

The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon: From the Chinggisid Lineage to Mongolian Nationality¹ (From the seventeenth to the early twentieth century)

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ABSTRACT

The main theme and motivation of Mongolian historiographical works of the seventeenth century onwards was the perpetuation and glorification of the Chinggisid lineage. The Mongol chroniclers presented the Chinggisid lineage as sacred and everlasting, like the flow of the sacred Ganges. This paper examines the significance of this perpetuation of the Chinggisid lineage in the construction and reconstruction of the Mongolian identity by examining the historiographical works of the seventeenth through early twentieth centuries.

The study (1) identifies the relevant lexicon and clarifies the concepts it conveys by analysing the lexicon's usage; (2) determines the significance of the discourse concerning the Chinggisid lineage in constructing and imagining of Mongolian identity by analysing the structure of the narratives; (3) discloses and traces the evolution of the Chinggisid lineage lexicon into a lexicon of Mongolian nationality by analysing the relevant underpinning ideological, political and social developments.

The study shows that the writing of the genealogy of the Chinggisid lineage, in fact, was an act of perpetuation and reconstruction of *Monggol ulus*. In the Mongol chroniclers' legitimisation of the Mongol nobility's rule of Mongolia, the Chinggisid lineage was not only the source of legitimacy and the symbol of the unity of the Mongol nobility but also was the everlasting stem of the Mongolian 'nation'.

Furthermore, the study argues that with the Mongolian independent state-building movement led by the Chinggisid nobility, the Chinggisid lineage became the unifier of the Mongols. Thus the lineage became the stem from which the Mongols traced their origin and as a network of ruling princely houses, it embraced the Mongols and drew them together. In

addition, the Chinggisid lineage concepts and discourses, underpinned by a traditional Mongolian ethos of human genealogy and propagated by the Mongol nobility, evolved into the concepts of Mongolian nation and nationality with the rise and spread of the rhetoric of the independence of the Mongols and Mongolia.

CONCEPTUAL CRISIS OF MONGOLIAN IDENTITY AND NATIONALITY LEXICON AND ITS ROOTS

Contesting conceptions: ündesten versus ulus

*Ündesten*³ is the Mongolian standard term for nation and its definition is pivotal in determining membership of the nation of Mongolia, and accordingly, one's nationality. Indeed, any discussion of the issue of nation and nationalism in Mongolia depends on the understanding and definition of the concept of nation (*ündesten*). In tracing the usages of the term *ündesten*, however ambiguous and ambivalent they might be, one can discern the presence of civic or ethnic sentiments; and, within the ethnic sentiment, the existence of two strands is evident – a 'purist' and a 'greater' Mongolian outlook is also noticeable.

During the socialist period, the concept *ündesten*, at least, in its 'scientific' definition, was an exact rendering of the Soviet concept *natsiya*. Yet, in fact, membership in the *Mongol ündesten* was in practice determined by citizenship. Theoretically however, *ündesten* was defined by a common language, culture, territory and economy. Such an *ündesten* was formed in the age of capitalism out of a number of *yastan*,⁴ which had formed out of a common language, culture and territory in the age of feudalism (Sambuu, 1978: 236–8; 1983: 129–30). More recent formulations still define the concept of nation by the presence of linguistic, cultural, territorial, political and economic unity (Byambaa & Sodnom 2000: 35). It is clear that, the Mongolians' (by 'Mongolians' I denote the citizens of Mongolia and by 'Mongols' either the all ethnic Mongols or the Mongols prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of Mongolia) prevalent use of *Mongol ündesten* was and remains congruent with the category of all citizens of Mongolia. Yet, recent developments have questioned this understanding. Now, some use the term to refer to all ethnic Mongols while others use it to mean only the ethnic Mongols of Mongolia.

To give a significant example, in a conference entitled 'The Scientific Basis of the Conception of National Security' held at the National University of Mongolia in 2001, Professor Ts. Gombosüren, the then head of the host university's Philosophy Department, questioned the use of the term national (*ünesnii*) in a document entitled 'The Conception of National

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Security', which was adopted by the Mongolian Parliament in 1994, and suggested the use of the term state (*ulsyn*) instead. Gombosüren argues that the Western concept of nation, including the Soviet one, generally indicates a notion identical to the Mongolian state (*uls*). Subsequently, Gombosüren claims that the Soviet theory of nation and nationality is not applicable to the Mongolian case as the Mongolian nation (*ündesten*) was formed at the beginning of the thirteenth century as a result of the foundation of a united state (*tör*) and integral territory, whereas according to Soviet theory, it ought to have been formed in the twentieth century (2001: 21–4).

As Gombosüren asserts, 'historically, nation, at least, indicates "an indigenous population of a given state in its entirety" that shares "a common ethno-genesis [*ugsaa garal*], culture, and language"' (2001: 23). Therefore, he argues, the use of the *ündesnii* in the 'Conception' is ambiguous, instead *ulsyn* is proper or 'the term *ündesnii* should not indicate a sense of Mongolian origin/descent [*ugsaa*]' (*ibid.*). Gombosüren continues to argue 'If the term is used in this ethnographic [*ugsaatny züin*] sense in this document then a question will arise about whether the term denotes only those of Mongolian origin/ethnicity among the citizens of our state [*uls*] or all those of Mongolian origin [*garaltan*] settled in the various corners of the world. If we mean all the Mongols in the world, or only indicate the Mongolians of pure blood [*tsever tsusny Mongolchuudaa*] then, perhaps, it is proper to talk about "national solidarity" [*ündesnii ev negdel*"]. Or, if we mean Mongolia's entire population, perhaps, it is proper to articulate "people's solidarity" [*ard түмний ev negdel*"] or "state solidarity" [*ulsyn ev negdel*"]' (2001: 24). He remarks that his 'idea is not an expression of an intention to sacrifice his own nationality [*ündes ugsaa*]' (*ibid.* 25). In addition, he claims himself to be a 'genuine Mongolian, who is never ashamed of his Mongolian gene/stock/race [*udam*] and who venerates his ancestors' wisdom and benevolence that has preserved the Mongolian nationality [*ündes ugsaa*] during the colonial period of a great power' (*ibid.*).

Gombosüren's conception of nation (*uls*) is not free from controversy; it is clear however, that his conception of the Mongolian nation is congruent with the entire citizenship of Mongolia, while he defines Mongol *ündesten* by common origin/descent (*ugsaa*) (which, in turn, is defined by genes and blood), and, perhaps, culture, and language. Indeed, his polemic manifests the ongoing conceptual debate on the issue and the crisis of the Mongolian nationality concept due to the recognition of the presence of ethnically non-Mongol Mongolians in Mongolia and ethnically Mongol non-Mongolians outside the Mongolian state. Gombosüren, by rejecting the former definition of *ündesten* and forwarding his own 'ethnic' interpretation, tries to embrace all ethnic Mongols, and at the same time, by rejecting the usage of *ündesnii* and forwarding *ulsyn* as coterminous to 'nation' tries to accommodate ethnic non-Mongol Mongolians within Mongolia. In effect, Gombosüren separates

the standard Mongolian term of nation (*iindesten*) from its embedment in statehood and ethnicises it, thus, turning it into something similar to the *ethnie* (Smith 1998: 13–16) or race concept. Therefore, for Gombosüren, those of Mongolian origin/descent, blood and gene/stock make up the Mongolian *iindesten*, while, Mongolia's population in their entirety make up the Mongolian *uls*, which, according to him, corresponds to the Western concept of nation.

Uradyn E. Bulag's perspective presented in his *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia* (1998) is another significant example. Bulag's perspective can be considered as representing what he defines as 'Greater Mongolia'. Bulag presumes all the Mongols to constitute one nation (*iindesten*) (by the usage of the Mongols of Inner Asia the term *iindesten* exclusively denotes ethnic Mongols; see Atwood 1994 for detail); however, to his disappointment, Bulag encounters in Mongolians a different conception of the Mongolian nation that is embedded within the Mongolian state. Accordingly, Bulag reveals his disappointment by stating that 'the concept *Mongol iindesten* as used in Mongolia covers only the Mongol *yastans* of Mongol *ugsaa* within the ... boundary of Mongolia, but not those beyond' (1998: 183). Thus, Bulag, being put outside of the Mongolian nation (*iindesten*) by the Mongolians, finds himself and his imagined fellows – the Inner Mongols, the Buryats, and, presumably, the Kalmyks, facing discrimination from the Mongolians. Consequently, Bulag criticises contemporary Mongolian national identity as being a product of what he calls 'Soviet-Mongolian nationalism' and 'Khalkha-centrism'. In fact, Bulag, by perceiving the Mongolians' attitude toward the non-Mongolian Mongols as discrimination, exposes a 'greater Mongolia' sentiment, which can be considered as a voice of ethnic Mongolia.

However, Bulag's 'discrimination experience' cannot be attributed solely to the Mongolians or the Khalkhas as he emphasises. In fact, the Mongolians also find 'discrimination' among the Mongols of Inner Mongolia, the Buryats and the Kalmyks. Therefore, Bulag's 'discrimination experience' in Mongolia is ubiquitous in the Mongol cultural or ethnic world⁵. This leads us to consider another significant factor in the ongoing discourse that is often manifested, however contrary it may be to the ethnic Mongols' stated wishes. This factor is the change that the past has imprinted on the Mongols. The fact is that different Mongol identities have been constructed – the Mongolian, the Inner Mongol, the Buryat, and the Kalmyk – all of which are historically circumscribed, situated and constructed out of and within the political, social, and psychological boundaries that were created as a result of the partitioning of ethnic Mongolia. Thus, the past, specifically, the twentieth century's developments and transformations have already left their mark on the ethnic Mongols.

Shared historical and ethno-cultural heritage is certainly an important

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condition of being Mongol; however, it is not the only condition, especially, for being a member of the Mongolian nation. Beside shared historical and ethno-cultural traits, there is the vital condition of being a member of the Mongolian nation – a mutual recognition and loyalty of fellows (see Gellner 1983: 7). Therefore, what the Mongolians (as well the Buryats, the Kalmyks and the Inner Mongols) are demonstrating is not exactly discrimination towards each other. Rather it is, for instance, in the case of the Mongolians, a manifestation of the distinctive Mongolian identity and recognition of the presence of the Inner Mongol, the Buryat and the Kalmyk identities which are different from the Mongolian though still Mongol, and at the same time distinct from the Chinese, and the Russian and any other analogous entities.

Indeed, these polemics are the results of the ongoing identity crisis that the ethnic Mongols experience. This crisis is a result of the recent developments – the end of the Soviet hegemony and the lifting of the Cultural Revolution, that entailed the ethnic or cultural resurfacing of Mongolia over and around the state boundaries with the demise of the Iron Curtain and the relaxation of the state borders. In fact, all Mongols have experienced the rule of Communist regimes, with their attendant ideological confines, and aggressive assimilationist policies, and thus their national language, culture and religion have been radically altered or even endangered in some areas. Consequently, various degrees of nationalist sentiments and fervour have surfaced and the Mongols are currently attempting to revive their national language, culture and religion. In short, they want to build their own 'identity home' and their search for their 'identity home' leads them to their shared cultural and historical heritage. This complex development entails multilayered and uneasy interactions, challenges and polemics among the Mongols. Yet, all Mongols are aware of their ethno-cultural and historical political unity and many of them are willing to emphasise it while also being aware of the several political bodies into which the Mongols have been partitioned. To be sure, the Mongols recognise each other as Mongol while some of the Mongols still wish to see a single ethnic and political Mongolia. These developments and challenges ultimately have led the Mongolians, and apparently, the other Mongols too, to the questions of nationhood, nationality and national identity and are challenging previously established concepts of Mongolian nationality.

Thus, the concept of nation (*üindesten*) and nationality (*üindes ugsaa*) is a particularly grave question: whether it should accommodate all the Mongols, which would transform the concept into an ethnic one, or demarcate and divide the Mongols by citizenship. Apparently, the Mongolians are bewildered; their ethnic sentiments lead them to the former position, but their civic sentiments lead them to the latter, as Gombosüren's argument shows. However, the fact is, once constructed Mongolian national identity is still defined by Mongolian citizenship and it is nested in the nation-state of

Mongolia. Yet, as a result of the recent developments, a formulation of ‘national minority of other tongues’ [*öör khel бүхнii үндэстнii тсөөнkh*] (Paragraph 2, Article 7, The Constitution of Mongolia, 13 January 1992) has been introduced into the Mongolian Constitution. The introduction of a ‘national minority’ formulation can be interpreted as a sign of a shift in the definition of the Mongolian nation and nationality concepts from an emphasis on citizenship to a cultural or ethnic principle. In addition, the Mongols are also using politically less sensitive terms *ugsataan* and *tuurgatan* to accommodate all ethnic Mongols.

Indeed, Gombosüren’s equation of *uls* with a Western concept of nation has its own root. The Mongolian concept *uls* denotes a body of people who possess their own sovereign state/government (*tör*) that exercise their sovereignty in a certain territory. The declaration of Mongolian independence proclaims, ‘Our Mongolia is originally an independent state/nation [*uls*]. Therefore, now, in accordance with the ancient order, we have decided to become an independent state/nation establishing a new state/government [*tör*] and not allowing others to intervene in our right to be in charge of our own affairs’ (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 110). While the usage of the terms *uls* and *tör* both can be rendered into English as ‘state’, here the terms express concepts that are clearly differentiated from one another. *Tör* indicated what the Mongols were lacking then, that is, the Mongols’ own state/government that would make Mongolia a nation-state, by making the Mongols sovereign in their own affairs. On the other hand, *uls* denoted the people that were originally independent and now by founding their own state/government had once again become an independent people, a nation. Furthermore, a definition given to this term by Shagj in the first years of Mongolian independence, states, ‘*ulus* – those of mankind who gained the right to decide their own internal affairs of any ...’ [*ulus khümün-ü dotor-a zagur-a-yin aliba khereg-iyen tasulun shitghekhü erhe-yi ologsan-i inu ...*] (1994 [1926–1929]: 146).

Yet, the concept *ündesten* was defined by concepts such as origin, ancestry, bloodline and cultural patterns, before its Stalinist or Marxist reconceptualisation, as we will see later on. In fact, the Mongolian nationality lexicon has dichotomous or ambivalent roots: one set of terms (*ulus*, *irgen*, *kheleten*, *togatan*, etc.) is based on a state-cultural or politico-cultural discourse, while the other set (*obogtan*, *ugsagatan*, *ündüsüten*, etc.) is based on an ethnic-racial discourse, yet both discourses had been closely intertwined and underlined by the prominence of Chinggisids until the mid-1920s. To some extent, herein lies one of the principal roots of the contemporary crisis of the Mongolian nationality lexicon. In the following section I shall attempt to outline briefly the historical transformations of Mongolian terms of collective identity in order to clarify the issue at hand.

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A brief outline of Mongolian identity terms

The modern Mongolian terms and concepts of nationality and ethnicity first became clear by the end of the nineteenth century, when the Mongols started to strive to build an independent state. Some of the terms designated the Mongols in their entirety, while others denoted attributes that the Mongols supposedly had in common. Yet, Mongolian nationality terms, and to some extent, the concepts behind them appear in Mongol chronicles as early as the seventeenth century. This is not to say that modern nationalism existed among the Mongols in this period, but neither does this mean that the Mongols had no concept of nationality or ethnicity at all at that time.

Medieval period

Certainly the Mongols had notions of a distinctive *Monggol ulus* (state-people) and *Monggol irgen* (people) from at least as long ago as the 'Chinggis' stone' that dates back to 1224–5 with their own origin myth (see Rachewiltz 1972; Thackston 1998; Munkh-Erdene 2004: 65–112). The *Monggol ulus* identity was formed due to Chinggis Khan's statecraft, on the one hand, and the ethno-cultural similarity of 'Mongol-like' (*Monggoljin*) or 'felt tent' people, on the other. Afterwards, during the Mongolian Empire, the Mongols' *Monggol ulus* identity was preserved due to the rulers' 'segregation' policy and to the privileged status assigned to the Mongols as 'people of the state'. Extant Mongolian language sources of the period indicate that no peoples of the Empire other than the Mongols had ever been denoted by the term *ulus*. They were denoted by the term *irgen*, as were the Mongols. The designations of the Mongols in the Chinese language 國族 (*kuo-tsu*) [lit. 'state-clan'] and 國人 (*kuo-jên*) [lit. 'people of the state'] confirms their *Monggol ulus* or *ulus* status and identity. In addition, the Mongols also identified themselves in cultural or linguistic terms using the phrase 'people of Mongolian tongue' (*qamuq Monggoljin kheleten*) (Cleaves 1954: 54; see also Munkh-Erdene 2004: 65–112 for detail).

Early modern period

Along with the long and well-established term and concept of *ulus*, two groups of terms appear in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century chronicles. The one group designates Mongols in their entirety as a body of people: *Monggol obogtan*⁶ (or *omogtan*), *Monggol izagurtan* (Poppe 1936: 12). The other group of terms: Mongolian ancestry,⁷ origin⁸ and gene/stock/ race⁹ indicates attributes that the Mongols supposedly shared. In addition, we find phrases like 'the land of Togomag¹⁰ root/nationality',¹¹ (Gombojav 2000: 15) and 'root/lineage/ nationality of the Oyirad and Ögeled'¹² (*Oyirad Ögeled-un ug ündiisün*) in the Mongol chronicles (Dharma 2000: 305–16). Therefore,

these terms and concepts that served as basic definers of a group identity must have been used in relation to the Mongols.

The most consistent term that the Mongol chroniclers used to denote the Mongols is *Monggol obogtan*. The seventeenth-century chroniclers continuously used this designation. One of the earliest chronicles of the period, the anonymously authored *Altan tobchi*, says 'Börte-chino . . . taking a girl called Goa Maral who had no husband became the *Monggol obogtan*' (Bawden 1955: 37). According to Charles Bawden, the other manuscripts that bear this title all used either *Monggol obogtan* or *omogtan*.¹³ Likewise, Lubsangdanjin's *Altan tobchi*, and Shamba's *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke* both repeat the same story with the same designation *Monggol obogtan* (Cleaves 1952: 6; Shamba 1959: 8). It should also be noted that at the same time the chronicles used *obogtan* to denote the clans and tribes of the thirteenth century.

Obviously, *obogtan* is not politically, but rather descent or ethno-culturally oriented for it was defined by a perceived commonness of ancestry. In fact, according to the Mongol chronicles, the Mongols saw themselves as an origin/descent group. In addition, a Mongolian dictionary of the early eighteenth century states, 'A kin [*töröl*] is one *obog*' (Khorin nigetü 1979). Yet, it is difficult to determine to what extent the term was used among the Mongols. However, while Bawden considered that the oldest version of *Altan tobchi* was written before 1624, Lubsangdanjin wrote his *Altan tobchi* circa 1662 (see Bawden 1955; Zamcarano 1955). Besides, while Shamba was from Khalkha, Lubsangdanjin was from Chakhar. Thus, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the term and concept was significantly widespread and used continuously in this period. Later on, during the early period of the Mongolian independence movement, *Monggol obogtan* was the most commonly used designation for the Mongols. Considering this, it is plausible to assume that at least from the seventeenth century this term was in usage among the Mongols.

In addition, the Mongols identified themselves in linguistic or cultural terms as shown by the use of phrases such as, *Monggol kheleten* (people of Mongolian tongue) and *Monggol togotan* (all those who can be considered as Mongol altogether as an entity). The designation *Monggol kheleten* that defined and identified the Mongols in cultural or linguistic terms is frequently used to denote all the Mongols including the *Oyirads* in the '*Rab hbyams-pa Zaya-Pandit-iyn saran-yin gerel khemekhü tuguji*', one of the earliest *Todo* (Clear or Lucid) script chronicles written by Zaya-Pandit Namkhajamtsu's (Ogtorguin Dalai) disciple Radnabadra in 1691. It is also worth pointing out that the Kalmyks and the Buryats constantly considered themselves to be part of the Mongol group and emphasised their ethno-cultural unity with the Mongols. One significant example of this is the phrase, 'Kalmyk people of Mongolian origin [*izagur*] that have same language and religion with them [with the Mongols]' (Sükhbaatar 2001: 207).

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The *Mongol togatan* is another expression that was used to denote the Mongols in their entirety. The stem of the term *toga* literally means number; a verb form of it *togalahu* means to count, or to consider; obviously, the term indicated those who can be considered or counted as Mongols in their entirety as a distinct body of people. The expression appears in Rashipungsug's *Bolur erike* but in the form of 'Mongol togatan people [ulus]'. Rashipungsug reported that after Usughal Khaan, his successor Elbeg ruled 'his own *Mongol togatan* people' (Rashipungsug 2000 II: 338). Pointing to this Rashipungsug signalled the transition from the 'multiethnic' Yuan dynasty to the ethnic Mongols' Mongolian State. In his usage, the word *togatan* is used to qualify certain named peoples and it is very informative. It reveals the underlying inclusion and exclusion process of demarcating the entity called the Mongol people. Since Rashipungsug (2000 I: 3–5), as discussed elsewhere, claimed the Mongols to be a people of distinct origin that bear their own authentic name (*Monggol*) and live by a distinct lifestyle or economy, that is, livestock husbandry, obviously, the people who could be considered or counted as Mongol were basically determined by their origin, their ethno-cultural factors, and so on.

Yet, the *Khorin nigetü* also provides a very informative definition of the significant term *ugsaga*. It says that 'if the progenitor/forerunner [*angkh-a*] of a kin [*töröl*] tribe [*aimag*] had rooted [*ündüsülen*] and multiplied (or bred) from one origin [*izagur*] and have identical language [*üge utga*] and character (or custom, conduct) [*zang chinar*] it is an *ugsaga*' (Khorin nigetü 1979). Here, *ugsaga* denotes not just the concept of descent but a group of people who share common ancestry, language and character or custom. Thus, we can see that *ugsaga* was also used in an ethnic sense.

Therefore, apparently, the determining criteria for being a Mongol appear to be origin/descent and other ethno-cultural attributes. These designations, contrary to Atwood's assertion, show that, 'the idea of a nationality (defined by customs, language and ancestry) as opposed to a country or state' (Atwood 1994) can be said to have existed in Mongolia long before the independence movement. In fact, these terms are not political or state based but ethnic or nationality focused as shown by the notions they convey. Thus we can surmise that the Mongols were identifying themselves by the commonness of 'blood, race, descent, and the mysteries and mystifications of biological likeness', the basic features that Clifford Geertz defines as central to the notion of nation or nationality (Geertz 2000: 231).

Modern period

By the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, both groups of terms, along with *shashin* (faith/religion) came to the fore and became the basic vocabulary by which the Mongols' goal of building an independent state was understood. In addition, they served as the common expression of the Mongols' unity and political unification.

According to the documents of the Mongolian independence revolution, the Mongols designated themselves variously as *Monggol obogtan*, *togatan*, *izagurtan*, *ugsagatan*, and *ündüsüten*. Among them, *Monggol ündüsüten* and *Monggol ugsagatan* were the new designations that appeared during this period. In addition, *Monggol kheleten* may have been used during this period, for the designation appears in Tseveen Jamsarano's letter written in 1932 (see later in this paper); however, the term has not been found in the documents of the Mongolian independence movement.

The other group of terms, *obog* (ancestry/clan), *izagur* (origin), *ugsaga* (descent) *ündüsü* (root/lineage/nationality), *udum* (gene/stock/race) and *yasu* (bone) and their various compounds indicate the attributes that the Mongols allegedly shared and, by which they recognised each other as members of the *Monggol obogtan*, *ündüsüten*, etc. In other words, the *obog*, *izagur*, *ündüsü*, *ugsaga*, *udum* and *yasu* and their various combinations defined membership in the *Monggol obogtan*, *ündüsüten* and so on. Accordingly, the *Monggol obogtan* and *ündüsüten* can be surmised as a community or an entity of people who share common ancestry, origin and root/lineage/nationality.

In fact, both groups of terms are morphologically and semantically inter-related, that is, almost every term that designated the Mongols as an entity or community derived from a term that denoted an attribute that the Mongols supposedly shared or had in common. For instance, the term *obogtan* derives from the term *obog* (ancestry, clan) adding a noun suffix *-tan*; thus *obogtan* means 'ancestry group'. Likewise, *izagurtan*, *ugsagatan*, *ündüsüten* and *kheleten* mean a community or group of origin, descent, lineage and language, respectively (all of which can be understood as race, ethnicity, or nation or nationality in Geertz's sense).

Both groups of terms denoted the Mongols in their exclusivity and entirety, especially, in the documents of the Mongolian independence movement. These terms (except *aimag* which was also used to denote the Mongols in their entirety) have not been found denoting the Mongols' tribal or administrative units, i.e. there has not been found Khalkha, Oyirad, Chakhar or any intra or sub-*Monggol obogtan*, *togatan*, *izagurtan*, *ündüsüten*, *ugsagatan* and *ündüsü*, *izagur*, and *ugsaga*. It suggests that the Mongols thought that only all the Mongols in their entirety could constitute an *obogtan*, *ündüsüten* and so forth. At the same time, according to these designations Mongols were a distinct entity among analogous entities, like the Chinese and the Manchu. Therefore, the concepts expressed by these terms indicated and suggested the commonness of the Mongols and their collective identity, and, at the same time differentiated the Mongols from non-Mongols.

During the period, the usage of both groups of terms had changed considerably. The concepts of some of the terms remained and grew in significance while some of them changed or lost their relevance. Until the 1920s, within these two groups of terms two terms had the same root *obog*

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and *obogtan*, and *izagur* and *izagurtan*. Up to the late 1910s, *obogtan* was used regularly, especially in the Mongolian government's documents while *izagurtan* and *togotan* were used less often. *Mongol ündüsüten* and *Mongol ugsagatan* emerge in the early 1920s. From the 1920s onwards, the terms *ündüsüten*, *izagurtan* and *ugsagatan* were used more often while *obogtan* diminished in usage. It is worth noting that the participants in the 1911 revolution tended to use the term *obogtan*, while the participants in the 1921 revolution more often used *ündüsüten*, *izagurtan* and *ugsagatan*. Among the second group of terms *ündüsü*, *izagur ündüsü* (sometimes, *ündüsü izagur*) were often used during the entire period. In the interim, a binomial term appeared, *yasu ündüsü*, which was used interchangeably with *ündüsü* and *izagur ündüsü*.

A fundamental shift to *ündüsü* and *ündüsüten* occurred in the 1920s. It is interesting that the *Introduction of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Party to the Mongol mass* used only the term *ündüsü*. Yet, in the *Introduction*, the terms *Monggol ündüsüten* and *Monggol ündüsүн-ү* both of which were used in the main body of the *Proclamation*, were not used. A meeting of party members, which was later renamed the First Congress of the Mongolian People's Party adopted these documents in 1921. It is probable that Jamsarano, the prominent Buryat-Mongol nationalist who participated in the Mongolian independence revolution from its outset and wrote many times about the Mongols' cause, coined the term *ündüsüten* and the designation *Monggol ündüsüten* for he drafted these documents. From this time onwards, *ündüsüten* became an established term in the Mongolian nationality lexicon, and eventually replaced the other terms (see Atwood 1994). Mongolian leaders identified their position as nationalists (*ündüsü ugsaga-ban bodokhu*; lit. care for, or be concerned with, one's own nationality), called themselves nationalists (*ündüsü-ben barimtalagchid*) and declared that their aim was to build an independent Mongolian state that would include all the Mongols.

In the next section, I will make an attempt to delineate the scope of the Mongolian nationality lexicon and reveal the primary mechanisms of identity construction amongst the Mongols in the pre-independence period.

SCOPE OF THE MONGOLIAN NATIONALITY LEXICON AND THE MONGOLS' IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION MECHANISM

As we have seen, Mongolian nationality terms were significant long before the Mongolian independence movement and prior to the 1900s their concepts foreshadowed the complexity of the Mongolian nationality discourse; however, the original concepts have since been conspicuously transformed. As indicated earlier, both groups of terms are interrelated morphologically

and semantically; that is, almost every term that designated the Mongols as an entity or community derived from a term that denoted an attribute that the Mongols supposedly shared or had in common. Therefore, a clarification of the basic terms (*izagur*, *ugsaga*, *ündüsü*, *yasu*, etc.) is an essential prerequisite for a better understanding of the derived terms and their concepts. Indeed, Christopher Atwood justly points that:

Ugsaa derived ultimately from the word *ug* (stump, base, origin, or beginning and, as an adjective, original, basic or initial). It was primarily used in the Qing period to mean a lineage, as in *khaan-u ugsaa* (royal lineage). *Ündüsü* had a similar primary meaning (root, beginning, origin, base, or, as an adjective, original, basic, fundamental, or principal). It was often used as a term to describe the legitimate ancestry of the Mongol nobility, as in phrases such as *khad-un ündüsü*, ‘the origin/lineage of the sovereigns’. Along with *ijagur*, another term primarily meaning ‘root’ and latter applied to royal lineages in particular, these three terms, combining and recombining in a variety of binomes, formed the main lexical resource out of which the post-1911 terminology of nationalities (as distinct from countries) would be formed (1994).

As the Mongol chronicles indicate, beneath the Mongolian nationality lexicon rests a deep-seated primordial understanding of human genealogy and the ‘origin myths’ of the Mongols. Furthermore, a close reading of the chronicles also reveals some aspects of the traditional Mongol mechanism for constructing a person’s identity. In fact, *izagur*, *ugsaga*, and *ündüsü* (or *ündüsün*) and so forth are the terms by which the basic concepts of the Mongols’ understanding and construction of human genealogy were expressed. In this regard, the Chinggisid lineage was the most representative and the central embodiment of the Mongols’ understanding of human genealogy for it still comprised the Mongol nobility’s line and was the only long-standing, human genealogy recorded by the Mongol chroniclers. Moreover, not only was the Mongols’ understanding of human genealogy best represented in the recording of Chinggisid lineage but also the Mongols’ ‘origin myths’ were tied to the Chinggisid royal lineage that established the Mongolian state and had been ruling the Mongols ever since. Therefore, the Mongols’ traditional ethos of human genealogy, the Chinggisid lineage, and the Mongols’ ‘origin myths’ were crucial elements in the rise of these terms and concepts.

In the following sections, I will attempt to (1) clarify the concepts of these terms in their usage with respect to the Chinggisid lineage; (2) to shed some light on the Mongols’ traditional mechanism for defining and constructing a person’s identity; to reveal the Chinggisid lineage’s significance in relation to the Mongols by reviewing their ‘origin myths’; and, (3) to disclose how these concepts came to form the conceptual and linguistic lexicon of Mongolian Nationality.

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Genealogy: A Source of Social and Ethnic division

Below, I will cite one passage from *Erdeni-yin Erike (The Precious Rosary)*, which was written in 1835 by Ishibaldan, a Mongol lama, in order to clarify the concepts of the terms *izagur*, *ugsaga* and *ündüsü* in genealogical usage, for it has a short passage that can perhaps serve best to explain the terms in the question. Ishibaldan wrote:

There were born three sons, called Bugugatagisi, Buguchisaljigu and Bodonchir. The *ugsaga* of those three later became the *izagur ugsaga* of the princes of the Qatagin, Saljigud, and Borjigin, respectively. Bodonchir is the progenitor (*angkhan*) of the Borjigin *izagurtan*. The *ündüsü* of water reaches to a mountain, the *ündüsü* of human being reaches to Heaven. Once, the *ündüsü* of a human being reaches to Heaven, one's *ugsaga* will become divine and famous, therefore the progenitor of human beings of the Jambudvipa descended down (*tasuragsan*) from Heaven, however later many descended down also from *Lus* (sans. Naga, Dragon) and *Yagchis* (sans. Rakshasa), *Asori* (sans. Asuri, Demi-gods), etc. However, Bodonchir is ... the *ugsaga* of Maha Samadi,¹⁴ who had a Heavenly *izagur* ... Khatun bahadur has no *ugsaga* (Heissig, W. 1961:1 2r-v, 19v).

The passage allows us both to clarify the meaning and see the conceptual interrelationship of the terms. First, the meaning of *ugsaga* can be clarified from the phrases 'Bodonchir is ... the *ugsaga* of Mahasammata' and 'Khatun bahadur has no *ugsaga*'. 'Khatun bahadur has no *ugsaga*' means he has no son. Furthermore, according to this *religio-dynastical mythometer*, Mahasammata is the first king of humankind and progenitor of the royal lineage to which Bodonchar belongs. Therefore, *ugsaga* means descent or descendant.

Second, Heaven and the other realms are the sources from which humankind originated. Therefore, the phrase 'Mahasammata, who had a Heavenly *izagur*' shows that *izagur* is a term that stands for origin. Consequently the Borjigin *izagurtan* is an ancestry group or the Borjigin nobility as a community of Bodonchar's offspring, since Bodonchar is the progenitor or the putative ancestor of the Borjigin clan and nobility.

Here, it should be noted, the term *izagurtan* cannot be read as aristocrat denoting specific social class or strata, as the post-revolutionary usage of the term implies, for *izagur* is a generic term for origin. Yet, it is true that person's social status was determined by one's origin or *izagur*; however, it is not the *izagur* itself, but rather, to what kind of *izagur* a person belonged that determined a person's social status. Therefore, for instance, a Borjigin *izagurtan* held a high social status for Bodonchar is descended from Heaven *izagur* or origin. In this particular sense, origin was a source of social division. For instance, Rashipungsug writes, 'In the country of India, there are four *izagur* (castes). Among our Mongolian people, there were not *biraman* (*brahmin*)

and *zandalachi* (*kshatriya*) *izagur*, (Rashipungsug 2000 I: 12). Likewise, Galdan wrote in his *Erdeni-yin Erike* c.1841 that in the time of Mahasammata humans divided into four *izagur*: *khan*, *biraman* (*brahmin*), *noyon* (*kshatriya*), *kharalig* (servants) and these four *izagur* are in India (Galdan 1999: 4). However, later during the 1930s, the Mongols started to use *izagurtan* and *ugsagatan* to indicate aristocracy (see Atwood 1994).

Third, since Heaven is an origin and *ündüsü* connects a descent or descendant to its source of origin or origin, thus it can be presumed to be a line or lineage. However, one may assume *ündüsü* stands for origin; since, water (or rather river), which appears in the passage, usually originates from a mountain. However, the passage says, '*ündüsü* reaches to or approaches to a mountain or Heaven'. Therefore, it is apparent, both the mountain and Heaven are the origins. Hence, *ündüsü* cannot stand for origin as such but is rather a thing that connects a human being to his or her origin, line or lineage.¹⁵ Obviously, in the passage, '*ündüsü* of water' meant a river's stream or flow. We can corroborate this explanation by noting the symbolic analogy of the Chinggisid lineage with the stream or flow of the Ganges River. Actually, in the passage Ishibaldan was recording the genealogy of the Chinggisid lineage, which was believed to be rooted in a Heavenly origin (*tenggeri izagur*).

As a result, we can conclude that *izagur*, *ündüsü* and *ugsaga* stand for origin, lineage and descent, respectively. Furthermore, for one to be of a certain origin or to be a descendant of this origin is, essentially, the same thing. In this sense, *izagur* and *ugsaga* are identical, though the viewing perspectives are different. Thus, the compound term *izagur ugsaga* is used implying both the end of a line; since, a person, if one is neither a progenitor nor the last of the line, can be, in one sense, a descendent of one's own ancestor and, same time, an origin of one's own offspring. In this sense, *izagur ugsaga* is identical with line or lineage (*ündüsü*). Likewise, a compound term *obog izagur*, which appears in the chronicles frequently, means the origin of any clan (*obog*) having one ancestor. Perhaps, *obog izagur* is just another expression that conveys the same idea with more clarity. Finally, descent (*ugsaga*) belongs to or derives from a lineage (*ündüsü*). In this sense, the lineage is the source of descent; thus the lineage is also an origin (*izagur*). Therefore, according to their contexts and perspectives the meanings of all these terms can be overlapping. It is also worth noting that the chroniclers also used terms like *ug ündüsün* and *ür-e ündüsün*, the former pointing toward the origin, the latter toward the descent, yet, both indicating lineage. Overall, we can say that *izagur*, *ündüsü*, and *ugsaga* all can indicate origin, lineage and descent, yet from different angles.

This interpretation can be supported by the *Khorin nigetüi*'s explanations that supply the following interpretations. The dictionary gives the following definition for *izagur*, 'Any *ug udam* is *izagur*; *izagur* is a clan/stock (*obog*) and

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bone (*yasu*) of human beings that has been rooted (*ündüsülen*) down from the olden times' (*Khorin nigetü* 1979). The same dictionary also provides the following definitions for *ug* (beginning/source), *udum* (stock/gene), *obog*, and *yasu* (bone) that will clarify the previous explanation given to the term *izagur* (*Khorin nigetü* 1979). According to the dictionary, 'Ug is any lineage (*ündüsü*) and origin (*ekhi*'); 'people of one *obog* are an *udum*, and people of one *urug* are also called *urug udum*', while 'one kin is one *obog*' (*Khorin nigetü* 1979). In addition, the dictionary says that 'Any hard [tissue] beneath the flesh (*mikh-a*) is bone (*yasu*)' (*Khorin nigetü* 1979). Moreover, according to the dictionary 'any people who are related by *huda* (marriage or affinity) and *obog* together are *urug* (kin/dynasty); and also one's father and mother are nuclear *urug* (*tegüs urug*)' (*Khorin nigetü* 1979).

In fact, Mongols with their patriarchal tradition divide kin into *yasun töröl* (bone kin) and *mikhän töröl* (flesh kin). The bone kin is determined by the father's line. Thus, the *izagur*, *ündüsü*, *ugsaga* and *yasu* all are defined by the father's line. Thus, *ündüsü* is not simply lineage but 'male lineage' or patrilineal lineage as well as origin and descent. For this reason, a term *yasutan* (bone group) was often used to denote members of one *obog*. It is noteworthy that the term *yasutan* appears in the nineteenth century Buryat-Mongol chronicles denoting an entire people, including all Buryat Mongols as descendants of a certain number of male progenitors (*echige*) (Poppe 1936).

Furthermore, from these dictionary definitions we can clearly see that *izagur*, *ündüsü* and *ugsaga* are not just origin, lineage and descent but these terms can also mean people who have common *izagur*, *ündüsü* and *ugsaga*. In fact, the earlier cited dictionary definition of *ugsaga* (see in the *Early modern period* section) unambiguously reveals that the term *ugsaga* denoted not just a genealogical concept but also a group of people who have a common ancestry, language and character or custom, that is, an ethnic concept. Indeed, the previously mentioned *Monggol izagur*, *Monggol udum* or *udam*, Togomag *ündüsüin* or *ündüsüitü ulus* and the Oyirad Ögeled's *ug ündüsüin* also convey similar ethnic notions. What, then is the connection between the two realms, that is, genealogical and ethnic, or rather what makes the genealogical terms stretchable into the ethnic realm?

Identity Construction: The Mongols' traditional ethos

In fact, *izagur*, *ugsaga*, *ündüsü*, *yasu* and *udum* are the basic concepts of human genealogy of the Mongols for all of these concepts are defined by blood or 'bone' line. Furthermore, we can be sure that, for the Mongols, bloodline or genealogy was one of the basic factors determining their status and identity: social and ethnic or national. Therefore, behind the Mongolian nationality lexicon rests the Mongols' traditional ethos of human genealogy.

This can be seen more clearly from a dictum that frequently appears in the Mongol chronicles. The Mongol chroniclers attributed this dictum to the Fifth Dalai Lama's work *Zalagus-un khurim* (*Youth Feast*), and used it as an ethical foundation and motivation of their work. The dictum not only discloses what history meant to the Mongols but also reveals one aspect of the Mongols' traditional way of constructing their identity, that is, the connection between the genealogical and ethnic realms.

The dictum states, 'If a person (or human being) does not know one's own *ug izagur* the he is like a monkey lost in the forest; if one does not know one's own *obog*, one is like a dragon made out of turquoise; if he does not read scripts narrated about one's own ancestors one is like a lost child' (Shastina 1957: 15). The terms *ug izagur* and *obog* used in this earliest version of dictum changed slightly over time. For instance, Dharma used '*ug ündüsün*', and '*omog yasun* with great custom' in place of *ug izagur* and *obog* respectively in his *Altan Khürdün Mingghan Khegesütü* (*Golden Wheel Thousand Motifs*) written circa 1739 (2000: 313).

The dictum urges the Mongols to learn their history. However, the main logic of the pronouncement reveals how the Mongols were constructing or determining their identity at the time. According to the dictum, a person cannot find oneself or one's own 'true' identity without knowing and understanding one's own origin or ancestry, lineage and so on. The matter of finding one's own identity requires a person to know and understand their own origin, lineage and so on. The matter of knowing and learning one's own ancestors presupposes knowing and learning from them. Thus finding one's own identity implies a certain degree of perpetuation of one's own ancestors and their customs and traditions. In this sense, it can be said that for the Mongols their past was always present with them as a part of their identity escorting them throughout their lifetimes. Thus, the Mongolian traditional ethos, to paraphrase Mircea Eliade, required the Mongols to see themselves as real to the extent that they are satisfied with imitating and repeating their predecessors. In other words, the traditional ethos dictated that the Mongols see themselves as real, i.e., as 'truly themselves,' only, and precisely insofar as they perpetuated their ancestors (Eliade 1959: 34). For this reason, *izagur* (origin), *ündüsü* (lineage) and so forth were essential factors of the Mongols' identity constructions.

Furthermore, as the dictum states, reading and studying of the 'sacred scripts' was essential to the Mongols to know and understand their ancestors and their deeds, traditions, customs and so on. No doubt, to provide this 'identity repository' was the Mongol chroniclers' principle aim. In this sense, history was one of the essential sources of identity construction. Indeed, the Mongol chronicles were one of the commanding authorities to this end. The principle aim of the Mongol chroniclers was to glorify and perpetuate the Chinggisid lineage and connect their putative descendants with their great

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ancestors by registering the Mongol nobles contemporary with the chroniclers in the lineage record, thus inspiring the Mongol nobles, and by implication, the Mongols as a whole. Certainly this genealogy was vital to the Mongol nobility since the Chinggisid lineage was the principle source of their legitimacy, both internally (within Mongolia) and externally (within the Qing Empire) (see Atwood 1994 for Mongolia as a realm within a realm). Certainly, the Mongol nobles were aware of it. In fact, the Mongol nobility not only had their own lineage records (*ug-un bichig*) but also were obliged to show these to the Qing court for it was essential in the procedure of the succession of their hereditary titles, domains and privileges. Indeed, the Aisin Gioro Emperor's recognition of the Chinggisid lineage's authority over the Mongols and the existence of an autonomous realm of Mongolia with its governing structure including the Ministry of Outer Mongolian Governance (Li Fan Yuan) within the Qing realm allowed this perpetuation. That is why, the glorification of the Chinggisid lineage was possible and, in fact, an independent Mongolian ideological space was at the disposal of the Mongols.

It is questionable, however, whether the traditional ethos of the Mongols' human genealogy and identification was derived from the customs of common Mongols or from the Chinggisid lineage's custom, practices that intrinsically implied power distribution. Perhaps, the Chinggisid lineage tradition should be seen as primarily responsible for the Mongols' traditional ethos of human genealogy, since as the state clan the Chinggisid lineage had every reason to elaborate this ethos, which it needed to regulate the relationships of its members. At any rate, the prime embodiment and maintainer of this ethos was, no doubt, the membership of the Chinggisid lineage, the principle bearers of the concepts *izagur* (origin), *ündüsü* (lineage), *ugsaga* (descent) and so on, for it was their genealogy that had written records, and was still them that ruled the Mongols at that time; thus, it was the lineage best known to the Mongols and most cherished by them.

But what about the concept of 'the Mongols'? In what follows I will show how the Mongols constructed their collective identity and how these concepts operated by examining Mongolian 'origin myths' offered by the Mongol chronicles. This reveals the significance of the Chinggisid lineage and its statehood in the construction of the Mongols' collective identity. In addition, I will offer an alternative reading of the concept *ündüsü* in its usage with respect to an entire people.

The Mongols' origin myths: Statehood and the Chinggisid lineage

The Mongols' origin and descent myth is deeply interwoven with the history of Mongolian statehood and its foundation and the then still intact ruling lineage, the Chinggisid lineage, as the Mongol chronicles of the seventeenth and later centuries testify. The Mongol historiography of the period tells

broadly speaking two different stories about the origin of the Mongols: (1) the Mongols descended from Börte-chino or Bodonchar, the putative ancestors of the ruling Borjigin clan,¹⁶ (2) the Mongols are a certain *Bidin* (or *Bide*, *Bede*, *Bida*) people whom Chinggis Khan named Mongol after building his state.

According to the majority of the seventeenth century's chronicles, the Mongols descended from Börte-chino and his wife Goa Maral. The story of Börte-chino and Goa Maral was originally written in the *Secret History of the Mongols* (Rachewiltz 1972) indicating Chinggis Khan's ancestors; however, these chronicles made them the ancestors of the Mongols, and thus made the Mongols an origin/descent group. In addition, in the attached text of the *Shira tuguji*, in which the author referred to a certain *Khökhe Debter*, the same story is reported using the phrase *Monggol omogtan* (Shastina 1957: 19). Moreover, *Dai Yuwan Ulus-un bichig*, translated into Mongolian from Manchu circa 1640–44 and printed then, straightforwardly states that, '*Dai Yuwan (Ta Yuan) Ulus's original (izagur-un) name is Mongol. The ancestor of the Mongol people is Bodanchir*'¹⁷ (*Dai Yuwan Ulus-un bichig* 1987: 3). In fact, according to Frank Dikötter, in the Qing Empire, lineage discourse based on the cult of patrilineal descent was a powerful mode of construction of racial (group) identity and, especially at court level, patrilineal descent was the basis for distinguishing the Manchu, the Mongol, the Tibetan or the Han as distinct descent line groups (2000: 1083–1101). Indeed, the above-quoted *Dai Yuwan Ulus-un bichig* that states Bodonchar to be the ancestor of the Mongols is a product of the Qing official historiography. Obviously, this mode of construction of racial identity should have reinforced the Mongol nobility's own identity discourse. Thus, we can surmise that according to this version, the Mongols thought of themselves as a community of patrilineal descent. Furthermore, the Mongols appear to be the descendants of the Mongolian royal lineage's ancestors.

The other version of Mongolian origin myth is found in Sagang Sechen's *Erdeni-yin tobchi* written circa 1662. According to this version, Börte-chino, son of a Tibetan king, came to *Bidin-yin ulus* (or *Bede*) with his wife Goa Maral; and the *Bidin-yin ulus* made Börte-chino their ruler upon hearing his noble origin (Schmidt 1829: 56). Thus, the original name of the Mongols appears to be *Bidin*. Afterwards, Sagang Sechen says that Chinggis Khan renamed the *Bidin ulus* with the name *Khökhe Monggol* (Blue Mongol) for their loyal and bold service [*monglaju zobaldan jirgaldan khüchin-yin ülemji ügegügsen*] and becoming the core of his empire [*yerüngkhei-yin gool bolugsan*]. The designation *Khökhe* symbolises the *Monggol ulus's* 'supreme of all living beings' [*khüdelkhü-yin degedü*] status for Chinggis Khan raised the *Bidin ulus* to that high status cherishing them as a topaz (*molor erdeni*). Thus, the Mongols appear to be a 'supreme loyal bold core *ulus*'.

The majority of Mongol chronicles in later centuries held to this version.

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Gombojab (1999: 12), Lomi (Heissig & Bawden 1957), Dharma (2000: 15), Ishibaldan (Heissig 1961: 1v), Galdan (1999: 130, 133), Injannashi (1991) Khishigbatu (1997: 34) all held this opinion, with few modifications. Among them, Injannashi stated that, ‘the ancestor (*ug*) of the Mongols is the *Bede ulus*. The Chinese, not being able to say it correctly, called it *Da da* (Tatar) *ulus*’ (Injannashi 1991: 31). Furthermore, according to Injannashi, *Bede* is an old word or pronunciation which means *biden*, that is, ‘we’ or ‘our’, thus *Bede* or *Biden ulus* means ‘We the people’ or ‘Our people’ (*ibid.*). Dharma, however, relegated the appearance of the name Mongol to Börte-chino’s arrival. In addition, *Monggol-Borjigid obog-un teükhe* written by Lomi circa 1732 says that Chinggis Khan named his state *Monggol ulus* after uniting many *aimags* (Heissig & Bawden 1957: 7).

Apart from these, Rashipungsug, a noble from the west-wing Baarin banner, writing circa 1774–5, addressed one chapter of his work *Bolur erike* (Crystal Rosary) to the question of the Mongols’ origin. Rashipungsug denied the account given of the Mongol’s origin in the Chinese chronicle *Nebterkhei toli* (Encyclopedia) by which a certain descendant of an ancient Chinese emperor appears to be the ‘ancestor of the *Monggol ulus*’ [*Monggol ulus-un ug ebüge*] (2000 I: 3). According to Rashipungsug’s belief, the Mongols are an inherently distinct people; however, no human being but only the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas know the origins of the peoples (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Rashipungsug claimed that the original name of ‘our *ulus*’ is Mongol; however, the Chinese called the *Monggol ulus* variously by their own will, sometimes *Siyen-yuin* (Xianyun), and sometimes *Siung-nu* (Xiongnu). Rashipungsug definitely saw the Mongols as an inherently distinct body of people, perhaps, as a community of descent for he was defending the Mongols’ origin from the ‘falsification’ of the Chinese chronicles. Thus, according to the prevalent version of Mongolian ‘origin story’, the Mongols thought of themselves as a distinct body of people with its own unique origin/ancestry.

Yet, Grigorii Potanin, a Russian explorer who travelled through north-western Mongolia in 1876–7, recorded a range of origin myths of various peoples that can be considered examples of a folk tradition. He gathered these stories from common Mongols living in what is now the western part of Mongolia. Those various myths speak of the Mongols’ origin stemming from a white standard [*Tsagan tug*], a certain woman named ‘Uduli’ [*küükün Udulī*], stone, flesh, bull, or a blue bull (Potanin 1881: 161–3). Therefore, the common people had different kinds of origin myths; however, they all saw the Mongols as descending from a common ancestry, which was distinct from the ancestries of the other peoples like Chinese, Tibetans, etc.

Thus, we can surmise that there were present, at least two major perspectives on the Mongols’ collective identity construction: the elite and folk traditions. However, both perspectives presented the Mongols as a distinct

body of people and Mongolia as a distinct realm. Yet, Potanin's account helps us to reveal the power and limit of both the elite and folk traditions. No doubt, the elite tradition, which was represented by the Mongol chronicles, was the most widespread, seemingly truthful and commanding version of the construction of the Mongolian collective identity, for it was transmitted through the 'sacred scripts' and was backed by the Mongol nobility, lamaseries and intellectuals while the folk tradition was oral and was limited to certain localities and audiences.

Overall, all the versions¹⁸ of the Mongolian origin story lead us to conclude that the Mongols thought of themselves as an inherently distinct body of people (*obogtan* or *ulus*), a descent community, thus presenting a durable biological or genealogical community. Therefore, we can deduce that ancestry, blood and genealogy together with emotional ties and attachments together defined the Mongols' collective identity.

Yet, the identification of the ancestor of the Chinggisid lineage as being the sole origin of the Mongols shows that Mongolian statehood (and the elite tradition) made the Mongols think of themselves as a community of descent. Thus, to rephrase Susan Reynolds, the Mongols were a community of descent, or biologically homogeneous, because they were an enduring political and cultural community (see Reynolds 2000: 542). However, in the eyes of the Mongols they 'were not only enduring political and cultural communities but were biologically homogeneous too' (*ibid.*). Thus, the existence of the Chinggisid lineage and its intact 'home-rule' was the very foundation of the idea of continuity of the *Monggol ulus* and the Mongolian collective identity.

Furthermore, the usages of the terms *ündüsü* and *udum* in association with ethnonyms reveals this primordialist understanding more clearly. Significant examples of the usages of the term *ündüsü* in relation to the entire people can be seen from Gombojab's and Dharma's chronicles. Gombojab, while tracing the Chinggisid Golden dynasty's (*altan urug*) lineage, wrote that Chinggis Khan's eldest son Jochi became khan in 'the land of Togomag *ündüsün* (root/lineage/nationality)' (1999: 15). Dharma writing about the same event used 'people [*ulus*] of Domog *ündüsütü* (root/lineage/nationality)' (2000: 94). From this usage, we can deduce that *ündüsün* was a basic definer of an entire people and, consequently, people were called such and such *ündüsütü* (lit. to possess or belong to *ündüsü*) people.

Moreover, Dharma's brief account given under the heading of the 'Separation of the Oyirad and Ögeled's *ug ündüsün*' from the Mongols sheds some light onto the inquiry of the nature of the concept of people's *ug ündüsün* (2000: 305–16). The very phrase, which Dharma described under the heading, says, 'The four *tümen* Oyirads (of the ten *tümen ulus* whom Togon Temür Khaan took out from Daidu) became a hostile enemy in the time of Batula *chingsang* of the Choros clan' (2000: 309). The event is, in fact, the

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political separation of the Oyirads and Ögeleds from the rest of the Mongols by creating their own ruling lineage and subsequently their own khanate. And, Dharma depicted this development as the separation of the Oyirad and Ögeled's *ug ündüsün* from a common Mongol one.

The very expression *ug ündüsün* consists of two words and *ug* can mean 'origin' and 'original', and *ündüsün* 'root' and 'lineage'. The expression can be read in two different ways: as a compound noun meaning origin/root or lineage. However, in this instance, the term *ug ündüsün* cannot be read as an origin/root, for origin/root itself cannot be separated. The *ug ündüsün* denotes here a thing that can pass through time and can be separated. Therefore, we can suppose it to be analogous with lineage (*ündüsün*) for lineage does pass through time and can separate by branching. The alternative reading would be 'original lineage' which still relies on the notion lineage. Furthermore, Dharma's very heading, the separation of Oyirad and Ögeled lineage, can be understood as a separation of the Oyirad and Ögeled's ruling lineage (*ündüsün*), but not as the separation of the Oyirad and Ögeled's 'lineage' or 'original lineage' from a common Mongol one. Dharma's point, however, was not the separation of the Oyirad's ruling lineage, but the Oyirad and Ögeled's becoming an enemy to the rest of the Mongols. Moreover, Dharma's earlier report about Jochi's becoming the khan of the 'Domog *ündüsütü*' certainly did not denote Jochi's lineage but the Tokmak people's lineage, for Jochi belonged to the Chinggisid lineage. Therefore, Dharma's very wording is exactly what it says, that is, the separation of the 'lineage' or 'original lineage' of the Oyirads from the common Mongol one. Since, we can infer that people's *ündüsün* was analogous to that of lineage concept.

However, as the Oyirads political separation from the rest of the Mongols means separation of their lineage, then lineage is defined by a political or state formation. Therefore, it would not be a gross mistake if we were to render the concept *ug ündüsün* or *ündüsün* as similar to that of 'nationality' concept or, rather, the Mongolian concept of 'nationality' and it appears to be very much analogous with that of human genealogy.

In fact, the phrase, 'You are not a Chinese offspring [*ür-e*] but a person of Mongolian *udum* who has Chinggis Khan's origin [*izagurtai*]' (Heissig 1962: 73v), which is found in *Bolur toli* (Crystal Mirror) written by Jimbadorji, a noble from Urad banner, circa 1834–7, discloses the concept of the other important term *udum*, in particular – an important aspect of the Mongols' wider collective construction of identity. Here, Chinggis Khan's origin can be read either as defining the Mongols as a whole or the origin of the person. For instance, the Yongle emperor of the Ming dynasty, was, according to this myth, considered to be Chinggis Khan's descendant Togon Temür Khaan's biological son (see Bawden 1955: 68, 155; Cleaves 1952: 126 for details). However, the main content of the phrase is the concept *udum* as defined by

blood or offspring. Consequently, the ‘person of Mongolian *udum*’ is person of Mongolian bloodline. Thus, bloodline, as the phrase reveals, appears to be one of the principle criteria that decides an individual’s affiliation to one or another *udum*. Therefore, it shows the Mongols’ understanding of nationality to be analogous to with that of human lineage.

In addition, Ishibaldan also used an expression ‘people of Mongolian *udam*’ (Heissig 1961: 22r) denoting ‘Jungar, Torguud, Ögeled, Khalkha, etc., all the Mongols [*Monggol neyite*]’ (*ibid.*: 20r). Ishibaldan’s usage of *udam* was identical with that of Jimbadorji. Ishibaldan, while tracing the Mongol nobility’s lineage used the term *udum* for denoting their line. The continuity of the line of a certain Mongol noble depended on whether the noble had his own biological male heir or not. Thus, a Mongol noble’s *udum* means his male bloodline that includes all the male offspring. For Ishibaldan, the lineage of the Mongol nobility is, definitely, analogous to that of the Mongols as a whole, if not identical. Therefore, Ishibaldan’s ‘people of the Mongolian *udam*’ are the people of Mongolian lineage. Certainly, the Mongolian *udum* refers to the Mongolian bloodline or stock/gene/race and ‘the people of Mongolian *udam*’ meant the people of Mongolian bloodline/race.

The concepts *ündüsün* and *udum* appear to be analogous if not identical; however, *ündüsün*, in effect, was defined by political formation in Dharma’s account. Moreover, the similarity of the concepts *udum* and *ündüsün* can be supported by the previously cited seventeenth century dictionary definitions of these terms. Furthermore, the Mongolian ‘nationality’ concepts (*ündüsü* and *udum*) etc., appear to be intimately intertwined with the Mongols’ understanding of human genealogy and with the concepts of lineage, or more specifically, with the Chinggisid lineage. In particular, the accounts show that there was an inference of the concepts of people’s *ug ündüsün* or *ündüsü* (lineage-nationality) with a ruling lineage (*ündüsü*). Obviously, the Mongols’ traditional ethos of human genealogy and its most perfect manifestation, the Chinggisid lineage, was the archetype by which the Mongol chroniclers understood, and in effect, from which were derived and modelled the Mongolian concepts of common lineage-nationality. Therefore, the various ethnic or genealogical concepts (ancestry, bloodline, and descent) served as the basic definers of the entity that was called *Monggol ulus* or *Monggol obogtan*, i.e. the Mongols’ collective identity. Indeed, these concepts caused the Mongols to presume that they were descended from a common ancestry. Thus, the Mongols understood themselves to be an origin/descent group or community (*obogtan*, *togatan* and *ulus*).

Furthermore, the identification of the Chinggisid lineage’s ancestor as the ancestor of the Mongols as a whole, and the story of the name Mongol as referring to the ‘supreme loyal bold core *ulus*’¹⁹ reveals the significance of the Chinggisid lineage and, in effect, the centrality of Mongolian statehood for the construction of the Mongols’ collective identity. The ‘five colours and

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four aliens, nine great *ulus*' (*tabun öngge dörben qari yisün yekhe ulus*) scheme (see also Atwood 1994 for this scheme), which repeatedly appear in chronicles from the seventeenth century onwards, reveals the significance of this interpretation. According to this scheme, Chinggis Khan subdued the Jambudvipa's sixteen great states (*ulus*), peoples of 361 tongues (*kheleten*), 721 clans (*obogtan*), and reorganised them into the 'five colours and four aliens' (*tabun öngge dörben khari*) or 'nine great *ulus*' (Sagaster 1976: 81; Baldanjavov 2001: 28, 66). Apart from the Mongols, the other eight great *ulus*es and their locations and symbolic colours vary from chronicle to chronicle. However, the *Monggol ulus* constantly appears in the core, its symbolic colour was blue and it was designated as the 'supreme of all living beings' (or most worthy [*khündülegdekhü degedü*]) (Injannashi 1991: 33).

The symbolic representations of the five colours are explained variously. Dharma identified the five colours with the colours of the five elements of Mongolian traditional cosmology: cosmos/space (blue), air (white), fire (red), water (black), earth (yellow) (2000: 306). Obviously, the Mongols' choice of blue may have reflected their traditional object of worship – the *Khökhe tenggeri* (Blue heaven or sky). At any rate, while Galdan attributed the colour blue to Chinggis Khan, as though he was a re-incarnation of bluish Vajrapani (1999: 133), Injannashi claimed that because the Mongols were respected by all other peoples, they took the colour blue, the highest of the five colours (1991: 33).

Apart from these, Rashipungsug's etymological interpretation of the name Mongol is very significant. According to him, the name Mongol consists of two syllables, *mong* and *gool*. The syllable *mong* is the first syllable of the word *mongdasi ügei*, which according to Rashipungsug means, 'to make a self-sufficient living by one's own fortune and ease'. Rashipungsug explained that:

The people of other *ulus* make a living exerting themselves in manual labour such as farming, handicrafts, commerce, and so on. The people of our *Monggol ulus* make a living herding livestock, feeding themselves by the yearly increase [of the livestock] and in the meantime using them for riding, transportation and, selling the excess for buying goods (2000 I: 5).

The other syllable, *gool*, means 'core'. Unlike the other chroniclers, Rashipungsug ascribed Mongolia's 'core' position to the spread of Buddhism therein. According to Rashipungsug, the 'core' of the *Jambudvipa* was originally India; however, the Mongolian Khaans by spreading Buddhism in their own country made the religion more prosperous than it was in other countries. Thus, Mongolia became the 'core *ulus*'; even though it had originally been a peripheral country (*khijagar orun*) (*ibid.*).

The name Mongol and its symbolic interpretation, Mongolia's place within the 'nine great *ulus*' scheme, plus the identification of the ancestors

of the Mongols with those of their royal lineage reveal that, in effect, the Mongols' collective identity construction was based on and defined by their statehood, in addition to their blood or biological likeness. Indeed, due to the Chinggisid lineage's rule of the whole of Mongolia 'Through the Qing period, the Mongols continued to see the Mongolian banners as collectively forming a single realm, one on a level with that of China, Tibet, Korea and so forth . . . Neither political disunity within a realm nor a realm's incorporation into a larger empire disrupted this sense of a historically continuous domain' (Atwood 1994), and the realm of Mongolia or *the imagined statehood* of Mongolia was the fundamental source of the Mongols' construction of collective identity. Thus, 'the Mongols saw territorial separation of the major peoples of the empire as an unquestioned part of Qing, and indeed any legitimate, statecraft' (Atwood 1994).

Thus, we can conclude that for the construction of the Mongolian identity the role of the Chinggisid lineage was paramount. The Chinggisid lineage was 'national', for the Mongolian nobility, which were tied by their common bloodline, tradition, custom and so on, ruled almost all of Mongolia. Furthermore, the Chinggisid lineage and nobility was the provider and constructor of the Mongolian collective identity for they inculcated and educated the Mongols with the idea of a separate Mongolia. In fact, the Mongol chroniclers were mostly the members of the Mongol nobility and Buddhist religious hierarchy who were united by their patron and teacher relationship. Indeed many of the ecclesiastical incarnations, including Jebdzundamba Khutugtus the head of the religious hierarchy in Mongolia, were from Chinggisid lineage. While the Mongolian nobility with its Chinggisid legitimacy was the symbol of Mongolian statehood that controlled all of Mongolia through its network of ruling princely houses, the Mongolian religious hierarchy and Church was the most organised 'national' institution, one that dominated Mongols' minds and souls. In this sense, the elite tradition was a 'national' tradition. Certainly, common people were indoctrinated by the elite tradition because the chroniclers always instructed the people to learn their own *ündüsü* and *izagur*. Furthermore, the Mongols' tradition of patrilineal descent and kinship solidarity should have served as a fertile soil for the cultivation and spread of this 'national' tradition.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Mongolian traditional ethos of human genealogy reinforced by the Chinggisid lineage that symbolised the distinct realm of Mongolia, the Mongols' 'frame of reference' by which the Mongols construed and constructed their identity, was the Mongols' principle mechanism for identity construction and it produced the Mongolian lineage-nationality/ethnicity and the Mongolian gene/race/stock concepts and discourse. No doubt, the Mongolian nationality concepts and the Mongols' understanding of nationality/ethnicity were essentially primor-

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dialist for they were based on blood and kinship ties and sentiments and the main inculcator of these concepts was the Chinggisid nobility.

In the final part of this paper, I shall examine the process of nationalist construction of Mongolian identity focusing on the period of Mongolia's independence movement.

MONGOLIAN INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONALISM

The emergence of nationalist ideology: The idea of independence

Being required to confess his guilt of 'nationalist rightist deviation'²⁰ before the Central Committee, Jamsarano sent a letter to the Central Committee of the MPRP in 1931. The following passage that belonged to the original draft of Jamsarano's letter (which was attached to the edited version) sheds some light on the emergence and transformation of Mongolian nationalism:

The question of the national movement that aimed at reviving the *Mongol ovogton* from sleep was published in the newspapers around the end of the first Russian Revolution. It was a movement that aimed to revive the culture and education of all the *Mongol ovogton*, who spoke the various dialects of the Mongolian language and were dispersed throughout the vast land of Russia, China and Tibet, sometimes, called *Mongol khelten* and *Mongol tuurgatan*. Once, there emerged the question of all *Mongol ovogton*, this movement has also been called a movement of unification of all the Mongols or Pan-Mongolism. Soon afterward, the movement became political instead of being cultural and aimed at Buryat and Kalmyk's autonomy in Russia and Outer and Inner Mongolia's separation from China (Tseveen 1997: 47).

However, Injannashi, a noble from the Tümed west wing banner of the Josotu league, expressed some of these ideas in his *Khökhe Sudur* (Blue sutra) some two decades earlier than Jamsarano's dating. Indeed, Injannashi was the first Mongol chronicler who openly questioned the Qing authority over the Mongols and the one who first broached, even if only in theory, the idea of an independent Mongolian statehood. Writing no later than 1891, Injannashi argued that:

Is not it his (Chinggis Khan's) majesty that until now for seven hundred and ten years Mongolia is governing one horizon of the world . . . How many are they in the world whose lord fathers have established a thousand year government/state (*törö*) for their own sons, grandsons and nation (*aimag ulus*) . . . The Chinese sons and offspring [grow] easily and rapidly multiply. . . However, has someone ever heard that the offspring of the Ming dynasty are ruling any corner of the world or even a piece of land the size of a fingernail . . . The Ming dynasty . . . could not secure its lineage (*ündüsün*) to the distant

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future. The Great Yuan dynasty (*ulus*) secured its lineage (*ündüsün*) for a thousand years ... Otherwise how could such a distinct Mongolia have survived (1991: 44–6).

Injannashi's argument was based on the Chinggisid lineage's rule of Mongolia and the Mongols and indeed on the Mongolian tradition of statehood. Subsequently, Injannashi declared that, 'Mongolia has never submitted to the Middle kingdom (*dumdadu ulus*) for over two thousand years' (1991: 69). Consequently, Injannashi repudiates the Qing Emperor's authority over Mongolia and claims Mongolia as an independent state, for the descendants of the Mongolian royal lineage still held the title Khaan and reigned in Mongolia. Injannashi argues:

If one of the descendants of a Khaan did not lose the title Khaan then the land is considered as his *ulus*'s territory even if the original dynasty (*ulus*) has declined and been oppressed by others, submitting tribute to them. The descendants of our Mongolian Great Yuan dynasty were reigning in succession until the Khökhe Khota's Senggedügüreng Khaan, the period of the Taizu and Taizong of the present day Daiching (Qing) dynasty. Moreover, even now four khans are still reigning in four *aimags* of Khalkha. In the laws of the Daiching dynasty, they have constantly been prescribed as such. Therefore, both the Ming and the present day Daiching dynasty, which were established after the Great Yuan state/dynasty, cannot be considered as Khaan of Mongolia. The descendants of Great Yuan did not submit to the Ming ... And now, the main branch of Yuan dynasty is still seated as Khaans, therefore, couldn't one consider both the Ming and the Qing dynasties as transitory dynasties? (1991: 70–1)

The Chinggisid lineage's continuous rule of the Mongols meant, for Injannashi, the continuity of the Mongolian government/state (*törö*). Therefore, the survival of the Chinggisid lineage that ruled the Mongols and Mongolia was the basis of the continuity of the *Monggol ulus*.

Furthermore, for Injannashi, Chinggis Khan and the Yuan dynasty was 'the lord father of the lineage-nationality [*ug ündüsün-ü ezen echige*]' (1991: 46) of the Mongols or Mongol nation (*aimag ulus*). Thus, for Injannashi, while the Chinggis Khan lineage was the progenitor of the Mongols' lineage-nationality (*ug ündüsün*), the Mongol nation was founded by the Yuan dynasty or Mongolian state. Obviously, Injannashi's lineage-nationality concept was derived from and analogous to Chinggisids' lineage concept. It should be noted that Injannashi used the binomial term *ug ündüsün* (1991: 10, 11, 28, 46, 46, 62) (note that Dharma also used *ug ündüsün*) fairly consistently to convey his ideas, however he sometimes used '*ug ündüsün* and *izagur udum*', '*ug izagur udum ündüsün*' or '*ug ündüsün izagur udum*' (1991: 13, 62, 62). Yet, Injannashi used *ündüsü* alone referring to the Chinggisid lineage (1991: 27, 45, 51)

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Besides putative common ancestry and statehood tradition, Injannashi's understanding of the Mongols' lineage-nationality appears to be determined by ethno-cultural factors (see 1991: 47–9, 52–3, 74–8). Indeed, Injannashi, when referring to the Mongols as an ethno-cultural body constantly denoted them as *Monggol togatan*. Yet, Injannashi's *Monggol togatan* had a clearly demarcated territory since he writes:

The territory of our one *aimag*²¹ that titled Mongol . . . to the north borders with Russia. Its eastern side is Khara mörön (the Amur River), and its west edge is Kökenuur. Within this reside the Southern six leagues, the Northern four *aimag* of Khalkha, Kökenuur, Chakhar, Bargu, Ööled, Dörbed, Ili and Khobdu; Its (the territory's) length is 500 *gazar*, and its width is 1000 *gazar* (1991: 25).

Injannashi's great concern was the Mongols' sense of Mongolness. Injannashi wrote with dismay that, '...scholars in the three hundred or so banners of our *Monggol togatan* are not few . . . but they know nothing about the matters of *Khökhe Monggol ulus* of their own lineage-nationality [*ug ündüsün*]' (1991: 10). Injannashi appropriated the moral dictum mentioned earlier, which the Mongolian chroniclers often attributed to the Fifth Dalai Lama, and applied it to a new context. Injannashi neither attributed it to the Dalai Lama nor did he use it as an abstract moral basis of his writing. Injannashi turned the dictum into a certain kind of criterion of Mongolness by categorising a person who does not know his own lineage-nationality (*ündüsün*) as a beast and a noble who does not know his own ancestors (*ebüge*) as an animal. Moreover, Injannashi harshly criticised authorities who disrespect their own origin (*izagur*) and categorised them as pigs (1991: 28). Subsequently, in order to revive the Mongols' 'national consciousness', Injannashi passionately appealed to the Mongols to learn the history of their own lineage-nationality and be aware of their identity. Injannashi instructed the Mongols:

There is a start and finish in affairs. There is origin and end in the elements. It is proper for human beings of the Universe to know their own origin-race-nationality [*ug izagur udum ündüsün*]. To make an analogy, if the Son of Heaven who reached the Emperor's throne does not love and revere his own parents showing them exceptional gratitude, is he not worse than the commoners are? Likewise, if human beings do not know their own lineage-nationality [*ug ündüsün*], origin-stock-race [*izagur udam*], ancestors, and [their] deeds, names and clans then it is the same as if they were to put a stake on the top of a tall tower and claim the stake is taller than the tower. Even if they know the meaning of Heaven, the laws of the Earth, and the customs of the World and the cause of the Universe they are the same as not having lineage-nationality [*ug ündüsün*]. The *Monggol togatan*, know and comprehend this altogether! (1991: 62).

Ultimately, Injannashi dedicated his *Khökhe Sudur* to the *Monggol togatan* – exhorting them to, ‘Know, the *Monggol togatan*, altogether, our own lineage-nationality [*ug ündüsün*] and gene/race/stock [*izagur udam*]’ (*ibid.*: 13) wishing ‘the *Monggol togatan* to last for a thousand and ten thousand years inexhaustibly, unbreakably, and inextinguishably, without decay’ (*ibid.*: 58).

The idea of the advancement of the Mongols by education that Injannashi passionately propagated was a new outlook among the Mongolian chronicles. According to Injannashi’s outlook, his own age was a period of the Mongols’ degradation and humiliation. Being a noble himself, he harshly criticised the Mongol nobility and clergy for the misrule that led to this degradation. Injannashi sharply criticised existing practice that exempted the Mongols from the civil servant’s examination, even when Manchus and Muslims (Khoton) were taking part in the examination. Injannashi questioned, ‘What is the reason for exempting every *Monggol togatan* from the examination, for all time?’ (1991: 20). On the basis of his own study of the history of the Yuan Dynasty and the Mongols’ attainment of Buddhist theology, Injannashi rejected all the prejudicial views, such as those of Chinese historiography, which regarded the Mongols as unintelligent. For him, the exemption of the Mongols from examination (in fact a noble privilege) hindered the Mongols’ advancement in assuming leadership in the management of governmental and military affairs. Consequently, he urged the Mongols to strive to master governmental and military affairs.

Injannashi not only emphasised the need for a civic education but also criticised the practice of Buddhism in Mongolia for not paying adequate attention to Mongolia’s ‘national’ history and culture and making all the Mongols ignorant (*bukhur*) in the name of making them Buddhas (*burkhan*) (1991: 3). He even blamed the *Sangha* for interrupting Mongolia’s population reproduction by ‘making Mongolian boys monks in the name of making them Buddhas thus eliminating their offspring’ (1991: 45).

Clearly, Injannashi was in his own conception a member of the *Monggol togatan*, and he was crying out desperately in order to save and advance his own *Monggol togatan* and Mongolia. However it is difficult to determine, using the sources at our disposal, whether and to what extent his ideas were widespread. Yet, I suppose, since Injannashi was attacking his opponents for calling him and his fellows heretics [*man-u burugu üzelten, burugu nomtan khememüi*] (1991: 4), his ideas were, obviously, not uncommon at that time. In addition, his manuscripts might have been fairly widely circulated for there is evidence that in 1914 a certain Dagdan copied *Khökhe Sudur* from the private collection of Prince Tüden, whose banner comprises the present Erdenetsagaan *sum* of Sükhbaatar *aimag*. Also, according to Jamsarano, fifteen parts of the *Khökhe Sudur* were kept in Saint Petersburg library in 1909 (Damdinsüren 1968: 83). Perhaps, Injannashi can be seen as one of the

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representatives of his time and generation, expressing certain ideas and feelings that were familiar to his contemporaries.

Another prominent propagator of nationalistic ideas was the Eighth Jebdzundamba Khutugtu of Khalkha. The Eighth Jebdzundamba issued a number of bulls (see Sarkozi 1992) that propagated anti-Chinese and even anti-Manchu ideology. In one of his bulls (Mongolian *lündeng* or Tibetan *lun-bstan*) the Eighth Jebdzundamba condemned the Khalkhas scolding them 'You, my Northern Khalkhas, welcome a Manchu, and Black Chinese by your table and mat, while humiliating the priests of my faith. It is the sign of your suffering at the hands of the enemy of the alien tongue and, the breaking of the Buddhas faith!' (Sarkozi 1992: 120; see also Jamsran 1992: 169).

Furthermore, the Eighth Jebdzundamba declared himself 'the protector and saviour of all ecclesiastical and secular beings of the fifty-seven banners of the three Northern *aimag* (Khalkha) and Inner forty-nine banners (Inner Mongolia)' in his bull of 1892 (Sarkozi 1992: 127–9); in fact, however, the Jebdzundamba's principal disciples were the Mongols of the Khalkha but not the Mongols of the Inner Leagues. In the same bull the Eighth Jebdzundamba declares:

Do not waste time since the sufferings of the numerous Mongols have become obvious. The black-headed Chinese became many and they have reached the extremes of disorder, thus we have to take care of the many Mongols who have faith in the religion of the compassionate Buddha. Following the ancient law, the Mongols have to follow Heaven's word. This year, from the first of the fourth month ride to the south, clear away the Chinese who are entangled in the Mongol banners. Do not buy Chinese tobacco. It is good to follow these orders. Then, there will be no poverty and no experience of bitter grief. From this time forth, you will be harmless and will live in very great wealth and abundance – it is certain. If you do not believe this edict, your [the Mongols'] prosperity will diminish and you will die together with the Chinese. From the first of fourth month, do not go with them [with Chinese]. Do not eat grain with them. Do not talk with the Chinese. If you do not talk, it is good. You are the white bone human descendants derived from four Emperors of the Yuan. If a Mongol wears a white hat and Chinese boots and acts like a Chinese, he will die with the Chinese. This time, the Chinese will disappear, land will be abundant and the prosperous age of our Mongols will certainly commence. (Sarkozi 1992: 127–9)

Here, the Eighth Jebtzundamba's nationalist rhetoric clearly makes the Mongols the descendants of Chinggisids by declaring them 'You are the white bone human descendants derived from four Emperors of the Yuan' thus turning them into the Chinggisids' descent group. Moreover, it is noticeable that the bull was issued immediately after the two-month-long

clash (from 9 October to the end of November of 1891) between the Chinese settlers and the native Mongols in the area of Josotu and Juu-ud League of Inner Mongolia better known as the Jindandao incident. Moreover, later on the Mongols in 1911, when they asked for support from Russia for their independence, included a description of this incident in one of the articles in their letter of relief. It stated that:

In recent years the Chinese (*irgen*) came to the Khüree and other areas by various routes and they have become too numerous. If it will entail the incident that happened in the seventeenth year of Badarguult Tör (1891) in Zosotu and Zuu-ud leagues of our Inner Mongolia where the Chinese cultivators slaughtered many of the monks and laymen, old and young, male and female persons of Mongolia without distinction, and burned down the their home; it will be the extreme of anguish (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 166)

It is very significant that the Eighth Jebdzundamba, being himself Tibetan, claims himself to be a descendant of the Golden dynasty (*Altan urug*) or the Chinggisid lineage. The Eighth Jebdzundamba's letter to the chief of the League of Tüshiyetü Khan *aimag* states, 'Since, I appeared as the reincarnation of the son of Tüshiyetü Khan of Khalkha, and later on, as son of Chin wang, I ask the dear disciples to consider me as being included in the Golden Dynasty' (Sarkozi 1992: 105). Later on, when the Eighth Jebdzundamba was elevated to the position of Khaan of Mongolia it was proclaimed that 'We, the Mongols, decided . . . to enthrone Jebdzundamba Lama, whom all the Khalkhas venerated and who was elevated as the son of the Tüshiyetü Khan, the ancestor of our princes, to the [position of] Khaan. (Jamsran 1996: 63–4). Thus, it is apparent, the Eighth Jebdzundamba was not only assuming the leadership of the Mongols but also was legitimising himself for future enthronement as early as the 1890s.

The idea of independence appears to have spread amongst the commoners even in distant regions of Mongolia. In this regard, various legends recorded by Potanin from the commoners of northwestern Mongolia are informative. Those legends associated with Shidar wang (Chinggünjab) and Amursanaa, the princes who revolted against the Manchus during 1755–8, were concerned with Mongolia's independence. According to the legends Amursanaa's incarnation and Chinggünjab's standard was supposed to lead the Mongols' struggle of liberation from the Chinese in the near future (Potanin 1881: 170). Also, Boris Vladimirtsov noted the spread of this legend among the Mongols (2002: 272–9). In 1892, when Pozdneyev (1896: 45–6) came to the Amarbayasgalant monastery, a local Mongol clerk earnestly inquired of him whether Amursanaa's grandson²² was advancing into Mongolia with his army in order to liberate the Mongols from the Chinese.

Moreover, Petr Badmaev, a Russian Buryat who had an ambitious plan to incorporate Mongolia and Tibet into the Russian Empire and who had

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travelled throughout Mongolia several times during 1893–1905, wrote to Nicolas II, the Russian Emperor, that the Mongols were already looking toward Russia for help in winning liberation from the Manchus and some of the southern Mongols were even preparing to revolt against the Qing Emperor. Furthermore, Badmaev raised the possibility of making Mongolia join Russia within two years without occupation but by providing the Mongols with arms and ammunition (Semennikova 1925: 91).

At any rate, by the late nineteenth century, a nationalist discourse that propagated the idea of independence and the separation of the Mongols from Qing Empire had developed among the Mongols and it was basically rooted in the Mongols' tradition of statehood and based on the Chinggisid lineage's rule of Mongolia. This ideology treated the Mongols as a community bound by a common lineage-nationality and functioned to alarm the Mongols about the forthcoming dangers of colonisation and extinction as the Qing 'New Policy' of Chinese settlement accelerated. This apprehensiveness marked this new ideology's anti-colonial, anti-assimilation, and anti-Chinese characters.

Certainly, from the time of the *Khökhe Sudur* to the declaration of independence such nationalist ideology must have spread significantly and the ideas, terms and concepts of Mongolian nationality and independence developed considerably. As seen in the example of Bayanbiligtü who 'spoke of the necessity of strengthening "the one tribe-race-nation of the Mongols" (*Monggol-un aimag ugsaa ündüsü*)' in 1908 (Atwood 1994), later during the 1910s the terms *obogtan*, *togatan*, *obog*, *izagur*, *ündüsü* and so forth were used widely in almost the same way.

Monggol obogtan: *The Primordial community*

In 1911, a bull issued by Eighth Jebdzundamba declared that, 'Now, it is time for our many *Mongol ovogton* to unite together, and establish an independent state [*uls*], propagate the yellow religion, and not allow the suffering of being oppressed under others' authority' (Magsarjab 1994: 10). When the Mongols declared their independence from the Qing dynasty they judged the 'New Policy' of the Qing dynasty as a policy of 'severing the lineage/nationality, and destroying the religion' of the Mongols (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 170). Consequently, the Mongolian government defined the main aim of the Mongolian independence as 'Defending the lineage/nationality, guarding our own religion, and preserving the integrity of our own territory' (*ibid.*: 171). With the declaration of the independence, Mongols from Inner *jasags* (Inner Mongolia) 'striving to inherit our own Mongol ancestry-origin-lineage/nationality [*obog yazguur ündes*] with no loss, ' (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 281) declared their allegiance to the newly established government and many of them came to Yekhe Khüriye in order to serve and liberate Mongolia.

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Undoubtedly, one of the major concerns of the Mongols was the danger of assimilation and colonisation by Chinese and this apprehension was not unfounded. Indeed, while the Chinese colonisation of Mongolian land was under way, the eventual assimilation of the Mongols by the Chinese was also foreseeable. While, many Chinese nationalists were agitating for the Hans (ethnic Chinese) to sacrifice their own blood purity to assimilate the aliens of the Qing Empire, including the Mongols (Moskalev 1997, 2002) the Qing Government had abolished the law that prohibited marriage between the Mongols and the Chinese. A petition, which contains fifteen articles, sent to Bogd Khaan 27 February 1914 from Lubsang-Odserjamtsu, the viceroy of Chakhar appointed by the Mongolian government, reveals this particular concern of the Mongols in a most detailed way. The third article of the petition states:

If, the Chinese come and occupy [lit. fill up] Mongolia [*Mongol oron*] then the Mongols will follow their conduct [*an zan*] for a long time until all the Mongols will be assimilated by Chinese [lit. changing insidiously will become Chinese]. If we analyse this situation, it is clear that Mongolian origin/nationality [*yazguur*] will gradually cease; however, Chinese say that there is no reason to worry about the Chinese exterminating the Mongols and the Manchus (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 236).

Thus, saving the Mongolian lineage-nationality or gene/stock/race and religion was one of the main reasons for the Mongols to strive for an independent statehood. Jamsarano also legitimised 'Mongolia's need for independence on China's desire to suppress our Mongolian nation [*izagur ündüsü*] and its traditional teachings [*yosu surtal*], and change its privileges [*erkhe*], language [*khele*], religion [*shashin*], and ways and manners [*jang jirum*]' (Atwood 1994). For this reason, the Mongols' idea of independence also included anti-colonial, anti-assimilation, and anti-Chinese elements. It should be mentioned that these features were distinguishable in Jebtzundamba's bull some two decades earlier; here however these patterns were expressed more sharply.

Numerous official documents, from proclamations to petitions, which were issued and received by the Mongolian government during the 1910s, contain *obogtan* and the other terms. I have extracted the following phrases from these documents in order to clarify what defined the concept of *obogtan*. The extracts which I have provided below, are mostly written by various Mongol nobles and civil servants who participated in or reacted to the Mongolian independence movement. They declared:

Our Mongols of one *ovog* and ancestor [*övög*], following our own old custom ... have established the government of an independent state (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 279)

Our *Mongol ovogton* ancestry-lineage/nationality [*ug yazguur ündes*] is one and our interest and suffering are shared (*ibid.*: 142).

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We, Mongols have been from the beginning one ancestral kin [*ovog töröl*]²³ (Jamsran 1996: 66).

We are from the beginning kin of bone and flesh of one origin. We from the beginning belong to one lineage/nationality hence it is proper that our joy, sorrow, birth and death be together. (Magsarjab, 1994: 41–2)

Mongol ovogton, from the beginning religion and lineage/nationality are one (*ibid.*: 55).

According to the passage, Mongols regarded themselves as a descent group with a common ancestry-lineage/nationality or a ‘bone and flesh kin’ (i.e. a community of descent and intermarriage) and displayed a strong loyalty towards each other, seeing themselves as destined to share their joy and sorrow, birth and death together. Thus, the *Monggol obogtan* appears to be a named body of people with common ancestry, custom, religion and destiny.

However, the Mongols’ identity was not only drawn from common origin and ancestry-lineage/nationality, but it was also drawn, in part, from religion and other cultural patterns. For instance, the Mongolian government made several protests to the Chinese government, which contains the following passages:

Our Mongols are not similar with those of the Inner land [China or Chinese] that have already established settlements and villages conforming to their own tradition. In addition, their way of life and mores are totally different. The dwelling place of Mongols is not permanent (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 71).

From the beginning, our Mongols are a distinct *aimag* [tribe/race] [from Chinese] our mores, language and letters are not same [as the Chinese] (Magsarjab 1994: 41).

Mongol and Chinese are different in mores, religion, language, and letters. All are different, mutually unintelligible (*ibid.*: 19).

Our Mongols were originally an independent state/people [*uls*], totally different from Chinese in mores, worship, economy and country’s atmosphere ... Our Mongols will never give up our own yellow faith’s core doctrine and custom (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 173).

In this passage, the Mongolian government, while protesting against the Chinese government, reveals one of the main sources, perhaps the most important source, of constructing Mongolian collective identity – the culture. Here again the Mongols appear as a distinct group of people (*aimag*) or *obogtan*. Unlike the first passage, however, this passage distinguishes the Mongols from the Chinese in cultural terms like language, religion, letters, mores, economy – and lifestyle as well as the Mongols’ own tradition of statehood since the Mongolian government officials also claimed that Mongolia historically was an independent state/people. At the same time, the passage still shows the primordial nature of the Mongols’ understanding of nationality for it claims that the Mongols from the beginning were a distinct

tribe/race from the Chinese. Therefore, it can be asserted that Mongolian governmental officials still saw *Monggol obogtan* to be an authentic distinct entity that differs from the other peoples by its origin and cultural patterns.

Therefore, we can distinguish the two aspects defining the *Monggol obogtan* or the Mongols as a body of people. The first passage represents the 'inner aspect' of the identification of the Mongols and it identifies the Mongols exclusively in terms of 'bone and flesh kin', i.e. blood. The second is the 'outer aspect' that identifies the Mongols or distinguishes the Mongols from analogous entities in ethno-cultural and historical terms. This identification process shows that Mongols had virtually no obstacle in recognising each other as a member of the *Monggol obogtan* since they regarded themselves as 'bone and flesh kin'. Nor did the Mongols have any problem in distinguishing themselves from analogous entities as demonstrated in the case of explanations of Mongol distinctiveness from Chinese as seen above. Consequently, it can be deduced that the Mongols had a well-constructed *Monggol obogtan* identity that embraced all of them and they regarded themselves as a distinct entity of people or nationality with its own culture and historical statehood that legitimised their claim for their own independent state.

The terms *obog*, *izagur*, *ündüsü* as they were used in association with the Chinggisid lineage interchangeably, here are used interchangeably as well. That is, all these terms denoted, obviously from different angles, an attribute or attributes that the Mongols thought to share from their putative common ancestry and will continue to share as long as they are not assimilated by others. And, the attributes that are denoted by the terms *obog*, *izagur*, *ündüsü* made the Mongols view themselves as bone and flesh brethren. Thus the concepts expressed by these terms defined the *Monggol obogtan*.

I have intentionally provided two renderings of these terms (*obog*, *izagur*, *ündüsü*) that were quite often used polynomially, sometimes as a binomial (*izagur ündüsü*), or sometimes as a trinomial (*obog izagur ündüsü*). The first rendering is the reading that I have drawn from their associations with the Chinggisid's lineage. However, here these terms are associated not with the Chinggisid lineage but with the Mongols, who also identified themselves in terms of language, religion, etc. ethno-cultural features. Therefore, if we follow the 'old reading', we have the Mongolian ancestry-origin-lineage, or Mongolian ancestry, origin and lineage, that is, an entire ethno-cultural entity's common ancestry-origin-lineage, etc. However, the cited passages say that if the Mongols are sinicised these attributes, that is, the ancestry, origin and lineage of the Mongols will end or be exterminated. Therefore, it can be concluded that these terms denoted lineage, consequently, the Mongols' common lineage.

However, what the Mongols actually shared as a distinct entity were ethno-cultural patterns and myths of common ancestry and origin, as well as

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tradition of statehood. Therefore, the second rendering, 'nationality' is the other and more meaningful reading of these binomial or trinomial expressions. Yet, the expressions also show that Mongols understood, or rather constructed, their nationality as something identical with a human lineage or genealogy. Obviously, the Mongols' kinship tradition and the traditional ethos of human genealogy generated this primordialist understanding of nationality. Therefore, the Mongolian concept of nationality was a kind of 'lineage-nationality', and consequently *Monggol obogtan* were a community of this 'lineage nationality'.

In using the formulation 'lineage-nationality', I also acknowledge that, undoubtedly, the Mongols' understanding of these binomial and trinomial expressions must have varied. Many may have used the term in order to indicate the commonness of the Mongols in the sense of nationality, while some used the terms to express something like the lineage of the Mongols or the Chinggisids together, in short the term and the concepts conveyed were shifting. Indeed, it is Atwood who first has meticulously noted this complicated shift and described the shift from 'lineage [*ündüsü*]' through a nation as a historical community of origin (*ijagur-asa ündüsü*) to a nation (*ijagür ündüsü*) (Atwood 1994).

In fact, the following passage reveals the shift in the nature of the concept. On 21 January 1912, at the inaugural blessing at the coronation of the Bogd Jebdzundamba as Khaan of Mongolia it was stated, 'Especially, in succeeding without interruption [*tasraltgüi*] to the lineage/nationality [*ündesen*] with golden origin [*survaljii*] of the state-people [*uls*], the *Mongol ovogton* myriad disciples and servants should strive for greatness and happiness' (Ochir & Pürvee 1982: 126–7). This phrase indicates a shift in the concept and at the same time the ambiguity of the terms and concepts. While the wording of the phrase appears identical with the wording of the expressions linked to the Chinggisid lineage, it also unequivocally indicates that the 'lineage-nationality' is not the lineage of the Chinggisids but the people's nationality (*ündüsün* of *uls*), that is, the nationality of a 'body of people occupying a defined territory and organised under a sovereign government' called *Monggol obogtan*. Indeed, it seems that the phrase was written using a combination of old and new concepts and terms. At the same time it indicates that the new concept was drawing its scope from the old concepts while acquiring a new character, that is, a state-oriented character or a civic connotation.

The other and 'inner' side of the concept 'lineage-nationality' can be clarified from both the notification (*medegülekhii*) letter of the head and ruling princes of the Ulaanchab league and the *Shine toli*. The letter was sent in September 1912 to the Chinese Interior Ministry in opposition to the Chinese intention of incorporating Mongolia into China. The letter states, '... especially if [we Mongols] become the citizen [*irgen*] of the *Zhong hua*

republic [*irgen ulus*], and the five races [*töröl*] unite and Mongol can no longer be our distinct name then the bone-lineage/nationality [*yasu ündüsü*] of the Mongols [*Monggol khümün-ü*], born from Heaven in ancient times, will probably be obliterated, and our fundamental belief, the Buddha's faith, will be relinquished'.²⁴ According to the passage, the heavenly origin of the royal lineage of the Chinggisids, has now become the origin of the Mongols in their entirety. The *Shine toli* pronounced this idea in 1914 much more clearly '... it is recorded down in veritable records [*iletkhel shastir*] that Inner and Outer Mongols all are the offspring [*üres*] of Lord Chinggis Khan and our ancestry, lineage and origin [*izagur ündüsü ekhe*] one ... and one nationality [*ündüsü*]' (*Shine toli khemekhü bichig* 16, 3 July 1914).

Indeed, what we read from these passages is the manifestation of the Chinggisid lineage camouflaged by the name Mongol. Obviously, the Chinggisid nobles, when they spoke about the Mongolian nationality understood by that their own 'heavenly mandated lineage'; in other words for them Mongolness was represented by the Chinggisid lineage and its legacy. In effect, it reveals the inner aspect of 'lineage-nationality' and the process of the construction of the concept of Mongolian nationality. The concept of the Mongolian nationality was built on the structure of the Chinggisid lineage. Indeed, the authors of these documents, and the leaders of the independence movement were the Chinggisid nobles who considered themselves to be 'bone and flesh' kin just as the Mongol chronicles and documents claimed. Thus, it can be inferred that 'lineage-nationality' was the result of the symbiotic merging of the Chinggisid lineage and the Mongols' ethno-cultural commonness. Therefore, I suspect that Chinggisid nobility and the civil servants (that is, the representatives of the elite tradition) made a set of concepts linked to the Chinggisid lineage into concepts of the Mongolian nationality or created subconsciously the concept of the Mongolian nationality out of the concepts of the Chinggisid lineage.

Yet, the following appeal of the Bogd Khaan issued in 1915 to the *Monggol obogtan* also indicates the real nature of the concept of nationality. The appeal stated, 'It is not an easy task to establish a new government/state [*tör*] ... Moreover, if now one part of *Mongol yazguurtan* could establish a foundation of state, numerous *Mongol ovogton* can unite into one nationality [*üundes*] and one religion at any time' (Magsarjab 1994: 57). Since, *Monggol izagurtan* denoted the Mongols as the people of Mongolian origin, *Monggol obogtan* should have indicated the Mongols as a people who share a common ancestry. Yet, the concept of nationality (*ündüsü*) was defined by membership in a single statehood, since when the people of Mongolian origin joined the Mongolian statehood, they were, at the same time able to be joined into one nationality. Thus, in fact, the language betrays this primordialist rhetoric and reveals the real nature of Mongolian nationality, that is, the membership in Mongolian statehood (note the Dharma's usage of *ug ündüsün* as previ-

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ously discussed). Thus, the concept *obogtan* (rather *Monggol obogtan*) appears to be constructed out of the sameness or similarity of language, religion, custom, and way of life and a myth of common ancestry or origin and most importantly collective membership in the Mongolian statehood. However, I note that the crucial concept of nationality that defined the *Monggol obogtan* was shifting from the assumed idea of ‘membership in kin’ to that of membership in a state. Yet, still membership in the Mongolian state was open only to the people of Mongolian origin. Therefore, apparently the Mongolian nationality, in the eyes of the Mongols, was still crucially determined by ‘bone and flesh’ or blood. Consequently, the *Monggol obogtan* was still assumed as a community of Mongolian blood.

Monggol ündüsüten: A Civic yet primordial community

Due to contingent historical developments, the Mongolian People’s Party (MPP) became the organiser of the independence movement or the so-called ‘people’s revolution’. In June 1920 the Outer Mongolian People’s Party members pledged, ‘to secure their nationality (*ündes yazguur*) without loss by strengthening and enriching the state/government [*tör*] and religion [*shashin*] with an earnest mind, after having recovered their lost rights through elimination of the reactionary enemy that contradicts the religion and nationality’ (Collection 1966: 7). Yet, in March 1921 the reorganised Mongolian People’s Party proclaimed that:

Now is the time in the world that every nation [*aimag ulus*] of any nationality [*ündüsü*] are pursuing the right to make its own nationality and mores prosper, hence our many human beings of the Mongolian nationality have to strive to connect what was once torn, and assemble what was once broken after having restored and reformed the collapsed government, and re-occupying the original territory ... The advancement of Mongolian people [*tümen arad*] depends on the establishment of a sovereign state [*ulus*] of *Mongol ündüsüten* ... In the future, *Monggol ündüsüten* will join together in the desire to become one state. In the immediate future, we aim to restore in a reformed way the recently collapsed autonomous Outer Mongolian government [*törö*], having emancipated ourselves from the reactionary Chinese authority (Dashnyam & Lonjid 2001: 105–108).

Thus, thanks to Jamsarano, a prominent nationalist who participated in the Mongolian independence movement from its beginning and who was responsible for formulating this document, the expression *Monggol ündüsüten* was introduced into this text. Meanwhile, the other terms were also in use and the passage below will show their meanings:

The *Mongol yazguurtan*,²⁵ struggling against the occupying oppressive enemy, will reclaim our own rights and authority by prospering our own nationality

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[*yazguur ündes*] and will establish a state and a government of our own original nationality (Collection 1966: 14).

We, the Mongols thinking of our religion and nationality, make the *Mongol ovogton* whole (*ibid.*: 36)

In order to multiply the population of Mongolia it is proper to settle into Mongolia the Buryat, Torguud, Inner Mongol, Barga and other *Monggol ündesten* if they wish, and make them permanent citizens giving them residence (*ibid.*: 99).

The aim to unite Mongolia, by establishing connection with the many *aimag* of the *Mongol ugsaatan*, is the important goal of our Party. Nevertheless, until now Barga, Inner Mongol, Uryankhai and other Mongols of our religion and nationality [*yas ündes*] have not been able to be united (*ibid.*: 76).

According to these passages, *Monggol ündüsüten* appears to be identical with *Monggol obogtan*, *Monggol izagurtan*, and *Monggol ugsagatan* and the main aim of the revolution was independence and unification of all the Mongols in order to protect their nationality and propagate their religion. The passages show no significant differences between the usage of *obogtan*, *izagurtan*, *ugsagatan* and *ündüsüten* and they are all channelled through nationality (*ündüsü*) and its various compounds (*ündüsü*, *izagur*, *ugsaga*) that qualified a people to be considered an *ündüsüten* (an attribute that a people possess naturally) and by virtue of this to form a distinct body. Thus, what defines the concept of nationality is the main question to be addressed.

Jamsarano formulated the MPP's proclamation and used the term *ündüsüten* in it along with the term *ündüsü*, and his writings can be seen as a vital clue in answering this question.²⁶ Indeed, by examining Jamsarano's confession letter mentioned earlier (written both in Russian and Mongolian) in which Russian renderings of Mongolian nationality terms are very useful in determining the differences and similarities of the terms, we can not only shed some light on the relationship of the terms but also gain a firmer grasp of the nature of Mongolian nationalism. Thus, Jamsarano wrote:

The main objective for the solution of the national problem is fivefold namely: 1) Our own Mongolian territory [*gazar us, territoriya*], 2) Our own nationality [*ündüsü, natsional 'nost'*], 3) The people [democracy] [*ard tümen, narod (demokratiya)*], 4) Rights and Freedom, 5) The state [*ulus, gosudarstvo*]. This is the five point basis of the nationalist rightist course of my type in the party leadership . . . In establishing the Mongolian national state, it is proper to attract immigration from Inner Mongolia and USSR: Buryats and Kalmyks [Torguud], i.e. the representatives of the Mongolian nation [*ündüsüten, natsiya*], with the consideration that the territory would be entirely occupied by a homogeneous [*izagur, odnorodnoi*] Mongolian mass and thereby block the path of the historical colonising aspirations of the Russian and Chinese peasantry. The Mongolian nation must possess its own

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territory ... With the further development of the national revolutionary movement, a federation of Mongolian tribes [*obogtan, plemena*] around the People's Republic of Mongolia will be established ... The Mongolian tribes should have cultural relations with our Mongolia and Ulaanbaatar, which is supposed to serve as a kind of Moscow for Inner Mongolia, Kōkenuur and etc ... The leadership of the Comintern, the aid of the USSR, the world revolution, the creation of socialism and the demolition of capitalism were evaluated from the point of view of Mongolian national interests, i.e. the goals were the interests of the Mongolian state, interests of national liberation and revival not only within Outer Mongolia, but also within Inner Mongolia, Kōkenuur, Xinjiang and Barga ... Hence, the struggles of the nationalists [*ündüsü-ben barimtalagchid, natsionalisty*] were for the real political, economic, and cultural independence of the Mongolian state, the struggle against Russian and Chinese colonisation, the struggle for more settlement of people of Mongolian origin [*obogtan, koreni*]. Mongolia must not be smashed under the feet of China, Russia or Japan, but should be an independent country [*ulus, strana*] ... This nationalist rightist ideology in the Party, at last, led to a national chauvinism, a self-conceit of a narrow national egoism, a cult of national independence and the sovereignty of the state, and an aspiration to pursue a sovereign policy independent from USSR, as equal with equal (The Central Archive of MPRP. F-4, D-4, XH-36).

This excerpt and the previously cited passage contain most of the terms that had been used throughout the whole period. While term *ündüsü* meant nationality, *ündüsüten* meant nation, and the idea of 'national' was expressed by *ündüsүн-ü*. The letter indeed largely reaffirms the conclusions reached in previous sections of this paper. The term *ündüsü* and its various compounds determined the person's belonging to a Mongolian nation, that is, nationality. If Jamsarano was using the term *ijagur ündüsü* (Atwood 1994) to express the notion of nation or nationality in 1912, at this time however he uses *ündüsüten* for nation, and *ündüsü* for nationality. Since Jamsarano was writing in 1912 that 'new states [*ulus törө*] are formed by those people having similar language [*khele*], ancestry [*ijagur*], religion [*shashin*], customs [*yosu*] and teachings [*surtal*] who all live in one region [country L.M.] [*orum*]' (Atwood 1994), it seems, Jamsarano defined nationality by these features.

In fact, Jamsarano, a scholar and ethnographer trained at St Petersburg University, had a significant impact on the Mongolian nationality lexicon and its concepts. By denoting the concept nation by *ündüsüten* and defining it by nationality or presence of a common language, origin, religion, customs, teachings and country Jamsarano made *Monggol ündüsüten* a popular entity bound to its own state and territory. In doing so, Jamsarano somehow 'modernised' the Mongols' primordialist concept of nationality. By this logic, those who qualify with respect to these prerequisites appear to be of the Mongolian nationality (*ündüsü*).

Yet, by using *Mongolskie plemena*, that is, Mongolian tribes, ‘which spoke the various dialects of the Mongolian language and were dispersed throughout the vast land of Russia, China and Tibet, sometimes, called *Monggol khelten* and *Monggol tuurgatan*’ he made the Mongols’ *Monggol obogtan* into homogeneous (*izagur, odnorodnoi*) tribes of a similar language group or origin (*obogtan, koreni*). Thus, it seems, he distinguishes *Monggol ündüsüten* from the *Monggol obogtan* or, in effect, for Jamsarano, those of the Mongols who would be within the Mongolian state were presented as the Mongolian nation, while those who were not were the *Monggol obogtan* and the like. Otherwise, by this logic Jamsarano implies that while all Mongols were *Monggol obogtan* only those Mongols who were within the Mongolian state were *Monggol ündüsüten*. Obviously, for Jamsarano, the Mongols’ *Monggol obogtan*, *Monggol izagurtan*, and *Monggol ugsagatan* matched his notion of ‘Mongolian tribes’ (*Mongolskie plemena*). For this reason, I contend that, when Jamsarano introduced the new term *ündüsüten* into the Mongolian nationality lexicon, he emphasised the importance of statehood. Thus, according to him, when the Mongols do possess their own statehood they represent a nation (and, logically, the Mongols who are citizens of Mongolia are of Mongolian nationality), and when they do not, they are, in effect, only an ethnicity or ethnic group (or as an individual, an ethnic Mongol).

Obviously, Jamsarano’s conceptions of Mongolian nation, nationality and *Monggol obogtan* were grounded in his education and differ significantly from those of the Mongols who had no formal education. Yet, his formulation of the concept of Mongolian nation and nationality would be gradually established in Mongolia due to the prominence of the Buryat Mongols in Mongolia’s political affairs and the younger generations of Mongolians acquiring Soviet education. Both of these entailed a ‘strong influx of Russian lexical influence’ into the Mongolian nationality lexicon (Atwood 1994) and displaced other designations like *Monggol obogtan*, *Monggol izagurtan*, and *Monggol ugsagatan*.

Nevertheless, up to the 1930s *Monggol ündüsüten*, *Monggol obogtan*, *Monggol izagurtan*, and *Monggol ugsagatan* were used interchangeably; *Monggol ündüsüten* however, was used more often. Moreover, there was not a clear-cut distinction between *ündüsüten* and the other terms. Yet, there is a keen nuance in the usages. When discussions referred to all the Mongols, terms like *obogtan*, *izagurtan* and *ugsagatan* tended to be used, though *ündüsüten* was also used. On the other hand, in discussions concerning Mongolia proper, the terms nation and national were used constantly (see for example Dindub, L. 1977; Amar, A. 1989; Choibalsan, Kh. Losol, L. and Demid, G. 1979). Thus, from the 1920s onward a distinction appeared between *ündüsüten* and the others; however the Mongols’ understanding of Mongolian nation and nationality remained primordialist in nature.

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CONCLUSION

With the establishment of Mongolian statehood, the Mongols, as a human group with a state formation, constructed a well-established identity and by virtue of this identity have constituted an identity-community ever since. This identity drew upon their own tradition of statehood as well as their ethno-cultural distinctiveness. Later on, during the Qing over-lordship, the Mongols presented a distinct body of people having *de facto* autonomy with their own ruling class (the Chinggisid nobility), a clearly demarcated territory that was perceived as their own country, and a culturally distinct population that was perceived as the *Mongol obogtan*, that is a community of strong primordial sentiment (see Munkh-Erdene 2004: 150–75 for detail). Thus, in effect, the Mongols' identity was nested within Mongolia and for them Mongolia was an imagined, if not actual, statehood. In effect, this identity was the root of the Mongols' claim for nationhood.

With the Chinggisid nobility and religious hierarchy's monopolisation of the early national struggle, their ideology and concepts shifted downward to the commoners, covering and embracing them just as 'kinship organises everything around a high centre' (Anderson 1991: 19). Indeed, once the Mongols' ecclesiastical and temporal lords began to propagate the idea of independence and 'invited' the common Mongols to stand for their common religion and 'lineage/nationality', the loyal Mongol disciples and serfs who hated the Manchu-Chinese officials and merchants followed their lords. In effect, it was a kind of 'elevation of the populace to the position of elite ... [making them] the bearer of sovereignty, the basis of political solidarity, and the supreme object of loyalty' (Greenfeld 1992: 7). To paraphrase Gellner (1983: 7), from this time on the Mongols shared the same culture and recognised each other as belonging to the same *obogtan*, 'lineage-nationality' and nation. Thus, an imagined political community called the Mongolian nation was constructed. The *Mongol obogtan* was 'a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own ... [or] a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own' (Weber 2000: 9). In fact, to paraphrase Seton-Watson (1977: 5), all that I can find to say is that the Mongolian nation came into existence when their nobles and ecclesiastical lords considered themselves to be a Mongolian nation.

Furthermore, the terms and concepts of the Chinggisid lineage had become the lexical and conceptual model and archetype underlying the Mongolian nationality conceptual lexicon due to the Chinggisid lineage's significance in the origin myth and the statehood tradition of the Mongols. Both the Mongols' traditional ethos of human genealogy and the Mongolian traditional historiography underpinned this transformation. The Mongol nobility presented at least a putative descent community that came down from time immemorial, a primordial community. While leading the

Mongols towards independence, the Chinggisid nobility and ecclesiastical lords spread their own ideology amongst the Mongols. Thus, the concepts of ancestry, origin, root/lineage/nationality, and descent, and *Monggol obogtan* etc. were fanned into flames throughout Mongolia by the rhetoric of the Mongol nobility animated by the Chinggisid lineage's primordialist zeal. Consequently, 'these ties were once imagined particularistically – as indefinitely stretchable networks of kinship and clientship' (Anderson 1991: 6) by the common Mongols. Since the concepts of the Chinggisid lineage and the Mongols' traditional ethos were primordialist in nature, they gave rise to a primordialist understanding and rhetoric of nation and nationality. The Mongols' traditional ethos of human genealogy that always suggested primordial sentiments must have substantiated this imagination. Thus, the above terms, whether they conveyed the notion of nationality or lineage, were defined by bone and flesh as their conceptual basis: this was the concept of the Mongolian royal lineage. For these reasons, Mongolian concepts of Mongolian nation (*Monggol obogtan*) and nationality (*ündüsü*) became primordialist in nature.

From this time forth the very terms and concepts shifted, crystallised and differentiated. For instance, *ündüsü* was transformed from lineage and lineage nationality to nationality and nation. While all these changes were dependent on the success or failure of Mongolia's independence movement, the underlying nature of this change was the Mongols' perception of, and loyalty to, their own state (*ulus*) and nationality/ethnicity (*ündüsü* or *ündüsü ugsaga*). As a result, at present, the prevalent use of the concept *Monggol ündüsüiten* in Mongolia proper is as a category that is coterminous with the entire citizenry of the country, while in Inner Mongolia it is coterminous with the ethnic Mongols. Yet, while *Monggol obogtan*, *Monggol togatan*, and *Monggol izagurtan* have become insignificant as terms *Monggol ugsagan* and *Monggol tugurgatan* (rarely, *Monggol kheleten*) denote the ethnic Mongols in their entirety.

Finally, I am not suggesting that the pre-independence Mongolian identity was a modern national identity or that the driving ideological force of the Mongolian independent state building movement was a modern nationalism. Instead, I am simply convinced that Mongolian collective identity, ethnic, national, or whatsoever it might be labelled, made the Mongols see themselves as an inherent community or entity that had its own distinct origin, culture, lifestyle, homeland and ruling institution, and was thus destined to live as such. This implies that what mattered for the devising of the modern nation and nation-state is, contrary to Liah Greenfeld's assertion, neither democracy nor the sovereign right of the people, in the first instance but rather a sense of 'Englishness', 'Frenchness' or any people's collective identity, just as 'Mongolness' did and does still in the Mongols' case. Furthermore, if we define nationalism as a principle that stipulates cultural

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and political units should be congruent, as Gellner suggests principles and sentiments of this kind were present at every stage of Mongolian history.

However, this does not mean that modern nationalism is simply a magnified version of pre-modern sentiments and loyalties. What principally separates modern nationalism from its pre-modern predecessors is its democratic basis, the *demos kratic* state, that not only truly nationalises (universalises within the country or projected country) the kind of sentiments and loyalties by every kind of *nationalness* but also that of every one of its subjects by its political appeal and forms of demagoguery that entitles the subjects to be sovereigns of the state, as citizens or a community of legal equals, which are at the same time, volunteers and conscripts.

NOTES

¹An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2003 annual meeting of the Mongolia Society in New York.

²I thank Dr Timothy May, Prof. Andre Gingrich, Michael Smith and Nina Lang for their suggestions, encouragements, and improvement of my English. I especially thank the anonymous referees of *Inner Asia* for their insightful advice and detailed comments. I am grateful to the Academic Fellowship Program for support (AFP/HESP Returning Scholar fellowship).

³The classic Mongol spelling is *ündüsüten*. Except the quotations from Cyrillic sources and current usages, here I used classic Mongol spelling of *ündüsüten* and the other terms.

⁴The classic Mongol spelling is *yasutan*.

⁵Bulag himself, it seems, is aware of this situation (see for example Bulag 1998: 187, 212).

⁶The term *obogtan* is used in *The Secret History of the Mongols* denoting various Mongol clans, see Rachewiltz 1972.

⁷The ancestor of the Mongol people is Bodanchir [*Monggol ulus-un eliütsüg inu Bodanchir*] (*Dai Yuwan Ulus-un bichig* 1987 3) (Ancestor of the Mongol people [*Monggol ulus-un ug ebüge*]) (Rashipungsug 2000 I 3).

⁸Mongolian origin [*Monggol izagur*] (Kazakevich 1935: 10; Sükhbaatar 2001: 207)

⁹Person of Mongolian gene/stock, [*Monggol udum-un khümün*] (Heissig 1962); peoples of Mongol gene/stock [*Monggol udum-un ulus*] (Heissig 1961: 22r)

¹⁰Togmak was the name of the nomadic people of the Qipchaq steppe during the Mongol Empire. See Z. V. Togan: The Origins of the Kazaks and the ozbeks in H. B. Paksoy (ed.) *Central Asian Survey*. 11, No. 3. 1992.

¹¹[*Togomag ündüsün-i gazar*] (Gombojab: 1999 15); [*Domog ündüsütü ulus*] (Dharma 2000: 94)

¹²[*Oiyrad Ögeled-un ug ündüsün*] (Dharma 2000: 305–16).

¹³In one of them, it was written *omogtan*, and in the other, it was written *aimag*. Gongor considered *omog* as a variant of *obog* (Gongor 1978: 6).

¹⁴According to the *religio-dynastical mythomoteur* (see Anthony Smith 1998: 13–16, 57–68) presented by the vast majority of the Mongolian chronicles, the khans of

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India, Tibet and Mongolia belonged to a single lineage; however, a different opinion was present too (see Gombajab 1999: 3–4). The line, as the chroniclers assert, starts from the Maha Samadi (sans. mahasammata), who appears to be the first Indian king, and continues down to contemporary to the chroniclers Mongol nobility. The lineage, according to the Mongol chroniclers, was as sacred and everlasting as the stream of the Ganges River.

¹⁵In addition, this interpretation can be supported by the translation of the basic text of Tibetan Medicine called the Four Tantras into Mongolian. Tantra means ‘lineage’. It is composed of four books and the first book is called Root *Tantra*. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Mongols translated Four *Tantras* into Mongolian several times. They translated it as *Dörbön ündüsü*. Furthermore, the Root *Tantra* was translated as *izagur-un ündüsü*. As well, a Mongol nobleman Sagang Sechen wrote *Khad-un ündüsün-ü Erdeni-yin tobchi* in 1662, and later in 1685 it was translated and published in Manchu and Chinese. The Chinese translation of this title is Menggu Yuanliu the Chinese characters being 蒙古源流. It contains both a character that means origin and one that indicates flow or stream. Perhaps, it is the Chinese rendering of Mongolian *ündüsün*.

¹⁶See the Compendium of Chronicles for the earliest version of the Mongols’ origin story W. M. Thackston (trans.) (1998) *Rashiduddin Fazlullah’s Jami’ u’t-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles A History of the Mongols, Part One*. Harvard University: 37–112.

¹⁷[*Monggol ulus-un elüntsüg inu Bodanchir*] (*Dai Yuwan Ulus-un bichig* 1987: 3).

¹⁸See also Potanin 1881: 161–3 for some folk myths; Ishibaldan (Heissig 1961: 40); Jimbadorji (Heissig 1962: 13v) and Danzanrabjai (Atwood 1994) for some religious accounts on the Mongols’ origin.

¹⁹The ‘core ulus’ interpretation may have had a deep historical root since in the *Secret History of the Mongols* the expression ‘*qol-un ulus*’ (ulus of the core) was used to denote the Mongolian Empire’s part that was under Qa’an’s direct control.

²⁰The Rightists were the followers of the Mongols’ original cause and Comintern and Bolsheviks cleansed them from the Party in 1928. Their main leaders were Tseven Jamsrano, Tserendorj, the prime minister, Amar, the foreign minister, Dambadorji, the secretary general of the Central Committee of party, Jadamba, the secretary of the CC and the others. Indeed, the rightist made up the vast majority of the Party. Later, many of them were purged and executed. After the purging the Rightist, Comintern put the Leftists in the leadership.

²¹Here, *aimag* means one distinct class or category of people.

²²During the independence movement Ja Lama styled himself as the reincarnation of Amursanaa. See Lomakina (1993) and also Gaunt (1993) for Ja Lama.

²³*Obog töröl* is used here as a compound name, means *obog* or nationality. When China declared the establishment of republic consisting of five races or nationalities, Mongols translated it as *ugsaga* and *töröl*, i.e. five nationality and kin or sort. *Töröl* literally, kin, kind, sort; race, species; relative.

²⁴The Second Historical Archives of China 1045–144 11/18/1912. I would like to thank doctor Mei-hua Lan for kindly sending me this document.

²⁵In 1922, Jalkhanz Khutugtu Damdinbazar, the prime minister, in his decree stated, ‘In the time of the ancient Bogd Chinggis Qa’an we *Monggol izagurtan* were a very powerful state (*ulus*) that conquered most of the world . . . Now, we Mongols found

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the way to spread our yellow faith [*shashin*] and defend our own *izagur ündüsü* forever' (The Central archive of MPRP: F-4, T-1, HN-104).

²⁶This document was published in 1921 in *Narody Dal'nyego Vostoka* (Peoples of the Far East), a journal that was published by Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern, in Russian translation. In there the term *ündüsü*, *ündüsüten* had been rendered as *natsiya* (nation), *natsional 'nost'* (nationality), and *narod* (people). However, this published version was significantly revised to fit to the idea of class revolution and, *ündüsüten* was replaced by *trudovoi narod* (working people) or *narod* in several occasions.

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