**Egshiglen Batjargal**

**End of Summer Report**

**FURSCA 2023**

**Ethnic Identity of Inner Mongolians in China**

**National Library of Mongolia**

1. Chuluundorj, Munkhbayar. *The Miracle of Nationalism* (Ulaanbaatar: Altan-Erdenii Nom NGO, 2013).
2. Mend, Zenee. *Southern Mongolia: Yesterday and Today* (Academy of Sciences of the Mongolian People’s Republic, 1990).
3. Mend, Zenee. *Southern Mongolian Folklore,* (Academy of Sciences of the Mongolian People’s Republic, 1981).
4. Lhamjav, Borjigon. *Red Revolution,* (Let Mongolians help Mongolians NGO, 2017).

**Songs (Youtube)**

1. Tulgatan Band (Inner Mongolia). “Mongol.” Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS5etiP6IjQ>
2. Mongolian Hip Hop Artists. “Toonot.” Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke9F7DUTEbM>
3. Inner Mongolian women cover. “Setgeliin Bulag.” Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDQgmqzOZPo>
4. Sumenhuar, C-Family, Nasnaa, and Mungunhuyag.   
   “Like a picture.” Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiAiL_h7TmI>
5. Sumenhuar. “Daraa Urtuu.” Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke9F7DUTEbM>

**Academic Sources**

1. Bulag, Uradyn E. “Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China.” *American Anthropologist* 105, no. 4 (2003): 753–63. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3567140>.
2. Bulag, Uradyn E. “Inner Mongolia: The Dialectics of Colonization and Ethnicity Building.” In *Governing China’s Multiethnic Frontiers*, edited by Morris Rossabi, 84–116. University of Washington Press, 2004. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbtzm7t.7>.

**U.S. Government sources, news articles, and blogs [separate the category]**

1. “Pan-Mongolism: What is it and Why Do We Need it?” 2018. Macongolia: Observations of Mongolia. <https://macongolia.com/2018/07/05/pan-mongolism-what-is-it-and-why-do-we-need-it/>.
2. “Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center.” 2022. Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center. <https://www.smhric.org/news_705.htm>.
3. “UNPO: Southern Mongolia.” 2008. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. <https://unpo.org/members/7883>.

**Chuluundorj, Munkhbayar. *The Miracle of Nationalism* (Ulaanbaatar: Altan-Erdenii Nom NGO, 2013).**

* Defined Nationalism as the ways and means of making all Mongolians happy. Therefore, the author considered nationalism a miracle and a savior.
* Southern Mongolia comprises Barga Mongolia, Torghud Mongolia, Upper Mongolia (page 48).

The rights of the Southern Mongolians are seriously violated today, and they are already among the worst minority nations in the world. In Inner Mongolia Autonomous Regions, Mongolians will occupy only ten percent of the population, so many Han people from China will come and sit aggressively (page 46).

* Southern Mongolians are being taken away from their land and forced to settle in Chinese cities, turning them into beggars, vagrants, and lawbreakers who cannot live.
* Their language and culture are being discriminated against, and the Mongolian people are being assimilated and destroyed.
* Their natural resources are being plundered and their pastures are being burned. Disobedient people are suppressed by imprisonment, torture and killing.

The book included three interviews:

1. With G. Rubin, Chairman of the Freedom and Federation of Mongolia, on 2010.09.17
2. With D. Murun, a true patriot, in 1992.
3. The author, Ch. Munkhbayar, participated in a round table meeting of nationalists and discussed the current situation and prospects of Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian region in 2010.07.02.

For the first interview with G. Rubin, the author asked questions regarding the party *Freedom and Federation of Mongolia.* For example, the mission of the party, why and how it was formed, and elaborated on the vision of the party of making Southern Mongolia as an independent state (pages 60-63). For the second interview with D. Murun, the author questioned whether the organization he is part of protects the interests of students in Inner Mongolia, the logistics of the organization, the symbol, and the political climate of the IMAR (pages 63-70). Lastly, the author, Ch. Munkhbayar, participated in a round table meeting of nationalists and discussed the current situation and prospects of Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian region. As such, the questions included what is happening in Inner Mongolia and the increase of refugees to abroad, such as America, from Inner Mongolia (pages 70-80).

As the book used interviews, it gave me a very good insight of how Southern Mongolians feel towards China, what actions the ethnic Mongolians in China are doing to preserve their identity, and their tendencies for future vision on Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. However, as the book was written by a Mongolian politician, Ch. Munkhbayar, who was a strong advocate for the rights of Southern Mongolians, the book was too political as it had a strong anti-Chinese sentiment.

**Mend, Zenee. *Southern Mongolia: Yesterday and Today* (Academy of Sciences of the Mongolian People’s Republic, 1990).**

The author noted that since the 1980s, China's foreign and domestic policies have undergone significant changes, the face of the country has changed, the people's thinking, appearance, and food supply have improved significantly.

China has begun to value the exchange of language with its neighboring countries.

* Many positive steps have been taken in the relations between Mongolia and China, and now it has already started to enter the path of effective relations.
  + The border issue occupies a central place in the relations between Mongolia and China. Now the border issue between the two countries is calm, and our border is starting to become a border of peace, a border of trade and a border of friendship.

Most importantly, the author noted that Inner Mongolians started to occupy a key position in the relations between Mongolia and China during the founding period of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (Page 157).

The author stated that “due to the Mongolian nation in the People's Republic of China and the Inner Mongolians in the People's Republic of China are one ethnic group, they are fragments of flesh, fragments of bones, and drops of blood.”

* From this, the author explains how when the relations between the two countries improve, Mongolians in both countries are happy, and when it deteriorates, they are the ones who are oppressed.

There is a Mongolian folk proverb that says,

"*The backbone of the state is the peace of the people*."

* Author noted how from his experience that only ordinary people and people who care about their country are repressed in chaos if the relation between the two countries deteriorates. As such,the author wants both countries to understand each other thoroughly so that people can be happy, free, peaceful and well-being.

The book was written in 1990 to examine the relations between Mongolia and China and how international relations impact the ethnic identity of both Mongolians and Southern Mongolians in China. In addition, the author emphasized the importance of the improvement of relations between Mongolia and China as it would result in a positive impact on the economic and social status of both. However, the book had its limitations as it was an advocacy of pro-China policy which is alarming as it would lead to loss of ethnic identity.

**Mend, Zenee. *Southern Mongolian Folklore,* (Academy of Sciences of the Mongolian People’s Republic, 1981).**

The author notes, “*it is obvious that the people of the country have resisted domestic and foreign oppression in many ways*” (Page 3).

* As such, the author emphasizes the importance of oral literature as a powerful weapon in the history of people’s struggle in many periods of social development.

The struggle of the people of any country for freedom, independence, and social progress for many generations is reflected in the oral literature created by the people of that country more deeply and widely than in other forms of folk art. By highlighting the various ways in which people have resisted oppression, the author underscores the significance of their collective struggle.

“As oral literature is the pure creation of the entire people, it has an ancient historical tradition and unique characteristics that have been spread through word of mouth regardless of regions or borders” (Page 4).

* These quotes constantly emphasize the power of folklore and literature, particularly oral literature, as essential vehicles for expressing the struggles, hopes, and dreams of a ethnic Mongolians in China. This is because folklore is a medium where people had the freedom to express their feelings without being involved politically.

Moreover, it is important how Southern Mongolian’s folk songs and oral texts are widely distributed in Mongolia.

**Lhamjav, Borjigon. *Red Revolution,* (Let Mongolians Help Mongolians NGO, 2017).**

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR) conjures a romantic image of a steppe land filled with nomads. However, in reality, in the first half of the 20th century, there were already more Mongols engaged in agriculture than in herding, and Chinese settlers outnumbered the Mongols by four to one.

This was supported by the statistics of how the population of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was 24.1 million by May 2023, and the ethnic composition was that Han Chinese were 78.7% and Mongols were 17.7% and others were 3.6%. As such, the mainstream Chinese, Han Chinese, constitute the bulk of the population, and the largest minority population is Mongolians even while they have formal autonomy under their name.

**Tulgatan Band (Inner Mongolia). “Mongol.” Youtube.** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS5etiP6IjQ**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS5etiP6IjQ)

The band name is Tulgatan Band (*Тулгатан Монгол*), meaning United Band, and they are from Inner Mongolia now performing in Mongolia. The song title is “Mongol” (*Өвөр Монгол*). The fact that they say they are from Inner Mongolia, shows the importance of the ethnic identity of the band, emphasizing that they are Mongolians even though they lived in China. There’s a resemblance in their music style and lyrics to an existing popular Mongolian band, Hurd.

“*Mongols, a descendant of great destiny*

*Cannot be extinguished, sky-high Mongols*

*Eternal Mongols*”

The comments for the song included how people became more courageous and increased the hope that Mongolians in the future will be united together (only to the Tulgatan Band, Hurd would not sing about it).

The video clip emphasized on the nature of Inner Mongolia.

* Landscape
* Physical - Traditional clothes, Yurt (Ger)
* Cultural

**Mongolian Hip Hop Artists. “Toonot.” Youtube.** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke9F7DUTEbM**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke9F7DUTEbM)

Directed by the Global Society of Mongols and published on March 10, 2018.

*"The look is Mongol, the blood is Mongol,*

*The soul is Mongol, wherever you are we are all Mongol!”*

* The description of the video provides a reminder that wherever you are, you are still Mongolian and that the community will welcome you with open arms. This is important as ethnic Mongolians not simply reside in Mongolia, but include both China and Russia. As such the chorus of the song highlights it:

The chorus of the song calls for Byriats, Inner Mongolians, Kalmyks, Tuvans and Hazara Mongols – all Mongols to come together. These ethnicities that are called out reside in countries that are not Mongolia proper.

* This song has a great significance as it aims to bring the important perspective of Pan-Mongolism, an irredentist idea that advocates cultural and political solidarity of Mongolians.
* The song features collaboration of well-known Mongolian and ethnic Mongolian hip hop artists and rappers. Advocated for the unification of all Mongolians.

In addition, it features the Mongolian natural beauty, landscape, traditional clothes, ger (yurt), traditional animals of Mongolians, Morin khuur (traditional horse headed instrument).

**Inner Mongolian women cover. “Setgeliin Bulag.” Youtube.** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDQgmqzOZPo**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDQgmqzOZPo)

* Published the cover in March 2023.
* The song “Setgeliin bulag” is a well known Mongolian song.
* The importance of this cover is that the video shows the original video, the video of women singing along, and the lyrics in mongolian script. This is important as Mongolian songs do not have mongolian script as the lyrics, but rather use the cyrillics.

**Sumenhuar, C-Family, Nasnaa, and Mungunhuyag.   
“Like a picture.” Youtube.** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiAiL\_h7Tm**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiAiL_h7TmI)

* *“My birthplace is like a picture*

*As if inviting me with the open blue khadag*

*As if a lot of people coming intentionally*

*As if the world awakened through our voice*

*Three months of summer of fast driving through the countryside*

*So leave your sadness, and wake up*

*The red sun rising from the top of the mountains*

*Go out and touch it, and follow me*.

* Six artists all were dressed in traditional clothes and the video was set in nature.
* Featured the collaboration of ethnic Mongolian women and Mongolian men.

**Sumenhuar. “Daraa Urtuu.” Youtube.** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke9F7DUTEbM**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke9F7DUTEbM)

* The song written and sung by Sumenhuar, who is from Inner Mongolia became well known in Mongolia through her this song which was published a month ago.
* The artist is well known through her cover of Western songs and with her skill of fluency of being able to speak every dialect of Inner Mongolia. Even with her cover of Western songs, she represents the Mongolian culture with her clothes by wearing the traditional clothes and jewelry.

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**SMHRIC: “A Testimony Southern Mongolian Dissident Writer Lhamjav Borjigin”**

**March 27, 2023**

1. Lhamjav Borjigin was sentenced to two years prison term followed by indefinite surveillance due to his book, China’s Cultural Revolution published.

“*People like myself - branded as undesirable and blacklisted as reactionary - are under the authorities’ strict control, monitored and followed around the clock. Reports several times a day, no matter where they go, they are followed.”*

*“All Southern Mongolians are treated as targets for cleansing and extermination. What they [the Chinese authorities] want is our land and territory. As a people, we are considered nonexistent.*”

China’s advantage of COVID for the Southern Mongolian

* People like Lkhamjav Borjigan, authors, were not allowed to meet with others like him.
* During the lockdown, a total of four doses of the vaccine were forced on each and every one of Southern Mongolians.
* Sunid Right Banner - the Chinese government issued a sack of flour or a bottle of milk to elderly citizens who agreed to be vaccinated, or given 500 yuan.
* The negative effects of the vaccine are well known, but the discussion of these side-effects were not allowed. “It is a fact that many people have died as a result of the vaccine. Discussion of these deaths is also strictly forbidden.”
* “In cities, dispatchers in white hazmat suits walked door to door, forcefully vaccinating residents. In some cases, they even broke into people’s homes in order to administer the vaccine.”
* Some of Lhamjav’s acquaintances who were vaccinated either died or fell victim to worsening conditions.

**Bulag, Uradyn E. “Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China.” *American Anthropologist* 105, no. 4 (2003): 753–63.** [**http://www.jstor.org/stable/3567140**](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3567140)**.**

Even in the pastoral areas, the ethnic Mongolians in China received their education in Chinese, as Mongol education programs were eliminated or reduced.

* The Mongolizing project failed to prepare Mongol students to face the new challenges ahead. Teaching Mongolian language instead of Chinese made students “dependent” on Chinese society more than ever; it made them largely “nonproductive” economically, politically, and even socially incompetent citizens in a Chinese-dominated society (Page 754).
* Rather than becoming a cultural and political elite in the multiethnic Inner Mongolian society as a whole, these newly urbanized Mongols educated in Mongol schools became elite *only* vis-à-vis Mongol pastoralists and peasant villagers.
* Not surprisingly, it is the cultural “victims,” or those who have received Chinese education, who have better adapted to the wider society, and some have become highly successful.
  + The success the author of the paper achieved through Chinese education haunted him, as it alienated him from his own cultural heritage.

As China’s cultural nationalistic sentiment developed in opposition to communist control in a movement, dubbed “cultural fever,” that actively questioned the reason for China’s backwardness, Mongol intellectuals and students scrutinized their culture and survival conditions.

* The author considered how one of his achievements of that time was to reattach himself to Mongolian language.
* Through self-education during his university years at Cambridge University,
* There are hardly any work units in which Mongolian language knowledge is required or even useful, because almost all jobs are controlled by Chinese, so the university-level knowledge of Mongolian is no different from illiteracy.
* People considered Mongolian education background as a tragedy.

“Under this tremendous Chinese economic and political pressure, a pressure derived from the history of colonization and ethnic division of labor, one finds that many Mongol-speaking Mongols are forced to “collaborate in the destruction of their instruments of expression.”

* As many Mongols would now say, only by shedding the burden of Mongolian language and by mastering the language of the dominant is there a chance to survive in Inner Mongolia.
* They have little patience for any argument favoring retention of the Mongolian language bilingual or trilingual along with Chinese plus a foreign language. Instead, they often advocate learning English to outperform the Chinese.

(+) Tumed Mongolizing project (early 20th century) - revival of the Mongolian language. (page 755)

* During the Cultural Revolution years, 1966-1976, Mongolian instruction was largely abolished. A new attempt to provide a Mongol education began in September 1979.
  + During the Cultural Revolution, the schools have lost students to Chinese schools. Nevertheless, the project continues to receive support from some Mongol intellectuals and cadres, “who supported the establishment of the school and invested much emotional capital with political metaphors.”
* As a means to create a small utopian community cut off from the polluting social world, the Mongolizing educational enterprise of *fengbi shi jiaoyu* (closed door education) has turned out many pure Mongol-speaking Tumed Mongols.
* The Turned banner education bureau set up an experimental kindergarten at Nationality Primary School at Bagshi Commune, recruiting 59 six-year-olds who were taught everything from mathematics to history in Mongolian.
* But all of these Tumed emerged with inadequate Chinese language skills and were therefore deprived of the vital social ability they needed to succeed in the wider Inner Mongolian society that is dominated by Chinese in all sectors.

The linguistic anxiety displayed by Mongols occurred nowhere and at no time other than precisely after they had built an autonomous region, a political and territorial institution. The IMAR, founded in 1947, was to be an ethnic safe haven in which Mongols would no longer be subject to Chinese discrimination and persecution as they had been between 1912 and 1947.

However, the “autonomy” failed to reproduce Mongols culturally or linguistically.

Some developments during the Qing dynasty, 1644-1911, did not prepare Inner Mongols well to cope with eventual Chinese colonization. This is because the Qing court deliberately segregated Mongol tribal groups from each other as part of its divide-and-rule policy to prevent the emergence of a unified Mongol opposition; smaller groups became vulnerable linguistically when more Chinese settled among them.

* Mongols who settled, took up farming, and intermixed with Chinese settlers quickly lost their language and became Chinese speakers. When?

Only the Mongols in the shrinking pastoral areas, where Chinese penetration was lacking, continued to speak pure Mongolian.

The Mongolian language loss was thus in large part a product of Chinese settler colonization. (Comparison may be interesting.)

Inner Mongolian nationalism in the early 20th century developed in response to both this cultural loss and colonization. Therefore, it was those groups which had lost the language that became the most ardent nationalists or communist-cum-nationalists.

* Constitute the majority of contemporary Mongolian leaders and intellectuals.

**Communism meant fragmentation for the Mongol peoples. (page 757)**

* Mongolian People’s Republic (MPR) was closer to the “communist” hearth, should Inner Mongolia therefore look up primarily to the MPR, which was also closer in terms of kinship, or to the PRC?
  + The Soviet Union answered this question with its own divide-and-rule policy.
  + In an effort to curb a pan-mongolian sentiment, the Soviet Union resorted to nationality building among different Mongolian groups in the Soviet Union by Cyrillicizing their dialects, forcing them to abandon the classical Mongolian orthography, which had the potential linguistic power to unify all the Mongols.
    - Mongols in the MPR were forced to adopt a Cyrillic script based on the dialect of the Halh, the numerically dominant Mongol group, in the 1940s.
    - By the 1950s, only the Mongols in China still kept their classical script, although its use was as wide as hoped for.
* However, **Inner Mongols saw the MPR as a strong magnet, as they looked to it for guidance in culture and language.**

Halh-based Cyrillic script

The joint MPR and Inner Mongolian language unification committee formed after the project was banned in China.

* Chinese pinyin is taken as the basis instead.
* Cyrillic script delegitimize in 1962

China was determined to domesticate its own minorities.

Mongols in the countryside are the masses in China. (page 759)

Post-Cultural Revolution anti-Chinese language sentiment spurred enthusiasm throughout Inner Mongolia to revive Mongolian language use in public and in private.

**Mongols are the titular nationality of the IMAR, but they constitute an absolute minority even there - to say nothing of China as a whole. As a minority, they are subjected to the hegemonies of both the dominant Chinese state and socialist moral and political constructions of ethnicity.**

* Although socialism promised equality and national liberation, nationality was seen not as an end in itself but as a means toward achieving socialism, which in turn became indistinguishable from integration into the Chinese state.
* **However, once acquiring regional autonomy in the form of the IMAR, the Mongolian nationality turned itself into something akin to an “intentional community” - that is one that was not to be assimilated or melted away, but, rather, one meant to reproduce itself in order to enjoy longevity.**
  + **Put in this way, we can better appreciate the enormous tension between the minority Mongols and the majoritarian Chinese state, *the former fighting for rightful existence against any attempt by the state to force assimilation*. (page 760)**

The reasoning: Minorities are often forced by the Chinese government to turn against their collective interest and pursue individual survival strategies as China is a nationalizing regime with a strong sense of history. So it is bent on socially engineering its minorities to shed more of their particularistic cultural features and attain more of ethnic Chinese characteristics. (page 760)

In this new multicultural Inner Mongolia of China, in which “Chinese National Multiculturalists” show “racism with a distance,” domesticated Mongols can now choose to sing and dance as they please, even speak their language if they care. But they have lost the economic, social, and cultural preconditions, as well as the political powers that can meaningfully define the purpose and quality of their native speech.

**Gratitude**

I am sincerely grateful for the support that has made my research on the Ethnic Identity of Inner Mongolians in China possible. This summer has been enlightening, allowing me to explore the ethnic identity and the ways they have preserved their identity under the Chinese government. The generous encouragement and support from various individuals and organizations have been instrumental in the completion of my research.

First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Russell Bradshaw Endowed Research Fund for financial backing. Their belief in the importance of academic inquiry has enabled me to delve into the intricacies of Inner Mongolian ethnic identity, providing me with the necessary resources and opportunities to conduct meaningful research. A special thank you goes to my esteemed professor, Midori Yoshii, whose expertise and mentorship guided me through the complexities of my research topic. Professor Yoshii’s unwavering support and guidance were invaluable in shaping my academic exploration. I am also grateful to the FURSCA committee for recognizing the significance and offering their encouragement. Their support enabled me to conduct my research in Mongolia, giving me the invaluable opportunity to use the materials from the National Library of Mongolia.

I am humbled and thankful for the opportunities provided by the Russell Bradshaw Endowed Research Fund, Professor Midori Yoshii, and the FURSCA committee. Your support has not only enriched my academic growth but also contributed to a broader understanding of Mongolian culture and identity. Lastly, I plan to write my honors thesis by further developing my FURSCA research this summer and to present at Elkin R.Isaac Student Research Symposium.