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6

2

Models and Morality: The Parable of the "Little Heroic Sisters of the Grassland"

A story that is famous throughout China is set in Inner Mongolia. One day in the middle of the harsh winter of 1964, Longmei and Yurong, two Mongolian sisters aged eleven and nine, were entrusted by their father to look after one of the collective's flocks of sheep close to home while he went out to help his neighbors. The two girls, ignoring their father's words, drove their herd farther away to a better pasture. The weather in February on the grassland is subject to sudden change. A blizzard swept in before they could round up their flock and head home. The frightened sheep ran with the roaring wind. Fearing that the sheep would be lost in the blizzard, the two sisters followed them. The temperature dropped to 37 centigrade degrees below zero, but the two sisters continued to run after their sheep in the blizzard, taking care that the sheep not scatter. Yurong, the younger sister, lost one of her boots while running. The girls drove off eagles hovering above their prey and also protected the flock against a Mongol herdsman who attempted to steal the sheep. After running after the flock for one whole day and a night, covering thirty-five kilometers in the blizzard, they finally reached a railway station at the Bayanoboo Mine. Yurong was no longer able to walk, but Longmei stumbled toward the station. A train was rushing past and was about to run over Longmei when a Chinese railway signalman, Comrade Wang, rescued her. With the help of several other Chinese railway workers, under the leadership of Bayandiren, a Mongolian Party secretary of the Bayanoboo Mine, Yurong was also found and saved. Prompt medical care by the local hospital and the Inner Mongolian hospital enabled both sisters to survive. Longmei suffered frostbite, and one of Yurong's legs was crippled. Only two sheep died in the blizzard; the remaining 380 sheep survived.

Ulanhu, who was then the paramount leader of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and China's leading ethnic minority official, immediately praised the sisters' heroic deeds. He graced the front page of the March 14, 1964, issue of the *Inner Mongolia Daily* with an inscription in his own calligraphy:

Longmei and Yurong, little sisters, are revolutionary successors from amongst the people of the grassland, growing up nurtured by Mao Zedong Thought. Youngsters of all nationalities in our Region will try hard to learn from their exemplary behavior and noble character.

Ulanhu penned the inscription just one year after Mao had anointed the sainted People's Liberation Army martyr Lei Feng in the magazine *China Youth* with a call to "Learn from Comrade Lei Feng." The *Inner Mongolia Daily* editorial noted, inter alia, that the Chinese participants in the drama of the two girls had demonstrated "class friendship and love, and minzu tuanjie" toward Mongols, and they were duly rewarded. The two sisters were also immediately accepted as Young Pioneers and henceforth lionized.

Very soon the story of the two little sisters was transmitted not only all across the Inner Mongolian grassland, but throughout China via films, plays, and picture books. It was even adapted as a lesson in national primary-school textbooks. The two sisters were depicted as happy children of a poor herdsman's family in the fertile grasslands of Inner Mongolia, nourished by the radiance of Mao Zedong Thought. The girls were among the best known in the Chinese communist pantheon of exemplars, including Lei Feng, Wang Jie, and others, and were said to have been particularly appealing to reneagers. Their signal difference was that they were Mongol, not Chinese, and had been ennobled when they were alive, whereas others were honored posthumously. They inspired two generations of young children—myself, a Mongol child in Inner Mongolia, among them. I not only was entraptured by the films and picture books, but kept their beautiful stage photos on my wall, both admiring their beauty and following their example, doing my best to become a good student of Chairman Mao. In learning from the two sisters, we were simultaneously taught to hate our Mongolian exploiter class enemies and to cherish the generous assistance of the brotherly Chinese.

I, and I believe many of my compatriots, never questioned the story at any time until 1993, when a torrent of newspaper articles appeared, reporting that the two little sisters had actually been saved not by Comrade Wang but by a Mongol man called Haschuluu. It was further pointed out that Haschuluu had been portrayed as the unnamed sheep rustler in the story. In the summer of 1996, I interviewed Haschuluu and obtained some documentation from him but was not able to interview the two sisters.

Examination of this political myth makes it possible not only to shed some new light on ethnic relations in Inner Mongolia, but also to look into the complex moral dimensions of ethnic representation in China. I treat the emergence of the two little exemplars as a strategy of resistance by the Inner Mongolian



6.1. Little Heroic Sisters of the Grassland (*Little Sisters of the Grassland*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1973)

leadership against the Party Center in Beijing, through a Mongolian representation of ethnic relations and socialist fervor. This kind of resistance came with a price, of course. It was achieved through disempowering a bad-class Mongol and showing deference to the Chinese by creating a myth of salvation at the hands of Chinese. But this was precisely the morality of socialist ethnic relations, one that was carefully constructed to maintain the status quo of the Mongols. However, this morality of ethnic resistance, which otherwise would be sustainable, has been complicated by Haschuluu's recent revelations. Haschuluu, who had long been vilified as a sheep rustler and class enemy, not only long resisted, but also eventually challenged, this representation. We are then left with questions about how to deal with such socialist ethnic heroes in the postsocialist period.

Nowadays, it is almost impossible not to discuss domination and resistance when we treat power relations. And yet, there has been a general tendency toward what Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) calls "the romance of resistance." Such a romance of resistance is a reflection of the author's philosophical orientation, informed by a liberal emphasis on free human spirits, viewing all kinds of domination or oppression as loathsome, rather than as a reflection of objective reality.² I follow Abu-Lughod in viewing resistance as a diagnostic of power, offering clues to power configurations in the society concerned, rather than for the sake of resistance: "Instead of taking these [sorts of resistance] as signs of human free-

dom," she argued, they should "tell us more about forms of power and how people are caught up in them" (1990: 42).

In studying ethnicity, social scientific studies exhibit a strong propensity to dichotomize the opposition between minority and majority-cum-state and to invariably view sympathetically the minorities, who are very often perceived to be the victims of majority-cum-state violence. This rests on viewing categories such as nation and ethnic group as "internally homogeneous and externally distinctive and bounded objects," as Eric Wolf puts it (1982: 6). Despite my conviction that the Mongols are in general subordinated and oppressed politically, economically, and culturally in China, a conviction that I hope is amply documented in this volume, I choose in this and other chapters to traverse the terrain incognito of the internal tensions among the Mongols against the wider Chinese political background. This task is perhaps best accomplished by discovering the subjects, giving them voice, and letting them represent their own interests. In this way, the monolithic category of the subaltern naturally dissolves, opening a way for us to gaze into Mongolian society, both its internal dynamics and its relationship to the dominant Chinese society.

POLITICAL EXEMPLARS

The two little sisters were what Caroline Humphrey (1997) calls exemplars, one of the techniques used by a regime to project and instill official ideology. Ideology is abstract and cannot be effectively inculcated through mere slogan shouting or propaganda. What is abstract must be made concrete, human, and attainable through examples. Humphrey suggests that Mongol morality is largely based on exemplars.

Despite the wooden character of many socialist exemplars, we should avoid treating them teleologically, but rather should appreciate and analyze their role in socialist (and not only socialist) societies. The Confucian—or, for that matter, Mongolian—moral exemplar and the socialist exemplar all stress a need for self-cultivation and self-discipline, requiring a large degree of human agency on the part of the emulor and, from the elite point of view, enhancing social control through the active cooperation of the inculcated.³ The socialist regime also sought social change through this process, in that the socialist exemplar is based on a socialist-defined morality, a world of its own with a new hierarchy of honor and shame, distinction and mediocrity. The highest prestige or esteem in a socialist society is supposed to lie with those who conform to the socialist ideal, however that may be defined. Anita Chan (1985), in her study of Chinese political socialization, describes how young people in China before the Cultural Revolution feverishly tried to outdo their peers in emulating heroes or exemplars. The key here is not "learning" but displaying what one has learned, captured by the Chinese phrase *biaoxian*. The psychological pressure upon youngsters was tre-

mendous, generating a competitive political activism. Activists, according to Chan, when talking about activism or activist organization during the Cultural Revolution, "often turned to the word 'glorious' (*guangrong*), connoting both spiritual achievement and personal prestige" (1985: 7). While models have the capacity to project and personalize exemplary behavior, individuals and groups can also manipulate them in the pursuit of personal interests. Ironically, pursuit of socialist exemplar status frequently became a means to establish claims to personal glory, even while eschewing self-interest.

In a parallel fashion, Mao's class struggle engendered a self-interested subjectivity. Ann Anagnost suggests that Mao had launched a "class subject," especially in the "speaking bitterness" narrative promoted during land reform against alleged wrongs done by landlords. "Speaking bitterness" would be repeatedly resurrected in subsequent campaigns. Anagnost argues that "by giving 'voice' to the subaltern class subject, the Party engaged in a metaphysics of presence, one that authenticated its leadership as representing the constituencies its own discourse had constituted" (1994: 265). In other words, Mao's political conceptualization of class located actors within hierarchies of power, "especially in terms of relations of exploitation," rather than in their relationship to the means of production (Dirlik 1983: 196). In this way, the subaltern was transformed from victims into a force to transform society. This was in the interest as much of the subaltern as of the Party. The consequences of such a subaltern subjectivity were fully evident in the brutality during both the Land Reform and the Cultural Revolution (Huang 1995; see also chapter 4).

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE "LITTLE HEROIC SISTERS" TALE

Inner Mongolia is one of the five so-called autonomous regions in China. It was established in May 1947, two-and-one-half years before the founding of the People's Republic of China. Stretching along the northern borderland, neighboring Mongolia and Russia, it is presently home to over three million Mongols—numerically insignificant Daur, Ewenki, Orochon, Hui, and Manchu minorities—and about twenty million Chinese. Its incorporation into the People's Republic of China, as opposed to independence or unification with the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR, now known as Mongolia), was facilitated by Ulanhu, a veteran communist, who worked with the CCP, applying Leninist lenses to comprehend the Inner Mongols as a small oppressed nationality that deserved autonomy within a Chinese state.

However, this kind of autonomy did not prevent ethnic violence during the land reform period when naked class struggle was launched, which effectively allowed Chinese settlers to expropriate Mongol land. A politics of difference was subsequently pursued by Ulanhu to provide a kind of buffer for pastoral Mongols,

partially shielding them from the consequences of the class struggle approach until 1966, when the Socialist Education campaign, the predecessor of the Cultural Revolution, threatened to break through the ethnic boundary. In the early 1960s Mao's simulated class struggle approach became ubiquitous, and collectivization and communization became the dominant political discourse and organization. This now made the earlier policy differentiating Mongol and Chinese, and pastoral and agricultural conditions, not only obsolete but reactionary.

The new class struggle policy called for intra-Mongol class struggle to shape a socialist Mongolian nationality as a basis for class unity between Chinese and Mongols. Ironically, the emphasis on class obliterated the boundary between Chinese and minorities, the basis for providing "autonomy" to the latter. However, this class unity was never ethnic-blind. As the flag-bearing nationality of China, the Chinese projected themselves as the embodiment of modernity, the destiny, whereas the minorities were enjoined to learn from the "elder brother" Chinese. This new hegemony rendered any minority "autonomy" as rejection of socialist ideals and insistence on ethnic boundaries as regressive.⁴ In this new ideology, the burden of new ideal socialist nationality relations was imposed on minorities, who must transform themselves so as to be worthy of the friendship and assistance of the advanced Chinese elder brothers. This new class struggle offensive was extremely effective in breaking down ethnic boundaries, opening doors for both the state and the Chinese penetration into minority area, which resulted in further integration.

Under such circumstances, the question confronting Mongols was not so much a pressure to overthrow class enemies as it was to maintain Mongol leadership without losing out ideologically to the Chinese. Furthermore, Mongol communists faced a greater challenge, as the deteriorating Sino-Soviet relationship and increasing tensions between China and the MRP made Mongol communists increasingly susceptible to charges of ideological and national treason. This extraordinary situation necessitated a politically astute response from Mongol communists, requiring expressions of loyalty to China and its version of socialism. And it was in this what I call performative loyalty, that Mongols, especially Ulanhu, demonstrated their creativity.

As early as 1960 and 1961, during the three-year Great Leap famine that left millions dead throughout China, Ulanhu arranged for Mongols to adopt three thousand Chinese orphans, ranging in age from several months to six years. When dozens of orphanages in Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui, and Zhejiang provinces appealed to Beijing for help in late 1959, China's premier Zhou Enlai approached Ulanhu, the Mongol leader of China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, to see if he could provide some relief goods, as Inner Mongolia was among the few regions of China that had not been hard-hit by the famine. According to recent much-publicized reports in China (Hao and He 1997; Ma 1997), Ulanhu suggested instead that Mongol herders adopt and raise some of the orphans. Mongol herders, he reasoned, had been afflicted with severe vene-

real diseases in the past, leaving many women sterile. They were hungry for children. The Mongol adoption of the children neatly solved two problems, if only on a small scale: it helped alleviate the anxiety of childless Mongols, and it lightened the burden of Chinese struggling in the face of famine.

It turned out that helping the Chinese orphans was only part of Ulanhu's effort to "share the worry" of China (*wei guo fen you*), for he also arranged to donate 320,000 tons of grain free of charge and to sell 30,155 tons of grain to the state, thereby winning high praise for demonstrating "socialism, patriotism and collectivism" from the editorial of the *People's Daily* (January 1, 1962). As this case reveals, instead of the Chinese "elder brothers" helping the minorities, as Chinese propaganda invariably claimed, this was an instance of Mongols helping Chinese in the name of patriotism. This Mongol patriotism served Mongol interests, simultaneously raising the image/place of Mongols in the PRC—that is, in an important sense, reordering the rungs of ethnicity.

Over the next few years, Ulanhu's ideological offensive was manifested in several moral exemplars, including the two little sisters, all of whom were used not only to demonstrate Mongolian commitment to socialist revolution and to the Chinese state, but also to provide an effective Mongol form of ideological propaganda.

That the models were created from below—that is, by the Mongols themselves rather than by Mao or other Chinese leaders in Beijing—enables us to investigate the notion of Mongol agency rather than total subservience to what is handed down from the Center. Models are the building materials for ideological competition.⁵ An exemplar is susceptible to manipulation to serve the ends of its creator. Thus, in our story of two little sisters, what started out as a simple event came to be endowed with at least four distinct ideological messages. The first is that the Mongols, even children—and above all, two girls—were devoting their lives to the socialist cause. Their actions embodied the spirit of love for collective property, and they risked their lives to protect it. The second is clearly the motif of internationality/ friendship in the form of Chinese people helping—and in this case, even saving—Mongols. Third, there is an inherent sexual overtone here: it is not just friendship, it is the elder brother (Chinese) helping or saving the younger sister (Mongol)! It is possible that this, as well as the new class motifs, made the story particularly attractive at the highest levels of the Party. The fourth is the threat to socialism in the form of resurgent class enemies to the Mongol proletarians, exemplified by a former herdford, the unrepentant class enemy.

Let me analyze the story of the little sisters in light of this historical and theoretical context. What is extraordinary is that within the short space of a month—the incident occurred on February 9–10, 1964—by March 14, a model was being promoted, with the story published prominently in the leading newspaper of the Inner Mongolia Party and officially patronized by Ulanhu.⁶ Two weeks later, on March 27, the Peking Opera Ensemble of the Inner Mongolian

Art Theater performed a Peking Opera called *Little Heroic Sisters of the Grassland*, and Ulanhu personally attended the first performance. It is significant that a Peking Opera ensemble and not, say, a Mongol dance troupe performed. Chinese artists were the first to seize the opportunity to associate themselves with the two heroic models and their rescuers, which pleasantly surprised Ulanhu. He mounted the stage to honor the playwright-director and actors after the show, noting, “This play has been rehearsed well. You’ve gone ahead of us. You’ve already presented the heroes on stage even before they’re discharged from hospital. (In the play) the two heroes have gone back to the grassland.” In April 1964, at his instruction, the opera premiered in Beijing and was highly praised by Premier Zhou Enlai, General Luo Ruiqing, and other central leaders (Wurjitu 1997: 585). The story of the young heroines had been mounted on the national stage. The timing of Ulanhu’s eulogy of the girls and the opera performance suggests that both Mongols and Chinese were politically acute in identifying the ideological significance of the story, but perhaps each for different purposes. In promoting the two-sister story, Ulanhu not only astutely gauged the increasing importance of revolutionary Peking Opera,⁷ but also showed the top leadership, and Mao in particular, that the Mongols were committed to the socialist cause.

Interestingly, during the same period, Ulanhu promoted another art form, one with a specific Mongol character, the Ulan Muchir, a mobile song and dance ensemble consisting of twelve to thirteen performers. This ensemble was to promote to the remote herding camps that were inaccessible by other means. This, too, became an exemplar; indeed, many song and dance ensembles throughout China were thereafter renamed Ulan Muchir. In 1965 Ulanhu anointed Ushenju (Wushenzhao), a pastoral commune in Ordos, “the Pastoral Dazhai”—that is, the pastoral equivalent of Mao’s agrarian model village of Dazhai—and elevated Boroldai, a Mongol woman who cleared poisonous weeds and planted bushes in the desert, into a national model. Boroldai was a female Mongolian counterpart to the male Chinese national agricultural model Chen Yonggui, who was elevated to the heights in 1965. Gender is not the focus of this chapter, but it is a fact that several Mongol females, but no males, were projected as major icons in the 1960s, while the Chinese models were overwhelmingly male. We have already noted that gender and ethnic-nationality are intricately intertwined: minorities are often feminized by the majority nationality Chinese (cf. Gladhey 1994; Schein 2000). But feminization of minorities may not be merely erotic fantasy concerning minorities on the part of the Chinese. Rather, I contend that it also should be understood as a political strategy by Mongols to simultaneously manifest loyalty to the national enterprise and to present themselves as posing no threat to the Chinese, as, for example, the image of a warrior such as Chinggis Khan would evoke.⁸ (See chapter 3 for an in-depth historical analysis of gender and nationality in China.)

Briefly, Ulanhu’s extraordinary model-building activity was not only directed

toward winning the support of Mao, Zhou Enlai, Lin Biao, and Jiang Qing for his version of socialism in minority regions, but, in light of the wider political and ethnic context discussed earlier, it may be understood as a kind of resistance to Mao’s notion that “nationality struggle, in the last analysis, is class struggle,” highlighting instead a politics of alliance between Chinese and Mongol. This perspective brings out the subtlety of Ulanhu’s leadership: opposed to the application of class struggle to ethnic relations, he adroitly used the hegemonic class struggle discourse to represent Mongols as an ideologically advanced nationality and one that constituted no threat to China’s rulers.

REPRESENTING A MONGOLIAN CLASS

I have deliberately teased out certain ironies in Ulanhu’s exemplar-building activity, revealing it as a kind of resistance-within-collaboration. The representation of nationality amity, however, demanded redrawing the internal ethnic boundary.

Ulanhu’s selective representation of the socialist Mongol identity to the Center altered the nature of Mongol cultural content and social structure. The regime required a uniform ideological shape—in other words, an oppressed class (poor herders or farmers)—which in turn required an active Other. In the Inner Mongolian nationalist representation, there used to be an ethnic Other—that is, the Chinese colonizers. Indeed, Mao invoked Guomindang repression of the Mongols in his 1935 address to the Mongols. To continue to project the Chinese as the Other could not be sustained once Mongols became an ethnic minority within socialist China. Mongols could ill afford to paint a picture of vicious Chinese merchants or warlords rapaciously exploiting the Mongols, as that might have become the basis for their ethno-nationalist ideology antagonistic to the Chinese, who wielded power at the national level. The Other now had to come from among the Mongols themselves. The Chinese had to become, as the ideological representation in minority areas, elder brother figures, selflessly sacrificing their comfort to help Mongols. We can see this as Mongol pandering to the Chinese. And, of course, it is. But we can also see it as a political strategy to encourage the Chinese to define themselves in this way, to make the ideological norm for the Chinese the provision of help for minority peoples, specifically the Mongols. As Ann Stoler argues, “Colonial cultures were never direct translations of European society planted in the colonies, but unique cultural configurations, homespun creations in which European food, dress, housing, and morality were given new political meanings in the particular social order of colonial rule” (1989: 136–67). One of the homespun representations of the Chinese in Inner Mongolia was that they were essentialized into a beneficent symbolic monolith.

It is important, however, to situate representation of the Mongol “Other” in a specific political and historical context. The herdford (*muzhu*), the equivalent

of the Chinese landlord (*dizhu*), was different from the feudal secular and ecclesiastical aristocrats who had already been overthrown. Mongolian nationalism in this century had targeted two groups: externally, the Chinese merchants, warlords, and settlers who were held responsible for the misery of the Mongols; and internally, the aristocrats and lamas. Aristocrats had put their own interests before those of their fellow Mongols by selling Mongol land to the Chinese, which provoked many rebellions throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and the lamas were blamed for reducing Mongol prowess because of their preaching of nonviolence and their withdrawal from the reproductive pool of the Mongols. These two categories of people were unacceptable to the Mongol nationalists, who were convinced that colonial liberation lay in secularism and class equality. An autonomous Inner Mongolia was proclaimed in May 1947 as a result of a hybrid nationalist-communist revolution that recognized Chinese sovereignty. But history did not stop there. Despite the demise of aristocrats and lamas and victory of the “Inner Mongolian people,” in the context of China’s land reform, it became necessary to delineate class hierarchy among the Mongols. The classificatory language of the 1947–1948 land reform in the pastoral areas used a term, *bagyan*, which was translated as *muzhu*—that is, herdlord—to refer to a category of rich Mongols. But in Inner Mongolia class carried less significance than in Chinese regions, until the Socialist Education Movement in the early 1960s. This was thanks to Ulanhu’s policy, learning from the land reform disaster in 1947–1948, defining policy in the pastoral region in terms of “Three Nos [no division of property, no class struggle, no class designation] and mutual benefit between the herdlord and herd workers” (see chapter 4).

The Four Cleanups launched a re-examination of the Mongol class structure and Ulanhu’s Three Nos. Under the direction of the North China Bureau, led by Li Xuefeng, reading back into the history of the region prior to the land reform of 1948, the herdlord–herd relationship was henceforth to be classified as antagonistic (rather than “mutually beneficial”). But such a reclassification threatened not only the former herdlords, or those so classified, but also Ulanhu, who hitherto had shielded the pastoral Mongols from class struggle. In this politically charged context, in 1965 Ulanhu all but conceded under pressure that it was necessary to conduct class struggle against all exploiting classes, including those in the ranks of pastoral Mongols. In the face of sharp political challenge, Ulanhu sought to advance a new theory, defining Mongols as essentially a proletariat, which would, in pursuit of its class interests, ally with the Chinese proletariat. He now advanced a theory of three bases (political, economic, and cultural) that would shape a harmonious relationship between the Mongols and Chinese and that, in a time of looming international conflict, would guarantee a safe borderland and unified Chinese state in the face of threats from the Soviet Union and its MPR ally. It is not surprising that the only option available for Mongols was to celebrate the Chinese–Mongol alliance and friendship, leaving the Other to be found among the Mongols, as in the little sisters story. Behind

this ethnic amity was, of course, the bigger Other, the hostile and “revisionist” Soviet Union and its ally, the MPR.

This analysis takes us to the question of how the story of the two sisters was forged. The original March 14 story posited no Mongol enemy. The enemy was nature, the blizzard, and eagles hovering above, preparing to pounce upon the lambs. The opera mounted by the Baotou Opera House soon afterward “invented” a Mongol herdlord who attempted to steal the sheep and pilfer collective property, taking advantage of the two little sisters. In the play the alert class-conscious members of the proletariat caught and punished him. And, of course, as in the original story, the opera highlighted Chinese heroism in saving Mongols. This representation, inasmuch as it was created in Inner Mongolia, was based on self-deprecation. It meant dividing the Mongol populace along class lines and embedding the Mongols in a subordinate position to Chinese in a dialectics of power and subordination. The opera version had profound implications for former herdlords long bereft of all property and power in the new phase of class struggle.

WHO SAVED THE TWO SISTERS?

In 1993 many Chinese newspapers reported a dramatic story told by Haschuluu, claiming that he was the true savior of the two sisters. Chinese and Mongol authorities, in publishing the story, tacitly approved the claim. His version of the story runs as follows in brief:

On the 9th of February, Haschuluu went to see off an old classmate at the Bayanooboo railway station. He took his eleven-year-old son with him. The next day, they started off for home, as he worried about his own two daughters who had been looking after livestock. Not far from the railway, to the west, they saw several hundred sheep squeezing into a gully. He and his son assumed that their own animals had been blown there by the blizzard, because west of the railway there were no sheep other than those belonging to their brigade. They discovered one dead goat and a white dead lamb. Haschuluu decided to deliver them to the railway station for temporary storage, as they were the commune’s property, asking his son to keep the flock together. Haschuluu took the dead goat to the railway station, but a young Chinese worker named Wang Fucheng was reluctant to let him keep it there, and only agreed when Haschuluu promised to take it away by 6 p.m. Heading northwest again, Haschuluu discovered his son with a girl. She was Longmei, the daughter of their fellow brigade member Tianxi. She was already frozen, and only managed to say that her sister was still in the mountains. Haschuluu quickly led her to the switchroom, and his son followed. As they neared the station, Wang raised his signal torch and ordered them to stop, as a passenger train was approaching. When the train was still two hundred meters away, Haschuluu pulled the girl by the arm and crossed the railway lines. He asked Wang to go find help, but Wang was reluctant to do so. Soon, however, four or five Chinese workers arrived. Alarmed by Longmei’s

swollen face, they started to rub snow on her face and feet. Asking them to find the missing girl, Yurong, Haschuluu raced off to the post-and-telecommunication office and placed a call to the Sinebulag commune. He then rushed to the Bayanoboo Mine Headquarters, and asked if they could lend a truck to help transport two frozen girls to the hospital. Wu Long, the director of the Mine, responded quickly and organized a rescue team. The two girls were saved.

The new version of the story did not question the two sisters' heroism. It differed from the earlier version, however, in two important dimensions—that Haschuluu and his son had discovered and saved Longmei and that some other Chinese workers, not Wang, had rescued Yurong. The mine Party secretary, Bayandüren, was absent in this account, but the mine director provided a truck and organized the rescue team. This new story was not entirely subversive and did not throw into disarray the carefully constructed myth that a Chinese worker had saved the two Mongol girls as a demonstration of “class friendship and love, and minzu tuanjie.” Actually, it tells a slightly different story: that is, cooperation between Mongol and Chinese led to the rescue. Haschuluu was adamant that most of the Chinese involved had acted honorably to save the girls. This stance may well have been warranted, but it was also politically astute, because Chinese political culture in the 1990s certainly did not allow for any general questioning of Mongol–Chinese ethnic amity and friendship.

There were other hidden dimensions to the story. Readers may have noted that the two Mongolian girls had Chinese names, Longmei and Yurong. The sisters are from a family of Harchin Mongols, who had settled in the region in 1960. The Harchin are a highly sinicized Mongol group whose homeland straddles the Mongolian and Manchurian borderland.⁹ In the territorial configuration after 1947, the greater part of Harchin territory fell outside of Inner Mongolia in Liaoning province. In 1957, at the time of the Hundred Flowers movement, some Harchin openly complained that they suffered from discrimination at the hands of the Chinese and requested to settle in Inner Mongolia. Ulanhu once remarked that it would be all right for other Mongols also to immigrate to Inner Mongolia if Chinese immigration could not be stopped. The subsequent Great Leap Forward movement essentially lifted the lid on immigration, and several million Chinese, as well as smaller numbers of Mongols, rushed into Inner Mongolia over the next several years. At the time, Inner Mongolia was better off than most parts of China, which in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward was afflicted with a horrendous famine, claiming millions of lives. The two sisters' family was among that tide that swept into Inner Mongolia during the Leap. They settled in a pastoral brigade in the fertile grassland near Baotou. As the Harchin had long been highly sinicized, many had adopted Chinese names. The two sisters' father was called Tianxi. However, despite their Chinese names, the two girls could not speak Chinese well as of 1965, since the people of the new homeland where they had lived for over four years were almost entirely Mongol-speaking.¹⁰

Haschuluu was a Horchin (not Harchin) Mongol from the eastern part of Inner Mongolia. Born in 1918, he had served as a platoon leader in the Japanese-controlled Mongolian Hingan Army for three years in the early 1940s. After the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Government in May 1947, he became a military researcher at the General Staff office of the Inner Mongolian Liberation Army. He was a gifted intellectual. In July 1949 he was employed as editor for the journal *Changchun Public Security*, produced by the Changchun City Public Security Bureau. In 1952 he returned to Inner Mongolia and worked as an assistant editor at the Mongolian Editorial Department of the Inner Mongolian Publishing House in Hohhot. But personal and ideological differences with his immediate Mongolian superiors at the publishing house in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward resulted in the expulsion of Haschuluu from his work unit in 1958. Unable to settle the dispute in Inner Mongolia, he lodged a complaint against his superiors to the Party Center in Beijing, only to be arrested and incarcerated in 1960. He was sentenced to two years' “labor under surveillance” (*laodong guanxi*) for the errors of (1) making complaints to the Party Center; (2) quarreling with police and disturbing social order; (3) eating pork when living in a Muslim neighborhood; (4) and repeatedly quarreling with his wife. In July 1962, as a result of widespread economic hardship, a population dispersion program was carried out in order to alleviate urban food shortage. Just one month before finishing his service, Haschuluu was hastily sent to the countryside and was promised that, if he agreed to go, all charges against him would be dropped as soon as the sentence expired. Otherwise, he would have to serve two more years. He and his whole family were exiled to where the two sisters lived: Narangerel Brigade of Sinebulag Commune in Darhan Muminggan Banner, near Baotou city. He was still laboring under surveillance when the events of February 1964 unfolded.

When I interviewed him in 1996, Haschuluu, a gaunt old man at the age of seventy-eight, was still angry when he recalled his life story. Indeed, nothing was more important to him than this event. Although his career had already been ruined earlier, he could handle it as many did. But punishing him for saving the two sisters, who became heroes while he languished as a criminal, deeply contravened his sense of basic human morality.

TRUTH AND POWER

The story is not only a matter of truth or lies. It is also about morality. Indeed, what is truth? Michel Foucault (1980) holds that “truth” is linked to power/knowledge. Knowledge linked to power not only assumes the authority to determine “the truth,” but also the power to monopolize truth.¹¹ In Maoist categories, especially those of the Cultural Revolution, “truth” was constructed in the class struggle, while in Ulanhu's Inner Mongolia, it had an additional dimension—

ethnic relations. In light of Foucault, we should pay attention to how the combination of discourse and power produced a certain conception of crime and the criminal, as well as of heroism, conceptions that had profound effects not only for criminals and judicial officials, but for the entire population for whom the two sisters modeled the interaction between class struggle and nationality bonds.

Haschuluu's account permits a glimpse into some of the ways in which this regime of truth functioned. Haschuluu shows how Wang had trumped up the story of the rescue to his personal advantage. According to Haschuluu, in 1964 Wang, in his interview with the journalists who came to report on the two little sisters, reaped proletarian virtues for himself while discrediting Haschuluu. As Haschuluu reconstructed, Wang fabricated the following story:

Haschuluu crossed the railway lines and immediately seeing the dying Longmei, he sneered and walked past her. Suddenly, he saw two dead frozen sheep not far from Longmei. Thinking that no one could see him, and that the girl would soon die, he thought why don't I get my hands on them? So, pulling the sheep's leg, he threw it over his shoulder, and was stealthily attempting to slip away when a railway worker passed by. After all, it was the working class, the bowstring of "never forget class struggle," that was drawn tight. He [Wang] stopped Haschuluu, asking in a stern voice: "Where are you taking this sheep?"

"Oh, oh, nowhere, who says—Ah, ah, I want to—" Haschuluu hemmed and hawed. "No, where did you get it? Let's go back and have a look!" The railway worker escorted Haschuluu to the herd, and then he saw Longmei, who was dying of frost. He angrily ordered Haschuluu not to move and he carried Longmei to the railway station. Comrade workers eventually rescued Longmei.

Haschuluu said that this version of the story was transmitted in propaganda documents called "Xiang Yingxiong Xiao Jiemei Xuexi" (Learn from the Little Heroic Sisters) (no. 1 and no. 2), published in 1964, almost immediately after the incident, by the Bayanoboo Mine people's committee. This propaganda transformed the tale of the two sisters, who no longer fought only against the blizzards, but also against the class enemy. The story was enthusiastically adapted by the Baotou Opera House, as mentioned earlier. The truth was reconstructed by those who had access to the media, and the truth was constructed around a class enemy—the Other—who by "definition" was fit for precisely such a robe.

This should not be construed as suggesting that the higher authorities lacked information about who had saved the girls. According to a later official investigation, Wang Zaitian, a Mongol Party secretary in charge of law and order in Inner Mongolia, and the deputy banner governor of Darhan Mumingan banner, also a Mongol, deliberately suppressed the truth. Wang Zaitian and the deputy governor had tried to strike a deal with Haschuluu. In consideration of Haschuluu being "an element under surveillance," they would not be able to commend him publicly, but he would be deemed to have "expiated his crime by his good deeds."

This he accepted, believing it was the only hope for a return to normal life. How dared he not trust the Party?

The Mongol authorities then installed a Chinese as the savior of the Mongol girls, fully aware of the fabrication, and the Mongol savior was exorcised lest he ruin the tale's message. Ultimately, for the sake of the message, he would in fact be presented as the Other in propaganda. Thus, not only would Haschuluu not be discharged as promised, he would accumulate further negative political labels. The difference between fiction and reality began to blur. To provide the tale with more meaning, he was accused of being a sheep rustler, counterrevolutionary, and herdlord. By suggesting that he stole the girls' sheep, taking advantage of their frozen status, he was virtually accused of committing the offense of attempted murder. This concocted story took on its own momentum. In 1966, as soon as the Cultural Revolution started, the Party secretary of the Sinebiagi Commune, a Mongol, forced Haschuluu to endure a "struggle session" for three days and nights. Moreover, Longmei, then thirteen years old, was brought into the struggle, a form of class struggle education. The two sisters would soon publicly repeat the story of Haschuluu's perfidy everywhere.

Subsequently, in the mounting international tension between China and the Soviet Union and its ally the Mongolian People's Republic, many Mongols during the Cultural Revolution, Haschuluu among them, were labeled as "agents of the revisionist Mongolia," "historical counterrevolutionaries," "active counterrevolutionaries," and "New Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (IMPRP) members," the latter referring to an alleged vast Inner Mongolian conspiratorial plot to secede from China. This gave rise to a witch-hunt and pogrom of the "New IMPRP" members that cost over sixteen thousand Mongol lives and several hundred thousand injuries, by official reckoning. Haschuluu was borrowed for "struggle" everywhere in Darhan Mumingan banner. He was finally released from his sentence in July 1967, but as the witch-hunt against the "New IMPRP" escalated, he and his family were expatriated to his hometown Jim League, in eastern Inner Mongolia in September 1968. In Darhan Mumingan banner and his hometown, Khuree banner, he served more than three years in prison, on and off. He was finally politically rehabilitated in February 1975. This may have been related to an ongoing effort to partially rehabilitate the victims of the "New IMPRP" witch-hunt, which Mao had admitted in 1969 had "gone too far" (*kuodahuale*). Tragically, the two sisters have never publicly acknowledged that Haschuluu was their savior, although Yurong, the younger sister, did so in private.

That Longmei has been unwilling to recognize Haschuluu as having helped her is not entirely surprising. Longmei was eleven years old at the time. Unlike many other models who suffered greatly during the Cultural Revolution because of their link with overthrown Party officials, Longmei and Yurong did not suffer, despite their link with Ulanhu. Indeed, Mao's wife Jiang Qing used Longmei to criticize Ya Hanzhang, a famous Chinese scholar, who was noted for his support

of Ulanhu and Ulanhu's nationality policy. Longmei, by being utilized by the rebels in Inner Mongolia and by Chinese leaders at the national level during the Cultural Revolution, had her importance as a national hero heightened.¹² Longmei's own subsequent political career rested on clinging to the official version of the story. In a 1990 interview, she remarked that the person she admired most was still Lei Feng, the model revolutionary whom Ulanhu doubtless had in mind in creating the myth of the two sisters of the grasslands (Du 1990).

STRUGGLE OVER THE TRUTH: THE "POST-SOCIALIST" REGIME OF HARMONY

The Maoist regime of truth produced legions of victims and victimizers, as the hegemonic culture of class struggle was built on a widening gap between representational and objective reality. After the Cultural Revolution, these contrasting realities became a battleground between Maoists and their opponents. The public transcript (to use James Scott's term) that ultimately won the battle usurped Mao's own dictum: *shishi qishi* ("seek truth from facts"). It was, of course, never central to Mao's thought, though he did apparently use it a couple of times. It was Deng who made it his cardinal principle after the Cultural Revolution. Philip Huang offers an interesting analysis of the Chinese expression:

The Chinese expression in fact conveys a good deal more than the narrow empiricism suggested by that translation [Seek truth from facts]. *Shishi* suggests immediately the connotation of "real facts" as opposed to phony facts. And *qishi* conveys not so much the connotation of the amoral "truth" that the discursive context of English lends the term as a more moral "what is right and true," as opposed to "what is wrong and untrue" (as in *mingbian shifei*, or "distinguish clearly between right and wrong"). The fact that this expression has become the reigning slogan of the post-Cultural Revolution era demonstrates the depth of the reaction against the rupture between representational and perceived reality in the Cultural Revolution. *Shishi qishi*, or "seek what is right and true from real facts," is a call to realign representational reality with objective reality. (1995: 135)

The effect of this battle cry was tremendous. Vera Schwarcz (1994: 46) writes that "[o]nce the boundaries of truth telling had been expanded officially from above . . . a flood of memory, pain, and remorse rushed up from below." It launched a reverse "speaking bitterness" narrative, affirming the subjectivity of the victimization of the Cultural Revolution and the injustice to which many had been subjected. While Mao successfully mobilized the subaltern consciousness and subjectivity, Deng's initial strategic use of "Seek truth from facts" ultimately proved threatening to his own limited reform, as it created a "subjective capacity for 'moral memory'—an act of recollection that refuses to identify the

past only with what is collectively useful in the present moment" (Schwarcz 1994: 47). What was immediately emphasized by the Deng regime was social harmony, as victims and victimizers were urged to put their former sufferings behind them, even to forget what had happened, and promote economic reform. "The Truth" still refuses to be dissociated from knowledge/power. Indeed, as F. G. Bailey argues, truth may be seen as harmony and is conditioned by the "social need" for harmony. A truth that does not support what is perceived as social harmony is immoral and must be suppressed: "Society requires for its survival the practice of deceit" (Bailey 1991: 27).

The new/old Chinese culture of harmony that has been counterposed to the Maoist culture of disharmony need not be celebrated. We should not assume that this will naturally give rise to a utopia in which conflict and contradiction are eliminated. Rather, we need to deconstruct the ways in which the rhetoric of harmony "masks the realities of the social coercion that maintains some semblance of peaceful co-existence despite on-going antagonisms" (Colson 1995: 70). The enforced need in Inner Mongolia, unlike the Chinese regions of China, is for ethnic amity. Although in post-Mao China people have abandoned socialist models, and the nouveaux riches have become the new models,¹³ abandoning the socialist models in Inner Mongolia would have different political implications, as it might affect ethnic relations. The new regime of harmony in Inner Mongolia subscribes to a "don't or else" policy: "Don't say or do anything detrimental to minzu tuanjie."

Although Haschuluu was acquitted of criminal charges in 1975, the injustice done to him in the fabrication of the story of the two sisters still stood. In July 1978 Haschuluu and his son submitted to the Inner Mongolian Party committee a 119-page complaint entitled, "How we discovered and rescued the heroic little sisters of the grassland, Longmei and Yurong—Thoroughly exposed the serious crime of Wang Fucheng, Bayandüren and Baoxiao in cheating various newspapers and journals of the whole country and their journalists and in cheating the Party Center and Chairman Mao, as well as people of various nationalities." They demanded the restoration of their reputations with regard to the innuendo in the two little sisters story, but to no avail. Undaunted, Haschuluu wrote letters to the *People's Daily*, and the latter finally brought the case to the attention to the CCP secretary-general Hu Yaobang. In April 1979 Hu urged that the case be settled. Only then did the Inner Mongolia CCP propaganda department (*xuanchuan bu*) investigate the affair. It is worth noting that the propaganda department, not the judiciary, was in charge of this affair. Although Haschuluu was then able to return to his work unit, the Inner Mongolia Publishing House, a long silence ensued. Finally, in 1984, at the prodding of the organization department (*zuzhi bu*) of the Party Center, the Inner Mongolia Youth League Committee, where Longmei worked, and the Inner Mongolia Publishing House, Haschuluu's work unit, investigated and confirmed Haschuluu's testimony. On January 8, 1985, the year's first circular from the organization department of the

Inner Mongolia CCP called on the propaganda department to take appropriate measures to remedy the damage to Haschuluu's reputation. The propaganda department was urged to give him a monetary reward and public praise. But following the standard formula of Deng Xiaoping's dictum of *yi cu bu yi xi* ("better crude than meticulous") with regard to the Cultural Revolution, the instruction following the circular emphatically pointed out that the comrades at the Hohhot Railway Bureau should do "ideological work" on Wang to free his mind of misgivings. In other words, Wang was not to be discredited; he had simply made a mistake, he was still a good comrade. In Deng's version of a pan-Chinese "com-munitas," to use Victor Turner's (1969) term, rehabilitation was to soothe animosity and bring amity among contenders, rather than equity.

But had harmony been restored? We have already noted the reluctance of Inner Mongolian officialdom to rehabilitate Haschuluu. It took four to five years to settle the matter and then only after the intervention of the Party Center and its secretary-general. Even after the reconciliation decision, nothing substantial was forthcoming. There was a media blackout.¹⁴ The reason for this silence was that an unnamed leader in the Party Center (*zhongyang shouzhang*) had ordered, "The influence of the original propaganda about the heroic little sisters from the grassland was very great, now it is not necessary to carry out a correction propaganda." So there was to be no negative propaganda that might vilify Mongolian heroines, either. But who was this influential central leader who was so interested in protecting the two little sisters? Haschuluu was reticent to name that *zhongyang shouzhang*.

It is not entirely impossible, however, to speculate about the identity of the leader. The only high official at the Party Center with a personal stake in the story of the two sisters was Ulanhu. He was then China's vice president. For want of better terminology, we may suggest that the relationship between Ulanhu and the two sisters was one of patron-client, by virtue of the fact that Ulanhu had created and propagated the model in 1964. Their relationship was temporarily severed by the two sisters during the Cultural Revolution, when Ulanhu was overthrown and they denounced him. But this did not reduce Ulanhu's grandfatherly affection for them. When Ulanhu visited Inner Mongolia for the last time in August 1987 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Longmei and Yurong were among the local dignitaries who had an audience with the aging leader, who died the following year.¹⁵ It is therefore not surprising that Ulanhu would have sought to block Haschuluu's rehabilitation. Moreover, Inner Mongolian officialdom between 1979 and 1992 was dominated by Ulanhu's son Buhe and other family members.¹⁶ It is ironic that the official version harped on the very class struggle line that Ulanhu had long striven to overcome.

TOWARD A CONCLUSION

Socialist China is not only a polity that disciplines its citizens into socialist subjects, but also can be understood as a system of cultural significance. Socialism

as an ideology is abstract, and the abstract must be concretized and made manifest for the masses less attuned to subtlety. Like modern nations, socialist subjects require not only novels, flags, museums, and other monuments (Anderson 1991), but also constant guidance. The state presents models for socialist subjects to look up to and to guide them in remolding themselves (cf. Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden 1991). As such, models are not individual human beings, but embodiments of an ideal, a crystallization of collective wisdom. During its heyday of socialist revolution, China produced numerous novels, plays, operas, comic books, and movies, to represent the Past, Present, and Future in melodramatic forms. According to Peter Brooks (1994), melodramas are the best form to represent revolutionary morals, for in melodramas, the humble people rise against the evil and the evil is always punished in the end. Daniel Gerould (1994) also argues that melodramas of revolutions in France and the USSR often adopt the Manichean view of the world, voice the need for heroes and villains, and preach simplistic moral lessons. It is interesting that our two little heroic sisters were both modeled and melodramatized. They were turned into paragons of people upholding communist enthusiasm for production, "ideal" ethnic relationship—*minzu tianjie* (*as beneficiaries of Chinese salvation*), and even waging intra-Mongol class struggle (*as victims of Mongol class enemies*). As paragons, they have been taken out of history to lead a reified existence. In such melodramas, truth is necessarily constructed.

However, pointing out the fabrications in the "Little Sisters" story is both easy and difficult. It is easy for an outsider. But it is also difficult, first because several of the protagonists are human beings who are still living in such roles and have great stakes in maintaining the status quo. There is no sign that they themselves have spoken about it reflexively. It is no guarantee about the absolute truth of Haschuluu's story. It would be wise to beware of replacing one myth of selflessness and class struggle with another myth of selflessness and nationality harmony. Second, dismantling such a political dinosaur would have great implication for the morality of the socialist Mongolian *minzu*. Although the myth of Chinese "saving" the Mongols has been proved to be contrived, the "little sisters" were not abandoned as Mongols, and in fact, they now are listed among the thirty communist Mongolian military and political celebrities in contemporary China. Of course, in the newly restored "truthful" story, the "Little Heroic Sisters" have reconciled with their Mongolian savior, Haschuluu (Bayar 1998: 159–64). Third, it is in the interest of socialist China to continue to uphold such a model—a newly sanitized version, of course—however contrived the entire thing may be, simply for the sake of the regime living with glorious past memories. In a scheme to further monumentalize the socialist ideal, perhaps to inculcate some altruistic ideal into millions of children and youths brought up eating McDonald's and watching Hollywood blockbusters, the All China Young Pioneers are planning to erect a Memorial to Heroic Chinese Children and build an Exhibition Hall for the Chinese Children. They plan to display the little sis-

ters' heroic deeds along with those of juvenile martyrs such as Xiao Ehei and Liu Hulan (Bayar 1998: 160).

It is perhaps unfair for me to go further into what Doris Sommer would call a "pretty lie" (1991: 90), not least because the protagonists and their melodrama continue to have significance for the socialist Mongolian *minzu* and socialist China, which is struggling to maintain a regime of harmony and economic prosperity in the era of globalization. At a minimum, however, we can challenge here the inherent romanticization of resistance of minorities against the majority in recent postcolonial critical scholarship, by identifying several kinds of socialist subjects. Subjects are understood in Foucauldian terms, viz. they are produced within a discourse. These subjects may produce some forms of "resistance," but they speak or act within the limits of—or indeed they must be subjected to—the episteme, the regime of truth, or the regime of harmony. Phrased in this way, we may find the "subjects" writhing within the discursive regime defined by the state, being at once resisters and accomplices, or sometimes one and sometimes the other.

What may also be inferred from this study is the moral constraint the regime of truth places on the maintenance of the ethnic boundary in Inner Mongolia. This is not to suggest that there is no longer an ethnic boundary. Rather, I suggest that the boundary is maintained by the moral discourse that takes its reference from the regime of truth. This study tries to show the overlapping structures of ethnicity and state and insist that to understand ethnicity in socialist China, we stand to gain much insight into the "failure" of ethnic resistance by analyzing relational complexity. Complexity in this sense does not imply conscious collaboration with the powerful but the curious fact that action and the discourse of "resistance" very often operate within the framework of the existing order of domination.

NOTES

1. Lei Feng was by no means the first model used by Mao, nor was such a model inherently socialist. Mao took his inspiration from the exemplary models for children that had been commonplace in teaching Confucian morality and were developed in the revolutionary base areas in Jiangxi in the late 1920s and early 1930s and in the wartime resistance bases in the years 1937–45. But the most direct lineage for the Chinese socialist exemplars appears to emanate from Mao's hero emulation movement in the Yan'an years of the 1940s, which was also inspired by the Soviet models of the Stakanovite movement. See Patricia Stranahan (1983); Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden (1991); and Selden (1971).

2. Sherry Ortner (1995) has criticized the current state of "resistance" ethnography and found three forms of what she called "ethnographic refusal": sanitizing politics, thinning of culture, and dissolving actors. Paul Willis (1997) recently criticized two kinds of weakness in anthropology: empiricism and humanism. The problem with humanism is

that "since you've traveled so far to the field, and you have a bounded notion of the field despite protestations to the contrary, you see the agents involved in that field as in charge of their own destiny in some way or another. It might look traditional, irrational, old fashioned, religious or whatever, but our job is to show the real truth, to show ultimately, another people's culture is human and rational, with Centered human beings in some way controlling their own forms" (1997: 184).

3. To be designated a labor hero or model is thus to convey a title of prestige, and prestige, as William Goode (1978) argues, is one of the factors that enables social control. The other three control factors are force and threat of force, wealth, and friendship-love-affection. I would point out that the title can become a source of mockery or challenge in periods when regime legitimation falters, as this study shows.

4. This was testified to by increasing denunciation and punishment of "nationality rightists" (*minzu youpai*) or "local nationalists," starting in 1958. Whereas "great Chinese chauvinism" had been earlier denounced as oppressive of and discriminatory to minority nationalities, and minority "nationalism" was encouraged to combat "great Chinese chauvinism," a great reversal occurred beginning in 1963. Great Chinese chauvinism, in fact, came to be equated with socialist class position, with "elder brotherly" help, imbued with ideological progressiveness.

5. Mary Sheridan (1968) identified the proliferation of military and civilian heroes in the power struggle between army generals and civilian leaders. In discussing the Chinese model of moral exemplar, Lucian Pye distinguishes a hierarchy in terms of the goal of self-improvement: "The goal of self-improvement was moral perfection according to established standards, and hence it sought excellence in terms of conformity to cultural norms, not in terms of the uniqueness of the individual. There was a hierarchy of moral achievement in which only the elite could strive for self-development while the mass of the people were ruled by example" (1996: 19–20).

6. Ulanhu's enthusiasm for the two girls was matched only by that of local officials. The first detailed report in the *Inner Mongolia Daily* would indicate that the Mongol leader Bayanduren, party-secretary of Bayanboo Mine, was instrumental in promoting this story in the first place. Most of the officials involved, as well as the saviors of the girls and later helpers, were explicitly identified as "Communist Party members." These leaders seemed to be extremely conscious of the political capital they could gain from being identified as helping the two heroines. Their enthusiasm for the girls went beyond the bounds of "concern" by fatherly cadres for the safety of the people under their jurisdiction. The potential rewards unleashed a tremendous enthusiasm not only from Mongols but also Chinese, vying to demonstrate their ideological virtue. What started as a demonstration of the embodiment of Communist morality of altruism became the vehicle for an acute struggle for self-interest. All of the people involved were duly praised or rewarded.

7. We should bear in mind the national context of the socialist education campaign and Lin Biao/Jiang Qing efforts to reform the Peking Opera at precisely this time. See Lowell Dittmer (1981). But it is extraordinary that Ulanhu, a Mongol, played a role in harnessing the Peking Opera to spread Maoism among the people in and out of Inner Mongolia. After the birth of the *Little Heroic Sisters of the Grassland*, Ulanhu remarked that the modern Peking Opera should emphasize the themes of minority nationalities. In a CCP Politburo meeting, Ulanhu proposed organizing a festival of Peking Opera on contemporary themes. That proposal was apparently accepted by Jiang Qing and others

active in the movement to revolutionize Peking Opera, as in early July 1964, an All China Festival of Peking Opera Modern Play Demonstration was held in Beijing.

In 1964 Ulanhu's contribution to the new Peking Opera in socialist education was recognized by one of China's veteran artists, Xia Yan, who said: "It was Comrade Ulanhu who first mobilized the Modern Peking Opera Festival (*xindai jingxi huayun*). Comrade Ulanhu especially was concerned with modern Peking Opera. It is an especially important question of how to infuse the national form into the performative art of Peking Opera. The modern opera festival was very important" (quoted in Baoyindalai 1990: 154).

8. Amy Mountcastle suggests that in recent years the exiled Tibetans have similarly sought to cast their struggle for independence in feminine terms. But in this instance, it is a case of capturing the attention of the world and particularly Americans. As feminine, the exiled Tibetans hope to present an image of a "gentler race," as victims of Chinese aggression. Mountcastle argues, "if the Tibetan nationalist enterprise is portrayed in 'softer,' feminized, universally meaningful terms, then the Chinese are portrayed as masculinized aggressors whose interests are nationalistic, self-serving . . ." (1997: 138).

9. Their princes were the first in Inner Mongolia to promote modernization and nationalism, taking their inspiration from Japan's Meiji Restoration. Harchin intellectuals subsequently led the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, a nationalist-democratic party under the leadership of the Comintern and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. However, the political position of the Harchin in Inner Mongolia was eclipsed during the Chinese civil war of the late 1940s as they supported the losing side—the Chinese Nationalist Party.

10. Nevertheless, characteristic of Mongolian tribal politics, the Harchin newcomers faced discrimination as outsiders. Longmei reportedly said in the March 14, 1964, report, for example, that if she and her sister did not look after the flock, her brigade neighbors would comment negatively about their family. Moreover, *contra* the formal story that the father was a poor herder, his class background was actually higher. Haschuluu told me that the father was actually of aristocratic origin. Why had not such a bad class background barred them from becoming socialist models? Haschuluu's explanation was that their father had been able to conceal his class background and that Mongol officials decided to ignore their class background in their eagerness to discover a powerful model.

11. Foucault argues, "Truth isn't outside power. Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (1980: 131).

12. Longmei joined the PLA when she was seventeen. Initially, she worked as a nurse in a military hospital and then went to study medicine at the Baotou Medical College and the Inner Mongolian Medical College. She later worked as a Communist Youth League leader in Inner Mongolia. She is currently a deputy chair of the People's Congress in the Donghe District of Baotou Municipality.

Yurong, the younger sister, was permanently crippled as a result of frostbite. She is now a deputy chair of the Inner Mongolian Association for the Disabled. Haschuluu did not bear many grudges against Yurong, the younger sister. Even during the Cultural Revolu-

tion, after saying that Haschuluu stole their sheep in her speeches at schools, Yurong would come and tell him that she would never forget his kindness for saving her life. Unlike her sister, Yurong has always been close to Haschuluu's family and looked after his ailing wife. On March 15, 1993 Yurong attended her funeral.

13. We should not, however, draw a premature conclusion concerning the demise of the Lei Feng model in China. Even today, there seems to be what is called "Lei Feng Spirit," which shows a tremendous power of adaptability, combining ancient Chinese virtues with modern Communist ideology. According to Lockwood, "the mantle of Lei has descended on a Ms. Du Chunyan. After being laid off by a state-owned enterprise on the verge of bankruptcy—a common story, as China grapples with the task of reforming tens of thousands of loss-making businesses—Ms. Du opened her own shop. Since then, she has been training other laid-off workers, in what the newspaper describes as an attempt to repay her debt to society. . . . With millions facing unemployment as China allows its loss-making state-run businesses to go bankrupt, a great deal of Lei Feng Spirit is going to be needed" (1998).

14. Haschuluu claimed that numerous journalists from the *People's Political Consultative Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, *Inner Mongolia Daily*, and *Inner Mongolia Pictorial* came and interviewed him and his son. But nothing appeared in the press.

15. Indeed, Ulanhu was said to be eager to see his models, and they talked for over ten minutes at the railway station before his departure for Beijing. Longmei and Yurong wrote a memorial article, expressing how Ulanhu satisfied their demand to write the school name and youth palace at their own constituency in 1986 and 1987 (Longmei and Yurong 1990).

16. Ulanhu died in December 1988. While it was impossible to criticize his model so long as he was in power, in 1990 some Inner Mongolian newspapers published hints of revelation, pointing out that Haschuluu was the true discoverer of the girls. But the full explosion of the story only came in late August 1993, one year after the removal of Ulanhu's son from his position as the chairman in Inner Mongolia.