

Mongolians after Socialism: Politics, Economy, Religion

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Chapter 18

The Mongolian National Revolution of 1911 and Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the Last Monarch of Mongolia

Batsaikhan Ookhnoi

Editor's introduction: : In this strongly researched contribution, Professor Batsaikhan Ookhnoi reconsiders the role of the 8th Jebtsundamba – in rough terms, the Mongolian equivalent of Tibet's Dalai Lama at the time – in engineering the national independence of Mongolia from the Chinese Qing Empire in 1911. The facts and interpretation of this event are particularly important since, as asserted in his description, it is “the most special historical event that has occurred in the lives of Mongols during the past three hundred years.” Given the heavily propagandized view of Mongolian history that was developed during the Stalinist and the longer socialist era in Mongolia – including demeaning and disparaging characterizations of the 8th Jebtsundamba and of Buddhism generally – such reconsiderations of Mongolian history are especially important and significant at the present time, that is, as the nation asserts its values and its history in relation to its course for the future.

In the present case, Professor Batsaikhan argues for the strategically intelligent, foresightful, and politically effective personal role of the 8th Jebtsundamba in engineering Mongolian independence, including the successful strategic managing of Mongolian relations with Russia, with China, and also internally vis-à-vis powerful Mongolian nobles and clans. Addressing the claims of alternative interpretations, Professor Batsaikhan cites a rich tapestry of primary historical accounts and, in the process, provides the basis for further important work on this and related important junctures and reinterpretations of Mongolian history.

Introduction

On December 1, 1911, the Mongols seceded from the Manchu Empire, declared their independence, and elevated the Bogdo (Holy) Jebtsundamba Khutuktu to the throne as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation.¹

Since 2007, Mongols have annually celebrated the 29th of December as the Day of our National Independence. This process was facilitated by the findings of many Mongolian and foreign scholars concerning the National Revolution of 1911. A more objective attitude has been taken toward historical studies than was the case during the socialist era, and a process of reviewing the recent ideologized historical past has begun in earnest. As part of this effort, I wish to recount here how Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu was described during the socialist years and the change of understanding with respect to him that has taken place during the post-socialist period.

Preconditions for the Mongolian National Revolution of 1911

Yaakov Shishmarev, a famous Russian diplomat who spent some 50 years of his life in Mongolia, noted in 1885 when writing about Mongols, “In case conditions are to be created for the Mongols to be united, the Khalkhas are certain to lead the movement. Many factors account for this. The most important one is that in Khalkha resides the reincarnation

¹ O. Batsaikhan, *Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the last king of Mongolia: life and legend*, revised second edition, Ulaanbaatar, 2011.

of Avid Jebtsundamba who all Mongols and Khalimags venerate.”²

The authority and reputation of the Khutuktu were huge in Mongolia even though he was Tibetan and had been found, as a reincarnated leader, not in Mongolia but in Tibet. As such, the Manchu Emperor had accorded him no titles or privileges. Because he was so influential, it was noted that “although he is not directly in charge, he can be instrumental not only in Mongolia but also for others beyond her.”³

Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu stated in 1909 in one of his decrees, “It is now time for us to think of how to promote Mongolia’s religion and statehood, protect our land, and live for the long term in peace and happiness. If we miss this time, we will have to suffer a great deal and will be unable to control our land, much less foregoing lives of happiness. If I do not remind you of this, in spite of my knowledge, there is no use for the Mongolian nation to have venerated my eight reincarnations. I, therefore, cannot but advise you. You, nobles

² Donesenie Russkogo konsula v Urge Shishmareva o polojyeni Mongolii (*Report of Shishmarev, Russian Consul in Urga on the situation of Mongolia*), iul 1885 – Sbornik geograficheskikh topograficheskikh i statisticheskikh materilov po Azii Voyenno-uchenogo komiteta Glavnogo Shtaba Vyip. 22, SPb. 8 1886, s. 154-160; Ocherki torgovykh i pogranychnykh otnoshenii s Mongoliei v period 1861-1886 gg i sovremennoe polozhenie strany. (*Essays on trade and border relations with Mongolia in 1861-1886 and contemporary situation in the country*) – Gosudarstvennyi arhiv Chitiskoi oblasti F.1 Lst.1, c.3292; Otchet o 25 letnei deyatelnosti Urginskogo konsulstva (*Report on 25 years of Activities of the Consulate in Khuree*), 1886; Edinarhova N.E., Russkii konsul v Mongolii (*Russian Consul in Mongolia*), Irkutsk, 2001.

³ State Archive of Chita province (Russia), F.1, Lst.1, c.32921, p.21.

and officials, think well concerning the way forward, and let me immediately know of your views and opinions.”⁴

Ample information is available concerning the secret meeting of Mongolian nobles in Khuree in July 1911. The United States Embassy in Peking informed its Government that the meeting was held in the Bogdo’s residence and that he chaired it.⁵ This indicates Bogdo’s involvement in the initiative.

Dobdanov, a Buryat who arrived at Khuree on 21 October, 1911, mentioned in a letter to V. Kotvich the following concerning the political situation in Mongolia: “The future of Khalkha’s life is now in the hands of the Bogdo Khaan only. But the Bogdo’s political vision has not been clear so far.”⁶

Dobdanov underscored when writing about the Bogdo that, “It is no coincidence for the Khutuktu to have been elevated to the throne as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation. He has in fact been so for many years. He had been working for years carefully and unswervingly to show the world that he was the Khaan of the Mongolian nation. The coup taken place was an outcome of Khutuktu’s wise policy and the effect of his political wisdom.”⁷

⁴ T. Tumurhuleg, *Naimdugaar Javzandamba hutagt yamar hun baiv*, Utga zohiol urlag, 1990 ony 4 dugeer saryn 6 (What kind of person the 8th Jebtsundamba Khutuktu was, Literature and Art, 6 April 1990).

⁵ R.Bold, *Mongolyn tusgaar togtnolyn talaarh ANU-yn uzel handлага, bair суuri, bodлого* (1910-1973) (United States Attitude, Position and Policy on Mongolia’s Independence) sedevt doktoryn dissartatsi, Ulaanbaatar, 2007, p.24.

⁶ V. Kotvichiin huviin arhivaas oldson *Mongolyn tuuhend holbogdoh зарим бичиг*, Судлан hevlүүлсэн akad.B.Shirendev, erhelsen akad. SH.Natsagdorj (*Some of V.Kotvich’s personal documents relating to the history of Mongollia*, Researched and published by B.Shirendev, edited by Acad. Sh. Natsagdorj). Ulaanbaatar, 1972, p.70.

⁷ Ibid, p. 92.

Dobdanov also noted in his letter to Kotvich that, “the Mongolian National Revolution was a blow to the Manchu authorities and aided, as such, the Chinese revolution. The Chinese should be grateful to the Mongols for that and should, at least, recognize their [favorable] situation that is now created.”⁸ This demonstrates the wider significance of the Mongolian National Revolution of 1911 and suggests the importance of deeper historical study with respect to it. It may be possible to view the Mongolian Revolution of 1911 as a factor in the process that led the Manchu authorities to understand that they had no means to oppose the Chinese Revolution that was then spreading throughout the Manchu territories, including the remotest areas, and which had become an overwhelming process.

The culmination of the Mongolian national revolution of 1911: The enthronement of Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation

A very interesting account of the ceremony of the Khan's enthronement was provided in ‘Obugun bicheechiin uguulel’⁹ (“Reminiscences of an Old Scribe”) by G. Navaannmjil, who had attended the event and described what he saw. He wrote, “The 9th day of the mid-winter month came. (We) rode on horseback to the yellow palace in the centre of Ikh Khuree. When (we) dismounted from (our) horses and walked towards its main large gate, there were so many people gathered that it was impossible to see where the crowd ended. Nobles, officials, khutukhus, and lamas in their official headwear, jackets, and

⁸ Ibid, p. 92.

⁹ G. Navaannamjil Ovgun bicheechiin uguulel (Reminiscences of an Old Clerk) Ulaanbaatar, State Printing House, 1956.

variegated deels (gowns) were lined up for the occasion. When the Bogdo and Tsagaan Dari (White Tara) came in solemn pomp, all those gathered kowtowed and became quiet. The Bogdo and his consort were sitting in a beautiful Russian four-wheel yellow carriage flying a golden flag. Eight attendants and lamas were carrying the carriage. Before it high-ranking lamas and escorts were marching in file. A few nobles in black and wearing swords in red scabbards were leading the group. Many armed guards in their fine uniforms were marching in file along the sides of the road. When the Bogdo and his consort walked past the central gate of the palace and into the gher-palace, all those high-ranking nobles and lamas followed them. Other nobles were waiting, standing in front of the state palace.”¹⁰

Bogdo and Ekh Dagina (“the Beauty”) wore expensive black fox-fur hats with diamond buttons of rank on top, colorful deels, and speckled sable-fur jackets. Escorted by nobles, soivon and donir, they were slowly walking on the yellow silk walk prepared for the occasion. Three ceremonial parasols – two with golden dragon designs and one adorned with peacock feathers – were held above them from behind. A donir and a nobleman in black, with a sword in a red scabbard, led the procession. The Bogdo and Ekh Dagina were supported by their arms by assistants and nobles. Bogdo and Ekh Dagina, after visiting the Ochirdara temple, proceeded to the state gher-palace. Many khutuktus, khans, vans, beel, beis, gung, zasag and tajj who were entitled to enter the palace, followed them.

Beis Puntsagtseren, a former Mongolian Minister in Khuree, came out with a rather long document and announced

¹⁰ Ibid.

loudly that a decree on distributing favors had been issued. All the laymen and lamas, officials and clerks became silent and kowtowed. Beis Puntsagtseren began reading the decree. But it was difficult to hear. With some efforts, I was able to make out, “The Bogdo was elevated as Bogdo, the sunshiny and myriad aged Khaan of the Mongolian nation and the Tsgaan Dari as the mother of the nation and the reigning title would be ‘elevated by many.’ And Ikh Khuree is to be called Niislel (Capital) Khuree. Thus Mongolia was established as a state and a great ceremony was held.”¹¹

L. Dendeu, a researcher of Manchu history, viewed Mongolia's independence of 1911 as “a remarkable exploit that led to Mongolia's secession from the Manchu, the protection of her national identity, and the establishment of an independent Government in Mongolia,” and he described these important events in his work.

Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuku as the leader of the Mongolian National Revolution of 1911

The eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba

Agvaanluvsanchoijinyamdanzanvanchigbalsambuu¹² was born in 1869 in Tibet in the family of Gonchigtseren, a well-off financial official of the Dalai Lama.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 182-185.

¹² L. Jamsran, *Shashin turiig khoslon barigch Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuku Khaan - Mongolchuudyn sergen mandaltyn ehen* (Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuku Khaan, Wielder of Power in both Religion and State - The Beginning of Mongols' Revival), Ulaanbaatar. 1992, pp. 158-184; S. Idshinnorov, G. Tserendorj, *Jebtsundamba Agvaanluvsanchoijinyamdanzanvanchigbalsambuu*, Unen, 16 June 1990.

He arrived at Khuree on the morning of September 30, 1874 and received a joyous welcome.¹³ The Khuree population doubled at the news of his pending arrival, and there were many nobles among them. Soon afterwards, in early October of the same year, the Khans and gungs of the four aimags of Khalkha gathered in Khuree, and a formal welcome was arranged for the eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu and his elevation to the Bogdo throne. The Manchu Emperor conferred on him the corresponding title and rank along with the golden diploma of entitlement and a golden seal.

Since the Bogdo stayed in Khuree permanently following his arrival, after being found in Tibet when he was five years old, his life was closely linked to the history of Mongolia. He arrived in Mongolia in a group with seven members of his family, including his father, mother, elder brothers and Luvsankhaidav, a younger brother.

The Bogdo was taught from early on in Tibetan and Mongolian writing, and concerning religious conventions and Eastern customs and traditions. Old people who remember him mention that his Mongolian was better than his Tibetan. He was the last Khaan of the Mongolian nation, was enthroned three times, and was the only one to receive the gavj (Lamaist high clerical degree) out of the eight Bogdos who led the Mongolian Lamaist church.

It is often mentioned that when influential Mongolian nobles, close to the Bogdo, such as Da Lama Tserenchimed and Chin Van Khanddorj, commander of Tusheet Khan league, confided in the Bogdo their views on making Mongolia an independent nation, he decreed to hold a meeting of all the

¹³ Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire, F., China desk 143, Lst. 491, No. 575, pp. 81-82.

khans, nobles, and high ranking lamas of the four Khalkha leagues during the Danshig offering to be performed by the leagues and Ikh Shabi in the summer of 1911, so that they could express their views on whether to accept or not the new policy course of the Manchu Government. The meeting has often been referred to as marking the beginning of the movement for Mongolia's national liberation.¹⁴ The proponents of such an approach view the Mongolian khans and nobles as the initiators of the national movement and Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu as their supporter. A deeper analysis of the historical situation provides a somewhat different view.

In the late 19th century, the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu sent his emissaries to Russia on a secret political mission.¹⁵ In June 1911, T. Namnansuren, the good nobleman, wrote a letter to the Bogdo to alert him against the risks and dangers of the new Manchu policy being enforced in Khalkha. Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, having reviewed the content of the letter, decreed to convene in July in Khuree a meeting of the khans, vans and noblemen the four aimags.¹⁶

The leading noblemen of the four leagues met in Khuree in the middle of 1911 and convened a meeting of noblemen, with each league and Shabi represented by four delegates to

¹⁴ S. Idshinnorov, G. Tserendorj, *Jebtsundamba Agvaanluvsanchojinnyamdanzanvanchigbalsambu*, Unen, 16 June 1990, No. 143.

¹⁵ O. Batsaikhan, *Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the Last King of Mongolia: Life and Legend*, revised second edition, Ulaanbaatar, 2011.

¹⁶ Z. Lonjid, *Bogd Gegeenten Oros ulsaas heden udaa tuslamj hussen be*, Mongol Ulsyn Ih surguuliin Niigmiin shinjleh uhaany surguuliin Erdem shinjilgeenii bicheg (How many times Bogdo Gegeen turned to Russia with request for assistance. Research papers of the School of Social Sciences, the Mongolian State University), Tuukh - 6, UB, 2007, p.70.

have the issue of “the need for Mongolia to be an independent state” –discussed as Bogdo had decreed a year earlier. But when Sando, the Manchu Amban in Khuree, became suspicious, the meeting was suspended. But it continued in the summer of 1911 under the pretext of performing a religious service for the benefit of the Bogdo.

The Khans, noblemen, officials and khutuktus and lamas of the four Khalkha leagues and many Shabis met in the summer of 1911 in the office of Khuree’s Erdene Shanzodba under the pretext of performing, by Bogdo’s decree, religious services. They discussed how to oppose to the ‘new Manchu policy course’ and restore Mongolia’s independence. Since it was difficult to reach a consensus decision by many participants who were not free from the persecution of the Manchu Amban, a secret meeting for consultation was arranged in a gher set up in the woods at the back of the Bogdo Mountain for those noblemen and khutuktus led by the khans of the Khalkha’s four leagues who were firmly opposed to the Manchu new policy, and who believed that it was a time for Mongolia to become independent in the interests of their nation, religion, state and land.

It was decided during the noblemen’s secret meeting to “send a special deputation to Great Russia, the northern neighbor, to kindly explain Mongolia’s situation and seek assistance. The foundation of the Qing Government had become weak and unstable, and it became impossible (for Mongolia) to bear foreign officials’ and ministers’ oppression, exploitation, and their complete disregard towards Mongols’ interests. Although it was necessary to become independent and protect Mongolia’s religion and land, it was very difficult to do so without foreign assistance” and to “appoint Chin Van Khanddorj, Da Lama Tserenchimed, and the official Khaisan as the deputation.”

The Mongolian delegation took a letter seeking assistance from Russia. It was signed jointly by the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu and the four Khalkha khans: Tusheet Khan Dashnyam, Zasagt Khan Sonomravdan, Setsen Khan Navaantseren and Sain Noen Namnansuren. Korostovets, a Russian minister in Peking, considered “the arrival in Russia’s territory of the Mongol envoys at their own initiative to be useful as a pretext for negotiations (with the Manchu authorities –O. Batsaikhan).” M. Tornovskii noted in this connection that, “The Venerable Bogdo, could successfully hold, over the heads of their enemies, businesslike negotiations with the Imperial Russian Government to get assistance for Mongolia. He managed to get the support of the noblemen who believed in the possibility of obtaining their freedom from the Chinese with Russian assistance.” He wrote that noblemen and lamas met in Khuree in June 1911 under the leadership of Bogdo the Venerable.

The political events that took place after the meeting held in Khuree during the Danshig offering for the benefit of the Bogdo in the summer of 1911, plus the noblemen’s secret meeting held in the Bogdo mountain, show that a provisional government was in effect established at the time in Mongolia. This institution was formalized and was named a General Provisional Administrative Office for the Affairs of Khalkha Khuree on 30 November 1911 – after the delegation that had gone to Russia and successfully completed their mission had returned to Khuree.

An important immediate objective of the Provisional Government was to restore and declare Mongolia’s independence. The Provisional Government issued on December 1, 1911, a Declaration proclaiming the end of the years of Manchu rule and the establishment of Mongolian independence as Sando was being expelled from Khuree.

A flag with Soyombo, a symbol of national liberation and independence, thus, began to fly in Ikh Khuree.

The Mongolian National Revolution, thus, broke out in the year of the boar and resulted in the elevation of Jebtsundamba Khutuktu to the throne as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation on the 9th day of the mid winter month or December 29, 1911. Obviously, the Bogdo's enthronement was aided by a number of factors. He, for one, was not only the religious leader of the Mongols. He could become, by then, the most popular statesman.

Mongols had long considered that the Bogdo's reincarnations were inevitably related to the Chinggis Khan's golden lineage – ever since the Lofty Enlightened Zanabazar, the first Bogdo Jebtsundamba, who was the son of Tusheet Khan, who was of the golden lineage. After his elevation as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation, Bogdo Jebtsundamba and Queen Ekh Dagina visited, on the first day of every Lunar New Year, the gher-palace of Avtai Sain Khaan, the father of the Tusheet Khan Gombodorj, and they set a fire in its hearth. This practice may have been meant to express the continuation of the stately tradition of Mongolia and was supported and followed by the sensitive and intelligent Bogdo Khaan under the impact of Chinggis Khan's descendents and other influential statesmen of Mongolia.

Bogdo's treatment in Mongolia's historical studies

After the demise of the Bogdo Khaan on May 24, 1924, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) decreed on June 3, 1924 that Mongolia become a Republic.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ardyn Erkh sonin 1924 ony 6 dugaar saryn 25 (Newspaper *The Right of the People*, 26 June 1924).

It is said in the volume “History of the Mongolian People’s Republic,”¹⁸ Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, leader of the Mongolian Yellow faith was elevated as the Khaan of the Mongols and became the wielder of power both in the church and the state. The demise of the Enlightened Bogdo provided a convenient pretext for establishing Mongolia as a Republic.”¹⁹ But this did not provide any conclusion. It did, however, entail numerous references to the Bogdo’s Government or references to the effect that the secular nobles and high-ranking lamas headed by the Bogdo were greedy exploiters.

The following was noted about Bogdo in the “Short Outline of the History of the Mongolian People’s National Revolution,” written by Kh. Choibalsan, D. Losol and G. Demid: “The fact that Bogdo caused grief and affliction to the people instead of ensuring their well-being, clearly showed the false and harmful nature of incarnates like him.”²⁰

The “Brief History of the MPRP” had the following to say about the Bogdo: “The Mongolian people’s national liberation movement resulted following the formation of a feudal Government headed by absolute monarch Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, and in the proclamation of Mongolia as an independent state.”²¹ The third edition of the

¹⁸ *Bugd Nairamdah Mongol Ard Ulsyn Tuuh*, nemj, zasvarlasan gurav dahi hevlel (*History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Third Revised Edition), UB. 1984, p. 319.

¹⁹ *Bugd Nairamdah Mongol Ard Ulsyn Tuuh*, nemj, zasvarlasan gurav dahi hevlel (*History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Third Revised Edition), UB. 1984, p. 392.

²⁰ Kh.Choibalsan, D.Losol and G.Demid, “*Short Outline of the History of the Mongolian People’s National Revolution*”, Second edition, Ulaanbaatar, 1979, p. 25.

²¹ *Mongol Ardyn Huvisgalt Namyn Touch Tuuh*, (*Brief History of the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party*), Ulaanbaatar, 1970, p. 94.

“Brief History of the MPRP,” published in 1985, concluded that, “The Treaty of Oath” adopted on November 1, 1921, gave a powerful blow to the feudal schemes headed by the Bogdo and opposed to the revolution, and this was of a critical importance in the strengthening of the new people’s statehood and Government.”²²

The following was noted about the Bogdo in “The Experience of the Struggle Successfully Waged by the Party against the Right Opportunists,” published in 1932 by U. Badrakh, one of the main representatives of the Radical Left: “The eighth reincarnation of the Bogdo Jebtsundamba contributed, as he wielded power in both the church and the state, to the secession of Mongolia from the Manchu Empire and the establishment of Mongolia’s autonomy beforehand and the people’s Government presently.”²³ This was but a statement of the truth that was difficult to avoid even under conditions of Stalinist propaganda. The histories of the MPRP and the MPR, written much later, however, could not recognize the impact of the Bogdo in a way that the above author did. This illustrates how strong the influence of ideology on historical research later became. Scholar Ts. Puntsagnorov wrote, “Historical analysis shows that the Enlightened Bogdo had been assessed as the sworn enemy and an oppressor of the Mongolian people till the last gasps of his breathing.”²⁴

²² *Mongol Ardyn Huvisgalt Namyn Tovch Tuuh*, nemj zasvarlasan gurav dahi hevlel. (*Brief History of the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party*, Third revised Edition), Ulaanbaatar, 1985, p. 85.

²³ U. Badrah, Namaas baruun bourunhiichuud lugee temtssen amjilttai ih temtsliin turshlaga (The experience of the Struggle Successfully Waged by the Party against the Right Opportunists), Shine usegt buulgaj, hevleld beltgen, tailbar hiisen Chunt. Boldbaatar, Soron Suhbaatar, UB. 2001, p. 175.

²⁴ Ts. Puntsagnorov, *Mongolyn avtonomit uyeiin tuuh* (*History of Mongolia’s Autonomy*), UB. 1955, p. 105.

Dr. Sh.Sandag, a Mongolian scholar, concluded in his book published in 1971 that, “The importance of the proclamation of Mongolia’s national independence and the establishment of the Mongolian feudal state under the Bogdo Khaan, were not thoroughly considered and analyzed. The activities of the statesmen of that time were assessed in a very general way. The years 1911-1919 were termed as the ‘period of Mongolia’s autonomy.’ Because of such approaches, I would rather say that the relevant issues were simplified or were avoided and objective reality was not clarified.”²⁵ It ought to be noted that in spite of such conclusion, there are not many research works and books on the history of Mongolia’s state and party written since then and containing a thorough and objective assessment of the issue under consideration.

Post socialist research works on Bogdo Khaan

The following was written about Bogdo in the historical book, *The Mongolia of the Twentieth Century*, published in early 1990s when a new liberal political atmosphere was becoming established in Mongolia: “When speaking of the leaders of the struggle for Mongolia’s national independence, one cannot but mention the eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu. Although he was Outer Mongolia’s religious leader, all Mongols who professed the yellow faith worshipped him as their teacher and mentor. The so-called ‘new policy course’ of the Manchu Empire was opposed by him from the very beginning of its implementation in Mongolia. He considered that its implementation would lead to the loss of

²⁵ Sh. Sandag, *Mongolyn uls touriin gadaad hariltsaa* (Mongolia’s External Political Relations), Volume 1, UB, 1971, p. 25.

‘Mongols’ fundamental customs.” It concluded that it was understandable that this position of the Enlightened Bogdo had been conditioned by his ministers and the Mongols who had been close to him.”²⁶

T. Tumurkhuleg, a Mongolian scholar, wrote in 1990 in his article, “What kind of person the eighth Jebtsundamba Khutuktu was,”²⁷ that “The eighth Jebtsundamba Khutuktu of Khalkha was one of the persons who were cruelly decried in the modern history of Mongolia under the pretext of a struggle against religion. From what was written in books and sutras and what was said by the old people, he was smart, not stupid, courageous, not cowardly, and willful, not subservient.”²⁸

The fifth edition of the *History of Mongolia*, published in 2003, noted the following about the Bogdo: “The Bogdo Jebtsundamba, leader of the Mongolian yellow faith, was able to assert himself on the political scene and became the Khan of the Mongolian nation and the state symbol because he had, from the very beginning of the national liberation movement, firmly stood for overthrowing the Manchu and Chinese rule. He restored and strengthened Mongolia’s political independence and strove to unite the Mongols under the banner of the yellow faith.” It concluded, “the Enlightened Bogdo, the limited monarch, passed away on 20 May 1924 when preparations were being undertaken to establish Mongolia as a Republic. His demise removed the grounds for the limited monarchy with

²⁶ Ts. Puntsagnorov, *Mongolyn avtonomit uyeiin tuuh (History of Mongolia’s Autonomy)*, UB. 1955, p. 105.

²⁷ T. Tumurhuleg, *Naimdugaar Javzandamba hutagt yamar hun baiu*, Utga zohiol urlag, 1990 ony 4 dugeer saryn 6 (What kind of person the 8th Jebtsundamba Khutuktu was, Literature and Art, 6 April 1990).

²⁸ Ibid.

state power vested in people's government and accelerated the process of transforming the form of governance.”

Baabar observed in his book *The Twentieth Century Mongolia: Migration and Settlement* that, “On the very day that Outer Mongolia overthrew the rule of the Chinese Qing regime, which lasted exactly 220 years, and solemnly proclaimed Mongolia Elevated by Many or independent Mongolia, a 41 year old Tibetan who had an unusually long name Agvaanluvsanchoijinyamdanzanvanchigbalsambuu, worshipped by the Mongols as the eighth Incarnation of Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, was elevated as the Khaan of this new nation.” He concluded that the Jebtsundamba was the “spiritual leader of the Mongols” and noted that there was no other person who could compete with him for the throne.

The Tusheet Khan Dashnyam, who was most closely related from among the four khans of Khalkha to the golden lineage of Chinggis Khan, could have been elevated as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation. But he was not and his words, that he was the most senior among the khans of the Bogdo Chinggis lineage compared to the Jebtsundamba of Tibetan origin, were hardly heeded by anyone.

If the Mongolian nobles were, indeed, more prominent among those who initiated and led the national movement to a successful conclusion than the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, a khan of the Golden Chinggis lineage could have been supported. But that was not the case. Instead, all followed the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu. This indicates the Bogdo's influence and the measure of success he had in directing events. It is highly probable that the national revolution started according to his intention and spread and intensified with the support of Khalkha's nobles. Once the process started and intensified, some of the nobles might have taken activities incompatible with the policy pursued by the Bogdo Khaan.

Prof. Sh. Natsagdorj wrote, “If out of the eight Khutuktus elevated in Khalkha, the name of Zanabazar the Lofty, the first Khutuktu, is linked to the loss of Mongolia’s independence, then the name of his last successor, the eighth Bogdo, is associated with the struggle for the restoration of Khalkha’s independence. But it was not Jebtsundamba Khutuktu or the four khans of Khalkha who effected the Khalkha’s secession from the Manchus and China, but rather a few influential lamas and nobles of Mongolia and several Inner Mongolian officials of that time. They included van Khanddorj of the Tusheet Khan league, the Bogdo’s confidant Da Lama Tserenchimed, and the Inner Mongolian official, Khaisan.” This view was supported and ‘fully justified’ by Dr. L. Jamsran, who wrote, elaborating these ideas, that, “The Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu played an important role in the national liberation movement of the Mongols to free themselves from the Qing regime and restore their independence. His elevation to a position of its ideological and political leader was not due to his efforts only. It ought to be explained in the context of efforts of statesmen like Khanddorj, Tserenchimed, Chagdarjav and others who relied on the Bogdo’s reputation in the struggle for the restoration of Mongolia’s state independence, and who had him enthroned to this end.”

What the above scholars wrote about the Bogdo seems to assert that the Bogdo Jebtsundamba did not initiate and lead the struggle for Mongolia’s national independence. Such views, in my humble opinion, are a result of a subjective approach towards the historical events. The consideration of the situation of Mongolian nobles under the Manchu rule, particularly the comparison of their reputation, independence, and influence relative to those of the eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba shows that the Bogdo had more possibilities and opportunities than they did to initiate and lead the national movement. The Bogdo became the foremost leader of the struggle for the Mongolian

national independence because he could seize, with vision and foresight, his possibilities and opportunities.²⁹

Bogdo's treatment in foreign historical works

Count Alfred Kaizerling (1861-1939), who worked for the Governor General of Khabarovsk as an official on special assignment, wrote in his memoir³⁰ about his visit to Khuree and his meeting with the Bogdo, “Khuree is where the gher-palace of the Khutuktu, the living Buddha in the East, is located. It is to Mongolia what Lhasa is to Tibet. The Khutuktu is venerated as much as the Dalai Lama. When he reached adulthood, he was to go to Peking to pay tribute to the Chinese Emperor and receive a blessing at a Buddhist temple there. Since the Peking Government was concerned about the influence of an adult and independent Khutuktu, blessed Khutuktus often happened to suddenly die on their way back to Khuree, and reincarnations were sought and found to take their places. But this Khutuktu did not go to Peking when he reached adulthood; despite pressures from Peking and those who surrounded him, he postponed his trip under various pretexts. He was safer in Khuree, and it was possible in Khuree to prevent Peking's direct assassination attempts on his life. His attitude towards Russia was favorable. He hoped that Russia would help him if his relations with Peking turned sour.” He mentioned that he was sent to Khuree by Baron Korf to strengthen the friendship between Russia and Mongolia.

²⁹ O. Batsaikhan, *Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the Last King of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar, 2008.

³⁰ Alfred Kaizerling, *Vospominaniya o russkoi slujbe* (Memoirs on my Service in Russia), “Akademkniga”, Moskva, 2001.

He noted the following about his meeting with the Khutuktuu: “..... Lamas were lined up along the sides of the stair we were ascending. On the upper floor a young fellow of about 18 years, dressed in a fine Tibetan style, was waiting for us. He confidently greeted and invited us to take seats. I presented to him Baron Korf’s personal letter of greeting decorated with the state emblem and the Emperor’s name in ornamental script. The Khutuktu sat on his throne on a sacred cushion and invited me to sit on a sofa opposite him. We were offered Chinese tea served on a golden tray. We had an easy, uninhibited conversation. I then presented the gifts brought for the Khutuktu. He liked a telephone set, the functioning of which was interesting to him. But he liked a music box more and was heartily amused by it. He laughed loudly when he heard a brief melody and said that it was like a horse galloping. He immediately had its lyrics translated by his disciple and was quite satisfied when informed of its content.”

The next day count Alfred Keizerling attended a reception given by the Khutuktu. They discussed business and played chess. He wrote, “When I said, as instructed by Baron Korf, that it was important for Mongolia and Russia to get closer through trading, all those present supported me. Khutuktu inquired if I played chess. When we were playing chess, devout Buddhists came crawling one after another and got his blessing. On occasions, the Khutuktu blessed them with a chess piece he was holding. When doing so he was humming and what surprised me was the tune. It was the one he heard the day before. He checked and then checkmated me while blessing his subjects in the tune of Strauss’ waltz. I was quite satisfied with my meeting with the Khutuktu and left the palace after offering my gratitude for the reception.”³¹ This excerpt

³¹ Alfred Kaizerling, *Vospominaniya o russkoi slujbe* (Memoirs on my Service in Russia), “Akademkniga”, Moskva, 2001.

from the count's memoir is, in my opinion, indicative of not only the degree of the Khutuktu's independence, freedom and far-sightedness, but also his intention to get closer to Russia. Larson, who came from America, viewed the Bogdo as a "warm hearted person."

Monsieur de Panafie, Charge de'Affaires of France in St. Petersburg, reported to his Foreign Minister de Selv on December 8, 1911, based on the information of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that "Now Mongolia is ruled by the Khutuktu who is the most venerable teacher of this nation."³² A news report that appeared in the Frankfurter Tzeitung newspaper on January 10, 1912 read, "The crisis in Mongolia has its origin in the failure of the last Chinese (*Manchu- O.Batsaikhn*) Emperors to conceal, driven by their political activities, their dissatisfaction with the Khutuktu, who is the religious leader of this nation. It was the Khutuktu who turned to the Russians. He, just like the Dalai Lama of Tibet, led the people who were discontented with Chinese sovereign rule."³³ It also noted, "This second living Buddha, overconfident in himself, entertained unrealistic ideas. The Khutuktu is rather old and likes alcoholic drinks and other earthly pleasures that are unacceptable to his religion."³⁴

E. T. Williams of the United States noted about the Bogdo Khaan, "The Khutuktu is the third highest ranking living Buddha after Dalai Lama and Erdene Panchen Lama,"³⁵

³² Frants bolon busad gadaad heleerh Mongolyn tuuhiin holbogdoltoi barimt bichgiin emhtgel (Collection of Documents in French and other Foreign Languages, relating to Mongolia's History). Compiled and translated by T. Tumurhuleg, UB. 2006, p. 158.

³³ Ibid, p. 172.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ The American Journal of International Law, Vol.10, No.4. (Oct., 1916), pp. 798-808.

and he mentioned that, “there were 160 khutuktus in total in Tibet, Mongolia and China, and the Khuree Khutuktu led some 25 thousand lamas, and the number of his disciples reached 150,000.”

The Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu sought the restoration of Mongolia’s political independence and the unification of all Mongols. He issued an appeal to all Inner and Outer Mongols to unite and re-establish their nation state. Out of 49 banners of Inner Mongolia, 38 expressed their wish to join the newly independent Mongolia.³⁶ F. Moskovitin expressed his views on this issue in his letter of March 19, 1912, addressed to V. Kotvich: “You know, the Inner Mongolian nobles are beginning to aspire for union with the Khalkhas. The reason is that they are counting on getting Russia’s support through the Khutuktu. Our Government, however, decided to support the Khalkha only.”³⁷ Jamsran Tseveen wrote to V. Kotvich on 19 March 1912 that the Bogdo, the Radiant as the Sun, still had hope of uniting all the Mongols.³⁸

I. Ya. Korostovets noted when writing about the situation of the Bogdo’s Government in post-revolutionary Mongolia that, “The Khutuktu is standing firmly for friendship with Russia. He is supported by people like Van Khand, Namsrai,

³⁶ Ogedei Taiwan (Tai-Ping), Usher Jilin uimeenii gerel ba suuder, Ovur Mongolyn surgan humuujliin hevleliin horoo, (Pros and cons of the uprising of the year of ox. Press committee for Education in Inner Mongolia) 2006.

³⁷ *V. Kotvichiin huviin arhivaas oldson Mongolyn tuuhend holbogdoh zarim bichig*, Sudlan hevluulsen akad.B.Shirendev, erhelsen akad. SH.Natsagdorj (*Some of V.Kotvich’s personal documents relating to the history of Mongollia*, Researched and published by B.Shirendev, edited by Acad. Sh. Natsagdor). Ulaanbaatar, 1972, p. 181.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 192.

Tusheet Khan and Dalai Van, who joined our side.”³⁹ In other words, his writing points to the critical role that the Bogdo Khaan played in the conclusion of the 1912 Treaty between Russia and Mongolia and the Bogdo's loyalty to friendship with Russia.

It was the eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu who early on conceived the scenario of the Mongolian National Revolution of 1911, based on his estimates of Mongolia's situation under the Manchu rule and her administrative and legal circumstances. Circumstances played out successfully as he thought they would. It was noted more than once in historical sources that nobody took an independent step without the Bogdo's consent. By 1911, even nobles' meetings in Khuree and their adjournment did not take place without the Bogdo's blessing.”⁴⁰ On the other hand, it should be underscored that though Buddhism was used at other times to suppress rather than encourage Mongolian national pride, it had a direct impact not only on preventing Chinese culture from penetrating into Mongolia in the early 20th century but also on the unification of the Mongols in the interest of their national independence. These developments occurred as the result of the Enlightened Bogdo, the head of the Mongolian Lamaist church, who then became Mongolia's national leader.

³⁹ I. Ya. Korostovets, *Ot Chinggis khaana do Sovetskoi respubliki, Otvetsvennyi redaktor O. Batsaikhan, Redaktory Bazarov, B.V, Ganjurov V. Ts, (From Chinggis Khaan to Soviet Republic, O. Batsaikhan, Editor-in-Chief, Editors: Bazarov, B.V, Ganjurov V. Ts) UB., 2004, p. 315.*

⁴⁰ O. Batsaikhan, *Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the Last King of Mongolia; Research work, Ulaanbaatar, 2008.*

Conclusion

The secession in 1911 of the Mongols from the Manchu Qing Empire and the proclamation of the restoration of their independence opened a new era in Mongolian history. This new chapter of history in the early 20th century revived the Mongolian nation in Asia upon the elevation of the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu to the throne as the Khaan of the Mongolian nation and the proclamation of the nation as ‘Mongolia’ and the era as ‘elevated by many’ and Ikh Khuree as ‘Niislel Khuree.’

Obviously the consideration of the situation of Mongolian nobles under the Manchu rule, particularly the comparison of their reputation, independence and influence with those of the eighth Bogdo Jebtsundamba, show that the Bogdo had more possibilities and opportunities than they did to initiate and lead the national movement. The Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu became the foremost leader of the struggle for the Mongolian national independence because he could seize, with vision and foresight, those possibilities and opportunities.

Liuba, Russian Consul General in Khuree, noted in his telegram sent to St. Petersburg in January 1912 that, “The Khutuktu is, without doubt, the person who led the event that led to the independence that Mongolia enjoys now.”⁴¹ This is nothing but an expression of the truth.

If the Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu could become an object of veneration of Mongolian national religion before 1911, he surely became, after the National Revolution of 1911, not only its spiritual but also its political leader – a ruler

⁴¹ RGIA, f. 892, op. 3, ed. hr. 127, l.1, Archives of the Russian Foreign Policy, Fond Mission in Peking, opis, deko 316.

of the Mongols in the true sense of the word. He is the father of the national revolution that brought about the revival of Mongolia as a nation.⁴²

I view the National Revolution of 1911 as a most special historical event that has occurred in the lives of Mongols during the past three hundred years. It should, if its historical significance is to be considered, take a particularly important place in the life of Mongolia, as a landmark event that restored the foundation for the revival and further existence of the Mongolian nation and laid down the basis for the prosperity of its national tradition, customs, and culture.

⁴² O. Batsaikhan, Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the Last King of Mongolia, Research work, Ulaanbaatar, 2011.