

Mongolia at 800: The State and Nation Since Chinggis Khan¹

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INTRODUCTION

As we are commemorating the 800th anniversary of Temüjin's ascent to power, we are being told that that event marked the birth of the Mongolian state, the *Yeke Monggol Ulus*. There can, of course, be no question that this event happened and that it marked, like the Otrar Incident a dozen years later,² a major qualitative change in the history of Mongolia and indeed of most of northern Asia. What is of equal importance but has been neglected or entirely ignored was the birth of a Mongolian nation, or perhaps more precisely speaking, a new Mongolian nation. The relative neglect is understandable because the two terms are frequently used interchangeably. I hope to show not only that state and nation are two different entities but that in the case of Mongolia they differ in size and longevity, with nation being the more enduring. A state, such as the one Chinggis Khan created in 1206 on the banks of the Onon River, is an objectively definable political entity led by a government. Its existence can be ascertained regardless of the efficacy of its government. A nation, on the other hand, is a cultural entity characterized by a variety of common objective features, such as language, customs and habits, and economic activities. Most importantly, and in contrast to a state, a nation is also defined by the subjective force of a sense of identity.³ Moreover, this sense of identity is heavily dependent on context. During the time of the Mongol world empire, men serving with the armies in far-away lands undoubtedly identified themselves with the Mongolian nation, but members of their own families staying behind at home had probably little or no reason to identify themselves with any "nation" beyond their own clan.⁴ If state and nation are not identical, it follows that they are rarely if ever truly interchangeable concepts.⁵

This obviously makes any study of a nation much more complicated and makes my paper quite literally an essay. I will attempt to trace the antecedents of both

¹ This paper was first presented at the Ninth International Congress of Mongolists, Ulaanbaatar, August 8, 2006., and published in *Inner Asia* 8 (2006), 151-161.

² See my "Otrar," *Olon Ulsyn Mongolch Erdemtnii V Ikh Khural* (Ulaanbaatar, 1992), v. 3, 333-340, and "Otrar revisited," in *Mongol Sudlalyn Ögüüllüüd = Essays on Mongol Studies* [Commemorative volume on the occasion of Academician Bira's 70th birthday], edited by Ts. Batbayar et al. (Ulaanbaatar: Olon Ulsyn Mongol Sudlalyn Kholboo, 1998), 195-208.

³ This definition of nation is closest to the one used for the original inhabitants of North America but less so to the Chinese term *minzu* because the latter is a state definition that does not always conform with a group's sense of identity.

⁴ Examples in non-Mongolian contexts abound. A family in a Turkish town or village might not see themselves as Turkish (unless asked by a foreign visitor), but that same family, once transposed to Germany as guest workers, will probably identify themselves as Turkish.

⁵ In fact, some states exist without their "own" nation, like the Vatican, Andorra and other microstates. By the same token, there are many nations without any state of their own, and their typical fate has been to be referred to as minorities.

state and nation and then sketch the fate of both to the present. My main themes are the empire period and its aftermath, the impact of external forces, the recent political separation, and an assessment of the present Mongolian state and nation in the historical context. Those readers who might expect to find in this paper linkages to the substantial corpus of theories about the nature of nation and nationalism will be disappointed as will be those who anticipate a discussion of relevant works on modern Mongolia, most notably the books by Uradyn Erden Bulag.⁶ Linking up with other works on nation and nationality, be they theoretical or focused on Mongolia, is absolutely essential, but this is not the place for it. This essay is merely a very simple, but hopefully not simplistic, attempt to persuade my fellow Mongolists to think of Mongolia differently from what some of us have been accustomed to during the past few decades.

Before I begin, I should point out that the idea of a new type of state being created in 1206 has not gone unchallenged. There are basically two alternative interpretations. One says in effect that whatever was new for the Mongols had already been practiced by other non-agricultural groups. This view is exemplified by the anonymous author of an article in the *Britannica Online* who acknowledges that Chinggis Khan's new state possessed "superior stability" because it was organized along bureaucratic lines but asserts that this feature already explained the superiority of the Jurchens over the Kidan.⁷ It is true that the Jurchens did create a bureaucratic state which, partly because of its internal cohesion, enabled the Jurchens' triumph over the Kidan. Still, what Chinggis Khan created was new on the Mongolian plains and ultimately proved superior to the Jurchen prototype.

The other alternative interpretation goes further by denying that the Mongol state was a state at all because it lacked sufficient continuity. In the words of the late Joseph Fletcher, "if the empire survived from generation to generation at all, it was because each successor tried not to be a successor in the agrarian empires' sense but rather a refounder. Without a refounder, who-ordinarily by struggle-brought his own personal retainers, administrators, and allies with him rather than inheriting those of his predecessor, it was unlikely that the empire would long endure."⁸ This interpretation underrates the practice of these "refounders" to staff their governments with men not from one or two tribes, as was the custom before 1206, but quite literally from the entire empire.⁹ Besides, the tacit assertion, not made by Fletcher but still found in and

⁶ *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) and *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

⁷ "The history of the Eurasian steppe: the Mongol empire, 1200-1308," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

⁸ Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: ecological and social perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46 (1986), 11-50. This is a curious statement because, describing as it does a "refounder" as someone who brings in his own personal retainers, it could equally well describe an American, Chinese or Russian president.

⁹ In light of my comment in the preceding footnote, it is clear that Mongol khans were far more cosmopolitan than some contemporary presidents in their search for the ablest and most competent government.

out of academe, that a state is not a state unless its society is wholly agricultural or sedentary, is best ignored as an expression of provincialism.

There had of course been a Mongol nation prior to 1206. At least as early as the seventh century Chinese sources started referring to a group, they called Menggu in the general vicinity where later Temujin and his family lived. We know very little about the early stages of this group, or as some people would use the somewhat derogatory term tribe, but not later than the twelfth century records show that it formed a homogeneous society whose members shared a common culture, including language, had close kinship ties and, most importantly, were bound by a strong sense of togetherness. In short, the group had all the earmarks of a nation, as I use the term here. The murder of Temujin's father, Yesugei, and the subsequent hardships placed an enormous strain on this nation, enough to threaten its very demise. But that was not to be. Instead this Mongol nation not only revived but also its name would soon include all the nations on what became known as the Mongolian homeland.

THE FORMATIVE PERIOD

Starting in 1206 and proceeding through many decades, this Mongolian homeland ultimately extended from the vicinity of Lake Baikal in the north to the Ordos Bend of the Yellow River in the south and from the Xing'an Mountains in the east to the Altai Mountains in the west. It is certainly remarkable that in spite of massive movements of people outward to the four corners of the known world and inward by invasion and immigration, civil wars and foreign occupations, the size of this homeland changed relatively little over the next eight hundred years. This area is still one contiguous Mongolia in every sense other than political-economic.

Chinggis Khan established a Mongolian state with an effective central government and army which were superior to anything that had been created up to that time either on or near the Mongolian plains. He accomplished this remarkable feat by making competence rather than lineage his chief criterion in staffing both his civilian and military administrations. The result was a state governed by members coming from all previously separate groups, or nations.¹⁰ An equally important consequence was that Chinggis Khan set in motion a process that eventually created a new Mongolian nation. By working side by side, often far away from their home areas, civilian officials and military officers and men started to identify themselves more and more with a new nation rather than with their original groupings, or former nations. At the same time, a new culture developed, with linguistic differences being diminished, and customs and habits becoming more uniform throughout both the civilian government and military units and later through the entire population of the Mongolian homeland.

¹⁰ Later on, as the empire expanded, many non-Mongols were added to the civilian administration and even more to military units.

THE COLLAPSE OF AN EMPIRE AND THE DECLINE OF STATE AND NATION

From the mid-fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, both the Mongolian state and nation were subjected to enormous strains. A central Mongolian government ceased to function and ultimately died. As the Chinese reasserted control over their own country by establishing the Ming dynasty, an estimated 60,000 Mongol soldiers and administrators stationed in Northern China chose to return to their homeland.¹¹ But “return” is actually a misnomer because many, perhaps most, of them lived all their lives away from Mongolia and thus their “return” caused not only economic hardships but also psychological pressures. Having spent their lives in military or civilian positions in occupied China, they had little or no experience in herding. As they became totally absorbed in the daily local struggles to make a living, their sense of one Mongolian nation gradually weakened and perhaps reverted to a more local, pre-1206 concept of nation. Yet at the highest levels of leadership, the idea of one unified Mongol state never died. Indeed, a series of bloody civil wars in the Mongolian homeland between 1400 and 1454, pitting the Oirats against the Khalkhas, was largely motivated by a desire to recreate a strong centralized state and thereby securing their claim to be Chinggis Khan’s legitimate heirs. Both Esen Khan (d. 1454) and Dayan Khan (d. 1543) came close to reestablishing an effective central government over most of Mongolia, but it fell apart shortly after each leader’s death.

BUDDHISM’S EFFECT ON STATE AND NATION

The last major attempt at reunifying Mongolia was undertaken by Dayan Khan’s grandson, Altan Khan (1507-1582), who, lacking sufficient military power, tried to achieve his goal in a novel way. He invited Sonam Gyatso (1543-1588), the leader of Tibet’s Gelug, or Yellow, sect, to meet him in 1578 near the Kökenagur¹² where the men struck a deal. Both men faced a similar problem. Like Altan, Sonam Gyatso sought a way to make himself and his sect superior to his competitors in Tibet. In order to help each other, the two men tried to revive the glory of the by-gone empire, specifically the relationship between Qubilai Khan (1215-1294) and ‘Phagspa La-ma (1235-1280). Altan Khan bestowed on Sonam Gyatso the title Dalai Lama, thereby perhaps imitating Qubilai’s alms-giver function, while Sonam Gyatso took on the role of ‘Phagspa Lama’s role as religious preceptor.¹³

¹¹ It appears that the new Ming rulers’ policy was not to expel the Mongols but rather to recruit them as frontier guards. Many other Mongols living in Central and Southern China actually stayed there, if not by choice then by necessity, and one can find their descendants in a few places in Yunnan and Sichuan. See my “Some notes on the Mongols of Yunnan,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 28 (1984), 100-118.

¹² The Chinese call this body of water Qinghai which currently is also the name for the province in which the lake is located. The English meaning is Blue Lake.

¹³ For a discussion of the relationship between Qubilai Khan and ‘Phagspa Lama, see Sh. Bira’s “The Mongolian Ideology of Tenggerism and Khubilai Khan,” in *Mongolian Culture and Society in the Age of Globalization: Proceedings of an International Research Conference, West-ern Washington University, August 5-6, 2005* (Bellingham: Western Washington University, Center for East Asian

The result of this agreement turned out to be quite one-sided. Sonam Gyatso's Yellow Sect achieved supremacy in Tibet,¹⁴ but Altan Khan failed to reestablish an effective central Mongolian government. Instead, his conversion to Tibetan Buddhism helped spread the religion beyond his own nutag, or home area, of Tumet, resulting in an ever-increasing stream of Tibetan missionaries into Mongolia where they established the first Buddhist center in Kökeqota in 1579 which, along with other places in Southern Mongolia, has remained to this day an important Mongolian Buddhist center.¹⁵

Numerous studies have described how the Buddhist juggernaut affected every single aspect of Mongolian life, including religion, culture, society, and the economy. The construction of many hundreds of Buddhist centers where an estimated one-third of the male population of Mongolia lived their entire adult lives¹⁶ fundamentally and permanently changed the character of Mongolian society and culture. It marked the beginning of cities in Mongolia, most notably the two principal cities of Kökeqota and Yeke Kūriye, now called Ulaanbaatar. It also drastically reduced the amount of nomadic herding and replaced it with sedentary pursuits. These two developments, in turn, gave birth to a printing industry and a small but influential literary elite. The long tradition of oral literature was strengthened among the great majority of Mongols who remained illiterate by *badarchi*, itinerant monks who eked out an existence by wandering from place to place and entertaining people with their renditions of many forms of Mongolia's rich literary heritage.¹⁷

REUNITED BUT UNDER FOREIGN LEADERSHIP

The next stage in the long history of the Mongolian state and nation was initiated in the plains beyond Mongolia's eastern borders. There the Manchus, viewed by the Chinese as insignificant as they had once the Mongols, made meticulous preparations for their grand objective: the conquest of China. They needed all the help they could get for this ambitious enterprise, and so in 1636 they struck an alliance with those Mongols closest to them, thereby securing their right flank as they were facing China.

The Manchus succeeded. After bringing several countries and regions¹⁸ under their control, the Manchus began to govern Mongolia and other non-Chinese portions of their empire through a central governmental agency, the Lifan Yuan. By the end of the seventeenth century, Mongolia was reunited but it was now under Manchu

Studies, 2006), 13-26.

¹⁴ It is impossible to say how much, if at all, the Gelug sect owed its victory to the Kökenagur pact.

¹⁵ Even the nominal head of all Mongolia, the Great Khan Tümen, and the Oirats who were enemies of both Altan Khan and Tümen, converted.

¹⁶ This estimate is an average for all of Mongolia. Some regions, such as the Khalkha area, had an even higher percentage.

¹⁷ One very popular form of rendition was the *urtu-yin daguu*, or long song. Its popularity lasted well into the second half of the twentieth century when hours-long performances could be heard on the radio. For a better understanding of Mongolia's great literary heritage, see Walther Heissig's two-volume work, *Geschichte der mongolischen Literatur* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972), 969 pages.

¹⁸ They were China, Mongolia, Tibet, and in the following century also Dzungaria and Eastern Turkestan.

control. The situation bore an uncanny resemblance to China's reunification under Mongol control in the late thirteenth century in at least two respects. In both cases it was a foreign power that did the reunifying.¹⁹ Likewise, the reunification went through two stages: the Mongols from north to south in China, the Manchus from south to north in Mongolia. To ensure their control over Mongolia, the Manchus were not content with only the Lifan Yuan. They also became powerful patrons of the already well-established Buddhist Church in Mongolia which became arguably their most effective control mechanism, if for no other reason than that the Buddhist establishment drained the country of a very large portion of manpower and huge amounts of wealth.

The last century of Manchu rule saw the reawakening of a sense of self-identity among Mongols both in the northern as well as the southern parts of the country. The lead was taken by a new generation of mostly secular writers whose works inspired a renewed sense of being Mongol rather than Tumet, Chahar, Kharchin or some other grouping. None was more famous or more influential than Injannasi (1837-1892), arguably the greatest Mongolian literary figure of the nineteenth century and a native of Southern Mongolia. Following in the footsteps of his father, Wangchinbala (1795-1847), and elder brother, Güleransa (1820-1855?), both well-known literary figures, Injannasi produced many works of poetry and prose with his most famous work being the historical novel, *Köke sudur*, which continues to be hugely popular in Southern Mongolia, as evidenced by a continuous stream of books about the book and its author as well as at least one feature movie and a book of cartoons. Vigilante groups, like the *duguilang* ("circle"), began to express this reawakened sense of Mongolian nationhood in more visceral ways such as attacks against Chinese and the occasional Manchus and foreign missionaries. These and other developments clearly signaled that the end of Manchu domination was in sight.

PARTITION AND THE CURRENT SITUATION

As the Qing dynasty began to crumble, the Mongols, along with the Chinese and Tibetans, declared their independence from the Manchus. In the North, the most powerful individual, the head of the Mongolian Buddhist Church, declared himself the head of a new Mongolian government, but the other two-thirds of Mongols who lived in the South and thus relatively closer to the Chinese power center of Beijing were not so successful. Their aspirations for independence from foreign rule were crushed by attacks throughout the 1910s by a succession of Chinese warlords in Beijing who masqueraded as the Republic of China and asserted, without a shred of legal justification, that all of Mongolia belonged to China.²⁰ As a result, Southern

¹⁹ The Chinese blurred this inconvenient fact by giving their Mongolian overlords a thoroughly Chinese dynastic name, Yuan. The Mongols, like most other people under similar circumstances, did not resort to blatantly distorting the historical record.

²⁰ This is not the place to go into this largely ignored historical problem. Suffice it say that I know of no document signed and ratified during the time of the Qing dynasty that states that Mongolia was ever a part of China or that it should be annexed by China after the Qing dynasty. The as-assertion by the warlords and all subsequent Chinese governments has been unilateral and acquiesced in initially by

Mongolia²¹ eventually be-came completely integrated into the political and economic framework of China.

Toward the end of the 1910s, a Chinese warlord clique then in control of Beijing made an attempt to annex the northern part of Mongolia and might have actually succeeded in its land grab had it not been for the entirely unforeseen event of the civil war in Russia that spilled into Northern Mongolia, first by troops under the command of Baron Sternberg and then, hard on their heels, the ultimately victorious Red Army. This event resulted not only in the Chinese troops being chased home but also in rapidly growing Russian control leading to the creation of a “people’s republic” in 1924. What followed was a process that over the next seventy years completely subordinated the territory to policies made in Moscow. They affected not only the political, economic, and military fortunes of Mongols living in this rump state but also their view of their own culture and society.²² The result was that the northern portion of Mongolia saw the creation of a state whose government had not even a modicum of autonomous decision-making powers until about fifteen years ago. At the same time, relentless indoctrination of generations of citizens created a new sense of nation. Conceived in Moscow exclusively for the Soviet Union’s geopolitical benefit, this new sense saw the citizens of the new state as the only true or pure Mongols while the majority, living beyond its borders, came to be referred to by various adjectives like “Inner”, “Chinese” and less complimentary terms. Viewed in a wider historical perspective, this attempt at creating a new Mongolian nation was exactly the reverse of what Chinggis Khan had undertaken 800 years ago. How well this attempt succeeded is difficult to measure but there is quite clear that as late as 1945 the sense of a common Mongolian nation was still alive. It was widely reported in the summer of that year, as MPR troops swept into Southern Mongolia alongside Soviet army units, that voices were heard for reunifying the two parts of Mongolia.²³ Nothing came of it because it ran counter to Stalin’s wishes.

In one respect, the majority of Mongols living in the South had a somewhat similar experience. They, too, were subjected to foreign domination but until 1949 it was not nearly as intense as in the North. In the 1910s and 1920s, a variety of local and regional Chinese governments exerted some degree of control over Southern Mongolia. Then, during the war years of 1937 to 1945, Chinese overlords were temporarily replaced by Japanese overlords.²⁴ Soon after war’s end, Chinese control

Russia and several other foreign countries and later by virtually all governments.

²¹ Strictly speaking, Southern Mongolia also includes the entire eastern part of Mongolia, i.e. the area between the Xing’an Mountains and the present state border.

²² For a more detailed discussion of the consequences of Russian control, see my “Introduction: Some Conceptual Remarks,” in *Mongolian Culture and Society in the Age of Globalization*, 3-6.

²³ The latest reminder of this feeling for one Mongolian nation has been brought to us by Christopher P. Atwood in his “Poems of fraternity : literary responses to the attempted reunification of Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian People’s Republic,” in *The Black Master : Essays on Central Eurasia in Honor of György Kara on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Stéphane Grivelet et al. (Wiesbaden : Harrarowitz, 2005), 1-10; and “Pan-Mongolian poetry from 1945,” in *Mongolian Studies* 27 (2005), 57-70.

²⁴ The most detailed description of the war years in Southern Mongolia by a participant observer is by Sechin Jagchid in his *The Last Mongol Prince: The Life and Times of Demchudongrob, 1902-1966*

returned, and by 1949 Southern Mongolia became integrated into the Chinese state to a degree unprecedented in its entire history. Since then the sense of being part of one Mongolian nation among the Mongols of Southern Mongolia has waxed and waned with their feelings toward the Chinese, reaching an apex during the so-called cultural revolution²⁵ while being relatively weak during times of economic prosperity.

What lies ahead for the Mongolian state and nation? I am not making any specific predictions but will point to the larger context. We are witnessing profound changes in the system of international relations which have been brought on primarily by globalization,²⁶ and these changes will undoubtedly impact both state and nation in ethnic Mongolia.

Threats to the state system are nothing new. Economic pressures in late medieval Europe led to the creation of customs unions which, in turn, weakened the power of individual states. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 codified a new system of more interdependent states. From the mid-nineteenth century on, a steadily accelerating pace of technological accomplishments, such as radio, further diminished state power. The aftermath of the second world war seemed to bring this process to a halt as two states temporarily gained vast political and military power, but what the USA and the USSR gained was more than outweighed by the much steeper loss of power suffered by their respective client states.

Even the two superpowers were not immune to change. While the USA and the USSR were enjoying unchallenged political and military supremacy, global economic forces were steadily gaining in strength from the 1960s on and finally burst forth when the Soviet Union imploded. For more than a decade since then these forces have been sweeping across the planet and have set in motion a conflict of unprecedented intensity between globalization and other transnational forces, mostly economic and technological, and the old state structure. It is too early to predict the outcome of this struggle, but it is a fair surmise that the stronger states will be able to withstand the globalization forces longer and more successfully and may in fact use these same forces to economically absorb weaker neighbors. If my prediction is correct, China and to a lesser extent Russia will be able not only to retain most of their state power but to use their economic power to weaken neighboring states. It is far less certain that China will also succeed in weakening the Mongolian nation, both in its objective cultural attributes as well as in the way Mongols perceive themselves, especially the two-thirds who live under Chinese administration.

(Bellingham: Western Washington University, Center for East Asian Studies, 1999).

²⁵ One indication of this sense of belonging to one Mongolian nation (and of the Chinese reaction to it) could be found on top of the museum in downtown Kōkeqota. The statue of a galloping horse that had pointed to the north was turned 180 degrees. I also remember a number of conversations with young Mongols, always singly and out of earshot of anybody else, in which they expressed their strong sentiments on this subject. Incidentally, the statue is still looking south.

²⁶ For discussions of some of the problems created by globalization, see *Mongolian Culture and Society in the Age of Globalization*.

SUMMARY

I hope that this brief essay on the history of the Mongolian state and nation has clarified a few points. I have tried to demonstrate that conceptually state and nation are not interchangeable and each deserves to be treated in its own right. The state started out in 1206 with a truly centralized government and it included all inhabitants of Mongolia from Lake Baikal to the Ordos Bend. Moreover, it had complete political and military sovereignty. From the fourteenth century on, the state gradually lost its central power as the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate went their own separate ways, and no later than the end of the seventeenth century the Mongolian state ceased to exist altogether, never to be resurrected to its former extent. In a purely legalistic sense, one could perhaps say that a state was reestablished in 1921 or 1924 in the northern portion of Mongolia, but for most of its existence that state had no sovereignty in any real sense because it was subjected to total Soviet control. Only in the past fifteen years can one speak of a Mongolian state with at least a modicum of sovereignty, but one that has control over only slightly more than 30% of the Mongols living in Mongolia.²⁷

I believe that this essay has also demonstrated that the Mongolian nation has fared somewhat better than the state over the past eight hundred years. As I pointed out, one important reason for the difference is that for much of Mongolia's existence, its inhabitants were under a single government, even though during the more than 250 years of Manchu rule it was not a Mongolian but a foreign government. Only during the time of civil wars and their aftermath, roughly a hundred years, and the most recent ninety years have Mongols not been under a single government. Moreover, I have tried to show that even during the dark days of the civil wars, the sense of one Mongolian nation never died out and was strong enough for a variety of regional leaders to try to resurrect one effective government for the entire Mongolian homeland. I also believe that my essay warrants the conclusion that a sense of one Mongolian nation is weakest when people are suffering great economic stress and civil strife, as it happened after the collapse of the Mongolian empire, and during periods of relatively peaceful contact with foreign neighbors. At the same time, this sense of one Mongolian nation tends to be greatest in times of prolonged and stressful contact with foreigners. This occurs both when Mongols are in control over others, as during the empire period, as well as when tables are turned, as during various recent periods in Southern Mongolia. Finally, and most importantly, it is my conclusion that while the present state is very much smaller, especially in terms of population, than in earlier times, the extent of today's Mongolian nation, both in its objective and subjective aspects, has not changed much over the centuries. The same language, customs, habits and lifestyle are found on both sides of the state boundary, while at certain times during the recent and relatively short period of political separation the feeling of belonging to one Mongolian nation, as defined at the beginning of this essay, has repeatedly manifested itself.

²⁷ This leaves out Mongolian groups living beyond the contiguous Mongolian homeland, such as the Mongols living in various parts of China as well as the Kalmyks in European Russia.

I hope that my essay will encourage at least a few Mongolists to begin defining Mongolia in ethnic, cultural, and societal ways and not always and everywhere in solely political terms. We should apply this new, more inclusive perspective of Mongolia in our research. A project that purports to be a study of contemporary Mongolian literature should include not only Tumet, Khorchin and Chahar but also Khalkha.

A study of the effects of desertification in the Gobi area on Mongolian society should include all Mongols in the area, not only some. And when we will finally turn our attention to the multifarious effects of globalization on Mongolian culture and society, we ought to include the entire Mongolian homeland. It goes without saying that any research devoted to contemporary political matters must continue its focus on the present separate state structures in Northern and Southern Mongolia, but even in this rather restricted field there are opportunities for comparisons. They require additional time and effort, but they also reward researchers with greater depth for their research projects by giving them a better, more inclusive perspective of Mongolia.