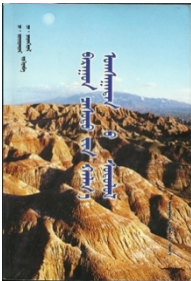


REVIEW: MONGOLIAN LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP ON THE MONGOLS OF THE GANSU-QINGHAI REGION

Reviewed by Mátyás Balogh
(Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)



Ci. Bürinbayar, Burenbaya'er 布仁巴雅尔. 2001. *Degedü monyol-un tobciyan, Qinghai Mengguzu Gaikuang* 青海蒙古族概况 [A General Survey of the Deed Mongols]. Öbür Monyol-un Suryan Kümüjil-ün Keblel-ün Qoriya. Hohhot 呼和浩特: Nemenggu jiaoyu chunabshe 内蒙古教育出版社 ISBN: 7-5311-4965-6/k; 61, 272 (4+3+14+251), no index, bibliography, maps, or images (paperback 15RMB).



C. Coyidandar, Cha. Qiadanda'er 查。乔旦德尔 and Ci. Cecengerel, Qi. Siqengerile 其。斯琴格日勒. 2006. *Baruyun casutu-yin qalqa uysayatan-u sudulul, Xueyu Ka'erka Mengguren Minsu Zhiyan* 雪域喀尔喀蒙古民俗志研究 [A Study of the Halh Mongols of the Western Snows] Beijing 北京: Ündüsüten-ü Keblel-ün Qoriya. Minzu chubanshe 民族出版社 [Minority Nationalities' Press] ISBN: 7-105-07690-9, 497 (11+25+471). 11 color images, 1 genealogical table, list of author's publications (466-468), no index, bibliography, or maps (paperback 35RMB).

QINGHAI AND GANSU MONGOLS

The majority of China's Mongol population (estimated at 3.5-4 million) live in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR). Some also live in the adjacent provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning,

and Hebei. A significant number of Mongol communities also exist in northwest China, notably in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and in Qinghai and Gansu provinces.¹ The Mongols of these administrative regions are predominantly Oyrat-Mongols (Weilate), otherwise known as western Mongols. The four major tribes of the Oyrats – the Dörböt, Torguud, Hoshuud, and Choros – established the Jungharian Empire (1630-1758) in the seventeenth century in the north part of what is now the XUAR. When the Choros began gaining the upper hand in the struggle for hegemony in the late 1620s, many Dörböts and Torguuds left the region and migrated to the Volga delta, where they established their own khanate under Russian protectorate, and became known as the Kalmyks. In 1736, another group of Oyrats, under the Hoshuud Gülüshi Han's leadership, left the area for the Kuku-Nor region, roughly present-day Qinghai Province, in order to aid the fifth Dalai Lama and expel the Halh Tsogt Taiji's Mongols, enemies of the Dge lugs pa order of Buddhism.

The Mongols in Qinghai and Gansu provinces are most often referred to as Deed Mongols 'Upper Mongols' or Hoshuud, though Gülüshi Han's army also included some Torguud, Hoid (a minor tribe), and Choros troops. After a couple of decades in the region west of Kuku-Nor, some Deed Mongols migrated northwards to Dunhuang in Gansu Province, and their descendants currently live there in Subei Mongol Autonomous County. Bürinbayar's *The General Survey of the Deed Mongols* summarizes available information about the Deed Mongols in Qinghai Province, but does not include information on the Deed Mongols of Subei.

Southeast from Subei, in Sunan Yugur Autonomous County, is Baiyin, a Mongol ethnic township (C. *mengguzu xiang*). The Mongol residents of this area are surprisingly not Deed Mongols, but Halhs who fled their original homeland in present-day Gowi Altai Province, mostly during the 1920s and 30s. They are discussed in C. Coydandar's *Study of the Halh Mongols of the Western Snows*.

¹ Hurelbaatar (1999:196) states that in 1990 there were 138,021 Mongols living in the XUAR, 71,510 in Qinghai, and 8,135 in Gansu.

GENERAL SURVEY OF THE DEED MONGOLS

The book is an encyclopedic work consisting of ten chapters (*bölög*), with each chapter subdivided into several *keseg* 'units'. The author's intention was to write about everything concerning the Deed Mongols. As its Chinese title makes clear, it belongs to the genre called *gaikuang*, a general survey or description of the facts about a given topic. *Gaikuang* are frequently published in China about such administrative divisions as provinces, prefectures, and counties, and also about certain minorities or groups of minorities. The Mongol word (*tobciyan*) that translates Chinese *gaikuang*, echoes the title of the thirteenth century Mongol chronicle, *Moŋyol-un niyuca tobciyan*, *The Secret History of the Mongols*. This chronicle describes the origin and deeds of Temüjin, later known as Chinggis Khan, and ends with the reign of his son, Ögedei. Thus, the Mongol title of Bürenbayar's work suggests that it discusses the history of the Deed Mongols, contains descriptions of their rulers and conquests, explains where the Deed Mongols originated, and how they occupied the territory in which they currently live. However, the whole book is much more of a *gaikuang* than a *tobciyan* in the 'classical sense', i.e., the author also focuses on health-care, infrastructure, and mass-media in Deed Mongol territory.

The first chapter, as is typical of standard *gaikuang*, deals with geography, and gives a thorough description of the terrain in which the Deed Mongols live.

The second chapter discusses Deed Mongol territorial administration, beginning with the autonomous Mongol administrative units, namely Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Henan Mongol Autonomous County, and three Mongol ethnic townships: Halejing, Toli, and Huang Cheng, all located in Haibei Prefecture. The third and largest unit of this chapter deals with the old administrative division of the Deed Mongols, which consisted of the Hoshuud, Choros, Hoid, Torguud, and Halh tribes, the latter being the only non-Oyrat tribe that joined the Deed Mongols, having migrated from Jasagt Han Province of Outer

Mongolia in 1765.² Bürenbayar briefly discusses these tribes and then turns to a discussion of the twenty-nine Deed Mongol banners (twenty-one Hoshuud, four Torguud, two Choros, one Hoid, and one Halh) in great length and in much detail.

The third chapter, 'Historical Events', reviews the history of Mongol presence in the Kuku-Nor region before the arrival of the Deed Mongols. It also relates the Hoshuud Gūūshi Han's military campaign against Tsogt Taij, a Halh Mongol noble who came to the area in an effort to annihilate the Dge lugs pa order of Buddhism and replace it with the Rnying ma pa order. Gūūshi, with his ten sons and their followers, settled in the region, becoming an important ethnic component of the Kuku-Nor region. This chapter does not deal with the Deed Mongols' recent history, rather, the discussion ends at mid-twentieth century.

Chapters four to eight discuss the different aspects of contemporary Deed Mongol life including economic activities, culture and education, religious life, rules and regulations concerning autonomy, and traditional customs. These chapters are a very useful source of information for those interested in traditional Mongol culture and the herding way of life. In addition, they include such contemporary topics as water usage in the arid Tsaidam Basin, fish-farms in Kuku-Nor, Mongol and Tibetan ethnic schools, sports, games, and healthcare. The last chapter, again like many publications of the *gaikuang* genre, is titled 'Famous People' and lists the names of the most venerated Deed Mongols and their outstanding achievements.

A STUDY OF THE HALH MONGOLS OF THE WESTERN SNOWS

The discussion begins with a lengthy introduction (forty-five pages), consisting of four sections. In the first section, the authors describe the history of their research in the area that lasted from 1984 to 2005. The second section is an outline of the area's geographical

² He and Zhang (2005:193).

features, and the third unit discusses the origin of the Sunan-Halh. It is curious why these important pages were made part of the introduction. However, this brief, but very informative, history contains the memories of a number of elders who personally participated in the migration from Mongolia to Gansu in their childhood or youth. These narratives make clear that migration was diffuse and happened because some left their homes owing to Kazak bandits harassing the Halhs of two neighboring banners (Toli gūng and Dayicin wang) and because they were afraid that the bandits would soon plunder their banner as well. Furthermore, nobles and Buddhist lamas fled from anticipated persecution from the newly emerging power of the Mongol Communists. The migrants first settled farther north in Gansu in Mazong, close to the Sino-Mongolian border. After a couple of years, most moved deeper into Chinese territory to either Sunan (Baiyin Township) or to Barayun qosiyun 'Right Banner' of Alashan League.³ A few detoured to Xinjiang before reaching their final destination in Sunan, and some settled in Pingshanhu, another Mongol ethnic township in Gansu that is very near the Inner Mongolia border.

The main body of the text is divided into three long *bölög* 'chapters' that are subdivided into smaller units. Chapter One is titled 'Customs' (*yosu jansil*) and is subdivided into five units: Everyday life; Greetings and showing respect; Rituals of a person's lifespan; Celebrations, festivals, beliefs, and religious matters, and; Games and competitions.

Chapter Two, 'Oral Literature', comprises four units. The first is a *irügel* 'single praise' of a steed in the form of an alliterative verse, collected by the authors from a local resident in 1984. The second is a substantial collection of aphorisms and riddles. The third unit is a collection of sixty-nine Halh folksongs that occupy a very generous part of the book (pages 180 to 358). This is followed by the fourth unit, a collection of eighteen legends and tales.

Chapter Three deals with characteristic features of the Sunan-Halh dialect. It begins with an outline of its phonology and continues

³ Alashan is the westernmost prefecture level unit of IMAR.

with an enumeration of words and expressions that are unique to this dialect, both in Mongolian script and IPA transliteration.

The appendices include, among other items, a personal letter from the authors to a professor, and the latter's answer, containing the lineages of certain lords, who governed the Halhs in question around the turn of the twentieth century, before the migration took place. The lineages are followed by a list of the governors of Baiyin and Pingshanhu from 1950 to 2002 and from 1949-1997, respectively.

...

Both books are explicitly descriptive and summary in character. Folklore materials, traditions, customs, rituals, and taboos are presented without explanation or analyses. When history is touched upon, the events and facts are described – there are no hypotheses and speculation. Some sort of explanation would add much to the understanding of folk literature, particularly in terms of aphorisms, for example, C. Coyidandar and Ci. Cecengerel (169) write that, "A fatherless boy has a big head, and a motherless girl has big buttocks," but we are left wondering why.

Neither book challenges the results of previous studies, sets forth new ideas, or discusses their subject in a new context with a new approach. Instead, they present a tremendous amount of information, which I think makes them valuable repositories of data for further research.

The reviewed books are only two examples of a large number of such books written by Mongol authors in Mongol about their own nation's history, language, and culture. Their readers are almost exclusively Mongol scholars. Only a handful of foreign researchers of Inner-Asia use them because these books are extremely difficult to obtain; the best way to get them is to locate the author or turn to the publishing house, but possible readers outside the spheres of Chinese-Mongolian scholarship usually do not know that a book they would be interested in exists.

REFERENCES

- He Ling 何玲 and Zhang Zhaoyun 张照运 (eds). 2005. *Qinghai Mengguzu shiliao ji* 青海蒙古族史料集 [A Collection of Historical Resources on the Mongols in Qinghai]. Xining 西宁: Qinghai renmin chubanshe 青海人民出版社 [Qinghai People's Press].
- Hurelbaatar, A. 1999. A Survey of Mongols in Present-day China: Perspectives on Demography and Culture Change in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A Elleman (eds.) *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*. New York: ME Sharpe, 191-222.


NON-ENGLISH TERMS


Note: In Written Mongolian c = ch, š, and s before i = sh, ŋ = ng, q = kh, γ = gh


Alashan 阿拉善

Baiyin 白银


Barayun qosiyun⁴  = The Right Banner of Alashan League,
Alashan Youqi 阿拉善右旗

Bölög 


Bürinbayar 

Choros, Coros 

Coyidandar 

Dayicin wang 

Deed, degedü 

Dge lugs pa 

Dörböd, Dörbed 

Dunhuang 敦煌

gaikuang 概况

⁴ Written Mongolian words in the original script are given as they appear in the original text.

Gansu 甘肃 Province

Güüshi Han, Güüši qan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Haibei 海北 Prefecture

Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture 海西蒙古族藏族自治州

Halejing 哈勒景

Halh Tsogt Taiji, qalqa Coytu Tayiji རྒྱུ་ཤི་རྒྱལ་ཁྲིའུ་ཏཱ་ཡི་ཅེ་ཏུ་ཏཱ་ཡི་ཅེ།

Hebei 河北

Heilongjiang 黑龙江

Henan Mongol Autonomous County 河南蒙古族自治县

Hoid, Qoyid རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Hoshuud Güüshi Han, Qošud Güüši qan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Huang Cheng 皇城

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region 内蒙古自治区

irügel རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Jilin 吉林

keseq རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Kuku-Nor, Köke nayur རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།, Oyrat: Kök nuur

Liaoning 辽宁

Mazong 马鬃

mengguzu xiang 蒙古族乡

Moŋyol-un niyuca tobciyan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Ögedei རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Pingshanhu 平山湖

Qinghai 青海 Province

Rnying ma pa རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Subei Mongol Autonomous County 苏北蒙古族自治县

Sunan-Halh, sunan qalqa རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Temüjin རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

tobciyan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Toli རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། Tuole 托勒

Toli güng རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Torguud, Torγud རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Tsaidam, Cayidam རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།, Oyrat: Cäadm, Chaidamu 柴达木

Weilate 卫拉特 Oyrat, Oyirad རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།, Oyrat: Öörd

Xining 西宁 City

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region 新疆维吾尔自治区
yosu jaŋsil ཡུ་སུ་ཇམ་སུལ་