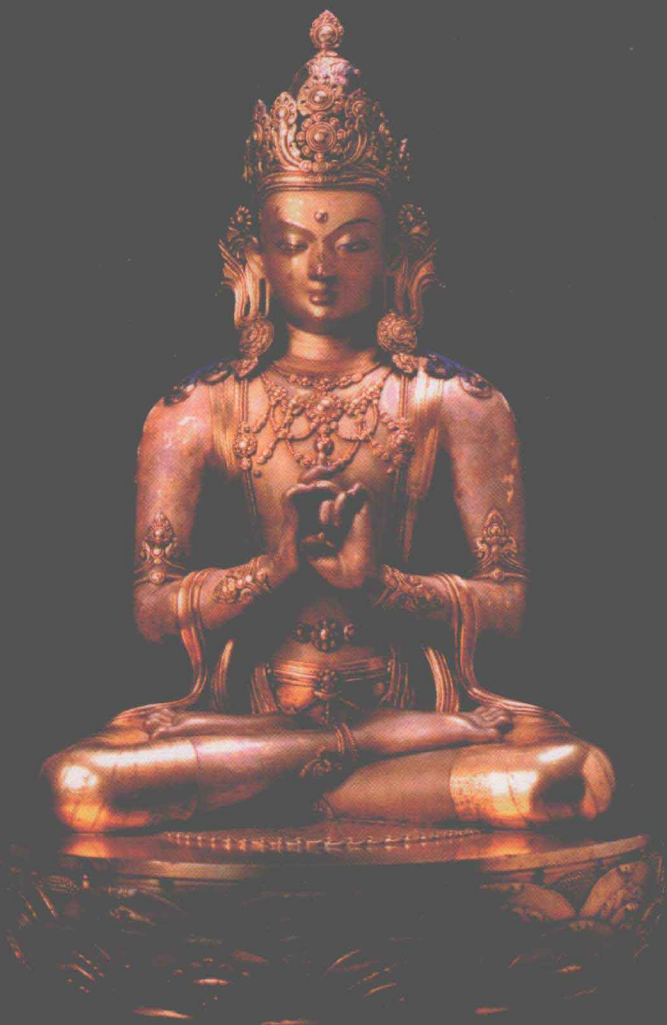


MONGOLIA

in the 21st Century

Society, Culture and International Relations



K. Warikoo • Sharad K. Soni

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Edited by

K. Warikoo ~~and~~ Sharad K. Soni



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PREFACE

Mongolia occupies a unique place in the geographical heartland of Asia. Bordered by Siberia in the north and Gobi desert in the south and surrounded by two powerful neighbours – Russia and China, Mongolia has had a peculiar geo-strategic situation of being land-locked. Its location at the crossroads of Central Asia, North East Asia, Far East, China and Russia further enhances the importance of Mongolia. Having an area as big as 1,566,500 sq. kms. with little over 2.6 million population, Mongolia is the seventh largest country in Asia in terms of its territory but populationwise it is one of the smallest. Its significance, however, lies in the territory rather than in population, which contributed much to the shaping of its distinct nomadic civilisation and its history. The Mongol expansion under Chinggis Khan left a significant impact of the nomadic peoples of Inner Asia on the sedentary world. In fact the Mongol led campaigns not only threatened the security of major settled regions of Eurasian continent but also brought a vast zone stretching from the China Sea to the banks of Dnieper under the unified Mongol rule led by Chinggis Khan himself and later on by his successors.

At the turn of the twenty first century, Mongolia has been trying to overcome its geographical disadvantage of being a landlocked state and is striving to open itself to the outside world despite being surrounded by two giant powers – Russia and China. Moreover, in the post-Cold War security environment of Mongolia, bilateral and multilateral cooperation has become the key factor of regional dynamism in the Asia-Pacific. With the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War the geopolitical situation of Mongolia was altered. This encouraged China to consider its future relations with Mongolia in the

framework of new geopolitical realities on the northern side of its border. There have also been concerns about Mongolia's search for a Third Neighbour, such as the United States or Japan which could act as a balancing power vis-à-vis Russia and China.

Mongolia now seeks to ensure the security of its own existence by strictly observing the policy of not allowing the use of the country's territory against other States; ensuring its Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone status at the international level and making it an important element of strengthening the country's security by political means. China, on the other hand, wants to build up its power base in North East Asia due to its geo-strategic and geo-economic importance.

As regards India and Mongolia, both countries have had civilisational links spanning over a period of 2,700 years despite being geographically far away. The two countries are the southern and northern ends of a Buddhist arch which provides the cultural foundation of a political and cosy strategic relationship. It is this cultural compatibility that has defined the interests of India and Mongolia. Almost 90 per cent of the Mongolians are Buddhists who consider India as the land of the Buddha's birth and hence affectionately they call India their "Spiritual neighbour." Mongolia's new freedom of strategic choice has further highlighted the commonality of interests. With the signing of the Treaty of Friendly Relations and Cooperation in 1994, a solid foundation was laid down for further development of bilateral relations and cooperation in regional and global affairs.

Both Mongolia and India are involved in several activities including expansion of their multipronged cooperation in diverse areas. Mongolia has some untapped assets which can attract participation by Indian businessmen. Mongolia's assets include abundant mineral resources, broad opportunities to utilise solar and wind energy, a large livestock economy, an agricultural area totalling 130 million hectares, a geographical bridge between Central Asia and Northeast Asia, and a strong commitment to a market economy. Besides, Mongolia's geopolitical location makes it very special for India's Asian strategy.

India's traditional security thrust in South East Asia is now being extended to East Asia and the Pacific and Mongolia figures prominently in this initiative, particularly if it goes beyond to include North East Asia. The new role of India in East Asia for regional cooperation is expected to have its impact on Mongolia as well. Mongolia has been reiterating its support for India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council. That India and Mongolia have been maintaining closer ties, notwithstanding the physical barriers is also evident from the fact that in December 2005 the two sides agreed in principle to launch a new joint project for the establishment of a satellite-based e-network for tele-education and tele-medicine in Mongolia. The present status of India-Mongolia relations can be described as the "most friendly, cordial and trouble-free."

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the first national minority autonomous region in Chinese history, has also been playing a significant role. In terms of geopolitical importance, Inner Mongolia occupies 3,193 kms., i.e., 70 per cent of the borderland area of the 4,677 kms. long Sino-Mongolian border. With its 15 banners (*hoshuns*) sharing common borders with Mongolia and having five trading ports of first and second-class categories, Inner Mongolia plays a sort of bridge between China and Mongolia. Although the Mongols in Inner Mongolia and Mongolia are living in two different countries, ethnically they belong to the one group sharing same language, culture and the lifestyle. While relations between Mongolia and China have reached a high point, there are some risk factors in their relations. Mongolian notion of potential Chinese threat to reoccupy its "lost territory" is still prevailing as Mongolia had been the Chinese frontier province under the Qing dynasty from 1691 to 1911. The issue of "Pan-Mongolism" or Mongolian nationalism is still a bone of contention between the two sides. China is increasing its economic leverage in Mongolia in order to ensure the non-involvement of Mongolia in any kind of ethnic resurgence of Inner Mongols for the Pan-Mongolist cause.

So far as the Russian Federation is concerned, the indigenous groups having close ethnic affinities with Mongols

are concentrated in the Republics of Buryatia, Tuva and Kalmykia. The intellectuals and Buddhist clergy from these Republics have been traditionally wielding considerable influence in Russia particularly in its dealings with Mongolia and Tibet. The post-Cold War era has signified the end of strategic conflict and heralded the end of viewing international politics purely through the geopolitical perspective. New security agenda of states is comprehensive and broad, economics and politics often playing major roles in the individual country's internal and external security interests. Mongolia's international relations have now "shifted from predominantly political and military fields to economic, scientific-technological and information sectors, in other words, from geopolitics to geo-economics." As such Mongolia recently has become a centre of attraction for not only its two neighbours but also the US, Europe, Japan and others.

It is in this background that this book deals with both the historical, cultural, economic, geopolitical perspectives on Mongolia and also its relations with direct and third neighbours. The book is based on the papers presented by eminent academics and Mongolists from India, Mongolia, Russia, USA, Kazakhstan, China, Japan and Turkey at an International Seminar organized in November 2007 by the Central Asian Area Studies Programme, Centre for South, Central, South East Asian & South West Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

First three chapters provide historical perspectives on the statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads, Mongolian influences on the economic, military, social and cultural life during Mongolian rule in Anatolia, besides shedding light on the documents in Turkish Archives related to Mongolia. Fourth chapter traces the Mongolic elements in the Hazaragi language of Afghanistan. Issues of Mongolian nationalism and importance of Mongolian language and culture in the identity formation in Mongolia are analysed in chapters five to six. Chapter seven while surveying the literature related to Chinggis Khan, his life and exploits, analyses the revival of Chinggis cult and its importance for the historical and cultural heritage and political

identity in Mongolia. Whereas the evolving national security interests of Mongolia, particularly in Northeast and Central Asia are explored in eighth chapter, the following chapter delves into the vulnerability of the economic security of Mongolia. Chapter ten analyses the position of Mongolian women not only in the pre and post-1921 periods, but also during the post-socialist economic transition period. Five chapters (eleven to fifteen) deal with India-Mongolia relations in a comprehensive manner, tracing their civilisational ties from ancient to modern times, contribution of Prof. Raghuvira to the promotion of Mongolian studies, links between Indian and Mongolian literature with particular reference to the Buddhist influences, and the problems and prospects of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Whereas chapter sixteen deals with Sino-Mongolian relations in contemporary times, three chapters (seventeen to nineteen) explore the relations between Mongolia and Russia, particularly after the break-up of former USSR. Chapter twenty provides insight into the political and economic relations between the United States and Mongolia during the past two decades.

Mongol culture areas outside Mongolia in Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of China, Buryatia, Kalmykia and Tuva Republics of Russian Federation are dealt with separately and in detail in seven chapters (twenty-one to twenty-seven). The study is rounded up by a chapter focusing on the issue of migration of ethnic Kazakh diaspora (*Oralmans*) from Mongolia to Kazakhstan.

Editors

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CHAPTER 1

STATEHOOD TRADITIONS OF MONGOLIAN NOMADS

B. Enkhuvshin

First of all, it must be made clear that being civilized does not ultimately mean urbanized. Majority of researchers and scholars in the field of civilization study define a civilization as a harmonious coherence of social life, administration, law, letters and culture, education, technology, science and art. According to this definition, state, governance and statehood traditions are the elements of civilization. Therefore, there is no ground to regard nomads, who had their own state and a highly developed statehood doctrine as uncivilized, uncultured or barbarian. The statehood tradition of Mongolian nomads has a history of 2,200 years and they influenced the establishment of a distinct nomadic civilization which belongs to the treasure of civilizations created by the humanity.

Derived from their way of living, traditions, religion, mentality and values, the statehood tradition of Mongolian nomads is the intellectual foundation of their state. While we consider the statehood traditions from the point of view of civilization studies, the statehood is regarded as implementation of the governance idea expressed by the state writing, the ways of treatment by state of its subjects and people, the rules, concept, policy and ideology of perception by citizens of their state. Secondly, we cannot consider the statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads separately from the history of establishment of the Mongolian state.

The history of the classic statehood traditions of Mongolian

nomads (3rd century BC – 13th century AD) can be classified into three inter-related periods, namely birth, heritage and restoration. Following this principle and from the point of view of civilization development, this paper presents an overview of the establishment and development of classic statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads through following periods:

- Ancient period (3rd century BC – 3rd century AD)
- Early states established on the Mongolian soil (3rd century AD-11th century AD)
- The Mongol State Empire (12th-13th centuries AD)

PERIOD OF THE HUN EMPIRE

The period of the Hun Empire (3rd century BC – 3rd century AD) and establishment of Great Mongol State and the Mongol Empire are of our particular interest. It was during this period that the classical statehood tradition of Mongolian nomads was established and developed and that Mongolians left their traces in the development of world civilization. The Hun State was founded in 209 BC. It is believed that the statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads originated from this time.

Firstly, these traditions based on culture originated from nomadic husbandry and customs derived from particular geographic and natural conditions. The sky was the supreme belief of the Hun Empire and became essential spiritual content of Central Asian nomadic people. Introduction of writing had an extraordinary impact on the state development of Hunnus. Hunnus had a state seal and used a special seal in their relations with other states. The Hun Empire maintained official contacts with neighboring states and concluded treaties of friendship. Preservation of territorial integrity was the foundation of statehood concept. We consider that development of this concept formed one of the key elements of statehood, which is protection and development by the state of its society, civilization and culture.

Secondly, to compare with sedentary states, Hunnus established a relatively simple system, and organized their

governance to be able to conduct independent domestic and foreign affairs. They developed an army organized into a system of 10, 100, 1000 and 10000 units, divided the country into the central, eastern and western administrative parts and promoted the view of heaven above, which meant the respect for state power. This leads to a conclusion that during the time of the Hun Empire another key element of statehood was formulated, which is perception, trust and attitude of citizens towards the state.

Thirdly, Hunnus ensured security of the famous Silk Road and developed the world trade network. They reached cultural centers of Mesopotamia from western China through mountainous and steppe regions of Central Asia. The great road linking Rome, Muslim countries and Western Europe served as the road for interaction of nomads. City-states emerged along this road in Asia, Arabia and Africa. Besides, Buddhism, Muslim, Daos and Christian religions peacefully co-existed along this road. The nomads used this road to introduce the Chinese paper-making technology in Egypt and Europe and the modern military technology in Eurasia.

STATEHOOD OF ANCIENT MONGOLIAN AND OTHER STATES ON MONGOLIAN TERRITORY

Although subsequent Mongolian ancestor states, such as kingdoms of Hsianbi (1st-3rd centuries AD), Jujani (4th-6th centuries AD), Khyatan (8th-12th centuries AD) and Tureg (6th-8th centuries AD) emerged as successors of previous states and inherited statehood traditions to some extent, certainly they brought their own peculiarities of statehood due to their unique culture and writing.

Firstly, historical evidence shows that the notion of *qagan* came into being during the Hsianbi state period. The Hsianbi state just like the Hun empire divided its territory into the central, east and western administrative parts, had decimal unit system, state and laws. This state was a nomadic civilization with its own script, shamanism, nomadic customs and morals. Elevation to royal rank was introduced in Hsianbi era which was inherited by the Great Mongol State in the 13th century AD.