

the case of Inner Mongolia, however, when the Chinese Communist authorities made their offer, the recipients were not Mongolian herdsmen and peasants, but Mongolian Communists and nationalists, who gained support among the Mongols by making promises of national liberation. When the Chinese central authorities purged Ulanhu and other early Mongol officials at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, this social contract was effectively nullified.

The Cultural Revolutionary purges, and the continued high-handed official attitude toward Mongolian sentiments since then, have reduced Mongolian cadres to little more than yes-men. In a state such as China, where the only people who enjoy political representation are government officials, Mongolian cadres who abandon their moral obligation to argue for local interests become complicit in the land-grabs and other abuses that put Mongol herdsmen in such a vulnerable legal position. Their failure to function as an ethnic autonomous bureaucracy has resulted in a failure of the whole autonomy system.

In a broader sense, if the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist government was mainly based on providing land ownership to Chinese peasants, the same cannot be said of their relationship with Mongol herdsmen, because the Mongol aristocracy and ruling class had never deprived herdsmen of communal land rights. Any legitimacy the Chinese Communists established among their Mongol allies in Inner Mongolia was mainly political and ideological, i.e., through the notion of a class-based political nation, which unlike the historical cultural nation offered a forward-looking ideology based on a common socialist economy and the specter of international hostilities.

Since 1978, when China embarked on economic reform, the opening up of the economy to market forces increasingly involved not only private land rights but also private ownership of capital, and the former ideological nation began giving way to an economic nationalism that offered an alternative means to the same goal of building a powerful state. Where the economic nation falls short of the political nation is in its rationalization of uneven development and the sacrifice of certain groups, industries or ethnic groups for the good of the whole.

During the period of the political nation, the Chinese Communists were able to accommodate the ideological conflict between nationalism, which emphasizes the cultural line, and class politics, which gives class distinctions precedence over ethnic distinctions. The Chinese Communists emphasized whichever of the two themes worked to their best advantage at different periods, for example, emphasizing the united front and downplaying class conflict during the Sino-Japanese War. Chinese nationalism also played a part in what is typically regarded as an ideological split with the Soviet Union in the 1960s.

In the same manner, Mongol Communists such as Ulanhu and his followers used both nationalist logic and class analysis, and could be called Mongolian nationalist Communists or Communist nationalists, depending on the means and ends at the time. In the early period of the IMAR, they regarded the

Lhasa Nights

BY WOESER

O Lhasa, dreamlike nights!
A certain lotus may have never bloomed,
Sometimes a wineglass shatters at a tap;
Yet there are people, just a few—who blessed
Them with such spirit?—to whom this roaming feast
Seems Paradise for banishment self-chosen.
And if (invisibly) they weep, it's only
For a kinsman whom they couldn't keep.

O Lhasa, nights of woe!
A certain bluebird may have never chirped,
And sometimes garments get begrimed with dust;
Yet there are people, just a few—who spread
This plague?—who see bright fleeting Time as but
A pool wherein the posturing ego sinks.
Illusions countless, ever so seductive,
Can't lure a reincarnate kinsman back.

O Lhasa, nights like nowhere else!
A love there is that never came to pass,
And certain bloodlines gradually mixed;
Yet there's a man, perhaps just one—what kind
Of lightning bolt?—who makes a stifling fate
Serve as the hinge of reconciliation.
Upon the endless wheel of birth and death
I wish you would forever be my kin!

Rendered into English by A.E. Clark

new Chinese state as a transitional step on the way to the ultimate goal of Mongols in different countries joining with all other peoples in a stateless and classless future. But what common future is envisaged by the economic nation? Economic integration and globalization might have pointed to a similar supranational future if the post-Communist Chinese state had not put so much emphasis on Chinese culture and history to compensate for its ideological vacuum. The current trends raise a question for non-Chinese minorities: if globalization is inevitable, why should they have to be assimilated by the Chinese first before taking part in it?

In the political nation, the revolutionary view of history based on Chinese Marxism allowed the Chinese Communists to present themselves to the Mongols as different from and superior to previous oppressive Chinese powers. Interpreting history in terms of class struggle, the CCP held that the oppressive Manchu-Chinese policies, the actions of Chinese warlords and the KMT's oppressive policies toward the Mongols did not promote the interests of the Chinese as a whole, but only the interests of the Chinese ruling-class.

This revolutionary view of history has, however, been negated and reversed in an era of economic reform and inter-