



The Mongols of Manchuria: Their Tribal Divisions, Geographical Distribution, Historical Relations with Manchus and Chinese, and Present Political Problems. by Owen Lattimore

Review by: A. J. Grajdanzev

Pacific Affairs, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Sep., 1935), pp. 367-371

Published by: [Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2751486>

Accessed: 17/06/2014 01:15

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Pacific Affairs*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Book Reviews

the subtle imagery of Rossetti and Swinburne. So in English translations of the *t'zu* we should expect to be able to recognize the melancholy of Lü Yu, the spontaneity and naturalness of Liu Yung, the magnanimity and grandeur of Chou Pang-yen, the tranquillity of Chiang K'uei, the majesty of Hsin Chi-chi, and the etherealness of Su Shih. I admit such an achievement is difficult, but what an achievement it would be if once attained! The very fact that Miss Candlin has to limit her translations to under 80 pieces makes it impossible for her to adjust her focus so that each of her objects can stand out in sharp relief, distinctly individualized.

I do not think it is excessive to say that Miss Candlin's translation is a landmark among the attempts of numerous individuals to present Chinese poetry to occidentals in the true light.

W. Y. YU

THE MONGOLS OF MANCHURIA: THEIR TRIBAL DIVISIONS, GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION, HISTORICAL RELATIONS WITH MANCHUS AND CHINESE, AND PRESENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS. By Owen Lattimore. New York: The John Day Company. 1934. pp. 311; maps, bibliography. \$2.50.

IF THE creation of a Manchukuo means anything," according to Mr. Lattimore, "it means an attempt to set up a continental power in Asia," and he adds that Manchukuo is "a completely senseless product of violence unless it means the opening up of the far more comprehensive question of Mongolia": for Manchukuo "was fashioned under the star of war, and the star shines now toward Mongolia." Why not Siberia, or China? Because "the problem of Mongolia allows room for strategy; the scope of movement covers many hundreds of miles . . . Mongolia is therefore the key to the destiny of the whole Far East."

For the Manchurian Mongols, "Japan has accepted the challenge of the future by creating within Manchukuo the autonomous Mongol province of Hsingan, . . . within which the Mongols may govern themselves" (*sic*). This province "has its own troops, and is free of garrisons of the Manchukuo army. The civil administration and military organizations are either in the hands of Mongols, or promised them for the future." There are no signs, it may be pointed out, that these promises are likely to be fulfilled.

For the edification of the Chinese Mongols it is urged that the Man-

churian Mongols must be more friendly to Japan than are the Chinese of Manchuria, "because of being saved from the all-extinguishing effects of Chinese civilization." Since the Chinese Mongols have not yet thus been "saved," the inference is obvious. For Outer Mongolia it is pointed out that it is now "possible to think of unification in terms of counter-revolution . . . leading to the restoration of the hereditary princes, the Lama Church and the old tradition."

Many pages are devoted to the history of the Mongols and of Chinese colonization of Mongol territories, and 135 pages to a minute description of Mongol tribes, leagues and banners. One may wonder why so much space should be devoted to these. The author himself in the first part of the book endeavors to prove that they have never played an important part in Mongol life.

Thus it will be found all through Mongol history that even a tribe is not so "real" a thing as the genealogy of a princely family . . . the obvious nucleus on which to found a tribe. . . . The tribe itself, in the older conditions of Mongol history, might lose its name and identity by changing its allegiance from one prince to another, or a prince might found a new tribe by gathering up followers from many different tribes. . . . Land has no part. . . . Manchu policies established some degree of identification as between tribe and land. . . . The rapidity and thoroughness of revolution in Outer Mongolia was primarily due to the fact that the position of the princes was artificial.

Taking all this into consideration one may say that the minute subdivisions between tribes, leagues and banners, in relation to the land, is not of great importance. Nor does the author anywhere show what importance it has, if any.¹

The author holds that "the Mongols of Manchuria are important for . . . their numbers, the extent of their territories and the strategic position they hold in relation to Outer Mongolia and to the part of Inner Mongolia still nominally under the control of China. . . . There are

¹ Since the author of the book condemned is in the delicate position of being also the editor of *PACIFIC AFFAIRS*, he does not wish to make unfair use of his ability to say the last word. He thinks, however, that he has made sufficiently clear in the text of the book the difference between the pre-Manchu organization of the Mongols and the "artificial" organization introduced by the Manchus. It is an essential part of his argument that this organization was intended to weaken the Mongols, and that it was later deliberately used by Chinese officials for preventing Mongol unification and resistance to Chinese colonization. If there be any truth in this, then there must be a perfectly genuine importance in the cataloguing and mapping of the "minute subdivisions" which the reviewer considers to be so negligible.—O. L.

Book Reviews

actually about twice as many Mongols in Manchukuo as there are in Outer Mongolia." Mr. Lattimore exaggerates the numbers of the Manchurian Mongols in estimating them at two millions. The population of Hsingan province is only 965,000, according to the latest official investigation, published in the *Ta Tung Pao*, in Manchuria, for 29 July, 1934. If we take into consideration about 10,000 Russians in the Three Rivers region and 4,000 along the Chinese Eastern Railway, together with Japanese residents and, most important of all, the Chinese population within the Mongol region, the number of Mongols may be estimated at about 800,000 or perhaps less. We may usefully compare the data on cattle, the chief source of Mongol wealth, although the author gives no data on Mongol economics.

	Outer Mongolia (1932)	Manchurian Mongolia (1934)
Camels.....	498,000	10,000
Horses.....	1,624,000	278,000
Cattle.....	2,142,000	392,000
Sheep and Goats.....	22,734,000	1,430,000

We may be sure that these figures understate the true size of the herds, especially in Manchuria, but nevertheless the difference is too striking to be misleading. Without doubt the data reflect a difference not only in wealth but in occupation. In order to appreciate the "importance" (or otherwise) "of their numbers and their territory," we must refer to the author's own words:

At the present time the successful Mongol is the man of tents and herds. If the Mongol settles down it is because he has been forced to descend to the Chinese level. . . . The Mongol is forced either to give up his riding animals, milk cattle, meat diet and comparatively careless farming methods, thus coming down to the Chinese level—or to get out.

Data on cattle clearly show that the Manchurian Mongols have taken the first opportunity.²

I am unable to understand the author's exaggerated statement that in case of a war between Russia and Japan the Mongols "might be able to influence the result, perhaps decisively." In my own opinion, "operations along the Mongolian frontier" would "decide" nothing. There are great distances to be covered, without roads and very often without

² The author submits that it is not a question of "taking an opportunity" but of being *forced* to choose between alternatives.—O. L.

water—deserts in the full sense of the word³—and beyond them, on the Siberian frontier, either the lofty, snow-covered Sayansk range, or good, defended gates along the Selenga, with feeder-railways, paved roads, and good air bases. Much the same is true of Manchuria, with the exception that the Hsingan range is lower than the Sayansk, and easier to pass through, and that the Japanese would have a hostile Chinese population in their rear.

Yet the author believes that the problems of Vladivostok and the Ussuri-Amur frontier, more than 2,500 kilometers long, are local, while the Mongolian frontier, no more than 700 kilometers long, and half desert, is decisive and allows room for strategy.⁴ Nor can I agree with his contention that the territory of the Manchurian Mongols “is most remote from immediate Japanese influence and most inaccessible to strong intervention.”⁵ Three railways cross Hsingan province and many strong Japanese garrisons have been quartered there, besides which fortresses have been built, and it cannot be said that “troops cannot easily be moved by rail” into it.

We may now consider the possibilities of the Mongols under the aegis of the Japanese. Japanese colonization of Hsingan has already begun, under a planned system, with millions of subsidy and military support. Immigrants to Solun have found there conditions better than in Brazil. Mr. Lattimore is right in saying that Japan needs not only the grain and beans of Manchukuo, but its minerals, timber, meat, wool and hides; but who in Hsingan is to dig out the coal, iron and gold and cut the timber for the Japanese? Who but Japanese, Koreans and Chinese? Prospecting is already going on and concessions are already being partitioned. The coming of the Japanese will accelerate the process of Mongol extinction.

As for Mongol autonomy, it is impossible to see how the author can take it in earnest. The “autonomous” province has neither capital nor government. The author writes of the “special standing of the Mongols, approximating to alliance”; but I suggest that this decapitation of

³ As against this sweeping assertion, it may be pointed out that it is a matter of historical record that these “deserts” are not forbidding enough to have prevented large campaigns, over great distances, involving not small raiding parties but armies of major size.—O. L.

⁴ The author’s alarming theory is based on a consideration of the difference between frontal attack and flank attack, and is so stated in the book.—O. L.

⁵ A look at the map will indicate that the part of Manchuria that is “most remote and inaccessible” from Japan is the Mongolian frontier.—O. L.

Book Reviews

the Mongol "allied" province and its division into four sub-provinces indicate a desire to prevent unification.⁶ It is an "autonomy" under which Japanese troops command every important point. So far as is generally known, all important administrative posts are in Japanese hands, while Mongol officials are as much puppets as are Chinese officials in Manchukuo.

It is a pity that an author with so good an imagination on the subject of the future of empires has not condescended to describe in detail how it would be possible to reconstruct "a system of Imperial overlord, ruling princes and tribal loyalties, combined with an intelligent policy of adaptation to the modern world." The reviewer's information is to the effect that Mongol princes are as selfish as they were under the Chinese, in selling the natural resources of the country to the newcomers. The author admits that "the princely class in recent years has, on the whole, set its class interest above the national interest." It is somewhat difficult to understand why they should now set national interest above class interest, under the conditions that obtain in Hsingan.⁷

It would seem that the author is under the historical spell of many centuries of Barbarian invasion of China; hence his exaggeration of the importance of the Mongols. He forgets the centuries that have passed over Asia. A few thousands of widely scattered nomads can no longer "influence decisively" a gigantic struggle between two nations with multiple millions of population, equipped with modern technique. Nevertheless he has rendered an important service in raising this Mongol question, and an interest in the "unknown frontier." The Mongols as a people deserve it. It is only to be regretted that he has given the past so much space and the present so little. We may hope that this book is to be supplemented by another, treating of the present position of the Manchurian Mongols, politically and also economically. It is likely that in such case his vivid description of the possibility of a "Mengkukuo," to be "ruled" (save the mark!) "like Manchukuo by P'u Yi," will somewhat fade.

A. J. GRAJDANZEV

⁶ Developments between the time when the book was written and the time when the review was written indicate that the reviewer is quite right. This at least is the opinion of Mongols who are *not* under Manchukuo.—O. L.

⁷ This begs the question. When a prince "sells out," it is usually because rebellion is hopeless. Under such conditions, it makes no moral difference whether the pressure comes from China or Japan; but it is possible for either China or Japan to change the conditions.—O. L.