The Mongolia Society was established in 1961 as a private, non-profit, non-political organization interested in promoting the study of Mongolia, its history, language and culture. The aims of the Society are exclusively scholarly, educational, and charitable. Members receive free copies of the Journal and the Survey and have the right to vote and participate in the activities of the Society. Institutional members receive the Journal, the Survey, and the Occasional Papers Series.

The Mongolia Society 2013 Annual Meeting and Panels

The 2013 Annual Meeting of The Mongolia Society will be held in conjunction with the Mongolian Cultural Center's annual Mongolian conference on Friday and Saturday May 3 and 4, 2013, at the Mongolian Embassy in Washington, DC. Furthermore, we also will be meeting in conjunction with the North America-Mongolia Business Council (NAMBC) on Tuesday and Wednesday May 7 and 8, 2013 at the Residence Inn Arlington (Virginia) Capital View, close by Reagan National Airport.

We are placing a CALL FOR PAPERS for the 2013 Annual Meeting and Panels in WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 3, 4, 2013. Please submit your abstract on Mongolian history, language, and culture no later than April 10, 2013. The abstract must contain the paper title, be no more than 300 words and have contact information, including email address. You must be a Mongolia Society member to present a paper. To join the Society, please either contact the Society office or go to our website www.mongoliasociety.org

Please submit your abstract to Susie Drost, The Mongolia Society, 322 Goodbody Hall, IU, 1011 E. 3rd St., Bloomington, IN 47405-7005; Telephone and Fax number: 812-855-4078; E-Mail: monsoc@indiana.edu

The NAMBC meeting includes a Tuesday night reception at the Mongolian Embassy and a variety of speakers from Mongolia, the US, and Canada speaking on business, particularly mining topics. Our President, Dr. Alicia Campi, has been asked to speak on a panel focusing on Mongolian resource nationalism and the mining sector. Mongolia Society members are most encouraged to attend.

Delgerzaya Delgerjargal performing at the Mongolian New Year reception in Bloomington

Look for your 2013 Board of Directors election ballot to be sent to you shortly.
The 2012 Annual Meeting of The Mongolia Society was held on Saturday, March 17th in Toronto, Canada. This was the first annual meeting the Society has held outside the United States. Professor Jennifer Purtle, an art history professor specializing in the Mongol Yuan Dynasty at the University of Toronto, facilitated the arrangements for the Society. The day’s activities were divided into two parts. The Annual Business Meeting was held in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. The keynote address was given by Mr. Ganbold Dambajav, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Mongolia to Canada, representing His Excellency Mr. Tundevdorj Zalaav-Uul, the Mongolian Ambassador to Canada. Elected to the Board of Directors was Prof. Bulag of Cambridge University in England, Dr. Peter Marsh of California State University-East Bay, and Susan Meinheit of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

The meeting then moved to the lovely historic Croft Chapter House at the University of Toronto for an afternoon presentation devoted to exploring mining and environmental issues in Mongolia. Mongolia Society President, Dr. Alicia Campi, introduced the 2011 Award winning film by Executive Producer and Director Ed Nef entitled “Mongolia: Mining Challenges a Civilization.” After the film was shown, a panel discussion followed. Panelists included Ed Nef, Santis president and movie producer; Steve Saunders, Executive Director of the North American-Mongolia Business Council (NAMBC); Ms. Tsogzolmaa Dorj-Adiya, a mining researcher from the University of Quebec who spoke on mining and mining safety; and Mr. Ganbold Dambajav, of the Mongolian Embassy to Canada. After a lively discussion, there was a reception. About 70 people attended the day’s activities, including members of the Canadian-Mongolian immigrant community living in Toronto and Quebec.

This meeting was sponsored by The Mongolia Society, Jalsa Urubshurow and Nomadic Expeditions, Toronto Seminar in East Asian Art, Department of Art and Central and Inner Asian Studies at the University of Toronto, and an anonymous donor.
During the communist period in Mongolia the word ovog (clan name) was used to mean patronymic (father’s name). In 1991 President Punslmaagiin Ochirbat called on citizens to restore the national tradition of “knowing their clan names and heredity, and keeping a family tree,” which had been banned since the 1920s. His words were reinforced by the National Security Concept (June 1994), which said: “Mongolia shall revive on public initiative the tradition of keeping track of the family genealogy to 7-9 generations of ancestors.” This was followed in January 1997 by a government decree on keeping a family tree (Ugiin bichig khotılıkh juram), saying that three names, the clan name (ovog), patronymic (etsgiin ner) and personal name (ööriin ner), in that order, were to be used in identity papers (irgenii pasport), foreign travel passports (gadaad pasport), birth and marriage certificates, national census returns, and other official documents.

Natural order of things

Thus the ovog reverted to its original meaning of clan and clan name (bütgünr ner), although the terms örkhist ovog (family ovog) and garal ovog (clan of origin) were also used. A handbook of some 1,300 Mongolian clan names was published, perhaps based on Academician Byambyn Rinchen’s famous 1979 atlas, showing places across the country where the clans had come from. Citizens who did not know their clan name were encouraged to choose a suitable one, reflecting their place of family origin, or trade.

In the Mongolian natural order of names the clan name comes first, followed by the patronymic with a possessive case ending, and the given name last, e.g. Yamaat Boldyn Bat. Most people do not use their ovog in everyday life, certainly none of the country’s leaders do. In Mongolia given names are used in the same way as surnames in English-speaking societies: Mr Bat. In Mongolian directories people are listed alphabetically by their given name (Bat) plus their patronymic, either in full or as an initial, to distinguish between those with the same given name: B. Bat. When international registers are compiled by Mongols, the foreigners may also be listed alphabetically by their given names. The ovog and etsgiin ner follow the male line and are not surnames or family names, which women in western societies may change by marriage. When the 1997 decree was updated in October 2007, it pointed out that husbands and wives have different ovog, since the wife has and retains her own.

Muddle over “surnames”

Writing in the newspaper Ardyn Erkh in June 1997, a government official described a new identity card, literally a “citizen’s certificate” (irgenii inemlekh), which would gradually be introduced to replace the existing identity papers (irgenii pasport). The details to be recorded included the clan name, father’s name and given name of the holder, place of birth, and also ethnic origin (yas ündes). However, at some point, perhaps in 2002, without public explanation, the State Registration Authority appears to have decided unilaterally to use the patronymic instead of the ovog as the “surname” in the new foreign passport. Sarlagatai O. Mashbat later suggested (Zauny Medee January 2007) that this decision had broken the Mongolian Family Law of June 1999. The law’s article 24 on naming children stated that “the father and mother on the basis of agreement give their child a name and ovog” (24.1) and “the child takes the father’s name” (24.3).

Perhaps too many people had wanted to adopt Genghis Khan’s ovog Borjigin. Or there may have been continuing confusion over use of ovog, which for many decades had meant “father’s name”. There also seems to have been no check on the meanings of the English words “surname” and “family name” which, despite being pretty well synonymous, continue to be used as the official translations for etsgiin ner and ovog, respectively, in Mongolian identity cards. Mashbat proposed the use of “middle name” for patronymics in passports, and suggested that for a transitional period Mongolian passports should carry an official notice on the inside front page saying that the Mongolian government was in the course of changing Mongolian names.

The State Registration Authority may have been misguided by the many then current western press reports about Mongols “being asked to choose surnames.” They included frequent dispatches by Reuters news agency, e.g. Jere My page, in August 1998, and articles by Mark Magnier and Toby Moore in the Los Angeles Times in October 2004. This error goes back a long way: the 2/1987 edition of Mongolia magazine said (in English page 22), “The surname is formed from the father’s name in the possessive case with the ending of ‘iin’. Mongolians have no patronymic names.” On the other hand, writing in Mongoliya 9/1990, D. Bayar said (in Russian, page 25), “The Mongols have no surnames [familiya], just given names and patronymics… In the past the Mongols used to have surnames, so-called ‘tribal names’.” Several dictionaries agree about ovog: Lessing (1960) and Hangin (1986): clan, surname, family name; Bawden and Altangerel (1997): clan, family name, patronymic. Naturally, they reflect the situation before the government changed ovog back to its former meaning, but the Oxford-Monsudar English-Mongolian Dictionary (2006) still translates surname as ovog.

Reversal of names

In 2010 the State Registration Authority conducted “revised civil registration” nationwide, creating on the basis of over 15 million documents a database of almost 2 million citizens for the introduction of “smart” or biometric identity cards with photographs and fingerprint prints of the holder. It is planned to use these cards, now being issued, in conjunction with new electronic voting machines at the elections to the Mongolian Great Khural at the end of June 2012. Rather than rendering the patronymic (etsgiin ner) normally, with the possessive case suffix, before the given name, the new cards print it separately in its own given name form. When the etsgiin ner is used in documents without the possessive suffix (-yn, -iin), the distinction between patronymic and given name is Continued on page 4
lost. When the “surname” moves to second place, Boldyn Bat becomes Bat Bold, and the name is out of legal order.

This can lead to muddle, even in Mongolia itself. For example, in February 2011 the UB Post published an article with references to Khurts Bat (Batyn Khurts) as Bat, Enkhbat Damiran (Damirangiin Enkhbat) as Damiran, and Sanjaasuren Zorig (Sanjaasürengiin Zorig) as Sanjaasuren. In April 2011 the UB Post called Gombyn Tsogtsaikhan, deputy chairman of MonA-tom, Tsogtsaikhan Gombo and Gombo, and the Mongol Messenger named the director of the fuel department of the Ministry of Mineral Resources as Erdenepure Amarkhuu and subsequently as Amarkhuu, although his name in Mongolian is Amarkhuu Erenepurev. In the same issue the deputy di-rector of Erdenes MGL, Ganzorigiin Temuulen was referred to as Ganzorig. The Mongolian “News” agency this March, in a feature about the 25th anniversary of Mongolia-U.S. relations, named the Mongolian ambassador as Bekbat Khasbazar, and subsequently as Khasbazar all through, although his name is Khasbazar Bekbat!

There have also been references in English to the Mongolian president as Elbegdorj Tsakhia and the Prime Min-is-ter as Batbold Sukhbaatar. In March 2011 Montsame’s Eng-lish service published a feature about the “ardent struggler” of the 1921 revolution Sukhbaatar Damdin. A recent advertise-ment featured General Lkhagvasuren Jamyan, another famous his-torical figure. The reversal of the given name and patro-nymic in English, contrary to the normal Mongol practice, is thus spreading to the names of historical figures as well. Mongoli-an’s growing use of English business cards with their names the wrong way round just adds to the confusion.

Mongolian script complications

President Natsagiin Bagabandi and Prime Minister Nambaryn Enkhbayar decreed in June 2003 that the 800th an-niversary of Genghis Khan’s order on the adoption of the Mon-gol script would be marked on 2 May 2004, and then at the beginning of May every year, as Mongolian National Script Day. President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj decreed in 2010 that, from July 2011, Mongolian ambassadors’ letters of credence and other communications with foreign states would be issued in Mongolian script (with translation). Meanwhile, birth and marriage certificates, education certificates, diplomas, etc., would be printed in both Mongolian script and Mongolian Cy-rillic. The text of the presidential decree (supposedly 3/10 of 29 March) seems not to have been gazetted, but according to Ödriin Sonin (August 2011), President Elbegdorj made a brief reference to it in his address at the opening of the 10th Con-gress of the International Association of Mongolian Studies. Professor Sh. Choimaa reported (Montsame, January 2012) that about 27,000 diplomas in the two scripts had been issued by the Mongolian State University so far, although there had been some problems with the correct forms of names. Every-body should learn to write their name in Mongolian script, he said.

Romanization standard revised

In January 2003 the Mongolian Centre for Standardiza-tion and Metrology, as it was then called, published State Standard MNS5217.2002, “For Romanizing the Script of the Mongol-ian Cyrillic Alphabet.” Developed after much public discussion of a number of proposed variants, this new Romanization stand-ard was quite unlike the Soviet-approved Romanization of Mon-golian introduced experimentally in the 1930s. It had a number of unusual features, however, in particular the use of an apostrophe to indicate vowel variation: in transliteration, back vowels o = o, u = u, front vowels o’ = ö, u’ = ü. In words with several vowels, it was sufficient to use the apostrophe only once per word. Amongst consonants, x = x, j = zh, ts = c, shch = sh’ and so on.

In June 2003 the Mongolian Great Khural adopted a Na-tional Romanization Program (Latin üsgiin ündesnii khöötölbör) covering several years of preparation, development and training, including publication of dictionaries and hand-books. Some aberrant spellings in Mongolian Cyrillic were to be corrected. However, it became clear that the state standard was unsuitable and was being modified. For example, the tourist company Juulchin came to be spelt with a j and not zh (Ödriin Sonin, January 2004). A “transitional” Romanization table pub-lished on the Ministry of Agriculture website in March 2005 indicated that j = j, not zh, x = kh as an alternative, and ts = ts or c. Meanwhile, the development program was quietly abandoned.

Ten years later, at the end of February 2012, Ziuny Medee reported that the National Standardization Council had adopted MNS5217:2012, updating MNS5217.2002. The changes included both abandonment of apostrophes and introduction of diariticals: ö = o’, ü = u’, also kh = x, and ts = c. However, the solutions for shch and the hard sign were still unsatisfactory (I think these two letters are redundant and need not be Roman-ized). The Mongolian media in English currently do not use ac-cented letters, the name Tömör, for example, is written Tumur. It is hard to believe, given the time scale, that the Mongolian names printed in English on the new electronic identity cards to accompany the Mongolian Cyrillic forms have been matched to the new Romanization standard. Have the authorities put the cart before the horse again?

Conclusion

The fundamentally different ways of writing Mongolian names described have raised important issues. It is probably too late and too difficult to persuade the Mongolian authorities that some aspects of Mongolian identity cards and passports are de-fective. If reversal of names, based on mistranslation, as promot-ed by Mongolians in English, is generally accepted, records and indexes of Mongolian names, even historical ones, will quickly become corrupted. We should surely follow the principle fol-lowed by the Mongolians in their own language, that the patro-nymic precedes the given name, and given names are used as we use surnames.
A travel guide by a tourist for tourists.

Why do people write travel guides? For the use of travellers and tourists. In that respect Robinson's book is like all the rest. Few travel guides are written to be read from beginning to end, however, and in that respect Robinson's book is not like all the rest. The book can be read from beginning to end, just like a real book. The first 170 pages of the book offers narratives of the geography, history, people and culture of Mongolia including the section I enjoyed the most, a few pages on "Everyday Mongolian Experiences." This is followed by 300 pages of description of Mongolia that was deliberately written not as an aimag by aimag description of places to see and things to do but an actual travelogue, a narrative the author's experiences during his own two month journey clockwise around Mongolia. The book ends with Advice and facts for travelers, practical information about airlines, travel agencies, accommodations and useful sources of further information. Interspersed throughout the introductory sections and the travelogue are sections on special topics like shamanism, geology, deer stones and naadam, some excerpted from or based upon other writers such as Mongolists Ivana Grollová and Christopher Kaplonski. Also interspersed throughout the narratives are what Robinson calls "Literary Excerpts", more selections from published works by Roy Chapman Andrews, Owen Lattimore, Natsagdorj, Thomas Barfield, Don Croner, Ben Kozel and Gaby Bamana, a Mongolist and anthropologist from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the same place where Robinson grew up.

Travel literature for the non-traveler

Robinson's book is travel literature as much as a travel guide, and a very readable account written by someone who did a great deal of reading and studying about Mongolia both before and after his sojourn there. It is not a work of scholarship but is nevertheless full of interesting information about Mongolia that even those like myself who have been to Mongolia several times may not know. The pictures are wonderful: my wife, born in Khar Chuluut near Tarialan in Khovsgol aimag gasped at the large photograph of the vanseumberus (snow lotus) spread across pages 366-367; my 4 year old got very excited at the picture of aarul—her favorite food—drying on page 118; I caught my breath at the photographs of the reclining Lady Buddha, the landscapes of Dariganga and Mongolia's incredible blue lakes. It is a very nice book to show people who may never see Mongolia except in pictures.

The book has many splendid anecdotes, such as when he relays "the apocryphal tale of the tour guide who texted a message, hit the 'Send' button and tossed it high in the air ... landing back in his hands, the phone read 'Message Sent'" (p. 160). There are also sobering statements that ring true to my own experience:

*Anti-Chinese prejudice is strong and the visceral hatred expressed by some Mongolians towards Chinese—even the mere sight of them—can shock visitors.* (p. 80)

*And in recent times, women have pushed even further ahead as boys were kept home for herding and girls completed higher education and entered the modern workforce. Some 80 percent of college and university graduates are women; male resentment, even misogyny, is now a serious problem...* (p. 120)

*But too many casually discard their plastic bags, which then fly across the vast and empty steppe. You know that you're nearing an aimag or sum centre by the number of colourful bags littering the landscape hanging on every possible upstanding object.* (p. 161)

The tourist's dream of Mongolia

If I could stop here after having noted all the nice things about Robinson's book, I would be much happier; no doubt Robinson would be too. But Robinson began his book with a few lines which sent this reader reeling, never to recover in spite of the interesting narratives, special topics, literary excerpts and beautiful photographs. In the first paragraph of the introduction I read this:

*Some 800 years ago, people sure didn't need the Mongols when they were brutally forging the world's greatest land empire ... In today's troubled times, however, the world desperately needs what Mongolia has to offer: an uncrowded and wide-open landscape populated by friendly people where you can be totally cut off from the frustrations, depressions and annoyances of modern life. It's now time to head in the other direction.* (p. 25)

This is followed by two sentences praising Mongolia's land, animals and people, and then this:

*Mongolia is the ideal destination for crashed-out financiers, getting over a divorce or sorting out a midlife crisis.* (p. 25)

The question is: is this what Mongolia needs? Could the Mongolia Robinson (and I) fell in love with survive hordes of frustrated, depressed, annoyed, crashed-out financiers and other people suffering from personal disasters and crises descending on its pristine natural spots in expectation of five-star hotels, good roads, four-wheel drives, first class service and ... none of the troubles of modern life? Would these hordes of tourists not do the opposite and bring all of the troubles of modern life to Mongolia? Robinson thinks not:

*But even as things improve with more five-star hotels in the capital, comfortable 4WD vehicles and luxury tourist ger accommodation, Mongolia will always remain a rustic destination—and that is precisely its enduring attraction.* (p. 26)

In fact, Robinson at one point suggests the opposite: that the biggest danger to Mongolia's natural environment arises from the cultural attitudes of the Mongols themselves:

*But changing long-entrenched cultural attitudes about hunting, a very long tradition in Mongolia, is the biggest challenge.* (p. 46).

Tourists in search of great hunting and fishing bring a hefty revenue to the government, but in order for there to be Continued on page 12
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21) 福仁哈达 : 蒙古族 / 张新泰, 马雄福主编 ; 玉素甫・依沙克, 别克苏力坦・凯赛副主编. 乌鲁木齐市 : 新疆人民出版社, 2011. (民间新疆. 故事系列) ISBN 97872281141630 (Mongolian folklore of Xinjiang)


29) История развития жилища у кочевых и полукочевых тюркских и монгольских народностей России / Н.Н. Харузин. Издание второе. Москва : URSS, 2011. (Академия фундаментальных исследований. Этнология) ISBN 9785397017275 (History of the Turkic and Mongolic peoples in Russia)


33) 建设和谐内蒙古的环境道德保障体系研究 / 魏智勇著. 北京 : 中国环境科学出版社, 2011. (可持续发展教育丛书) ISBN 9787511105547 (Environmental protection in Inner Mongolia)


35) Кыргызские князья монгольской и литовской поры / В. Ашевенко, Харьков : Фолио, 2011. (Знаменитые украинцы) ISBN 978966052087 (Kyivan princes during the Mongol period) system under Jurchen and Mongol

Continued on page 8
Northern Chinese society and the examinations

Rashid ad

社会科学民族学重点研究基地民族学研究丛书

59) ISBN 9783868930641 (Bonner islamwissenschaftliche Hefte ; Heft 22) ISBN 9788393279326 (Mongol invasion of Poland and the art of war in medieval Europe)

58) Теліги, 2011.

57) ISBN 9784750334295 (Mongol and Mogul empires)

56) Mongol and Inner Mongolia's economy Continued on page 9
60) 内蒙古历史文化 : 图文版 / 主编侯世忠, 斯热文 ; 总撰稿杨道尔吉. 北京市 : 民族出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787105116355 (History of Inner Mongolia)

61) 内蒙古西部地区发展问题研究 / 童年成 ... 北京 : 首都经济贸易大学出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787563819546 (City planning in Inner Mongolia)


65) 契丹风韵 : 内蒙古辽代文物珍品展 / 深圳博物馆, 内蒙古博物院编. 北京 : 文物出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787501031658 (Exhibition of antiquities from Inner Mongolia)

66) 气候变化对内蒙古温带草原的影响及其响应 / 李晓兵等著. 北京 : 科学出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787030302663 (Grasslands of Inner Mongolia and climate change)


73) 少年成吉思汗 / 南宫不凡著. 南京市 : 南京大学出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787305081774 (Chinggis Khan, fiction)

74) 草原的王朝契丹 : 美しき3人のプリンセス特別展 / 九州国立博物館編集. 福岡] : 西日本新聞社, 2011. (Khitan excavations in Inner Mongolia)


78) Tajná kronika Mongolu / přeložil Pavel Poucha. Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2011. ISBN 9788074221026 (New edition of Poucha’s translation of the Secret History. I have been looking for this for 25 years!)


Хэвлэлний газар / Publishing House, continued from page 9

82) 東京大学総合研究博物館所蔵江上波夫教授旧蔵資料目録 / 第1部：内蒙ツ / 欧田良宏, 三國博子, 小川よよい = Catalogue of the Namio Egami collection. Part 1, Inner Mongolia / Yoshihiro Nishiaki, Hiroko Mikami, and Yayoi Ogawa. 東京: 東京大学総合研究博物館, 2011. (東京大学総合研究博物館標本資料報告, 卷号0910-2566; 第85号 = The University Museum, the University of Tokyo material reports; no. 85)


(Mongolian history)

86) 陰山岩畫 = Rock art of Yinshan / 北方民族大学内蒙ツ河套人文学院编纂. 上海: 上海古籍出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787532558926 (Rock art of Inner Mongolia)


91) 中国民族民间蒙古族舞蹈 / 冯爱云主编. 北京: 北京体育大学出版社, 2011. ISBN 9787564406318 (Dance in Inner Mongolia)

92) Золотые звёзды Халхин / Канчик Гей: биографический справочник / автор-сост. М.В. Музалевский. (Историческая библиотека "Кавалер": 30) ISBN 9787532558926 (Rock art of Inner Mongolia)


94) Мандаринский известняк / В. В. Музалевский, М. В. Музалевский. (Историческая библиотека "Кавалер": 30) ISBN 9787532558926 (Rock art of Inner Mongolia)


Dissertations and Theses


WORKID=129915&fid=74813 Continued on page 11
102) Hydroclimatic variability in north-central Mongolia as inferred from tree rings / Caroline Leland. Thesis (M.A.)--West Virginia University, 2011. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10450/12633


And finally, a few from 2012 and some to look forward to in 2012:


112) Mongolia at the market: dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the School of Economic Studies / edited by Puntsagdash Luvsandorj, Chuluundorj Khashchuluun and Namsrai Batnasan. Berlin: Lit (Distributed by Global, London), 2012. (Global cultural and economic research ; 7) ISBN 9783643902139


The Mongolia Society is in need of these items for the office:

1) A digital camera for taking photos at meetings and other events sponsored by the Society, as well as for photos to be uploaded to the web.
2) LED projector for power point presentations at meetings.
3) Sound system, i.e., microphones and stands, amplifier, speakers, for amplified sound at receptions

If you would like to donate any of these items, please contact Susie Drost, at the Society office. The Mongolia Society is a 501(c)3 organization and a tax deductible receipt will be given for any donation.

Telephone and Fax: 812-855-4078; E-Mail: monsoc@indiana.edu
Carl Robinson review continued from page 5

enough game left for the tourists it will be necessary to keep the Mongols from their own traditional ways of life. ??!!

Robinson wants a scenic, traditional pre-modern Mongolia, a Mongolia that fits the frustrated modern tourist's needs. Not surprisingly for a male writer, the fact that young women outnumber boys three to one in Ulaanbaatar is seen as a blessing for the tourist (p. 479), not as a troubling problem for the people of Mongolia. Whenever Mongolia does not fit the tourist's desired image--such as the realities of the gold mines and industrial towns in the north (Erdene and Darhan)--Robinson judges such places to be "barely worth the trip" (p. 212). But how can one have five-star hotels, good roads, sedentary employees providing excellent service at luxury tourist attractions without building local housing for these herders who have now become proletariat? How can you develop tourism without local shops, doctors, hospitals, cell phone towers, gas stations, car repair shops, police stations and all the other necessities that a sedentary population serving demanding foreigners would require for their health and well-being? Without, that is, changing traditional Mongolian society into modern industrial society?

The massive, shiny statue certainly comes as a surprise and will no doubt become a popular tourist attraction, especially with the locals. ... Costing over US$50 million and planned to include a large tourist ger camp, the project clearly reflects the national pride, ambition and dreams of Mongolia's modern--and often still-young--entrepreneurs (Genco also runs 13th Century National Park, a replica medieval encampment with overnight accommodation some 40 kilometres (25 miles) to the southeast, and plans a spa and golf resort.) (p. 224)

So much for pristine nature, traditional hospitality, and isolation from the modern world. Mongolia will become an Asian Disneyland with amusement parks, golf courses, spas as well as a fake replica of Mongolian culture, and all of this will displace not only the gazelles (already run out of certain areas by oil drilling according to Robinson and the locals with whom he spoke (p. 257)) but local traditional communities and everything that Robinson says we should be going to Mongolia to see. And Robinson is aware of this. Writing of Khokh Nuur he remarks:

Surrounded by low hills, the circular-shaped lake is a lovely spot but has lost its pristine tranquility to tourism, and even private development, in recent years. (p. 229)

Yet in the very next paragraph describing Hangal Nuur, he writes that this is "a commmister Young Pioneer Camp ... no doubt waiting for an ambitious entrepreneur to revive it" (p. 229). He closes his paragraph on Uureg Nuur with the remark:

Still undeveloped, it's only a matter of time before someone builds a tourist ger camp along its lovely shores. I can already see water skiers scooting around this lake! (p. 373)

After praising the local silversmiths in Dariganga, he notes that they have all moved to Ulaanbaatar without saying why (p. 281). The reason is not hard to guess: no airport, permits required to visit, so there are few tourists. Tourists mean money, so if there are no tourists, the silversmiths go where the tourists are. But what happens to Dariganga if they leave? And what happens to Dariganga if they stay and the tourists do come? Robinson lets us know exactly what will happen, for it happened at Karakorum. After stating that what Karakorum "desperately" needs is "a quality showcase museum--including an open-air facility--" (p. 434) he notes his shock at the place upon his arrival there, but his shock is not due to its lack of a museum:

If you've arrived from the solitude of the Mongolian Outback, however, as I did, Harhorin can't help but come as something of a shock. From capital of the Mongol Empire to Tourist City today! Scattered around the town are more than a dozen tourist ger camps, some quite large and one boasting the biggest ger in Mongolia as its dining room. Traffic is busy and everyone ends up at Erdene Zuu. Souvenir markets are everywhere--near the first turtle, the Phallic Rock and especially inside the monastery grounds. (p. 45).

And that is not the worst of it:

One of my Mongolian companions was shocked to see a European couple drinking beer just inside the main gate. Other tourists, especially those in groups, were just plain loud. Personally, I was surprised to suddenly see so many other foreigners about and didn't know what to expect. (p. 436)

My dear Mr. Robinson, if you build tourist attractions and write guide books encouraging tourists to visit them, what do you expect to attract? Gobi bears, black tailed gazelles, mute swans, snow lotuses, Przewalski horses and the stillness of the reclining Lady Buddha?

You can purchase this book through the Mongolia Society office.
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