zhongyang Ribao* (Central Daily News).

⁴³ Chen Changjie, a native of Fujian, was a graduate of the Baoding Military Officers School. In 1948 he was appointed Garrison Commander of Tianjin. This proves that his punishment for his involvement in the "March Twenty-sixth Incident" was a punishment on paper only.

reactions to Chen Changjie's actions and punished him by permanently barring him from any future official appointments.

These measures, which were taken in order to placate the Mongolian multitudes and reduce their anger, were similar to the measures taken at the conclusion of the investigation into Yigu's activities. Many of Prince Sha's subordinates, including his own lama son, Ghalsangyisi, were important leaders in this resistance movement. The Chungking authorities were aware of this and proceeded cautiously. Towards Prince Sha they expressed "kind concern and encouragement," but General Yao Zong,⁴⁴ who was the Rehabilitation Commissioner in charge of restoring peace and order in the Yekejuu League, captured and executed Lorai, a captain in the Peace Preservation Corps of Prince Sha's Jasagh Banner, in order to "mete out legal punishment" and deter others who might harbor similar rebellious intentions.

After this "March Twenty-sixth Incident,"⁴⁵ Prince Sha returned to his traditional policy of refraining from any comment on the political friction between Chinese and Mongolian administrations and was "as silent as a cicada during the wintertime." Rong Xiang, the *amban* of the Tumed Banner, was the only Mongol in the so-called "Suiyuan-Mongolian official circles" who still dared openly criticize oppose Fu Zuoyi and argue for the protection of the administrative authority and integrity of the Mongolian leagues and banners. It cannot be said that all of these developments are unrelated to Yigu's actions and policies in Inner Mongolia.

⁴⁴ Yao Zong was at this time the headmaster of the Office of the Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee.

⁴⁵ Many articles about the "March Twenty-sixth Incident" have been published, and there is no need to list them here. On several occasions during the 1950s, I discussed this incident with Mr. Liu Lianke, who had been the Special Commissioner of the Suiyuan-Mongolian Banners' Kuomintang. Mr. Liu was a native of the Kharachin Left Banner. When this incident broke out, he tried to contact Prince Sha secretly and act as a liaison between the Chungking authorities, Fu Zouyi, and Prince Sha. Mr. Liu passed away ten or twenty years ago and, unfortunately, left no written records about these matters.