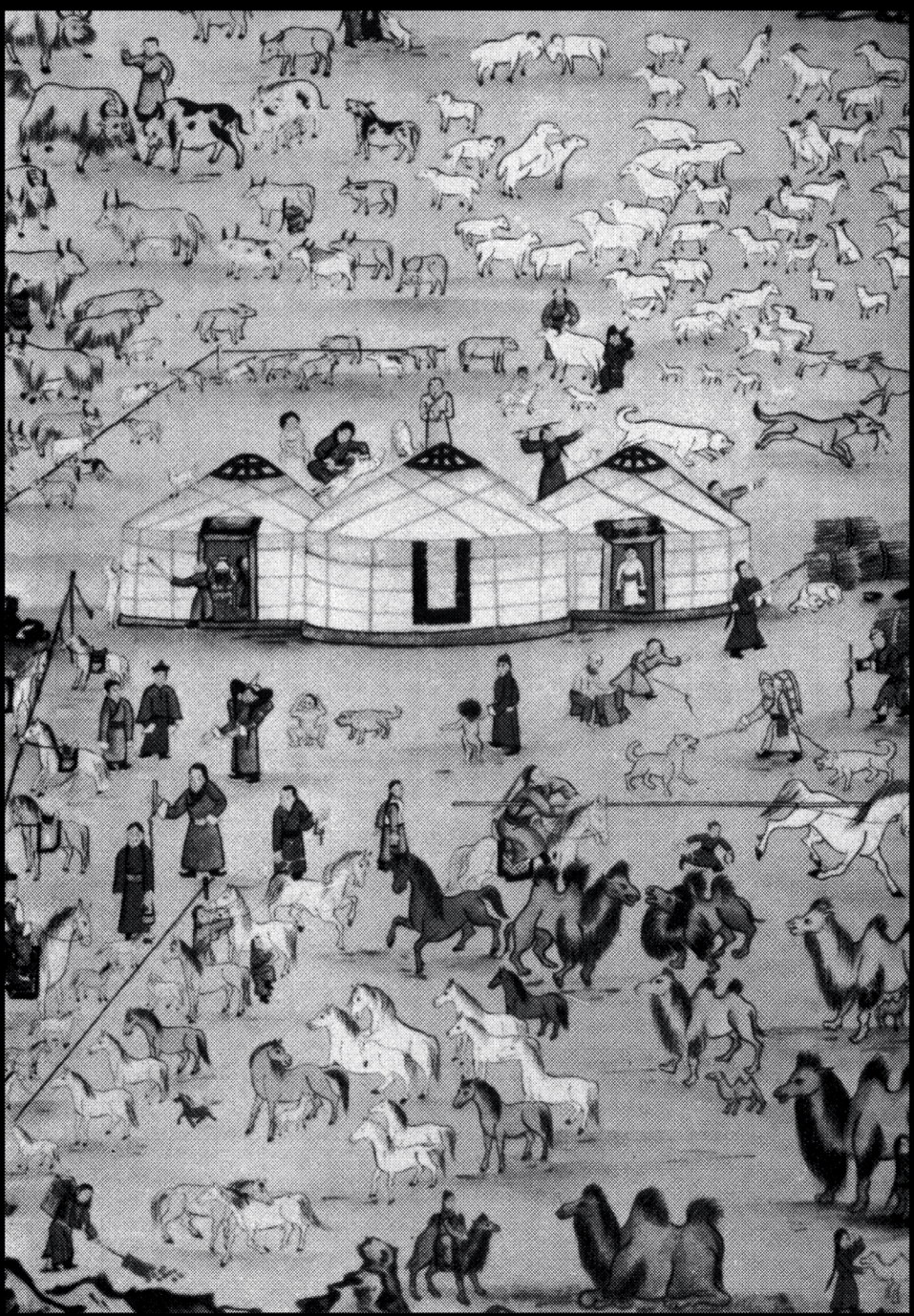
MONGOLIAN TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

AN ANTHOLOGY

C. R. BAWDEN



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FOR JEAN

WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE

PREFACE

The intention of the present book is to introduce readers to some of the various genres of literature, both oral and written, in which the genius of the Mongolian people expressed itself from early beginnings in the thirteenth century up to the end of the nineteenth century. The translations are all my own, though naturally some of the passages I have chosen have been translated previously by others. I hope that my choice of items to translate, and the styles in which I have chosen to present them, will meet with the approval, or at least the understanding, of my readers.

The terms Mongolia and Mongolian need some explanation. In formal terms there is today only a single country named Mongolia. This is, roughly speaking, the territory which at one time was known as Outer Mongolia and then, from 1924 to 1992, as the Mongolian People's Republic. It lies between Russia in the north and China in the south. More Mongols dwell outside Mongolia itself than within its borders. South of Mongolia lies the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of China, much influenced nowadays by Chinese culture, but linguistically and in other respects close to its northern neighbour. These two areas form, as it were, the Mongolian heartland, and it is their literature which is presented in the present book. North of Mongolia dwell the Buryats, heavily influenced by Russian politics and culture, and far to the west, this side of the lower Volga, dwell the Kalmucks, of whom much the same can be said. Small isolated groups of Mongols are to be found elsewhere in mainland Asia, and in Taiwan, Europe and the U.S.A.

Mongolian culture is to all intents and purposes a unique one. The Mongols were, and to some extent still are, a horse-riding folk, living a mobile life accompanying their flocks and herds. But always they have been inclined to settle in fortresses, trade-cities, lamaseries, and today in towns and conurbations, when conditions favoured that process. When we first meet them, they worshipped the Blue Sky and lived in a universe peopled by local deities and shamanist spirits. Theirs was a clan society, much given to warfare amogst themselves, and, in the time of Genghis Khan, on an international scale. Then, in the late sixteenth century, they began to be converted to Tibetan forms of Buddhism. Some lamaseries were loyal to unreformed Buddhism, but for the most part it was the Yellow Sect, or Gelugpa, Buddhism which prevailed. Mongols usually refer to Buddhism as Sharyn Shashin, the Religion of the

Yellow. Earlier contacts with Tibet during imperial times, followed by this second, more permanent conversion, had a profound effect on language and culture. The incorporation of Inner and Outer Mongolia, from the seventeenth century onwards, in the Manchu-Chinese empire, brought about further fundamental change. Mongolian literature reflects these vicissitudes. The most recent developments, the dominance and now the collapse of a Soviet-inspired culture, lie outside our scope, but I have trespassed to a small extent on this field where it seemed legitimate to do so. I hope that my translations will give my readers a little insight into these changing world-views of the Inner Asian Mongolian people.

To present in an intelligible way texts written within a culture so different from that of one's readers requires a certain amount of elucidation. I have tried to keep irritating footnotes to a minimum, but I have not been able to dispense with them altogether. I have to confess that I have not always been fully confident of the accuracy of my translations, for texts can be corrupt, spellings confused, and dictionaries inadequate, and, above all, one's own knowledge is limited. But I trust that any mistakes I have made will not detract from the overall correct interpretation of the originals which I have aimed to achieve.

Charles Bawden

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INTRODUCTION

Readers of English who would like to know something of Mongolian literature and to sample it are not well served. There is, as far as I know, no account in English in book form of the history of the literature which the Mongolian peoples have built up over the last eight hundred years. It is ironical, though, that two of the first European scholars to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Mongolian language and to explore its literature were in fact British subjects. Edward Stallybrass and William Swan, missionaries of the London Missionary Society, one English and the other Scottish, were sent to eastern Siberia in the early part of the nineteenth century, charged with the duty of bringing the Christian gospel to the Buryat Mongols, a Mongolian people living north of the frontier with China. They were the first to lift the veil for English speakers on what was, until then, a more or less unknown part of the Asian world. They were men of quite extraordinary ability. They had first to learn Russian, the one European language which enabled them to live their daily lives in remote Siberia, and to gain their first scholarly insights into the Mongolian language and Mongolian culture. They became fluent in spoken Buryat-Mongol and in the written Mongolian language. It was also necessary, in order to use dictionaries, to master Manchu and Tibetan, and the latter language also provided them with a key to the understanding of Mongolian Buddhism or Lamaism. They compiled their own dictionaries and grammars and, as soon as they felt themselves capable of it, they devoted themselves to the task for which they are still remembered, the translation, from the original languages, not from English, of the whole Bible into Mongolian. They printed the Old Testament on their own press in Siberia, and the New Testament was printed for them, first in England and later in Russia. They collected Mongolian books, or had copies made, and a number of these belong nowadays to the British Library. But they chose deliberately not to become scholars, considering that to do so would detract from their main task as missionaries, with the result that no tradition of learning in the field of Mongolian culture sprang from their unique experience.

Readers of German have been better served. P.S. Pallas's encyclopaedic survey of Mongolian culture, published in two volumes in 1776 and 1801, and Benjamin Bergmann's account of the culture of the Kalmucks, which appeared in Riga in 1804 and

1805, are still of considerable value. The former was reprinted in1969 and the latter in 1980, though the fact that both books are printed in the Gothic script may make them rather hard going.

The name of Isaac Jacob Schmidt may not be widely known except to specialists, but it was he who was the real founder of language-based Mongolian studies addressed to a general European readership. Schmidt was a Moravian, a member of the Church of the United Brethren. He grew up in Amsterdam, but as a result of the French wars of the 1790's he emigrated to Russia, where he was employed by the Moravian brethren, first at Sarepta, their colony on the Volga close by the city of Tsaritsyn, then at Saratov, and, from early 1812, in Moscow. Having worked for some years amongst the Kalmuck Mongols of south Russia, he acquired a deep and unique knowledge of the Kalmuck language. In early 1812 he moved to Moscow, leaving that city a few months later as Napoleon was approaching. He travelled to St Petersburg in the company of John Paterson, a correspondent of the London Missionary Society and an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The two men may have talked over the possibility of sending a mission to the Buryats during the course of the journey. What is certain is that in 1814 Paterson and his colleague Robert Pinkerton discussed such a venture with the British and Foreign Bible Society and the London Missionary Society, and at the end of that year the Society resolved to establish a Mongolian mission. Stallybrass and a Swedish clergyman named Cornelius Rahmn were appointed to open it a few years later, arriving in Irkutsk early in 1818, and Swan joined Stallybrass a little later after Rahmn had had to return to Europe for personal reasons.

Before leaving Moscow in 1812, Schmidt had completed his translation of the Gospel according to St Matthew into Kalmuck. The Bible Society had already approved a grant of money to pay for a fount of type, and the translation was printed as soon as the type was ready. In St Petersburg he continued his activities as a Bible translator, with the help of Badma, a Buryat nobleman, one of two who had been sent to that city to assist him. These Buryats had brought with them as a gift the manuscript of a Mongolian chronicle known as Erdeni-yin Tobchi, The Precious Summary, composed by 1662 by an Inner Mongolian prince named Sagang Sechen. Schmidt made a pioneering translation of this work. He published this translation, together with the original text, and notes which are still relevant, in a magnificent edition in 1829. He had other notable achievements too, including the first really useful dictionary of the Mongolian language to appear in Europe, with

equivalents in Russian and German, a Mongolian Grammar, and a translation of the seven chapters of the Geser Khan epic, which were all that was known to exist of the epic at that time. His dictionary was soon overtaken by that of his younger contemporary, the Pole J.E. Kowalewski, which appeared during the 1840's and was last reprinted in 1993, but his translations still stand as monumental achievements. Indeed, his edition of The Precious Summary was reissued in 1961, while the translation was reprinted by itself in 1985.

Schmidt himself lived and worked in Russia, but a strong tradition of scholarship in the German language has persisted to the present day. Of an older generation of scholars one might mention Berthold Laufer who published, in German, the first full survey of Mongolian literature, and Erich Haenisch, who was the first European scholar to publish a complete translation, into German, of The Secret History of the Mongols, together with a reconstruction of the Chinese-coded text and a dictionary. Nicholas Poppe, amongst much other pioneering work, published several volumes of Mongolian epics in translation, while the published work of Walther Heissig in many fields, including historiography, bibliography, and above all, traditional literature, is of defining importance in twentieth-century scholarship. His two-volume History of Mongolian Literature, available so far only in German, is a thorough survey of nineteenth and early twentieth-century literature, a very productive period, and an indispensable introduction to the subject.

Readers of French can find, in the Reverend Antoine Mostaert's book Folklore Ordos, translations of a massive collection of popular literature which he made during his residence in the Ordos region of West China in the early years of this century.

Russian scholars have been active throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but their work, with the exception of that of Poppe, who wrote to a large extent in German and English, is, for all practical purposes, accessible only to specialists. The same is true, no doubt to a greater degree, of work in Chinese and Japanese, and, in this century, in Mongolian itself. The present Introduction is not intended as a survey of the history of Mongolian literature, but is no more than an attempt to put the items I have chosen for translation into their historical and social context.

HISTORY

Mongolian literature begins, abruptly, with a masterpiece. The Secret History of the Mongols was written down, so we are told in its last few lines, 'in the year of the rat'. These few words are puzzling. Do they mean that the book was composed at that time, or merely that a copy was made then? And which year of the rat is intended? The individual years of the animal cycle occur at twelve-yearly intervals, so that while 1240 is often taken as intended here, 1228 is also a possibility adopted by some scholars. For an appreciation of the literary qualities of The Secret History, however, the exact dating hardly matters. What is of importance is that The Secret History offers us a unique insight into what the Mongols at the time of Genghis Khan (1162-1227) thought of themselves.

By the time that subsequent chronicles came to be composed, in the seventeenth century and later, the Mongols had become converted to the Yellow Faith, Gelugpa Buddhism, emanating from Tibet, and their ways of thought had been thoroughly compromised by this alien cultural importation. But The Secret History preserves, uncorrupted, the essence of life on the steppes of Inner Asia before the new religious ideas, taken from Tibet but harking back to Indian cultural norms, had come in from the south. A curious fate allowed The Secret History to maintain its pristine character uncorrupted. At some time in the fourteenth century the Mongolian text was transcribed into Chinese characters used for their phonetic effect. What happened to the original in its Uighur script we do not know, but it cannot have been entirely lost, since much of it is incorporated in the Altan Tobchi or The Golden Summary of Luvsandanzan. But The Secret History itself became, as it were, crystallized for centuries to come in a form hardly intelligible to either Mongols or Chinese, until the original text was restored in the early twentieth century. This process of restoration was facilitated by the fact that interlinear Chinese glosses had been added to most, though not all the words, of the transcribed Chinese text, and that an abbreviated version of the Mongolian text had been translated, quite early on, into Chinese. So, though problems of detail remain, we hear, in the pages of The Secret History, the authentic voice of the Mongols of the twelfth and tbirteenth centuries.

While later chronicles trace the royal house of the Mongols back through mythical Tibetan rulers to a mythical first king of India, The Secret History preserves the pre-Buddhist tradition of its

anthropomorphic origin . A blue wolf, with a destiny from heaven, and his wife, a fallow doe, came passing over the so-called Tenggis-water, and they were the ancestors of Genghis Khan. The Secret History names generation after generation of their descendents, recounting as it does so, incidents which have imprinted themselves on Mongolian consciousness ever since, and which are frequently retold in later chronicles. The text of the book is mainly in prose, but it contains a great deal of traditional verse, and prominent personages in it tend to speak in verse. That some of the verse was, even at the time of composition of the book, itself part of an older tradition, is apparent from the wording of the book. So, for example, when Genghis's mother reproves Genghis, or Temüjin as he still was, and his brother Khasar for murdering their half-brother Begter, we read: 'Citing ancient words, quoting old words, she was exceedingly displeased with her sons.'

The world of The Secret History is a rational one, unlike that of later chronicles such as The Precious Summary of Sagang Sechen, which deal in miracles. Not that the supernatural is entirely absent. When Temüjin escaped from the Tayichigud, he paid attention to omens which he believed Heaven had sent him, and again, after his escape from the Merkit, he vowed to worship the mountain Burkhan Khaldun, considering that he owed his life to its protective care. But religion does not obtrude, and the early paragraphs of The Secret History introduce us in plain terms to the rough life of the Mongolian plains during a time of inter-clan squabbling. Life depended on the horse, the provider of transport and of food in the form of milk. After the death by poisoning of Temüjin's father, his mother had great difficulty in caring for her children, and we are told how she ran up and down the Onon River, gathering wild fruit and digging up roots to feed them with. The boys, too, were reduced to catching fish, no substitute for the meat upon which Mongols rely. After a while, the family acquired eight horses, which were later stolen by thieves. This theft provides the occasion for one of the set pieces of Mongol historical lore, for Temüjin set out to recover the horses and on the way met a lad called Bogorchu who was milking his mares. Bogorchu was so impressed by Temüjin that he abandoned his milking-pail and followed the future Genghis Khan without even calling in at his own tent. They recovered the horses, and Bogorchu became one of Genghis's lifelong companions. Companionship and loyalty are one of the recurring themes of Mongolian tradition.

English readers nowadays have a choice of three masterly versions of The Secret History, those by Francis W. Cleaves, Igor de

Rachewiltz and Urgunge Onon, so that it is perhaps not necessary to offer more than a sample or two from it in this collection. But this splendid monument of Mongolian literature cannot be overlooked, for it rises up as a unique achievement in an otherwise pretty barren century. There is nothing in Mongolian writing to prepare us for it. This sophisticated piece of prose and verse occurs abruptly, unheralded. And for centuries afterwards there is nothing in Mongolian literature to rival it. Some translation literature from imperial and post-imperial times survives, and the fragmentary remnants of an Alexander romance or epic tease us with the thought that much may have been lost in the years of decay under the late emperors of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty of China and the subsequent internecine wars between rival rulers and emperors, who give the impression of having been little more than feuding warlords. I offer two extracts from the early pages of The Secret History. Both of these contain pieces of alliterative verse which, as suggested above, must rank as survivals of earlier oral literature.

In a certain generation of the Mongolian royal line, a man known as Dobun Mergen, Dobun the Wise, married a woman named Alan-qo'a, Alan the Fair. They had two sons, named Belgünütei and Bügünütei. Dobun Mergen had also taken into his household a boy whom he had received from his destitute father, a man belonging to a tribe called the Ma'aliq-Bayya'ud, in exchange for the flesh of a deer which he had hunted and killed. The first extract from The Secret History continues the story from this point. The second extract tells how Temüjin escaped at the time of a raid carried out on his family by his enemies the Merkit.

Some three centuries later, there begins a new phase of historical writing, which lasts into the nineteenth century. I have presented extracts from three of the best known of these chronicles, all dating from the seventeenth century. These consist of two works with similar titles, an anonymous Altan Tobchi, or Golden Summary, composed probably very early in the century, and a Golden Summary composed by a lama named Blo-bzang bstan-'jin or Luvsandanzan, which has been reliably dated to 1655. The third chronicle is The Precious Summary of Sagang Sechen. Some of the stories told in the early part of The Secret History are retold in these later chronicles, often with remarkable textual faithfulness, but to a great extent the ethos of historical writing has changed. Genghis has become something of a mythical figure, and tales of magic and supernatural intervention, more suitable to folklore than history, have found their way into the narrative. The first extract,

The Youth of Genghis Khan, is based on the text of The Golden Summary, but a version is also to be found in The Precious Summary, and both are reminiscent of a more extensive, but rather problematical, version in The Secret History. This extract gives a sober account of events in Temüjin's early life, but other extracts are far less rational in their approach to what is by now legend rather than historical fact. This does not mean that the chronicles are valueless as a historical record, but it is what they tell us of the Mongols' view of themselves and their past, rather than the bare facts, which is of real interest.

LEGENDS

With the authors of the chronicles adopting the elastic view of historical accuracy which they do, it is difficult to separate legend from history, and I have taken the path of classsifying as legend such stories with a historical background as do not actually figure in chronicles. Two of these legends, that is The Story of the Two Dapple-greys and the Tale of Ubashi Khungtayiji, belong to Mongolia's distant past. The former may date back to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, while the latter must have been composed considerably later.

The Tale of Ubashi Khungtayiji tells how the Mongols were defeated in a battle against their rivals, the West Mongolian Oirad, towards the end of the sixteenth century, probably in 1587. The Mongolian scholar Ts. Damdinsüren calls it a classical composition of sixteenth-century Mongolia, but if this is correct it leaves only a few years between the suggested date of the events recounted in it and the composition of the text. It is probably safer to say that the date of composition is uncertain. The language in which the tale is written is characterised by a number of west Mongolian words and expressions, and the story is told from a west Mongolian point of view.

This tale appears to reflect an actual, though unidentifiable, event in the history of the wars between the eastern and western Mongols during the late sixteenth century, especially after the death in 1586 of Abatai Khan of the Khalkha, who had brought about the temporary unity of these two main branches of the Mongolian people.

Damdinsüren, who published a text of this tale in 1959, gives us some facts about the life and activities of Ubashi Khungtayiji, known also as Sholoi Ubashi, who controlled a large khanate, stretching from the head waters of the Selenge and Tamir

rivers in Mongolia as far as Krasnoyarsk, under the title of Altan Khan. Contrary to the narrative of the Tale, he cannot have been killed in the battle with the Oirad, as an envoy from the Tsar of Russia met him personally on the banks of Lake Uvs in 1616 and reported on his appearance, saying that he appeared then to be about 60 years old. Damdinsüren also dismisses the story of the killing of the seven-year old boy as a fictional device intended to discredit Ubashi Khungtayiji.

The other legends, that is, Gerel the Clever Khan, How the Four Khans of Khalkha Got Their Titles, The Ölet War and The Legend of the Squinting Princess, have been translated from the repertory of a bard named Yangjav who was born 1n 1916. The first three are reworkings of older tales.

DIDACTIC LITERATURE

A strong strain of didacticism runs through Mongolian literature from very early times up to the recent past. The so-called Wisdom-literature of Genghis Khan preserves anecdotes concerning the wise pronouncements associated with the name of the great Khan, which are to be found scattered through various chronicles and other collections. Similar anecdotes or maxims are to be found associated with the names of Genghis's son Chagadai and his grandson Khubilai Khan. A much more extensive piece of didactic literature, The Key of Understanding, has sometimes been believed to have been composed by Genghis Khan himself. Though thematically it resembles some of the Wisdom-literature, this ascription seems very unlikely, if only because from time to time it shows an affinity with the didactic poem known in Mongolian as Subashid, which was first translated from Tibetan into Mongolian in the thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The Kite is a nineteenth-century composition by Danjinrabjai, the Fifth Incarnation in the lamaistic line of the Noyon Khutuktu, who will be discussed below in connection with his lyric poetry.

The Orphan Boy is an ancient piece of didactic literature, in which the arguments put forward by an orphan boy as to the merits of drinking are found superior to those offered by Genghis's paladins. In it, the initiation of the custom of celebrating the first yield of milk from the mares is ascribed to Genghis Khan himself, but the mention of an offering being made to the Buddha and the Three Jewels, that is, the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Clergy, indicates that the poem in its present form dates from a period later than that of Genghis.

The theme of the clever boy who can out-argue his supposed superiors occurs again much later in the piece entitled The Boy with the Black Ox. The contents of this disputation between a teacher and a small boy may nowadays appear somewhat naive, but the work seems to have been very widely disseminated in the nineteenth-century. Manuscripts with several different titles are known, and the part of the teacher is even played by Confucius in one. The Chinese element is apparent, but so are the purely Mongolian elements, some of which occur also in folktales. For one such, readers may care to compare the story The Clever Daughter-in-law.

The theme of evils associated with excessive drinking is taken up again in the tract On the Evils of Strong Drink. This tract appears to have been composed in the early twentieth century. There is no indication in the blockprint in which it is preserved of the exact date of its composition or of the name of its author, but to judge from the existence of another blockprint of similar appearance, theme and choice of vocabulary, it may well have been written by a senior lama, the Dooramba Gelegjamcho, also called Buyandalai, the Mongolian version of his name. Gelegjamcho is known to have been a member of the Literary Committee, the predecessor of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, which was founded in 1921. There is reported to have been a religious campaign against sinfulness in Mongolia organised around the turn of the nineteenth century, and this tract, and others on the same theme which belong to the State Library in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, may have been associated with it.

Moral lessons are also conveyed in parables in which animals converse with each other in human speech. The Discourse of a Sheep, a Goat and an Ox is the work of a lama named Nagwangkhaidub, who lived from 1779 to 1838, and who wrote mainly in Tibetan. This tale is sharply critical of those members of the clergy who so far disregarded their Buddhist principles as to slaughter beasts for meat, and who put forward hypocritical arguments in support of their irrelegious behaviour. The Story of the Little Dog, the Cat and the Mouse is by a nineteenth-century writer known as Gendüng Meyiren. It tells how the three animals discussed how best they should behave in obedience to Buddhist principles of conduct, and how they were deceived by a passing old man.

Dorji Meyiren, to whom we owe the satirical tale The Hare, the Hogget and the Wolf. was born in 1878 and died in 1943. His

life thus spanned the end of the old order in Mongolia and the early years of the Mongolian People's Republic, during which he joined the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and worked as a government official. The point of The Tale of the Hare, the Hogget and the Wolf is that it is a parody of the traditional form of a legal or administrative document as established during Mongolia's dependence on the Manchu Empire of China.

TALES OF INDIAN ORIGIN

Stories attached to the figure of King Vikramaditya are evidently of Indian origin, but are found in other Asian languages, including Mongolian, where the king is named Bigarmijid. Legend tells how in the 17th century two holy men came from India to the residence of the First Jebtsundamba Khutuktu of Urga on their way to look for the legendary realm of Shambala in the north. They asked the Khutuktu if they would attain their goal. He told them that on their way they would come across a great lake. If they dipped a finger in it and it remained unharmed, this would be a sign that they would be able to get across. Further, a blue bull would come out of the lake, and if they could catch it and ride it they would be able to get to Shambala. When they reached the lake, the younger Indian disregarded instructions and tried to cross it on his carpet, but was overwhelmed by the water and died. The elder Indian put his finger in the water, whereupon it turned to stone and dropped off. The bull emerged but could not be caught. The Indian returned to Urga, the Khutuktu's residence, and there he recounted the tales of King Vikramaditya, which were then written down. The stories have remained popular in Mongolia, and have been circulated widely over the years in manuscript form, while three separate collections have been published in print in the course of the twentieth century.

The chapters which I offer here are a revised version of a translation from one collection, which I published in India in 1960. The first extract gives the frame-story of the magic throne of King Vikramaditya and the child king who sits on it, and the efforts of a king called Araji Booji to ascend it himself. Each time that Araji Booji tries to sit on the throne he is restrained by one of the thirty-two wooden figures which are fixed on its steps. The wooden figure then recounts an episode from the life of King Vikramaditya and warns Araji Booji that if he is not equal in wisdom and skill to King Vikramaditya he will not be able to sit on the throne.

The story of Maudgalyayana and his rescue of his mother from hell goes back to early origins in Sanskrit and Chinese literature and to later Tibetan versions. The version I have translated here is from an abbreviated text published by Ts. Damdinsüren in his Anthology of Mongolian Literature.

EPIC

The Mongolian epic is perhaps the most thoroughly analysed and discussed genre of Mongolian literature. The genre may be divided into two groups. On one side stands the epic of Geser Khan, known outside Mongolia through the work of I.J. Schmidt since the 1830s. This is a prose work, much influenced by Tibetan versions, but nevertheless an independent piece of Mongolian literature, not a translation. The version translated by Schmidt consists of seven chapters, each of which recounts a separate event in the life of Geser Khan. I have translated two chapters.

This book achieved the uncommon distinction for a secular work of being printed in Peking from wooden blocks in the year 1716. Eight further chapters were printed in Peking in 1956, and two of these have been translated into German by Walther Heissig. Other Geser manuscripts have been published in what was formerly the Mongolian People's Republic and is now Mongolia.

On the other side stands a large number of verse epics, whose themes are uncomplicated narratives of heroes and ogres, warring nobles, ravished wives, talking horses, death and resurrection and so on. Though this genre is generally termed, by Mongolian scholars as well as foreigners, the Heroic Epic, the essence of it is not really heroism in any accepted sense. There is nothing in Mongolian epic to parallel, for example, the Iliad, the Odyssey or the Aeneid, or, in more recent times, the Chanson de Roland. Indeed, it remains an enigma why the incomparable military past of the Mongols, which led to the existence for a short while of the greatest land-empire up to their time, is not reflected in epic verse. The hero lives and acts in a realm of hyperbole and magic. Everything which happens, and the framework in time and space of the action, is exaggerated to an unbelievable degree. Some favourite themes occur over and over again. In particular we may mention the theme of the young hero who transforms himself temporarily into a 'snotty-nosed youth', in order to bring about the unexpected defeat of the khan's champion in the three traditional sports of archery, horse-racing and wrestling, and so to win as his

wife a princess who is being competed for. Epics are still sung by bards, either unaccompanied or to the self-accompaniment of a bowed or plucked instrument. The accompaniment may sometimes be no more than a repeated interval, giving the performance an almost mesmeric effect.

I offer translations of two verse epics below, together with one other, Keviin Sayin Buyidar, which has been transmitted in print in prose form, but which in other respect follows the norms of the epic.

PRAYERS AND RITUALS

There is a rich tradition of Mongolian popular religion in which we see mingled traits of three cultural systems, an indeterminate folk-religion, shamanism and lamaism. Many manuscripts have been preserved, most of them lending themselves only very uneasily to complete translation for a general readership. These present prayers for the worship of the God of the Fire as an annual rite or as part of wedding and other ceremonies, prayers for the worship of the White Old Man who is seen as the lord of the earth, who has control over domestic beasts, prayers for the worship of Manakhan Tngri who is the lord of the wild beasts, and prayers for hunting, including those for the recall of the supposedly straying saddle-thongs with which booty would be attached to the saddle, and so on.

The ritual for the worship of the God of the Fire which I offer is a fairly late composition, dating to the second half of the eighteenth century. By this time, fire rituals had lost most of their pre-Buddhist characteristics, but the fact that it is the breast and other parts of a sheep, together with two different sorts of distilled spirit, which form an important element in the sacrifices which are to be offered, is a pointer to the tension which always existed between the principle of respect for all life, which is fundamental to pure Buddhism, and the practicalities of everyday life in Mongolia. Mongolian life has always depended on the rearing of domestic animals and the hunting of wild beasts for its continuance. Meat and milk products are the basis of diet, and leather and horsehair are indispensable raw materials, while only by fermentation and distillation could the valuable milk be kept from spoiling in the hot summer.

The fire ritual offered here is interesting in that it is divided into sections by the use of rubrics, so giving a clear picture of the course of such a ceremony, beginning with the visualisation of and

invitation to the deities worshipped, and proceeding through various stages to the point where the deities are despatched towards their own home.

In fire rituals other than this one it is very common for the origin of fire to be indicated. The originator may either be a single benefactor, such as the Buddha Shakyamuni or the missionary Padma Sambhava, who is credited with introducing Buddhism into Tibet in the eighth century. More usually two benefactors are named. They may be an anonymous pair, called simply the Father and the Mother, or they may be the Khan Father and the Khatun, or Queen, Mother. They may also be named. The Buddha and the god Khormusda, Yisügei and Ögelen, the father and mother of Genghis Khan, Genghis himself and his wife Börte, Chagadai, one of the sons of Genghis, and his wife Changkhulang, are all credited in one ritual or another with having struck and then kindled the fire. The God of the Fire seems first to have been female rather than male as in the text translated here.

I offer here also one each of the main types of prayer to be recited before hunting, that is, an incense offering to the gun, a prayer to the saddle-thongs, and a prayer to Manakhan Tngri.

SHAMANISTIC INCANTATIONS

P.S. Pallas was familiar with Mongolian shamanism, to which he devoted a chapter in his great survey of Mongolian history and culture. The subject was developed in a scientific manner by the Buryat scholar Dorji Banzarov in his article on the Black Faith or Shamanism Among the Mongols, published in Russian in 1846 and reprinted in 1955. An English translation of this work has appeared in the United States. Since Banzarov's time, much attention has been devoted to the subject. Academician B. Rintchen, one of Mongolia's foremost scholars of the twentieth century, published three volumes of original texts in the Mongolian language in the then West Germany between 1959 and 1975. He may have cast his net rather widely, including some items which belong to the realm of folk-religion rather than specifically to shamanism, but these three volumes, which have still not been fully exploited, offer a mass of indispensable raw material. Volume I contains transcripts of what Rintchen called literary sources. Volume II is devoted to Buryat shamanist texts. Volume III includes a few manuscript texts, but is devoted for the main part to oral recitations taken down from the recitation of Buryat and

Mongolian shamans and shamanesses. These recitations were put into French in a fully commented edition by Marie-Dominique Even published in 1992. I give in the present book two slightly altered translations which I first published in a review of Rintchen's third collection in 1977.

The short passages connected with the ritual for obtaining a site for exposing a corpse fall rather outside the limits of an anthology of literature, but I include them because of their human interest.

CEREMONIAL VERSE

Traditionally, many social activities among the Mongols were accompanied by the recitation of formal or ceremonial poetry. The first three items below are examples of the so-called 'title' or song in praise of the winning horse in a horse-race, and of other horses. Mongolian horse-races are run in open country over a course several miles long. The jockeys are young boys and girls. The first five horses are saluted by having kumis, the fermented milk of a mare, poured over their rumps. These horses are known as the 'Kumis Five'. A local tradition in Mongolia tells how it was the custom, after the recitation of the Title of the Last Horse, to fasten the boiled belly of a sheep to its saddle-thongs. The name given to the last horse derives allegedly from this custom. A good race-horse is distinguished by the possession of a number of physical signs, which are to be found enumerated in special handbooks. The horse of an epic hero is often described in terms similar to these descriptions, but in a hyperbolic style. Wrestlers may be introduced and praised with similar 'titles'.

I offer also a benediction for a newly erected tent and a poem to be recited at the ceremonial first cutting of a child's hair. The former is of especial interest in that enumerates the various items which go to make up a Mongolian tent, together with the objects which may be found in different parts of the tent. The tent is divided into separate areas, though these are not visibly demarcated. The back part, furthest from the door, is known as the khoimor, and is the most honourable part of the tent. The head of the household has his place here, while guests would be invited to 'sit higher up', that is, in or near the khoimor. This is where, in a pious family family, the Buddhist images and offerings would be placed on a small altar. Framed family photographs can also sometimes be seen in the khoimor.

A Mongolian tent has a wooden gate, which is covered by a

door made of material, which hangs down from its top edge. So a Mongolian tent-door may be 'lifted up', rather than 'opened'. The tent is usually pitched so that the doorway faces towards the south or the south-east. Directions are taken as if one is looking from the khoimor, so that the right-hand side of the tent is to the west and the left-hand side to the east. The former belongs to the men, the latter to the women. Just to the west of the door would be found the kumis-stand with its big skin bag containing the fermenting milk of mares. Opposite this, on the other side of the door, is the cooking space. The central part of the tent is occupied by the hearth, on which in former times would be found the brazier, but where nowadays there will be instead a cast-iron stove. The fuel is likely to be dry animal dung, which is kept in a square box near the fire. The fire is sacred, and must not be polluted by such actions as spitting into it. Smoke emerges through a wooden roof-ring, which can be covered when necessary, for instance at night, with a felt flap which forms part of the tent-coverings. A chimney usually protrudes through the ring, while an electric cable may also be fed in through it. The tent itself is constructed out of at least four, but usually more, sections of trellis wall, from the peaks of which rise rafters which slot into the roof ring. The tent-coverings are of felt, with probably a protective layer of canvas on top, all bound round from one doorpost to the other with ropes. Often there is a wooden floor, though tents may rest on the bare earth. Lighting nowadays may be provided by electricity, and I have seen strip-lighting attached to the rafters of a more permanent tent.

FOLK-TALES

Mongolia is rich in folktales, and readers will notice many which are familiar to them, as a whole or in respect of single motifs. The story of the treasure of King Rhampsinitus, told by Herodotus, has found its way to Mongolia, as has the story of Odysseus and Polyphemus.

Three of the categories into which I have classified the folktales require special mention. The first of these is a group of tales attached to Balansengge, Mongolia's exemplar of the universally familiar Eulenspiegel-type figure. Balansengge, whose name is found in alternative spellings such as Balansang or Balgansang, is the archetypal Mongolian trickster figure. He is also known as Dalan Khudalch, literally 'Seventy Liar', a name which I have turned into 'Multifibber'. He is a timeless figure. In the first tale translated we find him taking grain to the co-operative, an

economic unit of Mongolia's recent past, while in the final series of stories he is engaged in a superhuman struggle with the demon agents of Erlig Khagan, the Lord of the Underworld, a mythical figure from Mongolia's Buddhist past, whom he finally dethrones and replaces. The humour in these tales is naive and sometimes scatological, while Balansengge's antics are sometimes grotesquely inhuman. Some Balansengge stories are not to be differentiated from anonymous trickster tales, with which they have some motifs in common. For example, the motifs of putting the 'hero' of a story into a sack and trying to drown him, after which he tricks his enemies into visiting the Palace of the Water-spirits and getting drowned themselves, are to be found in both categories of tale. Occasionally, as with the story Balansengge Deceived, the tables are turned on Balansengge, who becomes the victim.

Mendicant tales form quite an extensive group. The badarchin, or mendicant, was a wandering lama who begged his way from tent to tent, seeking alms on his own account or for the benefit of his lamasery. Mendicant tales are of course not peculiar to Mongolian literature: the Schnorrer of Yiddish folklore immediately springs to mind.

A third group of tales is attached to the name of Shagdar Soliyatu, or Loony Shagdar. Shagdar is said to have been born in 1869 in Inner Mongolia, and to have been placed in a lamasery as a novice at an early age. Unwilling to put up with the religious life, he abandoned his lamasery in order to wander around the countryside, behaving as what the authorities no doubt viewed as a vagrant nuisance. A number of anecdotes, composed in mixed prose and verse form, in which he satirised what he saw as the evils of the day, such as self-satisfied clerics, a greedy aristocracy willing to sell good pastures lands to the Chinese in order to buy amusements for themselves, dishonest Chinese or Japanese traders, have become attached to his name, and a little collection of these was published in Inner Mongolia in 1959. The language of these anecdotes is a racy colloquial, and the point of some of them depends on what is to an outsider an insoluble pun or local allusion. Nevertheless, it has proved possible to present a selection of them, illustrating what, until Walther Heissig first publicised them in an article written in 1961, was an unfamiliar type of popular satire.

MYTHS

Little need be said of Mongolian origin myths, of which I offer a number.

TRIADS

The triad consists of the artistic grouping of three phenomena, which are unconnected except for their stated possession of the one quality which it is intended to illustrate.

SINO-MONGOLIAN PROSE LITERATURE

Both Inner and Outer Mongolia became incorporated within the Manchu-Chinese empire during the course of the seventeenth century, with far-reaching consequences for the political, economic and cultural future of what became, in effect, frontier territories of that empire. The great Chinese romances were translated into Mongolian, either directly, or through the medium of Manchu versions, while the love of the Mongolian public for tales of adventure led to the composition of a great number of pseudo-historical romances, many of them developing fictional themes relating to the Tang dynasty. Themes from these romances were also worked up into long minstrel poems. The resulting 'book epic' took root more especially in Inner Mongolia, geographically closer to the Chinese source of inspiration.

Any Mongol seeking an official career had to do so through the Chinese examination system, so that it is no wonder that educated Mongols tended to become sinicised as the years passed by, and the Mongol language itself, now secondary as far as prospects of career development were concerned, itself became contaminated by the more dominant culture. In some parts of Inner Mongolia it effectively died out, and little remained to distinguish monolingual Mongols from Han Chinese.

Not a great deal of the numerous Sino-Mongolian works of literature mentioned by Walther Heissig in his History of Mongolian Literature are actually accessible today, but the works of a few nineteenth-century authors of significance have been printed long after their deaths, and serve to illuminate this otherwise obscure passage of Mongolian literary and linguistic history. Some of these are the Inner Mongolian translator and literary critic known as Khasbuu, and the family of the historian

Wangchinbala, of whose sons Injanashi, also a historian, but a novelist, poet and artist as well, is the most celebrated.

KHASBUU

Khasbuu flourished in the first part of the nineteenth century. Little or nothing is known of him, and even his name may be only a pen-name, for its two elements, reversed in order and turned into Chinese, correspond to Baoyu, the name of the hero of the Chinese novel Hong Lou Meng. The title of that book has, since the appearance in 1893 of the first part of an English translation by H. Bencraft Joly, frequently been rendered into western languages as The Dream of the Red Chamber, or an equivalent of this. The book may, though, be more familiar to English readers through its alternative title The Story of the Stone, as used by David Hawkes and John Minford for their translation, which appeared in Penguin Classics between 1977 and 1986.

Khasbuu appears to be the first person ever to have attempted a systematic translation of the Chinese novel. A manuscript of his Newly Translated and Commented Hong Lou Meng is known to belong to the State Library in Ulaanbaatar, while three other manuscripts in Inner Mongolia formed the basis of a printed edition issued in 1975 by the Inner Mongolia University in Hohhot.

Khasbuu's translation, though systematic in the sense that it follows the text of the original more or less from beginning to end, is by no means complete. Apparently lacking confidence in his ability to make a complete translation, he concentrated on telling the story of the relationship between Baoyu and one of the two main heroines, Lin Daiyu, and in so doing he reduced the hundred and twenty chapters of the original to a mere forty. The limitations of the task he set himself meant that, while he translated some chapters more or less fully, he also omitted a considerable number of chapters entirely, and abridged others to a considerable extent. He sometimes gave a brief summary of episodes which he had omitted. Khasbuu also made alterations in the sequence of events. Passages selected for translation had, as a result, to be joined together by link passages, which were either adapted from the original text, or on occasion even invented by the translator. Occasionally he adapted the wording of the original book to suit his Mongol readers. Nevertheless, although Khasbuu saw himself as the author of what he called The Little Dream of the Red

Chamber, his translation follows the text of the original quite faithfully within the limits which he set, and, with some exceptions, it is not difficult to locate oneself in it.

The following example will illustrate one way in which Khasbuu adapted the Chinese story. Readers of The Story of the Stone may recall how in chapter XCIV the Chinese character for 'chang' (to redeem), proposed by Iron Mouth Liu, is analysed so as to suggest that Baoyu's lost jade would be found in a pawn-shop. Khasbuu transposes the passage into a new, Mongolian, context, choosing a word and an analysis all of his own. Whereas the original novel analyses the character in terms of the meanings of the simpler characters which go to make it up, Khasbuu analyses his word in terms of the strokes used in the Mongolian script, each of which is known by a technical name. He writes as follows:
'The top of the word 'tangkhai' (spoiled, rowdy), which he gave, consists of a 'round'. Underneath two 'teeth' is an 'open stroke'. So the thing is obviously round and will be found inside mouth and teeth. Further, if we suppress the 'tail' in the syllable 'khai' we get 'khas' (jade), so he must be speaking of a gem.'

Khasbuu explains his meddling with this passage in his commentary to chapter 29, as follows:
'If, when we read works written in Mongol by masters from before our childhood, we spell out the skilful composition of associative compound characters in Chinese sounds, those who do not know Chinese will skip over it, and will not appreciate the mastery in it at all. Even readers who know Chinese may find it insipid. So I turned the associative compound in this chapter altogether into Mongol letters, but this was not in order to show off in front of scholars. Anyway, I will write it out now, not daring to suppress the wording.' He then gives an explanation which corresponds to that provided by Hawkes and Minford on page 301 of volume 4 of The Story of the Stone, and finishes by saying: 'Ah ! how marvellously skilful the writer is !'

Khasbuu's actual translation offers, as far as western readers are concerned, little more than a curiosity, though for students of the Mongolian language it furnishes, along with Injanashi's writings, valuable material for the study of the Sino-Mongol literary language of the nineteenth century. In any case, it is, for all practical purposes, inaccessible to such readers. But what is of real interest is the fact that Khasbuu composed a commentary to each chapter, and it is hoped that the extracts given in this book will lead western readers, who have perhaps enjoyed The Story of the Stone in its English translation, into the mind and

imagination of a long-dead critic of the novel, whose interests and methods may appear both exotic and novel.

Khasbuu was not the first Mongolian translator to comment chapter by chapter on the work he was translating. A translator named Arana had done the same a hundred years or so earlier when translating the romance Xi You Ji, familiar to English readers in Arthur Waley's translation entitled Monkey. However, in composing his commentary, Khasbuu seems to have modelled himself closely upon the seventeenth-century Chinese man of letters Jin Shengtan (d. 1661), who commented upon the novel Xi Xiang Ji, and whom Khasbuu appears to have regarded as his literary hero. Khasbuu was not much concerned with the background to the composition of the novel, so ably expounded by David Hawkes in the Introduction to Volume 1 of his translation. What interested him most of all were the verbal subtleties and little private jokes which Hawkes mentions (page 45), and which he says he fears may have vanished in his English translation. Khasbuu sees great significance in the way the author would anticipate an important episode by the previous insertion of a less prominent, but similar, episode. He pays great attention to puns sugested by the names given to some characters. He also likes to compare the skills of the writer with the skills of the artist.

Khasbuu made much use of what the literary historian Wu Shichang calls 'technical methods of description', a technique of literary criticism which goes back, through commented editions of Hong Lou Meng, at least as far as Jin Shengtan. These 'methods', as Khasbuu himself calls them, and which number over twenty, do not correspond to western figures of speech, and do not amount to a system of critical terminology, but seem to have been invented by each critic, Khasbuu included, to suit his immediate purpose. Khasbuu does not define the scope of each of his 'methods', but offers them to us as required in order to illustrate a feature of the style of the passage he is reviewing. With a few exceptions, no 'method' is mentioned more than once.

As a literary critic, then, Khasbuu is situated firmly in a Chinese tradition, and indeed, apart from a few isolated references to Mongolian literature, as for instance his quotation from the Geser epic in the commentary to chapter 6, there is only the fact that he acted as a translator and wrote his commentary in Mongolian to indicate that he was a Mongol and not a Han Chinese. Besides this, his Mongolian language is heavily influenced by Chinese, and its occasional opacity can be penetrated only by discovering the Chinese words which underly what appear

to be Mongolian calques. A Chinese version of the commentaries published in 1979 has proved invaluable in making the present translations. It may be too daring to suggest that Khasbuu thought in Chinese but wrote in Mongol, but it is tempting to do so.

INJANASHI

Injanashi (1837-1892) was a member of the Inner Mongolian minor nobility who achieved real fame only in the twentieth century, when his novels were first printed. He came from a cultured family. Like his father Wangchinbala and his brothers, Injanashi composed much attractive verse and he was also a talented artist in the Chinese manner. Western scholars first drew attention to Injanashi's life and works in the 1930s, but it was only after the Second World War that the three novels for which he became famous in his native Inner Mongolia and abroad were issued in easily legible editions, replacing earlier printings which had always been more or less inaccessible. Injanashi's major achievement is his historical novel Köke Sudur (The Blue Chronicle). This is a continuation of a work begun by his father, Wangchinbala (1795-1847), who had died having written no more than eight chapters. It recounts the history of the Mongolian nation at the time of Genghis Khan and shortly afterwards. In its most recent edition this book totals over two thousand pages. It has never been translated into English and, given its size and limited interest to western readers, it probably never will be. Readers who wish to know more about The Blue Chronicle will find a discussion of it, and an analysis of its contents, in a monograph by John Gombojab Hangin.

Injanashi is known also for two romantic novels, entitled in Mongolian Nigen Dabkhur Asar and Ulagana-a Ukilakhui Tingkim. The former title may be translated, somewhat contradictorily, as The One-storey Tower, and the latter as The Pavilion of Red Weeping. Neither has been translated into English, though both have been put into Chinese, and there is an abbreviated version of The One-storey Tower in Russian. Both novels have been discussed in academic literature, and The One-storey Tower was the subject of an as yet unpublished doctoral thesis submitted to the University of London by Mr (now Professor) A.C. Clunas.

The One-storey Tower draws heavily on Chinese sources for features of its plot, its cast of characters and its social setting. It is particularly dependent on The Story of the Stone. Many

episodes in it are no more than slightly altered translations of episodes from the Chinese novel. Injanashi drew on other sources too, most importantly on a Chinese continuation of The Story of the Stone entitled Hong Lou Fu Meng, and on a story entitled Wen Guo Lou in the seventeenth-century collection Shier Lou. The One-storey Tower is preceded by three prefaces. Of these, the first is a slightly modified translation of the preface to Hong Lou Fu Meng, while the second is a version of the preface to yet another continuation of The Story of the Stone, entitled Hou Hong Lou Meng. Before judging Injanashi too severely, though, as no more than a manipulator of other authors' work, we must take account of the tradition in which he was working. The One-storey Tower was only one of a host of imitations and continuations of The Story of the Stone which saw the light of day during the course of the nineteenth century, and it has probably received more than its due share of attention precisely because it was written in a language other than Chinese. We do not know, either, what was Injanashi's intention in writing his romantic novels. They seem not to have been printed during his lifetime. Were they written merely for his own pleasure, or for the delectation of a limited circle of friends, or did he have a wider readership in view? Our lack of knowledge should modify our critical view.

The third preface, though, is original, and in it Injanashi explains how his work both differs from, and is similar to, The Story of the Stone. One difference is that in his book there are no vicious daughters-in-law and no crafty concubines, presumably a dig at Wang Xifeng and Aunt Zhao. The fact that Injanashi points this out in the first words of his Preface prepares the reader of the novel for the fundamental contrast which is to emerge. The Story of the Stone can be read as a tragedy, whereas Injanashi's two novels, taken together, form a tragicomedy, in which the tragic element is very subdued. If we disregard its supernatural framework, The Story of the Stone is highly realistic. The One-storey Tower, on the other hand, is romantically cosy, while The Pavilion of Red Weeping is melodramatic beyond belief.

In spite of this fundamental qualitative difference, which sets Injanashi's work apart from the Chinese novel, and demonstrates its inferiority as a piece of imaginative literature, Injanashi boldly insists that two of his girl heroines, Qin Mo and Lu Mei, share the temperaments of Baochai and Daiyu, while the character of his hero Pu Yu is equated with that of Baoyu, the hero of The Story of the Stone. Injanashi couples the unfortunate fate of Pu Yu, whose love-life is temporarily frustrated by the interference

of his mother and his grandmother, with the tragic stultification of the relationship between Baoyu and Daiyu which results from the machinations of Grandmother Jia and Xifeng. The parallel is not exact, however, for when writing this preface Injanashi had not perhaps anticipated the happy ending he was going to bring about in his second novel, where Pu Yu, whose first marriage to a stranger has ended with her death, finally succeeds in marrying all three of his childhood girl friends, not only Qin Mo and Lu Mei, but another, Sheng Ru, as well.

The fact that Injanashi modelled his two romantic novels on Chinese works written decades before his time disposes of any claim that they are to be seen as social criticism, though this point of view has been put forward. The One-storey Tower, in particular, can only be seen as an imitation of imitations, derivative at second-hand, situated as it is within the extensive pseudo-Hong Lou Meng Chinese literature of the nineteenth century, but deriving its interest from the fact that it is written in Mongolian. If it had been written in Chinese it would probably not have attracted any attention at all, but written, as it is, in the Mongol language, it affords a rare insight into the intellectual world of a Mongolian gentleman who had enjoyed an education within the Chinese cultural tradition, but who was not racially Chinese himself. It allows us also to see how the Mongol language, rough and unadorned as it shows up in the epic, for example, was yet capable of rivalling the sophisticated language of the great Chinese classical novel of the Qing dynasty.

LYRICS AND OTHER VERSE

THE CONVERSATION SONG

The so-called Conversation Song is a type of miniature drama, performed by a few singers, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment, without stage, costume or action, and so suitable for the confines of a Mongolian tent.

Mongolian verse is characterised by two main features. The first is alliteration of the initial syllables of the first words of two, and sometimes more than two, consecutive lines. So, for example, the first two lines of Prince Sumiya begin with the words bas and baruun. The second feature is antithetical parallelism, which may be found between two couplets or between two longer groups of lines. The effect may be enhanced by the application of the linguistic principle known as 'vowel-harmony'. Mongolian vowels

are divided into two main groups, with a, o and u as 'back' or 'male' vowels, and e, ö and ü as 'front' or 'female' vowels. The vowel i is considered neutral. If the first vowel of a word belongs to the back group, all following vowels in that word must also belong to that group, and similarly with front vowels. There are minor exceptions to this general rule, but they are of no significance to us in the exposition of the scheme as it affects verse.

The way parallelism works is as follows. The second group of lines repeats the idea expressed in the first group, using different words, but following the syntactic scheme of the first. The poetic effect is enhanced if the first line or set of lines uses one vowel-group, while the second uses the other vowel-group, even though this conceit may result in an apparent inconsistency. It does not disturb the Mongolian listener, for example, that, in his first speech, Prince Sumiya is riding a tall brown horse, and in the second a black-grey horse. It does not mean that he came riding two horses, but rather that metrical artifice demands that on the first occasion his horse is, in Mongol, described in front vowel harmony as öndör keer, and on the second occasion in back vowel harmony as khar saaral, with the remaining three lines of each quatrain following, in their first syllable, the vowel-group of the first line.

It can happen that words of contrasting meaning may belong to opposite vowel-groups. Two such words are baruun, 'west', and züün, 'east'. Hence in Juyaar's speech which begins: 'I dreamed the lotus would blossom', the first syllables of the first four lines follow the back vowel word baruun, while the next four follow the front vowel word züün. It is unfortunately impossible to imitate this basic feature of Mongolian metrics in an English translation.

RAVJAA

Danjinrabjai, or Ravjaa as he is often known today, was a lama poet who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is difficult to think oneself into the world of such a man. Ravjaa's language itself is puzzling for several reasons. For one thing, much of his work was originally composed in Tibetan, before Mongolian versions were made, so that one may be working at second-hand. Secondly, reference tools are inadequate for a complete appreciation of his rich and esoteric vocabulary. Thirdly, Rajvaa thought in terms of the theology and philosophy of northern Buddhism in its Mongolian form, and through sheer ignorance one cannot always

be sure of having caught the true meaning of his poems.

Ravjaa seems to have had a dual character, being at one and the same time a worldly roisterer, fond of drink and women, and a profoundly pious lama. One might compare him in this respect, if only superficially, with John Donne, and such a comparison immediately illustrates the difficulties facing a translator coming underprepared from a completely different social, religious and philosophical climate.

The choice of poems to be translated has to a great extent been restricted by the need to select only those which lend themselves to more or less full translation. Even so, it has been necessary to make some tacit cuts. Within those limits, it has been possible to present some simple nature poems, some love songs, some poems with a deeper religious theme, and some extracts from Ravjaa's poetical teachings or sermons. As will be apparent, even what appear to be purely secular songs very often end on a religious note, though, as with the final couplet of Beautiful Khangai, this nod to piety may seem to us almost perfunctory. His long didactic poem The Kite has been mentioned above, and I give also two entertaining prose conversations composed by him. He is known also as the author of a stage play entitled The Moon Cuckoo.

As explained above, one of the characteristics of Mongolian verse is the use of antithesis. Ravjaa makes full use of this facility, to such an extent that his contrasting images sometimes seem to a western reader to be quite disconnected. We may refer to Beautiful Khangai again to illustrate the use of this device, but it can be seen in most poems. I have tried to make my translations rhythmical, but from time to time the compressed imagery of the original has frustrated me, and readers are asked to overlook my literary lapses. As in all my translations, I have made no attempt to reproduce the alliteration so characteristic of Mongolian verse.

INJANASHI AND HIS BROTHERS

Injanashi's romantic novels contain a number of his lyrics. In The One-storey Tower some of these are compositions by characters in the novels, written perhaps in the course of poetry competitions. Others assist or complement the narrative, while others still, especially those which appear at the end of a chapter, seem to be merely ornamental additions to the text. In The Pavilion of Red Weeping the poems tend rather to be commentaries on the action

of the novel, so that the majority of them do not lend themselves to translation unless accompanied by explanation, which might prove tedious to readers to whom the novel is unfamiliar. The lyrics are anything but profound in content, tending rather to display a superficially charming, but inward-looking, sentimentality.

As far as their structure is concerned, these poems present an interesting mix of Mongolian and Chinese metrical peculiarities. Lines are as a rule marked by alliteration of the first syllable, as is common in Mongolian verse. But if, as no doubt we are meant to, we ignore the suffixes which play an important role in the structure of the sentence in Mongolian, and which are usually printed separately from the word to which they apply, each line is seen to contain a fixed number of full words, usually five or seven. This must be in imitation of the five-character or seven-character lines of certain Chinese verse, and suggests that Injanashi was thinking in terms of Chinese metrics. It must be observed, though, that the considerable possible variation in length between individual Mongolian words, which, unlike Chinese monosyllables, are often polysyllabic, and the fact that a word may carry one or more than one metrically uncounted suffix or, indeed, no suffix at all, means that the lines in Injanashi's verses are of varying length as printed, and are thus denied the geometrically regular appearance of Chinese verse.

A short, and apparently incomplete essay by Injanashi's brother Güngnachoga, entitled Essay on Poetry, allows us to pursue this line of thought further, and to surmise that Injanashi and his brothers, steeped as they evidently were in Chinese culture, formed a literary group which tried to develop a system of Mongolian metrics which would parallel the classical Chinese systems. Güngnachoga complains of the paucity of verse in Mongolian, and even seems to claim that it does not exist. He writes: 'From the time of the composition of Confucius's Book of Songs has there been an age without verse? But why do the Chinese possess it, and not the Mongols?' He goes on to ask how it is, that although the line of the Mongols has continued to exist from the time of their ancestor the Khagan Taizu of the Yuan dynasty (that is, Genghis Khan), and that there have arisen many Mongolian poets, they all seem to have composed in Chinese. 'Why is it,' he says, 'that Mongol verse is so extremely rare?' Both his choice of the Shijing as the starting point of his argument, and the denial that the Mongols have poetry, suggest that Güngnachoga took it as axiomatic that only art poetry corresponding to Chinese models deserved the name. For, as we

see in other sections of the present book, there is plenty of native verse. Mongolian chronicles alone preserve much traditional verse, not to speak of the long epics, folk poetry, the conversation song and the book epic. He suggests two possible reasons for this gap in Mongolian culture, firstly that the Mongolian language is poorer in vocabulary than Chinese (which may well be true, though Güngnachoga denies it, saying that although there are difficulties in translating Chinese into Mongol, there is no reason why it cannot be adequately done) and secondly that poetry in the Mongolian language was neglected because it was of no advantage in the pursuit of an official career. This, of course, demanded fluency in Chinese and in the writing of formal essays. Having dismissed these possibilities without, as far as can be seen, proposing his own solution, he goes on to give a very brief summary of Chinese metrics, mentioning the four tones and the obligatory rhyme patterns, and then remarking that the Mongol language also possesses poetical characteristics which could be turned to account, such as back, front and neutral vowels, and words formed from them, and the possibility of alliterating rhyme. He then gives a brief description of the two genres of Tang verse known as Jueju and Pailü (though here he may actually mean Lüshi). In particular he describes how in the latter, eight-lined, form, the first and last two lines were, in his words, 'single', while the middle four were 'paired'. At this point, unfortunately, the essay, as printed, breaks off, leaving us uninformed as to how he may have intended to apply his metrical analysis to Mongolian verse. However, what he does say is sufficient to suggest that this little group of brothers may have been attempting something novel, that is, Mongolian verse in Chinese metrical patterns. Only our present lack of knowledge prevents us from judging whether their innovative ideas, if such they were, caught on, though we do know that they were not the only Mongolian writers to bewail the paucity of Mongolian verse when compared to the richness of Chinese literature.

GÜLERANSA

Güleransa (1820-1851) was the eldest son of Wangchinbala, Injanashi's father. Like his brothers Sungwayidanjung (1834-1898), Güngnachoga (1832-1866) and Injanashi, Güleransa was a writer of note, though it is only in the late twentieth century that any of his poems have become accessible abroad, and then only in the

Mongol language. He was educated in both Mongol and Chinese, and translated the Chinese novel Shui Hu Zhuan, The Water Margin, into Mongolian. A number of his poems have survived, and show him to have been a capable lyricist in much the same pattern as his younger brother Injanashi. Indeed, examination of the work of these four brother poets shows how similar their verses sometimes were, in both choice of theme and use of vocabulary. However, some of Güleransa's poems have a sharper point than those of Injanashi, especially those which treat of the First Opium War and his father's part in it as a military commander. The poem Loathsome Guests, which appears to concern a lamasery festival, is a particularly sharp piece of social censure.

SANGDAG

Sangdag was a poet from the Gobi area, who lived in the nineteenth century. He is best known for his somewhat sentimental poems, called in Mongol üge, or 'words', in which he puts into charming, if slight, verse the thoughts that some living creature, an animal or a plant, may have expressed about its lamentable condition.

NATSAGDORJ

Dashdorjiin Natsagdorj (1906-1937) has been built up posthumously to occupy the role of founder of modern Mongolian literature. He started life as a government clerk, and then studied for some years in Germany, as a member of a group of bright children who had been sent there by the Mongolian government in the 1920's. His later years were clouded first by an unhappy first marriage and then by the disasters of the years of Stalinist oppression in Mongolia, which blighted the lives of many quite innocent Mongols. His Russian wife and his small daughter were deported to Russia in 1936, and Natsagdorj, who had already been imprisoned for a while during the so-called leftist deviation of1932, took seriously to drink. He died of a stroke at the age of thirty-one.

The years following the establishment of Mongolian independence in 1921 saw an initial outpouring of exuberant literary experimentation, as young writers, among whom Natsagdorj took a prominent place, freed themselves from foreign

influences such as those emanating from Tibet and China, and tried their hand at composing novels, short stories, plays and lyrics. Much of what was written in the first few decades now reads stiffly, and sometimes resembles elementary instruction and propaganda. Some of Natsagdorj's poems, which relate to matters of hygiene, display this characteristic, but it must be remembered that he was speaking in novel terms to a public which was just liberating itself from a disastrously backward condition, into which it had been dragged by a combination of colonial neglect and exploitation as an outlying part of the Manchu Empire, and a corrupt and decaying theocracy. In their own terms, though, these poems are proof that a revolutionary change had taken place in literary expression in Mongolia, comparable to the political revolution that was dragging the land, albeit tragically in some respects, into the modern world. Natsagdorj has no time for the self-indulgent melancholy and imitative chinoiserie so characteristic of Injanashi, or for the narrow spirituality of much of Ravjaa's verse. He comes through as a young and thrusting Mongolian patriot, anxious about the evident underdevelopment of his people and the fact that disease was rampant in a declining population, and conscious that Mongols needed to be directed towards new and positive attitudes. He has other themes as well, such as young love and the pain of imprisonment, based on his own experience. The reader should remember that Natsagdorj was writing during the early days of Mongolia's socialist revolution and of the existence of the Mongolian People's Republic, which were a time of hope for the future, before the dreadful years of 1937 and after, which he did not live to see. There is, thus, a pathos in the last two stanzas of My Native Land, a praise-song for Mongolia, whose impact depends on the list of geographical names, and which dates from 1933. For Natsagdorj, the revolution of 1924 and the following few years was, at least to begin with, a positive experience, though it had its dark side for him personally.

CHIMEDIIN JIGMID

I offer one poem composed and performed by the minstrel Chimediin Jigmid, who was born in Inner Mongolia in 1896 but moved in 1948 to what was then the Mongolian People's Republic, where he died in 1965. The theme of the poem, the evils of excessive drinking, goes back to the so-called Wisdom Literature of Genghis Khan.

SOME TRADITIONAL VERSE

I offer a few poems from the hundreds which are to be found in Mongolian anthologies. The content of Mongolian folk-poems may appear slight, but their allusive style means that it is often difficult to appreciate what they are getting at. Some poems attributed to named poets, such as Ravjaa's The Supreme Qualities and The Old Man and the Birds, or Natsagdorj's It Shows Up Azure-coloured, are nowadays considered to be folk-poetry, and could equally well have been included in this section.

The so-called Long Song is an exotic genre distinguished not by its length, as its name might suggest, for the text of a Long Song may be quite brief, but by the manner of its performance. The highly ornamented melodic line is drawn out to a considerable extent, with the vowels of the lyrics supplying the base for this ornamental delivery. The printed text of the lyrics of a Long Song does not hint at this metrical peculiarity, but readers may like to know that the song Crest of Zergent and the two versions of the Orphaned white camel-kid have been drawn from collections of Long Songs.

REMINISCENCES

Remiiscences do not form a recognised genre in Mongolian literature. I have taken the liberty of presenting some passages from disparate sources, in which the writer speaks in the first person, and which illuminate Mongolian life from different perspectives, and placing them in an invented category.

A MODERN SHORT STORY

The one short story which I have translated falls outside the chronological framework of this book, but I include it to illustrate how Mongolian literature began to strike out formally in new directions during the twentieth century, while occupying itself with old themes. The Tears of the Reverend Lama retells in short story form the familiar theme of the would-be celibate lama who is deceived and ruined by a scheming woman. This theme of the jilted lama is also the basis of the conversation-song Wanglii.

A Note on Spelling

Mongolian has been written in a variety of scripts over the centuries, of which two are of paramount importance. From the early thirteenth century, the time of Genghis Khan, to about the 1940s, the language was usually written in what is known as the Uighur script, a vertical alphabetic script of near-eastern origin. This script was in some respects ambiguous, and in its use certain artificial spelling conventions were observed. In the 1940s it was replaced, in what was then the Mongolian People's Republic and is now Mongolia, by a version of the cyrillic script. A one-for-one correspondence between the old and the new letters was neither aimed at or achieved. At the same time the spelling was reformed, creating new and different conventions. Similar changes were initiated in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of China in the late 1950s, but these were reversed after a couple of years. These facts alone determine that consistency in transliterating Mongol words, which can vary in spelling according to which script was used in writing or printing them, is not easily attainable.

Some of my sources were written or printed in the Uighur script and traditional spellings, others in the cyrillic script and reformed spellings. I found it impossible to adhere to these two schemes of spelling and at the same time present versions of the originals with which English-speaking readers could feel at ease. I have therefore anglicised the spelling of Mongolian names and words in a way which I hope will render them acceptable. The same applies to words and names borrowed by Mongolian from other languages, principally from Tibetan. I decided not to try to do what the Mongolian authors themselves had declined to do, that is, to reconstruct an academically correct form of foreign words, but to present them as nearly as possible as they appear in the original, or, if there is a generally accepted English equivalent, to use that.

I have chosen to write proper names for which there is a traditionally accepted spelling in that spelling, rather than adapt them to academic standards. Thus I write Genghis Khan rather than Chinggis Qan, or even Çinggis Qan to be pedantically correct, Khalkha rather than Halh or Xalx, and so on.

The language of The Secret History of the Mongols presents special difficulties, which will be explained at the appropriate place. The Secret History has not come down to us in the Uighur

script, but transcribed, syllable by syllable, into Chinese characters used for their phonetic effect The language is also a rather archaic form of Mongolian. For these two reasons, names transliterated in a strictly academic manner can look typographically clumsy. For clarity's sake I adopt the spelling system used by Urgunge Onon, but readers will notice that this results in inconsistency with other extracts taken from later chronicles.

A Short Bibliography And Suggestions for Further Reading

The originals of a few of the passages which I have chosen for translation are to be found in European editions, which can be tracked down in major libraries, though no doubt with some trouble. The majority, however, occur in books printed in Mongolia or in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of China. There seemed to me to be little to be gained by referring my readers to obscure publications which they would be most unlikely to be able to lay their hands on, and which would not be very informative if they could be found. Accordingly I have not provided source references for the majority of the passages I have chosen, and limit myself in my suggestions for further reading to works in English, French and German.

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL

Readers who wish to explore the history and culture of the Mongols will find a most useful bibliographical guide in Judith Nordby, Mongolia, Clio Press, 1993, volume 156 of the publisher's World Bibliographical Series. Though not much attention has been devoted to Mongolian literature in English, there are numerous travel books which provide a background for the appreciation of Mongolian life. Three books by Henning Haslund can be specially recommended. These are Tents in Mongolia, 1934, Men and Gods in Mongolia, 1935 and Mongolian Journey, 1949. Judith Nordby's bibliography presents a wider selection.

The story of the mission to the Buryats is told in my book Shamans Lamas and Evangelicals: The English Missionaries in Siberia, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985. There is a full bibliography of the subject.

Pallas's Sammlungen historischer Nachrichten über die mongolischen Völkerschaften was reprinted in two volumes in 1980 by Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria.

Bergmann's Nomadische Streifereien unter den Kalmüken in den Jahren 1802 und 1803 was reprinted in 1969 by Anthropological Publications, Oosterhout, The Netherlands. The original four small-format volumes form one book in the reprint.

Schmidt's edition of The Precious Summary, entitled Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und Ihres Fürstenhauses, verfasst von Ssanang Ssetsen Chungtaidschi der Ordus, was published in St Petersburg and Leipzig in 1829. It was reprinted in 1961 by Europe Printing, The Hague. A new edition, edited by Walther Heissig without the Mongolian text, was published in 1985 by Manesse Verlag, Zurich.

Schmidt's Die Taten Bogda Gesser Chan's, des Vertilgers der Wurzel der Zehn Uebel in den Zehn Gegenden, first published in 1939 in St Petersburg and Leipzig, was reprinted in l925 in Berlin.

Laufer's Skizze der mongolischen Literatur, first published in 1907 in the Hungarian periodical Keleti Szemle VIII, was reprinted in 1976 in Hartmut Walravens (ed.) Kleinere Schriften von Berthold Laufer, Teil 1, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden.

Haenisch's translation of The Secret History, entitled Die Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen, first appeared in 1941, but this edition was almosty totally destroyed by bombing during the Second World War. A second edition appeared in 1948. A revised version of this, edited by Walther Heissig, was published in 1981 by Eugen Diederichs Verlag, Düsseldorf, Köln.

Poppe's monograph The Heroic Epic of the Khalkha Mongols, published originally in Russian, appeared in English in 1975 and 1979 in Bloomington, Indiana. Poppe published eight volumes of translations of Mongolian epics in the German series Asiatische Forschungen, between 1975 and 1985. His anthology Mongolische Volksdichtung, published in 1955 by Franz Steiner Verlag, remains of great interest.

Of Heissig's many publications the one most relevant to us is his two-volume Geschichte der mongolischen Literatur, published in 1972 by Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden. This contains a full bibliography of his own work and that of others up to the time of publication. As the great majority of the works from which I have taken passages for translation are discussed in this book, I have not

thought it necessary to refer to it on every occasion. Of more specialised interest, being devoted respectively to the Geser epic and to recent Mongolian epics, are his Geser-Studien, published in 1983 in Opladen by Westdeutscher Verlag for the Rheinische-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and his two-volume Erzählstoffe rezenter mongolischer Heldendichtung, published in 1988 by Harrassowitz. His German translations of some of the items translated in the present book will be found in his Mongolische Volksmärchen, published in 1963 by Eugen Diederichs, and Helden-, Höllenfahrts- und Schelmengeschichten der Mongolen, published in l962 by Manesse Verlag, Zurich.

Mostaert's Folklore Ordos, Peiping, 1947, is probably by now hard to locate, but remains a treasure-house of folk literature collected at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Ordos region of west China.

HISTORY

The Secret History can be consulted in Francis Woodman Cleaves, The Secret History of the Mongols, For the First Time Done into English out of the Original Tongue, Harvard University Press, l982; Urgunge Onon, The History and the Life of Chinggis Khan, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1990; and Igor de Rachewiltz, The Secret History of the Mongols, published in Papers on Far Eastern History, Australian National University, 1971 and later issues.

The anonymous Altan Tobchi was edited and translated by myself in 1955 under the title of The Mongol Chronicle Altan Tobči and published by Harrassowitz as Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen Band 5. This early attempt of mine at editing a Mongolian text could do with some revision. The Altan Tobchi of Luvsandanzan has not been translated, but a somewhat imperfect printed version first published in Ulaanbaatar in 1937 was reprinted as Scripta Mongolica I by the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1952 with a critical introduction by Antoine Mostaert.

In 1956 the Harvard-Yenching Institute also published, as Scripta Mongolica II, facsimiles of three manuscripts of The Precious Summary, edited with a book-length introduction by Mostaert. An English translation of The Precious Summary was begun in 1964 by John R. Krueger as No. 2 of the Mongolia Society's Occasional Papers, Bloomington, Indiana. His monograph Poetical Passages

in the Erdeni-yin Tobči, published in 1961 by Mouton and Co., The Hague, is a valuable contribution to the study of the text.

Heissig's monograph Die Familien- und Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der Mongolen I. 16.-18. Jahrhundert, published by Harrassowitz in 1959 as Asiatische Forschungen Band 5, is a comprehensive survey of Mongolian historical writing.

DIDACTIC LITERATURE

Walther Heissig's monograph Bolur Erike "Eine Kette aus Bergkristallen". Peiping 1946, is a valuable introduction to the subject of the wisdom-literature associated with the figure of Genghis Khan, but is probably not easily accessible. Essays by Heissig on the wisdom-literature associated with Chagadai and Khubilai are to be found in Tractata Altaica, Harrassowitz, 1976, and Studia Sino-Mongolica, Franz Steiner, 1979, respectively

For the Subashid see James E. Bosson, A Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels: The Subhāṣitaratnanidhi of Sa Skya Paṇḍita in Tibetan and Mongolian, Bloomington, Indiana, 1969.

TALES OF INDIAN ORIGIN

Vikramaditya tales can be found in translation, with an introduction, in my book Tales of King Vikramāditya and the Thirty-two Wooden Men, New Delhi, 1960.

EPIC

The main sources for the study of the Mongolian epic have been mentioned above. There are twelve volumes of translations in the series Asiatische Forschungen including those made by Poppe.

PRAYERS

Heissig's book The Religions of Mongolia, London and Henley,

Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, is the best survey of the subject, and is fortunately available in English translation. For more technical discussion, his books Mongolische Volksreligiöse und Folkoristische Texte, Franz Steiner, 1966, and Götter im Wandel, Harrassowitz, 1996, may be consulted.

SHAMANASTIC INCANTATIONS

Those shamanist songs in Rintchen's third volume which were recorded from oral recitation were edited and translated into French by Marie-Dominique Even in Chants de chamanes mongols, Études mongoles et sibériennes, cahier 19-20, 1988-1989, Université de Paris X.

CEREMONIAL VERSE

Henry Serruys, Kumiss Ceremonies and Horse Races, Harrassowitz, 1974, Asiatische Forschungen Band 37, may be consulted with profit.

FOLKTALES

A small collection entitled Mongolian Folktales, Stories and Proverbs in English was published by The Mongolia Society in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1967. For a collection in German translation, with an informative postscript, see Heissig, Mongolische Märchen, Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1963. Mostaert's collection of folktales from Ordos has been mentioned above.

SINO-MONGOLIAN LITERATURE

KHASBUU

The work of Khasbuu has not been noted to any great extent in western critical literature. My own discussion of his work appeared in an article in Zentralasiatische Studien 15, Harrassowitz,1981.

INJANASHI

For Köke Sudur see John Gombojab Hangin, Köke Sudur (The Blue Chronicle), Harrassowitz, 1973, Asiatische Forschungen, Band 38. I published a chapter-by-chapter summary of The One-storey Tower in 1979 in Studia Sino-Mongolica.

NATSAGDORJ

The extraordinary story of the Mongolian educational group sent to Germany in the 1920s has been told in three different places by the late Serge Wolff, who personally played a leading part in its activities. This venture, together with the story of a contemporary commercial delegation, was described in the Royal Central Asian Journal, vols. XXXII and XXXIII, 1945-46, while the educational venture was described in The Mongolia Society Bulletin of the Mongolia Society, Bloomington, vol. IX, no.2, 1970, and then in Zentralasiatische Studien 5, 1971.

A Note on the Translations

Some of my translations have appeared previously, and are identified below. These early versions have been subjected to revision to a greater or lesser extent for the purpose of inclusion in this book.

Passages from the anonymous Altan Tobchi appeared in my edition of the chronicle, listed in the Bibliography.

The Tale of Ubashi Khungtayiji appeared in the magazine New Orient, 1967 no. 2, Prague.

Discourse of a Sheep, a Goat and an Ox appeared in New Orient, 1966, no.1.

The Evils of Strong Drink appeared in Tractata Altaica.

The Stories of King Bigarmijid and the Thirty-two Wooden Men appeared in my edition, listed in the Bibliography.

Anaa Mergen Khan appeared in my book Mongolische Epen X, Asiatische Forschungen, Band 75, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz.

The hunting rituals appeared in an article entitled Mongol Notes II. Some "Shamanist" Hunting Rituals from Mongolia, Central Asiatic Journal, vol.xii no.2, 1968, Mouton and Co and Otto Harrassowitz.

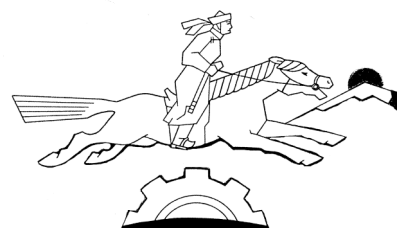
The shamanist incantations appeared in a review published in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, vol. XL, part 2, 1977.

The translations from Khasbuu have been adapted from an article in Zentralasiatische Studien, 15, 1981.

Prince Sumiya, some poems, including three of Sangdag's 'words', an abbreviated version of The Perils of Drink, and the Benediction for the Tent, appeared in Ruth Finnegan (ed.), The Penguin Book of Oral Poetry, 1978.

The stories from Old Jambal's Tales appeared in my book Tales of an Old Lama, The Institute of Buddhist Studies, Tring, 1997.

HISTORY



The King of Tibet and the Princess of China

The following episode from The Precious Summary is not found in the text published in 1829 by Schmidt, but occurs in the so-called Urga Manuscript published in facsimile by Erich Haenisch in 1955, and also in three manuscripts from Inner Mongolia published by the Rev. Antoine Mostaert in 1956. The motif of a message being conveyed by someone hidden in an elaborate pit is found elsewhere in Mongolian literature. A version in English is to be found in Owen Lattimore's book Mongol Journeys, where the hero is Abatai Khan of the Khalkha, who brought Buddhism from Tibet to Khalkha in the late 16th century.

Then as the King was thinking to himself: 'It is the one Supreme Doctrine which is necessary for the welfare of the living creatures of the Land of the Snows[1], he saw two rays of light emerge from between the eyelids of the figure which had come into existence of its own accord.[2] He saw one of these rays of light fall upon the Princess Gribsun, daughter of the King Armour of Light of Nepal. She was born in the Ga-ape year, and was sixteen years of age. Her complexion was white. She bore the signs of perfection, and she was more beautiful than one could wish for. She was not enmeshed in the ways of the world. From her mouth there emerged the scent of lotus-flowers. She found her power in the Treasury of Jewels. He saw the second ray of light fall upon the Princess Wencheng, daughter of the King Tang Tayisung of China. She was born in the Ga-ape year, and was sixteen years of age. Her complexion was bright and light blue. She bore the signs of perfection, and she was more beautiful then one could wish for. She was not enmeshed in the ways of the world. From her mouth there emerged the scent of hari-sandalwood. She found her power in the Shastra of the Intellect.

Then, when he sent the two noblemen Tonmi Sambora and Uran Tanggarig to invite the girl from Nepal, he gave them three caskets, saying: 'The King of Nepal will ask you three separate things. Give him one of these on each occasion.' Then, when King

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[1] Tibet.

[2] This refers to a previous passage which tells of the creation by magic transformation of the figure of a monk from within the heart of the King.

Armour of Light asked them three separate questions, these were understood secretly by means of the letters in the caskets, so that the King was amazed and afraid, and gave them his daughter Gribsun, the reincarnation of the Furious Mother. Together with that White Tara the Lady Gribsun, he gave them three figures which had come into existence of their own accord, a Joo Akshobhya Vajra which had been enlivened by the Buddha Kashyapa, a Maidari Wheel of the Law, and a White Mother Tara formed from gorshisha sandalwood, and also all the scriptures of Nepal without exception. They brought her to Tibet, and she met the King in his twenty-third year, the Ki-pig year.

Then he sent three hundred emissaries, headed by the three noblemen Brisaru Kungston, Uran Tanggarig and Tonmi Sambora to invite the Princess Wencheng, giving them three letters in caskets as before. Four groups of emissaries had come at the same time from the King of the Doctrine of India, from the King of Jewels of Persia, from the Mongolian King and Lord of the Assembly, and from the King of the Geser Army, to invite that Princess. Then the King, her Father, being inclined to the Doctrine, said he would give her to the King of the Doctrine. The Queen, her Mother, was devoted to goods, and said: 'Let us give her to the King of Jewels.' The Prince, her elder brother, was keen on heroes, and said: 'Let us give her to the King and Lord of the Assembly,' The Princess liked handsome people, and planned to go to the King of the Army. There was no-one who mentioned Tibet.

Now the King Tang Tayisung was very astute, and thought to himself: 'One has heard that this King of Tibet is not like ordinary men. Let me listen well to the words of the emissaries of the King of Tibet, and find out their deepest meaning.' He said to the Tibetan emissaries: 'Does your King have the Three Shrines of the Buddha? If he has, I shall give him the Princess, my daughter. If he has not, I shall not give her to him.' Uran the Minister[3] presented him with the letter from the first casket. The King opened it and looked at it. Like the letter given previously to the King of Nepal, it was written on blue paper in Chinese characters done in gold and jewels. It read: 'You, King Tayisung, have shrines. I do not have shrines. One day, I shall send one hundred and eight craftsmen, magically transformed from myself, and they will erect one hundred and eight temples with their doors turned towards China. Will this not be a marvel of mine? If, by the time I do this, you have not given me your daughter, I shall send many

[3] Or The skilful Minister

magically transformed soldiers and kill you, and shall seize your daughter, and destroy your lands.' Hearing this, he thought to himself: 'I wonder if this is true or false. If it is true, there will be difficulties.'

Then he said: 'Does your King have the Rule of the Doctrine? If he has, I shall give him my daughter. If he has not, I shall not give her to him.' Uran the Minister presented him with the second letter, and begged him to read it. When he opened the second letter and looked at it, it was written like the previous one. It read: 'You, King Tayisung, have the Rule of the Doctrine. I have no doctrine. When one day I shall form by magic transformation one thousand Wheel-turning Kings similar to myself, and set in operation the Rule of the Meritorious Doctrine, will this not be a marvel of mine?' If, by the time I do this, you have not given me your daughter, I shall send many magically transformed soldiers and kill you, and shall seize your daughter, and destroy your lands.' He thought to himself: 'I wonder if this is true?'

Further, he said: 'Does your King have the Five Joys of Desire? If he has, I shall give him my daughter. If he has not, I shall not give her to him. Then Uran the Minister presented him with the third letter, and addressed him as before. When he opened it and looked at it, it was written like the previous one. It read: 'You, King Tayisung, have the Five Joys of Desire. I do not have them. If you wish for joy and give me your daughter, I shall produce from my own body five hundred transformations. When I produce the joys of one thousand brilliant colours, unfamiliar to the organs of sight, one thousand harmonious sounds, unfamiliar to the organs of hearing, perfect scents, unfamiliar to the organs of smell, one thousand foods with one hundred tastes, unfamiliar to the organs of taste, one thousand soft garments, unfamiliar to the organs of touch, will this not be a marvel of mine? If, by the time I do this, you have not given me your daughter, I shall send innumerable magically transformed soldiers and kill you, and shall seize your daughter, and put an end to all your realms and lands.'

Then the King thought to himself: 'This really seems to be true,' and, although he was afraid, he pretended not to be afraid, and said: 'Tomorrow I shall give a feast for the five hundred emissaries. Pray come early.' Next day, when the emissaries came, he gave them a great feast, and gave each man a great bottle of strong drink, and said: ' I shall give my daughter to whichever of you who shall finish this by himself.' Then all the other emissaries drank a bottle each, but became drunk before they could finish it. They could not find the houses where they were staying, but spent

the night in different houses. Uran the Minister had come in the morning and marked with paint the way by which he would come. Then he poured into the cups of all the others the contents of his own bottle, and they each drank it and finished it up. When he returned home at night he returned to the house where he was living by means of the marks on the way by which he had come.

Next day, he said: 'We finished it. Give her to us.' To test them again he gave each man a sheep, and said: 'I shall give her to whichever of you can eat up the meat of this tomorrow and dress the skin.' Then the other emissaries were unable, not a single one of them, to finish eating up the flesh of the sheep and dressing the skins. Uran he Minister had already killed a sheep and finished eating its flesh with relish. He had tied down just one sheepskin from head to foot and finished dressing it. He said: 'We have done it. Give her to us.' Again he gave each man a hundred mares with their foals, the mothers separate from the foals. He said: 'I shall give her to whichever of you who can tell tomorrow which of these are mother and offspring.' Then the other emissaries tried with force to link mothers and foals, but did not succeed. Uran the Minister herded them apart overnight, and put them together in the morning, and each offspring recognised which was the udder of its mother. He said: 'We found out. Give her to us.'

Then he gave them five hundred hens with their chicks, and said: 'I shall give her to whichever of you can distinguish mother and chick tomorrow.' Then the other emissaries took one big hen and chick and tried to put them together, but did not succeed. Every one of them fled away and escaped. Uran the Minister scattered grain upon an open space and sent the hens into it. The chicks went in under the necks of their mothers and recognised them as they ate. He said: 'We found out. Give her to us.'

Then he trimmed five hundred larches evenly, and said: 'I shall give her to whichever of you can distinguish which is the top and which is the base. The other emissaries could by no means find this out, but Uran the Minister threw them into a great stretch of water, and the tops turned upwards, while the bases sank downwards. He said: 'We found out. Give her to us.' He said: 'Tomorrow I shall seat side by side five hundred girls of similar appearance to the Princess my daughter. I shall give her to whichever of you can pick her out from among them.' Next day the five groups of emissaries assembled, and came to the King's palace, and found the Princess and five hundred other girls, all dressed and ornamented alike, sitting beside the King. Then he asked the emissaries, senior and junior, to get up and recognise her.

The other emissaries, having superior authority, rose up one after the other, and took a pair each of the beautiful girls and went out, saying: 'If it is not the one, then it must be the other one.' Before this, Uran the Minister had taken up with a waiting-maid of the Princess's, and he asked her: 'They say that tomorrow whoever recognises the Princess among the five hundred girls shall take her. How can she be recognised from among all those similar girls? Please tell me about her appearance. I will make you my wife.' The woman said: 'The King's commands are most severe. If he finds out that I have told you, he will kill me without delay.' He said: 'How will he find out that you said anything? Just tell me.' She said: 'Our Chinese astrologers are skilful in mathematics. They will find out by means of mathematics.' Then Uran the Minister said: 'I can get the better of their methods.'

That same night he dug a pit nine fathoms deep, and in it he placed a three-legged brazier. On this he placed a cauldron, which he filled with water. He scattered the feathers of all sorts of bird over this, and put a big wooden lid on it. He seated the woman upon this, and covered her over with an iron net. He inserted a nine fathom copper pipe in the woman's mouth, passing through the mesh of the net, and made it possible for her to speak through this pipe. Then the woman spoke through the pipe as follows in a whisper into the ear of the Minister:

'As for the Princess, she is not more beautiful than the others. Her clothes and ornaments are not more splendid than those of the others. She will be transformed to make her look like the others. If I am to say what distinguishes her from the others, her face shines greenishly. When one looks at her, she is brilliant beyond what one may desire. Her teeth are white like crystal. Her eyes are dark like the sapphire. Her hair is black, of the colour of lapis lazuli. At her throat there is a small necklet. The space between her eyelids is as much as a barlay grain. She bears the Aryadara sign[4]. From her mouth there emerges the scent of hari-sandalwood. This is what she is like. She will be sitting above the six girls seated at the end.'

Then Uran the Minister took an arrow with the feathers of a black vulture, to which was tied cloth of five colours, and stood up. He said: 'The one sitting at the end must be the daughter of a weaver. She is adorned with a piece of cloth.

The one above her must be the daughter of a carpenter.

[4] Meaning uncertain.

Her shirt is faded.
The one above her must be the daughter of a potter.
Her hands are chapped.
The one above her must be the daughter of a blacksmith.
Her shirt is ragged.
The one above her must be the daughter of a painter. Her nails are stained.
The one above her must be the daughter of a goldsmith. She has a golden ring.
As for the one above her, she looks like the Princess-transformation.'

He brought the nock of the arrow to the collar of her dress. The Princess-transformation got up, weeping, and went away following the five hundred girls. Then the King her Father was greatly distressed on account of his daughter. He provided gifts, ten thousand by ten thousand, consisting of a Buddha statue of the Lord Shakyamuni, all the books of profound calculations, thirteen sutras like the Chintamani,[5] and all sorts of necessities, jewels, cloths, silk and other materials. He gave all these to his favourite daughter and set the Lady Princess on the road to Tibet.

Then Brisaru Kungston spoke maliciously as follows: 'O Great King, you have given your only beloved daughter to our King. Now if you were to retain one of us three ministers, would not the realms of China and Tibet become firm?' He looked askance at Uran the Minister, and the King said: 'You are going away with my one and only Princess-transformation, the apple of my eye. Now if Uran the Minister, whose wisdom and understanding are great, should stay here and defend my realm, the two great peoples would be firm and happy. And he retained Uran the Minister.

Then the King Tang Tayisung said: 'Go and fetch the person who pointed out my beloved daughter the Princess to the Tibetans.' He handed down this command to his ministers, but the ministers were unable to discover the person, and reported so to the King, and he said: 'Let the astrologers assemble and make an investigation by means of their calculations.' The astrologers divined, and said to the King: 'It was not a person who pointed out the King's Princess. Beneath the nine-fold ground are three great iron mountains. Above them is a great plain of cast iron. Above that has been set a great sea of water. Upon this all sorts of birds

[5] The legendary Wish-granting Jewel

are sitting. From this there has grown up a great palm tree. It is no human being upon this, but a female demon with a nine-fathom long copper pipe and a body full of eyes who has spoken.'

At this the King became greatly incensed, and he was about to have all the books of calculations burned in fire, but Uran the Minister instructed him, saying: 'How can you burn the books of calculations taught by Manjushri? Oh, Great King, as our King is possessed of great wisdom, when we were coming here, he instructed us, saying "You will be tested in various ways. Therefore, I shall send you a dream from here. Act according to that dream." That night a messenger from the holy tutelary genius of our King came and spoke to us in the form of such and such a woman.' When he said this, the King was reminded of the three letters which on that earlier occasion had known things, and, saying: 'If that is true, that is how it is,' he refrained from burning of the books.

The Lesson of Alan Go'a

The book known as The Secret History of the Mongols is not only the first piece of connected Mongolian writing to survive but one which presents a unique view of Mongolian society in imperial times, as seen by contemporary Mongols themselves. By a piece of curious good fortune the Mongolian text has remained unaltered, for at some time in the 14th century it was transcribed into Chinese characters used for their phonetic value, and thus remained more or less intact and impenetrable, until scholars began to reconstruct the original text in the early years of the 20th century. Their work was helped by interlinear glosses in Chinese to the transcribed Mongolian text, and by the existence of a somewhat abbreviated translation into Chinese. The work of reconstruction permitted translations, which have appeared in many different languages, into Modern Mongolian, Buryat Mongol, Chinese, Japanese, German, French, English and Hungarian, and so on. Later Mongolian chronicles are deeply affected by Buddhist influences, and trace the ancestry of the Mongols back to legendary kings of India. The Secret History, on the other hand, preserves untouched what appears to be a more ancient notion of the origin of the Mongolian people, showing them to believe that they had an anthropomorphic origin. Their first ancestors are named, in the first lines of the Secret History, as a Grey or Blue-grey Wolf and a Fallow Doe. The royal line of the Mongols descended from the union of these two, and in one generation a man known as Dobun Mergen, Dobun the Clever, married a woman named Alan Go'a, Alan the Fair. They had two sons, named Belgünütei and Bügünütei. Also, Dobun Mergen had taken into his household a boy whom he had taken from his destitute father, a man belonging to a tribe called the Ma'aliq-Baya'ut, in exchange for the flesh of a deer which he had hunted and killed.

Meanwhile, Dobun Mergen died. After Dobun Mergen had died, Alan Go'a, being without a husband, gave birth to three sons. They were named Buqu-qadagi, Buqatu-salji and Bodonchar Mungqag, Bodonchar the Stupid. Belgünütei and Bügünütei, the two sons born previously to Dobun Mergen, said to each other behind the back of their mother, Alan Go'a: 'This mother of ours has no brothers, no male relatives and no husband, and yet she has given birth to these three sons. There is only the man from the Ma'aliq-Baya'ut in the tent. These sons must be his.' Alan Go'a knew what they were saying behind her back.

One spring day, she was boiling the dried flesh of a sheep, and she made her five sons Belgünütei, Bügünütei, Buqu-qadagi, Buqatu-salji and Bodonchar Mungqag sit in a row, and saying: 'Break this,' she gave them each the shaft of an arrow. They each broke them in two – what could hinder them? Then she tied five

arrows together, and gave them to them, saying: 'Break them.' One after another they took the bundle of arrows, but could not break them

Then their mother Alan Go'a said: 'Belgünütei and Bügünütei, my two sons, you are suspicious of me, as having given birth to these three sons, and wonder whose sons they are. Your suspicions are correct. Every night a shining yellow man entered my tent on the light from the smoke-gap, and rubbed my belly. His brilliance entered my belly. On departing, he crept out on the rays of sun and moon, like a yellow dog.

Why do you speak thoughtlessly?
If one considers this, the sign is
That they are the sons of Heaven.
How can they be compared
With the black-headed people?
When they become the rulers of all
The commoners will understand too.'

Alan Go'a further exhorted her sons as follows:
'You, my five sons, were born of one belly. If, like those five arrows just now, you remain separate, anyone will be able to break you easily. But if you remain in agreement together, no-one can manage that.' After that, their mother Alan Go'a died.

The Youth of Chinggis Khan

Variant forms of the following narrative survive in Mongolian chronicles. The best known of these outside Mongolia is probably that entitled Erdeni-yin Tobchi, 'The Precious Summary', of 1662, a work completed in 1662 by the Inner Mongolian nobleman Sagang Sechen. This chronicle was translated into German by I.J. Schmidt and was published in 1829 under the title Geschichte des mongolischen Fürstenhauses. The translation given below is based on the version preserved in the early seventeenth-century chronicle Altan Tobchi, 'The Golden Summary'. In spite of the apparent solidity of the textual tradition, linguistic problems still remain, and as with all the extracts from chronicles offered here, the accuracy of the translation of a few passages cannot be guaranteed. It has not proved practicable to retain, or find a substitute for, the alliterated verse patterns of the original.

Then Yisügei Bagatur took his two younger brothers Daritai and Ochokhon hunting.[1] They something in, thinking it was an arctic hare, but found it was where a woman had urinated. They followed the tracks of some carts, and Yisügei said to his younger brothers: 'A fine son will be born from that woman.' They went on, following the cart-tracks. Chiledü, a man of the Tayichugud was going home with Ögelen Eke[2] whom he had taken as wife from the Olkhonud. They pursued them and caught them up and Yisügei said to his two younger brothers: 'Let us hunt them down.' Then Ögelen Eke said to her husband: 'Did you notice? Those three fellows look nasty. You get away.' She took off the shirt she was wearing and gave it to him, and those three brothers chased him off. They pursued Chiledü over three rivers and across three ridges, but did not catch him up. Yisügei seized Ögelen Eke and took her for himself. While they were on their way home the Lady Ögelen kept weeping and Daritai and Ochokhon said to her:

'He has crossed three rivers.
He has gone over three ridges.
If you search, there are no tracks.
If you look, there is no trace.
If you weep no-one will hear you.'

Ögelen Eke heard these words and went on without making a

[1] Erdeni-yin Tobchi says, more reliably, Nekün and Daritai. Ochokhon here suggests the second element of the name Daritai Ochigin of Erdeni-yin Tobchi.
[2] Mother Ögelen.

sound.

When they had brought in as a prisoner the Tatar Temüjin, Ögelen Eke gave birth to a son. They gave him the name of Temüjin. Ögelen Eke also gave birth to Khasar, Khajikhu and Ochokhu, making four sons in all. As Yisügei was taking his son Temüjin to the Olkhonud, Temüjin's relatives on his mother's side, Dei Sechin of the Khonggirad was watering his horses at a water-course midway between Tongsur and Chingchir. Dei Sechin greeted Yisügei, and asked him: 'Brother-in-law and son of the Borjigin line of the Kiyod clan, where are you going?' Yisügei said: 'I am going to put my only son Temüjin as a son-in-law with the Olkhonud.' Dei Sechin said: 'This night I dreamed that there was a completely white falcon which I held in the palm of my hand. This dream of mine means it was the genius of you, of the Borjigin line of the Kiyod clan. Go to my tent. I have a nine year-old daughter called Börte, and I shall give her to you. From of old it has been the custom of our land to seat our beautiful daughters in carriages, to harness black camel-stallions to them and to make them into queens and rulers of all. We harness grey-blazed camel-stallions for our beautiful daughters, and seat them on high thrones, and make them into rulers of all the people.' Yisügei Bagatur left his only son Temüjin there, giving a pair of horses to Dei Sechin, and departed, saying: 'My son is afraid of dogs. Take good care of him.'

As he was returning on his way home, he came across some Tatar people who were having a feast. He dismounted, saying: 'They are dangerous people. How could I avoid them?' They mixed poison in some food and gave it to him. He reached his tent in distress, and said: 'I met some dangerous Tatar people. They mixed poison in their tasty food and gave it to me.' Troubled as to his life, he said: 'Tell Menggelig to come.' He said to Menggelig: 'I have left my only son Temüjin with Dei Sechin of the Khonggirad. Go and fetch him at once.' He went to fetch him at once, but before he could bring him back, the Ruler Yisügei had died.

The lady mother, born with wisdom, constantly nourished her son, born with intelligence, with wild onions, and turned him into the Ruler. The lady mother, born with character, nourished her son, born with a destiny, with little fishes, and brought him to the place of predestined khagan.[3]

[3] Khagan is a royal title, similar to, and sometimes alternative to, khan.

Temüjin and Khasar said to their mother Ögelen Eke: 'For some time Begter has been stealing the fish we have netted. Today he has stolen a lark which Khasar shot with a blunt arrow. We are going to kill Begter and Belgetei.'[4] Ögelen Eke said: 'Oh my sons, why do you talk like the five sons of Örbei Gooa of the Tayichugud of old? You have no companions but your shadows, no whip but your tails.' At these words Temüjin and Khasar went out, banging the door. After they had gone out, and while Begter was sitting looking after their eight dun geldings, Temüjin from in front, and Khasar from behind, came to hem Begter in and kill him. Begter said: 'If you are going to kill me, kill me. But do not kill my younger brother Belgetei. Without doubt he will give you his strength.' They killed Begter. When Temüjin and Khasar came to their mother Ögelen Eke, Ögelen Eke said:

'My sons, you are like birds of prey striking at a cliff,
You are like black dogs biting your own placenta,
You are like grey wolves plunging into a rainy day,
You are like camel-stallions biting the narrow-bones of their own foals,
You are like dogs attacking the darkness,
You are like tigers unable to seize anything.
What have I made of my sons?'[5]

Suddenly the Tayichugud attacked the tent. The Tayichugud said: 'We have no need of the five of you, woman. Send out Temüjin.' Having heard these words, Temüjin went secretly into a wood by the Onon River and hid there. The Tayichugud learned of this and kept watch over the gap by which he had gone in. He spent three days and nights in the wood, and was going to come out, but while he was tightening the girth-strap and fitting the breast-strap, they slipped and fell off. The Ruler thought to himself: 'As for the girth, that may be all right, but would the saddle and breast-strap slip? My god[6] has held me back,' and he went in again. He spent another three days and nights there, and after that was about to come out, when he saw

[4] Begter and Belgütei were half-brothers of Temüjin.
[5] This is one version of a poetical passage which survives in variant form in other texts of Altan Tobchi and elsewhere. The text surviving here is not perfectly comprehensible.
[6] Temüjin probably refers here to his departed father, as below.

that the way was blocked by a massive white rock. He said: 'Heaven my father has held me back,' and went in again and spent three more days and nights there. He stayed there for nine days and nights without food or drink, and then saying: 'May Heaven my father decide if I am to live or die,' he was about to come out, but the Tayichugud were watching the gap. They seized Temüjin and took him to their tents. They put chains and fetters on him and kept guarded him. As they were guarding him, Chilagun and Chimbai, the sons of Torkhan Shira, took pity on him. On he fifteenth day in the full moon of summer were holding a great feast, and left a simple man to guard him. Temüjin struck that man down with his chains, and the man got up and shouted out. Hearing the noise the Tayichugud came running, but Temüjin had got into the water and lay there. Torkhan Shira saw that he had got into the water and was lying there, and said: 'It is a good thing for that boy to lie there. I will search in the wood. Oh bright man, dress your forelock. Oh good man, stroke your beard.' The Tayichugud dispersed and went home. After dark night had fallen, by means of the noise of the beating of kumis, he went into the tent of his rescuer Torkhan Shira. Torkhan Shira said: 'Oh, Temüjin, go to your mother. Why have you come in here?' Chilagun and Chimbai, the two sons of Torkhan Shira, said: 'A bush will shelter a lark which has come fleeing to it. What good would it do us, if we did not honestly take pity on a boy who has come trembling?' They broke the chains with an axe and let Temüjin go. He hid Temüjin in a cart full of wool, together with his own daughter who was named Khatakhan. Early next day the Tayichugud got up, and saying: 'Where has the boy with the chains and fetters gone,' they searched each of their tents. They came to the tent of his rescuer Torkhan Shira, and having searched Torkhan Shira's tent, they were going to search the cart full of wool, when the elder brother of Torkhan Shira said rudely: 'Would anyone hide a living human being in a cart full of wool in such a summer drought as this?' Then they all dispersed. After that Torkhan Shira said: 'Oh Temüjin, you nearly cast out my ashes.' Then he gave his sterile white mare to Temüjin, and took off one of his stirrups and gave it to him. Killing a lamb which had sucked two ewes he prepared its flesh and gave it to him for provisions, and said: 'Hurry to your mother.'

Temüjin hurried away and came to his mother, and was enjoying his pleasure when the Tayichugud came pursuing him by his tracks, and stole the eight dun horses. The Ruler mounted the horse Dargi Khonggor on which Belgetei had gone hunting

marmots and pursued them. As he was pursuing them by the trodden-down grass, Külüg Bogurchi, the son of Lakhu Bayan, had taken his barrel and leather bag and was milking his mares in a deserted place. The Ruler met him, and Bogurchi asked: 'You of the Borjigin line of the kiyod clan, where are you going? ' The Ruler said: 'I have come following the tracks made by the Tayichugud who came and stole our eight dun horses.' Külüg Bogurchi, the son of Lakhu Bayan, mounted the Ruler on his swift pale yellow piebald horse, and having gone to his numerous horses, he himself mounted a white horse with a black back and went off in pursuit together with the Ruler. They were just about to reach the Tayichugud when they saw a lot of men lying asleep surrounding the eight dun horses. The Ruler said to Bogurchi: 'Bogurchi, you hold the horses. I shall go in.' Bogurchi said: 'I followed you on a blessed and good day. If I were to skulk on this day of battle, what would that make of me?' The Lord saw that what Bogurchi said was right, and the two of them went in, and drove out the eight dun horses. As they were coming back with the eight dun horses, Lakhu Bayan was on the road. He turned one way laughing, and turned the other way weeping, and said: 'My son, do not abandon this enterprise of yours. He killed a lamb which had sucked two dams gave it to them as provisions, and let them go.

The ruler brought the eight dun horses to his mother Ögelen Eke. After he had come back Ögelen Eke, Khasar and his younger brothers, who had been grieving, saw him and were glad.

Temüjin Escapes From The Three Merkit

This extract is taken from the 'Secret History'.

While they were encamped at Bürgi-ergi at the head of the Kelüren River, early one morning, when the light was yellow and dawn was breaking, the old woman Qo'aqchin, who served in the tent of Hö'elün-eke, got up, and said: 'Mother, mother! Get up at once! The earth is quaking. A thundering sound is to be heard. Can it be that the terrible Tayyichi'ut are on their way here? Mother, get up at once!'

Hö'elün-eke said: 'Wake the lads at once!' Hö'elün-eke got up at once. Temüjin and the other lads got up in a hurry, and seized their horses. Temüjin rode one horse. Hö'elün-eke rode one horse. Qasar rode one horse. Qachi'un rode one horse. Temüge-otchigin rode one horse. Belgütei rode one horse. Bo'orchu rode one horse. Jelme rode one horse. Hö'elün-eke took Temülün on her lap. They got one horse ready as a spare horse. There was no horse for the Lady Börte.

Temüjin and his brothers set off while was still early, and made for the mountain Burqan. The old woman Qo'aqchin said: 'I shall hide the Lady Börte,' and made her get into a black covered cart, and harnessed to it an ox with dappled flanks, and set off up the Tenggelik stream. It was still half light, and day was dawning, when some soldiers came trotting towards them and surrounded them. They asked her: 'Who are you?' The old woman Qo'aqchin said: 'I am one of Temüjin's people. I came to shear the sheep at the Great Tent, and now I am going back to my own tent.' They said: 'Is Temüjin in his tent? How far is the tent?' The old woman Qo'aqchin said: 'The tent is nearby. I do not know if Temüjin is there or not. I got up from behind it and came here.'

The soldiers trotted off. The old woman Qo'aqchin beat her ox with the dappled flanks and hurried forward, but the axle of the cart broke. As they were saying to each other: 'The axle of the cart has broken on us. Let us run on foot into the wood,' those very same soldiers immediately came trotting up, with the mother of Belgütei riding pillion with her legs hanging down. They said: 'What are you carrying in that cart?' The old woman Qo'aqchin

said: 'I am carrying wool.' Then the older ones of the soldiers told the younger lads, the sons, to dismount and have a look. When the younger lads, the sons, dismounted and took away the door of the cart, they found a woman sitting inside. They pulled her out of the cart, and made both her and Qo'aqchin ride pillion, and set off in the direction of Mount Burqan, following the tracks of Temüjin in the grass.

Three times they went round Burqan-qaldun after Temüjin, but could not capture him. In the troublesome wood, which threatened to swallow them in its swamps as they swerved this way and that, and where a sated serpent would be unable to penetrate the wood if it tried, they followed him but could not capture him. These were the Three Merkit: Toqto'a of the Uduyit-Merkit, Dayir-usun of the Uwas-Merkit, Qa'atai-darmala of the Qa'at-Merkit. These Three Merkit had come seeking vengeance for the abduction of Hö'elün-eke by Chiledü. Those Merkit said to each other: 'Taking our revenge for Hö'elün-eke we have taken their women. Now we have had our revenge.' They came down from Burqan-qaldun and went home.

Wondering whether those Three Merkit had indeed gone home, or were lying in wait, Temüjin had Belgütei, Bo'orchu and Jelme go after the Three Merkit and observe them for three days and nights. They let the Merkit make their getaway.

Temüjin came down from Mount Burqan, and, striking his breast, he said:

'Because Mother Qo'aqchin could hear like a weasel,
Because she could see like a stoat,
I myself escaped.
Following the tracks of a deer,
With my horse hobbled by its halter,
I made my home with elm-twigs.
I ascended Mount Burqan.
On Burqan-qaldun,
I was lucky to escape
With my life the size of a louse.
Caring for my one and only life,
Following the tracks of an elk,
With my only horse,
I made my home with willow twigs.
I ascended Mount Burqan.
On Burqan-qaldun
My life, the size of an insect,

Was shielded.
I was thoroughly terrified.
Every morning I shall make sacrifices to Burqan-qaldun.
Every day I shall pray to it.
Let the descendants pf my descendants note this.'

And, facing towards the sun, he laid his belt around his neck, hung his hat on his hand, struck his breast with his hand, knelt nine times towards the sun, and offered a sprinkling of milk and a prayer.

How Temüjin Acquired The Name Of Genghis Khan

This legend, translated here from a version found in 'The Precious Summary', gives a fanciful but traditional explanation of the meaning of the title Genghis Khan.

Then in the Ki-hen year, in his twenty-eighth year, the Prince Temüjin ascended the throne at Ködege Arulan by the Kerülen River. On three mornings before that day a bird like a five-coloured lark sat upon a square stone in front of his tent and sang 'Genghis, Genghis',[1] and in consequence of that his name of Brilliant Holy Genghis Khagan became celebrated in all directions. Then the stone suddenly split open of its own accord, and from within it there emerged a jade seal, which was known as the Khasbuu.[2] It was one span in both length and breadth, and on its back were two entwined dragons on top of a tortoise. The markings upon it stood out as if carved. This seal could make an impression through precisely one thousand sheets of paper.

Immediately thereupon, he set up there his nine-tailed white standard, which had been planted and erected at the head of the Onon River, and his four-tailed black standard, which had been sent to Deligün Boldag and erected there. He became the Lord of the Forty Ten-thousands of the Bede[3] people.

[1] In fact the Mongol text has 'Chinggis, Chinggis', and Genghis Khan should more correctly be known as Chinggis Khan, but I have retained the 'Genghis', as this is more familiar and is also used elsewhere in this book.
[2] Jade Treasure
[3] An old name for the Mongol people, superseded from this time onwards by the name 'Blue Mongols' given them by Genghis.

Genghis Reproves His Brother Khasar

This episode is translated from the version found in the 'Precious Summary'.

The Lord Khasar joined up with the Seven Khongkhotan and went off campaigning. The Lord put Sübegetei Bagatur in charge of the army and sent him in pursuit, saying:

'My ten-thousands!
Like the blaze on a forehead,
Like the tassel on a hat,
Bound round like a splint,
Knotted up like a rock!
My soldiers!
Surrounding me like a fortification,
Ranged like reeds,
Listen!
In matters of laughter, be gentle like the ring-finger.
In matters of rapidity, fall on like gyrfalcons.
In matters of play, browse here and there like young camel-foals.
In matters of killing, swoop like falcons.'

Sübegetei Bagatur said:

'I shall see if I am capable or not.
May the tutelary genius of the Lord decide whether I am capable or not.
I shall go and try my very best.
May the tutelary genius of the Lord decide whether success will be easy.'

And he went off, and overtook them. Sübegetei Bagatur spoke thus to the Lord Khasar:

'The saying goes:
If you separate from your relatives,
You will become the prey of all and sundry.
If kin fall out with each other,
They will become booty for other men.

The saying goes:
All that moves can be acquired,
But relatives cannot be acquired.
Subject people can be acquired,
But brothers cannot be acquired.'

The Lord Khasar agreed with these words, and turned and went back and rejoined the Lord his elder brother.

Then Khasar and Belgütei got together, and said:

'This Lord rules improperly.
He uses force unjustly.
It was by the skilful archery of Khasar,
And by the strength of Belgütei,
That he crushed the strangers,
And softened what was hard.
Who else lends him their strength but we two
In his expeditions to the People of the Five Colours?'

The Lord heard of this boasting of theirs, and thought to himself: 'I shall covertly humble the pride of these youngsters.' So he turned himself into a poor old man, and went around the tents offering a longish bow for sale. When Khasar and Belgütei encountered him, they mocked him, and said: 'I say, old man, what use is that bow of yours, except as a little bow to shoot moles with?' The old man said: 'Why do you mock me before you have seen anything? First look, then understand!' Laughing and jeering at him, Belgütei tried to string the bow, but he lacked the strength to do it. The old man strung it for him. Khasar took it, and tried to draw it, but could not do so. Then, before their very eyes, the old man turned into an old man with snow-white hair, mounted on a blue mule with a blaze. With an arrow from that longish bow he shot a rock apart, and said:

'You two young fellows!
Before you use big words,
Chew them over well.'

As he departed, the two said to each other: 'That was no ordinary man. That must have been a transformation of the Lord. And they felt afraid, and from then on they behaved themselves.

Genghis Takes A New Wife

This episode, translated from the 'Precious Summary', is a poeticised version of an historical event told more soberly in the 'Secret History'.

Then Orochu Sigüsi of the Oyirad Buriyad caught a falcon from the Great Bayikhal Water, and conveyed it to the Holy Lord, and put the Buriyad people under his overlordship. Then, in his twenty-ninth year, the King-dog year, he went out to fly that bird of his. As he was going from the Olkhui River to the Ula River, Wangchug, the Khagan of the Jürchid, deserted him. The Lord in his anger drew up his army. However, the Ula River, having no ford, formed an obstacle. Andun Ching Tayiji, the son of Togtangga Bagatur Tayiji, tied the reins of a thousand geldings together, and went in, shouting, and they crossed over the water and besieged his town. The Lord issued an order, saying: 'Give me ten thousand swallows and a thousand cats, and I shall raise the siege of your town.' They immediately gave him these creatures in full number, and he tied hemp cloth to the tails of each swallow, and cotton to the tail of each cat, and set fire to them, and the swallows sought their nests in the town, and the cats ran over the roof beams of the buildings, and set fire gradually to the whole town. By means of this ruse he brought it into submission. The Lord took the daughter of Wangchug Khagan, Jalikhai by name, for himself, but, as they were returning, the Queen Jalikhai died on the journey.

Then, in the same year, in his thirty-first year, the Sim-mouse year, he went in the direction of the rising sun, riding to campaign beyond the Ünegen River. That river was in flood, and the Lord was on the hither side, and he sent envoys to say: 'Pay me tribute. If you do not, then let us fight each other.' Chagan, the Khagan of the Solonggos, was afraid, and presented him with a girl called Khulan the Fair, the daughter of Dayir Usun of the Solonggos Merkid. He also gave him a tent covered with tiger-skin, and two divisions of people, the Bugas and the Solonggos. He also received in submission a third division of the Solongos, namely the Chagan.

Then, as he had stayed away for three years, his Queen, the Lady Börte, sent Argasun the Lutenist to him. When the Lutenist arrived, they greeted each other, and he addressed the Lord thus:

'Your wife the Queen, the Lady Börte,
Your offspring, princes and princesses,
All your great people,
Are well.
The salbar-falcon lays its eggs upon the Sala-tree.
Carelessly relying upon its tree,
It gets its nest destroyed by an owl.
It gets its nice eggs and young eaten.
The swan and goose lay their eggs upon the reedy lake.
Relying upon the reeds and seeking shade,
They get their eggs and young eaten by the buzzard.
My blessed Lord, pray listen to this.'

The Lord approved of these words of admonishment, and abandoned his great campaign and returned home. He set out for home, saying:

'My Great Queen, Lady Börte,
Whom I met before I was established,
Became my mother-like Queen,
Brought to me by my precious father.
It is hard to look on the face of the Lady Börte who has stayed at home,
While I have gone to the plains and taken Khulan.
It is shameful to be angry with each other at home
When strangers are with us.
One of you nine champions should go ahead
And speak to the Lady Börte.'

Mukhuli of the Jalayir said: 'I will go,' and he went on in advance, and kotowed to the Great Queen, the Lady Börte, and addressed her thus:

'These are the words of the Lord:
"I did not keep to the established rule.
I looked towards a stronger rule.
I did not follow the advice of minor and major officials.
I was seduced by the gaudy appearance of a tiger-skin tent.
In order to attract a distant people
I took the Queen Khulan to wife."'

The Wise Queen, the Lady Börte, said:

'Is it the desire of the Queen Börte?
Is it the will of the numerous great people?
It is the power of our Khan and Lord.
The Lord can decide wih whom he will be intimate.
Many are the swans and geese upon the reedy lake.
The Lord can decide about shooting them till his fingers hurt.
Many are the girls and women in the numerous people.
The Lord can decide which shall be fortunate and favoured.
Does a woman say she will take a household upon herself?
Does an unbroken horse say it wishes to be saddled?
The old saying goes:
There is nothing wrong in health and surplus.
There is nothing good in suffering and want.
May the golden tent-ropes of the Lord the Khagan be firm.
What is it to us women?'

Then Mukhuli went and met him and reported to him, and the Lord was much pleased and agreed, and he lodged in his golden palace.

The Story Of Argasun The Lutenist

This story, which is preserved in more than one chronicle and version, is to be found in the 'Precious Summary' immediately following the episode which I have entitled 'Genghis takes a new wife'. I have translated here the elegant version to be found in the Altan Tobchi of Luvsandanzan. There had been some confusion in the past as to whether Argasun was in fact the lutenist or the quiver-bearer of Genghis Khan. This confusion arises from the similarity between the Mongolian words for 'lute' and 'quiver'. The Chinese translation of the 'Precious Summary', made under the authority of the Emperor Qianlong, actually prefers 'quiver-bearer', as does my present source, but it seems certain that 'lutenist' is the correct choice, and this is argued by the Mongolian scholar Damdinsüren who discussed the poem in his monograph on the history of Mongolian literature.'

Now, when the Holy Lord came with the Queen Khulan, it happened that Argasun the Lutenist had become drunk on hard spirits, and had taken his golden lute and spent the night elsewhere. The Holy Lord sent for Bogorchi and Mukhuli, and despatched them, saying:

'Knock out Argasun without a word.
Kill him without a sound.'
Bogorchi and Mukhuli went to him, and said:
'Argasun the Lutenist, we have been sent
To knock you out without a word,
To kill you without a sound,
Because you got drunk on hard spirits,
And took your golden lute and spent the night elsewhere.'

Argasun the Lutenist said:

'The voice of a man who is to be killed should be heard.
A man who is to die should speak.
Convey this to the Lord.'

At this, the two officials did not kill him, but brought him in, causing him to carry:

Powerful wine in his armpits,
Strong wine on his chest.

From outside the tent Bogorchi and Mukhuli said:

'The light is entering
Your brilliant, great tent.
May sons and daughters in the tent be awakened.
Your guilty ones and prisoners are assembled.
May you pronounce your brilliant, great orders.

The light is entering
Your great jade palace.
May door and smoke-flap of your gated tent be opened.
Your anguished, suffering ones are assembled.
May you pronounce your great jade orders.'

The Lord arose, and had Argasun the Lutenist brought in to him. The Lord did not speak. Bogorchi and Mukhuli did not say a word. But Argasun the Lutenist addressed him as follows:

'When the seventy-tongued wheatear chatters,
It cannot utter the mere sound 'jang'
As the falcon falls upon it.
As the Predestined Lord sits scolding me,
I cannot utter the mere word 'jang'.

From my eighteenth year,
I have kept your golden lute.
I study your skilful means and knowledge.
No bad habits
Are to be found in me.
It is true that I became befuddled by hard spirits,
And befuddled by hard spirits I took your golden lute.
But I had no disloyal thoughts.

From my twentieth year
I have kept your holy lute.
I study your genial wisdom.
No bad, disloyal disposition
Is to be found in me.
It is true that I became befuddled by strong spirits,
And befuddled by strong spirits I took your holy lute.
But I had no traitorous thoughts.'

At this, the Lord said:

'My Argasun, speaking well with your mouth.
My Lutenist, speaking well with your voice.'

And he reprieved him.