

Урадын Ерден Благ

2

The Cult of Ulanhu: History, Memory, and the Making of an Ethnic Hero

Ulanhu (1906–1988) has figured prominently in my discussion of many areas of Inner Mongolian ethnopolitics. Ulanhu, or “the red son of Communism,” as his name would be translated, was the founder of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and was its supreme leader from its origins in 1947 until he was ousted in the early days of the Cultural Revolution. Long the nation’s top official minority cadre, in the 1980s he served as China’s vice president, the highest position any minority cadre has ever held. We are thus left with an intriguing question: How has Ulanhu been evaluated by Mongols and Chinese in his lifetime and after his death? In this chapter I make no attempt to use public opinion surveys or other quantitative measures to take the pulse of Mongol and Chinese views, an impossibility in the current political atmosphere in China. Rather, I focus on a phenomenon emerging in Inner Mongolia in recent years—that is, an attempt by both Mongols and Chinese to set up a posthumous cult of Ulanhu. By cult, I do not refer to political-cum-religious venerational worship, as was the case of “Mao Craze” or Mao Cult in the 1980s and 1990s (Barné 1996). There is no Ulanhu badge being used as a protective charm, nor is there Ulanhu cuisine to reenergize the body and soul. What is at issue, and thus the focus of this study, is the different meanings of Ulanhu as a great minority leader to the Chinese state and to the Mongols, who are a minority both in their own Autonomous Region and in China.

Here I treat Ulanhu as someone betwixt and between two worlds, Mongol and Chinese. He was a hybrid in multiple terms: he was a Mongol but could not speak Mongolian. He was a representative of the Mongols; indeed, he was said to represent the entire minority nationality population of China, attaining the

status of a *minzu lingxiu* ("minority nationality leader"), and simultaneously a party-state leader as the "pre-eminent nationality work leader" (*zhuoyue de minzu gongzuo lingdao ren*), as the Party's official evaluation states. Ulanhu then offers an interesting opportunity to examine ethnic relations within the frameworks of Chinese socialist ethnopolitics and of regional and global politics. I will examine the Chinese state's and Mongols' changing evaluation of him. Here an anthropological and qualitative approach, combining documentary analysis and personal interviews, yields particularly interesting results.

CONSTRUCTING AN ULANHU CULT

When Ulanhu died in Beijing on December 8, 1988, he was deputy chairman of the National People's Congress. The Party's official evaluation was that he was a "reliable Communist soldier, distinguished Party and state leader, outstanding proletarian revolutionary, pre-eminent nationality work leader." When Ulanhu died, however, there did not seem to be any breast-beating mourning either in China for a while or in Inner Mongolia. Indeed, life went on, and nobody paid too much attention to the news of his death. His funeral was quietly held in the auditorium of the PLA general logistics headquarters in Beijing. Apparently, no organized mourning ceremony was held in Inner Mongolia. Only about four to five hundred people attended the funeral in Beijing. In addition to official mourners, including ranking Party, government, and military leaders, most of those in attendance were Tuned Mongols, especially Ulanhu's family members. Some arrived from Inner Mongolia uninvited. According to informants who attended the funeral, the mourners were quickly led around the corpse and ushered out after performing the usual three-bow ritual, leaving no time for people to express their grief. Buhe, Ulanhu's eldest son, then chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, was said to have requested that a proper funeral be held in Inner Mongolia, but Deng Xiaoping reportedly vetoed this. He further requested that a small mausoleum be built in Inner Mongolia. Deng again did not give permission. Finally, Buhe was pressured to agree to cremating Ulanhu's body, his ashes to be kept at Babaoshan Cemetery in Beijing, where the ashes of heroes of the revolution are usually kept. It is rumored that Buhe was also confined to Beijing for a period following the funeral.

Ulanhu's low-profile funeral may be contrasted with the mourning following the deaths of two prominent leaders in early 1989: the death of the Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Panchen Lama, in January and that of the disgraced Chinese leader Hu Yaobang in April. I consider first the Panchen Lama. Upon the Panchen's death in January 1989, a memorial service was held in the Great Hall of the People, and Buddhists all over China, most notably in Tibet, organized memorial services to commemorate him. The People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Democratic Management Committee of the Tas-

hihumpo Monastery were made responsible for building a stupa and a memorial in his honor. Both were to be erected in the Tashihiumpo Monastery itself, so that, according to the official account, "future generations may honor the memory of the man who accrued so much patriotic and Buddhist merit" (van Grasdoff 1999: 188).

Why the difference? It was explained to me by a Chinese politician that the reason is that Ulanhu was a communist, while the Panchen Lama was a Buddhist. Ulanhu was China's vice president from 1983 to 1988 and at his death was a vice chairman of the National People's Congress. Ulanhu's funeral was said to be in line with the CCP policy to hold simple funerals for communist leaders. This explanation undoubtedly underestimated the high stakes in the maneuvering between China and the international Tibet lobby being played out around the Panchen Lama. Chinese authorities invariably compared the Panchen Lama's patriotism to the Dalai Lama's apostasy and betrayal of his Chinese motherland. In this light, the difference may not be simply a separation of state from church, but may lie rather in the political symbolism carried by the dead Panchen in relation to the Chinese state and the Tibetans.

An insight can also be gained from consideration of the death and funeral of Hu Yaobang a few months later. Born in 1915 and joining the CCP when he was eighteen, Hu Yaobang made his political career by working in the Chinese Communist Youth League. For fourteen years, between 1952 and 1966, he was the first secretary of the Youth League. After the Cultural Revolution, thanks to his close relationship with Deng Xiaoping, Hu was appointed secretary-general of the CCP Central Committee in 1980. But he finally fell in 1987 when he angered Deng over his stand on the question of bourgeois liberalization (Yang 1988). He suddenly died in April 1989, in the middle of student protest in Tiananmen Square. The refusal of the Party to the student petition for an explanation of the background to Hu's resignation as secretary-general of the Party in 1987 and denial of student participation in the official memorial service held inside the Great Hall of the People prompted students to turn Hu into a cult hero. On April 22, challenging the official memorial service, students staged their own ceremony, thus managing to "convert an official ceremony into a counterhegemonic performance" (Perry 1994: 77).

It does not, therefore, seem correct that Ulanhu's low-profile memorial service can be adequately explained by the Chinese Communist Party policy with regard to its deceased leaders or their official rank upon their deaths. "Fancy funerals" for leaders were banned only after October 1991, and then only briefly. According to Reuters on October 11, 1991, which reported the declaration of the Central Committee of the Chinese Party, "when senior officials of the Party and state die, their funerals must follow the principle of simplicity." The declaration further stipulated that dead leaders would be cremated and their ashes buried, no tombs were to be built, and no ashes could be scattered (Watson 1994b: 82–83). Why was the Party's lofty principle applied to Ulanhu retroactively?

The Chinese state's apparent apathy toward his memorial service and the ban on the funeral being held in Inner Mongolia came as a great surprise, and even a shock, to many Mongols, giving rise to speculation that Ulanhu might have made mistakes and fallen out of favor with Deng Xiaoping. People cracked bitter jokes, saying that the scale of Ulanhu's funeral was smaller than that of Li Sheng a few years earlier; he was a friend of Ulanhu's and a veteran Turned Mongolian revolutionary who held a minor post as the director of the Hohhot Nationality Affairs Committee. Li had become hugely popular among Mongol students in the 1981 Mongolian students' movement, supporting their demands. His cortege was said to have paraded from Hohhot to Lama Dong some fifty kilometers away, a place associated with his revolutionary activities during the anti-Japanese war. Some explained to me that the Chinese leadership was worried that those who suffered from the anti-new Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party movement and anti-Ulanhu movement during the Cultural Revolution might gather at his funeral and cause a disturbance. It is difficult to ascertain precisely the Chinese government calculus at the time; the official handling of the funeral and the general response of the Mongols may be indicative of the diminution of Ulanhu's political value for the Chinese party-state. Certainly in 1988–1989, Ulanhu did not have the stature to Mongols that the Panchen Lama had to Tibetans or Hu Yaobang to Chinese.

What is certain is that a turn occurred in the official policy toward Ulanhu three years later. In June 1992 the Propaganda Department of the CCP officially permitted a modest mausoleum to be built in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia. The decree of the center, which is carefully displayed in the mausoleum, reads:

June 12, 1992: Central Propaganda Department: [We] in principle agree that a small scale (*xiao xing*) mausoleum can be built for Comrade Ulanhu. [We] suggest that the scale should be set in accordance with the principle of frugality and modesty. The cost should be born by the autonomous region. Office of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee.

This appeared to be an after-the-fact approval. In May, one month before the approval, construction had already begun in western Hohhot inside a Botanical Garden, under the Inner Mongolia Party Committee and Government. The construction was completed hurriedly, but rather than the modest structure that the Propaganda Department had stipulated, a great structure emerged, fashioned after the model of the Chinggis Khan Temple in Ulaanhot and the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum in Ordos, only bigger. Officially opened on December 23, 1992, the mausoleum is 2,100 square meters. By comparison the Chinggis Khan Temple covers 822 square meters and the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum 1,500 square meters. In the absence of the body or ashes, one huge standing statue was erected in front of the mausoleum, much like a returning Ulanhu walking on

the grassland of his homeland. Inside the main hall is a sitting statue, surrounded with wreathes presented by individuals and organizations when special memorial services are held. These are strikingly similar to the statues of Chinggis Khan in Ordos, except that Chinggis Khan is armored. As in the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum, there are very few actual "relics." Instead, their respective careers and accomplishments are chronicled through photographs and paintings. Outside the hall, there is a tablet inscribing the names of every prefecture government and party committee in Inner Mongolia as donors.

The new mausoleum has been designated as a "base for patriotic education." On women's day (March 8), children's day (June 1), and army day (August 1), the government orchestrates pledge-taking rituals, initiation rituals, thus turning Ulanhu's mausoleum into not only a public display of the patriotic deeds of Ulanhu, but the political ritual platform of Inner Mongolia. The official purpose of the mausoleum is captured in the following words, written by one of Ulanhu's daughters:

Under the new situation of reform and opening, organizing Comrade Ulanhu's Mausoleum exhibition has important historical and practical significance; it has provided us a necessary platform and lively education materials for conducting education in revolutionary tradition and patriotic education. It will always educate later



7.1. Statue of Ulanhu in Front of His Mausoleum (2000)



7.2. Statue of Chinggis Khan in Front of His Mausoleum (2000)

generations to learn from the glorious spirit of the older generation of proletarian revolutionaries, and complete their unfinished causes. (Qidige 1993: 48)

ETHNOPOLITICS AND POSITIONAL SUBJECTIVITIES

What we have seen is an interesting return of Ulanhu to Inner Mongolia, from which he had been removed for twenty-two years after 1966. In 1966 he was declared a counterrevolutionary, a traitor to China, a campaign that resulted in the catastrophic purges not only of Ulanhu but of virtually the entire Mongol leadership of Inner Mongolia, and a situation that resulted in numerous casualties of ordinary Mongols. And yet after his death, he apparently made a comeback as the ultimate embodiment of the state, as a representative of the Chinese nation, Mongol hero, a symbol of Chinese patriotism, a defender of the Chinese nation, all of which were meritorious at a time when internal and external forces were said to be trying to split China apart. I argue that the timing of Ulanhu's return, from a low-profile treatment in 1988 to pomp and grandeur in 1992, was closely related to efforts by Beijing to assure stability and control in the autonomous region. This was also the result of pressures from certain Mongols to restore his honor and to use him to strengthen the position of Mongols in Chinese politics and society.

It is useful to briefly examine the ethnopolitical situation in Inner Mongolia in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the course of the 1980s, many of Ulanhu's children and relatives regained power and held high government positions in Inner Mongolia—indeed, forming an important factional political force in the region. Buhe, Ulanhu's eldest son, was the chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for ten years, between 1982 and 1992, when he succeeded to his father's position as the deputy chairman of the National People's Congress in Beijing. He was never the Party secretary; in fact, the position has always been held by a Chinese since Ulanhu's removal in 1966–1967. It is important to note that no one, least of all a Mongol, ever replicated Ulanhu's many-sided power—for example, Party, government, and army chief in Inner Mongolia, simultaneously holding many important Party and state positions in Beijing. In the popular perception, Buhe's domination in Inner Mongolia did not derive from his personal capability; rather, it hinged on his being the son of Ulanhu. This is not entirely unique to Inner Mongolia, but common to China, where many senior communist leaders' offspring have assumed leadership positions, the prime example being Li Peng, the adopted son of the later premier Zhou Enlai.

Ulanhu's family domination in Inner Mongolia was derided in numerous stories. One story tells that when someone went to the Inner Mongolian government building and shouted, "Lao [senior] Yun!" almost half of the office windows were opened. Realizing his mistake, the person shouted, "Xiao [junior] Yun!"; the other half of the windows then opened. Yun was Ulanhu's Chinese surname, a name shared by many Turned Mongol group, to which Ulanhu belonged. A similar story is that there were so many Yuns seeking to attend Ulanhu's funeral in Beijing that it became difficult to buy train tickets.

Ulanhu's family domination in Inner Mongolia was not just about tribalism, but was also about official corruption. China's market reforms opened venues for those with political connections to reap vast personal profits. This official corruption led to the protest and demand for more transparent polity in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Anticorruption movements called for popular justice. There was outcry against the collaboration between Buhe's wife and Li Peng's son to line their pockets by speculating in cashmere, a newly booming commodity of Inner Mongolia. Chinese and "democratic" criticism of Ulanhu as a "Mongolian King" and his dynastic rule of Inner Mongolia was published in an overseas dissident publication, *Zhonggong Taixidang* (CPC Princes) (Ho and Gao 1992). This was rather reminiscent of the charges against Ulanhu during the Cultural Revolution that he had become a "reigning prince" (*dangdai wangye*) and was building an "independent kingdom" (*duli wangguo*).

Here we note two important issues that are not always reconcilable: the intra-Mongol struggle and the internationality struggle in Inner Mongolia. Assuming an oppositional rhetoric against "tribal" politics in a multiethnic situation could be an effective way to cut across the ethnic barrier. For the criticism of "corrupt" Turned Mongols had the effect of criticizing not only the "corrupt" officials but

the “Mongols.” Characteristic of modern politics, whether communist (democratic centralization) or liberal democratic (electoral legitimization), in Inner Mongolia “the people,” of course, are overwhelmingly Chinese. There is no easy solution to this situation, especially in Inner Mongolia, where the Mongols are an absolute minority in their own “autonomous region.”

Perhaps in response to “popular” resentment of the Tumed Mongols, who no longer had Ulanhu’s support, toward the end of 1991 Buhe’s younger brother Uje, mayor of Inner Mongolia’s largest city, Baotou, who was poised to succeed Buhe as chairman of Inner Mongolia, was removed from Inner Mongolia and made a vice-governor of Shanxi province. Buhe, after retiring from his post as chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 1992, was kicked upstairs to become a vice-chairman of the People’s Congress, a post his father, Ulanhu, had held until his death. That is, he was removed from his power base in Inner Mongolia. Since his departure, most of the Tumed Mongol elite, especially those bearing the same surname, “Yun,” in the upper echelons of political power have been removed from office, making way for eastern Mongolian and Chinese. At the same time, in a curious way, to curb eastern Mongolian domination, the Party institutionalized tribalism by alternating the chairmanship between Tumed Mongols and eastern Mongols and leaving out many other significant Mongol groups.

To these internal dynamics of ethnopolitics were added exogenous events: specifically, democratic movements in the Mongolia People’s Republic (MPR) and various Asian nations and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Inner Mongolia, because of the close ethnic link with Mongolia, was clearly affected, although Inner Mongolia did not experience violence or the emergence of a separatist movement on a scale comparable to that in, for example, Xinjiang. Nevertheless, Wang Qun, the Party secretary of Inner Mongolia, wrote an alarmist report in the *People’s Daily*, on May 14, 1990: “Since last spring and summer, there have been two incidents in the Inner Mongolia region in which a small number of people started up trouble. At first a small number of people exploited ethnic issues to stir things up in a vain attempt to destroy nationality solidarity and the unity of the motherland” (quoted in *Crackdown in Inner Mongolia* 1991: 7). The state subsequently cracked down on two Mongol organizations in Yekeju and Bayannur Leagues. The main charges against these organizations included organizing family meetings and lectures in which they discussed Mongolian cultural renewal and national modernization. The groups distributed anti-Soviet nationalist pamphlets written by the famous MPR democrat-nationalist leader Baabar and established contacts beyond Inner Mongolia (see *Crackdown in Inner Mongolia* 1991). These mild cultural and civil society-type movements met with heavy-handed responses from a paranoid Party. Not only were they declared illegal, but leading Mongol participants were incarcerated for years. An anti-Mongol nationalist campaign was carried out in Inner Mongolia. According to an

appeal and a statement issued by an overseas Mongolian human rights organization, Inner Mongolian League for the Defense of Human Rights,

Wang Qun, the present secretary of the Communist Party in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, is using high-handed methods to intimidate and threaten Mongolian intellectuals and cadres. Many Mongolians fear this incident may evolve into a campaign of political persecution. It has not only effectively silenced the Mongolian intellectuals but also caused great unease among certain high-level Mongolian officials. This is because their memory of the massacre known as “unearthing the new Inner Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party” in which tens of thousands of people were killed 22 years ago is still fresh. (*Crackdown in Inner Mongolia* 1991: 15)

What is of interest for this chapter, though, is whether and how Mongol officials resisted in this time of crisis. To his credit, Buhe was sympathetic to the intellectuals and was reluctant to suppress Mongol demands for greater nationality rights. Buhe was known to have had much friction with the Party secretary Wang Qun. Wang, an “imperial envoy” eager to bring Inner Mongolia into closer integration with China, implemented the Center’s policies, often with excessive passion. Buhe, however, insisted, as his father had during his long rule, that Inner Mongolia had its own peculiarities and sought to adapt central policies to the local situation in many areas. Many Mongols evaluated Buhe positively for his handling of this matter. Nevertheless, Buhe and other Mongol officials were eventually forced to toe the official line, insisting on defending national unity (*minzu tujanjie*). How do we reconcile these two stances taken by Mongol officials?

Here it is useful to invoke James Scott’s theory of the arts of resistance (1990). He distinguishes two modes of political discourse: public transcript and hidden transcript. The term *transcript* refers to a kind of political discourse that may take such forms as speeches, gestures, and practices. For Scott, public transcript is a protective mask worn by the subordinates in interaction with the powerful, in the manner of showing deference or consent. The hidden transcript is always an offstage performance, which conveys the true feelings of the subordinate after removing the mask of disguise. It is important to note that public transcript, as a kind of hegemony, may serve the subordinate as much as the powerful. He convincingly argues that subordinated groups, in their protest, usually do not have an alternative ideology, but embrace the bulk of the dominant ideology: “most protests and challenges—even quite violent ones—are made in the realistic expectation that the central features of the form of domination will remain intact” (1990: 92). In the struggle, strategic actions usually emphasize loyalty to the institution or person. “Any dominant ideology with hegemonic pretensions must,” Scott argues, “by definition, provide subordinate groups with political weapons that can be of use in the public transcript” (1990: 101).

Concerning this “use value of hegemony,” Mongol intellectuals and officials, I suggest, have learned how to use official ideology for their own purposes. “Minzu tuanjie” (nationality unity/amity between nationalities) is a hegemonic slogan designed by the party-state to force nationalities into line. The hegemony of this term lies in its absolutist assumptions: the objective of the state is national unity, and only socialism can bring about national unity. This “national unity,” however, ultimately privileges the interests of the Chinese. The official injunction is that no one should say or do anything detrimental to minzu tuanjie (*bu shuo/zuo bu li yu minzu tuanjie de huai/shi*). This injunction seeks to effectively foreclose any legitimate way to express politicized ethnic grievance, lest it undermine “national unity.” “Preserve state unity and consolidate national unity” is a slogan raised at every sign of ethnic unrest. Mongol officials and intellectuals would be paraded on TV and radio to declare where they stood on nationalism. Invariably, all would express their resolute opposition to any attempt to undermine minzu tuanjie, thereby creating the impression that “nationalism” was more harmful to the Mongols than to the Chinese state. However, while minzu tuanjie is an ultimate state weapon, the praxis can be more complex.

As our case shows, indeed, the battleground is the keyword *minzu tuanjie*. The importance of keywords in politics is underscored by Daniel Rodgers (1987). Political struggle for him is over the control of these metaphors of legitimization. In his fascinating study of the concept of *fengjian* or feudalism in Chinese history, Duara (1995: 146–75) shows that the indigenous term initially provided impetus for the federalist movement across Chinese provinces. Empowering local people and governments was seen as a way to preserve the Chinese nation in the light of the ever-weakening central state in the final decades of Manchu rule. However, the federalist movement lost its ideological legitimacy when *fengjian* was later invested with negative meanings, identified as feudalism, as the Other of the master narrative of History.

The fortune of the term *fengjian* highlighted an important principle defining the relationship between state and society in the face of external threat. Local autonomy, ethnic or nonethnic, is often seen as undermining state unity and sovereignty. Whereas *zi zhi* (“self-rule” or “autonomy”) or even self-determination were positive keywords that indeed were used in the names of many national minority organizations, such as the Inner Mongolia “Autonomous” Region, in the early 1960s, the escalating Sino-Soviet rift required absolute loyalty of the frontier Mongols to the beleaguered Chinese state. Ulanhu’s insistence on local autonomy—that is, the protection of Mongol rights in the autonomous region—then became the very basis for charges of his alleged crime of splitting China, and he himself was purged. In July 1981, in a seminal article published in the *People’s Daily* to defend minority nationality autonomy, which he championed, Ulanhu argued, “Once nationality regional autonomy is conscientiously implemented, the minority nationality peoples would then be deeply convinced that they are not only the masters of their own homeland, but also of the motherland;

their spirit of loving the motherland, loving their own nationalities would be greatly elevated” (1999: 371).

This line of argument over what constitutes the condition for nationality autonomy and national unity clearly reveals competing visions and positions. Mongols are desperate to make sure that their demands for limited autonomous rights are not understood by the Chinese as weakening state integrity. Losing this precarious legitimacy in a neurotic China, hypersensitive to the “nationality question,” would invariably invite the state’s ruthless suppression. Minzu tuanjie, by virtue of its ambiguous meanings, referring either to “national unity” or to “amity between nationalities,” has been embraced by both Chinese and Mongols for different purposes. Whereas “national unity” tends to obscure Mongols as a political and cultural unit, minzu tuanjie, understood as “amity between nationalities,” recognizes and highlights difference and equality between nationalities. The universalistic and particularistic dimensions of minzu tuanjie could, therefore, be pitted against each other. An assimilationist policy could be criticized for not cementing minzu tuanjie but destroying it. For their part, the Chinese would hold that ethnic differences and demand for equality and autonomy, which are seen by minorities as conditions for minzu tuanjie, would lead to minzu fenlie (national splinterism). The following incident illustrates an interesting process whereby positioned subjectivities are expressed in manipulating the meaning of minzu tuanjie.

In the early 1990s, as democracy and nationalist movements spread across Mongolia, the Chinese government became nervous, fearing that Inner Mongols would also join a pan-Mongolian movement, spurring independence and democracy in Inner Mongolia. Wang Qun, the Party secretary of Inner Mongolia, made repeated speeches, harping on minzu tuanjie and the dangers of splinterism, to the dismay of many Mongol officials and intellectuals. As some Mongols confided to me, this was a typical ploy of frontier colonial officials bidding to consolidate their power. To take another example, Han Maohua, a deputy Party secretary, made reports in 1993 at the Inner Mongolian Party School that Mongols were latecomers, settling in the territory of Inner Mongolia only eight hundred years ago, whereas historical and archaeological evidence showed that the Chinese had lived in Inner Mongolia since time immemorial. This was an attempt, Mongols asserted, to deny them their rights of autonomy. Wang’s and Han’s speeches and their underlying goal incurred a barrage of criticism from Mongols. Some high-ranking Mongolian leaders asserted that it was Wang and Han, not the Mongols, who wanted to drive the Mongols away from Inner Mongolia, splitting China. Mongol leaders also accused them of violating the Chinese Constitution and the Law of Nationality Regional Autonomy, which defined Mongols as the titular nationality of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. They swiftly reported the case to Beijing, leading to an investigation. They demanded that the Chinese officials not distribute Han’s speech to the public, especially to Mongol students. Had Mongols not exercised caution, had they reacted angrily

in public, this could have provided local Chinese officials with ammunition to prove to the Chinese central government that Inner Mongolia was indeed in trouble, and it was necessary to crack down on alleged Mongol “splitters” in order to defend the “motherland.” In this struggle, Wang Qun was criticized by the Party Center, but he was not punished; instead, he added the post of chairman of the Inner Mongolian People’s Congress, the highest self-ruling organ of the autonomous region, one usually reserved for the Mongols. Han Maohua was subsequently removed from Inner Mongolia but appointed Party secretary of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, clearly a promotion for his meritorious service. Although Mongols were not entirely happy with this outcome, it nevertheless constituted a small victory in removing Han from the Autonomous Region and blocking the circulation of his poisonous thesis. Whether this was a victory worth winning may be disputed, but it must be understood within the specific context of Inner Mongolia in which Mongols are on the defensive against the state’s desire for more direct control and in which frontier Chinese cadres’ special role is to serve as guarantors of Chinese national security. Victory, from the Mongol point of view, is not secession—a victory that would virtually guarantee war—but is maintenance of the precarious status quo.

It is in such a geopolitical context that the meaning of Ulanhu’s political career assumes great importance. In 1989, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident and the unrest in Tibet, a massive campaign by the Inner Mongolian government, headed by Buhe, was carried out in Beijing and Hohhot to propagandize Ulanhu, portraying him as a staunch communist, a patriot who successfully solved China’s ethnic problems in Inner Mongolia. They did not hesitate to point out that while Tibet was troubled with ethnic riots and calls for independence, Inner Mongolia, thanks to the fruit of Ulanhu’s effort, was stable and prosperous, having unshakable trust in the Party’s leadership. A huge exhibition of Ulanhu’s life was mounted in Beijing in 1991. Under Buhe’s direction, a Ulanhu Revolutionary History Materials Compiling Office was set up in 1989 and an Ulanhu Research Association in 1990, with its own journal, *Ulanhu Research*. Housed in the Inner Mongolia Archives, the association was charged specifically with studying Ulanhu’s patriotic thought and revolutionary contributions. In the next few years, a biography, a memoir, a pictorial, and a six-part tele-drama were produced, displaying Ulanhu’s outstanding contribution to “solving” the Inner Mongolian question.

This effort catered to the needs of the beleaguered Chinese state, which was desperately seeking legitimacy, especially in the ethnic field. In a way, we could argue that ethnic unrest in the late 1980s and 1990s lent urgency to the Chinese government, requiring that it justify the incorporation of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia into China not as Chinese “liberation,” but as the willing act of patriotic minority communists like Ulanhu. These internal and external political atmospheres compelled both Mongol and Chinese Party leaders to take Ulanhu on board. In this new cult of Ulanhu, the discourse of power relations

in Inner Mongolia could then be referred back to Ulanhu and the institutions Ulanhu helped set up, providing resources that could be used by both Mongols and Chinese. Now that Ulanhu was presented as a symbol of Mongol revolution and patriotism, Mongols and Chinese—indeed, the entire Inner Mongolian officialdom—rushed to become patrons of the mausoleum. Suddenly, Ulanhu became a great man, no longer an ambiguous figure. No one could then afford to dissociate from him. Ulanhu is dead! Long live Ulanhu! The dead Ulanhu became part of the state’s magic, the “attraction and repulsion” of which being, as Michael Tausig so eloquently writes, “tied to the Nation, to more than a whiff of a certain sexuality reminiscent of the Law of the Father, and lest we forget, to the specter of death, human death in that soul-stirring insufficiency of Being” (1997: 3).

Then, who was Ulanhu? What did he actually mean to the Chinese state and the Mongol people? Before sketching his life history and contemporary remembrances of his “contributions” in the following two sections, I want to briefly discuss the subjectivity and positionality of social analysts.

Renato Rosaldo (1993: 166) defines the analyst as a “positioned subject.” This perspective emphasizes reflexivity on the part of the anthropological analyst *vis-à-vis* the “culture” one studies. In an ethnopolitical situation, we deal with more than one culture and more than one group. The cultures and groups are relational and at times oppositional. This requires us to recognize that in an ethnic conflict situation, the views expressed by opposing group members are also “positioned.” It is important to take seriously the sometimes clashing views of the “positioned subjects” on the ground and treat them also as kinds of social analysts.

This kind of relational and positional subjectivity is marvelously captured by Andrew Shryock in his study of the binary rhetoric in writing and maintaining genealogies or histories among Bedouin tribal sheiks under conditions of segmentary social and political relations. Truth is locally and relationally understood and therefore changeable (Shryock 1997). Likewise, Michael Herzfeld proposes what he calls “reflexive comparativism,” the goal of which is not to treat history-making of the sort Shryock describes “as though it belonged to exactly the same mode as western historiography.” The advantage of reflexive comparativism is that “instead of making ‘our own’ mode the immutable touchstone for the evaluation of all others, we treat it as an interesting cultural object in its own right” (Herzfeld 2001: 65). Following this reflexive comparativist approach, I do not try to find an objective truth in what Ulanhu actually did or did not do; the truth is always relational, and this is perhaps especially so in a socialist state, as I noted in chapter 6 with regard to the two heroic little sisters. Rather, in examining the ritually constructed cult of Ulanhu, we can make sense of relationally positioned subjectivities maintained by Mongols and Chinese, especially the Chinese state.

THE MEANING OF ULANHU TO CHINA

In this section, I examine Ulanhu's communist career path to gauge what he meant to the Chinese Communist Party state. Ulanhu's life history showed that from the very start of his revolutionary career, he constantly crossed the ethnic line. To China, his greatest value seems to be his "loyalty," rather than fighting for Mongolian interests.

Born into a sinicized Tuned Mongolian peasant family in 1906, in the suburb of today's Hohhot, the capital city of Inner Mongolia, Ulanhu received his education in Beijing's Mongolian Tibetan school, where he became a Chinese Communist Party member in 1925. His revolutionary mentor, Li Dazhao, one of the legendary founding fathers of the Chinese Communist Party, known for his alternating positions on nationalism and internationalism (Meisner 1967), was sympathetic to Mongols. Ulanhu never forgot to narrate this revolutionary genealogy (Ulanhu 1989). Trained in Moscow from 1925 to 1929, Ulanhu made many friends who later proved to be extremely useful for his career: Wang Ruofei, Zhou Enlai, Wu Xiuquan, and so on (Hao 1997). Unlike other Mongol communists who attempted to revive the defunct Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, which Ulanhu also joined in 1925, Ulanhu and his Tuned Mongol cohort returned to Inner Mongolia in 1929, set up a cell of the Chinese Communist Party, and established international communication lines between the CCP and the Comintern. Ulanhu's early communist activities in Inner Mongolia made two lasting impressions on fellow Chinese communists. Wang Ruofei, a high-ranking Chinese communist, came to work in the base established by Ulanhu in Suiyuan province. Under Wang's leadership, Ulanhu tried to instigate Mongolian rebellion against the ruling GMD. After Wang was captured by the enemy in 1931, Ulanhu played an important role in the rescue operation. In 1936 Ulanhu instigated the desertion of troops from the Mongolian nationalist leader Prince Demchugdongrob's army, consisting mainly of Tuned Mongols. Although most of the troops were later annihilated by the GMD army, the uprising was symbolically important for the Chinese, as it was a first shot fired at the Japanese and their Mongolian collaborators. Following the second CCP-GMD coalition against the Japanese invasion, Ulanhu joined the Mongolian army under GMD control, and he managed to recruit many CCP members. The symbolic and political capital he earned was enormous. His was the only communist and Mongolian resistance movement leaning toward the Chinese Communist Party.

In 1941 when his communist activity was considered intolerable to the GMD, which threatened to kill him, Ulanhu was summoned to Yan'an, where he became the most trusted "minority" communist within the ranks of the CCP, thanks in part to his friendship with many of the CCP's top leaders who had been his acquaintances or classmates in Moscow in 1925–1929. He then directly participated in the Party's formulation and practice of policy toward minorities.

Serving first as a dean of studies of Yan'an's College of Nationalities and surviving the 1942 rectification movement in Yan'an, Ulanhu emerged as an alternate member of the CCP Central Committee in the Party's Seventh Congress in 1945. As the Second World War drew to an end, Ulanhu became the CCP's point man to solve Inner Mongolian questions.

Ulanhu demonstrated his remarkable skill at solving the Inner Mongolian "question" for the CCP when he was dispatched by General Nie Rongzhen to dismantle the Provisional Government of the Republic of Inner Mongolia, a pro-independence Inner Mongolian government set up in 1945 by Prince Demchugdongrob's officials after the Soviet-Mongolian invasion and occupation of much of the central and eastern parts of Inner Mongolia. Without firing a shot, he managed to become the "chairman" of the government and later dismantle it and recruit its members into his own Inner Mongolian Association of Movements for Autonomy, a semigovernmental organization set up in 1946. Then, moving to eastern Mongolia, he replaced the more militarily savvy Eastern Mongolia Autonomous Government with his own association, which paved the way for founding the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Government in May 1947 (Hao 1997; Nei Menggu Zizhiqu Dang'an guan 1989). This latter government was a strategic gift to the Chinese Communist Party in its race for control of Manchuria in 1947–1948. A CCP-controlled Inner Mongolia guaranteed not only a strong base for the CCP operation, but also Mongolian support for the CCP. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Government was also significant for the CCP, as it was the Party's first major success in resolving territorial and nationality issues. Ulanhu, as the man who delivered all this to the CCP, was, of course, richly rewarded for his meritorious service, as he was accorded the full control of Inner Mongolia and allowed to restore the historical Mongolian territories under the jurisdiction of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

This brief biographical note shows that Ulanhu's rapid rise within the CCP hierarchy was directly related to his remarkable success in "solving" the Inner Mongolian "question." One does not have to doubt his skill, but the efficacy of his skill must be understood within larger power relations. There was no other option for Inner Mongols but to cooperate with the Chinese Communist Party. After all, the CCP also promised to dismantle the Chinese provinces and return them to Mongols. Instead of positing a mysterious magnetic gravity of China to minorities, as Chinese communists-cum-nationalists maintain, we should perhaps think of Ulanhu and other Mongols' decision to work within China as strategic maneuvers. In all Chinese representations, the CCP's military power, with its million-strong army contending for supremacy with the GMD in Manchuria, is downplayed. Rather, the inclusion of Inner Mongolia into China is represented as a struggle and as a "desire" by Ulanhu and other Mongols who supposedly knew that Mongols' future interest lay only in China.

The idyllic Chinese representation of Ulanhu's struggle for China nevertheless allows us to understand the "effect" of Ulanhu on the nature of the Inner

Mongolian revolution. I argue that by “solving the Mongolian question” for China, Ulanhu transformed the Inner Mongolian issue from one of Chinese and Japanese colonization to one posing a threat to Chinese national sovereignty. This is not to deny that as a Mongol himself, who started his revolutionary career out of a desire to improve the livelihood of his impoverished Tumed Mongols, Ulanhu was a kind of nationalist, and communism, a doctrine that preached colonial liberation, was enormously attractive to him. He was, however, oblivious to the tendency that the CCP, although initially endorsing internationalism—the altruistic passion for the liberation of all humanity—became increasingly nationalistic because of the Japanese invasion. National salvation, rather than social equality, became its priority. As a member of the Chinese Communist Party, Ulanhu constantly had to choose between his Party loyalty and loyalty to the Mongols. In the face of eastern Mongolian criticism in 1947, he insisted that the Inner Mongolian question was organically linked with the Chinese revolution, and only after the Chinese revolution succeeded could the Inner Mongolian question be solved. This vision led him to organize unconditional Mongolian support for the CCP to ensure its victory over the GMD (Ulanhu 1999). However, the CCP struggle against the GMD was simultaneously a nation-building effort. Once the CCP won the war and founded the People’s Republic (in 1949), to insist on independence or self-determination became a reactionary activity, as it was interpreted as splitting from the progressive forces. Ulanhu thus, in effect, became a person who was instrumental in delivering Inner Mongolia into the CCP and later PRC jurisdiction. And this double role—that is, leading the Mongols to fight for equality or “autonomy” and solving the “Mongolian question” on behalf of the CCP—made him both a “national ally leader” and a Chinese communist cadre.

Given his career experience and his special status as a Mongol communist with extensive links to the MPR and the Soviet Union, he became a member of the Central People’s Government and a member of the National Committee of the People’s Consultative Conference in late September 1949, a position that clearly indicated that he was a founding member of the People’s Republic of China. His diplomatic skill was recognized; he was elected the “executive chairman” of the presidium of the conference of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association on October 5, 1949. He subsequently added the posts of the standing committee member of the Political Consultative Conference and deputy commissioner of the Nationality Affairs Commission. His position as a state leader *vis-à-vis* minorities was confirmed on September 1, 1950, when he was appointed by the State Council as the deputy director of the PRC’s first National Day Reception Committee, in charge of entertaining ethnic minority representatives. In September 1954 Ulanhu was elected vice premier of the State Council, National Defense Committee member, and commissioner of the Nationality Affairs Commission. On September 27, 1955, he was awarded the military title general (*shangjiang*), second in rank only to marshals. His standing within the

Party hierarchy was further elevated in September 1956, when he was elected an alternate member of the Politburo, the only officially recognized minority member in the highest power organ of the CCP. These impressive positions were held concurrent with all the top positions in the Party, government, and army of Inner Mongolia until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

The positions he achieved had to be managed carefully. His continued importance to Chinese national politics hinged on his ability to keep Inner Mongolia fully integrated into China. This had advantages and disadvantages, for diminished “difference” on the part of the Mongols would also reduce his political weight. Thus the imperatives of ethnopolitics led Ulanhu, throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, to engage in two sets of powerful discourses: first, whether or not Inner Mongolia should be a part of China. In this, Ulanhu was unequivocal in his determination to safeguard the territorial integrity of China. As a Moscow-educated communist who went through the Yan’an rectification training, Ulanhu was well versed in the Party’s two-line (*luxian*) struggle theory—that is, the struggle between capitalism and socialism. In Inner Mongolia, in addition to the two-line struggle, Ulanhu constantly rehearsed a two-road (*daolu*) struggle—in other words, to be part of China or to be independent. Unfortunately, in order to establish his unequivocal patriotic credentials, he set up an Other, the long-defunct Inner Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (IMPRP). He tirelessly narrated the struggle between his Yan’an road and eastern Mongols’ IMPRP road, alluding to the tension between the two in the months before founding the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Government in 1947. The IMPRP road, in his view, was for independence, associated with the GMD and the Japanese militarism; it was thus anti-Mongol and unnationalist! The Yan’an road, on the other hand, while predicated on the progressive and good Chinese, was better for the national development of the Mongols. To some extent, this discourse made Mongols geographically split, as it put many eastern Mongols into a potentially disloyal camp and the western Mongols, represented by his Tumed Mongols, as the vanguard of the Mongolian future. Indeed, this prospect required continued narration of the danger of independence and justified the repeated condemnation of Mongolian regional nationalism (see Ulanhu 1999 and chapter 5).

Ulanhu’s second set of discourses was, however, an attempt to cultivate Mongol support to offset overt Chinese infringement on Mongol rights. If the first set of discourses derived from Ulanhu’s political identity as a Chinese “patriot,” the second one was from his ethnic identity as a Mongol. Ulanhu’s career was geared largely for the liberation of Inner Mongols from the oppression of the Chinese. In the Leninist definition, this would mean liberating the oppressed small nation from an oppressor nation. The creation of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was therefore his version of the liberation of Mongols. Unification of Inner Mongolia, defusing the ethnic tension between Mongol herdsmen and Chinese peasants by making pastoralism a legal part of the Chinese national

economy, indigenizing Inner Mongolian administration, and so on, were among numerous measures he adopted. These measures were to make Mongols the principal nationality of the autonomous region and to make their status congruent with the administrative power. In this effort, Ulanhu effectively defined the Chinese as helpers of the Mongols. His criticism of Chinese chauvinism was particularly harsh. There were two tools in his hands: first, he would quote Mao's words in denouncing Chinese chauvinism and celebrate Mao's promise for ethnic equality. He tried to define and legalize the autonomous institution. Many of China's minority autonomy legislations in the 1950s, however inadequate from today's vantage point, were the result of his effort. In this manner, we can then see an interesting development in Inner Mongolian ethnopolitics. To uphold the autonomy was very much like upholding a mini-nation-state sovereignty. Border, administrations, language, education, and so on, were all important things that needed to be protected for Mongols. The diminishing status of the autonomy, the interference of the state and Party without mediating through Ulanhu, would be resisted and sometimes denounced as showing Chinese chauvinism. In this situation, Ulanhu would bypass all the channels and talk directly to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. This created an interesting impression in Inner Mongolia: Mao and Zhou were kind to Inner Mongolia, but there were a lot of bad local Chinese (Hao 1997).

Briefly, Inner Mongolia in the 1950s and early 1960s was full of contradictions; the population of Inner Mongolia was broadly divided into four camps: pro-China Mongols; pro-MPR Mongols; anti-minority Chinese at the lower-level; and pro-minority Chinese at the center, such as Mao and Zhou. By balancing these, Ulanhu reaped enormous political capital. There was a kind of personality cult in the 1950s, largely encouraged by Mao himself, who saw the role of such minority leaders as crucial in ruling the minority region. According to Jiang Ping (1995), who was once the commissioner of the State Nationalities Affairs Commission, he saw Ulanhu's portraits in the guest house of Sunit banner along the Sino-Mongolian border in 1965. Apparently, this was allowed by Mao, as Jiang writes, "Chairman Mao remarked many times before his death: In Inner Mongolia, you should hang Ulanhu's portrait, and shout Long Live Ulanhu. We need batches of most prestigious mass leaders who had intimate relationship with the masses. This was absolutely indispensable in the revolutionary war, so it is in present period of socialist construction" (1995: 169).

This seemingly happy apotheosis of Ulanhu defies representational politics in a liberal democracy, in which a leader shows allegiance to his constituency. That he was simultaneously a representative of the Party to the Mongols and that of the Mongols to the Party denies much moral integrity that can be accorded to any one representative. Gleason gives a vivid description of the characteristics of local officials in Soviet Central Asia:

Of necessity, local officials serve powerful central patrons. At the same time, however, the resourceful and clever local official may simultaneously seek to promote

the interests of his native homeland and ethnic brethren. As the representative of the center, the native local official might exploit the fusion of political and economic decision making, endemic scarcity and personalistic control over allocative decisions in seeking to mobilize resources to satisfy the wishes of his central patrons. At the same time, as a representative of the locality, he may use these self-same instruments to advance the interests of his ethnic counterparts. Whose man is the local official in the Soviet periphery? The clever local official may be able to answer in the classic retort of the native colonial official: "I am everybody's man." (1991: 614)

But such dual allegiance is fraught with dangers. One cannot please everybody. It may be argued that it was this dual allegiance that ultimately brought down Ulanhu during the Cultural Revolution. On the one hand, he could impose his will as a heavyweight state leader in Inner Mongolia and bargain for more state resources to his own constituent region of Inner Mongolia by virtue of his position in the central government and his direct access to Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu De. He also managed to make the experiences of Inner Mongolia exemplary to other minority areas of China. Indeed, in 1958 Zhou Enlai praised the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region as a model region. On the other hand, although extremely effective in cutting red ribbons, this power could also be resented by both his subordinates in Inner Mongolia and his superiors in Beijing. This was especially so when he blocked or modified the Party's policies or directives by insisting on the "difference" of the Inner Mongolian situation. For instance, class struggle was successfully avoided in the pastoral region. And land reclamation was resisted. His position as the alternate member of the Politburo and the second secretary of the CCP North China Bureau (appointed in November 1960) became a point of dispute between him and Li Xuefeng, the first secretary of the CCP North China Bureau. Insisting on his being an alternate member of the Politburo, he defied Li Xuefeng, his superior in the North China Bureau, and effectively blocked North China Bureau intervention into Inner Mongolian affairs, either directly or by making himself the Bureau's representative in Inner Mongolia, much to Li's chagrin.

This seems nothing unusual, for politics means conflicts. But what is at issue here is that the entire fate of Inner Mongolia hinged on one charismatic politician. However, this kind of "personality" politics showed its weakness in times of crisis or when his use value expired or his power became a liability rather than an asset. His defense of Inner Mongolian autonomy, in the form of printing and circulating Mao's 1935 Declaration to the Inner Mongolian people in 1966; his defense of the Turned Mongols from being struggled against in the Four Cleanups Movement; his promotion of Turned Mongols in an effort to maintain "revolutionary" authenticity and "Mongol" control of Inner Mongolia; and his insistence on the nationality policy, rather than on the application of universalist class struggle in the multiethnic Inner Mongolia, all backfired (see chapter 4).

These issues became the primary reasons for the denunciation of Ulanhu in the North China Bureau's marathon conference at the historic Qianmen Hotel in Beijing in May–July 1966, which launched the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In a combined effort by his subordinates in Inner Mongolia and his humiliated superior in the North China Bureau, Ulanhu was accused of creating an independent kingdom, advocating Inner Mongolian independence, and conspiring with the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic. At one point in the meeting, Ulanhu was charged with planning a coup on the occasion of celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 1967, when he would massacre the Chinese, and for which purposes he had already had a mass grave dug in the suburb of Hohhot (Hao 1997: 261). In the fifty-plus days' denunciation meeting, the North China Bureau officially charged Ulanhu with five crimes that were formally approved by the Party Center on November 2, 1966:

Ulanhu's mistake is the mistake of opposing the Party, socialism and Mao Zedong Thought; it is the mistake of destroying state unity, carrying out nationality separatism and revisionism with an aim for an independent kingdom; in nature he is the biggest power-holder taking the capitalist road in the Party organization of Inner Mongolia. Exposure and criticism of Ulanhu's mistakes is tantamount to having dug out a time bomb buried inside the Party. (Tunnen and Zhu 1995: 23)

Between August 16 and November 2, 1966, the Party Center stripped Ulanhu of positions as first secretary of the Inner Mongolia Party Committee, second secretary of the North China Bureau, commander and commissar of the Inner Mongolian Military Zone, and president of Inner Mongolia University. But he was allowed to retain the position as chairman of Inner Mongolia, in name only, until mid-1967.

The denunciation of Ulanhu was initially a Party-orchestrated activity. He was not punished by the rebels unleashed by Mao to destroy the bureaucratic obstacles to his revolutionary vision. To some extent, Ulanhu was rather analogous to Liu Shaoyi, who was now presented as embodying the very antithesis of Mao and the Party's revolutionary program. Lowell Dittmer argues that in the criticisms of Liu Shaoyi, Liu became at different times and for different reasons “1. a symbol for all ‘capitalist-roaders’ that was used as a rallying call for rebellion against an entire category of elites, 2. a scapegoat for other capitalist-roaders, a villain against whom both friend and erstwhile foe could unite in common vilification” (1998: 248–49). However, he argued, the two functions Liu served alternated, so that “the Red Guards were inclined to use Liu as a ‘symbol’ for attacks on diverse local targets, whereas the official press tried to use him as a ‘scapegoat’ to deflect attacks from these same targets” (1998: 250, original emphasis). What's peculiar about Ulanhu's situation is that while Liu Shaoyi was tortured to death, Ulanhu survived and did not seem to suffer much physi-



7.3. Ulanhu Accused of Biting Off Lands from Neighboring Provinces (*Jinggangshan: Tongda Wulanhu Zhuanhao*, October 8, 1967)

cally. After the Qianmen Hotel conference, Ulanhu was kept in Beijing and later transferred to Hunan province under military protection.

Mao and Zhou's decision not to allow Ulanhu to be sent to Inner Mongolia for struggle may have been based on a genuine belief that Ulanhu would be killed by the angry factions, but contrary to Mao and Zhou's much-touted love for “nationality cadres,” their refusal to clarify their own evaluation of him, either as a “revolutionary” cadre or as an enemy, made the case worse and created further problems for Ulanhu. In fact, it was Zhou Enlai who chaired the Qianmen Hotel conference that overthrew Ulanhu.

The ambiguity of Ulanhu's position is evident in the fact that he was denounced by the Party Central and the North China Bureau, but he was not allowed to be physically struggled by the factions in Inner Mongolia. Moreover, he continued to appear on the Tiananmen Rostrum, together with Mao and Zhou, until 1967. In fact, he continued to keep his positions as chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, alternate member of the Politburo, and vice-premier of the State Council until 1967. It was fear of Ulanhu's return and retaliation that drove some of his Chinese subordinates and the North China Bureau leaders to wage an all-out propaganda war against Ulanhu throughout Inner Mongolia, gathering concrete evidences to prove his alleged nationalist secessionism and other crimes, so that the Party Center could do away with him once and for all. Although he was openly denounced by the Party, declared the



狼子野心 昭然若揭

7.4. Ulanhu Dragging the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Out of China
 "I am over 60 years old, and I have been fighting Chinese chauvinism for more than 40 years. I can still..." (*Jinggangshan: Tongda Wulanhu Zhuanhao*, October 8, 1967)

ultimate enemy of all the people of Inner Mongolia, and stripped of all his posts in May 1967 when Inner Mongolia was put under the military control of the Beijing Military District, the Center's refusal to surrender him to be subject to the revolutionary justice in Inner Mongolia continued to confound both rebels and loyalists. Ulanhu had to be demonized by all sides, a symbol conveniently used by different factions to attack each other for serving Ulanhu at one point or another. This anti-Ulanhu orgy persisted well into the early 1970s. Ulanhu was the central figure in what was later called three unjust cases that engulfed the entire Inner Mongolia: the "Ulanhu anti-party treason clique," the "February counter current in Inner Mongolia," and the "New Inner Mongolia People's Revolutionary Party." In a report to the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC on July 16, 1981, Zhou Hui, the Party secretary of Inner Mongolia, admitted that "[t]hroughout the region, 790,000 people were directly incarcerated, struggled against, or kept incommunicado under investigation mainly as a result of these three cases. Of these, 22,900 people had died and 120,000 were crippled" (*Crackdown in Inner Mongolia* 1991: 29).

Given such a heavy-handed denunciation of Ulanhu and Mao's all-too-brief verdict in May 1969—suggesting no more than that the punishment of the Mongols had gone too far but was not wrong—Ulanhu's rehabilitation was far from easy. After Lin Biao's death in September 1971, Mao approved a list prepared by Zhou Enlai of old cadres to be "liberated," and it included Ulanhu's name. It is interesting to note how Zhou Enlai then ostensibly defended Ulanhu. According to Hao Yufeng (1997), the official biographer of Ulanhu, in late 1971 in a meeting preparing for the Party's Tenth Congress, Jiang Qing, Wang Hongwen, and others of the group that would eventually be branded the Gang of Four insisted that Ulanhu was guilty of promoting secessionism and revisionism, and the great revolutionary masses of Inner Mongolia would never accept his liberation.

Zhou Enlai defended Ulanhu thus: "Ulanhu is a Mongolian cadre since the early days of our Party; he has made many important contributions to the Chinese revolution!" He then specifically pointed out that Ulanhu's outstanding contributions included abolition of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Inner Mongolia, which aimed to split China and destroy national unity. He praised Ulanhu's heroism in this incident as *dandao fuhui*—that is, he went to the enemy camp all by himself, disregarding personal safety. His efforts to organize the Inner Mongolia movement for autonomy and the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Government were all part of his remarkable contributions. His mistakes were secondary, and he confessed his mistakes to Mao and was determined to correct them. Finally, Zhou Enlai remarked, "In a great country like ours, which has 56 nationalities, it is abnormal that we don't have a nationality leader coming out to work" (Hao 1997: 281–82). Zhou Enlai was clearly embarrassed that all minority leaders had been overthrown and punished.

Here one should note that Ulanhu was liberated largely because of his "Mongolian" identity and his status as a "nationality leader." Moreover, he was praised for his role in destroying Mongolian independence and bringing Inner Mongolia into China. His pro-Mongol work after 1947 was, however, labeled "mistakes," for which he apologized. He was then given high positions within the Party and government organizations in Beijing. For instance, he was elected first deputy chairman of the Political Consultative Conference in February 1978, second to Deng Xiaoping, who was the chairman. Deng apparently also appreciated Ulanhu's status, as he said to Ulanhu after their elections,

You are the nationality leader of our party, and in the work of nationality you have accumulated rich and concrete experiences. Comrades Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai highly respected you for this point when they were alive. Look, our country was left in a terrible state by Lin Biao and the "Gang of Four"; I hope you can help the Party Central to clear up the mess left by the Gang of Four. (Hao 1997: 289)

Ulanhu was subsequently appointed the chairman of the United Front Department of the Party Central to "clear up the mess" for the Party Central.

During this period, he was a full member of the Politburo and was vice-chairman of the PRC, and at his death in 1988 he was a vice chairman of the National People's Congress. However, in spite of his high positions in the Party, he was permanently severed from Inner Mongolia. More important, he was supposed to represent the Party in his capacity as a "minority" leader but was deprived of his constituency. The Party's official appraisal of Ulanhu upon his death noted that comrade Ulanhu was a "reliable Communist soldier, distinguished Party and state leader, outstanding proletarian revolutionary, and pre-eminent nationality work leader."

ULANHU IN MONGOL EYES

Taken at face value, the Ulanhu cult may manifest a common desire by both Mongols and Chinese, by appealing to Ulanhu's communist spirit, to further ethnic unity and common prosperity. Behind the seeming solidarity with regard to the Ulanhu cult, we can nevertheless see that Ulanhu represents different values to Mongols and Chinese. It would be preposterous to suggest that from a Mongolian point of view, however sinicized some Mongols were, they would only emphasize and celebrate their own subordination.

The inspiration of Ulanhu to Mongol leaders is that he placed Mongol interests on an equal footing with the interests of the Chinese state, making the case that the protection of Mongol interests and of harmony among nationalities held the key in Inner Mongolia (and not only in Inner Mongolia) to the enhancement of China's national interests, including security interests. Although Ulanhu's Inner Mongolia was short of independence—and, indeed, power was monopolized by him, his mainly Tumed associates, and his family members—Ulanhu nevertheless did several things beneficial to all Mongols during his lengthy rule of Inner Mongolia. Inner Mongolia under his leadership offers a good contrast to today's Inner Mongolia, one so sharp that many Mongols recall his era (1947–1966) as a lost paradise. By this technique of contrast, Ulanhu and his era have come to represent to many not only tolerable ethnic relations, but, above all, the glory of Mongol control of Inner Mongolia. This constitutes the core of his value and his cult to the Mongols.

Several features stand out to characterize his leadership. These are qualities especially stressed not only by ethnic Mongolian leaders, but also by ordinary Mongols and, to some extent, even by local Chinese, who see little benefit in the conflict between the center and the region. Further on, I will summarize certain attributes of Ulanhu stressed by some Mongol officials, especially by Zhao Zhenbei, a Mongol leader, who made his name by expelling illegal Chinese immigrants in the early 1980s while governor of Silingol League. Their comments were published in two 1990 volumes commemorating Ulanhu. On the one hand, the authors are speaking to Mongols. But at the same time, their words

must be more or less acceptable to the Chinese authorities, who also vet the manuscript and read the book.

Zhao describes Ulanhu as a great son of the Mongolian *minzu*. His contribution lay in his "creative" application of Marxism to the reality of Inner Mongolia, a claim precisely analogous to that made for Mao with respect to the sinification of Marxism. And this retains great significance for guiding nationality work in Inner Mongolia. What, then, is this creative work of Ulanhu's? Zhao claims that Ulanhu developed a complete series of "thought" regarding nationality work, especially in the pastoral region. Ulanhu single-handedly demonstrated that the pastoral economy is not something backward, as agriculturist Chinese would have it, but is a legitimate part of the national economy. Thus, he fundamentally transformed the perception of the Chinese leadership toward the pastoral economy. Ulanhu maintained that pastoralism was the key to the economy of Inner Mongolia. Consistent with this policy, Ulanhu resolutely opposed reclamation of pastureland for crop growing, activities initiated by both local Chinese and the Chinese leadership of the North China Bureau and the Ministry of Agricultural Reclamation (*nong keng bu*). Ulanhu insisted that the pastoral Mongols had a different class structure from that of farmers, thereby resisting the blind imposition of Mao's agrarian-based class categories in Inner Mongolia. Instead, he devised a new policy appropriate to Inner Mongolia: no redistribution of land, no struggle, no class classification (the "Three Nos"), and moreover, he held that the herdlord and herder relationship should be mutually beneficial (see chapter 4 for a detailed discussion). At the height of the communalization craze, Ulanhu, according to Zhao, opposed any such reorganization in the pastoral area. What he did, paying lip service to the center, was merely change the names of the Mongol *sumu* (township) to communes but staunchly resisted the leveling practices associated with the communes elsewhere. What made Ulanhu great was his independent and creative thought, an ability to hold to the truth in defiance of erroneous policies from the Center. In contrast to the general disaster wrought to all other provinces and regions by Mao's revolutionary zeal, culminating in the Great Leap famine, during Ulanhu's twenty-year leadership in Inner Mongolia, the Mongolian population increased from 800,000 to 1.3 million, and livestock numbers grew from 8.41 million in 1947 to 41.7 million in 1965, a prosperity unparalleled in any part of China (Zhao Zengbei 1990). These bold statements are not unreasonable; of course, Zhao ignores Ulanhu's shortcomings. While Zhao attributed this achievement to Ulanhu's creative thought and independent leadership style, a Chinese commentator, who praised the same achievements made by Ulanhu, resolutely insisted that "[t]his is the result of Comrade Ulanhu leading various nationalities of Inner Mongolia to stride forward along the correct direction of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought; this is the inevitable result of the Party's nationality regional autonomy policy. It is bound to be futile for anybody to deny it" (Zhao Yuting

1990: 140). While noting certain common elements, what is most striking is the fundamental difference in approach between the two.

Mongols who recalled Ulanhu almost invariably stressed his creativity and independent spirit. For Buyandalai, a vice director of the Cultural Department of Inner Mongolia, Ulanhu laid the foundations for a new Inner Mongolian culture. Recalling Ulanhu's initiative in organizing the Inner Mongolian Cultural Ensemble (*Ulan Muchir*) in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which became a model for propagating the Mao Zedong Thought adopted throughout China, he pointed out that it was Ulanhu who insisted that Mongols had a rich culture that others should also learn from. Ulanhu's greatest contribution was showing that Inner Mongolian culture should be Marxist in content but national in form. And this was said to be in stark contrast to the later and still ongoing deliberate suppression by Chinese authorities of the Mongolian form of Inner Mongolian art and culture. Buyandalai concluded his recollection with praise:

Ulanhu has gone and left us, but long live his radiant nationality culture and art thought, and the nationality cultural enterprise to which he devoted his entire heart. The purpose of remembering him is to inherit his legacy, and to develop more numerous, newer and better culture and art to console his soul up in heaven. (1990: 170, emphasis added)

Particularly surprising are the claims of Ulanhu's contribution to the Mongolian language. The Mongol language, one of the symbols of Mongol political equality, from the founding of the People's Republic, was challenged in the state's new discourse. Chinese (Mandarin) was privileged, becoming the direct medium not only for the transmission of Mao's doctrine, but in virtually all government activities, from administration to education to the military, even in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. This association of political correctness and linguistic chauvinism posed a stark choice to Mongols: to remain politically and scientifically "backward" (thereby inevitably subjecting themselves to the Chinese civilizing mission) or to "catch up," in the first instance by incorporating key loan words from Chinese but ultimately losing the Mongol language in favor of Chinese. While a few Chinese-learning Mongol linguists advocated taking in not only borrowed words from Chinese but even sounds and grammatical components, most Mongol officials resisted this by forming a committee to borrow words from the Cyrillic Mongolian used in the Mongolian People's Republic. They rejected the idea that only Chinese was an appropriate source of loan words.

The state-imposed language loss was exacerbated by the social environment Mongol elites found themselves in. Following the 1947 founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Government, in 1952 the seat of government moved to Hohhot, originally a monastic town, divided between Manchu (army), Chinese (merchants), and Mongol (monks and pilgrims) quarters, that quickly became

overwhelmingly Chinese with the migration of tens of thousand of workers and officials from north China (cf. Jankowiak 1993, for the contemporary "Chinese" characteristics of this city). Very soon, the children of Mongol cadres and intellectuals lost their language because of the combination of peer pressure from Chinese children (the overwhelming majority) and classroom instruction in Chinese, rather than Mongol (cf. Bao 1994). The rapid loss of language stirred strong resentment among Mongol officials and intellectuals, who voiced their criticism in the Hundred Flowers Movement in 1957. If, in old China, Mongols had lost their language because of the oppression of Great Han chauvinists, they asked, what could account for the loss of the Mongol language in the New China, in which ethnic oppression was supposed to have been eliminated and all nationalities were equal? It was agreed that Mongol language use had to be strengthened. However, one month later, this officially sanctioned criticism was targeted as a veiled attack on the Party and the Chinese Nation. Language became an issue precisely because it was one of the defining principles of Mongol nationality (Tegusi 1993: 56). Coupled with this was the fact that Mongolian was defined as the first language of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and it was decreed as early as 1947 that official documents must be prepared in Mongolian and Chinese. The difficulty in maintaining the dual-language policy after 1949 was resented by Mongols, not only because it inconvenienced many Mongol cadres and intellectuals, but also because the Mongol language was a powerful symbol of their status and identity. To be deprived of that status had profound political implications: it was a sign of the assimilation of the Mongols, one that could warrant the rescinding of Mongolian autonomy, the very basis of their status, authority, and position. Ethnic autonomy was, after all, based on difference.

Mongol linguistic resistance was poignantly demonstrated in 1957 by Ulanhu, the leader of Inner Mongolia, who deliberately spoke Mongolian on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Many Mongols were moved to tears and could not forget it even after his death in 1988. Mongols interpreted his Mongol speech as defiance against the increasing Maoist and Han chauvinist onslaught on Mongol culture. It was sensational because Ulanhu could not speak Mongolian, as he belonged to the Turned Mongol group, which had lost the Mongolian language a century ago. He read his speech from a text written in Cyrillic that was translated from his original Chinese (he spoke Russian fluently).

Thus, for Shernamjil (1990), a veteran linguist, Ulanhu was the founder of new China's Mongolian language work. He credits Ulanhu with inscribing an article (Article 53) in the Common Program ratified by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (which served as a Constitution) between 1949 and 1954: "All national minorities have the freedom of developing their dialects and languages, preserving or reforming their customs, habits and religious beliefs" (in Hinton 1980: 55). Ulanhu, as a non-Mongol speaker himself,

insisted that every Mongol and Chinese cadre should be bilingual in Mongolian and Chinese. And indeed, Ulanhu made it compulsory for Chinese cadres to learn Mongolian, stating that it would be used as a yardstick to measure whether they were here in Inner Mongolia to serve the Chinese or Mongols. Shenamjil particularly mentioned that in 1957 Ulanhu addressed the Mongolian People's Republic delegation in Mongolian, which made a great impression on many (1990: 285). A famous Mongol writer, T. Damrin, recalled that in 1987, at a celebration held in Beijing, Ulanhu "greeted Inner Mongolian artists in Mongolian, everybody was greatly moved, full of tears in their eyes" (1990: 274).

These few illustrations suggest that admiration of Ulanhu on the part of some influential Mongols may be genuine. But that genuine admiration goes hand in hand with the tactical use of Ulanhu to make the points that they wish to make regarding the present regime. Through celebration of Ulanhu and glorification of his achievements, these Mongols express their strong resentment toward the present situation. Mongol tears at Ulanhu speaking Mongolian contrast with the erosion of Mongolian language in Inner Mongolia in the 1980s and early 1990s. Many of the Mongolian language schools set up after the Cultural Revolution had collapsed, for the Chinese-dominated market economy made any Mongol education unsustainable, indeed useless. Nor is admiration for Ulanhu limited to the Mongol elite who once worked for Ulanhu. It extends to ordinary Mongols, Tuned and non-Tuned. They express their utmost contempt for some Mongol leaders, who are known to forbid their children to speak Mongolian when Chinese guests visit them. Critics say, "Look at Ulanhu; he was a real man. He not only tried to speak Mongolian himself but also tried to make the Chinese learn it!" Here, obviously, the issue is not that Ulanhu himself had indeed managed to learn Mongolian—in fact, his Mongolian was no more than signing his name in Mongolian script and uttering some simple everyday sentences—neither is it how many Chinese had learned Mongolian, but it is Ulanhu's "intent" or "effort."

When Mongols looked back at the Ulanhu era, they found at least two things: First, Mongols as a whole in Inner Mongolia were relatively better off economically than people in most of the country. This was true not only through the 1950s but also during the Great Leap Forward famine of the early 1960s. Politically, they also enjoyed more rights than they do today.

The Mongols quoted previously portray Ulanhu as a Mongol hero. The heroism of his deeds is based on comparisons of then and now. It is also based on a comparison with Mao. Although I suggest that this is a strategy chosen by Mongols largely as a means to engage in power discourse, nevertheless, their genuine feeling for Ulanhu cannot be dismissed. I would like to show that new criteria to evaluate a leader may be emerging in Inner Mongolia.

What Mongols see of themselves in assessing the twentieth century is that they are weak and overwhelmed by the Chinese, and that they are themselves

hopelessly divided, unable to either become a united people or defend their interests in the face of the combination of a powerful Chinese state and large-scale Chinese migration to Inner Mongolia. Their decline in this century is a sharp contrast to their history of glory and valor. Their constant yearning for Chinggis Khan is, in this sense, a yearning for the recovery of Mongol prowess. Making things worse, the Mongol "feudal" lords early in this century, in the eyes of Mongols, indulged their selfish interests at the expense of the people. Not only did they collaborate with Chinese warlords, they also suppressed Mongols. These social vices seen in Mongol traditional lords indicate that Mongols would like to have a leader who could protect their interests against Chinese colonization and stand equal with the Chinese. The quality they would like to see in a Mongol leader is, first of all, strength and power, and that power should be directed outward, rather than inward.

Mongols love to point out that Ulanhu concurrently held the top Party, government, and army posts in the Autonomous Region, as well as being vice-premier (elected in both 1954 and 1965) and an alternate Politburo member, the only minority Politburo member. All of these were underscored to display his importance to Inner Mongols, both as the supreme leader of the autonomous region and as a major figure at the national level. This is impressive, not only in Inner Mongolia, but also in all other minority regions, where no one held all these positions simultaneously. This achievement is contrasted strongly with today's situation, in which the army, Party, and National People's Congress are all controlled by Chinese. And even when a Mongol is chairman, he lacks the authority in that position that Ulanhu had built because of the primacy of the Party secretary, always a Chinese. Ulanhu's monopoly of power, although at times contested in the sphere of intra-Mongol relations, has become one of his greatest merits, and it is now immensely admired by virtually all Mongols.

A number of miraculous signs linking Ulanhu with Mao are also widely remarked. Ulanhu is favorably compared to Mao Zedong: (1) both lived to the age of 82; (2) both Mao and Ulanhu shared one character in their names: *ze* (Ulanhu's Chinese name is Yun Ze), which means "pool" or "pond," and by extension "beneficence"; and (3) they physically resemble one another; Ulanhu was even taller than Mao. These signs underscore Ulanhu's quality as a great man, comparable to Mao.

How should we understand this? Hevia, in a fascinating study of different notions of *koutou* ritual, rejects defining it as "rituals of abject servitude." Following Catherine Bell's study of ritual as a "strategic mode of practice" that "produces nuanced relations of power, relationships characterized by acceptance and resistance, negotiated appropriation, and redemptive reinterpretation of the hegemonic order" (1992: 196), Hevia sees *koutou* as "empowering the lesser in a dependent relationship with a superior" (1994: 193). In his view, the *koutou* is a negotiation process involving power relations. Not everyone is permitted to *koutou*; "the subject must be encompassable," that is, the subject must also be

powerful in the sense of having attributes and capacities desirable for incorporation into the imperial rulership. Indeed, we know that in history, tributary relations with the Chinese often demonstrate the strength of the nomadic kings, and what was negotiated worked to the material advantage of the latter. The importance of such ritual also lies in confirming the support of emperor/empire for the rule of a local ruler. This historical precedent may have contributed to a notion that a strong leader within the ritual realm will be able to obtain greater benefits for his people. Seen in this light, Ulanhu's joining the Chinese symbolic world creates expectations that the communists would deliver more—that is, restoration of the fragmented Inner Mongolia—and indeed assure some kind of autonomy, something Mongols could not achieve without help. Similarly, Mongols would concur that the ascendancy of Ulanhu to the power center of the Chinese state did not mean that he was just a puppet but that he was strong and a force to be reckoned with by the Chinese government. Mongols may also see his high position in government as a demonstration of collective Mongol power in the configuration of the Chinese ethnic hierarchy, wherein greater autonomy and benefit could be wrestled out for the Mongols.

How this kind of dual allegiance and power relations was supposed to have worked is illustrated in the case of Ulanhu. The dismantling of the Inner Mongolian autonomy that Ulanhu had created, and his own demise, as well as the suffering of the Mongols during the Cultural Revolution, tended to bridge the gap between Ulanhu and the Mongols through shared suffering. Ulanhu also did his best to restore the fractured territorial autonomy of Inner Mongolia in the 1970s. According to a Mongol who was directly involved in restoring lost Inner Mongolian territories, Ulanhu played the role of a strong man after he was released from “protective custody” (*jian hu*) and allowed to resume work in 1973. Hua Guofeng, Mao's successor, was said to be less knowledgeable in minority affairs, and other leaders responsible for minority work were not yet reinstated, so he allowed Ulanhu a free hand in this realm. In his capacity as the minister for the United Front, and in close cooperation with other Mongol leaders, in 1979 Ulanhu then ordered the restoration of the territorial boundaries of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. This was no small job. There was opposition from three sides: the central ministers, the five provinces and autonomous regions, and Mongol leaders within those provinces. The latter were against the unification because they already held some positions of power. Unification would mean a reshuffle that could threaten their positions. This narrative highlighted one man using his skills to maneuver within the Chinese leadership, contrasting Ulanhu with the selfish Mongol officials who preferred to remain within Chinese provinces. The narrative thus transformed Ulanhu from a traitor to an ethnic hero. Mongols acknowledge today that without Ulanhu, there might never have reemerged a unified Inner Mongolia; indeed, there would be no “Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region” at all. A Mongol dissident who would not concur with Ulanhu's other merits nevertheless acknowledged Ulanhu's outstanding performance in

defending the Autonomous Region. He felt obliged to attend Ulanhu's funeral in Beijing uninvited and wrote an elegiac sentence, “In memory of twice unified Inner Mongolia!”

The strength or ability (*chadlai*) of Ulanhu is also favorably assessed along with his second quality, Mongol heart (*Mongol seigel*). The notion of Mongol heart is eclectic. It allows a person to fail in doing something; what matters above all is loyalty to one's nation. This is perhaps the ultimate test for Ulanhu. “Mongol heart” always distinguishes “one of us” from “one of them,” or “for them” from “for us.” As long as that “for us” is made clear and proved, even a complete failure may be turned into a martyr. Alternatively, a man of great accomplishments may be disowned (see chapter 5, for the Daur reevaluation of Merse).

Indeed, Ulanhu's “heart” is also the battleground of the posthumous evaluation of Ulanhu by the Chinese state and Mongols. In a memorial article published in the *People's Daily* on Ulanhu's ninetieth jubilee on December 23, 1996, Qiao Shi, then chairman of the National People's Congress, emphasized Ulanhu's solid Party spirit: “Comrade Ulanhu was loyal to the causes of the Party and the people; under all circumstances and in whatever posts he held, he had been resolutely following and implementing the Party line and its various principles and policies, always placing the fundamental interests of the Chinese Nation and collective interests of the State before everything else” (Qiao 1996). He was praised for fighting hard against any Mongol attempts to betray China. Ulanhu's greatness, in this official evaluation, lay in his Chinese heart.

There is no denying that deep in their hearts, Mongols deeply resent Ulanhu's so-called great patriotism—that is, his loyalty to the Chinese Nation. But this was a fair accompli, one that could not be disputed by any Mongol official in the People's Republic. Rather, Mongols try to find every sign that shows Ulanhu's Mongol heart after 1947. The accumulation of stories, from his trying to speak Mongolian to his concrete efforts to promote Mongol rights and his purges by the Chinese, almost vindicated earlier suspicions that he might be a Chinese agent. Mongols, especially eastern Mongols, were deeply suspicious of Ulanhu's ethnic identity in the 1940s. As he was called Yun Ze and assumed the title chairman of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement Association, he was rumored to be a Chinese agent disguised as a “reincarnation” of Prince Yondonwangchug, the first head of the Mongolian Local Autonomous Political Affairs' Council, a political movement initiated by the famous prince Demchugdongrob. Prince Yondonwangchug, who died in 1939, was also known as Prince Yun in Chinese abbreviation (Jagchid 1999). An image of Ulanhu has been built through gossip and anecdotes, a classical arena where hidden transcripts are staged. These social constructions, which may involve a highly selective reading of his activities as viewed by many Mongols, portray him above all as a man who always placed Mongol interest before all else.

Some Mongol intellectuals, who were long suspicious of Ulanhu, now suggest

that he might just have had a Mongol heart, but regrettably he was convinced that communism would deliver liberation to Mongols, and he made the fatal mistake of allying with the Chinese Communist Party. When he realized the problem, he was already on the pirate boat. He could not get off, but had to carry on. Many Mongols now understand, in light of increasing evidence, that there was no choice for Inner Mongols but to accept incorporation into China, particularly since the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic steadfastly refused to render any assistance to Inner Mongols in their desire for independence.

Other Mongols would say that no matter how masterful he was in nationality affairs, Ulanhu was extremely ignorant of the Chinese mentality, although he thought he understood them from his life experience. These remarks are from some eastern Mongolian intellectuals, who have every reason to say something critical. But no doubt they see Ulanhu not so much a deliberate traitor as a victim of his own internationalist enthusiasm. The blame is therefore directed toward those Chinese who cheated Ulanhu, who was sincere, typical of a Mongol.

There are numerous stories of Ulanhu's awakening—that is, becoming more ethnically conscious. I mentioned that it is a great comfort for some Mongols that Ulanhu, who once was ignorant of Mongolian language, managed to read a text in Mongolian in 1957. An eastern Mongolian cadre told me a story to convince me that Ulanhu was indeed knowledgeable in Mongolian. In the 1950s, after the new Chinese currency was printed, he spotted a mistake in the translation of “bank.” The Mongol translation *mongon ger* was a literal translation of the Chinese *yinhang*, which means “silver/money house.” Ulanhu immediately spotted and suggested that it be retranslated as *bank*, a well-established international loan word in Mongolian. Not only this, he managed to persuade the Center to retrieve the printed currency and issue new correct notes.

One important story concerns how Ulanhu insulted Wang Zhen. Wang, a ranking military man and minister of the Agricultural Reclamation Ministry, turned a large part of Mongol pastureland in Hulunbuir into agricultural fields in the early 1960s. It is said that Ulanhu got extremely angry when Mongols complained to him about the loss of their pastureland. He then went to Hulunbuir and ordered Mongol herders to let in horses to eat up all the crops, thus spoiling the scheme. This is certainly an exaggeration. But it was remarkable that Ulanhu managed to persuade Wang Zhen to restrain his activity in Inner Mongolia, while in Xinjiang his military production and construction corps, *bin-guan*, became a major colonization force (cf. Seymour 2000).

Another story tells of a famous Mongol singer in Beijing who experienced discrimination at the hands of the Chinese director of the Central Nationalities Song and Dance Ensemble. One day she went to see Ulanhu to ask if he could do something to help her. A few days later, at a meeting of the Nationality Affairs Commission, Ulanhu said to the minister in his typical Turned Chinese dialect:

“Hey, I heard that X is a bastard, bullying our poor Y, can you do something about it?” As the story goes, before long the director was sacked.

These two stories among Mongols indicate that a strong Mongol heart, protecting Mongols, and defying the Chinese are the basic criteria for approving of a Mongol leader. His action is justified and given high approval from Mongols, and that is exactly what is expected of a strong man who has a Mongol heart.

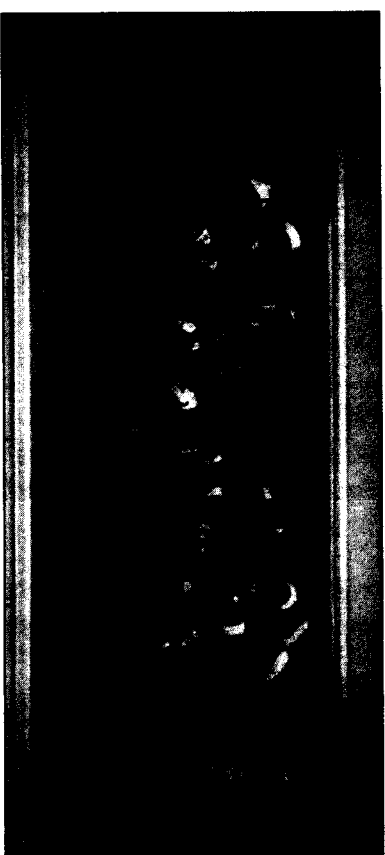
Another important series of stories, known by almost all Mongols, illustrates a sense of despair shown by Ulanhu. According to this story, Ulanhu did not want to be transferred to Beijing. The motif in this genre is that of a caged tiger, crippled, yet always thinking of going back to Inner Mongolia. Some Mongols would say that he was disappointed at how Inner Mongolia had developed and worried at its prospects. Deng Xiaoping in this story is an uncompromising hardliner. On the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ulanhu managed to return to visit Inner Mongolia, but only after a tough negotiation with Deng. Deng eventually allowed him to go, but with these preconditions: First, he must praise what he has seen, and second, he must not incite any trouble. Perhaps the most moving part may be that of Ulanhu going to pay homage to Chinggis Khan. His pilgrimage was not on the agenda. Ulanhu had again to ask Deng's permission, and he was granted two hours there. Before Chinggis Khan's shrine, Ulanhu was said to have bitterly wailed. So do many Mongols nowadays. He stayed more than four hours before finally being pushed by his security guards onto the helicopter, never again to return to Inner Mongolia. It is said that after wailing in grief, the old man of eighty-one stood up and murmured, “Still, *minzu tuanjie* is good.”

These stories portray Ulanhu as a kindly old Mongol, kidnapped by the Center. Mongols and Ulanhu wailing together in front of Chinggis Khan's shrine somewhat ties their fate together through Chinggis Khan, the ultimate symbol of the Mongol people. That Ulanhu worshiped Chinggis Khan is not entirely new. As early as 1939 he had been involved in removing the Chinggis Khan shrine from Ordos to a relatively safe area in Gansu, when Japanese forces attempted to seize it. In 1946 he raised the slogan “Descendants of Chinggis Khan, Unite!” as a war cry to inspire Mongols to fight for the autonomy of Inner Mongolia. In 1954 he officially arranged to bring back the shrine from exile and ordered that a three-domed mausoleum be built to house the shrine in 1956. On that occasion, he personally officiated at the Chinggis ceremony, as he did in 1962. According to charges levied during the Cultural Revolution, Ulanhu tried to become Chinggis Khan the second. Like many other Mongol patriots, perhaps Ulanhu always identified himself with Chinggis Khan. His cry before Chinggis Khan is a symbolic gesture, indicating that he thought he had failed, but it is also a message that he tried his best, following in Chinggis Khan's steps. We do not know what he thought, but his cry before Chinggis is interpreted by Mongols as repentance before the supreme Mongol ancestor.

Humphrey (1997) distinguishes two types of morality, **Asian and European**.

She suggests that unlike rule-based European morality, Asian, and particularly Mongolian, morality is constructed in the discourse of exemplars. In such a society there is no absolute wrong or right. The exemplar morality allows for individual difference and social hierarchy. In Mongolia, everybody, at some point in life, should have a teacher. The teacher is someone who advanced and improved himself or herself in relation to some moral principle, such as "bravery," "purity of thought," or "compassion." In our case, Ulanhu might be regarded as a political exemplar by the Chinese in order that people learn and conform to the political message. Mongol perceptions of exemplars can be multidimensional. Humphrey notes that exemplars have little or no control over what teachings their disciples derive from them. It is the disciple's task to make certain points exemplary in his own moral construction. This insight might help us to understand how Mongols make sense of Ulanhu. For Mongols, Ulanhu embodies numerous messages, contrary to the simple model of patriotism that the Center wishes Mongols to learn from him. To say the least, Ulanhu is seen as a quintessential exemplar *not* to trust the promises of the CCP. Mongols try hard to figure out the meaning of his "teaching" of "minzu tuanjie"; they believe that, being a great and clever man, Ulanhu must have a hidden message in his words. The hidden message, if it is hidden at all, was expounded by a Mongol scholar in an article that recently won a prize. He argued that Ulanhu had advocated not only internationality unity, but also intranationality unity. His exposition is worth quoting at length:

Our country's elder generation proletarian revolutionary, outstranding leader of minority nationalities, and the founder of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, Comrade Ulanhu, in his remaining years, even on his deathbed, was always deeply concerned about this problem. In 1987 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of founding the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, he reiterated this point in his own article on this special topic: "unity includes the unity of all nationalities in the whole country, the unity between various nationalities in Inner Mongolia, and the unity within a nationality. Only when this unity is strengthened, when the state unity is consolidated, only when there is a strong unified great motherland, and when the region that has achieved nationality regional autonomy has internally united would various causes better develop. . . . The formation and development of the Mongol nationality is also the result of the unity between various tribes." He, in his 1988 conversation with Comrade Wenjin, in his sincere words and earnest wishes, looked forward to better unity between various nationalities in Inner Mongolia, and among Mongols. This is the greatest expectation from our revered Comrade Ulanhu before he departed from the world forever. When this testament of his was publicized by vice chairman Wenjin in 1988 after the formation of the new administration of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, in a form of journalistic question-answer on TV and radio, it was praised and endorsed by cadres and masses of all nationalities of the region. (Orchilon 1993: 124)



7.5. Ulanhu as a State Leader to the Mongols (2000)

"TOTALITARIAN NOSTALGIA" FOR STRONGMAN ULANHU

As we have seen, the Mongol cult of Ulanhu emerged as a result of "contrast" between past and present. The past is necessarily multilayered, forming the legendary or mystical Golden Age, the dark medieval times, informing the rise and fall of a people. The past represented by Ulanhu was not necessarily a Golden Age, but it embodied certain hopes after a hellish dark age. And this recent past of hope, with its limited promise, established a link with the ultimate Golden Age of Chinggis Khan. Historical contrast is an institution in all modern nationalist historical consciousness, punctuated by linear time. It gained particular salience as a mechanism for political legitimacy in Communist China: By contrastly contrasting the present with the past, one yearns for a brighter future. But this future-looking contrast can also be reversed in the form of nostalgia—looking back to the past with fond memory, a yearning that targets the present as the dark age, and looking in horror at the uncertain future. The past serves as something known, certain, and stable. Barmé writes that "nostalgia develops usually in the face of present fears, disquiet about the state of affairs, and uncertainty about the future. Confronted with social anomie and disjuncture, nostalgia provides a sense of continuity" (1999b: 319). He points out that the new cult of Mao Zedong of the late 1980s and early 1990s was caught in a dialectic of irony and nostalgia. The irony is that despite Mao's purge and terror, Mao, like Stalin, "was the embodiment of both history and the national spirit, so to deny him would be to negate not merely one's own history but also vital facts of the national character" (1999b: 320). The nostalgia for Mao at a time of economic uncertainty and social anomie under Deng Xiaoping's rule invested in him a mystical image of being a "representative of an age of certainty and confidence,

of cultural and political unity, and, above all, of economic equality and incorruptibility." Thus the Mao cult is both what he calls "totalitarian nostalgia" and a kind of resistance. And precisely here, Barné points out, lies its irony and limited value: it offers a simple model of what it was in the past, "but it did not offer new or viable political solutions to China's problems" (1999a: 321).

To a certain extent, the cult of Ulanhu may be understood as a "totalitarian nostalgia." It is also based on the institution of contrast. But unlike the Mao cult, the yearning for Ulanhu is an aspiration for a viable solution to China's ethnic problems (i.e., from a Mongol perspective, the Chinese constitute a problem to the Mongols, not vice versa) that Ulanhu had so long fought for, albeit with limited success. And that is to foreground the role of the state and its constitution in the ethnic relations sphere. Here is the crucial site of struggle: Whereas the Center and the Chinese appropriate him only to obtain Mongol loyalty in a crude manner, Mongols reclaim his Mongol identity not only to point out the Center's hypocrisy, but also to suggest a new kind of politics. Mongol officials are now successfully appropriating Ulanhu and his complete set of ideas in order to resist further incursion into rights that are seen as rightfully theirs. Significantly for the Mongols, Ulanhu is not only the engineer of that objectifying machinery, but also part of the machinery—that is, the state. If he is really recognized as a state leader, as having once been China's vice president, if the law he engineered is recognized as legitimate and binding, there is no reason (many Mongols say) why he should not be granted the greatest respect by Mongolian officialdom. Mongols are most emphatic that Ulanhu is "patriotic" for China, thus firmly establishing the base that Chinese cannot fault.

Ulanhu has become an institution upon which people can rely and bargain with the state. What is interesting is that Mongols, especially students, often raise Chinggis Khan's portrait and demand rights once exercised by Ulanhu in Inner Mongolia! In terms of generations of leaders, with the ever greater decline of the Mongols' ethnic rights in Inner Mongolia, people do miss Ulanhu: If he were alive, they say, Inner Mongolia would be different. Only he could stand up to Chinese discrimination and abuse. Here, Mongols have started to appropriate him as an ethnic hero, along with Chinggis Khan. This cult transforms Ulanhu from an ambiguous figure into what James M. Burns (1978) calls a "heroic leader."

This heroic leadership does not necessarily mean that Ulanhu actually possessed heroic qualities that delivered tangible benefits to the Mongols. Heroism does not necessarily pivot on success. Moreover, heroic leadership is "not simply a quality or entity possessed by someone: it is a type of relationship between leader and led" (Burns 1978: 244, emphasis original). Whatever quality or attribute is possessed by the heroic leader, worship of him or her is an outcome of an expectation, a projection of one's fears, aggressions, and aspirations onto some social objects that allow a symbolic solution to conflicts. "Heroic leadership provides

the symbolic solution of internal and external conflict" (Burns 1978: 244, emphasis original).

Both Chinggis Khan and Ulanhu, however, have also been appropriated by the Chinese state as its national heroes. The addition of Chinggis Khan and Ulanhu to the Chinese national pantheons is a complex process, with resistance and complicity from the Mongols, reflecting the complex relationship between Mongols as an ethnic minority that wishes its culture and heroes to be properly represented by the state and the state's desire to integrate minorities, including Mongols, into a national state. In the latter case, Chinggis Khan can also be de-Mongolized, making him into a racialized pan-Chinese hero, whose highest function may be to display Chinese racial and military superiority to White Others. Likewise, Ulanhu may also be de-Mongolized and made a Chinese "nationality work leader," as a paragon of loyal minorities, representing a Janus-faced circle: to conquer the state to be ruled by the state.

Whatever mixed and entangled feelings Mongols have about this Chinese appropriation, from a Mongol perspective one senses a difference between Chinggis Khan and Ulanhu. Chinggis Khan is an ultimate identity-giver to the Mongols, and his worship is religious-cum-nationalistic, whereas Mongols' respect for Ulanhu, as this book shows, is not a celebration of their identity, but a weapon for dealing with the Chinese state and their current dilemma, or a symbolic solution of their problems. He thus provides a point of reference against which every Mongol leader must be compared. One may raise this question: Would a new Mongol leader be able to stand firm and be reckoned with by the Chinese central government? But perhaps such questions are impossible to answer, as Ulanhu's status was contingent on his earlier communist career and intimate links with the Soviet Union and Mongolia. With these factors gone, it is doubtful that any Mongol could achieve comparable significance within the Chinese polity. What is certain is that Ulanhu does remain a symbolic aspiration.

In summer 2000, during my latest trip to Inner Mongolia, I went to visit the Ulanhu Mausoleum—indeed, not just once. In contrast to earlier times, the gigantic mausoleum was virtually deserted. There were very few people in the botanical garden, still less in the mausoleum. Protected by fee-collecting guards at the entrance to both the botanical garden and the mausoleum, Ulanhu enjoys a secluded serenity, unperturbed by either the bustle of the streets or the dust blown up by the faintest wind. As I gazed at the gigantic statue, my mind was filled with a famous passage uttered by Pavel Korzhagin, the hero in the Soviet writer Nikolai Ostrovsky's novel *How Steel Was Tempered*, a novel that inspired millions of idealistic people in China from the 1950s to the 1980s:

Man's dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that, dying, he might say: all my life, all my strength,

were given to the finest cause in all the world—the fight for the Liberation of Man-kind. (1959, part 2: 114)

Later, when I mentioned this to a senior Mongol, he said with a deep sigh: “But he died with regret and shame. His cancer was caused by his increasing anxiety in his later years.”

Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1990. “The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women.” *American Ethnologist* 17(1): 41–55.
- Altangata. 1980. *Dawuer Menggu Kao*. Huhahaote: Nei Menggu Zizhiqu Shehui Kexueyuan Minzu Yanjiushi.
- Anagnost, Ann. 1994. “Who Is Speaking Here? Discursive Boundaries and Representation in Post-Mao China.” Pp. 257–79, in *Boundaries in China*, ed. John Hay. London: Reaktion.
- . 1997. *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation, and Power in Modern China*. Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Ao Dong. 1989. “Boxue Duocai de Xuezhé Guo Kexing.” *Dawuer Ren*. (September 30).
- Ardyajav. 1991. “Guanyu Chengde Gong Huanyuan bing Fanyi de “Yanchao Mishi.” *Dawuer Ren* (July 10).
- Arwood, Christopher P. 1994. *Revolutionary Nationalist Mobilization in Inner Mongolia, 1925–1929*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Ayong. 1998. “Guanyu Dawuer de Zuyuan Wenti.” Pp. 381–86, in *Dawuer Ziliao Ji*, vol. 2. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.
- Ayong Batu. 1982. “Qidan Houyi de Dawuer Zu Shehui.” *Dawuer Zu Yanjiu* 1: 26–40.
- Ba Jingyuan. 1980. “Baotou Mengmin de ‘Chuzudi’ yu Mengzu de Laili jiqi Yanbian.” *Baotou Shiliao Huiyao* 3: 130–38.
- Badaranga. 1998. “Dui Dawuer Zucheng ji Zuyuan Wenti de Kanfa.” Pp. 463–67, in *Dawuer Ziliao Ji*, vol. 2. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.
- Bailey, Frederick G. 1991. *The Prevalence of Deceit*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Balibar, Étienne. 1991. “The Nation Form: History and Ideology.” Pp. 86–106, in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein. London: Verso.
- Balzer, Marjorie M. 1999. *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Ban Lan, ed. 1997. *Huhehaote Shici*. Huhahaote: Nei Menggu Renmin Chubanshe.
- Bao, Wurlig. 1994. *When Is a Mongol? The Process of Learning in Inner Mongolia*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Seattle: University of Washington.