

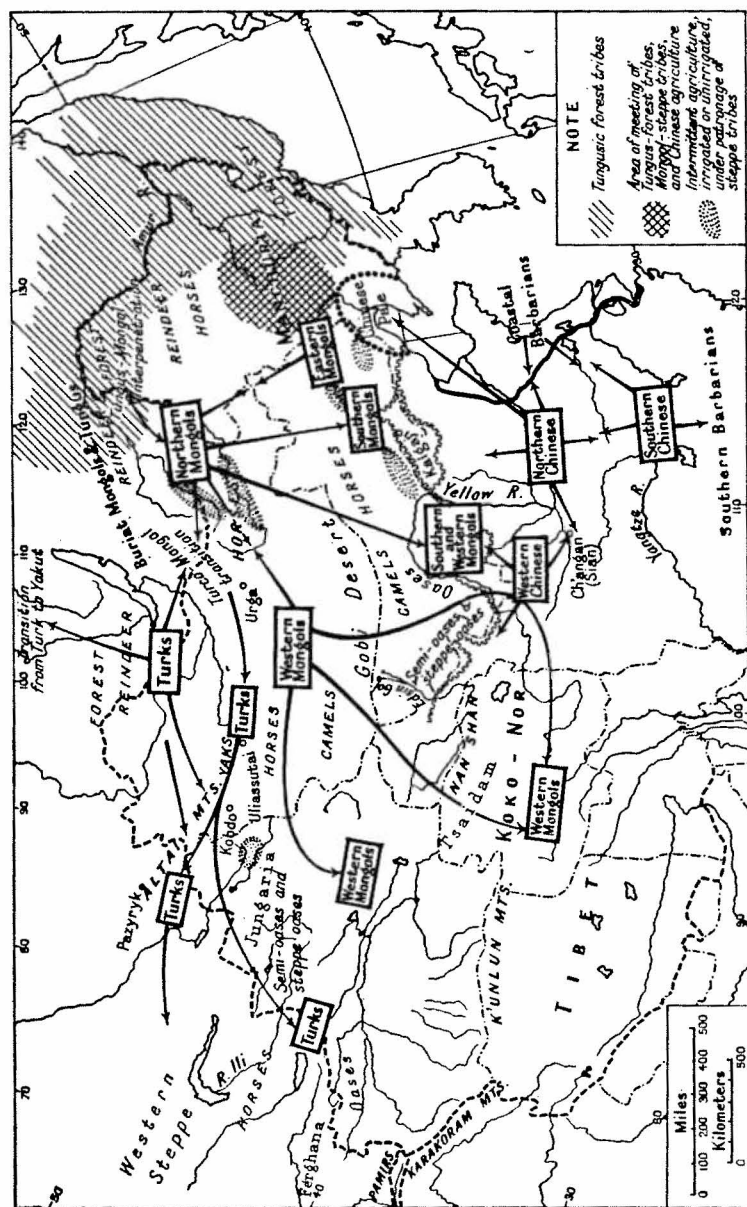
INNER ASIAN FRONTIERS  
OF CHINA

BY  
OWEN LATTIMORE

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MAP 5—Steppe and forest tribes and economy in relation to China and the Great Wall Frontier.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STEPPES OF MONGOLIA AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STEPPE NOMADISM

Rather than undertake the survey of the Great Wall Frontier in arbitrary geographical order, from Manchuria on the east through Mongolia and Chinese Turkistan to Tibet on the west, it is better to examine at once the steppe region of Mongolia. This is the *locus classicus* of all Frontier history. From the mixed geography of Manchuria on the east, and from the oases and deserts of Chinese Turkistan and the high, cold plains of Tibet on the west, there originated societies whose historical cast is best regarded as a series of variations on the history of the Mongolian steppe. These variant forms were powerfully modified by what happened in Mongolia and also by the influence of China, an influence differing locally in each region but of the same general order.

There is evidence that the neolithic people of Inner Mongolia tended to concentrate around marshy areas, that they were hunters who also had stone implements with which they may have grubbed up edible roots, and that they may also have practiced a "hoe agriculture." Stone implements and fragments of pottery are especially frequent in wide, shallow depressions now filled with sand dunes, some of them bare and some covered with vegetation.<sup>1</sup> In such areas the subsoil water is usually very near the surface.

<sup>1</sup> I write here from what I have seen in Inner Mongolia and heard from Mongols. For the literature of the subject, see the wide references in the writings of Bishop and Wittfogel, already quoted; also Creel, *Studies in Early Chinese Culture*, 1937, and Menghin, *Weltgeschichte der Steinzeit*, 1931. There was also a neolithic culture of mixed hunting, fishing, food gathering, and herding—the herding must at first have been very weakly developed—as far north as Buriat Mongolia (Pomus, *Buriat-Mongolian ASSR*, 1937, p. 96, in Russian).

While there may have been a general increase of aridity all over Mongolia since neolithic times, there is no reason to suppose that desiccation was drastic or sudden enough to give a sharp bias to the course of evolution from the neolithic life to the later steppe nomadism. It is clear that it was not a change from moist to arid climate that prevented the evolution of an agriculture comparable to that of China. On the contrary, dunes of sand came right up to the edges of some of these ancient marshes, and even at that time there was no network of streams that would have encouraged intensive agriculture over large areas.

#### EARLY CULTURAL DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN NORTH CHINA AND MONGOLIA

The decisive difference between China and the steppes of Mongolia is this: the neolithic hoe culture of the steppe did not develop even into an "extensive" farming of the open plains or into a mixed economy of farming combined with livestock breeding. It was pastoral nomadism that eventually became the ruling order, though not the sole order. There is a range of economic variation to be considered here. Irrigated agriculture makes possible the maximum (in pre-industrial societies) of intensive economy and concentrated population. Unirrigated farming, especially when the rainfall is light or irregular, and the combination of agriculture with pastured livestock predicate a more extensive economy and a thinner concentration of people. Pastoral nomadism is notably an extensive economy, forcing a wide dispersal of society. In the north of Mongolia and Manchuria, where the steppe gives way to the Siberian forests, there must be taken into account a still more extensive economy and still wider scattering of humanity among the forest hunting tribes, some of which are also breeders of reindeer or drivers of dogs. Beyond these tribes the ultimate transition is to the sub-Arctic and Arctic societies. Within the possible scale of variation, it

is to be noted that the steppe did not come to be ruled by "dry" or mixed farming, which would have been one degree removed from the intensive agriculture of China, but by an emphatic pastoral nomadism which was two degrees removed from the economy of China and in the upshot proved to be irreconcilable with it, until the rise of industrialism.

Working back from this, it seems probable that what took place during the later neolithic and the Bronze Age, from perhaps 3000 B.C. to about 500 B.C., was a broad but very slowly accelerating process of differentiation. This went on over an extremely wide and vague area, overlapping both the steppe, in which it was too difficult to advance beyond hoe agriculture even in favored spots, and the loess regions, where experiment was relatively easy and was repaid with immediate profit. In the heart of the loess region, at the Yellow River bend, the rate of change became conspicuous in the second millennium B.C. Near the edge of the steppe, it was only in the second half of the first millennium B.C. that it became rapid enough to force a sharp increase in the social importance of geographical and climatic differences between regions. In the much longer antecedent period the same kinds of men could live at much the same cultural level in all kinds of regions that were potentially, but not in actual use, much richer or poorer than each other. The importance of the process of economic differentiation here suggested supports, I think, Maspero's theory that the "northern barbarians" were ethnically of the same general stock as the northern Chinese, being descended from groups that had been "left behind" by the proto-Chinese who developed a higher agriculture in North China.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, however, it does not greatly matter whether the savages scattered from the Yangtze valley to Mongolia were of the same general ethnic stock or be-

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, *La Chine antique*, 1927, p. 11.

longed to different "races." Nor does it matter a great deal whether bands of them drifted from one region to another, or whether changes in climate poured a little more rain over the Yangtze valley or dried up a few marshes in Mongolia. Geographical contrast, cultural borrowing, social interchange, and migration were still fortuitous considerations that had no creative value until much later, *after* the processes of evolution had begun in specific regions. The deciding impetus resided in the improved usages that men began to practice, probably haphazard, in key regions where the natural balance of limiting and favorable factors made possible the momentous change from the repetition of primitive acts to the development of slightly less primitive habits. Once this kind of change had begun advances could be made either through local discovery or as the result of importation, migration, or cultural borrowing.

Whether or not the proto-Chinese had originally migrated inward to the great bend of the Yellow River, the important historical phenomenon was their advance near this point beyond the crudest stage of hoe agriculture. There followed a spread outward from this core to the loess region as a whole and the Great Plain of North China. This was at first a process of assimilation and convergence, in which the Chinese encountered "barbarians" on every front. On the whole, these barbarians are not described even at later periods as different "races," but as people who had not yet adopted the complex of economic practices and social organization that the Chinese were carrying with them.<sup>3</sup> In any case, the environment itself, except on the steppe Frontier, permitted the Chinese to

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, *op. cit.*, Ch. I; also Wittfogel's review of the question of racial relationship between Chinese and barbarians (*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas*, pp. 11-16). For a modern Chinese review of barbarians within North China, see Fu Ssu-nien, *East and West Theory of the I and Hsia*, 1936 (in Chinese).

take over each terrain and absorb each people they encountered, and the question of "barbarism" thereupon became of secondary importance and tended to disappear.

As they approached the steppe, however, the environment increasingly retarded the Chinese. It enabled the "barbarians," whoever they were, to resist with increasing effectiveness; and therefore the "barbarism" of these barbarians, instead of being overcome, was increasingly emphasized. The decision between nascent culture and recalcitrant barbarism had, moreover, to be separately fought out over each foot of terrain, because the change from loess to steppe, although relatively rapid, is nowhere determined by a hard and fast line of cleavage. The gradation is from irrigable land through less irrigable land to non-irrigable land; and the land that is in the category of being not non-irrigable but less irrigable is unmistakably cultivable. This in turn shades off into land that, though not non-cultivable, is less cultivable. In all such territory, especially at a time when the Chinese way of life, though on the way to becoming highly specialized, had not yet become set in its peculiarities, the relative balance of the factors that favored the Chinese and those that opposed them could only be determined by experiment.<sup>4</sup>

It is no surprise, therefore, to find in the early Chinese chronicles that the peoples of the northwest and north, and later the northeast, though apparently considered barbarian and hostile, are not described in any way that makes their un-Chineseness decisively apparent. A clear differentiation between Chinese cultivators and barbarian herdsmen had yet to be established. The Chinese themselves were still hunters on a large scale, and also herders of cattle, and therefore all that can prudently be said of their northwestern tribal contemporaries is that the tribesmen did more herding and less farming while the Chinese

<sup>4</sup> Compare Chapters XII and XIII, below.

did more farming and less herding. Certainly the shepherd tribes were not yet mounted steppe-nomads.<sup>5</sup>

#### RISE OF PASTORAL NOMADISM IN THE STEPPES

The essential problem is to determine when and why differentiation became so acute that categorically different and hostile forms of society emerged, whose relations with each other were thenceforward determined more by the degree of divergence than by the still surviving degree to which they overlapped each other. This extraordinarily important phase of history seems to be clearly associated with the technical differentiation between the use of stall-fed horses for chariots and carts and the use of pasture-fed horses in war and for travel and food (horseflesh and mare's milk); in other words, between harnessed horses and ridden horses. Pasture-fed horses can do less work than stall-fed horses, which have their hay and grain brought to them. Therefore a larger number of horses is needed, which in turn makes wide pastures necessary and a social organization that enables people to move with their livestock from pasture to pasture.

Much has been written about the domestication of the horse and about the later technical specialization of chariot driving, horse riding, the invention of the stirrup (which appears to have been remarkably late as well as extraordinarily important in war), and so forth.<sup>6</sup> The discussion has turned too much, it seems to me, on whether these technical uses were imported or locally discovered and whether importation meant the arrival of "invading races" or "conquering peoples" in the Chinese field of history.

This has allowed a more important consideration to drop

<sup>5</sup> Creel (*op. cit.*, p. 184) describes wars over grazing rights in the second millennium B.C. These, however, must have been wars between peoples who were cultivators and also had livestock, not between cultivators and nomad herdsmen. See also his p. 243, n. 31.

<sup>6</sup> See Menghin, *op. cit.*, for references to the literature, and compare also Chapter VI, below.

out of sight: that what is historically significant is that certain peoples were increasingly being excluded by the trend of development within China from adhering to "Chinese civilization" on a footing satisfactory to themselves—because their environment, although it overlapped that of the peoples who were coming to be Chinese, did not contain so many natural "Chinese" factors as the terrain nearer the kernel-region of Chinese history. For this reason they were constrained increasingly to neglect the use of agricultural resources and to develop as an alternative the use of pastoral resources. It was only when this diverging specialization had been carried to a certain point that the marginal steppe society ceased to be marginal and committed itself definitely to the steppe. Having reached that point it was ready to take advantage of a steppe technique of horse usage in order to increase the efficiency of life within the steppe environment.<sup>7</sup>

Whether the required technique was locally developed or imported or borrowed or imposed by conquerors is therefore a subordinate problem (to which I shall return in discussing the oasis world of Central Asia). What is here important is the fact that the technique was of no use until there was a society ready to use it. The time level at which this degree of readiness was attained can be only approximately determined; but certain major facts are clear. In the first place, the primitive Chinese continued to raise cattle, sheep, and goats, and also to hunt, long after the technique of irrigation had given a special bias to their agriculture. In fact, the exploitation of these resources always remained important in China, though not important enough to challenge the supremacy of agriculture. In the second place, it is clear that from neolithic times onward the society of the steppe and the steppe margin was never exclusively pastoral. On the margins of

<sup>7</sup> For this "retreat" of marginal groups away from agriculture and into the steppe, see Chapter XIII, below.

the steppe and in specially favored regions within the steppe agriculture survived either continuously or intermittently. The historical search must therefore be narrowed down to the attempt to establish the time level at which irrigated agriculture became the determinant within China and nomadic pastoralism the determinant within the steppe.

It can be said at once that the bias in China was established much earlier than the bias in the steppe. What gave the Shang-Yin people of the Honan-Shansi region their distinctive character in the second millennium B.C. was not the "primitive" hunting and herding that they still retained, but the concentration which they had already achieved of well developed agriculture around great cities.<sup>8</sup>

In the next millennium, as the evidence of Chinese history becomes clearer and firmer, the details of "barbarian" wars are more and more plentiful. The various barbarians, though listed under separate names, are not specially differentiated from each other according to their habits of life. None of them are described as horse-riding nomads until a late period. The impression that is conveyed concerning all of them is merely that they were less civilized than the Chinese.

It is in the second half of this millennium that references to the horseman begin to be recorded; and the moment that the horseman appears it is plain that he is to be taken as an index of a way of life that is different not in degree but in kind. The references do not by any means imply a sudden "discovery" of the horse. Indeed the Chinese long before this had war chariots; but whereas they had once used these chariots against barbarians who fought on foot, the barbarians now raided the Chinese borders as horsemen. Moreover, the tribal names of these mounted barbarians overlap to a certain extent with the names of the bar-

<sup>8</sup> For this period generally see Creel, *op. cit.*; also Wittfogel, *Economic and Social History of China*, with very full Chinese documentation.

barians formerly described as fighting on foot. It is evident that we have to deal with the rapid rise of a society of mounted nomads, especially on the north and northwest, who were of a different order altogether from the merely "inferior" barbarians who had until then been encountered on the fringes of the Chinese expansions, although these "new" barbarians were probably the same people, for the most part, as the old barbarians.

So far as I can determine, the period of definitive change was in the fourth and third centuries B.C.—the date being set by full accounts in the Chinese chronicles of two men who were not barbarians but important figures in the then rapidly developing Frontier statesmanship of China.<sup>9</sup> They were Chinese who actually adopted the mounted archery of the nomads and based their political power on it. The phenomenon is of interest because it shows that the Chinese and the barbarian ways of life by this time had become alternative and were becoming mutually exclusive. The difference was no longer in the stage of development but in the kind of society. Moreover, the status of this new kind of "barbarism" was high enough to induce important Chinese to go over to it in certain circumstances.

#### FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION OF THE RISE OF STEPPE SOCIETY

This new high status, which resulted from the creation of a new kind of society partly recruited from tribes already known to the Chinese, can only be explained functionally by close analysis of the way in which the people lived. It is unmistakable that the critical environment was the extreme periphery of China, along the margin of the steppe. The Chinese chronicles do not directly explain the problem. Nor has it been discussed, so far as I know, in the modern Chinese literature of Frontier history. Perhaps

<sup>9</sup> Lattimore, *Origins of the Great Wall*, 1937.

one reason why the functional explanation has been neglected and scholars have concentrated instead on the attempt to find out who the people were, by studies of their names, etc., is the fact that there is no "culture hero" of steppe nomadism comparable to mythical and semi-mythical heroes of agriculture, drainage, and so forth in ancient China at a very remote period. This in itself carries the inference that the technique of intensive, irrigated agriculture originated early in China and always remained at the heart of the developing Chinese culture. Therefore its early legends are among the oldest surviving material. The technique of horse-using nomadism originated a good deal later, in a peripheral region, and always remained irreconcilable with the Chinese culture. Therefore no reverent accounts of its beginnings were preserved by the Chinese. The nomads themselves had no written records until much later, and accordingly no old accounts are available from any source.

Naturally, I do not mean to imply that the steppe society was a sudden discovery or creation or that the use of cavalry was an abrupt invention of the fourth and third centuries B.C. There must have been an antecedent period in which rudimentary forms of the steppe society—perhaps a whole series of them—had been developing. Nevertheless, the importance of the period I have selected for the *conclusive* differentiation between Chinese society and steppe society cannot be disputed. Before this time the chronicle material does not make it possible to identify a specific and unmistakable steppe society. During this time a series of rapid changes gathered headway in China itself, ending in the disappearance of the old state form, a radical alteration of the social structure, and the creation of a new, centralized imperial state. This was completed under the brief Ch'in dynasty in the third century B.C. At the same time, the Frontier defenses of several states were united to mark out the main line of "the" Great Wall. The creation

of a Hsiungnu empire of the steppe lagged only a little behind these changes. The two-thousand-year history of the recognized Steppe Frontier had begun.<sup>10</sup>

The functional explanation to which I have referred concerns the way in which the most extensive of several cognate modes of economy came to be the determinant of steppe society and history, just as the most intensive practices of agriculture determined the character of society as a whole in China. As the primitive Chinese culture of the Yellow River bend has spread eastward and southward it has prospered through increasing returns. As it has moved toward the steppe it has encountered diminishing returns. In about the fourth and third centuries B.C. the spread up to the land of no running water had made the degree of diminishing returns critical. Tribes along the margin of the steppe, which until this time had been neither exclusively agricultural nor exclusively pastoral, began to take up "for good" an unmistakable pastoral steppe nomadism. They established a sphere of activity of their own, eccentric to the sphere of "civilized" society in China.

The use of horses, accordingly, became of paramount importance. Though it certainly was known before—the Chinese for centuries had used chariots and somewhat later had developed cavalry—what now occurred in the steppe was different. It was the rapid working out of a specialized technique of horse usage, which gave emphasis, range, and speed to the mobility that had become necessary in proportion to the decreasing practice of agriculture and increasing concentration on pastured livestock. Once it had been recognized by the people who were diverging from the Chinese way of life that the standard of wealth, importance, and power was henceforth to be determined by the exploitation of steppe resources, the ability to move with ease from a used pasture to a new pasture took on a

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

special value, and the importance of ability to control a wide range of alternative pastures was emphasized.

Mounted movement was functionally important because it heightened the characteristics and the efficiency of the symbiosis of steppe-fed herds and herd-fed society. The probable order of progression was: 1) abandonment of marginal culture and transition to a culture of clearly steppe character; 2) complete dependence of all livestock on grazing, without stored grain or even hay; 3) greater need of movement, in order not to stay in exhausted pastures; 4) the particular need for a higher degree of skill in the control of horses—because the average farmer who has always tethered or stabled his horses and fed them with grain and hay has difficulty in recapturing them if he turns them loose on open grassy plains; 5) the acquisition, consequently, of marked skill in riding and in the control of loose herds of horses.

These are the steps in order of social adaptation to economic needs. There is a further series in the evolution of a military technique appropriate to the society. The steppe was treeless, and warriors who formerly fought on foot were now mounted. This meant economy of wood in the making of bows, combined with the effort to make a bow not too unwieldy for a horseman to carry. These two things probably account for the nomad use of the compound bow, which is notably short for its great power and is made of horn—a steppe material—and short pieces of wood spliced double.<sup>11</sup> The art of shooting from horseback is clearly an advance over merely carrying the bow while riding. It is this, finally, that accounts for the invention of the stirrup, known to be a late refinement even in steppe

<sup>11</sup> Creel (Studies, pp. 246-47) shows that the compound reflex bow is much older in China (second millennium B.C.) than true nomadism in the steppe. He also shows that it is a link between ancient China and the circumpolar culture areas. The bow itself may therefore have spread into the steppe either from China or from Siberia, or from both; but the steppe use of the bow as peculiarly fitted to mounted archery must have been evolved in the steppe itself.

society. The stirrup gave the last touch of effectiveness to the mounted archer because it made possible a steady shot while galloping away from an attacker—the “Parthian shot” which was the deadliest tactical maneuver of the steppe warrior.<sup>12</sup>

I have here simplified the functional explanation to an extreme. Obviously some steps may have been made in a different order by particular groups, and some groups could acquire the whole of the technique, or part of it, by borrowing—if it suited their order of society. The Chinese, for instance, took over the whole of the technique of mounted archery, but without subordinating their agricultural economy to the nomadic economy. This meant that both their horses and their archers were inferior to those of the nomads, except in abnormal periods when years of consecutive campaigning at ruinous cost to their settled economy produced a professional cavalry that could match the “natural” cavalry of the steppe.

The main purpose of this digression into the economy and warfare of nomadism is to establish the principle that technical practices are significant only when they suit the needs of a society. To explain the rise of the nomads on the Chinese Frontier entirely by “invasions” of new peoples or the “borrowing” of the compound bow from some distant place is no explanation at all. “Invaders” could not have maintained themselves in the steppe without a technique for living there, however irresistible they were as warriors. The compound bow was worth neither “borrowing” nor inventing except by a society that had already arrived at a point that made the special qualities of the compound bow advantageous. The question of historical interest, therefore, is the interaction of society and tech-

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to C. W. Bishop (personal letter of March 16, 1938) for a number of valuable suggestions on the domestication and use of the horse, and particularly for drawing my attention to the importance of the compound bow and its use. I had always read the Chinese term *ch'i-she* as “riding and archery,” and had not seen that it specifically means “mounted archery”—an important technical distinction.



nique rather than the creation of societies by technical devices alone or the invention of devices merely *pour épater les chinois*.

#### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE STEPPES AND CHINA

Inability of the Chinese and the peoples of the steppe to coalesce is implied by the diverging line of development of steppe society. It is not only probable but certain that the steppe society was not ruled by a standard of land-ownership comparable to that of China. No single pasture could have any value unless the people using it were free to move to some other pasture, because no single pasture could be grazed continuously. The right to move prevailed over the right to camp. "Ownership" meant, in effect, the title to a cycle of migration.<sup>13</sup>

In the late centuries people like the Mongols have been restricted within territorial boundaries. The title to such territories belongs to the tribe as a whole, not to the chief or prince of a tribe. There is, accordingly, no individual property in land, though in practice the common, tribally-owned land is administered by the prince, who has the final decision in allotting the use of pastures to different families. The result, of course, is that the noble families, in spite of having no outright ownership, have direct use of the best pastures, in addition to exacting both services and tribute in kind from the non-noble families, which use the poorer land.<sup>14</sup> Even in this late and stagnant form of the steppe society, however, it is possible to see indications

<sup>13</sup> Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict*, 1932, pp. 48-49. It seems to me that the Mongol word *nutuk*, the land or "country" where a man "belongs," may perhaps be related to the verb *neghuku*, "to move," "to migrate"; whence *neghutel*, vernacular form *nutel*, as in *nutel ulus*, "nomad people" as distinguished from "settled people."

<sup>14</sup> I doubt whether this represents a true evolution from the steppe-tribal society toward feudalism. It is more probably a recurrent or intermittent phase of stagnation, a phenomenon of periods when steppe and settled land were under the same rule—as when the Manchu sovereign was both emperor of China and emperor of the Mongols.

of the original standard: that individual or family which can dictate the movement of dependents or retainers is dominant, and that tribe is dominant which controls a major cycle of migration and can allot subordinate cycles to other tribes. Consequently, the phases of steppe nomadic history are to be traced by the rise and fall of greater and lesser lords who are "protectors" of the right of movement of lesser men, from whom in return they demand services in peace and war and a variety of tribute in kind.<sup>15</sup>

Even the technique of pastoral economy is affected by the sovereign importance of movement, just as the crucial, privileged importance of the control of human labor in China limited the development of labor-saving devices and atrophied such enterprises as mining and mechanical industry. In parts of the steppe the grass is long enough to cut for hay; in parts it is not. The use of hay produces better cattle and is potentially of special value in the early spring, the season when the new grass has not yet grown, the season when the cattle are weakest, the season of calving and lambing, and also the season of the worst storms. Yet hay-cutting was never widely or continuously practiced, because prescriptive claims to hay meadows would have led to fixed landownership and the restriction of movement. The individual was reluctant to attempt to establish private ownership of this kind, because it would have left him naked of social protection when the rest of the tribe moved; and at the same time the chiefs, whose power was organized according to the mechanism of a mobile society, would not permit the individual to escape in this manner from their close control.

The more extensive economy of the poorer parts of the steppe, where movement was imperative, thus dictated more movement than was strictly necessary to the people in the richer part of the steppe, where a less extensive

<sup>15</sup> Lattimore, review of Grenard's *Genghis-Khan*, 1937.

economy would have been feasible. Similarly, there are wide prairies that carry almost no stock even in good seasons because relatively deep and expensive wells would have to be dug. The digging of easy, shallow wells in areas where any number of wells can be dug and the water is accessible to everyone was always as permissible as it was necessary; but "special" wells would have created special values and claims to fixed local ownership that did not suit the general interests of the society.

It is not surprising therefore that the situation has entirely changed in Outer Mongolia today, where the Mongol People's Republic has abolished the control of society by princes (and the later-developed class of monastic "princes of the church"), has instituted a new form of social control, and is beginning to splice together the productive resources of the old pastoral economy and the processing functions of a new industrialism created to serve it. Mobility is no longer sovereign; the economy remains basically pastoral but the society need no longer be nomadic. The storage of hay is accordingly becoming a general practice and pastures formerly unused are being opened up by the digging of wells.<sup>16</sup> The result is a simultaneous increase in the number of cattle and improvement in the quality of the stock.

Clear economic demarcation did not result in political isolation of China from the steppe. The Frontier, in spite of mighty and successive efforts at Great Wall building, never became an absolute line of cleavage. Geographically, economically, and politically it was a marginal terrain, which varied in depth. This was because the average and the determining degree of extensivity and intensivity were never identical in either the steppe or China. Neither society was permanently uniform. There was a range of variation in China from the more intensive to the less inten-

<sup>16</sup> Viktorov and Khalkhin, *The Mongol People's Republic, 1936*, p. 36 (in Russian).

sive, with concurrent political vacillations. In the steppe, the variation was from the more extensive to the less extensive, also accompanied by political alternations.

It is important to note, further, that the steppe was even less uniform than China; not only did it enclose oasis-like areas and permit on its fringes interpenetration of forest tribes and steppe tribes, of agricultural economy and pastoral economy, but it produced less natural internal trade and exchange than China. The steppe economy is a good deal more self-sufficient than that of settled societies. Its herds produce food, clothing, housing and fuel, and also transport. Lack of economic pressure creating internal trade is, however, offset by social demand for external trade. The steppe demand for trade with China (or the oases of Turkistan or Persia) was more insistent than the demand of settled agricultural communities for trade with the steppe. This was because the universal spread of essentials within the steppe society encouraged a demand for luxuries from outside the range of the society itself as a sure way of distinguishing between the greater and the lesser people, the rulers and the followers.

In a country like China, on the other hand, differences in natural resources made internal exchange a necessity. Communities that did not have salt or iron (commodities of prime importance, marking even sharper differences between undeveloped communities than between highly developed communities) could not move periodically as whole communities to the source of supply. Traders were necessary to act as representatives and intermediaries. As a by-product of this difference it was easy for the professional traders of China to control the internal trade of the steppe as well as its external trade.

It may be noted in passing that handicrafts and the beginnings of industry, as well as internal exchange of commodities, were much more weakly developed in the steppe than in China. The Mongol smith, for instance,

could move easily to the supply of ore and easily carry away with him enough to keep him employed on a very small scale. He could not, however, settle down at the source of supply of his raw material to develop his craft on a larger scale without detaching himself from his society. Nor could he, without settling near the supply of raw materials, employ apprentices or workmen for production on a larger scale. He never even became an itinerant professional artisan, but remained an owner of livestock and a normal member of a pastoral society. This holds true in spite of the fact that smiths in early periods appear to have held a specially favored position in their society. (The Mongol word *darkhan*, a smith, came later to mean also a privileged man, a man exempted from tribal taxes and services. It may also be connected, I suppose, with the word *darogha*, a leader or chief.) The same general considerations applied to work in wood, textiles, and so forth; no artisan activity could be developed on a large scale because it impaired mobility. Beyond a certain point, therefore, the steppe society as a whole encouraged the acquisition by trade of metal implements and wares and manufactured commodities generally. It inhibited the maturing of all occupations tending to break down the "nomadicness" of nomadism. Spontaneous evolution of industrialism was therefore checked in the steppe as in China, but for different reasons and at an even lower level.

#### CHARACTERISTIC PHASES OF STEPPE HISTORY

By taking into account the fact that the least typical, marginal territories of China and the steppe overlapped along the line of the Great Wall, an attempt can be made to describe the characteristic phases of steppe history. These phases can be related to the stratification of marginal steppe, poor pasture, rich pasture, valleys (like some of those in Northern Mongolia) where even irrigated

agriculture was possible, the transition zones between Northern Mongolia and the Siberian forests, and so on. The need for mobility, which approximated to a law of survival in the steppe, produced a norm of steppe-tribal society as unmistakable as the manpower norm of society in China, though departures from the norm were more extreme in the steppe than in China. The demand for freedom to move gave extraordinary power to the tribal lords who regulated the allotment of pastures and orbits of migration. This led to tribal wars, but it also made possible periods of relative stability based paradoxically on the smooth adjustment of claims to mobility.

In such periods, the superfluity of livestock, which the chief drew in tribute from the followers whose claims he upheld and who in return served as his men-at-arms, tended to become so great as to blot out its own meaning. The great chiefs, accordingly, were prompted either to take advantage of their mobile following in order to raid China if China were then weak, or to patronize trade if China were strong, and even to experiment with agriculture in their own domains—thus accentuating the differences in the scale of luxury as between the great and the humble. (It was typical in such periods to import Chinese or Central Asian oasis people to do the work of farming, not merely because they were more skillful but because the exploiting of such a subject population left the fabric of the steppe society itself as far as possible intact.)<sup>17</sup>

In time, these departures from the steppe norm, whether they were based on conquest beyond the steppe or diversification within the steppe, brought up the issue of the

<sup>17</sup> Ta Ch'ing Huitien, edition of 1818, under Li Fan Yüan, 17, Ch. 742; Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria*, 1934, pp. 70-82; also *Mongols of the Chinese Border*, 1938. William of Rubruck (thirteenth century), gives a general description of nomad society and customs when he first enters the area of the Mongol conquests in South Russia. He says: "The great lords have villages in the south, from which millet and flour are brought to them for the winter. The poor procure [these things] by trading sheep and pelts." (Rockhill, *William of Rubruck*, 1900, p. 68).

inability of the steppe society and the agricultural society to coalesce. When he had become committed to the rule of a mixed society the steppe lord found it impossible to adjust his acquired functions to his traditional functions. This was equally true of Chinese border potentates in periods of Chinese expansion into the steppe. Under the ruler, whether nomad or border Chinese, those whose vested interests were in the extensive economy began to pull against those whose interests were vested in the intensive economy.<sup>18</sup> This pull eventually broke up the mixed state, which in its fall caused confusion but made possible a return once more to relative stability, as farmer and herdsman gravitated back to the geographical environment that permanently favored each of them.

In such processes of cracking up and sorting out, the leading new political figures were likely to be men from the lower strata of the ruling class. Such men, while they understood the working of politics and war and the handling of the society and economy whose control they now set out to capture, had not been destroyed by the fall of their own vested interests, as had the upper strata of the same class.<sup>19</sup> Thus the decisive political agent was the man of the lesser nobility (like Chingghis Khan); but the geographical determinant, in such phases, was not the marginal terrain but the unmistakable steppe terrain, because in the poorer steppe nomadic society had been least affected during the period of temporary and illusory coalescence. There the technique of steppe nomadism, based on the most extensive economy and the extreme of social mobility, had been conserved.<sup>20</sup> From it, accordingly, steppe nomadism reasserted its ascendancy over that part of the marginal terrain in which the balance of factors favored the pastoral economy, while the Chinese culture

<sup>18</sup> Lattimore, *The Geographical Factor in Mongol History*, 1938.

<sup>19</sup> Compare Chapter XVII, below.

<sup>20</sup> Lattimore, *op. cit.*

returned to power along the river valleys to the south of the Great Wall, within that part of the marginal terrain where the balance of natural factors favored the walled city and its circumjacent fields.

#### VARIETIES OF NOMAD ECONOMY. IMPORTANCE OF SHEEP

In Mongolia, therefore, the course of history veered away persistently from the Chinese kind of concentration. The movement of people was all important: mankind had to keep up with its moving cattle. The ruler was the man who directed this movement and prevented people, other than those under his own control, from getting in the way.

This does not mean that the scope of nomadic movement is always infinite.<sup>21</sup> Within the world of the steppe there are many types of migration cycle, governed partly by geography and partly by social specialization in the use of different animals. There are groups that move over considerable distances and others that move only a few miles in the course of a year. Some nomads have a pastoral range which includes both rich and poor grazing, while some never leave the sub-arid steppe or remain entirely in good meadow country. There is an intricate relationship between the kind of pasture that predominates, the frequency of moving camp, the distance traveled from one grazing ground to the next, and the climate and soil. Sheep and camels do not do well on wet pastures; a lime soil is best for horses and a saline soil for camels. Goats and sheep crop the pasture more closely than other animals,

<sup>21</sup> Ralph Fox, *Genghis Khan*, 1936, p. 9: "The longest migration in the yearly cycle is well under 300 kilometers. The average is about 150." Fox's source appears to be A. Simukov, *Mongol Migrations*, in *Contemporary Mongolia*, No. 4 (7), Ulan Bator, 1934 (in Russian). My own observation indicates that Inner Mongolian migrations can rarely reach 150 kilometers. As I have elsewhere pointed out, the ability of steppe nomads to move over very great distances when necessary is not due to a habit of distant travel but to the fact that the mobile organization of their life can be converted from short-range movement to long-range movement (see *Caravan Routes of Inner Asia*, 1928).

therefore they can graze where cattle and horses have already passed; but cattle and horses cannot feed on a pasture where sheep and goats have recently been feeding. All these details of technique affect the degree of specialization in sheep, camels, horned cattle, yaks, and the hunting of wild game, which in turn modifies the degree of military aptitude of different tribes, especially under the bow-and-arrow standard of warfare.

Moreover, the tendency to specialization and the tendency to standardization have always reacted against each other in the nomadic economy. Horses are of special value in war. Skill in the use of camels gives freedom of movement in the most arid steppe and access to the widely scattered spots within arid regions where water and grass are relatively good. Cattle and yaks, on meadow and alpine pasture, give a higher output of milk and meat per acre than other livestock. Oxen drag heavy, primitive carts with more economy of power than either horses or camels, if they can feed well enough.

None of these animals, however, equals the sheep in all-around economic value to the steppe nomad.<sup>22</sup> For the Mongol of today, as of the past, the sheep provides wool for the felts with which the tents are covered, skins (tanned with the wool on them) for clothing, milk in summer and a surplus of cheese and butter to be stored for winter, meat in winter, and dung for fuel. (Sheep can be penned at night so that the dung which they drop is trampled hard within the enclosure; this eventually forms

<sup>22</sup> Lattimore, *The Geographical Factor in Mongol History*, 1938. In the decadent pastoral economy of Inner Mongolia, where the Mongols have been forced into the poorest pastures by Chinese colonization, goats are becoming more common than sheep, leading to a further vicious impoverishing of the environment and a more acute degeneration of the Mongol economy and society. This is aggravated by the fact that goats are more subject to fatal epizootic diseases than sheep. Goats are able to live on poorer pasture than sheep and give much the same products, though of poorer quality. Both sheep and goats, especially goats, destroy pasture land when grazed too closely and too long because their sharp hoofs cut the turf. This exposes the topsoil, which is blown away by the wind, with results that are often mistaken for climatic desiccation.

a thick deposit which is dug out in "bricks" for burning.) Sheep, therefore, more than any other kind of livestock, establish the basic economic standards of food, housing, clothing, and fuel.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, a strictly shepherd economy has two weaknesses. The sheep move slowly and do not provide transport (although they are used in some parts of Tibet to carry small packages of salt and borax). Transport, accordingly, is what really distinguishes the Mongols from the Chinese of many marginal areas, who practice an "extensive" agriculture of "dry farming" and at the same time pasture sheep and goats. It was probably the development of skill in the pasturing of transport animals in addition to food animals that enabled some of the "barbarians" of early Chinese history to abandon alternative kinds of economy and commit themselves to the steppe, while others relinquished animal husbandry in proportion as they prospered by farming and were eventually assimilated to the economy and society of China.

Certainly the technique of steppe life in Mongolia has always depended on combining the transport uses of horses, camels, and cattle, and the basic standard of wealth in sheep in different proportions according to the way in which the local environment varies from the edge of the Siberian forests to the depths of the Gobi. Even the military ascendancy of tribes with the best horse pastures was of no permanent use unless it was applied to the protection of sheep and sheep pasture; and the ability of the camel-using Mongols to resort to the poorest part of the Gobi in order to escape war never developed, so far as I know, to the point of a pure camel nomadism without reliance on sheep,<sup>24</sup> though camel-riding Mongols of the Western

<sup>23</sup> Lattimore, *The Eclipse of Inner Mongolian Nationalism*, 1936.

<sup>24</sup> Vladimirtsov (*Social Structure of the Mongols*, 1934, p. 39, in Russian) points out that the terrain in Northern Mongolia where Chingghis founded his tribal power was not suitable for camels. On p. 36 he states that the Northern Mongols did not have many camels until after the conquest of the

Gobi relieve their dependence on sheep to some degree by hunting gazelles and wild asses.

It was the self-sufficiency of the shepherd economy, with its variations, that restricted the growth and prevented the permanent survival in Mongolia of any true mixed economy. The social law of movement governing the dominant pastoralism never permitted agriculture, the working of metal, or the making of things to rise above subordinate importance. In *potential* resources, a country like Mongolia ranks with that part of the United States lying west of the Mississippi, east of the Rocky Mountains, and north of Texas. It can combine the exploitation of agriculture, livestock, mining, and industry. The necessary methods, however, could not be evolved by a society that grew out of the use of only such resources as could be exploited at a primitive level. By restraining more advanced enterprise, except when carried on by subject people, nomadism committed itself to a "vested interest" in mobility.

#### WEALTH VERSUS MOBILITY

Both stability and instability were inherent in steppe nomadism, the stability of self-sufficient economic resources and the instability resulting from the way in which access to and use of the various kinds of resources were combined in different proportions. In every possible combination the emphasis had to be either on wealth or on mobility. There was no ideal balance equally suitable to every region. The extreme of mobility was the mounted war-

Tanggut or Hsi Hsia kingdom (modern Ninghsia). He refers to a passage in the edition of the "Secret History of the Mongols" used by him; presumably this is the passage to be found on p. 68 of the Russian translation of the "Secret History" by Palladius. Here the Tanggut are described as a settled people (they were in fact a semi-oasis people) with quantities of camels. It is entirely probable that camels were first domesticated not on the northern side of the Gobi, but on the southern side, or in the Turkistan oases, by people who were at most semi-nomadic. Though I have found several references to camels in the Chinese chronicles for the first two centuries B.C., all these references point to the oasis routes, not to the steppe. See, e.g., Ch'ien-Han Shu, Ch. 94, second part, on the Hsiungnu.

rior; the extreme of invulnerability or inaccessibility was the camel rider of the Gobi; the extreme of wealth was the patch of intensively cultivated land in a watered valley, isolated in the general expanse of the steppe and exploited by nomad overlords. Yet the mounted warrior lost mobility in proportion as he accumulated plunder; the camel rider could not rise above a low level of wealth in the poor environment of the Gobi; the protected oasis immobilized its protectors and, if it became too wealthy and its protectors insufficiently mobile in the warfare of the steppe, it was always overwhelmed by raiders.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, the rulers of the nomads never tired of working out new combinations of mobility and wealth. For this reason, although the steppe as a whole stood apart from China as a whole, the two never ceased to interact. The maximum control of mobility over wealth was achieved when nomad invaders conquered China, but this in itself led to the undermining of mobility by wealth, and to the dependence of the conquerors on the swarming bureaucracy needed to collect revenue and to allot patronage. After the nomadic rulers had moved into China they became detached from the sources of their power and identified with the clumsy and vulnerable apparatus of agriculture, so that when their exploitation of the settled civilization had reached its point of diminishing returns they were overwhelmed, either by the same kind of rebellion that destroyed Chinese dynasties or by fresh nomad invaders. The maximum control of wealth over mobility was when strong dynasties in China reduced the nomads of the steppe to vassalage, but this in itself led to the undermining of wealth by mobility. Those who were appointed to rule the Frontier began to dissociate themselves from the Chinese sources of wealth and associate themselves with the steppe sources of power. The vassal began to demand a higher price for his loyalty, resorting to his mobility in order to

<sup>25</sup> Lattimore, *Caravan Routes*, 1928; also *The Geographical Factor*, 1938.

escape punishment; and thus the exploitation of wealth by mobility began again.

The last of these historical cycles was under the Manchu dynasty, from 1644 to 1911.<sup>26</sup> The Manchus made good use of Mongol auxiliaries to turn the flank of the Chinese positions guarding the direct route from Manchuria to China. These were Eastern Mongols, of the tribes occupying most of what is now Jehol and the western part of what is now Manchuria. The loot of China enabled the Manchus to subsidize these tribes, thus projecting the Manchu influence into the steppe and establishing a barrier between the new empire in China and the outlying, unconquered Mongol tribes. The result was a "sphere of influence" extending from the western plains of the modern provinces of Heilungchiang, Kirin, and Liaoning, across Jehol, Chahar, and Suiyuan to the deserts of Ninghsia. This is the historical Inner Mongolia, including "Eastern Inner Mongolia," which lies in Jehol and the Manchurian provinces.

To the west of Manchuria and the north of North China the good pasture of Inner Mongolia thins out into the Gobi. This at first made a convenient limit to the influence of the Manchus. It would have required expensive major campaigns, not compensated for by the acquisition of new sources of revenue, to bring the rest of Mongolia under control. Within a hundred years, however, the Manchus were able to intervene at much less cost in wars between the Khalkhas or Northern Mongols, holding most of what is now Outer Mongolia, and the Western Mongols or Olöts, holding the Altai region of Outer Mongolia, the northern part of Chinese Turkistan (Jungaria), and the Tsaidam region in the northeast of Tibet. (Western Mongol tribes later settled in the Alashan and Edsingol regions of what is now Ninghsia province; these territories, ac-

<sup>26</sup> Lattimore, *The Historical Setting of Inner Mongolian Nationalism*, 1936; *Where Outer and Inner Mongolia Meet*, 1938; also, for listing of tribes of Manchurian Mongolia ("Eastern Inner Mongolia"), with dates at which they came over to the Manchus, *The Mongols of Manchuria*, 1934.

ordingly, form a geographical extension westward of Inner Mongolia but belong tribally to Western Mongolia.) By this intervention the Manchus in the end became overlords of both the Khalkhas and the Western Mongols.

Virtually all of the Mongols thus became vassals of the Manchus. The ascendancy of wealth over mobility under this arrangement reached its peak in the eighteenth century. Nominally, the Mongols were obliged to raise military contingents for the Manchus whenever required, and such contingents were actually raised for service against the T'ai-p'ings and against the French and British in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Although this military vassal relationship never worked very effectively, it has had other important results. The idea of nomad vassals of a settled state requires interference with the fluidity of the nomadic migration cycle and the substitution of a more rigid territorial system. The overlord must know not only how many troops can be summoned from each tribe, but where they can be found. He must also prevent tribal war between his different vassals by insisting that claims to pastures and right of movement be referred to him. Under the true steppe-tribal system, claims to territory were asserted through the control of mobile tribes. Vassalage converted this into the quite different system of granting titles to territory, which carried with them the right to rule over tribes.

The significance of this change needs to be emphasized. In the tribal society two processes alternated with each other. The tribes were never static. Claims to pasture and the right of movement either led to the splitting up of tribes and the formation of separate clan-like groups, or to the coalescence of small groups under the more and more formidable leadership of great khans. The system of territorial vassalage prevented the process of agglomera-

<sup>27</sup> Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria*, 1934, p. 205, career of Senggerinchin, or Sankolinsin.

tion (because it threatened the overlord power) and left only the process of parcelling and repartitioning territorial units, thus automatically subdividing the tribal formations. The princes drew subsidies from the Manchu court but had to acknowledge in return that the Manchu emperor had the right of confirming them in their hereditary succession. This right was used in order to split up territorial and tribal units under a gradually increasing number of princes. Disputes over boundaries and jurisdictions that the tribal society itself would have settled by the special tribal form of war (which consisted of summoning extra followers in order to claim a wider cycle of migration and more pastures), were now settled by compromise, and the sovereign, instead of permitting one claimant to defeat the other and take over his following, made both of them equal princes with diminished territories.

Two other processes confirmed the ascendancy of wealth over mobility. For reasons already described it was easy for Chinese merchants to control both the external and the internal trade of Mongolia. It was also natural for the Mongol princes to act as patrons of this trade, sharing in the profits. By insisting on the tribal duties of each of their subjects they prevented the rise of a separate Mongol trading class, because it would have tended to become independent of them. By guaranteeing the safe-conduct of merchants, the extension of credit, and the collection of debts, they stood between merchant and customer, taking a toll on all transactions.

#### MONGOL UNITY UNDER CHINGGHIS KHAN AND ITS LATER DECAY

The second process was the spread of the Lama-Buddhist religion. Lamaism had originally been taken up by the Mongols when they held empire in China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There is no doubt that the Mongol rulers interested themselves in this for

the purpose of creating a national unity that would consolidate the Mongols and at the same time differentiate them from the Chinese. They wanted to make the Mongols a permanent ruling class, with a code of its own sanctioned by an organized religion. Chingghis Khan had brought the Mongols together after a series of tribal wars that had placed each tribal unit under a chief personally responsible to the supreme khagan. He needed, further, a common standard that would offset the dangerously great individual power of each of these chiefs. He was also aware, like other great nomad leaders who had dealt with settled peoples, of the way in which the mobile power of a nomad empire could be undermined by attachment to the immobile, agricultural sources of "civilized" wealth.

Chingghis therefore chose Uighur Turks from the oases of Chinese Turkistan to create a Mongol written language and the beginnings of a civil service. The use of Uighurs who were largely Nestorian Christians and of Moslems who spoke Turkish, Persian, and Arabic enabled his successors to administer China without immediate surrender to the Chinese scholar-gentry, who until then had smothered all barbarian conquerors by making them dependent for their revenues on the services of a bureaucracy which had almost the sole access to a written language so difficult that it was virtually a professional secret.

Khobilai Sechin, or Kublai Khan, the grandson of Chingghis and the first Mongol to rule the whole of China, continued this policy. He asked the father and uncle of Marco Polo to bring him Catholic priests from Europe in large numbers, presumably in order to promote a Mongol national culture separate from that of the Chinese.<sup>28</sup> These priests did not arrive; but others, like John of Montecorvino,<sup>29</sup> preached the Catholic cause under the patronage of the Mongol court. The Mongols never succeeded in

<sup>28</sup> Yule, *Marco Polo*, 1921, Vol. I, Ch. VII.

<sup>29</sup> Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, 1914, Vol. III.



identifying their power in China with any of the non-Chinese religions—probably because none of these religions, when transplanted, was culturally vigorous enough to hold out against the tough code of the Chinese mandarin.

Nevertheless it is remarkable how an unschooled people like the Mongols evaded the Chinese bureaucracy for as long as they did, until their connections with Central Asia and Persia weakened in the fourteenth century. Up to that time the Mongols in China “salted” their administration with accomplished Uighur Turks and Persians. Neither Mongol, Turkish, nor Persian became the sole administrative language of China, but it is noteworthy that none of the texts of Marco Polo have preserved any mention of the Chinese written language. Indeed, the general character of Marco Polo’s narrative suggests that he had little or no knowledge of either written or spoken Chinese and must have been able to get along with Mongol or Persian, or perhaps both, during his 27 years in China, in the course of which he held important official appointments.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, we have evidence from the Chinese side that the “scholarly” Chinese language was actually broken down, during this period, to such an extent

<sup>80</sup> Polo claimed to have mastered four languages and four scripts. The four scripts may well have been two scripts, each used in two ways—one for Persian and Arabic, one for Uighur Turkish and Mongol. Yule and Cordier, Polo’s editors, are not in full agreement on the question of his possible knowledge of Chinese. Very likely during his long residence he picked up a smattering of the spoken language; on the other hand his mention of a few words and names shows that he cannot have known the language well and therefore cannot have been able to read and write it. No foreigner ever learned to read and write Chinese without boasting about it. (Yule, Marco Polo, 1921, Vol. I, Ch. XIV and notes.) William of Rubruck, however, a little earlier than Polo, described Chinese writing very well: “They write with a brush such as painters paint with, and they make in one figure the several letters containing a whole word” (Rockhill, Rubruck, 1900, pp. 201-2). Rashideddin, writing in Persia at the beginning of the fourteenth century, shows a detailed knowledge of the numbers of Persians, Uighurs, and Nestorian Christians in the Mongol service in China (Yule, Cathay, 1914, Vol. III, pp. 117 *et seq.*). Bretschneider (Mediaeval Researches, 1888, Vol. I, p. 189), in a brief notice of the Chinese dynastic history of the Mongols in China, also calls attention to the many foreigners in Mongol service.

that even documents of all kinds were frequently written in an unscholarly, vernacular, and even partially “Mongolized” Chinese.<sup>81</sup>

#### REINTRODUCTION OF LAMAISM (SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

The Mongols also experimented with Tibetan Lamaism, a syncretic religion which is nominally Buddhist but almost certainly includes borrowings from Nestorian Christianity and Manichaeism. Although by the crude standards of the Mongols this was a religion of culture, it was also quite incapable of maintaining itself against the superior learning of the Chinese mandarins. On the expulsion of the last Mongol emperor from China, Lamaism vanished from both Mongolia and China because the Mongols were thrown back on their old steppe standards and there was no longer any need for a special cultural device to integrate the dominant steppe territory of the state with the subject territory of agriculture and cities.

Accordingly, when Lamaism reappeared among the Mongols in the sixteenth century the first converts were not the Mongols of the outer steppe but the border Mongols who had clung to the edge of China. When the Ming dynasty reestablished Chinese rule in China in 1368 it profited by a great cleavage between the Mongols of the north, who had always looked at China from afar, and those of what is now Inner Mongolia, who had been closely

<sup>81</sup> See the interesting remarks by Palladius on pp. 8 and 9 of the preface to his translation of the “Secret History”; also Laufer, A Sketch of Mongol Literature, Russian edit., 1927, pp. 10-11; and Chavannes, Inscriptions et pièces de chancellerie, 1904, p. 11, where the style of the Chinese written by scribes in the Mongol service is commented on as *fort bizarre*. It may be added that one reason for the textual difficulties of the “Old” and “New” official Chinese histories of the Yüan or Mongol dynasty is presumably the barbarisms in the documents used by the compilers. By the courtesy of K. A. Wittfogel I have been able to go over the sections from the Mongol period in an important study on which he is engaged, with the aid of Chinese collaborators—a series of selections from the Chinese dynastic histories to serve as an index to material on administration and political and economic development. For a preliminary account, see his A Large-Scale Investigation of China’s Socio-Economic Structure, 1938.

associated with the apparatus of Mongol rule in China. Even as early as 1260, the choice of Kublai Khan by the dynastic council to be supreme Khagan had displeased the northern Mongols, who considered that he was too Chinese and too little in sympathy with the military steppe tradition.

On the fall of the Mongol dynasty many of the southern Mongols actually went over to the service of the new Chinese dynasty, and it was largely because of this that the first Ming emperors were able to campaign at a great distance in the north of Mongolia. These campaigns blunted the military power of the steppe Mongols enough to remove the immediate danger of a renewed Mongol invasion of China, but did not result in subjecting the outer steppe to Chinese rule. Thereafter the Chinese turned back to organize the traditional machinery of agriculture, taxation, and state granary accumulation within China. The maintenance of the Great Wall Frontier was turned over to vassal Mongols of the Inner Mongolian fringe, who were not—for the time being—strong enough to be a danger to China but were willing, for the sake of conserving their own local privileges, to refuse coalition with the tribes of the steppe beyond the Gobi.

The most important Mongol vassal state lay along the great northern loop of the Yellow River, in what is now Suiyüan province. By the sixteenth century these Mongols, gathered in a federation of which the modern remnants are the Tumets and the Ordos tribes, were powerful enough to begin anew the process of making mobility ascendant over wealth. From about 1530 until his death in 1583 their chief, Altan Khan (Anda), harried Shensi, Shansi, and the metropolitan region of Peking. Westward he was overlord as far as Tibet and defeated the Western Mongols. The success with which he practiced the blackmail code of loyalty was rewarded by the Chinese with the title of Shun-i Wang—Obedient and Loyal Prince. At the same time the Chinese name of Kueihua (Return to Civil-

ization) was conferred on Kuku-khota (Gughe-khota, the Blue City), which he had built.<sup>32</sup> His most important demand on the Chinese was the privilege of holding fairs for trade. The inference is that without the revenue of these fairs he could not forego the profits brought in by his raiding wars.

It was under this prince that Lamaism was again introduced among the Mongols; the conditions I have described explain why. Altan Khan was a city-building prince. The territory he ruled was not in the heart of the steppe; its economy was of a mixed character. In order to attain stability the ruler wanted to convert accumulation by war into exchange by trade. Undoubtedly the state included agricultural and artisan subjects as well as pastoral people.<sup>33</sup> Such a following and such a state needed a unifying agency. Like the great Chingghis, Altan Khan wished to avoid the adoption of Chinese culture because it would not unify his marginal state but assimilate and subordinate it to China. Lamaism was just what he needed.

Above all, a celibate church with monastic property made possible a better management of the most important working problem of all such border states of mixed economy and society. The church's corporative, impersonal title to property achieved a higher degree of integration between mobile pastoral property and fixed landed property than the society of the time could manage in any other way. It both stood between and linked together the families that were attached to the tribal structure of power and those whose power was based on landed estates, tenantry, and city activities. Had not the non-family organization of the

<sup>32</sup> Mengku Yumu Chi (preface dated 1859), 1, 2, 21b. Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria*, 1934, p. 48. See also the many references in Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia, China*, 2 vols., 1919. Also Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, Vol. I, 1876, p. 418, citing De Mailla, *Histoire générale de la Chine*, Vol. X, 1779, p. 319.

<sup>33</sup> Lattimore, *A Ruined Nestorian City in Inner Mongolia*, 1934. At this site there was later discovered, by Mongols, a stone inscribed with Altan Khan's invitation to the Dalai Lama to reintroduce Lamaism into Mongolia.

church offered this neutral economic standard, rivalry between the two kinds of noble families would have split the state internally. It is hardly probable that Altan Khan thought this all out for himself in advance; what he probably did was merely to grasp and promote the function of the church in practice, in the course of the administrative routine of adjustment and compensation of forces that must necessarily have preoccupied the ruler of such a state.

LAMAISM AND THE RISE OF MANCHU POWER IN  
MONGOLIA (SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH  
CENTURIES)

When its origins have thus been stated it becomes much easier to follow and understand the subsequent history of Lamaism in Mongolia. Among other things, the fable of the fostering of Lamaism as a method of pacifying the turbulent Mongols is disposed of completely. After the death of Altan Khan the control of Mongol power along the Great Wall Frontier passed from the Tumets to the Chahars;<sup>34</sup> but at the same time the Chahars were being overtaken and passed by a new mixed power, that of the Manchus. By alliance with the Eastern Mongols the Manchus prevented the Chahars from consolidating a new and greater Chahar-Tumet state and forestalled the possibility of a new, direct Mongol conquest of China. They had still, however, to round off the conquest of China, beginning with the occupation of Peking in 1644, by dealing with the Great Wall Frontier as a whole.

Inner Mongolia quickly went over to the Manchus because it was easier to accept the position of subordinate allies, entitled to some of the benefits of conquest, than to challenge the Manchus in direct control of China. This made it possible to set up an "inner" Frontier structure that included Southern and Western Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, and the territory of the predominantly Chinese-

<sup>34</sup> For this period generally, see Baddeley, *op. cit.*

speaking Moslems in what are now the provinces of Ninghsia and Kansu. To this was added under the greatest of the Manchu emperors, K'ang Hsi (1662-1722), an "outer" Frontier or trans-Frontier of tribes and peoples who were under control but not under direct rule, in North Manchuria, Outer and Western Mongolia, the territory of the predominantly Turkish-speaking Moslems of Chinese Turkistan, and Tibet. The Manchu position in these outer territories was not based on direct conquest. It was achieved by a policy of waiting for the Western Mongols to exhaust themselves in a series of attempts, beginning before the Manchu invasion of China in the seventeenth century and ending in the eighteenth century, to create a new empire pivoted on the Altai region and the steppes of Northern Chinese Turkistan and extending westward into Tibet and eastward across Outer Mongolia.

The Western Mongols (first the Ölöts and then the Jungar or "Eastern Wing" of the Ölöts) failed partly because their pressure drove the Inner Mongolian tribes under closer Manchu control. Then the Khalkha or Northern Mongol princes began to ask for Manchu support. Finally the Manchus found allies also in Tibet and among the Moslem rulers of several oases in Chinese Turkistan, and the empire of the Western Mongols fell apart before it could be consolidated. Under Ch'ien Lung (1736-96) the outermost limits of Manchu control were defined. Some of the Western Wing of the Ölöts, who had broken away from the Jungar or Eastern Wing in 1686 and migrated across the southern Siberian steppes to the Volga, were invited back to Chinese Turkistan in 1771 (those who remained in Russia becoming the Kalmuks). This marked the end of Western Mongol power.<sup>35</sup>

It was in the course of these wars that control of the

<sup>35</sup> Duman, *Agrarian Policy of the Ch'ing Government in Sinkiang at the End of the XVIIIth Century*, 1936 (in Russian); review by Lattimore, 1939; Courant, *L'Asie centrale aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: empire kalmouk ou empire mantchou?* 1912 (mainly based on Tunghua Lu).

Lama church came to be identified with control of the Mongols. When the Western Mongols invaded Tibet they raised the "princes of the church" to be their vassals and gave them ascendancy in temporal rule. They thus gave the Lama church a new political importance. Turning back to the steppe, they then attempted to combine control of the church with their claim to supra-tribal empire and to make the church the symbol of Mongol unity and Mongol control over Tibet and the territories of mixed character adjacent to the Great Wall of China.

In this period, therefore, the favorite device of Mongol aspirants to power was to nominate their own relatives to high ecclesiastical positions in order to bracket control of the church and of the state. The fourth Dalai Lama of Tibet (1589-1616) was a Mongol and the only Dalai Lama not of Tibetan birth and nationality. In fact, this title (which is Mongol, not Tibetan) was granted by the Altan Khan of the Tumets who has already been mentioned.<sup>36</sup> Under the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-82) ascendancy in Tibet passed from the Southern Mongols to the Western Mongols.<sup>37</sup> A little later the Jebtsundamba "incarnation," was established among the Khalkha tribes, the first incumbent being a son of one of their greatest princes.<sup>38</sup> In this way the Dalai Lama came to be associated to a certain extent with the Western Mongol claim to Mongol hegemony and the Jebtsundamba Khotokhto, or "Urga Living Buddha," with the cause of the northern Mongols.<sup>39</sup>

The Manchus in maneuvering for control did not miss the significance of this half-completed combination of church power and state power. In taking advantage of the

<sup>36</sup> Compare Baddeley's account, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. lxxvi; also that given by Sanang Setsen (a member of the Tumet princely house), in Ch. IX of Schmidt's edition of 1829; also Schmidt's note 27.

<sup>37</sup> See Baddeley's account of this very confused period (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. lxxxii).

<sup>38</sup> Baddeley, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 232-234.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

wars between Western and Northern Mongols they negotiated with Living Buddhas as well as with hereditary princes. In the upshot they were able to perpetuate a Mongol church that was independent of the princes, thus creating a permanent dyarchy in Mongol affairs, with a church that looked toward Tibet (whose pontiffs were granted Manchu patronage) and princes that looked directly to the Manchu court in Peking. In order to maintain this dyarchy they made it a definite administrative rule that the sons and nephews of ruling princes might not be selected in infancy as Living Buddhas.<sup>40</sup> The heirs of temporal princes had to be confirmed in their succession by imperial consent, and under a quite separate system the Manchus also asserted a kind of right of censorship in the selection of as many as possible of the Living Buddhas,<sup>41</sup> who became, so to speak, Bishops and Archbishops Palatine, with both spiritual authority and temporal power—vassals of the empire with a separate standing.

#### MONGOLIA UNDER THE MANCHUS: ESTABLISHMENT OF FIXED TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES

Mongolia thus became a pastoral country of a new kind. Nomadism was restricted within boundaries that were both tribal and territorial. Fixed property became an institution through the building of temples and monasteries. Numbers of monasteries had territory of their own and stood entirely apart from the tribal system. The lay families in such territory were subjects of a Living Buddha and not of a prince. Other monasteries were built on tribal land and maintained at tribal expense. This helped to anchor the tribe to a fixed territory. The old nomadic cycle was broken up. Migration from pasture to pasture no longer led to conflict over the right of movement and to an

<sup>40</sup> Ta Ch'ing Huitien, Li Fan Yüan 13, Ch. 738; also Wei Tsang T'ungchih, 1896, Ch. 5. Compare Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria*, 1934, p. 255.

<sup>41</sup> Ta Ch'ing Huitien, Li Fan Yüan 12, Ch. 737.

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alternating process of tribal integration under great chiefs and disintegration under minor chiefs. Movement was restricted within the territory that belonged to each tribe as a whole. Within this publicly owned territory the hereditary prince and his council of nobles allotted pastures to clans and families. In theory the land belonged to the tribe; in practice, because each family "belonged" to the tribe and the tribe "belonged" to the prince, the land also belonged to the prince.

In earlier history the prince had been a "protector" as well as a leader. The individual or family, if dissatisfied with the "protector," fled to a new one. This method of gathering a following and at the same time depleting the tribes of rivals was part of the mechanism of the cycle of integration and disintegration.<sup>42</sup> The new allocation of fixed boundaries, held fast by temple property in addition to the overlord's decree, brought the old transfer of allegiance under a new ruling and made of it a new crime—not desertion from the tribal lord but flight from the tribal territory. The migrant who thus left his lawful territory became a vagrant and as such was returnable on demand by the tribe into whose territory he had entered.<sup>43</sup> Princes were no longer ready to fight each other for new subjects and followers, because their relation to the Manchu overlord was now not determined by the number of their followers but by the size and position of their territory.<sup>44</sup>

Not that the stability thus attained was new in every re-

<sup>42</sup> The record of the early years of Chingghis provides examples of such transfers of allegiance, affecting various individuals and tribes. Chingghis—and this marked him as an able chief—was adept at condemning such transfers when they were against his interest and justifying them when they suited him.

<sup>43</sup> It was also forbidden for lamaseries to accept novices to whom they were not entitled, and to run away from a lamasery. A man who ran away from the territory to which he belonged was liable to the death penalty, or to 100 lashes if he returned of his own free will (Riasanovsky, *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law*, 1937, p. 135).

<sup>44</sup> Hence it is characteristic of the Mengku Yumu Chi (1859), as a nineteenth century Chinese document on the Mongols, that its chief aim is territorial identification.

spect. The administrative ideal of the Great Wall Frontier, whether it were ruled from the steppe or from within China, always worked toward the allocation of a fixed territory for each tribe and regular duties and prescribed honors for each tribal lord. The theoretical permanence of such periods was part of the legal assumption that the dynasty that had instituted the arrangements would go on forever. Wealth prevailed once more over mobility. Lamaism and the institution of fixed monastic property had become instruments for dividing and ruling the Mongols instead of uniting them, because the tribes themselves had veered toward a fixed relation to the Manchu emperors, who were both suzerains of the Mongols and rulers of the Chinese.

Yet the continued working of historical change, under the appearance of a permanently fixed order, produced in time a severe distortion. This was due chiefly to the fact that while the upper levels of the Mongol society—the old aristocracy of the tribes and the new aristocracy of the church—had committed themselves to new standards of power and methods of rule, the lower levels were still governed under the sanctions of the steppe-nomadic life. Yet in fact the decrease in mobility had altered the technique of steppe nomadism. The economy had changed and so had the inner structure of society. The people who pastured the herds had lost some of the real advantages of nomadism but none of their theoretical obligations and duties as nomads, while those who ruled the people who pastured the herds retained most of their old tribal authority and had now added to it new forms of authority created by the new conditions.

For instance, when a prince demanded the return to his territory of a tribesman who had moved into other territory, he invoked the new law of territorial identification and at the same time was backed by the old tribal sanction that gave authority to a chief over a follower; while the

follower had lost the protection of that other canon of nomadic tribal life which had once permitted him to offer allegiance to another chief and claim protection in return for service. Thus the privileges of those in authority had been enhanced, while the duties of those whom they ruled had been added to because they were held answerable to two kinds of power and law.

#### MONGOLIA UNDER THE MANCHUS: INCREASE OF TRADE AND ITS EFFECTS

Economically, the chief effect of this was in the development of trade. The tribal standard which prevented the formation of a Mongol trading class (because internal trade was not essential to the steppe-nomadic order and would have weakened the authority of the chiefs), remained in force. Consequently, trade between Mongols and Mongols, as well as trade between Mongols and Chinese, was handled almost exclusively by a special class of Chinese traders. These men were different from the merchants who carried on the internal exchange of commodities in China itself. Most of them were controlled by a few great firms which operated like Hudson's Bay companies. Even individual small traders, who were nominally independent, actually got their goods on credit from these great firms and so in practice were tributary to them.

Artisans of all kinds, most of them financed at usurious rates by the same firms, carried further the destruction of the self-sufficient nomadic economy. Chinese itinerant smiths did metal work for the Mongols, driving out of business the herd-owning Mongol smiths who could not work continuously at their craft. Other smiths and artisans of all kinds worked permanently in the few towns, like Urga, Uliassutai, and Kobdo, or in border cities like Kalgan and Kueihua. Chinese carpenters made carts and water butts and even parts of the wooden framework of Mongol tents. Chinese wool clippers and felt makers, traveling with the

buyers who collected wool from the Mongols at iniquitous purchase rates against goods advanced to them on credit, even made for the Mongols the felts with which they covered their tents. Chinese-owned caravans carried trade goods about the country and carried back wool, hides, fur, and salt. A certain number of Mongols were hired by the Chinese to work with their caravans or drive back to the markets of China the sheep, cattle, horses, and camels collected against trading debts; but the business and the profits belonged to the Chinese.<sup>45</sup>

Thus the Mongols were made economically tributary to Chinese trade while remaining tribally subject to their own princes and monasteries, whose old canons of authority had been reinforced by new sanctions. The surplus of idle men created by the taking over by Chinese of almost all productive activity, except herding, was absorbed by the monasteries. By the end of this period of distorted social and economic values, from forty to sixty per cent of the male population were lamas.<sup>46</sup> Boys were presented to the monasteries at the age of seven or eight and grew up under lama tutelage. Few of them became literate beyond the point of being able to read Tibetan prayers (without understanding them). Even this was literacy in a foreign language which had no creative social value among the Mongols. It was possible to bring such enormous numbers of men under the control of the church because women and children could do most of the work about camp and the work of herding, except in periods of seasonal activity. For

<sup>45</sup> In parts of Inner Mongolia the ruin of Mongol society has gone so far that Chinese even work for the Mongols as shepherds and are hired to substitute for Mongols in compulsory tribal military service (Lattimore, *Mongols of the Chinese Border*, 1938).

<sup>46</sup> Viktorov and Khalkhin (*op. cit.*, p. 30) give 40 per cent of the *adult* male population, or 120,000 lamas, as the figure for Outer Mongolia before the Mongol People's Republic. The proportion in Inner Mongolia is probably higher, the Manchu control there having been more direct and the abuses of the system accordingly more pronounced—more temples and monasteries, more Living Buddhas. Viktorov and Khalkhin state that in 1921 the monasteries owned about 20 per cent of the livestock in Outer Mongolia.

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these seasons many lamas returned from their monasteries to their families. Moreover, the great increase in the number of lamas was not a direct expense to the church because most of them continued to be fed and supported by gifts from their own families.

Most of the lamas were idle parasites, but the higher lamas—Living Buddhas, abbots, and ecclesiastical administrators—together with the ruling princes and those of the aristocracy who administered tribal affairs under the princes, were active parasites. They accumulated more and more visible wealth in return for less and less necessary functions in the ordering of society. Their real functions were in fact largely transferred from the working processes of Mongol life to participation in the profits of Chinese trade. They lent their authority to the Chinese and drew dividends on it. At first they were the patrons of the traders, from whom they demanded tribute in return for the permission to trade. Then many of them became actual partners in trade, investing capital in Chinese firms.

To this they added the active use of their tribal authority in two ways: the enforcement of collective responsibility and the enforcement of *corvée* services. The tribe as a whole endorsed and was responsible for the debts contracted by individuals. If cattle plague or storm reduced a man's livestock so that he could not pay his debts, the trader could collect from the tribal treasury, and the tribal authorities in due course collected from the individual, with interest.

As a matter of fact, the collective debts of whole Banners (tribal-territorial units) became funded bookkeeping accounts, which enabled the traders to take over year by year the entire surplus production of the tribe or monastic foundation. Against this they issued at a higher book value just enough materials for clothing, utensils, commodities, and grain or flour for winter provision to keep the com-

munity going. The compounded bookkeeping debt grew yearly at usurious rates and became the symbol of the legal status and power of the trader within the community. The account-book debts of the Mongols were so important for this reason that even if a Banner offered to pay off the debt entirely the Chinese firms refused to accept payment, preferring to let the account run. Interest was paid at the rate of as much as 500 per cent per annum. The total Chinese trading debt of Outer Mongolia alone, in 1911 (when the Manchu dynasty fell), stood at about fifteen million *taels* (ounces of silver), an average of about 500 taels per household. One firm alone, the famous Ta Sheng K'uei of Kueihua, drove away into China every year 70,000 horses and 500,000 sheep, collected against interest on debts.<sup>47</sup>

The use of *corvée* labor illustrates the invoking of old tribal sanctions for new non-tribal purposes. Besides tribute in kind, the tribesman was called on for stated personal services to his immediate lord, to the prince above his lord, and to the tribal organization (*hoshigo* or *hoshio*, the "Banner"). In the old steppe-nomadic order these had been essential services, distributing duties that were really functional and social, though they also provided a garnishing of privilege for the aristocracy. Under the later perversion the prince either personally or on behalf of the tribe could summon tribesmen with camels or carts to carry loads for a trader—often the "official" trader of the tribe, with whom part of the tribal funds or the prince's own funds were invested. For this they might be paid nothing at all, or given their food, or even paid a small wage, according to the nature and duration of the *alba* or service; but in any case the prince could collect a private fee for each animal and man furnished by this use of his social power.

<sup>47</sup> Doksom, Report (to the Party Committee of the Mongol Government), 1936 (in Russian). For casual mention of the firm of Ta Sheng K'uei, see Lattimore, *Desert Road to Turkestan*, 1928, pp. 64-65.

## MONGOLIA AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Western travelers in the second half of the nineteenth century were attracted by the free spaces of the open steppe, the hospitality and noble manners of the aristocracy, the strange and mostly incomprehensible rites of the monastic religion.<sup>48</sup> Abundant herds gave the impression of great wealth. Only the sharper observers noted that the common herdsmen consumed very little of the mutton and beef and milk that walked about the pastures under their charge and that the poorer people were bitterly poor, although it is true that the degradation of the Mongol economy had not yet gone so far as that of the Chinese economy.<sup>49</sup> Even when it is in decay, a pastoral order of life does not destroy its livestock so readily as a degenerating agriculture exhausts and destroys its fields. Nor does even a tyrannical chief in a pastoral society keep his people at so low a level that they cannot reproduce—as recurrently happens in agricultural societies in phases of retrogression. He looks on his people as a breeder looks on livestock.

The poor Mongol, in spite of conditions that were becoming unbearably distorted, was therefore better fed, better housed, and better clothed than the poor Chinese. Yet few travelers were interested in deducing from the comparison of poor people and rich herds that the “free” life of the nomad was restricted even in freedom of movement, and that ownership had passed from the herdsman to princes and ecclesiastical dignitaries and was in process of passing again from them into the hands of Chinese trading firms. A pastoral equivalent of tenantry was in fact widely spread and especially practiced by the monasteries, which gave herds out to the care of individuals, reclaiming the natural increase on terms that brought them in more

<sup>48</sup> The English classic, notable for clear perception of detail and an intimate participation in Mongol life, which the author's very honest and simple Christian bias does not spoil, is Gilmour, *Among the Mongols*, n.d. See also Huc and Gabet, *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China*, edit. Pelliot, 1928.

<sup>49</sup> Lattimore, *Prince, Priest and Herdsman in Mongolia*, 1935.

than their “investment” and progressively impoverished the herdsman.<sup>50</sup>

Most travelers noted, however, that the Mongols were no longer warlike, and this was unfailingly attributed to the teaching of Lamaism. The official Chinese writings produced under the Manchu Empire confirmed this.<sup>51</sup> Neither Westerners nor Chinese nor even the Manchu statesmen who fostered the Lama church perceived that it was not the teaching but the function of the church that mattered. They slid over the fact that the church had been at the center of the bloodiest tribal wars between the Western and Northern Mongols. What had really come to pass was that church property in buildings and land reinforced the secular policy of assigning fixed territories to tribes and their princes, thus defeating the mobility inherent in steppe pastoralism, which had formerly compensated for the abuse of power by chieftains through the degree of choice in allegiance allowed to commoners. In this way war had been eliminated, but at the price of economic degradation and social enslavement.

## MONGOLIA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the turn of the twentieth century new conditions arose which confused still further both the Western and the Chinese understanding of Mongol life. Already, along the southern borders of Inner Mongolia and on the east in Manchurian Mongolia, subordination of the Mongol extensive economy to the Chinese trading economy had passed over into replacement of Mongol pastoralism by Chinese agriculture, through colonization. This economy was much more intensive than that of the Mongols, though not nearly

<sup>50</sup> Viktorov and Khalkhin, *op. cit.*, p. 30, where it is stated that in some Banners the monasteries owned from 50 to 60 per cent and even from 70 to 90 per cent of the total livestock.

<sup>51</sup> It is a set convention of the edicts and official documents of the Manchu dynasty that lamaism had converted the Mongols from a warlike people into a peaceful people.



so intensive as the agriculture of China within the Great Wall, because even at the margin of the steppe there was not enough water from either streams or wells to make irrigation a general practice.

Moreover, while agriculture in some respects effected an extension of the Chinese economy, in other respects it was not linked directly with the economy of interior China. Cumbrous transport made it unprofitable to send grain cargoes from the steppe into China. As the cart animals hauling the grain passed through cultivated country they had to be stall-fed. This meant that they ate up the value of a cartload of grain in a few days. It was more profitable to export the grain farther into the steppe either in carts or on pack camels. Traveling into the steppe, the transport animals fed freely and their owners were charged only a small pasture fee by each Mongol tribal-territorial government. In this way grain could be sent to a great distance; it was traded to the Mongols as food, and the traders got in exchange either commodities like salt (easily gathered from salt lakes) or livestock which could be driven to China and sold for much higher prices than grain would fetch, or wool and hides.

In times past this kind of thing had happened recurrently and had caused Frontier adjustments of the highest importance. Some of the Chinese border colonizers passed from extensive agriculture to the still more extensive economy of mixed agriculture and pastoralism, and some of them broke away from agriculture altogether and became nomads. At the same time, some nomads modified their pastoralism by the ancillary practice of agriculture, and some in time transferred altogether from pastoralism to agriculture, and became Chinese. Whether the predominant movement was toward extensive economy and nomadism or toward intensive economy and fixed agriculture depended on the general complex of Frontier relations—on

the alternating increase or diminution in importance of the factor of mobility in the historical cycle.

What happened at the turn of the century was that Mongolia came within the range of altogether new forces. The Trans-Siberian Railway skirted its northern horizon. Railways in Manchuria altered the status of Eastern Inner Mongolia. The Peiping-Suiyüan Railway reached up toward the southern edge of Inner Mongolia. Railways entirely altered the cruder adjustments between extensive and intensive economy that had existed before.<sup>52</sup> From the north the railway sent Russian traders from its flanks into Outer Mongolia. Russian colonists followed, at least as far as Buriat Mongolia and the Tannu-Tuva or Urianghai regions, adjacent to Outer Mongolia.<sup>53</sup> From the east and south the railways despatched into Inner Mongolia even more Chinese colonists than Chinese traders, because rail transport reversed the direction of grain export, making the Chinese market more profitable than the steppe market.

Firearms emphasized the change by altering in their own way the ratio between nomad mobility and agricultural immobility. The old method of adjustment, by which border communities tended to break away from China and gravitate to the steppe when changes from intensive to extensive economy had created a suitable degree of mobility, was now impossible. Although colonization, as it pushed into the steppe, distorted more and more severely the Chinese economy and with it the Chinese family and social system (leading, for instance, to the development of special forms of banditry and Frontier-provincial war-lordism), this new extensive-economy China remained linked uncomfortably to the old intensive-economy China by the alien devices of steel rails and firearms.

<sup>52</sup> Lattimore, *Chinese Colonization in Inner Mongolia, 1932; Where Outer and Inner Mongolia Meet, 1938; On The Wickedness of Being Nomads, 1935.*

<sup>53</sup> Kabo, *Studies in the Economy and History of Tuva, 1934 (in Russian);* see review by Lattimore, 1937.

It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened at the fall of the Manchu dynasty if it had not been for these factors and others related to them. Undoubtedly Mongolia and China would have tended to cleave apart along the Great Wall Frontier. The distortions brought about by slow change and encroachment under Manchu rule would have broken up sharply as the old underlying values of mobility and immobility, extensive economy and intensive economy, reasserted themselves and gravitated toward their natural geographical environments and social forms.

In Mongolia there would certainly have been a great struggle between the church and the princes, for the old traditions still vested in the princes would have responded to the reasserted need for mobility, while the church's great privileges would have been hard to dissociate from its territorial property because both privileges and property had been acquired in the process of subordinating Mongolia as a whole to the Manchu Empire.

In the end, the princes and steppe tribalism would have won, and the lamas would have disappeared as they did when the Mongols first went back into the steppe after losing their empire in China in the fourteenth century; or perhaps they and their church would have been subordinated to nomad forms as they were during the seventeenth century wars between Western and Northern Mongols. The principle of nomadism had not been entirely exterminated even in the church; in the regions most remote from China—in Northwest Outer Mongolia and among the Mongols of Chinese Turkistan—it was still customary for lamas to leave their monasteries in the summer and live in tents around portable "tent-temples."<sup>54</sup> Incidentally, the root difference between princes and church explains why in Outer Mongolia under the Mongol People's Republic the church has resisted revolution more stubbornly than the

<sup>54</sup> See Haslund, *Men and Gods in Mongolia*, 1935, pp. 282-286.

aristocracy. The Republic's principle of grafting suitable forms of industry on to the existing pastoral economy preserved pastoralism but destroyed the nomadic or tribal structure of society. The church, on the other hand, was already non-nomadic in its political structure; it therefore preserved, in part, an alternative method of basing a non-pastoral organization on a pastoral economy and so could keep up the struggle longer.

Actually a return to the past was inhibited by the new forces that had penetrated both Mongolia and China. Instead, Outer Mongolia was first made a victim of Tsarist Russian imperialism and then set free by the non-exploitative policy of the Soviet Union toward the Mongol People's Republic, the granting of loans without interest, economic aid, technical help, and the creation of an army trained and equipped by the Soviet Union but not officered by the Soviet Union or under its orders.

In the meantime China, itself laboring under the imperialistic pressure of the Western nations, was able by the use of railways and firearms to pass on a kind of second-degree imperialistic pressure against the Mongols. In the greater part of Inner Mongolia this has been replaced since the invasion of Manchuria by Japan in 1931 by direct Japanese imperialism, which is bearing so heavily on both Mongols and Chinese that it is fast creating the possibility of a new relationship between the two peoples of mutual aid and coöperation in the common interest—approximating to the relationship between the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia.<sup>55</sup> If this is carried to fulfillment there is the possibility of entering into still another historical period. The economy of Mongolia and that of China are not necessarily antagonistic to each other. Under modern conditions they can be complementary. What was lacking in the past was an adequate method of coördinating them. Industrialism

<sup>55</sup> Lattimore, *The Lines of Cleavage in Inner Mongolia*, 1937; *Where Outer and Inner Mongolia Meet*, 1938.

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and machinery can now link the steppe and the ploughland, the mine and the city, and link them in amity and without social subordination of one people to the other, if the social antagonisms derived from the past are prevented from carrying over into the future.

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NOTE: While in this chapter I have described the changes in Outer Mongolia as a rather gradual process (especially if compared with the results of the invasion of Manchuria), it is obvious that there has been a great acceleration in the past year. This chapter is a preparatory account, as good as I have been able to make it; but it cannot be read as a complete description of what Outer Mongolia is like today.

Probably the principal event of 1939, for the Mongols, was the arrival of Russian troops on the Mongolian-Manchurian border to fight against the Japanese. This event must have been accompanied by many significant changes, as Outer Mongolia necessarily went on to a full war footing. The result may well have been to increase Soviet influence, and even Soviet control; but this must be attributed more to Japanese aggression than to Soviet policy, as can be seen from the past record. There still remains another political and military move that could be made—a reconciliation between Outer Mongolia and China leading to an alliance against Japan.