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DEMCHUGDONGROB'S EARLY YEARS 1902-1919

His Birth

The sixty-four years of the life of Prince Demchugdongrob saw the devastation of two world wars. Invasion of Asia by imperialists was gradually checked by the rise of nationalism. Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 restored Asian self-confidence. But this victory also created strife within. The founding of the Republic of China in 1912, which ended monarchical rule, and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 marked the beginning of a new era. The Mongols, roused by these great changes, struggled to establish their own national identity. By the conclusion of World War II, half of the Mongol people had achieved their independence, at least nominally, but the other half faced harsh and rigorous trials.

Prince Demchugdongrob, born to a highly prestigious Chinggisid family, for a time assumed the position of national leader, but died in the custody of the Chinese Communists. His heroic but tragic life was entwined with the fate of his fellow countrymen, especially those Inner Mongols who struggled for the existence of their nation.

Although his full name was Demchugdongrob, most Mongol people called him *De noyan* or *De wangye*, a polite form of address for an honorable person. In Mongolian tradition, it was not polite to speak the full name of an elder or a person of honorable position. It was courteous to take the first syllable of his name and join it with his title. Therefore, *De noyan* means De the noble and *De wangye* means Prince De.

According to the traditional Mongolian lunar calendar, Demchugdongrob was born on the day, month, and year of the tiger. This corresponds to either the twelfth or seventeenth day of February of the year 1902 in the Western solar calendar. According to Chinese astrology, the date of Demchugdongrob's birth was an outstandingly auspicious one portending an excellent fate. He was born in the morning, though no one, not even his own mother, was able to give the exact hour of his birth. If his birth had been earlier than five o'clock, it would have been during the hour of the tiger; had it been later, it would have been during the hour of the rabbit. Either way the omen would have been a good one. In Mongolian tradition, to avoid a curse, one should not divulge the time, day, month, and year of a birth. Consequently, Demchugdongrob's birthday was never officially celebrated.

The year 1902 was the second year after the return of the Empress Dowager Cixi and the Guangxu Emperor from their refuge in Xi'an to Beijing. The Manchu court remained embroiled with the consequences of the Boxer Rebellion. To meet indemnity requirements, the court encouraged all Mongolian banners to offer "good-will remuneration" in the form of silver presented to the court. Though this moderate requisition

was not forced, it proved a burden for the Mongol common people. By no means did all Mongols support the Boxer rebels. Some banners, such as the Alashan, the Dalad of the Yekejuu League, and the Dorben Keuked of the Ulanhab League, lent their support to the Boxers, opposed the foreign countries, and became hostile to foreign missionaries. But Gungsangnorbu, the *jasag* prince of the Kharachin Right Banner and the pioneer of Inner Mongolian modernization, adopted a policy of "protection for the land and tranquility for the people" and forbade the Boxers from entering his territory. After the disturbances were over, those who had supported the Boxers were punished, but those who opposed the Boxers were not rewarded. Under foreign pressure, the court further demanded that those banners which had persecuted missionaries compensate them with land and silver. These events, coupled with developments in the neighboring Dorben Keuked Banner, worried the Sunid officials.

As for the general state of Inner Mongolia at this time, the traditional feudalistic institutions had begun to crumble, and resistance from the common people increased. In 1901, Sewangnorbusangbuu, the *jasag* prince of the Khorchin Right Center Banner (also known as the Tushiyetu Banner) of the Jerim League, whose ancestors had a close relationship with the Manchu imperial household, was killed by the people of his own banner because of the endless levies he imposed to satisfy his luxurious and extravagant lifestyle. Three years later, in 1904, Lenjalnortsan, the *jasag* prince of the Aukhan Banner of the Juu Uda League, was stabbed to death by his own attendants during a stay in Beijing for an imperial audience. He was killed because of his maltreatment of his own people. These examples indicate that the people no longer tolerated tyrannical behavior; they risked their lives in open rebellion.

This gave the Russians a chance to become further involved in eastern Inner Mongolian affairs. When the Russians occupied Manchuria after the defeat of the Boxers, Udai, the *jasag* of Khorchin Right Center Banner of the Jerim League, initiated contact with them and borrowed money from them. The Manchu authorities were able to remove Udai from his post, but they were still obliged to recognize the debt he had incurred. They ordered the banner to pay it; this of course increased the burden placed on the common people.

In 1902, the year Demchugdongrob was born, the great Trans-Siberian Railroad was completed. The next year, the jointly operated Sino-Russian Chinese Eastern Railroad was opened. The completion of this railroad linking the Trans-Siberian Railroad in the north and Dairen and Port Arthur (present-day Dalian and Lushun) in the south, through Hailar and Mukden (present-day Shenyang), immediately brought eastern Inner Mongolia under Russian influence. The Udai Incident was just a part of a larger picture.

The expansion of Russian power in East Asia worried a new Asian power: Japan. In 1894-5, Japan had obtained several privileges in Manchuria as a result of its victory in the first Sino-Japanese war. These were, however, soon taken from the Japanese emperor and transferred to the Russian tsar through the combined interference of Russia, Germany, and France. This eventually led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and Japan's subsequent infiltration into eastern Inner Mongolia.

Russian involvement in eastern Inner Mongolia was not welcomed by the Mongol leadership. Some of the more conservative Mongol leaders opposed any changes; others realized that there was no way to prevent the decline of the old ways. A change was needed. Prince Gungsangnorbu of Kharachin chose to follow the pattern of the Japanese Meiji Restoration. By the time of Demchugdongrob's birth in 1902, Gungsangnorbu

already enjoyed high prestige among the Mongol noble class and at the court in Beijing and had begun a modest program of modernization in his own banner. This meant that the Japanese obtained a foothold in Kharachin, the homeland of Prince Gung. Udai, on the other hand, wanted the Mongols to cooperate with the Russians.

During the Russian expansion into eastern Inner Mongolia, the old land route from Verkhneudinsk (present-day Ulan-Ude) to Beijing through Kiakhta, Ulaanbaatar, and Kalgan continued to be the main connection between China and Russia, regardless of the degree of completion of the railroads. With the increasing tension between the two countries, the political and military significance of this land route markedly increased. The Sunid Right Banner was located close by. Today, the railroad from Ulaanbaatar to Jining mostly follows the old land route, and the old residential area of the prince of Sunid has become a station along the rail route.

During these confrontations between China and Russia, the rulers of the Sunid Banner assumed a very conservative posture. Even so, they could not resist the new foreign pressure coming from Japan. This pressure, however, not only failed to lead the Sunid group to modernization but it made them more inclined to remain conservative. This traditionally obstinate disposition of the Sunids played a large role in influencing the attitudes of Prince Demchugdongrob.

His Youth

When Prince Namjilwangchug died, his only son, Demchugdongrob, was not yet born; and thus for a brief time, there was nobody to succeed the old prince. This greatly worried the Sunid people. In accordance with tradition, the senior *tusalagchi taiji* (assistant noble), Pandei, managed the *jasag*'s responsibilities. Of course, if a son were born that child would become the undisputed successor. However, if the expected baby were a girl, a successor would have had to be found among the male blood relatives of the deceased prince and be subject to approval by the Manchu court. But a son was born, and the problem of succession was resolved. Because they were so nearly delirious with joy, the relatives, banner officials, and even the infant's mother, as mentioned before, neglected to record the hour of the infant's birth.. *Tusalagchi* Pandei, the acting *jasag*, reported the happy news to the head of the Shilingol League, Prince Yangsang, and through him petitioned the *Lifanyuan* (the Ministry of Dependencies; something akin to a Colonial Office) for imperial recognition of Prince De.

The procedures for establishing the succession were drawn out and were not completed for six years until 1908, when the Manchus conferred the traditional rank and title of *jasag toroyin junwang* of the Sunid Right Banner upon Demchugdongrob when he was seven *nasun*, or, as Westerners measure age, six years old. The delay in completing the imperial recognition procedures was caused by corruption among Beijing officials; without bribes, they would indefinitely prolong these procedures.

During these six years, many important changes took place in Mongolia, China, and Asia in general. All these changes greatly influenced the future fate of the Mongols. Gungsangnorbu, the Prince of Kharachin, returned from a visit to Japan and established a modern boys' school, a girls' school, and a military school. He also sent several young men and women to Japan for study. This was the beginning of Inner Mongolia's modernization. While it increased the people's knowledge of and demand for democracy, this

modernization program also offended the conservative feudalistic mentalities of most Mongols; from the beginning, many powerful conservative groups opposed it. Nevertheless, Gungsangnorbu's modernization plans reflected contemporary world trends and reinforced the idea of modernization that had already gained a foothold in Mongolian life.

Events in western Inner Mongolia also greatly affected the herding people. During her escape from Beijing to Xi'an, the Empress Dowager Cixi met Yigu, a young Manchu bannerman, and from him learned about the plans for Chinese migration to, and cultivation of, Mongol land. After returning to her court in Beijing, she appointed Yigu as Deputy Minister of Military Affairs and sent him to Suiyuan-cheng (present-day Hohhot) to take over the grazing fields of the Yekejuu, Ulanhab, and Chahar banners for cultivation by Chinese settlers. Shortly thereafter, Yigu was appointed Station General of Suiyuan. Besides managing cultivation affairs, Yigu also handled the administration and military affairs of the region. With the full support of the court, Yigu forced the Mongol banners to accept his plans voluntarily. Those Mongol officials who refused to cooperate or who hindered Chinese cultivation were uniformly and unreasonably punished. Prince Arbinbayar, the head of the Yekejuu League, was dismissed from his office by the court in Beijing because of his opposition to Chinese cultivation.

Yigu's interference in Mongolian affairs was unprecedented in Mongolian history. His vicious policies threatening Mongol interests became the model for the later Chinese warlords of the Republican period, such as Feng Yuxiang and Fu Zuoyi in the West and Zou Zuohua and Tang Yulin in the East, and the present government. Yigu's oppressive policies eventually evoked stern resistance from the Mongol herdsmen. In 1908, the year Demchugdongrob was officially installed as the next ruling prince of Sunid, Yigu executed Dampil *taiji* and six other leaders of the opposition group. This set off a form of popular rebellion known as a *duguilang* (a general term for spontaneous popular rebellion). Fearing that the situation in Mongolia would deteriorate further, the Manchu Court discharged Yigu from all his official positions. But the damage that he had done to Mongolia's economy and politics was never undone. The destruction of the economic base of the Chahar Right Flank banners was especially severe.

With the support of corrupt Manchu and Chinese officials, the power and influence of the Chinese merchants in Outer Mongolia also greatly expanded. Almost all the people in Outer Mongolia had become deeply indebted to usurious Chinese moneylenders. The power of the Mongolian office of the *amban* at Ulaanbaatar diminished daily and eventually became a mere honorific post. The Manchu *amban*, on the other hand, became the real dominating force in Outer Mongolia. This precipitated a power struggle between the Khalkha Mongol nobles and religious leaders on one side and the Manchu *amban* on the other. The Manchu conflict with the Eighth Jebtsundamba *Khutugtu*, the Living Buddha of Ulaanbaatar, was the most conspicuous of these confrontations. These power struggles led to the fermentation of anti-Manchu, pro-Russian sentiment among the Khalkha ruling group.¹

¹ Mongolia and Tibet shared a common religious bond. The Dalai Lama of Tibet was the spiritual leader of both Mongolia and Tibet. At the turn of the twentieth century, the British actively sought to establish a buffer zone in Tibet between Russia and India in order to protect the British occupation of India. This strategy was, however, opposed by the God-king of Tibet, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and so a confrontation ensued. In 1905, a British military expedition led by Colonel Francis

The Mongols' anxiety and the wavering attitude of some Mongol leaders had already attracted the attention of the Manchu court. In order to appease the Mongols, in the late spring of 1906, the Court dispatched Shanqi (also known as Prince Su) to the Mongolian frontier. This measure led to fear and suspicion among many banners. Prince Shanqi visited the Josotu, Jerim, and Juu Uda Leagues and some banners of the eastern Shilingol League, pointedly bypassing the Sunid Banner. His travels and observations were aimed at developing a new policy toward this section of Mongolia. His recommendations were, however, shelved and ignored by the court.

During these six years 1902-1908, the pivotal events were the return to Beijing of the Empress Dowager Cixi and the puppet Guangxu Emperor from their exile, and the pressure from foreign countries for the nominal reinstatement of the deposed emperor. Another important development was the Manchu court's decision to adopt some modernization measures and discard its backward and conservative orientation. These changes, however, were too little too late; by this time, the agitation for a democratic revolution led by Sun Yat-sen had already gained significant popular support in the south. In 1905, Sun established the *Tongmenghui*—a revolutionary, anti-Manchu, anti-monarchical organization. In 1908, the year of Demchugdongrob's succession to his father's position, the Empress Dowager Cixi and the Emperor Guangxu both passed away within days of each other. The death of the empress dowager proved a turning point in Chinese history. Because the deceased emperor had no heir, the court designated the two-year-old son (three years old as the Chinese calculate age) of the late emperor's younger brother, Prince Zaifeng, as emperor. This was Emperor Puyi, the last emperor of China. These momentous changes signaled the downfall of the dynasty.

As mentioned, the conflicts between Russia and Japan culminated in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. As a result of Russia's defeat and the subsequent Portsmouth Treaty of 1905, all privileges the Russians had obtained from the Manchus, including control over the southern half of the Chinese Eastern Railroad, were ceded to Japan. As a result, Japan's influence suddenly expanded into southern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia. (During the Russo-Japanese war, Prince Gungsangnorbu of Kharachin supported Japan.) After the Portsmouth Treaty, Russia and Japan made a secret treaty in 1907. They agreed to draw a line at longitude 116 degrees 27 minutes dividing Inner Mongolia into two spheres of influence, the eastern half being under Japanese and the western half under Russian influence. Sunid and several other banners of the western half of the Shilingol League were thus subjected to Russian influence. Of course this treaty

Younghusband entered Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and the Dalai Lama fled north through the grasslands of Kokonor to Ulaanbaatar. Fearing that the Dalai Lama's stay in Ulaanbaatar might cause a political crisis, the Manchu Court suggested that he go to Udai Mountain, the Buddhist holy site in Shanxi Province. In 1908, the court invited him to Beijing to visit the Empress Dowager Cixi and the Guangxu Emperor. The relationship between the Tibetan leader and the Manchu Court soon turned sour, however, and after the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet, the Manchu court stripped him of all his honorary titles. This arrogant measure caused the Dalai Lama to flee to India for refuge at Darjeeling under British protection, and also led the Mongolian leader in Ulaanbaatar to regard the Beijing court as an enemy to the Buddhist religion. This religious animosity was a factor in the declaration of Mongolian independence from Manchu domination in 1911. Although the Sunid banner was not directly involved, it inevitably felt the repercussions from these events.

was concluded without the knowledge of the Mongols.

These events did not bode well for the future of Mongolia and were especially ominous for the land south of the Gobi. Even Demchugdongrob, with his auspicious "four-tiger" birth, would face a difficult future.

His Succession and Contemporary Events

According to Manchu regulations and Mongol tradition, the successor to a hereditary *jasag* prince could not take control of banner affairs until he reached his majority, eighteen *nasun* (seventeen years in western terms). Before the heir reached his majority, the senior of the two *tusalagchis* was to be custodian of the *tamaga*, the official seal of the banner, and was to rule on behalf of the successor. Pandei, the senior *tusalagchi*, continued to rule over the banner until 1919, when Prince Demchugdongrob reached eighteen *nasun* and became qualified to assume the duties and powers of the *jasag*. During the eleven years (1908-1919) between his designation as *jasag* and his ascension as a ruling prince, many important events occurred in Mongolia and also in Europe. Of these events, the declaration of Mongolian independence in Ulaanbaatar was the most influential for the Mongols and their future.²

The event that helped the independence movement gain momentum was the so-called new policy of Sanduo, the Manchu *amban* at Ulaanbaatar. Sanduo attempted to carry out some reforms in order to transfer into his own hands the political power still wielded by the Mongols. At about this same time, the Chinese revolution against Manchu rule had already broken out in the provinces south of the Yangzi River.

In the winter of 1911, the Mongol leaders in Ulaanbaatar, with the support of Tsarist Russia, installed the Eighth Jebtsundamba *Khutugtu* as the Bogda (saint) Khan of Mongolia and declared Mongolia's independence from Manchu-dominated China. The Ulaanbaatar authorities then issued, in the name of the Jebtsundamba *Khutugtu*, a circular to all Inner Mongolian nobles, officials, and commoners, inviting them to join in the struggle for independence, the common Mongol goal. This historic event shook the entire territory of Inner Mongolia, especially the Hulun-buir, Shilingol, and Ulanbatai Leagues, which shared borders with Outer Mongolia. The leaders of Hulunbuir immediately responded to this call and wholeheartedly joined Ulaanbaatar. The nobles and leaders of Ulanbatai were comparatively pro-Ulaanbaatar, but under pressure from Beijing, they chose to adopt a more prudent policy; they expressed sympathy with Ulaanbaatar but did not publicly declare their own independence. Only Yangsang, the head of the Shilingol League, opposed the independence movement. In response to this opposition, the Outer Mongolian authorities dispatched some troops to Yangsang's residence in the Abaga Left Banner, took him into custody, and imprisoned him in Ulaanbaatar. Because of this incident, Sodnamrabdan, prince of the Ujumuchin Right Banner and deputy-head of the league, began acting on behalf of the league head and adopted a wait-and-see policy.

At the beginning of the Chinese Revolution, the main slogan was *quchu dalu*

² Other notable events were the destabilization of Inner Mongolia, the downfall of the Manchus' Qing Dynasty and the founding of the Republic of China, the outbreak of World War I, the collapse of the Russian tsarist government, the success of the Bolshevik Revolution, the founding of the Soviet Union, the Japanese-American Siberian expedition, and the Pan-Mongolian movement.

huifu Zhonghua, or “expel the Tartar barbarians and restore China.” *Dalu* is a pejorative term for the Manchus as well as all northern non-Chinese peoples, including the Mongols. The Mongols, for their part, reviled the Chinese as *Khara Kitad*, which translates literally as “black Chinese” but is more properly rendered as “the heretical, wild Chinese.” Many Mongols were deeply suspicious of the new Chinese revolution, perhaps because the Chinese word for revolution, *geming*, was improperly transliterated into Mongolian as *gaming*, which carried connotations of unrestrained revolt against tradition. As a result, most Mongols took a very dim view of the Chinese revolution and were very anxious when they learned that it had succeeded.

In January of 1912, the Republic of China was officially established in Nanjing. In February, the Manchu court agreed to abdicate and remove the child Emperor Puyi from his throne. At a conference held in the presence of the Empress Dowager Longyu, only a few attendants opposed the decision to abdicate. Among the Manchu nobles who opposed abdication were Shanqi, the Prince Su who had inspected eastern Inner Mongolia in 1906; and among the Mongolian nobles were Nayantu, the Prince of Khalkha, and Gungsangnorbu, the Prince of Kharachin. The great majority agreed to peaceful abdication. Later, Shanqi fled to Dairen (Dalian), sought support from Japan, and organized the *Zongshe dang*, a loyalist party seeking restoration of the Manchu monarchy.

Gungsangnorbu (Prince Gung) returned to Kharachin and called a conference of princes and delegates from the banners of Josotu and Juu Uda and a part of the Jerim League for discussion at Ulankhada (present-day Chifeng) about the future of Mongolia. At this conference, Prince Gung advocated seeking help from Japan in gaining the independence of Inner Mongolia. At the same time, he also sent his personal representative, Lubsangchoijur (my father), to Ulaanbaatar to establish connections with the new regime there. However, nothing came of Prince Gung's plan, because Japan had reached an agreement with the newly established Beijing government under Yuan Shikai. Since the Japanese had obtained what they desired from the new Chinese government, they suspended their involvement with Prince Gung. To win back Prince Gung's allegiance, Yuan Shikai appointed him as the head of the main office in charge of Mongolian and Tibetan affairs. By a combination of intimidation and enticements Prince Gung was eventually persuaded to lean toward Beijing.

Confronting the seeming *fait accompli* of Outer Mongolian independence and worried over the dissension in Inner Mongolia, Yuan Shikai's government promulgated the *Menggu daiyu tiaoli*, or Regulations for the Treatment of Mongolia. These regulations were as follows:

All of the Mongolian territory should be treated not as a subordinate area but as a region equal to any other within China. The central government should not use the terms “subordinate” or “colony” in the office administering Mongolian affairs. The original ruling power of the Mongolian princes and nobles is to be preserved intact. The succession of hereditary titles and ranks in both Inner and Outer Mongolia is to be allowed to continue as before, and the prerogatives that persons holding such titles enjoy in their banners are to remain unchanged. The hereditary emoluments and salaries of the Mongolian princes and nobles shall be issued in full amount. The original titles of the Mongol *khutugtus* and lamas shall be preserved without change.

This proclamation had no effect on the Outer Mongolian independence move-

ment. It only protected the old feudalistic institutions of Inner Mongolia and eased the anxieties of Inner Mongolian conservatives. In order to gain the support of more Mongol leaders, Yuan Shikai ignored the fact that he was president of a newly founded democratic republic and conferred many feudalistic titles and ranks on both nobles and common people. The young Demchugdongrob was promoted to the position of *Khoshoi Dugureng Chin Wang*. This promotion was, of course, a cause for great celebration in the conservative Sunid Right Banner.

In 1913, the Ulaanbaatar government dispatched Shirun *jiangjun* (general) and Namsarai *bagatur* (hero) to command an army and take over Doloonnor, the religious center located between the eastern Shilingol and Chahar leagues. The purpose of this military action was to intimidate the Inner Mongolian leagues and banners into joining the newly established independent regime. Before this could be accomplished, however, the Outer Mongolian force was obliged to withdraw because of heavy pressure from Chinese troops. Immediately after the Outer Mongolian troops withdrew, the Chinese occupied Doloonnor and killed the famous lama Kanjurwa *Khutugtu*, who was sympathetic to the goal of unifying the two Mongolias. This brutal murder created a great disturbance among the Inner Mongols.

Another important event during this year was the establishment of the Mongolian-Tibetan Academy in Beijing. When Prince Gungsangnorbu arrived in Beijing, Yuan Shikai appointed him as general-director of the *Meng-Zang shiwu ju* (the Bureau of Mongolian-Tibetan Affairs), a bureau that soon had its name changed to the *Meng-Zang yuan*, or the Mongolian-Tibetan Ministry. In his new position, Prince Gung urged the Mongolian parliamentarians to pass a resolution establishing an educational center for Mongolian and Tibetan youth. The purpose of this center was to accelerate the modernization of Mongolia and Tibet. Although this center did not influence the Tibetans to any significant degree, it greatly influenced the politics of Mongolia. Prince Gung assigned several students, whom he had earlier sent to Japan, to work as teachers in this academy. These young intellectuals promoted the democratic ideas they had brought back from Japan, and the academy gradually became the headquarters for Mongolian modernization, reform, and revolution.

After Outer Mongolia's declaration of independence, relations between Ulaanbaatar and Beijing became very tense. In the winter of 1912, the Russo-Mongolian Agreement was signed in Ulaanbaatar. With this agreement, the Russians obtained all the economic privileges they desired, but still did not officially recognize Mongolian independence. After lengthy negotiations, a Sino-Russian treaty, obliging Chinese recognition of all the Russian privileges enumerated in the Russo-Mongolian Agreement, was signed in Beijing. In exchange for this agreement, the Tsarist government agreed to hold Sino-Russo-Mongolian talks for the resolution of the Mongolian independence issue. In accordance with this agreement, tripartite talks were held at Kiakhta from September 1914 to June 1915. Under pressure from both the Russians and the Chinese, the Mongols reluctantly agreed to seek autonomy instead of independence. The First World War broke out only two months after the talks had convened, and the Russians soon became preoccupied with defending themselves against the Germans. Thus, the balance of power began to favor the Chinese side.

As a result of the Sino-Russo-Mongolian Tripartite Agreement, the Chinese *tuhu shi* (protector) arrived at Ulaanbaatar in the winter of 1915. In order to demonstrate Chinese suzerainty over Mongolia, the Beijing government conferred the title His Holi-

ness *Khutugtu Khan* upon the Living Buddha of Ulaanbaatar, the head of the Ulaanbaatar regime. Following this political trick, trade between Ulaanbaatar and Beijing via Kalgan immediately increased. All commercial traffic moved through the vicinity of the princely residence of the Sunid Right Banner; and in Pangjiang, about fifty kilometers southeast of the residence of the Sunid prince, a cooperation was established to link Ulaanbaatar with Kalgan and Beijing. The Kalgan-Ulaanbaatar Automobile Company, a privately owned and managed firm, was soon organized; it succeeded in shortening the length of the journey from Kalgan to Ulaanbaatar to only five days. Pangjiang was usually the second stop for an overnight stay, and Ere'en (Eriyen) the third. All these new developments frustrated the conservative Sunids. It was as if they had been inadvertently drawn into a political whirlpool.

Also during this period, Yuan Shikai, the first president of the Republic of China, was plotting to occupy the imperial throne of China. Nayantu, the Prince of Khalkha, was the leader of the Mongol nobles who resided in Beijing and supported Yuan's plot. This situation posed a dilemma for the princes and leaders of the Shilingol League, and they could not decide what their next move would be. Immediately following Yuan's ascent to the throne, the war for restoration of the republic broke out. Yuan soon died under the intense pressure of this war, and Li Yuanhong, the vice-president, became the next president of the Republic of China. Although these turbulent events had no direct impact on the Sunid banner, they did diminish Sunid leaders' confidence in the stability of the Beijing regime.

Because of the cultural differences between Mongols and Chinese, and the Manchu policy of ethnic segregation, the ordinary people of Shilingol tended to ignore the political upheavals among the Chinese. But their attention was definitely captured when the Manchu throne was temporarily restored in Beijing. In the summer of 1917, General Chang Xun, a conservative Chinese leader, supported Puyi's efforts to reoccupy the throne abdicated by the Manchus in 1912. Although this political comedy lasted scarcely two weeks, it attracted the attention of many Mongol leaders. In Beijing, all the Mongolian nobles except for the enlightened Prince Gungsangnorbu openly expressed their support of this restoration. Because of their traditional and conservative attitudes, the Shilingol leaders also supported the Manchus.³

³ Toward the end of the Manchus' dynasty, many anti-Chinese uprisings were instigated by "Mongolian bandits." The best organized of these groups was led by Togtakhu *Taiji* of the Gorlos Banner in the Jerim League in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia. His group attacked many areas dominated by Chinese cultivators under the jurisdiction of the three Manchurian provinces of Mukden, Kirin, and Heilongjiang. Later, when Mongolian independence was declared, he and his followers went to Ulaanbaatar and enthusiastically joined the newly organized Mongolian forces.

After the Manchu emperor abdicated his throne, many conservatives in eastern Inner Mongolia became dissatisfied with the new Republic of China. Under Japanese protection, some conservative Mongolian leaders even established contact with Shanqi (the Manchu Prince Su) and his Qing loyalist party (the *Zongshe dang*) at Dairen. Among these leaders, the "Mongolian bandit" Babujab was the most widely known. His military activities had three objectives: (1) attacks on the areas dominated by Chinese cultivators in Mongolian territory in order to win the lower class herdsmen over to his side, (2) restoration of the Manchu throne in order to win over the conservative Mongolian upper class, and (3) cooperation with the Japanese military in order to strengthen his own armed forces. His military activities covered most areas of eastern Inner Mongolia and its bordering districts. After he was killed in 1916 by a stray bullet during a major offensive against

In the winter of that same year (1917), the Bolshevik revolution overthrew the Russian Tsarist regime. The rise of the Bolsheviks alarmed the Ulaanbaatar government and caused it to shift from its previous pro-Russian to a rather pro-Chinese foreign policy. However, the effects of the Bolshevik revolution on Inner Mongolia were still slight. Nor did the defeat of Germany, Austria, and Italy and the end of the First World War much attract the attention of the Inner Mongols. Not even Japan's "Twenty-one Demands" on China, which were to have great impact on southeastern Inner Mongolia, caused the Inner Mongols any great concern, except for some intellectuals and progressive leaders. In fact, there were even some people who thought that the Japanese oppression of China might provide a good chance to expel the Chinese settlers from Inner Mongolia or at least halt further immigration by them. By this time, Demchugdongrob was already sixteen years old. Even though he was not yet officially involved in politics, he could neither avoid nor ignore the influence of these events.

Linxi, a strategically located Chinese city in the Juu Uda League, his followers disbanded. During the Babujab incident, Ujumuchin and other banners in the eastern Shilingol League area were all in turmoil, although the western part of the League was not affected.

In the next year, 1917, another independence movement occurred in the Ukerchin-khonichin area (later known as Minggan banner) of Chahar. This movement was led by one Mugdenbu, a young intellectual. This radical group initially struggled against the local conservative Mongol leaders, then against the Chinese authorities, and was later attacked by Chinese forces from Kalgan. Thoroughly defeated, Mugdenbu fled to the Sunid for refuge. Chinese pressure on the banner led to his extradition to Kalgan, where he was executed. Although this was an isolated incident, it had considerable impact on the banners in the Chakhar and Shilingol areas. Because this incident symbolized the wide gap between the young radicals and the old conservatives, it influenced the thoughts and actions of later generations.