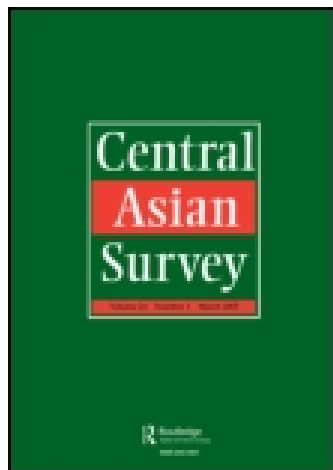




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The cult of Ulanhu in Inner Mongolia: history, memory, and the making of national heroes*

URADYN ERDEN BULAG†

Introduction

Inner Mongolia is fatefully linked with a Mongol called Ulanhu (1906–1988), the ‘red son of Communism’, who led it into the Chinese jurisdiction in 1947. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is now seeing its 50th anniversary, a history that has long left behind intriguing questions: how is Ulanhu judged by Mongols? Is the incorporation into China beneficial or non-beneficial to Inner Mongols? My tentative answer is that Ulanhu has been both misunderstood by his fellow Mongols and distrusted by Chinese officials. This answer is far from conclusive, and is likely to be controversial. I will not embark on a complex project of making quantitative assessment of the Mongols’ opinions so as to take the pulse of the social tendencies of the Mongols; rather I will focus on a phenomenon emerging in Inner Mongolia in recent years, that is, an attempt by both Mongols and Chinese to set up a cult of Ulanhu. I argue that this cult does not signify Mongols’ celebration of their identity in Inner Mongolia, or for this matter in China, but it is a carefully orchestrated drama to negotiate and bargain with the hegemonic state of China. In this paper, I hope to show that the making of an ethnic hero in China is not simply a matter of nationalism (which the modernist theorists like Gellner (1983) argue to be a political programme to make the nation congruent with the state). Since nationalist sentiment is untenable in public discourse, the struggle of minorities (I here follow Havel’s (1985) thesis on post-totalitarian politics) takes the form of appealing to the very state institution that suppresses the minorities.

Ethnic leaders like Ulanhu had worked hard to institutionalize a state mechanism in which he himself and the minority people he represented could be accommodated in China without being overwhelmed. With time, Ulanhu himself became a state leader (*guojia lingdao ren*), and the result of his efforts, law of the nationality regional autonomy (hereafter autonomy law) became a part of the

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Chinese constitution. Appealing to Ulanhu's 'soul and spirit', recognizing him as a state leader, emphasizing the autonomy law as a state institution, and demanding respect for that state institution then constitutes the core of this new cult on the part of the Mongols. This process is a public platform upon which minorities now are able to appropriate a weapon to defend themselves. Mongols then take an ambivalent attitude to Ulanhu. On the one hand, they bitterly accuse him of bringing Inner Mongolia into the Chinese fold in the first place, and thus he is a traitor to the Mongol nation; but on the other hand, he and the institution he helped establish are now indispensable in the Mongols' struggle in the multi-ethnic state of China, wherein the state is, while paying lip service to the minorities, is developing an ever stronger assimilationist agenda to integrate all nationalities of China into a Chinese Nation (*Zhonghua Minzu*).

The Chinese state tacitly allows this cult of Ulanhu; yet, the overall emphasis is not to give genuine autonomy to the Mongols, but to celebrate Ulanhu's merit in bringing the Mongols into China and 'defending' the unity of China. This paper argues that the expectations of both the Mongols and the Chinese are reconciled in the curious cult of Ulanhu. Below, I will develop some of the points mentioned in this introductory section.

Constructing a Ulanhu cult

First let me briefly say who Ulanhu was. He was born into a rich Tumed Mongolian peasant family in 1906. He received education in Beijing's Mongolian-Tibetan school, where he became a Communist in 1925. He was further trained in Moscow from 1925 to 1929. After engaging in military resistance against the Japanese invasion for some years, in 1945 he became a CCP central committee alternate member. With the help of the CCP, he founded the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region in 1947. After 1949, he was promoted rapidly in the CCP, concurrently holding numerous posts in both Inner Mongolia and the central government.¹ In 1967, Ulanhu was purged by Mao Zedong for showing nationalist tendencies. In 1973 he re-emerged in Beijing, and later successively held the posts of minister of the United Front, vice-president of China and vice-chairman of the People's Congress; but he never held any posts in Inner Mongolia.

Ulanhu died in December 1988. His funeral was held in the auditorium of the PLA general logistics headquarters in Beijing. Four to five hundred people attended the funeral. In addition to official mourners, the funeral was attended by mostly Tumed Mongols especially Ulanhu's family members. These people were, however, confined to the Inner Mongolian hotel in Beijing and prevented from going out into the street. The mourners were quickly led around the corpse and ushered out after performing the usual three *koutou* ritual, leaving no time for people to express their grief. Buhe, Ulanhu's eldest son, the then chairman of the Inner Mongolian autonomous region, was said to have requested that a proper funeral be held in Inner Mongolia, but Deng Xiaoping reportedly vetoed it. Buhe further suggested that a small mausoleum be built in Inner Mongolia;

Deng again did not give the permit. Finally, Buhe was pressurized to agree to cremating Ulanhu's body and his ashes were to be kept at Babaoshan Cemetery in Beijing, where ashes of heroes of the revolution are usually kept.

Ulanhu's low-profile funeral and the ban on a memorial service in Inner Mongolia contrast strongly with the high-profile funeral and memorial services rendered to the Tibetan Buddhist leader the Panchen Lama who died only one month later. A memorial service was held in the Hall of the People's Congress, and Buddhists all over China organized memorial services to commemorate him. We should remember that Ulanhu was vice-president of China from 1983 to 1988, and at his death was a vice-chairman of the People's Congress. It was explained to me by a Chinese politician that the reason for this difference is that Ulanhu was a Communist, while the Panchen Lama was a Buddhist. Ulanhu's funeral was in line with the CCP policy to hold simple funerals for Communist leaders. However, this explanation is not tenable, as some months later, the funeral of an ousted Chinese leader, Hu Yaobang, was also held in the Hall of the People's Congress, an event which later accelerated the pro-democracy movement in China, as we all know. It seems that the 'fancy funerals' for leaders were banned only after October 1991. According to Reuters, which reported the declaration of the Central Committee of the Chinese Party, 'when senior officials of the Party and state die, their funerals must follow the principle of simplicity'. The declaration further states that dead leaders would be cremated and their ashes buried, no tombs were to be built and no ashes could be scattered (cf. Watson, 1994, pp 82–83). The low profile treatment of Ulanhu was a great surprise to Mongols, giving speculation that Ulanhu might have made mistakes and fallen out of favour with Deng Xiaoping. People cracked bitter jokes, saying that the scale of Ulanhu's funeral was smaller than that of Li Sheng, a friend of Ulanhu and a veteran Tumed Mongolian revolutionary who held a minor post in the Inner Mongolian government. His cortege paraded from Huhhot to Lama Dong some 50 kilometres away, a place associated with his revolutionary activities during the anti-Japanese war. Buhe was also said to have been confined to Beijing for a while, lest he might cause some trouble in Inner Mongolia.

The caution over Ulanhu's funeral and his ashes being kept in Beijing clearly indicated the Chinese government's concern about Ulanhu. One explanation is that the Chinese leadership was worried that those who suffered from the anti-new Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (NRD) movement and anti-Ulanhu movement² during the Cultural Revolution might gather at his funeral and cause a disturbance. We don't know what exactly the government was worried about at the time, but that it happened during probably the most liberal period of China's political and economic reform might give some hint that as far as the minorities were concerned, the Centre did not want to take any risks.

However, soon there was a U-turn in the official policy towards Ulanhu. By June 1992, the Propaganda Department of the CCP officially permitted that a modest mausoleum be built in Huhhot, the capital of Inner Mongolian.³ In May, one month before the approval, the construction was already started. It was

completed hurriedly, but what resulted was a great structure, fashioned after the model of the Chinggis Khan mausoleum, only bigger.⁴ In the absence of the body or ashes, one huge standing statue was erected in front of the structure, depicting a returning Ulanhu walking on the grassland of his homeland. Inside the main hall is a sitting statue, surrounded with wreaths presented by individuals and organizations. Strictly adhering to the state appraisal, the pictures displayed in the halls reflected his career, that is: Ulanhu is a 'reliable Communist soldier, distinguished Party and state leader, outstanding proletarian revolutionary, pre-eminent nationality work leader'. Outside the hall, there is a tablet inscribing the names of every prefecture government and party committee as contributors. The new mausoleum has been designated as a 'base for patriotic education'. On the festival days of women, children, and army and all others,⁵ the government orchestrates pledge-taking rituals and initiation rituals, thus turning Ulanhu's mausoleum not only into a public display of the deeds of Ulanhu, but the political ritual platform of Inner Mongolia. The official purpose of the mausoleum is, 'under the new situation of reform and open-door, organizing Comrade Ulanhu's Mausoleum exhibition has important historical and realistic significance; it has provided us with a necessary platform and lively education materials for conducting education in revolutionary tradition and education in patriotism. It will always educate later generations to learn from the divine spirit of the older generation of proletarian revolutionaries, and complete their unfinished causes.'⁶

What we have now seen is an interesting return of Ulanhu to Inner Mongolia, from which he had been removed for 22 years after 1966. In 1966, he was declared a counter-revolutionary, a traitor to China, a campaign which resulted in the catastrophic purges of the Mongols in Inner Mongolia (see Woody, 1993). And yet after his death, he returned apparently as the ultimate embodiment of the state, as a representative of the state, a hero, a symbol of Chinese patriotism, a man who defended the Chinese nation, all of which are salient merits when there is so much internal and external force trying to split China apart. The timing of Ulanhu's return, from a low-profile treatment in 1988 to pomp and grandeur in 1992 may have been designed by central officials for stability. However, a further analysis of the timing, and the importance given to the mausoleum, and the caution shown by the Party Centre may indicate that it was a product of a dialogue between the Centre and the locality.

It is useful to examine briefly the contemporary ethno-political situation in Inner Mongolia. I mentioned that Buhe was distrusted by the Centre. In the 1980s, Ulanhu's family and relatives were able to keep high government positions in Inner Mongolia, forming a factional political force. They were able to strike some balance with the high-handed pressure from the Centre and the local Chinese officials. Their political dominance relied heavily on the support of Ulanhu, as well as their ethnic identity. Buhe was popular among Mongol intellectuals, for he was sympathetic to them and was reluctant to suppress Mongol demands for greater ethnic rights. He was also known to have poor relations with the Party Secretary Wang Qun on a number of issues. Wang, as

an 'imperial envoy' eager to bring Inner Mongolia into closer integration with China, was enthusiastic in endorsing the Centre's policies.⁷ Buhe was, however, insistent that Inner Mongolia had its own peculiarities, and wished to adapt the central policies into the local situation in the overall Chinese market economy. It seems that Buhe's ethnic sentiment and protectionist stance as well as his family domination in Inner Mongolia became a concern to the Central government. Towards the end of 1991, his younger brother Uje, mayor of Baotou city, who was poised to succeed his post, was removed from Inner Mongolia and made a vice-governor of Shanxi province. Instead, a Chinese from Beijing was appointed to become the vice-chairman (Ho & Gao, 1992, pp 380–401, 462–466).⁸ It thus became important for Buhe to reverse this. For Buhe, to allow the state low-grading or obscuring of Ulanhu would undermine the legitimacy of his leadership, for the Centre's initial message was indeed that Ulanhu might have become a common Mongolian nationalist rallying point. To these internal dynamics of ethnopolitics was added exogenous events, i.e. democratic movements in Mongolia and the collapse of the Soviet Union. They lent urgency to the Chinese government which also needed a legitimation to justify the incorporation of Inner Mongolia into China, not as an alien domination by the Chinese, but the doing of Mongols themselves. The internal and external political atmosphere compelled both Mongols and Chinese to take Ulanhu on board. A massive campaign by the Inner Mongolian government was carried out in Beijing to propagate Ulanhu, portraying him as a staunch Communist, a patriot who successfully solved China's ethnic problems. So much so that while Tibet was troubled with ethnic riots and calls for independence, Inner Mongolia, thanks to the fruit of Ulanhu's effort, was stable and prosperous, exhibiting unshakeable trust in the party's leadership. A huge and largely successful exhibition of Ulanhu's life was made in Beijing, and an Ulanhu Research Association was set up, specifically to study Ulanhu's patriotic thought.

Now that Ulanhu was presented as something different, as a symbol of revolution and patriotism, the very hegemonic discourse of China, Mongols and Chinese, indeed the entire Inner Mongolian officialdom, rushed to become patrons of the mausoleum. Suddenly, Ulanhu was a great man, no longer ambiguous. Nobody could now afford to dissociate from him.

Ritual and hegemonic order

Behind the seeming solidarity with regard to the Ulanhu cult, we can nevertheless see that Ulanhu represent different values to Mongols and Chinese. We have seen that the cult is constructed not only around an ideology, but also ritual. Taken at face value, our Ulanhu cult may manifest a common desire by both Mongols and Chinese, by appealing to Ulanhu's Communist spirit, to come to further ethnic amity and common prosperity. Although not denying the property of the ritual for generating a Durkheimian social solidarity, it is nevertheless necessary to underline the use value of this common ideology. Ulanhu can be said to be a key symbol (Turner, 1967) which has three properties: condensation

of meaning, multivocality, and ambiguity (Kertzer, 1988, p 11). Gluckman's (1963) 'channelling of conflict theory', although in line with Durkheim, does allow conflicting sides of a community to come to terms with each other. Rather than paying attention to this psychological dimension of the ritual, it seems to me more profitable to examine how the participants, as conflicting parties, are trying to achieve something out of the ritual. I therefore see in the cult of Ulanhu not how much ethnic amity it has produced (indeed, if there is any amity, it can only be dubious), but how behind this facade, Mongols and Chinese form their strategies. Seen in this light, I tend to regard the cult as a form of struggle.

The social context of our Ulanhu cult is China in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which should perhaps be defined as late state socialism, or post-totalitarianism defined by Havel (1985). Totalitarian society is a society in which one class uses naked power to serve its own class and suppress another. A post-totalitarian society, however, has different aspirations. Analogous to a fully developed society, a post-totalitarian society also needs to try to regulate itself with ideology and legality, binding everybody in the network, wherein both the powerful and the powerless are slaves to the system.

In North China, besides these post-totalitarian features, there is also a new tendency to see the minorities not only as dangerous, but outmoded barriers to the advancement of the Chinese civilization.⁹ Friedman (1995) argues that the present regime in Beijing represents a hegemony, anachronistically in the fashion of anti-imperialist Leninism, but now plus Confucianism and nationalism, which sees any ethnic minority as enemies of the nation. I suggest there are two tendencies: (1) stabilization or legitimation, which is characterized by laws and regulations so that peoples can find their niche in the contours of power; and (2) at the same time, there is the evolutionary nationalist vision of China which always wants 'progress'. It is in the interaction of this motion and non-motion that we find the cult of Ulanhu gaining significance. The Chinese ideology is dialectical, thus giving room for manoeuvre. As the state ideology is to turn the minorities towards further integration, or to remove obstacles, making space for its Chinese style civilization, it automatically comes into conflict with legitimating devices like laws and regulations, very symbols of the Chinese state power. From the minority point of view, this situation constitutes a classical case of domination and resistance. We must now understand that in the ritual of Ulanhu cult, both elements are present. Then what kind of resistance is possible for Mongols?

James Scott (1990) distinguishes two modes of political discourse: public transcript and hidden transcript. This is a useful formulation; in an encapsulated society like China, open resistance is suicidal. The term transcript refers to a kind of political discourse in the form of speeches, gestures and practices. For Scott, the public transcript is a protective mask worn by the subordinates in interaction with the powerful, in the manner of showing deference or consent. The hidden transcript is always an offstage performance, which tells the true feeling of the subordinate after removing the mask. Scott's hidden transcript theory is useful for understanding Mongols' attitude to Ulanhu. Behind the mask

of this public deference to Ulanhu, Mongols from different groups may have rather uncharitable opinions of Ulanhu, such as that he's a traitor to the Mongol nation, or he promoted nepotism and perpetuated his dynastic rule in Inner Mongolia.¹⁰ Or on the other hand, Mongols whilst praising 'nationalities amity' (*minzu tuanjie*) tell apocalyptically of the future of Mongols in China. These are important subjects of study in their own right; but to understand our cult of Ulanhu, if we agree that he's not entirely worshipped by Mongols from the bottom of their heart, we must take on board one further dimension of Scott's theory of the public transcript. Part of the usual hegemony theory is an assumption of complete power which frightens people to submission and thus achieves social control. However, Scott argues, those who maintain hegemony have to explain why such a hegemony is necessary (p 77). Very often, the hegemony may serve the subordinate as much as the powerful. He convincingly argues that subordinated groups, in their protest, usually do not have an alternative ideology, but embrace the bulk of the dominant ideology: 'most protests and challenges—even quite violent ones—are made in the realistic expectation that the central features of the form of domination will remain intact' (p 92). In the struggle, strategic actions usually emphasize loyalty to the institution or person, so that something be returned. Such actions or behaviours take a uniquely moralistic twist. 'Any dominant ideology with hegemonic pretensions must, by definition, provide subordinate groups with political weapons that can be of use in the public transcript' (p 101).

I do not want to go further than this 'use value of hegemony'. Mongols, I suggest, have learned exactly how to use hegemony. In the cult of Ulanhu, Mongols emphasize his patriotism, his Communist ideas, and contribution to China. The Mongol perspective is to staunchly defend the orthodox Marxist doctrine, as a means to oblige the Chinese. As a famous Mongol nationality affairs specialist admonishes young Mongols: 'Don't meddle with all those capitalist concepts like democracy or human rights, let us stick to Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong thought. These are the very weapon we have to deal with the Chinese. If they believe they are still Communist, I am sure we can work out something.' I am not suggesting that this is the only method of resistance. Most likely we also have several hidden transcripts, depending on which context. As I pointed out, in a private Mongol-to-Mongol context, Mongols may bitterly criticize Ulanhu, and yet, in a Mongol-Han context, Mongols may deploy some elements of the dominant transcript. In this paper, I am largely concerned with the latter. I argue that this use of value of hegemony to the subordinate people as well as the powerful constitutes a public transcript, a platform of ritual action in Inner Mongolia.

It is worth pointing out that there is a difference between using the 'public transcript' as the Inner Mongols do here and using 'evocative transcript' in the case of Mongolia. Humphrey (1994) suggests an alternative explanation for political protest. She uses evocative transcript, i.e. transcript deliberately ambiguous and with multiple meanings. This is possible in Mongolia where Mongols know each other, and reference to something is known to almost

everybody. I believe evocative transcript is more appropriate in the context of treating history. But in our case of ethnic relations, perhaps there is no need to beat about the bush. Below I illustrate this point by showing how ‘nationalities unity’ (*minzu tuanjie*), as the dominant ideology, is being manipulated by minorities in China.

Nationalities amity: manipulating hegemony

Minzu tuanjie (nationalities unity) is usually seen as a hegemonic slogan designed to force people to step into line. It is perhaps a more neutral term than *minzu ronghe* (nationality integration) or *tonghua* (assimilation). However, the hegemony of this term lies in its absolutist value: the objective of the state is for nationalities amity, and only socialism can bring about nationalities amity. Past studies usually suggest how minorities are being assimilated under this slogan. Dru Gladney (1994) in a recent study of Hui nationality in China writes that the Muslim Hui manipulated the pluralist nationalities amity to make their own internal unity, thus sabotaging the original intention of the state (pp 270–271). For Mongols, however, the slogan is as much for internal unity (see below) as an obliging tool to deal with the Chinese. Mongol appropriation of this slogan is perhaps similar to Havel’s greengrocer’s slogan, ‘Workers of the world, Unite!’ (1985, p 27). Havel suggests that this is one of the powers wielded by the powerless, an attempt to live within truth. But while Havel’s greengrocer is sending the message: ‘I am following everything official, so leave me alone’, Mongols are not so fortunate as to be left alone.

Mongols are a trans-border nationality. Their kinsmen live in Mongolia and the Buriat Republic and Kalmyk Republic in the Russian Federation. Their ethnic sentiment is therefore often criticized as showing local nationalism and also trans-state nationalism, undermining nationalities unity. While this was tolerated originally by the CCP, indeed carefully channelled to fight against their ideological rival the KMT in the past, any further demonstration of this sentiment today is frowned upon, as it indicates not just a bad inter-ethnic relationship in China, but primarily a dissatisfaction with Chinese rule. Such a precarious situation makes Inner Mongols particularly vulnerable to any sign of local nationalism. The official injunction today is that nobody should say or do anything detrimental to nationalities amity (*bu shuo /zuo bu li yu minzu tuanjie de hua/shi*). This injunction effectively closes any legitimate way to express ethnic grievance, lest it undermine ‘nationalities amity’. ‘Preserve state unity and consolidate nationalities unity’ is a slogan that is put on every time there is a sign of ethnic unrest. The slogan has become the most effective weapon to deal with Mongols, intellectuals and cadres.

As our case shows, indeed, the battleground lies in the keywords, ‘nationalities amity’. The importance of keywords in politics is underscored by Rodgers (1987). Political struggle for him is over the control of these metaphors of legitimation. Duara (1993), in his fascinating study of Chinese history through examining the concept of *fengjian* or feudalism, shows that the indigenous term

initially provided impetus for a federalist movement across Chinese provinces. Empowering local people and governments was seen as a way to preserve the Chinese nation in the light of the ever weakening state held by the Manchu. However, the federalist movement lost its ideological legitimacy when *fengjian* was later invested with negative meanings. 'Now *fengjian* and its associated vocabulary in China came to carry the more familiar negative meaning as the Other of modernity and the Enlightenment that grew out of the history of Europe. This transformation of the sense of the word *fengjian* cost the federalists most dearly, for it effaced an entire tradition of political dissent with which they may have been able to associate themselves. It also deprived them of a rhetorical strategy whereby they could claim to be the legitimate successors to this tradition and thereby mobilize history on behalf of their cause' (1993, p 19).

In China, nationalities amity and state unity (*guojia tongyi*) are two closely tied keywords. Indeed, they have become contesting grounds both sides struggle to control. The point of divergence is whether developing ethnic culture and identity, the basis for the existence or prosperity of ethnic groups, is compatible with nationalities amity and state unity. To the Chinese, as they have increasingly turned to a centralized state, Mongolian autonomy or other ethnic movements must also be hooked in this hegemonic discourse. In the 1930s and 1940s, Mongol leaders such as Prinu De argued time and again that granting autonomy to the Mongols would, because of their gratitude to the grace shown by the Chinese state, be to defend the northern frontier against the Soviet or Japanese and keep the Chinese Communists out of Inner Mongolia, thus strengthen the state unity. However, the KMT government was convinced that an autonomous Inner Mongolia would pose a threat to China (Demchugdonrub, 1984). This same discourse continued into the People's Republic. In the early 1960s, riding against the increasing pressure from Mao, Ulanhu insisted in numerous speeches that to strengthen state unity and consolidate nationalities amity, three basics must be met: political, economic and cultural rights to the Mongols (Le Nan, 1994). However, in the disturbing international and internal atmosphere of the time, Ulanhu failed to convince the Centre of his argument; his argument became the very testimony for his alleged crime of splitting China, and he himself was purged. In July 1981, in a seminal article published in the *People's Daily* to defend minority nationality autonomy which he championed, Ulanhu again argued along the same line: 'Once nationality regional autonomy is conscientiously implemented, the minority nationality peoples would then be deeply convinced that they are not only the masters of their own homeland, but also of the motherland; their spirit of loving the motherland and loving their own nationalities would be greatly elevated (Ulanhu, 1987, p 10).

This line of argument over what constitutes nationalities amity and state unity clearly shows different visions; Mongols are desperate not to lose ground by allowing the equation of their limited autonomous rights with an agency weakening state unity. Below, I'd like to relate a recent political event in Inner Mongolia. This illustrates an interesting process whereby each

side manipulates the meaning of 'nationalities amity', which curiously results in further declarations of loyalty and patriotism to China on the part of the Mongols.

After the Mongolian People's Republic (now called Mongolia) declared itself a democratic state in 1990 some non-dominant Mongols in Mongolia, like the Buriats, having shaken off the yoke of Soviet control, wanted to communicate with their kinsmen across the borders in Russia and China (Bulag, 1998). In September 1993, a Mongolian world conference was organized by the former prime minister Dashiin Byambasuren, a Buriat, with an aim of establishing cultural and economic links with Mongols outside of Mongolia. As expected and as usual, the Chinese side became nervous, fearing Inner Mongols would also join the conference, and further would engage in some independence movement. Wang Qun, the Party Secretary of Inner Mongolia, made a big fuss about this event and prepared a long report recording whatever people or deeds he thought fit for so-called separatist suspicion. He talked about nationalities unity and separatism on many occasions, to the great dismay of the majority of Mongol leaders in Inner Mongolia. Wang Qun wanted to utilize this incident in order to suppress Mongolian leaders. He accused many Mongols of being nationalist, and using this pretext, he wanted to remove them from office, making way for his own control. He reported to Beijing suggesting that Inner Mongolia was in turmoil and only he could handle the situation.

Wang Qun and some of his Chinese associates made speeches, suggesting that Inner Mongolia does not belong to Inner Mongolians alone, but to all the nationalities in North China. This was an attempt, according to Mongols, to deny the Mongols their rights of autonomy. He wanted to provoke the anger of Mongolian leaders and intellectuals and university students. If Mongols reacted, they would fall into his trap. He would then have an excuse to convince the Chinese Central Government that Inner Mongolia was indeed in trouble, and then there would be a need to crack down on the Mongols in order to defend the 'motherland'. Wang's speeches and his underlying goal certainly incurred a barrage of criticism from Mongols. Some high-ranking Mongolian leaders moved resolutely against Wang and his associates. They strongly criticized Wang's speeches, pointing out that it was Wang, not the Mongols, who wanted to drive the Mongols away from Inner Mongolia, splitting China. Mongol leaders also accused Wang of violating the Constitution and the Law of the Nationality Regional Autonomy which defined the Mongols as the principal nationality of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. They swiftly reported this case to Beijing, and an investigation was carried out. As a result, Wang was removed from his Party-secretary post, and assigned a new job, Chairman of the Inner Mongolian People's Congress. The Chinese politicians withdrew their words consequently, but they went unpunished! Mongols are not entirely happy with this outcome; nevertheless, it is not a small victory.

Significantly, one of the weapons the Mongol leaders used in struggling against local Chinese officials is that they accused them (the Chinese) of causing these separatist tendencies. They say, you Chinese are trying to indicate that we

are alien people. Therefore, you are separatist, not us. For the sake of stability in this region, let us stress nationalities amity, please.

This is only one small incident, but it makes evident that state hegemonies have succeeded in becoming a conscious framework within which conflicting sides do communicate with each other. The emphasis on nationalities amity and state unity are themes deployed publicly by both Mongol and Chinese officials. They form strategies waiting for the right moment to trap each other. Most importantly, the discourse of power relations in Inner Mongolia can be referred back to Ulanhu and the Chinese institutions Ulanhu helped set up, by both Mongols and Chinese.

We have shown that 'nationalities amity' is a concept acceptable to both sides; the Mongols have won a victory by making the point that the Chinese attitude to the nationalities amity is the cause for nationalities disunity, which leads to separatism. Moreover, Mongols adroitly took advantage of a loophole in the Chinese redefinition of Inner Mongolian history, insisting that if Inner Mongols are immigrants, then it is the Chinese who make them aliens in China. In this discourse, the Chinese officials have clearly lost control of the keywords, thus enabling Mongols to maintain their status quo. However, one must caution that such a victory was won on the terms of the Chinese state. Although this might be the best that could be achieved, the immediate effect is that Inner Mongols declare ever more allegiance to the Chinese state.

The content of Ulanhu 'thought'

I will now briefly explain what value Ulanhu has for Inner Mongolia. I suggest Ulanhu had successfully established a communalist spirit among the Mongols through his engagement with the Chinese. And this spirit is now appropriated by the Mongols to engage in a public discourse to negotiate with the Chinese.

The inspiration of Ulanhu to Mongol leaders is that he put the Mongol interest on an equal footing with the state interest. Although Ulanhu's Inner Mongolia was short of independence and it was monopolized by him, his associates and his family members, Ulanhu nevertheless did several things beneficial to the Mongols during his rule of Inner Mongolia. Inner Mongolia under his leadership is a good contrast to today's Inner Mongolia, a contrast so strong that his era is seen as a lost paradise. By this discourse of contrast, Ulanhu and his era now represent not only normal ethnic relations, but above all the glory of Mongol control of Inner Mongolia. And this constitutes the core of his value and his cult.

Several features stand out in characterizing his leadership. These are qualities especially stressed by ethnic Mongolian leaders, but also by ordinary Mongols, and to some extent even by local Chinese, who do not stand to gain much benefit in the course of the conflict between the Centre and the region. Below I will summarize some of the attributes of Ulanhu, stressed by some Mongol officials, especially by Zhao Zhenbei, a Mongol leader, who made his name by expelling illegal Chinese immigrants in the early 1980s whilst he was the governor of

Silinggol League. Their comments have been published in two volumes in memory of Ulanhu in 1990.

According to Zhao, Ulanhu is a great son of the Mongolian nation. His contribution lies in his 'creative' application of Marxism to adapt to the reality of Inner Mongolia. And this has still great significance for guiding nationality work (*minzu yongzuo*) in Inner Mongolia. Now what is this creative work of Ulanhu? Zhao insists that Ulanhu has developed a complete paradigm of 'thought' regarding nationality work, especially in the pastoral region. Ulanhu single-handedly established that the pastoral economy is not something backward, as agriculturist Chinese would see it, but a legitimate part of the national economy; thus he has fundamentally transformed the Chinese perception towards the pastoral economy. Ulanhu maintained that pastoralism is the first economy of Inner Mongolia. Consistent with this policy, Ulanhu resolutely opposed land reclamation of pastureland initiated by both the local Chinese and the Chinese leadership from the North China Bureau (*Huabei ju*) and the Ministry of Agricultural Reclamation (*nong keng bu*). Ulanhu insisted that the pastoral Mongols had a different class formation, thus enabling him to resist Mao's class struggle in Inner Mongolia. Instead, a new policy appropriate to Inner Mongolia was developed: no redistribution of land, no class struggle, no class designation, and, what's more, the herdlord and herder should mutually benefit each other. At the height of the communization craze, Ulanhu, according to Zhao, opposed any such reorganization in the pastoral area. What he did, paying lip service to the Centre, was merely to change the names of the Mongol *sum* (township) to communes, but nothing of the standard commune practice was allowed there. What made Ulanhu great was his independent or creative thought, an ability to hold to the truth in defiance of erroneous policies from the Centre. In contrast to the general disaster wrought to all other provinces and regions by Mao's revolutionary zeal, during Ulanhu's 20-year leadership in Inner Mongolia, the Mongolian population increased from 800,000 to 1.3 million, and the livestock number grew from 8.41 million in 1947 to 41.7 million in 1965, a prosperity unparalleled in any part of China (Zhao Zhenbei, 1990). While Zhao attributes this achievement to Ulanhu's creative thought and independent leadership style, a Chinese commentator, who praised the same achievement made by Ulanhu, resolutely insisted that: 'This is the result of Comrade Ulanhu leading various nationalities of Inner Mongolia to stride forward along the correct direction of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought; this is the inevitable result of the Party's nationality regional autonomy policy. It is bound to be futile for anybody to deny it' (Zhao Yuting, 1990, p 140).

Mongols who recalled Ulanhu almost invariably stressed the above-mentioned qualities of Ulanhu. For Buyandalai, a vice-director of the Cultural Department of Inner Mongolia, Ulanhu was the foundation-layer of the Inner Mongolian new culture. Recalling Ulanhu's initiative in organizing the first Inner Mongolian Cultural Ensemble, he pointed out that it was Ulanhu who insisted that Mongols had a rich culture that others should also learn. Ulanhu's greatest contribution was that Inner Mongolian culture should be 'Marxist in content, but national in

form', and this was in contrast to the later and still ongoing deliberate suppression by Chinese of the Mongolian form of the Inner Mongolian art and culture. Buyandalai concluded his recollection by stating: 'Ulanhu is gone and left us, but long live his radiant nationality culture and art thought, and the nationality cultural enterprise to which he devoted his entire heart. The purpose of our remembering him is to inherit his will, and to develop more numerous, newer and better culture and art to console his soul up in heaven' (Buyandalai, 1990, p 170).

What is most surprising about Ulanhu's achievement was his contribution to Mongolian language. For Shenamjil, a veteran linguist, Ulanhu was the founder of the new China's Mongolian language work. According to him, it was Ulanhu who successfully inscribed an article in the Chinese Common Programme (Constitution) passed in 1949 that every nationality had the freedom to use their language. Ulanhu insisted that every Mongol and Chinese cadre should be bilingual in Mongolian and Chinese. And indeed for Chinese to learn Mongolian was made compulsory, as a yardstick to measure whether they were here in Inner Mongolia to serve the Chinese or Mongols. He particularly mentioned that in 1957 Ulanhu addressed the MPR delegation in Mongolian, which made a great impression on many (Shenamjil, 1990, p 285).¹¹ A famous Mongol writer, T. Damrin, recalled that in 1987, on a celebration held in Beijing, Ulanhu 'greeted [Inner Mongolian artists] in Mongolian, everybody was greatly moved, full of tears in their eyes' (Damrin, 1990, p 274).

These few illustrations suggest that Mongol admiration of him is perhaps genuine. Through celebration of Ulanhu and glorification of Ulanhu's achievements, these Mongols express their strong resentment of today's situation. Mongol tears at Ulanhu's speaking Mongolian contrasts with the erosion of Mongolian language in Inner Mongolia. The admiration for Ulanhu is not limited to the Mongol elite who once worked for Ulanhu, but extends even to ordinary Mongols. They express their utmost contempt for some Mongol leaders, especially the incumbent chairman of Inner Mongolia Öljii,¹² who is widely known to forbid his children to speak Mongolian when a Chinese guest comes to visit him. They pointed out to me, look at Ulanhu, he's a real man. He not only learned to speak Mongolian himself, but made the Chinese learn it!

When Mongols look back at the Ulanhu era, they find at least two things: Mongols in Inner Mongolia were relatively better off than most of the country. The region had a complete series of policies which were, although generally in line with the national policies, adapted to the local conditions. Ulanhu represented the collective interest of Mongols in their own autonomous region. Crucially, some of Ulanhu's policies have been embodied in the nationality law he helped pass in 1984.¹³

New criteria for evaluating a Mongol leader?

The recollections of Mongols as shown above portray Ulanhu as a hero. The heroic deeds of Ulanhu are perceived on the basis of a contrast and comparison

of then and now. Although I suggest that this is a strategy engaged by Mongols largely for power discourse, nevertheless, their genuine feeling for Ulanhu cannot be dismissed. I'd like to show below that there may be new criteria developed in Inner Mongolia to evaluate a leader.

What Inner Mongols see in themselves in this century is that they are weak and overwhelmed by the Han, and they are themselves hopelessly divided, unable either to become a united people or defend their interests. Their decline in this century is a complete contrast to their history of glory and valour. Their constant yearning for Chinggis Khan is, in this sense, an attempt to strengthen themselves. Making things worse, the Mongol feudal lords in early this century, in the eyes of Mongols, represented not only their own selfish interest. They also had the image of both collaboration with the Han warlords, and suppression of the Mongols. Interpretations of the Mongol rebellions of Sine Lama and Gaada Meiren¹⁴ and some others effectively established the notion that most Mongol leaders were corrupt and weak. These social vices seen in the early Mongol leaders indicate that Mongols today would like to have a leader who could both protect their interests against the Chinese colonization and stand equal with the Chinese. The quality they would like to see in a Mongol leader is first of all strength and power, with that power directed outward, rather than inward.

Hevia (1994), in a fascinating study of different notions of *koutou* ritual, rejects defining it as 'rituals of abject servitude'; instead, following Bell's study of ritual,¹⁵ he sees *koutou* as 'empowering the lesser in a dependent relationship with a superior' (1994, p 193). In his view, the *koutou* is a negotiation process, involving power relations. Not everybody is permitted to *koutou*; 'the subject must be encompassable', the subject must also be powerful in the sense of having attributes and capacities desirable for incorporation into the imperial rulership. Indeed, we know throughout history that the tributary relations with the Chinese often demonstrated the strength of the nomadic kings, and what had been negotiated was material advantage to the latter. This historical precedence may have contributed to a notion that a strong leader within the ritual realm will be able to get more benefit. And yet, this must be based on the condition that entering the realm is beneficial for nomads. Seen in this light, Ulanhu's joining the Chinese symbolic world is an expectation that the Communist would deliver more, i.e. restoration of fragmented Inner Mongolia and indeed some kind of autonomy, something Mongols could not achieve without help. Similarly, Mongols would concur that the ascendance of Ulanhu to the power centre of the Chinese state did not just mean he was a puppet, but he was strong and to be reckoned with by the Chinese government. Mongols may also see his high position in the Chinese government as a demonstration of the collective Mongol power in the configuration of the Chinese ethnic hierarchy, wherein more autonomy and benefit could be wrestled out for the Mongols.

The status of the Mongols in the Chinese ethnic hierarchy has interestingly transformed Ulanhu into a hero, or at least a representative of the Mongols. Mongols love to extol that he concurrently held top party, government, and army posts in Inner Mongolia, as well as being vice premier, and politburo member;

all of these are underscored to account for his importance to Inner Mongols. This achievement is contrasted strongly with today's situation, in which the army, party and people's congress are all controlled by the Chinese. His monopoly of power, although contested in the intra-Mongol relations, has become one of his greatest merits, immensely admired by all Mongols. A number of miraculous signs connected with Ulanhu are also pointed out. Ulanhu is favourably compared to Mao Zedong: (1) they both lived to the age of 82; (2) both Mao Zedong and Ulanhu shared one character in their names: *ze* (Ulanhu's Chinese name is Yun Ze), which means sea or water; (3) they physically resembled each other, and indeed Ulanhu was even taller than Mao. These signs are favourable to Ulanhu, giving him a quality as a great man, comparable to Mao.

The destruction of the Inner Mongolian autonomy created by Ulanhu, and his own demise, as well as the suffering of the Mongols during the Cultural Revolution somewhat bridged the gap between Ulanhu and the Mongols. Ulanhu also did his best to mend the broken autonomy of Inner Mongolia. According to a Mongol who was directly involved in restoring Inner Mongolia, Ulanhu played the strong man after he was released from 'protective custody' (*jian hu*) and allowed to work in 1973. Hua Guofeng, Mao's successor, was less knowledgeable in minority affairs, and all other leaders were not yet reinstated, so he allowed Ulanhu to do whatever he deemed necessary. Ulanhu, in his capacity of the minister for the United Front, then ordered the restoration and unification of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region in 1979, by mobilizing mass political forces in Inner Mongolia. This was not a small job. There were various oppositions, mostly from three sides, the central ministers, the five provinces and autonomous regions, and Mongol leaders within those provinces. The latter were against the unification, because they were already enjoying good positions. Unification would mean a reshuffle, and they might not be assigned better jobs. This narrative is characteristic of a one-man-struggle in which Ulanhu used all his manoeuvring talent within the Chinese leadership, in contrast to those selfish Mongols who would rather stay within Chinese provinces, and this narrative has, in effect, transformed Ulanhu from a traitor to a national hero. Mongols acknowledge today that without Ulanhu, there might never have re-emerged a unified Inner Mongolia, or there would not be an Inner Mongolia at all. A Mongol dissident who would not concur with Ulanhu's other deeds, nevertheless acknowledged Ulanhu's outstanding performance, and he felt obliged to attend Ulanhu's funeral in Beijing uninvited, and wrote an elegiac sentence: 'In memory of twice unifying Inner Mongolia'.

The strength or ability (*chadaltai*) in Ulanhu is also favourably rated along with his second quality, Mongol heart (*Mongol setgel*). The notion of Mongol heart is eclectic. It allows a person to fail in doing something; what matters is one's loyalty to his own nation. It is perhaps the most crucial test for Ulanhu. But this concept may also allow Mongols to pardon all mistakes committed by a leader. Indeed it may also show sympathy for some failure. 'Mongol heart' always distinguishes 'one of us' from 'one of them', or 'for them' from 'for us'. As long as that 'for us' is made clear and proved, a complete loser may be turned into a martyr; alternatively, a great man may be disowned.

Mongols try to find every sign that shows Ulanhu's Mongol heart. The accumulation of stories, from his trying to speak Mongolian, his concrete efforts to promote Mongol rights, his purges by the Chinese, have almost vindicated earlier suspicions that he might be a Chinese agent.¹⁶ Indeed, the story of his crying (see below) is a powerful message demonstrating not only his loyalty to the Mongols, but also the weakness of the Mongols. An image has been built through gossip and anecdotes, classical arena where hidden transcripts are staged. These social constructions, which may be a highly selective reading of his social activities, portray him as a man who always put the Mongol interest before anything else.

There is a clear shift from private transcripts against Ulanhu which I mentioned at the beginning to a more positive evaluation of Ulanhu. Maybe this is a reflection of dialectics in the Mongol mind parallel to dialectics of the Chinese state. Some Mongol intellectuals, who were deeply suspicious of Ulanhu, now suggest Ulanhu might just have a heart to help the Mongols, only he was convinced that Communism would deliver liberation to Mongols, and he made the fatal mistake of allying with the Chinese Communist Party. When he realised the problem, he was already on the pirate boat, he could not get off, but had to carry on.¹⁷ Such charitable attitude is abundant; as another Mongol would say, no matter how expert he was in nationality affairs, Ulanhu was extremely ignorant of the Chinese mentality, although he thought he understood them from his life experience. These remarks are from eastern Mongolian intellectuals, who have every reason to say something opposite. But no doubt that they see Ulanhu not so much as a deliberate traitor, but as a victim of his own internationalist enthusiasm. The blame is therefore on the Chinese side, who cheated Ulanhu, who was sincere, typical of a Mongol.

This vision of Ulanhu as a victim thus opens wide room for giving Ulanhu enormous respect, as indeed, it also reminds Mongols of their own experiences with the Chinese. The remembrance of a leader, especially in a mourning situation amongst the Chinese, writes Watson (1994), usually reflects their own suffering. The injustice Mongols feel done to them may also be reflected through the highest Mongol leader.

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

One important story about him concerns how he insulted Wang Zhen. Wang, as the minister of the Agricultural Reclamation Ministry, turned a large piece of

Mongol pastureland in Hulunbuir into agricultural fields in the early 1960s. It is said that Ulanhu became extremely angry when Mongols complained to him. He then went to Hulunbuir and ordered Mongol herders to let in horses to eat up all the crops, thus spoiling the scheme.

Another story tells about a famous Mongol singer in Beijing who was somewhat discriminated against by the Han director of the Central Nationalities Singing and Dancing Ensemble. One day she went to see Ulanhu to ask if he could do something to help her. After a few days, on an occasion at a meeting of the Nationality Affairs Committee, Ulanhu said to the minister in his typical Tumed Chinese dialect: 'Hey, I heard X is a bastard, bullying our poor Y (the singer), can you do something about it?' As the story goes, after a while the director was sacked.

Another story I feel important and known by many suggests a sense of despair shown by Ulanhu. According to this story, Ulanhu did not want to be in Beijing. The motif in this genre is that of a caged tiger, hopelessly crippled, and yet always thinking of going back to Inner Mongolia. Some Mongols would say that he was disappointed at how Inner Mongolia had developed, and worried at the prospect. Deng Xiaoping in this story is an uncompromising hardliner. On the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ulanhu managed to return to visit Inner Mongolia, but only after a tough negotiation with Deng. Deng eventually allowed him to go, but not without various preconditions: first, he must praise what he's seen, and second, not to incite any trouble. Perhaps the most moving part may be that of Ulanhu going to pay homage to Chinggis Khan. His pilgrimage was not on the agenda. Ulanhu had again talked to Deng, who permitted him two hours there. Before Chinggis Khan's shrine, Ulanhu was said to have bitterly wailed. So did many Mongols present. He stayed more than four hours before being finally pushed by his security guards on to the helicopter, then never to return to Inner Mongolia. It is said that after wailing, the old man of 81 stood up and murmured, 'still nationalities amity is good'.

These stories portray a Ulanhu, a kind old Mongol, kidnapped by the Centre. But Mongols and Ulanhu wailing together in front of Chinggis Khan's shrine somewhat ties their fate together through Chinggis Khan, the ultimate symbol of the Mongol people. That Ulanhu worshipped Chinggis Khan is not entirely new. As early as 1939, he was involved in removing the Chinggis Khan shrine from Ordos, when the Japanese attempted to snatch it. In 1946, he raised the slogan 'Descendants of Chinggis Khan, Unite!' as a war cry to inspire Mongols to fight for the autonomy of Inner Mongolia. In 1954, he officially arranged to bring back the shrine from exile and ordered a three-domed mausoleum be built to house the shrine. On that occasion, he personally officiated at the Chinggis ceremony, as he did again in 1962. According to the charges during the Cultural Revolution, Ulanhu 'smeared himself as Chinggis Khan'. From his point of view, we may guess that he always identified himself with Chinggis Khan. His crying before Chinggis Khan was perhaps a symbolic gesture that he thought he failed, but also a message that he tried his best, following Chinggis Khan's steps.

We do not know what he himself thought, but his cry before Chinggis is interpreted by Mongols as repentance before a supreme Mongol ancestor.

Humphrey (1997) distinguishes two types of morality, those based on exemplars and rules. She suggests that unlike the predominantly rule-based European morality, Asian or particularly Mongolian morality is constructed mainly in the discourse of exemplars. In such a society there is no absolute wrong or right. Indeed morality is hierarchical, rather than horizontal and universal. The exemplar morality allows for individual difference and social hierarchy. In Mongolia, everybody, at some point in their life, should have a teacher. 'The teacher is someone who advanced and improved himself or herself in relation to some moral principle, such as "bravery", "purity of thought" or "compassion".' In our case, Ulanhu might be regarded as a political exemplar by the Chinese in order that people learn and conform to the political message. Mongol perception of exemplar can be multi-dimensional. According to Humphrey, exemplars themselves usually do not have control over what teaching their disciples would learn from them; it is the job of the disciple to make certain points as exemplary in his own moral construction. This insight might help us to understand how Mongols make sense of Ulanhu. For Mongols, Ulanhu embodies numerous messages, contrary to the simple model of patriotism that Centre wishes Mongols to learn from him. To say the least, Ulanhu is seen as a quintessential exemplar *not* to trust the promises of the CCP. Mongols try hard to figure what his 'teaching' of 'nationalities amity' mean; they believe, being a great and clever man, Ulanhu must have a hidden message in his words. The hidden message, if it is hidden at all, is expounded by a Mongol scholar in an article which won a prize recently. He argued that Ulanhu had advocated not only inter-nationalities amity, but also intra-nationality amity. His exposition is worth quoting at length:

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

Conclusion: power of the weak and state hegemony

Many scholars now pay particular attention to the role of the state in categorization and colonization. The state in a number of ways affixes certain categories to people, forming what Yang (1989) calls 'contours of power'. Ulanhu's autonomy law serves a similar function, which legitimates certain power claims by Mongols, the lack of which can be officially protested, ideally legally. The enormous attention given to the autonomy law by Ulanhu may suggest that Ulanhu understood that autonomy can only be guaranteed by law. However, the legalization of the autonomous status curiously contradicts the overall objective of the Chinese socialist state, which sees class, nationality and autonomy as developmental. In the case of autonomy, the granting of such status is only a concession, awaiting an opportunity when the status be revoked so that full integration into the nation be achieved. We can perhaps see a direct conflict between this legalized and objectified nationality category and the more developmental category of *Zhonghua Minzu* (Chinese Nation), most recently advocated by the famous anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1989). The appeal of this popular category is such that it has become almost official. To challenge this category is nothing other than committing treason against China. However, there is another weapon left for the minorities, especially the Mongols, i.e. law of autonomy. Gladney writes: 'Not only has the state colonised its subject peoples, but by exerting classificatory control over national and religious identities, it has sought to control the ways that people conceive of themselves and act vis-à-vis the state. The protest over "China's Salman Rushdie", however, evidences effective ways in which some people have turned these designated identities against the state into a legal form of resistance' (1994, p 255).

By the same token, and along the line of James Scott's public transcript, I suggest that Mongol officials are now successfully appropriating Ulanhu and his complete set of ideas in order to resist further incursion into rights which are seen rightfully theirs. Significantly for the Mongols, Ulanhu is not only the engineer of that objectifying machinery, but also part of the machinery, i.e. the state. If he is really recognized as a state leader, as having once been China's vice-president, if the law he engineered is recognized as legitimate and binding, there is no reason (people say) why he should not be granted the greatest respect by Mongolian officialdom. Mongols are most emphatic that Ulanhu is 'patriotic' for China, thus firmly establishing a base against which the Chinese cannot pick any fault.

This shows that Ulanhu has become an institution upon which people can rely and which they can use to bargain with the state. What is interesting is that Mongols now, especially students, often raise Chinggis Khan's portrait and demand rights once actually exercised by Ulanhu in Inner Mongolia! In terms of generations of leaders, with the ever greater decline of the Mongols' ethnic rights in Inner Mongolia, people do miss Ulanhu: if he were alive, they say, Inner Mongolia would be different. Only he could stand up to the Chinese. Here, Mongols have started to appropriate him as one of their ethnic leaders, along

with Chinggis Khan. Both Chinggis Khan and Ulanhu, however, have also been appropriated by the Chinese state as its national heroes.¹⁸ Both are legitimate. *So I argue that the Chinese state now has the defining power, forcing Mongols to bargain or negotiate with the state through a medium sanctioned by the state.* Let us come back to the mausoleum. I see this monument as essentially a construction of social reality, in a fast changing society. Crucially, in this border region, Ulanhu provides a contradictory reference, *both* legitimating the state's penetration and consolidation of the frontier, exercising direct power, *and* the Mongols' resistance to further incursion to their autonomy.

In this light, what Mongols in China have aspired to build is perhaps a new type of society in which all groups in society are able to pursue their interests 'within the domain organized by the state, through political struggles focused on legal categories' (Asad, 1992). Such struggles cannot always be pursued successfully, but in our case of Ulanhu, Mongols do attempt to secure their rights 'legally' even in such an authoritarian state as China.

Notes and References

1. Until 1966, Ulanhu was an alternate member of the Politburo of the CCP, vice-premier of the State Council, commissioner for the State Nationalities Affairs Committee; second secretary of the CCP North China Bureau, first secretary of the Party Committee of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR), chairman of the IMAR people's government, commander and political commissar of the Inner Mongolian Military Zone, and principal of the University of Inner Mongolia.
2. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, due to the Sino-Soviet-Mongolian rift, Mao suspected that Inner Mongolia led by Ulanhu was about to declare independence. Ulanhu was denounced in 1966, and a witch-hunt of Mongolian nationalists was launched by the Chinese government, a movement that almost hit the entire Mongol population in Inner Mongolia. There were three cases: the 'Ulanhu anti-party treason clique', the 'February counter current in Inner Mongolia', and the 'New Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party'. In a report to the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, Zhou Hui, the Party Secretary of Inner Mongolia, admitted that 'Throughout the region, 790,000 people were directly incarcerated, struggled against, or kept incommunicado under investigation mainly as a result of these three cases. Of these, 22,900 people had died and 120,000 were crippled.' (Asia Watch, 1991, p 29). Mongols would say that the actual figure could be much higher. The population of Mongols at the time was less than two million.
3. The decree of the Centre is carefully displayed in the mausoleum. It reads: '12 June 1992: Central Propaganda Department: [We] in principle agree that a small scale (*xiao xing*) mausoleum can be built for Comrade Ulanhu. [We] suggest that the scale should be commensurate wording to the principle of frugality and modesty. The cost should be borne by the autonomous region. Office of the Chinese Communist Party.'
4. The mausoleum was officially opened on 23 December 1992. The size of the building is 2,100 square metres. The Chinggis Temple in Ulaanhot covers 822 square metres, while the Chinggis Khan mausoleum in Ordos is 1,500 square metres.
5. These are 8 March International Women's Day, 1 June Children Day, 1 August PLA Day, etc.
6. *Wulanfu Yanjiu* No 2, 1993, p 48.
7. Cf. Tomoche (1996) for a discussion of the loyalty of Chinese officials in minority regions to the Central government.
8. Buhe, after retiring from his post as the chairman of Inner Mongolian autonomous region in 1993, was 'promoted' to become a vice-chairman of the People's Congress, a post his father Ulanhu held until his death. Since his departure, most of the Tumed Mongol elite, especially those bearing the same surname 'Yun' in the upper echelon have been removed from power, making room for eastern Mongols and Chinese officials.
9. It seems the Chinese state has given up its position of 'Great Family of Nationalities'. One would assume such a notion to be loaded with the Confucianist idea of the family wherein minorities would not be seen as enemies but as occasionally disobedient younger brothers who must be educated and brought into line

(I am grateful to David Sneath for reminding me of this Chinese model). This benign model no longer exists (cf. Tomoche, 1996). Jiang Zemin in a report on minorities areas in 1990 suggested: 'We may consider using such phrases domestically as the "Chinese nation", "sons and daughters of China", so as to better appeal to the minorities' (Asia Watch, 1992, p 18).

10. Charges against Ulanhu's dynastic rule were made as early as during the Cultural Revolution. He was criticized for promoting his wife to an important position, and allowing his children to enjoy privileges. However, the Yun family rule of Inner Mongolia started only in the early 1980s. Buhe, his eldest son, who is also a Communist veteran trained in Yenan, became the chairman of the Inner Mongolian autonomous region in 1982, in the aftermath of the Mongol students' movement. Some Mongols opposing the Yun family would say that this is a Chinese trick of using one faction against another. Eastern Mongol officials in the Inner Mongolian government were relatively few during this period. The domination of the Yun Mongols is derided in numerous stories. One story tells that when one person went to the Inner Mongolian government building and shouted, 'Lao [senior] Yun!', almost half of the office windows were opened. Realizing his mistake, the person shouted, 'Xiao [junior] Yun!', the other half of the windows were opened. A similar story would tell that there were so many Yun Mongols going to attend Ulanhu's funeral that it became very difficult to buy tickets. For the Chinese criticism of Ulanhu's family rule in Inner Mongolia during the 1980s, see Ho Pin & Gao Xin (1992).
11. Ulanhu was brought up speaking only Chinese. He learned to speak and write Russian when studying in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. However, he had never managed to master Mongolian, although he made some efforts. His attempt to speak Mongolian on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region is often interpreted by Mongols as him showing a nationalistic sentiment and closing gaps with his Mongol compatriots.
12. Ōljii is known as a hand-picked sycophant. A story goes that after Buhe was kicked upstairs in Beijing in 1993, the CPC wanted to appoint a new chairman. It is said that Li Peng, the Chinese premier, asked a Chinese adviser (*gu wen*) from Inner Mongolia to recommend a Mongol who's docile and honest. Ōljii, the then governor of Hulun Buir League, was recommended to him. Mongols at that time had some hope for him, but he turned out to be completely deferential to the central government, failing to be able to defend not only Mongolian, but also the local economic interest.
13. Ulanhu wrote a long article in July 1981 expounding on the necessity of autonomy for ethnic minorities. The article was published in the *People's Daily*. However, it was rumoured that Deng Yinchao, wife of the famous Zhou Enlai, was enraged when she read the article, and shouted, 'What do you call it apart from advocating independence?' The circulation of the story amongst Mongols indicates that Ulanhu's modest achievement was not without meeting opposition from hardliners. The sympathetic tone towards autonomy in his article might have encouraged Mongol students and intellectuals to stage one month demonstration to oppose Document No 28 issued by the Central Committee of the CCP on August 5, 1981. The document instructed that no restraining measures be taken to stop Han Chinese immigrants into Inner Mongolia, and also demanded that local officials be elected in accordance with population ratio in Inner Mongolia. In the autumn of 1981, during the Mongol students' month-long demonstration, Mongol students made several demands, most of which referred to Ulanhu's ideas. They have already become the Mongol vision of what a better Inner Mongolia should be: (1) save our motherland; (2) stop the immigration of Han; (3) promote the minority population interest by increasing the quota of minority students from 25 per cent to 90 per cent; (4) increase the proportion of Mongolian officials; (5) in the future Han experts should be allowed only for a short time into Inner Mongolia; afterwards they should leave; (6) the Party Secretary and the regional commander must be Mongolian; (7) return to Ulanhu's policy of promoting livestock first (quoted in Jankiwak, 1988, p 280). It should be pointed that the students used Ulanhu as exemplar (see below) in working out their slogans and strategies.
14. Sine Lama and Gaada Meiren opposed Chinese land reclamation in Inner Mongolia early this century. They organized armed resistance to oppose their banner princes selling Mongol pastureland to the Chinese warlords.
15. Catherine Bell (1992) sees ritualization as a 'strategic mode of practice' that 'produces nuanced relations of power, relationships characterized by acceptance and resistance, negotiated appropriation, and redemptive reinterpretation of the hegemonic order' (p 196).
16. Mongols, especially the eastern Mongols, were deeply suspicious of Ulanhu's ethnic identity in the 1940s. As he was called Yun Ze and assumed the title Chairman of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement Association, he was rumoured to be a Chinese agent disguised as a 'reincarnation' of the Prince Yun, the chairman of the Mongolian Political Council, a political movement initiated by the famous Prince De.
17. These Mongols now understand, in the light of their researches, that there was no choice for Inner Mongols but to be incorporated into China, as the MPR and the Soviet Union refused to render any assistance to Inner Mongols in their desire to be independent. Once this is understood, I believe, the more they explore the circumstances Inner Mongolia was in at that time, the more appreciative Inner Mongols would become

towards Ulanhu's achievement. But some 'democratic' Mongols now start to blame Communist Mongols for choosing Communism in the first place. However, I would think that for Mongols at that time, to become Communists was not a conversion to an ideology, but a strategy to deliver liberation to the Mongols. Their model was the Mongolian People's Republic and the Soviet Union. To achieve 'liberation', they had to become Communist.

18. However, it must be stressed, there is a fundamental difference between Chinggis Khan and Ulanhu. Chinggis Khan is an identity-giver. His worship is religious-cum-nationalistic, whereas Mongol respect of Ulanhu, as this paper shows, is not a celebration of their identity, but a weapon to deal with the Chinese. He is thus a reference, from now on, for every Mongol leader to be compared with. One may raise such a question: would a new Mongol leader be able to stand firm and be reckoned with by the Chinese central government? But perhaps such questions are impossible to answer, as Ulanhu's status was contingent on his earlier Communist career, intimate links with the Soviet Union and Mongolia. With these factors gone, it is doubtful any Mongols would achieve such significance within the Chinese polity.

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