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THE MONGOL REBELLION OF 1756—1757

The drama of the long drawn-out struggle between the Manchu empire in China and the West Mongols, which began in the late 17th century and was not finally decided until the defeat of the Jungar leader Amursana in 1757, has tended to distract attention from the less spectacular topic of the relations between the Manchus and the Khalkhas, or Mongols of Outer Mongolia, after their formal submission to the emperor K'ang Hsi at the Convention of Dolonnor in 1691. As a result, the Mongol rebellion of 1756—1757, which was directed against both the Manchu power in Mongolia and Chinese commercial interests there, and which is associated with the name of Chingünjav, the prince of the Khotogoits of north-west Mongolia, has been almost totally ignored by western historians, although it seriously weakened the Manchu position in Mongolia just at the time when the Manchu forces were being fully extended by the campaigns against Amursana. We find, for example, that so ambitious and authoritative a work on the history of China in the Manchu period as A. W. Hummel's *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* ignores Chingünjav altogether, although it devotes a complete article to the Oirat Galdan and another to the Jungar Amursana. It only mentions the Mongol rebellion in passing, in the course of an article devoted to the pro-Manchu general Tsereng, and then as a "minor revolt." Elsewhere, in the article on Galdan, it states that after the Convention of Dolonnor the Khalkhas "kept their word and never rebelled throughout the dynasty." Maurice Courant did, it is true, briefly mention the rebellion in his monograph on Manchu-Kalmuck relations published in 1912;<sup>1</sup> but until Michel Pavlovsky drew attention to it in 1949 and to the unexploited documentary material con-

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Courant, *L'Asie centrale aux xvii<sup>e</sup> et xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles: empire kalmouk ou empire manichou?* (Lyon, 1912).

cerning it to be found in the *Ch'ing shih-lu*, suggesting that its outbreak was a much more serious challenge to Manchu supremacy in central Asia than had hitherto been realised, the episode generally passed unnoticed, at least by western scholars.<sup>2</sup>

In the last century A. M. Pozdneev, a pioneer in the exploitation of Mongolian historical material, succeeded in reconstructing a certain amount of the story, though his work has escaped general notice.<sup>3</sup> In the course of commenting upon a popular west Mongol concerning a certain *Shadar chiang-chtin* or "General aide-de-camp" he noted that this title concealed the identity of the rebel Chingünjav. Basing himself on the chronicle *Erdeni-yin erike* and also on *Iledkel shastir*, Pozdneev published, at the time, all the information he could cull about the life of Chingünjav and his abortive rising. But apart from this, comparatively little is to be found in Mongol chronicles about this episode, partly because the most easily accessible chronicles antedate it, partly also because of the pro-Manchu tone of much historical writing which copied its sources—which for this period were mostly official Manchu documents, without critical appraisal—and passed over Chingünjav's rising as a more or less discreditable episode. A note of deep disapproval is evident, for example, in both *Erdeni-yin erike* and in *Iledkel shastir*.<sup>4</sup> The former refers to him as a "rebellious bandit," while the latter, while describing his life in some detail, does so in the chapter concerning his father, considering him unworthy of an independent biography.<sup>5</sup>

The source material available to occidental scholars until very recently has been meagre, and would hardly have supported research into this neglected topic beyond what had already been done by Pozdneev. By contrast, Mongolian historians have in the past few years paid very close attention to the rebellion of 1756, an obvious reason for their interest being the fact that they have had access to rich contemporary documentation preserved in their own archives. They were also, during the 1950's, in a position to obtain photo-copies

<sup>2</sup> Michel Pavlovsky, *Chinese-Russian Relations*, (New York, 1949).

<sup>3</sup> A. M. Pozdneev, *Obrazcy narodnoj literatury mongol'skikh plemen*, (St. Petersburg, 1880), pp. 152ff.

<sup>4</sup> For an evaluation of *Erdeni-yin erike* see especially Joseph F. Fletcher, "A source of the Erdeni-yin erike," *HJAS*, XXIV, (1962/63), pp. 229—233. Discussing previous translations of the title *Iledkel shastir*, Fletcher, in his note 17, supplies the correct version: "Genealogies and Biographies."

<sup>5</sup> *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63.

of additional material preserved in Peking. From 1955 onwards the results of their research, mostly from the pen of a single scholar, Mr. N. Išžamc, have been appearing in Ulan Bator.<sup>6</sup> As might be expected, historical writing in Mongolia today is based on Marxist theory and tends to be directed towards exemplifying the correctness of the Marxist analysis as it simultaneously explores the events of the past. The rebellion of 1756 has no doubt attracted attention partly because of its intrinsic interest as one of the few dramatic episodes in an otherwise drab century, but also partly because it can be interpreted as displaying the beginnings of class consciousness in Mongolia, of a conflict of interest between the "feudal" nobility and the "masses," and as an example of a people participating in a national uprising in search of their freedom and independence from an aggressive foreign colonial power. Apart from its ostensible didactic value as demonstrating the will of the masses towards national independence, it appears also to be of especial interest to contemporary Mongol scholars in that it enables them to project backwards to the 18th century ideas of national self-consciousness and of a desire for independence from foreign rule which, in fact, probably never existed till the early 20th century. In a word, it is an essential part of the Mongol national legend, and it is in this sense that it has been interpreted by Mr. Išžamc. This is perhaps understandable, but it has produced a rather one-sided approach to the subject.

<sup>6</sup> N. Išžamc, *Manžijn darlalyg esërgüücsën Mongolyn ard түмний 1755—1757 ony zëvsëgt boslogo*, [The armed struggle of the Mongol masses of 1755—1757 in opposition to Manchu oppression], (Ulan Bator, 1955): "Mongolyn ard түмний 1755—1758 ony tusgaar togtolyn zëvsëgt tэмцэл 'Amarsanaa, Čingünžav naryn boslogo,'" [The armed struggle for independence of the Mongol masses, 1755—1758—the uprising of Amursana and Chingünjav], *BNMAU Šinzlëkh ukhaany Akademijn Mëdëll*, [Reports of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences], 1961, 4, pp. 61—72, Ulan Bator 1961: "XVIII зууны үеийн Монголын ард түмний тусгаар тогтнолын тэмцэлийн түүхнээс (Amarsanaa, Čingünžav naryn boslogo)," [From the history of the struggle for independence of the Mongol masses in the eighteenth century—the uprising of Amursana and Chingünjav], *Mongolyn түүх, ёртний судлал, угаатны зүйн зарим асуудал* [Some questions of Mongol history, archaeology and ethnography], *Studia Historica*, II, 3—8 (Ulan Bator, 1962) pp. 23—31: *Mongolyn ard түмний 1755—1758 ony tusgaar togtolyn zëvsëgt tэмцэл (Amarsanaa, Čingünžav naryn boslogo)*, [The armed struggle of 1755—1758 of the Mongolian masses for their independence—the uprising of Amursana and Chingünjav], *Studia Historica*, III, 3, (Ulan Bator, 1962), 129 pp.

Mr. Išžamc states his position unequivocally in his first essay on the subject, published in 1955: "The movement of the Mongol masses in 1755—1757 was thus an armed uprising of the nature of a struggle for national freedom and independence, and had as its aim the smashing of Manchu imperialist oppression."<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere he quotes with approval the dictum of Marshal Choibalsang—dictator of Mongolia at the time of Stalin's régime in the USSR, and in no sense a scholar—that Amursana and Chingünjav were "national heroes" and that the movement of 1755—1758 in Jungaria and Mongolia was "an armed struggle waged for independence," and also a statement made by Tsendenbal, at present premier of the Mongolian People's Republic, and a politician rather than a scholar, that Amursana and Chingünjav were "progressive feudal nobles" and that the events of the time were "a great popular uprising" against Manchu domination.<sup>8</sup> This uncritical acceptance of a tendentious evaluation made, by politicians, of events which ought to be examined from a less partisan viewpoint leads Mr. Išžamc to prejudge the issue in the very titles of his articles. The last, and most important, is, for example, preemptively entitled: "The armed struggle of 1755—1758 of the Mongolian masses for their independence." Three debatable points are tacitly assumed as axiomatic here. The first assumption is that the events in Jungaria from 1755 onwards and those of 1756—1757 in Outer Mongolia can be associated as part of a single "movement." The second is that the moving force in these events was the "masses," surely an anachronistic concept. The third is that the aim of the risings was to achieve independence, that is, as Mr. Išžamc states elsewhere, national independence from the Manchus. It is not intended that the present article should turn into a critique of the work of another scholar, but since the articles by Mr. Išžamc are the most important secondary sources for the subject under consideration it is necessary to point out that their theme is not developed in an altogether unprejudiced manner. What is not in dispute is the fact of the uprising itself, its wide extent, its involvement of all classes of the population, and the savagery both of some of its manifestations and of the repression which followed. It is on the question of the interpretation of the nature and significance of the events of 1756 and 1757 that differences are likely to arise, and, in particular, the question

<sup>7</sup> Išžamc, 1955, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Išžamc, 1961, p. 70, repeated in SH II, p. 30.

whether the spirit behind the uprising was that of a national will to independence or one of rather ragged xenophobia.

Nevertheless, in spite of the partisan approach which, to some extent, invalidates his conclusions, at least for non-Marxist readers, the narrative part of Mr. Išžamc's articles provides for the first time a coherent and very illuminating account of what was going on in Outer Mongolia at the time, and he refers to, and quotes from, a representative range of original sources. In addition to this, a volume of selections from the Central Historical Archives of the Mongolian People's Republic and from the archives of the Historical Committee of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, was published in Ulan Bator in 1963.<sup>9</sup> The documents of the latter group are, in fact, based on photo-copies of originals in the national archives of the Chinese People's Republic. In presentation this volume leaves much to be desired. All the documents have been printed in transcription into the modern Cyrillic script, and not a single facsimile reproduction has been given. Further, all those documents originally in Manchu are presented in recently-made translations into Mongol, unaccompanied by the Manchu texts. Hence it is not possible to check the accuracy of any document. Even so, this book, which contains 66 selections from contemporary archives, is immensely valuable, and together with Mr. Išžamc's studies, it offers a basis for a provisional assessment of the nature of the rebellion of 1756.

To appreciate why the rebellion should have occurred at all requires a brief retrospective look at the state of Mongol society. To suggest that the rebellion was a struggle for national independence implies that this was a meaningful concept at the time, and that a sense of national community prevailed distinct from feelings of loyalty to a particular lord. On the face of it, this is an anachronism: it suggests that the Mongols, a backward central Asian people, appreciated political concepts not effectively current amongst the more advanced countries of the west till the time of the American and French revolutions, and not a force to be reckoned with in Europe in general till the nineteenth century. This is not to deny that there were individual Mongol chroniclers and contemporary leaders who wrote and spoke on occasion of a Mongol nation. But in doing so they were not postulating the existence of a nation in the modern sense, but of a people

<sup>9</sup> Ö Čimid, *Čingünžavaar udirduulsan Ar Mongol dakh' tusgaar togtmolyn tэмцэл (1756—1758)*, [The struggle for independence in North Mongolia led by Chingünjav], (Ulan Bator, 1963), 163 pp.

solely in relation to its ruler or rulers. Their concept was an aristocratic, not a popular one. In this connection it is instructive to consider some extracts from an early eighteenth century chronicle written by the Kharchin Mongol Lomi, himself a member of the Mongol imperial clan, the Borjigit. In his chronicle, Lomi expressed enthusiastic loyalty to the Manchu emperors precisely because it was due to their efforts that the broken unity of the Mongol aristocracy was restored at a time when internal discord had scattered the tribes of the Mongols. He writes: "As generation succeeded generation, the succession came to Ligdan Khan (d. 1634), and the cohesion of the nation was broken, and all the tribes were scattered and dispersed, and were hard put to it to find peace. Then the lofty emperor T'ai-tsu (i. e. the Manchu Nurhachi) arose in the eastern lands and the imperial house, the regent and the nobles of the Mongol nation severally submitted with sincere intentions and were granted high and generous favours and enjoyed friendly treatment." Lomi goes on to say that when the Khalkha khans were defeated by Galdan and pushed back in confusion "the khans and their officers came to submit, and the gracious emperor K'ang Hsi granted them the favour of restoring what had collapsed and continuing what had been interrupted, and cherished and protected them . . . Can we say that this is not a great good fortune for us Borjigit that we have had the grace of the Holy Lord constantly bestowed upon us? . . . In my opinion, the fact that our Mongol nation, when about to collapse, was restored again, and when on the point of falling apart, was reborn, is in truth entirely due to the amazing mercy of the Holy Emperor."<sup>10</sup> Thus Lomi's outlook was a thoroughly pro-Manchu one, though his interests were Mongol. In his eyes, the interests of the Mongol nation were identified with those of its hereditary aristocracy, the Borjigit clan descended from Chinghis Khan, and the fact that the supreme overlord was a Manchu, and not a Mongol, was immaterial. What was of real importance was that the Manchus had restored peace and order to the Mongols and in so doing earned their loyalty.

Pozdneev, writing in 1880, did, it is true, make use of the term "independence" in connection with Chingünjav and his exploits. But Pozdneev did not have in mind the national independence of the Mongol people, but something quite different, his actual words being:

<sup>10</sup> Walther Heissig und Charles R. Bawden, *Mongyol Borjigid oboy-un teiike von Lomi (1732)*, (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1957).

"It is not in dispute that in all these actions Chingünjav was motivated by the ambitious idea of throwing off the yoke of the Chinese and making himself an independent ruler."<sup>11</sup> If we can accept Pozdneev's analysis, it shows Chingünjav as the last, and by now, outdated representative of a long line of Mongol princes who had similar grandiose ideas of setting themselves up independently of the overlord of the time, and who were often able to achieve their ambitions as long as a weak emperor held nominal sway over the Mongols. He was not a precursor of those nobles who in 1911 did manage to free Mongolia from the Manchus and establish a unified state. What above all characterises the history of the Mongols, after the expulsion of the Yüan dynasty from China in the late 14th century, is the tendency towards disunity and fragmentation. The imperial family continued to reign, but not to rule, until 1634, but for generations it had ceased to be a unifying factor in Mongolia. Local rulers were continually emerging, and setting up petty realms, some of which, like that of Altan Khan of the Tümetes, hardly outlasted their rulers, others of which, like that of the Altan Khans of north-west Mongolia, survived for a generation or two, and yet others of which, like the khanates of Khalkha, continued to exist, though with little independent authority, till the present century. It is doubtful if Chingünjav had more in mind than setting up such a petty principality for himself, whatever he may have said publicly, and the popular legend that he planned a new capital in his own peripheral pastures, with the name of North Peking, only serves to confirm this separatist tendency. In any case, what was possible during the impotence of the last Mongol emperors was no longer feasible after a new and powerful overlord, the Manchu emperor, had accepted Khalkha submission in 1691, and if Chingünjav really did aim at securing independence from the Manchus he was swimming against the tide, and betrays himself as sadly incapable of judging the temper of the times and his own insignificance in comparison with the Manchus. Moreover, even those Mongol princelings who had, during the 17th century, played with the idea of finding an alternative to submission to the Manchus, did not, with the exception of the powerful West Mongols, ever seem to envisage the possibility of total independence. Rather they considered the alternative of submitting to the Tsar of Russia. The Setsen Khan discussed this question with a

<sup>11</sup> op. cit., p. 155.

Russian envoy in 1647, but died before any decision could be taken, and there is a familiar legend, recorded in both Mongol and Chinese sources, that in 1688 the Khalkha aristocracy debated whether to seek help against Galdan in submission to the Manchus or to the Russians.<sup>12</sup> Alliance with the aggressive Oirats was out of the question, but so, significantly, was continued independence.

Throughout the mid-seventeenth century a significant change in the relationship between the aristocracy of Khalkha Mongolia, on the one hand, and the Manchu emperor on the other, had been taking place, and this new situation was institutionalised in the years between 1688—when the Tushetu Khan and the Jebtsundamba Khutuktu requested the protection of the Manchus against Galdan—and 1691 when the subordinate position of the erstwhile rulers of the Khalkhas was publicly established at the Convention of Dolonnor. Ever since the establishment of the Manchu empire, which had been accepted in 1636 by the princes of Inner Mongolia, the three khans of Khalkha had, to some extent, been subject to the suzerainty of the new dynasty, though the relationship was an ill-defined one. In 1636 they offered tribute to the emperor, and from 1655 onwards the custom of offering annually the tribute of eight white horses and one white camel, the so-called “nine whites,” seems to have been established. However, the khans retained an effective freedom of action, as illustrated by the fact that until 1688 the most powerful of them, the Tushetu Khan, and his brother the Khutuktu, were in diplomatic contact with Moscow as well as with Peking. Moreover, when a bitter dispute between the Zasagtu Khan and the Tushetu Khan led to intervention by the emperor K’ang Hsi in 1686, the latter showed himself unwilling, if not unable, to arbitrate on his own account, but preferred to enlist the help of the Dalai Lama, in view of the latter’s great prestige among the Mongols. A final indication that the Khalkhas were not formally under Manchu suzerainty is an argument adduced by K’ang Hsi in 1688 for not immediately acceding to the Tushetu Khan’s plea for

<sup>12</sup> For this legend in Mongol dress see Charles R. Bawden, *The Jebtsundamba Khutuktu of Urga*, (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1961), p. 45. It is to be found also in Chinese in *Meng-ku yu-mu-chi* (Taipei, 1965), Chung-kuo pien-chiang ts’ung-shu, vol. 1, p. 294. Here also the ultimate source seems to be a Mongol one. The reference, via a poem by the Khorchin Mongol Sung Yün (Hummel, op. cit. pp. 691/692), is to a reminiscence by Gejaidorji, grandson of Dondubdorji, the father of the second Khutuktu.

help against Galdan. The emperor suggested that both Oirats and Khalkhas had long been in tribute relations with him. Now that both were accusing each other of misconduct, it would be inappropriate for him to interfere on one side or the other, and such intervention would be justifiable only if the Khan were to bring his people over in formal submission to the Manchus.<sup>13</sup> This is, in fact, what happened soon afterwards. The Khalkhas could no longer resist the Oirats by themselves, and, to use modern parlance, they surrendered their independence to the Manchu emperor in exchange for protection. The chronicle *Erdeni-yin erike* expresses this in the following way. In 1688, it says, “the Tushetu Khan Chakhundorji led the Khalkhas into submission to the rule of the emperor K’ang Hsi.”<sup>14</sup> The new relationship was thus a personal contract, albeit a forced one, between two individuals. The rôle played by the Khutuktu, as head of the lamaist faith in Mongolia, was a similar one. Though strictly speaking he had no secular authority, and controlled only a number of personal subjects or *shabi*, he enjoyed universal prestige as a religious leader. K’ang Hsi recognised his importance by specifically appointing him “grand lama”<sup>15</sup> of the Khalkhas and putting him at the head of the lamaist faith in Mongolia. This action was taken in response to the Khutuktu’s personal plea in the summer of 1688, in which he asked the emperor to allot him new pastures and see to the restoration of his ruined lamaseries.<sup>16</sup> A memorial presented by the Li Fan Yün in connection with the death of the Khutuktu in 1723 summarizes the import of what the Khutuktu had done at this time. In part it reads: “The Jebtsundamba Khutuktu is the principal figure in the Yellow Faith . . . At the time of the rebellion of Galdan he brought the seven tribes of the Khalkha back to their allegiance and gained much merit.”<sup>17</sup>

The loaded terminology of this passage is characteristic of the familiar sino-centric attitude of Peking to the peripheral peoples, neither “rebellion” in the case of Galdan nor “brought back” in the case of

<sup>13</sup> See S. Nacagdorž, *Khalkhyn tiiikh*, [History of Khalkha], (Ulan Bator, 1963), p. 45. The assertion is substantiated by a quotation from a Mongol version of *Shuo-mo fang-lieh*.

<sup>14</sup> Galdan, *Erdeni-yin erike* (Ulan Bator, 1960), Monumenta Historica, III, 1, p. 104a.

<sup>15</sup> In Mongol *yeke blama*. For this episode see *Erdeni-yin erike*, p. 106a.

<sup>16</sup> *Erdeni-yin erike*, p. 103b, the source apparently being, as indicated by a reference in Nacagdorž, p. 44, *Shuo-mo fang-lieh*.

<sup>17</sup> *Meng-ku yu-mu-chi*, p. 295.

the Khalkhas being from the modern viewpoint applicable to the situation. But clearly what was involved was the personal submission of the khans and the Khutuktu to the emperor, and the recognition that their authority henceforth stemmed from him, notwithstanding their consciousness of being the descendents of Chingis Khan and members of the Mongol imperial clan.<sup>18</sup> At Dolonnor the khans were confirmed in the control of their subjects, an authority which they had held in fact for a century, and the Khutuktu was confirmed in the position he had held ever since the Dalai Lama gave him the title of Jebtsundamba in 1650.<sup>19</sup> In 1911 a group of Mongolian nobles proclaimed the independence of their country and Mongolia was constituted a theocratic monarchy with much of the apparatus of a modern state, with ministries, an army, and later a two-chambered assembly. In justifying this arrangement, which was evidently based on contemporary political thinking, the Mongols adduced a traditional argument. They maintained that while both Chinese and Mongols had temporarily been subjected to Manchu rule, with the fall of the dynasty both nations alike were released from their old obligations and were free to go their own way.

The Manchu emperors took care to foster the goodwill of their aristocratic partners in Mongolia and made no more than the minimum changes in the social and political order (the two being more or less identical) than was necessary to maintain good order there. Though as time went on a regular network of bureaucracy was built up, narrowing from its base in the *sumuns* and *bags*, or sub-banner units of Mongolia to the Li Fan Yüan in Peking, actual Manchu participation in the administration of Mongolia was minimal, and Chinese participa-

<sup>18</sup> The supreme authority of the emperor in Outer Mongolia is also demonstrated by his actual creation, in 1725, of the fourth khanate, that of Sain Noyon Khan, out of banners detached from the Tushetu Khan's khanate.

<sup>19</sup> The relationship between the Khalkha aristocracy and the Manchu emperor shows certain features reminiscent of European feudalism, and Marxist historians of Mongolia take it as axiomatic that "feudalism" prevailed at this time. However, it is dangerous to pursue the parallel too exactly. From 1691 the khans were, for example, no longer in any position of authority over those banners outside their own which nominally still belonged to their khanates. The *zasags*, or banner princes, were directly appointed by the emperor. No Mongol noble could alienate territory or subjects by enfeoffing a subordinate, though donations of laymen as *shabi* or retainers were made to high lamas.

tion nil.<sup>20</sup> The bureaucracy was staffed mostly by Mongols, and except for communications with Peking, which were in the Manchu language, Mongol was the main language of administration. The reluctance of the Manchus to disturb traditional relationships accorded with their general purpose of keeping Mongolia as a buffer for China on the north and west, and using it as a reservoir from which mounted troops could be drawn to help in the control of China and in waging war when necessary. Briefly, as far as the ordinary people were concerned, this policy expressed itself in the strict regulation of the entry of Chinese into Mongolia, the isolation of Mongolia from contacts with Russia, and the organisation of the people in a semi-military fashion. The nobility, on the other hand, was attracted to the imperial house by the distribution of titles, by the payment of salaries, by promotion to influential appointments, and by the bestowal of imperial princesses and other high-born Manchu ladies as wives.<sup>21</sup>

With an aggressive and internally unstable Jungaria periodically threatening Mongol as well as Manchu security, the interests of the Mongol aristocracy lay in their loyal support of a strong and vigorous dynasty in Peking. Self interest, and equally a sense of obligation and personal loyalty, attached them, with some notable exceptions, to the Manchus, until the end of the dynasty. There even emerged minor "dynasties" of Mongol nobles who not only succeeded from father to son in their rank and in the control of their banners, but also handed on from one generation to another the appointments they held. An early example of this process is to be found in the family of Tsereng (d. 1750). Tsereng was the first lieutenant general of Uliasutai, and was succeeded in this post by his two sons, Tsengünjav and Tsendenjav. Sanjaidorji, the first Mongol amban of Urga, was appointed in 1758. He was succeeded by his son Yündendorji who held the same post

<sup>20</sup> The first Manchu officials to be appointed were the trade supervisors (*jar'yübi*) at Urga and Khiakta in 1719 and 1727 respectively. After that, regular Manchu officials do not seem to have been appointed till 1761, when an *amban*, or resident, was appointed at Khobdo, and another at Urga as colleague to the Mongol *amban* already in existence since 1758.

<sup>21</sup> The policy of intermarriage had long been familiar in Inner Mongolia, but the first reference I can find to an occurrence in Khalkha is the marriage of Dondubdorji, a relative of the Tushetu Khan Chakhundorji, in 1697. Sanjaidorji, the first *amban* of Urga, was born of one Manchu princess and married another, and as a child was brought up in the imperial palace in Peking. (*Mengku yu-mu-chi*, p. 317.)

till his death in 1827.<sup>22</sup> Sanjaidorji was a descendent of Shidishiri, younger brother of the Tushetu Khan Chakhundorji (d. 1699) and it was members of the line of the Tushetu Khan who held the position of amban of Urga in later years: one may mention the names of Sündüvdorji, Delegdorji (in office in 1852) and Puntsagtseren (in office in 1911).<sup>23</sup> The sentiments attaching the Khalkha aristocracy to the Manchu imperial family were thus strong ones,<sup>24</sup> but at the same time, being based on personal and family connections, they seem at times to have been vulnerable to the caprices of individual noblemen who for reasons not always clear, chose to abandon their allegiance without apparently having thought out how they were to act subsequently. The principal example of such a lapse from loyalty, a lapse which was to serve as a trigger for the rebellion of 1756, was the alleged treason of Erinchindorji, a member of the family of the Tushetu Khan, half brother of the second Khutuktu, and a grandson of K'ang Hsi. Erinchindorji's offence, for which he was executed in early 1756, was to connive at the escape from Manchu custody of the prospective "rebel" Amursana, the Jungar leader.

As far as the common people and the lesser nobility were concerned, adverse economic conditions and high taxation, under which heading we may include liability to military service and the exhausting levies of men and animals made during the continual wars with the Jungars, were the factors which disposed them to revolt when Chingünjav's appeal in 1756 put a match to an explosive situation. The monopolization of Mongol trade by Chinese merchant houses was one result of the Manchu policy of trying to screen off Mongolia from the north and discourage penetration from the south. In the north a chain of watch posts along the Russian frontier was set up in and after 1727, and a special frontier zone established into which no Chinese traders were admitted at all. In the south the Manchus tried to regulate the entry

<sup>22</sup> Nacagdorž, p. 89.

<sup>23</sup> C. Damdinsürën, *Günzjijn süm*, The princess's temple, (Ulan Bator, 1961), *Studia Ethnographica* II, 3, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Thus Sanjaidorji, in a submission to the throne of 27th August 1756, stated: "The *beile* Tsevdén [one of Chingünjav's noble supporters—C.R.B.] told me to desert with all haste, but as I saw it, our family had for three generations down to myself been receiving the generous and weighty favours of the emperor. If I deserted this would mean openly rejecting the weighty favours received from the emperor in these three generations, and casting in my lot with the Khalkhas." See Čimid, p. 41.

of Chinese, especially of those elements such as traders, farmers and craftsmen, who were potentially disruptive of a nomadic culture by requiring merchants to obtain a license, valid for one year only, before entering Mongolia, by forbidding them to stop overnight in Mongol tents, to set up felt tents of their own, to marry Mongol women, and so on<sup>25</sup>. Their intentions were not simply negative and obstructive, as some Mongol scholars imply, but in part were directed towards protecting the Mongols from exploitation by a commercially more active and astute race. The Manchus realised that such exploitation would arouse resentment and unrest among the Mongols, to which extent their policies were directed by self interest rather than altruism.<sup>26</sup> But they realised also that the Mongols depended for certain necessities of life, notably cloth and tea, on the Chinese merchants,<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> On the similar policies adopted by both the Tsars and the Manchu emperors to keep their nomadic vassals in a "primitive" state so as to be able to use them in a military capacity, see Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols*, (Paris, 1948), p. 245. An excellent study of the development of Chinese trade in Mongolia in the eighteenth century is M. Sanždorž, *Khalkhad Khjatadyn möngö khüülögč khudaldaq névlerč khölsön n'*, [The penetration of Chinese usury trade and its expansion in Khalkha], (Ulan Bator, 1963), *Studia Historica*, III, 5. Sanždorž quotes from the Mongol state archives an interesting order of the emperor Chia Ching, dated 1805, on this subject: "From of old it has been declared policy to prevent cunning Chinese merchants from penetrating into and settling on the pastures of Inner and Outer Mongolia, to prevent the Mongols from abandoning their traditional pastoral economy, and by keeping the pastures virgin to have them stay there quietly, but for many years past, due to neglect, this has been evaded by cunning Chinese, and they have been allowed to move in and settle" (p. 40).

<sup>26</sup> Thus an order of 1798, quoted by Sanždorž, p. 39, draws attention to this point: "If the merchants, seeking their profits, bring the Mongols more and more into difficulties by heavy interest charges . . . mutual disputes and complaints will arise." Though this quotation is too late to be strictly relevant to our theme, it appears to draw attention to a chronic state of affairs. An addition to the Khalkha Code of 1709, made in 1726, attempted to limit the giving of credit to Mongols, ordering that all cases of credit trading be reported to the trade supervisor at Urga, who would take no cognisance of debts still uncollected by the time the particular trader's annual license to enter Mongolia had expired. The reason given was that if the "stupid people" were allowed to contract unsupervised debts, trouble was bound to arise. See C. Ž. Žamcarano and S. D. Dylykov, *Khalkha Džirum*, (Moscow, 1965), p. 91 and p. 320.

<sup>27</sup> A warning to the Khalkhas that to go on attacking the Chinese merchants in 1756 would lead to an interruption in the trade on which they depended was part of the Manchu propaganda directed against the insurrectionaries. "This

and allowed this trade under supervision. But because no competition from Russian traders was allowed on the one hand, and because the official regulations were easily and consistently evaded on the other, the economy of Mongolia soon fell completely into the hands of the various Chinese merchant houses and was thoroughly exploited. Much trade was carried on on exorbitant credit terms, so that both private individuals and whole banners fell into debts which it was impossible for them ever to pay off. It was a novelty that Chinese traders came into Mongolia at all: until the end of the 17th century it had been Mongols who sent trading missions into China. Yet in less than fifty years, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the position had been reversed. Mongolia was deeply penetrated by Chinese traders, most of them operating in and near fixed settlements such as Uрга and Kiakhta, but others going, illegally, further afield into the country districts. The practice of credit trading was established,<sup>28</sup> as was that of the *tungsh*. A *tungsh* was a Chinese firm which had built up a monopoly of trade in a particular banner, and also operated as a banker for that banner, so that as time went on many a banner became more or less completely mortgaged to its *tungsh*. Indebtedness to Chinese firms was perhaps not a major cause of the rebellion of 1756, but it provoked a dull resentment, and the fury of the rebellion, when it came, worked itself out largely in the plundering of Chinese shops and the killing or mishandling of the merchants and even of their Mongol assistants, since it was these who presented the most obvious, and also the most defenceless, target for mob violence.

(robbery) is harmful to the Khalkhas too, and why? Because for many years now their everyday needs in cloth and tea have been satisfied by what those Chinese merchants have brought in, and now, if the Khalkhas deliberately plunder the traders and steal their goods, the traders will be afraid and will stop coming. And if the traders stop coming, will they still be able to get their cloth and tea? This will be a serious matter for their livelihood." The Manchus also looked beyond this to the possibility that indiscriminate plundering would lead to anarchy, with every man for himself. "This would be a grave matter, and the Jungars afford a present example of this." The local authorities were enjoined not only to stop the plunderings and punish the guilty, but also to see that the Chinese traders were recompensed, so that they would not be deterred from future trading in Mongolia. (See Čimíd, p. 50.)

<sup>28</sup> Sanždorž gives details to show that long-standing debts were already in existence around 1740, quoting examples of debts contracted in Setsen Khan aimak in 1735 which had still not been paid off by 1743. (p. 56.)

What more than anything probably induced in the Mongols the mood in which they were ready to rebel was the burden of military service and of taxation for the Jungar wars.<sup>29</sup> Direct taxation paid to the emperor as tribute was not onerous at all, and was largely compensated for by the salaries paid out to *zasags*, but indirect taxation in the form of corvée and of supplies for the administration and army was by no means light. For instance, there was from 1727 onwards the system of watch posts to be maintained. Men had to be sent there, and their travelling expenses provided by the banner which sent them. Their services were lost to their home banner, and the allotment of pastures to the actual watch posts meant a considerable loss of good grazing ground to the frontier banners. Just as burdensome, if not more so, was the servicing of the relay stations, which, with their heavy demands for both men and animals, horses for riding and sheep for provisions, took up a considerable proportion of Mongolia's rather primitive herding economy. Over and above these corvées, which might be considered the basic "feudal" duties owed to the emperor, and which continued to the end of the dynasty, we have to realise that the early eighteenth century was a period of chronic war between the Manchus and the Jungars, with much of the fighting taking place on Khalkha territory.

As early as 1688 the Khalkhas had been exhausted by Galdan's invasions, and had had to rely for their sustenance on relief supplies issued to them by K'ang Hsi.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, during the first half of the eighteenth century tens of thousands of Mongols were mobilised as soldiers, and colossal numbers of animals were requisitioned for mounts, transport and provisioning. These were, it seems, paid for, though at a low valuation, and one which decreased sharply in terms of silver between 1730 and the 1750's,<sup>31</sup> but it was their withdrawal from use, especially from breeding, which meant a heavy capital loss to the Mongol economy, which drew its income almost entirely from the natural increase of its herds. The emperor Ch'ien Lung

<sup>29</sup> On this subject see the monograph by C. Nasanbalžir, *Ar Mongoloos Manž čin ulsad zalgurulž baisan alba 1691—1911 on*, [Taxation paid to the Manchu, Ch'ing, state by North Mongolia, 1691—1911], (Ulan Bator, 1964), 186 pp.

<sup>30</sup> Nacagdorž, p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> Nasanbalžir, p. 97, states that horses and camels were bought up in 1753 for six and fifteen taels each respectively, compared to prices of eight and twenty five taels given in 1730.

missed this point when, in an ostensibly patient reply to the grievances listed by Chingünjav in 1756 in his famous "Mongol letter" he said, with reference to certain requisitions, that they had all been paid for, so that it was impossible that the people should have been inconvenienced.<sup>32</sup> As more than one official request from local zasags for a reduction in the levies shows, the people were being reduced to destitution by the commandeering of their livestock and by having to sell off animals of one sort in order to buy others, to which they had been assessed, but which they did not have enough of themselves.<sup>33</sup>

Mr. Išžamc's solution to the question of why the Mongols as a whole preferred to remain loyal to the Manchus and to hold aloof from the Jungars is to view the matter as a straight forward clash of class interests and to condemn the Tushetu Khan and the Jebtsundamba Khutuktu as traitors who "sold out their fatherland to the foreign enemy." Elsewhere he speaks of the Khutuktu as "an inveterate spy and agent of the Manchu aggressors" and of several "reactionary clerical feudal nobles" who were carrying out a policy of "selling out" Mongolia to the Manchus.<sup>34</sup> Even when we make allowance for the intemperate language of this analysis and for the importation into the argument of irrelevant and anachronistic concepts such as that of the fatherland, it seems unlikely that this simple black and white view of the situation is likely to furnish an adequate explanation. Neither with Galdan nor with his west Mongol successors did the Mongols have a chance of reaching an accommodation, in spite of a tempting invitation issued by Galdantseren in 1731 to desert the Manchus and join him in the Altai. The flight of the Khalkhas from Galdan in 1688 was a realistic reaction to his invasion, and offered an example followed by other, non-Khalkha peoples, for instance the Khotogoits, Chingünjav's future subjects, who fled from their home by Ubsa nur to the river Selenge.<sup>35</sup> But the emperor Ch'ien Lung's

<sup>32</sup> Čimid, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> See Nasanbalžir, p. 97, for a submission by the *zasag* of a banner in Setsen Khan aimak in 1753 complaining of the ruination of his banner through the excessive demands made for horses, which had to be bought from elsewhere for camels. The situation was made worse by the eight preceding years of hard weather. Išžamc, SH III, p. 51, quotes an order of the emperor Ch'ien Lung dated 1756 in which it is recognised that several years of military operations and natural disasters had lowered the standard of living of the Khalkhas.

<sup>34</sup> Išžamc, SH II, p. 24, and 1955, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63, fol. 3r.

contrary contention that the wars against the Jungars were being waged entirely for the benefit of the Khalkhas is equally fallacious. His predecessor on the throne, the emperor Yung Cheng, had received a serious warning during the Jungar campaigns of 1731 and 1732 that there was unrest among the common people and sedition abroad among several members of the aristocracy. Several powerful nobles deserted the Manchu army in 1732, amongst them the Zasagtu Khan who had received a special reward of 5000 taels the year before in recognition of his military services.<sup>36</sup> Nacagdorž gives a representative list of ten aristocrats who had either simply deserted the Manchu army, or actually joined the Jungars at this time.<sup>37</sup> Ch'ien Lung's explanation, intended at the time to win over the vacillating Khalkhas, is of more interest nowadays as evidence of the strict limits within which he was able to manoeuvre. His dealings with the Jungars, in particular his acceptance of the surrender in 1753 and 1754 of leaders like Amursana and the "Three Tserens," on none of whom he could rely for sure, were as much dictated by an opportunist recognition of the limits of the possible as they were the realisation of a deliberate policy.<sup>38</sup>

When the great outbreak came in 1756 it came in conjunction with a renewal of the troubles with Jungaria. However, the interests of

<sup>36</sup> Nacagdorž, p. 65 and Nasanbalžir, p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Nacagdorž, p. 143.

<sup>38</sup> In an imperial order dated 16th September 1756 (Čimid, p. 52) Ch'ien Lung explains himself as follows: "The Khalkhas have all for generations been receiving imperial favours, and I am surprised that they could have been taken in by the rumours recklessly spread by the wretched Chingünjav, and have acted like this. From what I hear you are upset because you are exhausted by military action. For whose good have I been using these soldiers? Was it not in fact for the benefit of all you Khalkhas? If previously I had not accepted the submission of the 'Three Tserens' would they have brought over all their tents and belongings with them? Would it have been correct not to receive them? And if I had not received them, do you think they would have stayed quiet? It would certainly have meant the wilful plundering of you Khalkhas, and so for that reason I received them and settled them down. Though the Tserens remained quiet, in the matter of the cunning and wicked actions of Amursana, if I had not accepted his surrender, he certainly would have plundered you Khalkhas and taken possession of your pastures . . . That I have sent out my great army without regard to the expenses to the state, and reduced Jungaria, is all for the benefit of you Khalkhas." The three Tserens, Tseren, Tseren-uvsh and Tserenmönkh, were Jungar leaders who deserted Davachi for the Manchus in 1753, and the expense incurred by the Manchus in provisioning them was one of the grievances held by Chingünjav. For this see an imperial letter of 22nd July 1756 quoted in Čimid, pp. 26—28.

those involved, both in the case of Jungars and Mongols and in that of different groupings of Mongols themselves, while not contradictory or mutually incompatible, were not mutually complementary either, except in the negative sense that only a tightly united Mongolia, or better still a united Mongolia and Jungaria, could hope to stand any chance at all against the Manchus. A divided movement would be doomed from the outset. But it was precisely this element of solidarity which was lacking, and the most cursory glance at Mongolia's history over the preceding two centuries shows us that this was only to be expected. Mongols and Jungars, and Mongols amongst themselves, would make parade of national sentiments, would appeal to the name of the great ancestor Chingis Khan as a symbol of unity, and would talk of expelling the Manchus.<sup>39</sup> But when it came to the point of action there was always a fatal individualism, at worst a selfish ambition, which proved stronger than the fine ideals, and predictably and inevitably prevented the Mongols from doing anything but bring about their own ruin in the face of a determined enemy. The Jungars in particular seem to have been obsessively determined to allow their own internal jealousies and ambitions priority over their resistance to what to us nowadays might seem to have been their obvious common enemy, the Manchus. Right up to the very end, in the late 1750's, they persistently and perversely turned aside from the struggle for their group survival to indulge in palace revolutions and civil war. Amursana was an extreme offender in this respect, now siding with the Manchus whom he invited into Jungaria in 1754—1755, now fighting against them. Mongol disunity was less obvious than this, but just as destructive. Weakened by Manchu threats and promises some aristocrats sided with Chingünjav, others actively opposed him and fought on the Manchu side, while the most influential of them all, the Khutuktu, maintained throughout an ambiguous attitude.

It was the execution of the Mongol prince Erinchindorji in the spring of 1756 which apparently brought the discontent in Khalkha to a head. In brief the background to this event is the following. In 1754 Amursana came over to the Manchus, and the next year, ostensibly a Manchu general, was in command of some 10,000 troops in the

<sup>39</sup> See for example a letter sent by the Jungar leader Galdantseren to the Khalkha prince Lamjav in 1731 which stressed the previous good relations between the two peoples and reminded the Khalkhas of their imperial past. (Nacagdorž, p. 65.)

victorious campaign against Davachi, the *taisha* of the Jungars. Dissatisfied with the extent of his reward he made no secret of his intention to take the whole of Jungaria for himself, and the Manchu emperor summoned him to court as a precaution. On the way he escaped from his escort and for the next two years fought the Manchus and his own rivals alike until he died as a fugitive. Now, although during these two years there was no effective common action by Jungars and Mongols, there was, from the very beginning, a conspiracy between them. On the campaign against Davachi, Chingünjav, prince of the Khotogoits, had been a fellow commander of Amursana's, and they had planned a combined anti-Manchu uprising to take place simultaneously in Mongolia and Jungaria in the autumn. The Manchus suspected this, and removed Chingünjav to the far north to campaign against some rebellious Uriangkhai on the upper reaches of the river Ob. He warned Amursana that their purpose was suspected, and for this reason the latter slipped his escort. The threads of treachery led further than this. The commander of Amursana's escort was Erinchindorji, who was accused of conniving at, if not actually engineering, the escape.<sup>40</sup> Amursana had left his seal of office with Erinchindorji, telling him he wished to make a detour to visit his wife and would rejoin the escort later. When it was realised that he had taken a different road altogether there was an ineffectual attempt at pursuit which was not pressed. Erinchindorji was arrested and taken to Peking where he was executed.<sup>41</sup> Traditions vary as to whether the Khutuktu, who was in Peking at this time, was compelled to watch his half-brother's execution, or whether he was summoned to see the corpse displayed. But in any case, this event, which the Mongol nobility viewed as a grave infraction of their rights,<sup>42</sup> was a powerful

<sup>40</sup> The Manchu view is succinctly stated in *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63, fols. 31v—32r: "Erinchindorji was to convey the rebel bandit Amursana to the capital. Though he knew that Amursana was intending to defect, he did nothing about it, and allowed him to flee before his very eyes." Similar text in an imperial order quoted by Čimid, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> Išžame, SH, III, p. 53, says that Erinchindorji was "cruelly put to death". *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63, fol. 32r, *Erdeni-yin erike*, p. 119b, and Čimid, p. 33, suggest that he was allowed to commit suicide.

<sup>42</sup> To the extent that Ch'ien Lung had to state specifically that he did not consider the members of the Mongol imperial clan exempt from punishment any more than his own relatives. *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63, fol. 32v and Čimid, p. 33.

factor in the outbreak of rebellion two months later, while disaffection was still further aroused by the rumour that the Khutuktu and the Tushetu Khan were being detained in Peking against their will.<sup>43</sup>

Erinchindorji's execution was one of the main grounds for complaint made by Chingünjav in his insubordinate letter addressed to the emperor in connection with his desertion of his military charge amongst the Uriangkhai and his return with his troops to his own homeland amongst the Khotogoit in the summer of 1756 which marked the beginning of the rebellion. The tone of this letter was so abrupt that his Manchu secretary refused to deal with it, and Chingünjav had it drawn up in the Mongol language by one of his own men. It is hard, from the little we know about Chingünjav, to be sure what sort of a man he was. The only contemporary reference so far to hand is a remark made about him by a minor noble of the Khotogoit when testifying to his own behaviour. What this man said was: "Our prince's nature is hard and fierce, so that everyone is afraid of him. He has few intimates and now a lot of those people who did follow him are deserting him." There are two versions of this account, which has been translated from Manchu into Mongol for publication, and the other describes Chingünjav in addition as rash or hasty, and this is perhaps the most significant thing about him.<sup>44</sup> It is not clear whether he was riding a popular wave of insurrection, for there were mutinies and attacks on the watch posts in the spring of 1756 before his uprising began and they continued for a considerable time after his death in early 1757, or whether the popular enthusiasm was crystallised by the prospect of the backing and leadership of the nobility as represented by him.<sup>45</sup> But what emerges with some clarity

<sup>43</sup> I. Ja. Zlatkin, *Očerki novoj i novejšej istorii Mongolii*, (Moscow, 1957), p. 102.

<sup>44</sup> Čimid, p. 74 and Išžamc, SH III, p. 87.

<sup>45</sup> Išžamc, SH III, p. 58, shows that attacks on the watch-posts began in spring 1756 and continued at least till late 1758. However, it was generally recognised at the time that it was Chingünjav's summons which was responsible for the major mutinies. For a characteristic statement of this opinion see Čimid, p. 55, quoting an order by Ch'ien Lung prefixed to the Khutuktu's reply to the same: "Amongst the *taijis* (i. e. nobles) and soldiers who are stationed in the watch-posts and relay-stations, some men, gulled by the reckless rumours spread by Chingünjav of the Khotogoit, have deserted their watch-posts and relay-stations and withdrawn to their pastures. In my opinion they are all stupid Mongols, and have gone off in obedience to him because they were taken in by reckless rumours. It is not that they have deserted deliberately and defiantly."

is that the rising was opportunist in nature, without plan or ultimate aim, except that a vague dream of "abandoning the Manchus" was in the air, and that it was undertaken without the assurance that there would be any significant support for it amongst the leading nobles of Mongolia. Even the initial advantage of Jungar co-operation was lost. When Amursana rose in the autumn of 1755 Chingünjav was immobilised among the Uriangkhai. By the time he was ready to profit by the news of Erinchindorji's death, Amursana was a fugitive with the Kazakhs. The two were in communication again during the winter of 1756,<sup>46</sup> but by the time Amursana was ready to move again Chingünjav was already dead.

Chingünjav's previous history shows him to have been an erratic and unreliable subject. He had been confirmed as prince of the Khotogoit in 1738 and at the same time was made a lieutenant general in Zasagtu Khan aimak. In 1744 he was reproved for slackness in the command of his troops and in 1752 he was cashiered and lost his noble rank of *beile* for failing to surrender a fugitive. In 1754 he performed meritorious service against the Uriangkhai and got his rank back, and in 1755 was again a general and was even in personal attendance on the emperor, a signal honour for a man with his record. He was supposed to take part in the campaign against Amursana in the autumn of 1755 but delayed till it was too late, and was then sent against the Uriangkhai. From this campaign he withdrew and raised the standard of revolt. What lay behind these repeated lapses from loyalty it is hard to tell, but they may well have been no more than the expression of an ambitious and irritable character, moved by personal rancour against the overlord, and finally erupting in open but unprepared rebellion.<sup>47</sup>

Lack of a clearly stated aim, lack of planning, and lack of solidarity all doomed the uprising from the beginning. Most of the nobility remained loyal to the Manchus, and some of the work of repression could even be entrusted to Mongol generals, in particular to Tsen-

<sup>46</sup> Zlatkin, "Russkie arkhivnye materialy ob Amursane", *Filologija i istorija mongol'skikh narodov*, (Moscow, 1958), p. 309.

<sup>47</sup> Details of Chingünjav's life in Pozdneev, loc. cit. and in Išžamc, SH III, pp. 84 foll., based on *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63. The Khotogoit were a west Mongol people living on the Russian border near Ubsa nur. See *Iledkel shastir* chapter 63, fol. 2r ff. for a brief account of their history. Chingünjav himself was a Khalkha, not a Khotogoit. See Išžamc, p. 85.

günjav. The Khutuktu failed to give a firm lead, though he was not unsympathetic to the anti-Manchu party, and is reported to have appealed to the Emperor for clemency for Chingünjav.<sup>48</sup> In secret he seems to have played an even more positive anti-Manchu rôle. In the summer of 1756, together with the Tushetu Khan, he engaged in conversations with Yakobi, the Russian commandant at Selenginsk, on the subject of secession from Manchu sovereignty and submission to the Tsar. It was not till October that Yakobi got authority to pursue the matter further, and by then it was too late, as the Khutuktu had been overawed by Manchu intimidation, and in his turn had exercised all his prestige to persuade the Khalkhas to return to their duty.<sup>49</sup>

It seems safe to assert that Chingünjav, though the initiator of positive rebellion, was not the key figure in the crisis at all. Everything depended on the way the Khutuktu would move, and very probably Chingünjav's apparent dilatoriness was forced upon him by the need to wait and see on which side, if either, the Khutuktu would declare himself. It was well known at the time what a vital position the Khutuktu occupied, and loyal Mongols had advised the Emperor of his key function. In the middle of September, Sanjaidorji, then a general in Tushetu Khan aimak, wrote to the Emperor:

"Now if your slave follows orders and takes troops to suppress Chingünjav, it may have the unwelcome result that the Khalkhas as a whole will rally to his support, and it is my humble opinion . . . that it will be a setback to your Majesty's polity if by fear the Khalkhas are moved to disturbance. My stupid opinion is the following: The only person whom the Khalkhas trust implicitly is the Khutuktu, and the most advantageous step would be to extend favour towards him and get him to pacify the Khalkhas."<sup>50</sup>

This was a correct analysis of the situation. Mongolia as a whole was waiting to see what direction the Khutuktu would take before committing itself. But the Khutuktu delayed, and allowed the initiative to escape him, till he was manoeuvred into a position of impotence and the rebellion collapsed under the weight of Manchu oppression.

<sup>48</sup> *Iledkel shastir*, chapter 63, fol. 34r.

<sup>49</sup> For the negotiations with Russia see Zlatkin, *Očerki*, pp. 103 foll. It was assumed by the Russians that in the event of secession the Khutuktu would move into Russian territory, rather than that annexations of Mongol territory would take place.

<sup>50</sup> Čimid, p. 52.

The Khutuktu, who was known in Peking to have been agitating against the Manchus after his return from China in the summer of 1756 had, by October, been intimidated by Manchu agents. The Emperor had sent him a letter ordering him to do his best to persuade the nobility of Mongolia to restrain their subjects and bring them back to their duty, and this letter was circulated together with the Khutuktu's reply to it. Lamas were also sent round the countryside to preach loyalty to the Emperor.<sup>51</sup> Further, in October 1756, the Emperor called a general assembly of the Khalkha leagues at which he was represented by the Buddhist "metropolitan" of Peking, the Jangjia Khutuktu. The presence of this dignitary, and the appointment of Tsengünjav as general of Uliasutai, were sufficient to sway the Khutuktu and the aristocrats to swear an oath of loyalty.<sup>52</sup> In face of this, the messengers whom Chingünjav sent one after another to the Khutuktu to try to persuade him to come out on the side of the rebellion achieved nothing. Nor did anything come of a meeting which Chingünjav hoped to hold in Urga in early October to organise a coherent campaign against the Manchus under the Mongol nobility. The reluctance of the Khutuktu, the hesitation of most of the nobility, and the realisation that the Manchus were a determined opponent, all told against him and the meeting never took place. It is probably a true measure of Chingünjav's fatal impetuosity, and

<sup>51</sup> A text of this letter, addressed to the Setsen Khan Manibadar, is given in Čimid, pp. 54, 56. It makes plain the imperial policy of dividing the rebels by promising clemency to those who returned to their duty, but severe punishments for those who continued to resist after the order had been published: "Wherefore I shall not condemn them blindly, but if amongst them there are those who, having seen the orders I have given, return to their respective watch-posts and relay-stations, I shall pardon them all and not punish them. If having seen my orders they still intentionally do not return to their appropriate watch-posts and relay-stations, after having investigated the matter thoroughly, I shall punish them severely." The Khutuktu was charged with the duty of sending out lamas to preach loyalty to the Manchus, "since you, Khutuktu, are the grand lama whom all the four aimaks of the Khalkha revere". The Khutuktu, in his reply to the Emperor, paid lip-service at least to the principle introduced under Khubilai Khan of the special relationship of "lama and patron" which existed between them, an interesting confirmation of the fact that this relationship, originally uniting the Mongol emperors of China with high Tibetan lamas, had been transferred to the Manchu emperors of China and the high lama of Khalkha.

<sup>52</sup> *Išžamc*, SH III, p. 75.

perhaps also of excessive egotism, that he did not try to discuss matters with the leading nobles of Mongolia until a good two months after he had disclosed his hand to the Manchus by deserting his post.

The sorry tale of vacillation continued after Chingünjav's elimination. A feeling persisted that when the next worship of the Khutuktu took place in Urga in summer 1757, the pontiff would lead the people over to allegiance to Russia. Everything depended on him, but he could not bring himself to take a definite step. The great meeting of 1757 came and went, the nobles dispersed, and the long awaited decision was never taken. This hesitancy must be considered partly responsible for the failure to do anything effective to dislodge the Manchus, but, when it came to the point, there must have seemed good reason to the Khutuktu for not encouraging a rising whose success was very doubtful, whose spread would involve the whole people in disaster similar to that overtaking Jungaria, and which at best would only mean the exchange of the suzerainty of the Tsar for that of the Manchu emperor. But the Khutuktu's equivocal rôle did not save him personally. It is generally believed that he was assassinated by order of Ch'ien Lung in 1758,<sup>54</sup> and that the deaths of other Khalkha nobles such as the Tushetu Khan and the general Limpildorji were no accident either. The Emperor had a fulsome eulogy of the Khutuktu published, enumerating all he had done to defeat the traitor Chingünjav, evidently with the intention of concealing his real rôle, and it is from Russian archives that the other side of the story has to be pieced together.

Without support from the Khutuktu, the rebellion was doomed to fail. Chingünjav's lack of enterprise is amazing. He was under suspicion at least since late 1755, but by the summer of 1756 he had done nothing to prepare for rebellion. He recruited no initial force beyond those followers he brought back from the Uriangkhai campaign, who numbered about 800, and the most generous estimates never allow him more than some 2000 soldiers. From the first he was having to spend his private fortune. It was only after he had actually deserted his post that he began to try to win over other nobles, and only then did he send out a belated summons to action in which he reminded them

<sup>54</sup> For the rumour concerning the murder of the Khutuktu see Nacagdorž, p. 92 and p. 212, Zlatkin, *Očerki*, p. 107, and L. Cedev, *Ikh Šav'*, [The Shabi-estate], (Ulan Bator, 1964), *Studia Historica* VI, 2, p. 10.

of Manchu misdeeds, in particular of heavy taxation and of the insult of the execution of Erinchindorji, a member of the clan of Chinghis Khan. He called on them to desert the Manchus. Once again we note the appeal to the name of the great ancestor, and once again it proved an empty form of words. Few nobles joined the rebellion wholeheartedly, and even these operated in isolation from each other.<sup>54</sup> Chingünjav, having declared himself, should have struck at once while the Manchus were unprepared, but he seems never to have made a positive military move against them at all. As even Mr. Išžamc admits, it is hard to see just what he was doing in the months immediately after he returned to his home pastures.<sup>55</sup> Chingünjav did call the soldiers in the watch posts and relay stations out in mutiny, with considerable success, but he himself seems to have remained inactive amongst the Khotogoit till forced to retreat further and further north. Finally, in January 1757 he was captured with the few faithful followers who had not abandoned him, and sent to Peking for execution.<sup>56</sup>

The rebellion as a whole, though a violent outburst of popular feeling, was a ragged and disastrous episode. It was the general desertion of the watch posts and relay stations which caused the Manchus most anxiety,<sup>57</sup> but the latter acted with vigour and restored these essential posts to service by at first manning them with Inner Mongol soldiers from their own army. But even this mutiny, widespread though it was, was not a coherent national uprising, and enthusiasm for it was shaken by the Emperor's promise of leniency for those who resumed duty, and severe punishment for those who held out. There seem to have been no major clashes with the Manchu armies. Chingünjav, in the north west, did try to recruit troops from the neighbouring Uriangkhai. Some joined him, but many of even these warlike chieftains, who were not even Mongols, refused, like some of his

<sup>54</sup> Thus Išžamc, SH III, p. 55, says that two chief conspirators, the duke (*güng*) Damiran and the *beile* Tsevdén "did not join in a unified uprising, but separated and each went off to his own pastures."

<sup>55</sup> SH III, p. 66.

<sup>56</sup> *Erdeni-yin erike*, p. 122b, suggests that he was allowed to commit suicide.

<sup>57</sup> Sanjaidorji, reporting to the throne on 14th September 1756, said: "It is not just the rebel bandit Chingünjav alone, but all the Khalkhas who have deserted" and again a few days later: "There are very great numbers of *taijis* and soldiers in many watch-posts who have failed to obey me and have abandoned their important watch-posts and deserted in every direction." See Čimid, p. 52 and Išžamc, SH III, p. 56.

own Khotogoits, to rebel. Nor was Chingünjav able even to keep the loyalty of his own followers. As he was hunted further and further towards Russia, they fell away. When he had only 200 men left he had to suppress a mutiny in his own ranks. Then his forces dropped to 100. By mid-January he was on the Russian frontier with 50 men, amongst the Black Darkhads who sided with the Manchus. After a fierce final battle he was captured. As the Manchu commanders afterwards reported to the Emperor, in the end it had been the desertion of his own men which had told against him. "We, your slaves, did not await the arrival of the army to catch the bandit, but his own subjects, even to his own kin, themselves abandoned him."<sup>58</sup>

Outbreaks of violence all over Mongolia directed against the Chinese merchants and their shops exercised the Manchus at the same time. These were undoubtedly stimulated by Chingünjav's call to rebel, but like the army mutinies they were unplanned and unco-ordinated and seem to have had no objective beyond immediate plunder. For example, Kiakhta on the Russian border was taken and plundered by a force of 300 Mongols, but the victors seem not to have known what to do once their immediate aim of "eating Kiakhta" as they expressed it, had been achieved. They held the town for a couple of months, and were then, for the most part, taken prisoner by the imperial forces. Uрга, too, was attacked, and the Chinese shops there plundered, but the raid was an insignificant and ephemeral affair with no long-term effect.<sup>59</sup> The bands of armed men who attacked the traders were often small, consisting of no more than half a dozen herdsmen, and the official archives refer to them slightly as bandits and robbers. Sometimes the troubles merely afforded individuals a chance to pay off old scores and had no more generous aim.<sup>60</sup> In other cases, we read of Mongols simply following the herd and attacking the Chinese

<sup>58</sup> Čimid, p. 78, in a submission to the throne by Tsengünjav and others.

<sup>59</sup> A report of this raid by forty men on eight Chinese shops in Uрга is given in Čimid, p. 45.

<sup>60</sup> For instance, a number of Mongols were arrested for killing a Chinese named Sangaa and his associates, among them six Mongols. One of the accused had a debt with Sangaa, and when the latter came to collect it he tried to put off the repayment by saying he was just going to shift camp and would pay later. It came to a quarrel, but Sangaa escaped with the help of some bystanders. Then the accused talked the matter over with some of his relatives, and they simply decided to join a band of marauders who had come to plunder the local Chinese. See Išžamc, SH III, p. 82.

merchants because they had heard that others were doing so.<sup>61</sup> However satisfying such escapades may have been at the moment, they can have had no real result except to attract reprisals on the part of the much superior imperial forces. Nevertheless, 1756 was an exceptional year for violence, with outbursts occurring throughout Mongolia on an unprecedented scale, and the Manchus were obliged to deal severely with the unrest. Some bands of "bandits" were of considerable size, running into hundreds of men, as at Kiakhta, and reports put in by the general Limpildorji and others show that these large bands were often led by members of the nobility or by officials of the *shabi*, the personal estate of the Khutuktu.<sup>62</sup>

The suppression of the revolt was thorough and severe, though not as ruthless as in Jungaria, and the impression one derives from the published archives is that the weight of vengeance fell rather on those who had plundered the Chinese traders than on the mutinous troops. Special punitive units scoured Mongolia to deal with the rebels on the spot. How they set about their task can be seen, to take one example, from a report submitted to the throne by Huturinga and Dorji, two special commissioners who carried out much of the work of repression. Of one affair they wrote: "Eleven bandits . . . were beheaded, and their heads displayed as a warning at the place where they made their raid. Nineteen secondary bandits . . . were also summarily executed to set an example to others. We propose to confiscate their tents and cattle and to allot their wives and children as slaves to deserving nobles in the aimak. Of 183 men who made raids in various places in the district of Khüi and elsewhere, 30 have now been executed, and as for the 153 who remain and have not yet been caught, we are ordering the authorities concerned to arrest them and convey them here for execution as a public example, without

<sup>61</sup> See for instance evidence quoted in a submission by Huturinga: "We all heard rumours that a big force of bandits was coming down from the north-west and had attacked the army relay-stations. Further, we heard that they had plundered the goods of the Chinese traders in various places. So we banded together and went off to plunder the goods and cattle of the Chinese traders in the same way, and it is true that we did plunder them." Čimid, p. 109.

<sup>62</sup> Čimid, pp. 44—49, gives a number of reports about bands of up to two hundred men, some led by *tusalagchis* (a *tusalagchi* was the chief official in a banner under the *zasag*) and *taijis*. For the rebellious activities of lamas see Išžamc, SH III, p. 97.

distinction of whether they are ringleaders or secondary offenders.”<sup>63</sup> The captors of Kiakhtha were similarly dealt with, most of them being executed and their heads displayed on poles, while their families were dispersed into slavery. Chingünjav and his family were executed, as were several nobles who had supported him, and his immediate followers were severely punished though some of them were mere children, and they and others professed not to have known what was going on.<sup>64</sup> Some rebels were let off as “stupid Mongols,” but many were executed, while others, especially lamas, were banished on foot to distant, and for Mongols, unhealthy provinces of south China. Wives and children were enslaved to loyal nobles or were handed over as reparations to Chinese traders whose stocks had been plundered.<sup>65</sup> To judge by reports from Russian visitors to Mongolia at the time, the whole nation was reduced to beggary. Again and again they encountered beggars kneeling by the side of the road asking for charity, and with their own eyes saw women and little girls being loaded on to carts to be sent off as compensation to Chinese merchants.<sup>66</sup>

The Manchus had little difficulty in suppressing the rebellion, as soon as they had recovered from the initial surprise. Chingünjav's inactivity gave them time to bring up reinforcements from Inner Mongolia, and they were able to restore the watch-posts and relay-stations to service, to catch Chingünjav himself, and to deal with the

<sup>63</sup> Čimid, p. 110.

<sup>64</sup> Thus one of Chingünjav's noble supporters, the *taiji* Banjur, said: “The prince never gave me any explicit commands, but as he was the general and prince of our aimak I could not but follow him. In particular I never understood that he was proposing to rebel.” Two young boys made the following confessions: “Confession of Tögs: I am fourteen years old, a subject of Chingünjav. We had nothing much at home, so as Chingünjav was my lord I worked for him and stayed with him gathering dried dung for fuel to get my living. I don't know anything else about the matter. Confession of Lasran: I am thirteen years old, the grandson of Togd. It is true that I followed my grandfather Togd, but I don't know anything else about it.” The judgment was as follows: “We have publicly executed Togd, Aravdan, Doolin and Dampil on the 14th of the month, and we propose that, as Tögs and Lasran are small children under fifteen who did not understand the matter, but were forced into following the bandits, they be pardoned from execution, and allotted as slaves to deserving nobles in other aimaks.” Čimid, pp. 93—100.

<sup>65</sup> On slavery see especially Natsagdorž, “Gerijn khüvüüdiin ušir”, [On tent-slaves], *BNMAU Šinzlekh ukhaary akademijn mëdël*, 1965, 2, pp. 83—88.

<sup>66</sup> Zlatkin, *Očerki*, pp. 107/108.

marauding bands in the countryside, whose energy had been dissipated in plundering the Chinese traders, and who had no longer term objective. On the purely material side the rebellion collapsed because the Manchus were a well-armed, unified force, subject to central discipline, and mobilised against a far more dangerous enemy, the Jungars, compared with whom the Khalkhas represented a minor distraction. The Mongols were poorly armed, with, for the most part only clubs with which to face the hand guns and artillery of the Manchus. Their psychological handicaps were equally grave. The rebellion of 1756 was from the start undermined by a fatal disunity and reckless individualism. It betrays irresponsible haste, rash opportunism, lack of planning and co-ordination, and absence of a common purpose, at every turn. In general the Mongol aristocracy did not join Chingünjav. Reports submitted to the throne by loyal Mongol nobles overflow with gratitude for the imperial favours they had long been receiving, and even if we discount much of this as formal sycophancy, there is no doubt that the Mongol nobility did enjoy a privileged position in the empire. They can hardly have been disposed to jeopardize this by rising in rebellion against a powerful overlord at the behest of a minor chieftain who had no clear policy beyond a vague dream of “independence” as it is now termed, but which at the time would have meant at best the exchange of one overlord for another, at worst, mere anarchy.

The rebellion was not an anti-feudal uprising. Once or twice we hear of a noble being robbed, or of a chieftain who tried to obstruct the rebels being put out of the way, but basically there was never a hint of an intent to change the social order or even of the realisation that such a step might be within the realm of possibility. A negative xenophobia rather than a positive will towards national independence seems to be what inspired the rebels, and this lack of a feeling of solidarity and purpose manifested itself in the series of ragged outbursts of violence which were characteristic of the movement.

Contemporary Mongolian scholars view the rebellion as being an armed uprising of the Mongol people in a struggle for independence. Reasons for considering this an anachronistic analysis have already been given, but on the other hand the rebellion must be regarded as much more than a mere eruption of malcontents, however vaguely conceived, ill-planned and raggedly executed it was. In its extent and violence it no doubt exceeded the successful national movement of

1911, but the conditions of the time were very different. The noble conspirators of 1911 enjoyed the good will of Russia and even some calculating help too, while they had to deal only with the demoralised remnants of a dying dynasty which was itself faced with revolution at home. The rebels of 1756 had in Ch'ien Lung a far more ruthless and ambitious opponent, and were unable to develop their movement to the point where coherence might have been visible, even supposing that the will to concerted action in fact existed. Certainly at the ostensible head of the rebellion, that is Chingünjav, there was a declared will to desert the Manchus, though with what confidence it was expressed is doubtful, and in any case it was the Khutuktu, not the erratic minor prince of the Khotogoit, to whom all Khalkha, noble and commoner alike, looked for a lead. It is as the figure of a liberator that Chingünjav has survived in Mongol folk memory, but folk songs and legends are not the true stuff of history, and what Mongols recalled about Chingünjav in the late nineteenth century is not necessarily relevant to the realities of the mid-eighteenth century. The question to be answered is what the Mongols thought they were fighting for at the time, and what evidence we have is unreliable. The confessions of captured rebels are probably tainted evidence, since they were trying by minimising their responsibility to save their lives, so that probably a proper evaluation of this episode will rest on the interpretation of the broad facts we possess rather than what the actors said about themselves.

There would seem to be a real difference between the utterance of the slogan of independence or, as Chingünjav put it in a rather more negative way, and one betraying his noble origin and outlook, abandonment of the Manchu emperor, and the demonstration of an active will towards independence. There is little to suggest that any Mongol leader had any idea of an alternative to some form of foreign overlordship: even the Khutuktu was speculating only along the lines of migrating to new pastures within the Tsar's dominions, not of setting up an independent state, and some groups of Mongols took the traditional way out of a difficult situation by migrating mostly northwards into Buryatia.<sup>67</sup> It is perhaps not too bold to suggest that it was the burden of the chronic wars with the Jungars which brought the Mongols to the point of rebellion, and once this burden was re-

<sup>67</sup> *Išamc*, SH III, p. 103.

moved, and, what is more, the infectious example of a turbulent Jungaria for ever eliminated, there were no more stirrings of rebellion against the Manchus, except for sporadic riots on occasions during the nineteenth century, until the collapse of the dynasty provided a pretext for severing the historical connection with Peking.

The immediate effect of this unsuccessful rebellion upon Mongolia was little short of disastrous, especially as it had come after the exceptionally heavy winter of 1755—1756, when heavy frost and deep snow had caused great losses in cattle, and an epidemic of smallpox had cut down the population. However, the pacification policy of the Manchus was much less severe than the genocide they practised in Jungaria, and life soon recovered its old tenor. The Manchu administration was reinforced, especially with the development of Khobdo as the centre of government in the far west under a Manchu amban. Chinese traders continued to come in and to consolidate their position. The Emperor tried to relieve destitution by cancelling part of the official debt which the Mongols owed to the merchants, and by paying off part himself with a special grant,<sup>68</sup> but this was only a palliative, and by 1775 the official debt was a quarter as much again as it had been in 1756, and continued to grow. Even so, 1756 is a turning point in Mongol history. It exhausted the opposition to the Manchus, and it took another century and a half before the Mongol nobility, taking advantage of the decline of the imperial power, organised another, and successful coup. The one fundamental change the Manchus made was in the position of the Khutuktu. In order to avoid any repetition of the close family alliance between the Khutuktu and the powerful of the Tushetu Khan, it was decreed that with the third incarnation, the Jebtsundamba Khutuktu was to be "rediscovered" only in Tibet. From the third to the seventh, partly for the reason that they were foreigners, brought in as children into a hostile political atmosphere, the Khutuktus failed to exert much influence, though it is an ironical conclusion to the story of Mongolia's subjection to the Manchus that it was a Tibetan Khutuktu, the eighth, who was partly responsible for the expulsion of the Manchus from Mongolia in 1911 and who ascended the throne as the first, and only, king of an independent Mongolia.

<sup>68</sup> Publicly contracted debts as distinct from those owed by individuals. For imperial assistance in repaying debts see *Sanždorž*, p. 64.

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