

## Werk

**Titel:** Tuvan or Mongol: A study of inter-ethnic relations and ethnic definition strategi...

**Autor:** Enwall, Joakim

**Ort:** Wiesbaden

**Jahr:** 2005

**PURL:** [https://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?666048797\\_0009](https://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?666048797_0009) | LOG\_0018

## Kontakt/Contact

[Digizeitschriften e.V.](#)  
SUB Göttingen  
Platz der Göttinger Sieben 1  
37073 Göttingen

✉ [info@digizeitschriften.de](mailto:info@digizeitschriften.de)

# **Tuvan or Mongol: A study of inter-ethnic relations and ethnic definition strategies among Tuvans and Kazakhs in western Mongolia**

**Joakim Enwall**

Enwall, Joakim 2005. Tuvan or Mongol: A study of inter-ethnic relations and ethnic definition strategies among Tuvans and Kazakhs in western Mongolia. *Turkic Languages* 9, 93-115.

The inter-ethnic relations between Tuvans and Kazakhs living in the province of Bayan-Ölgii in western Mongolia have hitherto been touched upon mainly in works on either Tuvans or Kazakhs living in the area. The present paper is a sociolinguistic study of the inter-ethnic relations, with particular emphasis on education, culture, media and publishing. Furthermore, the tendency of the Tuvans to identify ethnically with the Mongols rather than with the Kazakhs is analyzed from the point of view of a sub-minority—majority identification theory.

*Joakim Enwall, Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, P.O. Box 635, SE-75126 Uppsala, Sweden. E-mail: Joakim.Enwall@lingfil.uu.se*

## **0. The setting**

The rain increased during the afternoon. More and more often the Korean jeep got stuck in the mud and we had to get out in order to pull it loose. On the right side of the valley the holy mountains of the Tuvans, Tsengel Hairhan Uul, rose majestically and now just a few hours remained until sunset. At the yurt where we had last asked for directions we had been told to drive up to the plateau at the end of the valley, and with great effort we finally managed. The view was simply enchanting, with a dark mountain lake in front of us, and in the distance the snow-capped mountains at the Chinese border. But soon we became aware that this was not the right road either, and we turned towards the north.

Evening had already fallen and we could just faintly discern a few yurts on a slope, but here our car got helplessly stuck. With my recording equipment in a backpack, I slowly began to walk upwards, my long Russian boots sinking deeper and deeper into the mud. From a yurt at the top of the slope, throat singing suddenly started, which forcefully, and to my ears in a somewhat extraterrestrial way, echoed into the valley. A few yaks stood together near the yurt, their white heads shining eerily like skulls. But then I suddenly heard a well known voice, “Welcome, welcome, was it difficult to find your way?” And there, the director of the Mongolian

theatre, Dr. Zolbayar, stood in a Tuvan *deel* and hat. “Come in and get warm; I will send people to arrange with the car and your luggage.”

Soon I sat together with Zolbayar in the yurt, which was lit by one single candle, barefoot on the woollen carpet, and his aunt Möndör handed me a small silver bowl filled with milk vodka as a gesture of greeting me to their home.

### 1.1. Introduction

In the province of Bayan-Ölgii in western Mongolia the population is mainly constituted of ethnic Kazakhs, but there are also other ethnic groups like the Uriankhai, Dörvöd, Tuvans and (Khalkha) Mongols. This study focuses on the Kazakhs, the Tuvans, and the Mongols, though with the latter more as a point of reference.<sup>1</sup> These groups are different from each other linguistically as well as in matters of religion, as the Kazakhs are Muslims, the Tuvans Shamanists and the Mongols Lamaist Buddhists.<sup>2</sup> For the Kazakhs as well as the Tuvans, the majority of the ethnic group live in other countries, the Kazakhs in Kazakhstan and the Tuvans in the Tuvan Republic within the Russian Federation.<sup>3</sup> The theoretical problem addressed in the present paper is the type of two-layer ethnicity existing among the Tuvans in western Mongolia. They internally define themselves as Tuvans, but in relation to the Kazakhs they often define themselves as Mongols.<sup>4</sup> What is even more important, however, is that in the local context they also act as Mongols. Furthermore, I look at the Kazakhs’ context-bound use of either Tuvan or Mongol, when referring to the Tuvans.

<sup>1</sup> The majority ethnic group of Mongolia, the Khalkha Mongols, constitute only around 0.4% of the population of Bayan-Ölgii province.

<sup>2</sup> The Kazakhs are Sunni Muslims, but just like the other Islamic nomadic cultures in Central Asia they were converted to Islam mainly by errant Sufis, and thus to a much lesser extent influenced by Islam than the traditionally sedentary populations. The Shamanism practiced among the Tuvans is sometimes defined as Tengrism, as the cult is focused on the God of Heaven, Tengri. Furthermore, strong Shamanist influence is observable in the variety of northern Buddhism practised by the Mongols.

<sup>3</sup> Tuva was a part of Outer Mongolia under the Qing Empire, but became an independent state between 1921 and 1944. In 1944, Tuva was incorporated into the Russian Soviet Republic (RSFSR) as an autonomous *oblast*, and later, from 1961, as an autonomous republic. For a more detailed account, see Mandelstam Balzer (1999: 133-135). After the fall of the Soviet Union, Tuva became one of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation, and the official name was changed to Tyva. According to the 1989 census, the number of Tuvans in the Soviet Union was 207,000. The Tuvan language belongs to the southern branch of Siberian Turkic, and the written standard established in 1930 was based on the central dialect of the republican capital Kyzyl. In 1930, Latin script was used to write Tuvan, but in 1941-43 this written norm was replaced by Cyrillic script, with three additional letters.

<sup>4</sup> The classification of Tuvans as Mongols is also official policy of China, where the Tuvans are counted as a subgroup of the Mongols. See Mongush (1996b). For further materials on the language of the Tuvans in China, see Mawkanuli (1999).

The views of the Kazakh and Tuvan local intelligentsia are analyzed from a local as well as from a regional perspective. Of particular importance in this connection are the various migrations, both in earlier times and in the recent decades, which have led to the present ethnic composition of the area.

Finally, I describe how the Mongolian central power in Ulaanbaatar has handled the question of Kazakhs and Tuvans, how the Soviet theories on the nationality question have influenced the ethnic classifications in Mongolia, and how the Soviet terminology has been adapted to a Mongolian traditional ethnic classification.

## 1.2. Theoretical framework

The purpose is to investigate why certain ethnic minority groups adopt the ethnic identity of the majority population, *parallel* to their own, in order to strengthen their own positions vis-à-vis another locally dominant ethnic minority group. In this connection, I try to outline how the conceptions of the ethnic history of the proper group and other groups, as well as context bound ethnic definitions, influence the interaction of ethnic groups. The present paper contains a case study on this question in the province of Bayan-Ölgii in western Mongolia.

This research question lies within the framework of theories of ethnicity and, more specifically, within the theories on formation and change of ethnic definitions. Although this field of research has developed significantly during recent decades, not much attention has been given to the kind of situation outlined above. In this case, we deal with a small minority identifying itself with a numerically much larger group as a lever against the locally dominant ethnic group. The point of departure is the definition of *ethnie*, or ethnic group, as proposed by Anthony D. Smith (1986: 22-30), but on this foundation, factors contributing, or potentially contributing to, this sub-minority—majority identification phenomenon will also be outlined.

Anthony D. Smith defines an *ethnie* with the following criteria:

- A collective name
- A common myth of descent
- A shared history
- A distinctive shared culture
- An association with a specific territory
- A sense of solidarity

Furthermore, Smith (1986: 32-41) lists the following factors as bases for ethnic formation:

- Sedentariness and nostalgia
- Organized religion
- Inter-state warfare

### 1.3. Sources and state of research

The background material is constituted partly by secondary sources, partly by materials from interviews and some statistical sources. The published sources are mainly scholarly writings on Tuvans and Kazakhs in Bayan-Ölgii and locally published statistical reports.

The interviews with the representatives of the Kazakh and Tuvan intelligentsia were carried out in Bayan-Ölgii in 2001 and in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, in 2002.<sup>5</sup> These interviews were carried out as part of a broader study on cross-border linguistic contacts in Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>6</sup> For the interviews, a semi-structured form was used. It had proven impossible to make detailed plans for the interviews prior to the field-trip, as there was no way of knowing whom it would be possible to locate on the spot. Thus, the interviews are the result of a cumulative process. As no large scale surveys were carried out, and as the number of interviews was limited, there is no claim to full coverage in this study. Rather, it is to be treated as a preliminary endeavour which could serve as a basis for further in-depth studies in the future.

Research on the Kazakhs and Tuvans in western Mongolia is relatively limited, especially concerning ethnic relations and their theoretical implications. However, there are a significant number of studies, mainly in the fields of ethnography and folklore, and there are also some articles dealing with ethnic relations, such as some of the articles written by Dr. Erika Taube, who started to study the Tuvans of western Mongolia already in the 1960s. Linguistic research on the Tuvan dialect of western Mongolia, termed Altai Tuvan or Tsengel (Cengel) Tuvan, has been carried out on the basis of the materials collected by Taube (Aydemir 2002: 39-50), but also by scholars who have recently done field research in Tsengel, e.g. K. David Harrison.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Marina Mongush, a Tuvan scholar in Kyzyl, has mainly written on the Tuvans of the republic of Tuva, but also on the Tuvans of China and Mongolia, and their ethnic classification. Furthermore, research on the Tuvans of Mongolia and China has been carried out by Russian, Soviet and Chinese scholars (Potanin 1881; Rešetov 1983, 1990; Sat & Doržu 1989; Vladimircov 1923). Apart from these scholars, there are articles on the Kazakhs of Bayan-Ölgii written by Peter Finke and Ingvar Svanberg. Furthermore, Alexander Diener is at present working on questions related to Kazakh migration patterns between Bayan-Ölgii and Kazakhstan.

<sup>5</sup> The financing for the field-trip to Bayan-Ölgii was kindly granted by the Helge Ax:son Johnson Foundation, and for Astana by the Birgit and Gad Rausing Foundation for Advanced Research in the Humanities.

<sup>6</sup> Other parts of this broader study are: Enwall (1992), (1999), (2000) (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Harrison conducted field research in Tsengel in 2000 and 2002 and is also co-author of a Tuvan dictionary (Anderson & Harrison 2003). Furthermore, he has established a homepage for Tsengel Tuvan language and culture (<http://www.swartmore.edu/SocSci/Linguistics/aslep/tsengel.php>) within the Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography project (ASLEP).

Among earlier publications, there are also locally published works by Kazakh scholars. These works mainly deal with the history of the Kazakhs, but partly also with the Tuvans (usually referred to as Uriankhai, see below).<sup>8</sup> In addition to these, we find descriptions in the form of fictional works, written in German by the head shaman of the Bayan-Ölgii Tuvans, Dr. Galsan Chinag [Tschinag].<sup>9</sup>

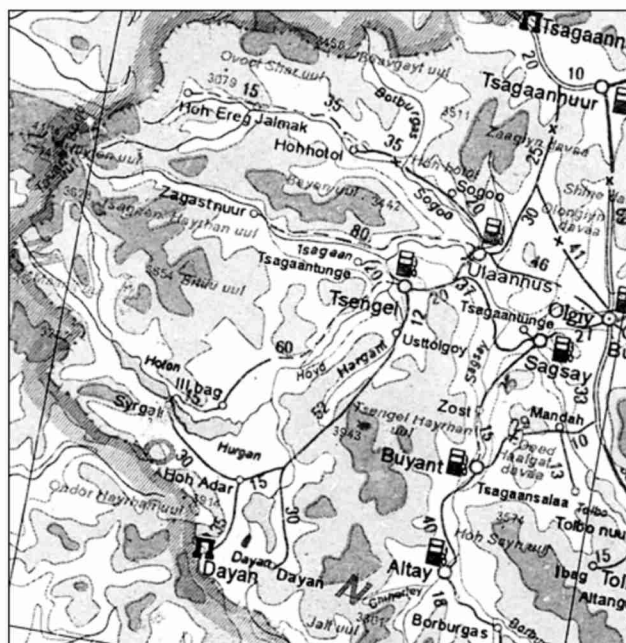
## 2. Ethnic and historical background

The geographical area on which this study is focused is the province (Mongolian: *aimag*) of Bayan-Ölgii in western Mongolia, bordering on the Altai prefecture in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China and the Russian Federation, including the republic of Tuva. The province has a total area of some 46,000 square kilometres and consists mainly of mountainous areas. It is further divided into fourteen smaller administrative units, called *sum*. The total population in the year 2000 was 94,094. Of these, 25,763 lived in the provincial capital Ölgii and some 8,110 in the *sum* Tsengel, where the overwhelming majority of the Tuvans live.<sup>10</sup> However, since 1953, there has been no land border with Kazakhstan. As long as the Soviet Union existed, this did not in practice affect the possibilities of travelling and engaging in border trade between western Mongolia and Kazakhstan, as both Kazakhstan and the intermediary area were part of the Soviet Union. This area, consisting of some 150 square kilometres, often referred to as the “Altai knot”, has, however, caused many problems for persons travelling between western Mongolia and Kazakhstan, as Mongolian citizens need visas for Russia, which can only be procured in Ulaanbaatar, six days by car from Ölgii (while they enjoy a visa free regime with Kazakhstan).

<sup>8</sup> The most important of these works are written by A. Saraj, former governor of Bayan-Ölgii province. Viz. A. Saraj (1992, 1999, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the history and life of Tuvans in Mongolia, there are several works by Galsan Chinag in German, including Tschinag (2000).

<sup>10</sup> Bayan-Ölgii aimgiin statistikiin heltes (2000: 8). In this otherwise very detailed survey of many kinds of statistical information pertaining to Bayan-Ölgii, there is, interestingly enough, no information whatsoever on ethnic and linguistic issues.

Map of Tsengel<sup>11</sup>

The views vary among scholars as to the ethnic composition before the middle of the 19th century in the area which forms the province of Bayan-Ölgii. This area was apparently not the object of scholarly interest in the neighbouring countries of Tsarist Russia and Manchu China, and there are no written descriptions regarding these matters. According to Tuvan intellectuals, the area was at the time sparsely populated by Tuvans, and no Kazakhs lived in the area.<sup>12</sup> According to the views of the Kazakhs, the area was virtually uninhabited before the first Kazakhs moved into the area from the Altai prefecture of China in the years 1850-1865 (A. Saraj 1992: 21). At this time, though, there was no state border between these areas, as Outer Mongolia was also part of the Qing Empire.<sup>13</sup> During the early years of Kazakh immigration into the area, the area of Tsengel *sum* of Bayan-Ölgii province served as summer

<sup>11</sup> On this map an English-based transcription system is used, whereby *Ölgii* is rendered as *Olgii*.

<sup>12</sup> Tömör-uyal: interview. According to Galsan Chinag, the first Kazakhs came to the Tsengel area as late as in 1898 (Chinag, Galsan: interview).

<sup>13</sup> The area now constituting Tsengel *sum* of Bayan-Ölgii province was furthermore marked as part of China on official maps as late as 1957 (Taube 1996: 214). The map she refers to is *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo dituji*, Beijing, Shanghai, (1957: 44-45).

pasture for the Kazakhs, but as more and more Kazakhs moved into the area during the latter part of the 19th century, some of them also sought their winter pasture in the area.

After the fall of the Qing Empire in 1911, Mongolia soon declared its independence under the religious and worldly leader Jebcundamba Qutuqtu. However, even after the Chinese had been forced to surrender to the Mongolian troops at Hovd (Kobdo) on August 7, 1912, a most important symbolic event in the course of establishing Mongolia as an independent state, the central power in Urga (present Ulaanbaatar) had to struggle for several years in order to gain full control over the territory. In addition to these problems, the Oirat-Mongol prince of Altai, Sharasūme, refused to let his area become part of the independent Mongolia, which explains why this district is nowadays a prefecture of Xinjiang in China. After Jebcundamba Qutuqtu's death in 1924, the Mongolian People's Republic was established, due to a massive Soviet-Buryat influence on the political scene.

Kazakh immigration into Mongolia at times increased due to the instable situation in Xinjiang during the republican period. There were also groups of Kazakhs who had immigrated from the Russian part of Altai in connection with the October Revolution (Finke 1999: 110). In 1931, in connection with the collectivization of live stock in the Kazakh areas of western Mongolia a large group of Kazakhs migrated to Xinjiang, but all of them, including some Kazakhs originally living in Xinjiang, returned to Bayan-Ölgii in 1932, as the living conditions in Xinjiang had proven to be even worse (A. Saraj: interview).

In 1940, the province (*aimag*) Bayan-Ölgii was founded. Earlier, this area had constituted the western part of the two provinces Uvs and Hovd, which in their turn had formed the district of Hovd (Kodbo) until 1931. Bulag (1998: 98-99) writes: "In 1940, however, in order to assist the Soviet operation in Xinjiang, a new autonomous *aimag* was founded out of Hovd *aimag* for the Kazakhs and the Altai Urianghais—Bayan Ölgii [...]. Until 1945, Mongols provided military aid to the Kazakh resistance fighter Osman [...]. The Chinese recognition of Mongolian independence in 1946 saw an end to this operation, but numerous Kazakh refugees went into Mongolia subsequently. The autonomous *aimag* managed to survive as a normal province, despite the abortion of the operation in Xinjiang." The Mongolian historian B. Baabar (1999: 396-397) describes the immigration process in the following way:

During the turbulence of this time [1930s and 1940s], an exodus of Kazakh refugees from Xinjiang began on a large scale. A generation before, towards the close of the nineteenth century, a few families had left their native Xinjiang due to heavy snowfall and migrated east of the Altai mountains. When the Bogd Khan theocracy was proclaimed, a few Kazakhs expressed their allegiance to him. Starting in 1921, the refugee movement was given a new name: "class struggle." For instance, a certain Dabidai, the leader of the Kazakhs in 1925, informed the State Bag Hural that about 340 families had been influenced by propaganda and wanted to move into Mongolia. The civil war, rebellions and revolts in the 1930s and 1950s caused a growing influx of



refugees into Mongolia. Bayan-Ölgii *aimag* gave refuge to the fleeing Kazakhs. Three hundred and fifteen people from sixty-nine families fled to Mongolia in July 1942. They reported that they sought asylum because they were victims of pillage and robbery, and they applied for Mongolian citizenship.

In the 1940s the relations between the Tuvans in Mongolia and the central power in Ulaanbaatar were severely complicated due to the tense relations between the Mongolian leadership and the Tuvan leader Salchig Togoo, after the independent republic of Tannu-Tuva had applied for incorporation into the Soviet Union. This incorporation was carried out in 1944 (B. Baabar 1999: 411), and this change in the political status of Tuva was regarded as too big a concession to the Soviet Union and as a dangerous precedent for the political future of Mongolia.

### 3.1. Population statistics and recent migrations

According to the 1956 census, the Kazakh population of Mongolia numbered 36,700 persons, of which most lived in Bayan-Ölgii. During the 1950s and 1960s, however, a large number of Kazakhs moved to other parts of Mongolia, mainly to Ulaanbaatar and the mining city Nalaih, in the vicinity of Ulaanbaatar. The subsequent population development for Kazakhs, Tuvans (numbers indicated only since 1989) and the total population of Mongolia were, according to Bulag (1998: 30) as given in the table below:

	1963	1969	1979	1989
<i>Total population</i>	1,017,158	1,188,271	1,594,386	2,043,954
<i>Kazakhs</i>	47,735	62,812	84,305	120,506
<i>Tuvans</i>				2,153

The Tuvans referred to in this comprehensive table in Bulag, put together by him from unpublished data from the State Statistics Bureau, are presumably only the Tuvans originating from Bayan Ölgii, as the number of Tuvans indicated in his table of distribution of nationalities by province indicates that only one Tuvan lives in Hövs-göl province, where the Tuvan-speaking Tsaatan (reindeer people) or Dukha number around 500. In this statistical survey they may have been lumped together with the 3,215 Uriankhai (referred to by Bulag as Urianghai) indicated for the province. However, there is no mentioning of Tuvan speakers in Hovd province, which seems odd, considering Hashimoto's field-work among the Tuvan speakers in Hovd as late as 1998. See Hashimoto & Pürevjav (1998). In the introduction (p. 145) to the word lists presented in the article, they write (*in my translation*): "Today, there are more than 160 households or approximately 1400 Tuvans [*tuva*] living in Khovd *aimag* in Mongolia. The Tuvans are also called *mon-chaaga*. It is considered that the word *monchaag* is etymologically related to early Turkic *bunčuk* (*mon-čuk*) and Mongolian *moltsog* (*molčuy*). The common explanation is that the *mon-chaaga* in early times used to make clan symbols in the style of finely formed tassles (Mongolian *moltsog*)

out of horse mane and horse tail. It should furthermore be mentioned that they were also called *höh* [blue] *monchaaga* as they used to wear pointed hats made of bluish cloth. The older people talk very fluently among each other in their mother tongue. It also seems that some of the young people have gone to the city of Kyzyl in the Russian Federation in order to study at institutes of higher learning and at university in the Tuvan language.”

This group has also been described by Mongush: “In China the Tuvinians are called *kök monchaks* or just *monchaks*, although they tend to call themselves *tyva*. They are called *mochaks* by the other peoples living in this particular region. It is thought they were first called this by the Kazakhs, and that the term was then adopted by the Tuvinians as self invented. Writers on the subject translate *kök monchak* as ‘blue necklace’ [...]. The story goes that at one time people distinguished the Tuvinians from other nationalities by the blue necklaces they wore. This explanation is colourful but rather implausible. An alternative explanation for the term might be provided by considering the fact that among the Tuvinians there is a fairly large clan group (in Tuvinian *so-o-k*) called Monchak” (Mongush 1996b: 121). However, Mongush presents a much less positive assessment of their language skills in Tuvan (Mongush 1996a: 225-243) than Hashimoto & Pürevjav.

A somewhat different interpretation of the name is offered by Schubert (1971: 107), who writes: “*Urianxai* (Mončak/Mončok; ob = mong. *munxag*?). Sie nennen sich selbst ‘Sojoten’ und werden auch mong. ‘Xöx čuluut = die mit blauen Steinen’ genannt. Sie siedeln in BAJ-ÖL [Bayan-Ölgii]/XOWD [Hovd].”

Taube concludes that this use of exonyms for Tuvans has resulted in much of the confusion now still prevalent in many works on the subject. She writes (Taube 1996: 218): “Die Tatsache, daß die Tuwiner in der wissenschaftlichen Literatur und in Reiseberichten über lange Zeit nicht unter ihrer Eigenbenennung erscheinen, sondern so, wie ihre Nachbarn sie nannten, manchmal auch nach einzelnen ihrer Stämme bezeichnet (wie Sojan oder Mončak/Monjak) oder nach Untergruppen derselben (wie Gök Mončak, was wieder in mongolischer Übersetzung als *Kokčulütun* oder Varianten davon in der Literatur auftaucht), hat gelegentlich zu Verwirrung geführt, zum Beispiel zur Verwechslung mit den mongolischsprachigen Urian-chaj.”

Interestingly enough, Bulag (1998: 90) classifies this group as part of the Oirat Mongols: “In Mongolia, the Oirat do not exist as a collective ethnic group. They have been fragmented into various subgroups which are known as ‘nationalities’ (*yastan*): Bayat, Dürbet, Zahchin, Myangat, Ööld, Sartuul, Torgut, Urianghai, Hotgoit, Montsogo, etc.” Presumably, the last of the groups mentioned could be identified with *monchaaga*. However, Sanders mentions no ethnic group called Montsogo, or anything similar, in his *Historical dictionary of Mongolia* (Sanders 2003). For the 2000 census, he gives the number 4,778 for the Tuvans (p. 113). To the Oirat ethnic group (p. 257) he assigns Dörvöd [= Dürbet], Torguud [= Torgut], Zahchin, Ööld, Myangad [= Myangat] and Bayad [= Bayat], but not the other groups mentioned by Bulag.

During the 1990s the size of the Kazakh population varied considerably from year to year, due to a massive emigration to Kazakhstan in the early 1990s, and a subsequent return, though on a smaller scale. In 1990 a treaty on exchange of work force was concluded between Kazakhstan and Mongolia, according to which Mongolian citizens could get residence and work permits for Kazakhstan for up to five years. This led to a massive migration of Kazakhs from Bayan-Ölgii into Kazakhstan. According to Ambassador Isagaliev, a total number of 63,000 Kazakhs have left Mongolia for Kazakhstan since 1990. Out of these, some 20,000 have become citizens of Kazakhstan; around 10,000 have returned to Bayan-Ölgii; 10,000 have filed applications for renouncing their Mongolian citizenship, which is a prerequisite for settlement in Kazakhstan, and the rest travel on a more or less regular basis between the two countries. In 1997, Kazakhstan established quotas for Mongolian Kazakh immigration to Kazakhstan, and also decided in which parts of Kazakhstan they should settle.<sup>14</sup>

According to the preliminary figures of the 2000 census, the total number of Kazakhs in Mongolia amounted to 102,983 (out of a total population of 2,382,525), and of these Kazakhs 80,776 lived in Bayan-Ölgii and an additional 10,005 in the neighbouring province Hovd, and 6,439 in the city of Nalaih, near Ulaanbaatar.<sup>15</sup> The Tuvans were until 1989 counted as a sub-group of the Mongolian-speaking Uriankhai<sup>16</sup>, a group which in 1963 amounted to 14,399; in 1969: 15,662; and in 1979: 18,957. In 1989 the number of the Uriankhai (this time without the Tuvan sub-group) was 21,325 (Bulag 1998: 30).

According to Taube (1996: 213), the number of Tuvans in Tsengel amounted to approximately 2,400 in the 1960s. The number of Tuvans in Bayan-Ölgii for 1989 was 737 persons in the statistics presented by Bulag (1998: 69), which corresponds poorly to local estimates by Tuvans and Kazakhs alike. Their estimates range between 1,500 and 2,000. According to Harrison, their number is 1,400 (<http://www.swartmore.edu/SocSci/Linguistics/aslep/tsengel.php>).

<sup>14</sup> Isagaliev: interview. According to information received from discussion partners in Almaty, however, this quota system has not only led to less immigration to Kazakhstan from Bayan-Ölgii, but also to a larger number of people returning to Bayan-Ölgii, as the regions assigned for settlement generally are located in the northern part of the country, which is inhabited almost exclusively by ethnic Russians.

<sup>15</sup> *Čislennost' naličnogo naselenija i kazakov proživajuščix v Mongolii (po predvaritel'nyim itogam perepisi naselenija 2000 g.), na 15 nojabrja 2000 g.* Unpublished document.

<sup>16</sup> The Uriankhai of Bayan-Ölgii were previously Tuvan-speaking, but during the last century, Mongolian has become their spoken language. Nonetheless, the Uriankhai shamans in Bayan-Ölgii still use the Tuvan language in shamanist practices (Ariunaa: interview). A parallel is present in China, on which Mongush (1996b: 123) founding herself on Rešetov's (1990:178-179) research, writes: "[...] the Tuvinians who have completely lost their native language cease to regard themselves as Tuvinians. They are usually called not *kök mo-chaks*, but Altay Uryankhays."

### 3.2. Language policy, education and publishing: the Kazakhs

Education in Bayan-Ölgii has been carried out mainly in Kazakh since the establishment of the province, and the system of education was built up by teachers and educational specialists from Kazakhstan. The textbooks used in the schools were mainly those of the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan (Isagaliev: interview). Later on, school textbooks in Kazakhs were mainly locally produced. Mongolian has been the official language of administration, but in practice this refers only to the written documentation and not to the language spoken at the various authorities within the provincial and *sum* administration. Especially in the rural areas, this tends to be only Kazakh.

A Kazakh language newspaper and a publishing house were founded already in 1941,<sup>17</sup> and between 1941<sup>18</sup> and 1991 several hundred books in Kazakh were published by this publishing house. No catalogues or registers of publications are available either in the archives of the publishing house or in the provincial library, but a reasonable estimate of the total number of titles is probably around 300.<sup>19</sup> The circulation of the books was between 1,000 and 5,000 copies, with an average of 3,500 copies. Around half the titles were works of fiction, most of them original works in Kazakh, but also some translations from Mongolian and Russian. Political reports and handbooks in various spheres constituted the other half. In the 1980s the newspaper, *Žaŋa ömir*<sup>20</sup> (New Life), published twice weekly, had a circulation of 10,000 copies. In connection with the economic collapse of Mongolia in 1995, the buildings of the publishing house and the newspaper were privatized and in the same year the state-run publishing house was shut down, and the format of the newspaper was diminished, while the circulation plummeted to less than 1,000 copies. It is now published only every ten days. A literary journal, *Šūyyla* (Ray of light), was published between the 1950s and 1990s, and recently there have been efforts to revive it (Šynaj, R.: interview), but it is no longer published on a regular basis. Until the 1980s its circulation was around 2,200 copies. There was also a political journal *Uaqyt žene oqiya* (Contemporary questions), published between 1955 and 1990 with a circulation of 2,100 copies (Raxat, Q.: interview).

The buildings of the publishing house were bought by a local entrepreneur, Ms. Lašyn, and apart from being responsible for the publication of *ž aŋa ömir*, she also

<sup>17</sup> The buildings of the publishing house were, however, built in 1949, and until then the publishing activities were carried out in provisional premises. In 1954 the activities of the publishing house were expanded and several of the employees were sent to Ulaanbaatar for education (Raxat, Q.: interview).

<sup>18</sup> Between 1941 and 1945 the books were published in the Latin-based Kazakh orthography then in use in Kazakhstan (Rakhat, Q.: interview).

<sup>19</sup> In principle, one copy of each book should be kept at the provincial library, but due to economic problems, all the stocks of books have been moved together into the corner of the original library, as most of the facilities will be turned into a cinema.

<sup>20</sup> Earlier called *Örkendeu* (Progress), and renamed *ž aŋa ömir* in 1955 (Raxat, Q.: interview).

prints invitation cards, name cards, and at times books on commission (Lašyn: interview). In these years of economic crisis the interest in literature and learning drastically dropped, and the remaining stocks of the publishing house are nowadays sold as fire-lighting paper at 300 tugriks a kilo at the firewood section of the Ölgii bazaar (Šynaj, R.: interview). The former bookshop was also closed down, and now serves as a snooker bar, leaving the firewood section as the only distribution point for books in the province.

In order to compensate for the collapse of a significant part of state-run educational and cultural activities in the early 1990s, the government of Kazakhstan has made great efforts to give help to the cultural and educational sectors in Bayan-Ölgii. Relay stations for Kazakh television were installed in 1992, and this has strengthened the ties between Bayan-Ölgii and Kazakhstan also in the spheres of popular culture and ideology. It has also led to standard Kazakh influence on the spoken language in Bayan-Ölgii. Since 1992, there are also local broadcasts from a TV studio in Ölgii, but only a few hours per week. The local radio broadcasts one hour per day, from 8 until 9 p.m. and is financed by advertisements.

Each year, 50 state scholarships for studies in Kazakhstan are granted to students from Bayan-Ölgii, and Kazakhstan also provides substantial help to the Kazakh theatre in Ölgii (Mizamxan: interview).

In 2002, a branch of the East Kazakhstan University was opened in Bayan-Ölgii, with some 75 students, who are to study for two years in Bayan-Ölgii and then for two years in Kazakhstan. The university is divided into three faculties: computer science, business administration and languages & literature. The executive director is Mr. Tau from Bayan-Ölgii, and seven of the teachers are also locally recruited. The rest come from Kazakhstan, both as regular and temporary faculty. In order to set up the university, Kazakhstan invested some 20 million tenge, but there are hopes that further investments will be made, so that the university can get its own premises within a future Centre for Kazakh Culture and Education. At present, they rent rooms from the Teachers' College in Ölgii (Tau: interview).

Pakistan has paid for building a mosque in Ölgii, and there is also a *medrese* with some 30 students. Some twenty persons have also gone for further studies to Medina, Karachi and Istanbul, where the economic conditions are much better for the students than in Kazakhstan, thanks to scholarships and travel grants. At the Friday prayer some 200 attend at most, and as only a handful of people know Arabic, everything is also translated into Kazakh. A Kazakh translation of the Quran was printed in Medina in 1990 (Batırbek: interview).

### **3.3. Language policy, education and publishing: the Tuvans**

In the province of Bayan-Ölgii there was since 1940 one *sum* with a predominantly Tuvan population, Tsengel Hairhan *sum*, but this *sum* was *de facto* disbanded in 1959, *de jure* only in 1962 (Taube 1996: 225), and the area was incorporated into the significantly larger Tsengel *sum*, with a population majority of Kazakhs. During the

1960s it gradually became more difficult for educated Tuvans to find qualified work in Bayan-Ölgii, as these posts were distributed by the local branch of the Mongolian Communist Party by Kazakhs to other Kazakhs. As a result, many Tuvans moved to areas in central Mongolia, altogether some 1,500 persons. According to Taube, there was even a saying in Tsengel that it was better to be a slave among the Mongols than a beggar among the Kazakhs (Taube 1996: 216). Those who remained in Tsengel had to use Kazakh in all contacts with the authorities. The official languages were both Kazakh and Mongolian, but as virtually no ethnic Mongols live in Tsengel, the Kazakh language dominated everywhere. However, there was one school with Mongolian as language of instruction, and there the Tuvan children were educated, as the Tuvans were very reluctant to put their children in Kazakh schools. The teachers were ethnic Tuvans. Around 1989 the Tuvan exodus from Tsengel halted and in the year 1995 the Tuvan shaman and writer Galsan Chinag managed, thanks to both state financing and private donations, to arrange a symbolical return of Tuvans to Tsengel, and from two areas in central Mongolia a camel caravan brought some 135 Tuvans back to Tsengel. After travelling for more than 2,000 kilometres a large welcoming ceremony was arranged for the returning Tuvans, an event which gained great symbolic value for the self conscience of the Tuvans. Later, calls were made for the reestablishment of the Tsengel Hairhan *sum* (Taube 1996: 216-225), but in 2001 there were no signs that this call would be met by the provincial authorities.

In 1992, a Tuvan school was founded in Tsengel, where the language of instruction for the first four grades was only Tuvan. For the 5th to 10th grade, teaching was mainly in Mongolian, but with Tuvan language and literature taught in Tuvan. The Kazakh language was not taught in this school. The textbooks were imported from Tuva in the Russian Federation. This school functioned until 1997, and it then had 337 pupils. Sixteen of the pupils were later sent to Kyzyl for further studies. In 1997, the school was shut down due to administrative and economic reasons, and the Tuvan pupils had to move to the much larger Kazakh school. Even there, however, education is in Tuvan during the first four grades, and later students receive some teaching in Tuvan until the 8th grade (Tömör-uyal: interview). The Tuvan written language standard, however, differs significantly from the Tuvan spoken in Tsengel (Ariunaa: interview). On this issue, Erika Taube (1996: 224) writes: "Allerdings wird mit tuwinischen Lehrbüchern aus Kyzyl unterrichtet. Das muß die Eigenart des Tuwinischen, das im Altai gesprochen wurde, beeinflussen, die Besonderheiten dieses Dialekts verwischen und eine Fülle von Russismen und Internationalismen in die Sprache bringen, die sie bisher nicht kannte. Selbst die Mongolismen werden dadurch zunehmen, die im Standard-Tuwinischen 30% ausmachen. Natürlich entspricht die in Tuwa verwendete Schreibung nicht der Aussprache des Tuwinischen im Altai."

The Tuvans who have moved to the provincial capital Ölgii generally have a relatively high level of education. They have quickly made careers within the Mongolian language institutions at the provincial level, and nowadays both the Mongolian theatre and the Mongolian school in Ölgii are led by ethnic Tuvans. By filling the

functions earlier filled by Khalkha Mongols through the state work appointment system, functioning until 1991, the Tuvans have managed to gain a higher level of prestige in the province.

Regarding the written language, only few Tuvans are literate in the Tuvan language, while the literacy rate in Mongolian among the Tuvans is very high. Knowledge of written Kazakh is more sporadic.

An interesting case of a common space for interaction between Kazakhs and Tuvans is, however, the Mongolian Turkish School in Ölgii. It is a private secondary school run by an organization called UFUK Educational Foundation, and it is one of four Turkish schools in Mongolia, the others being located in Ulaanbaatar, Darhan and Erdenet. The school in Ölgii was founded in 1995 and offers four years of education to 180 pupils, between 14 and 18 years of age, with an equal number of boys and girls. The languages of instruction are English, Turkish, Mongolian and Russian, but notably not Kazakh. The focus lies on computer science, languages and mathematics, and it is a boarding school with strict discipline. Twelve of the teachers come from Turkey and the other ten are locally recruited (Selahattin: interview). This school has become the elite school for the children of both the Kazakh and the Tuvan intelligentsia, and advertisement posters for the school are seen in most official locations and also in private homes. It is generally regarded as the only safe way to prepare children for university studies, and each year up to ten grants are given for university studies in Turkey.<sup>21</sup>

#### **3.4. Inter-ethnic relations in Bayan-Ölgii**

The inter-ethnic relations in Bayan-Ölgii, between the provincial majority population of Kazakhs and the various Mongol sub-groups, of which the Tuvans formally constitute one, are generally described as good and without any elements of more serious conflicts than the normal disputes about pasture land, which generally characterize the nomadic cultures of the region. This view is stated with emphasis by Mongols in Ulaanbaatar and also by the Kazakhs in the provincial capital Ölgii. Peter Finke (1999: 137-138) writes: “The relations between Kazaks and Mongols are remarkable, compared to other parts of Central Asia. In general they are peaceful, though not too intimate. [...] Usually mutual visits are restricted to close neighbours, but there are also more intensive friendships as well. [...] The language of inter-

<sup>21</sup> Only very vague explanations regarding the organizational structure and financing of the school were given in spite of repeated questions on these matters. These four Turkish Mongolian schools form part of the worldwide network of schools based on the thinking of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen. They are also listed as such by Balci on the basis of information from the Turkish Ministry of Education, viz. “Liste de principaux établissements nourdjou dans le monde en 1996/97” (Balci 2003: 144). Though Balci does not include Mongolia in his research, his description of the school activities and style of education corresponds well to information received in Ölgii. Ufuk also has an official homepage: [www.ufmts.org](http://www.ufmts.org), but it does not contain much information.



ethnic communication is usually Mongolian, although some Mongols have a fairly good command of the Kazak language. Inter-ethnic marriages, however, are almost non-existent.”

The Tuvans who live in Ölgii, however, usually present themselves as Mongols, and only when enquiring into more detail is it apparent that almost all of them are ethnic Tuvans. At present, there are only very few ethnic Mongols living in Ölgii. The Kazakhs also use the ethnic terminology in the same way; they tend to use Tuvan only as a mark of disrespect, and use Mongol on neutral occasion when referring to the Tuvans.

In private discussions at greater length, however, a somewhat more complex picture of the inter-ethnic relations emerges. The Tuvans generally characterize the Kazakhs as hungry for material goods and power, and apart from this, the Tuvans often associate the Kazakhs with the Kazakh bandits led by Osman (Ospan) Batur, known for his cruelty in connection with the Kazakh rebellions in Xinjiang in the 1940s.<sup>22</sup> According to a widespread view among the Tuvans, and partly also among the Kazakhs, in the early 1950s Mao Zedong persuaded the Mongolian leader Choibalsan to let many of the men who had fought together with Osman settle in western Mongolia (except for Osman himself, who was executed by the Chinese in 1951) and according to this view, these former bandits have introduced an element of ruthlessness among the Kazakhs.<sup>23</sup>

The Kazakhs, in turn, tend to describe the Tuvans as lazy drunkards, scorning the Tuvan yurts, which are much smaller than those of the Kazakhs, and the Tuvan habit of drinking milk vodka. The Kazakhs also regard the Tuvans as guilty, at least by association, of the repeated cattle theft carried out by Tuvan bandits, based in the republic of Tuva. This phenomenon has furthermore led to a virtual depopulation of the whole area bordering on Tuva.

Nonetheless, the impact of such stereotypes should not be overestimated, and even in Hargant, there are many *ails*, groups of yurts, consisting of both Tuvan and Kazakh yurts. According to Galsan Chinag (interview), however, the main reason for this is that the Kazakhs want to keep an eye on the Tuvans. This area has become particularly popular among the Kazakhs due to its suitable climate for raising cashmere goats, a major source of cash income. However, certain taboos are upheld by the Tuvans, and Kazakhs are not welcome at the Tuvan *ovoos*. From the language point of view, it is clear that while most Tuvans are trilingual in Tuvan, Mongolian and Kazakh, with linguistic competence in descending order, the Kazakhs living in Tuvan dominated areas like the Hargant valley, do not learn Tuvan.

<sup>22</sup> See Benson 1998. She mentions an agreement concluded in 1942 between Osman and the Mongolian authorities on Mongolian aid to Osman's Kazakh fighters in the form of weapons and advisors. For a slightly different version of these events, see B. Baabar (1999: 397-398).

<sup>23</sup> In view of the thorough analysis of the historical events carried out by Linda Benson, there is no evidence to corroborate this statement.



In connection with the tendencies of dissolution of the Soviet Union, starting around 1989, the power monopoly of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) was more and more put into question. At the same time, some Kazakhs voiced a wish to work for secession from Mongolia and incorporation into Kazakhstan. Among the Kazakhs there were, however, divergent views on how far the claims for autonomy should be taken and whether it was a good idea to be incorporated into Kazakhstan. Bulag (1998: 99) describes the sentiments: "A Kazakh National Unity Movement was inaugurated in October 1990 in Bayan Ölgii *aimag*, to 'promote Kazakh autonomy in Mongolia, adoption of Kazakh as the national official language, and the appointment of a Kazakh to the post of vice-president of Mongolia.'"

According to the Tuvan shaman and writer Galsan Chinag, the main proponent for the incorporation of Bayan-Ölgii was the linguist Qaržaubaj. Thereby, the Tuvans felt threatened not only as Tuvans, but also as Mongols, and in 1990, Galsan Chinag wrote an open letter to Qaržaubaj, in which he accused him of wanting to bereave the Tuvans of the Altai. After writing the letter, he went to the provincial capital, bringing a few bottles of homemade vodka, which could no longer be bought in Ölgii after the collapse of the Mongolian economy. During one day of talks and drinking together he told Qaržaubaj, according to his own words, that his head was undoubtedly much bigger than that of a marmot, a target which a Tuvan hunter rarely fails to hit. This would, according to Chinag, be his fate in case he proceeded with his plans for an incorporation of Bayan-Ölgii with Kazakhstan (Chinag, Galsan: interview). This event is, however, not confirmed by Professor Qaržaubaj, who since 1999 has been, Professor at Evrazijskij University in the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana (Qaržaubaj: interview). However, this version of the events is widespread among the Tuvan population of Bayan-Ölgii and strongly influences their view on the relations between Tuvans and Kazakhs.

Bulag (1998: 100-101) also writes about the inter-ethnic relations and points to further problems in the ethnic definitions:

As mentioned, Bayan Ölgii was founded for two ethnic groups, the Kazakh and the Altai Urianghai, the latter allegedly being a Turkic people. However, this is disputed by the Urianghai, who always think of themselves as Mongols. The increasing Kazakh domination in Bayan Ölgii has brought about much inconvenience to the Urianghai, and I heard that many of them have moved away. Their emigration from Bayan Ölgii [sic!] started in the 1960s, when the state farms were set up in central Mongolian provinces. In recent years, some Urianghai Mongolian scholars have protested about the fact that they were treated as Turkic people, both by the state and by anthropologists. They have begun to reclaim Mongolian identity. In fact, they say that they are the original Mongols, the ancestors of the Oirat Mongols, and they even claim that the majority of the Khalkha were originally Urianghai.

Certainly, there are many mistakes regarding historical facts contained in this passage, but, nonetheless, they play an important role in the inter-ethnic relations between Uriankhai, Tuvans, Kazakhs and Mongols. The main problem regarding Bulag's description is that he makes no distinction between Mongolian-speaking Uriankhai and Turkic-speaking Tuvans.

#### 4. Ethnic classification theory in Mongolia

In Mongolia two different terms are used to classify ethnic groups, *üнденстен* and *yastan*.<sup>24</sup> These terms are used in the official discourse as translation for the Russian concepts *nacija* and *narodnost'* respectively,<sup>25</sup> but the original Russian meaning was strongly shifted, as also the Kazakhs were considered as a *yastan* until 1991-1992.<sup>26</sup> The official Mongolian view on the ethnic groups in the country can be analyzed as the result of a traditional view on the matter as contained in the *Secret history of the Mongols* (*Mongolyn nuuts товчоо*; written in 1240) combined with a partly adapted terminology from the Soviet theory on ethnic groups. The basic notion was that those groups which had made up the empire of Genghis Khan belonged to the same tribal confederation and thus, politically, constituted one people, although among these groups there were both Mongolian-speaking and Turkic-speaking groups. At the same time, the Kazakhs of Mongolia were most conscious that the Kazakhs in the Soviet Union were classified as a separate nation, and this created discontent with the official classification among the Kazakhs in Mongolia. According to this view, there was only one *ündersten* in Mongolia, namely Mongols, and a great number of *yastans*, which were regarded as subgroups of the Mongols. Officially, there were no Tuvans in Mongolia, which resulted in a situation where the Tuvans *de facto* living in Mongolia were registered either as Uriankhai, in case they lived in western Mongolia, or as Tsaatan (reindeer people), if they lived near the Tsagaan nuur lake, near the Hövs-göl nuur lake in northern Mongolia. Hence, the Tuvans were indirectly classified under the concept of *yastan*, although they are speakers of a Turkic language. This study does not treat the question of the Dukha/Tsaatan,<sup>27</sup> but focuses only on the Tuvans of western Mongolia, whose self-designation is *diva/tiva* in Tuvan and *tuvaa* in Mongolian.

The question of the Tuvans is even more complex than that of the Kazakhs, as the Tuvans of Bayan-Ölgii have not even had the status of *yastan*, but have been considered part of the Uriankhai, a Mongolian-speaking group, which has, nevertheless, preserved religious practices of Tuvan origin, although the Uriankhai, unlike the

<sup>24</sup> For a further discussion of this classification, see Bulag 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Thus, *ündersten* corresponds to 'nation', while *yastan* corresponds to 'nationality' in the traditional translation of the Soviet terminology.

<sup>26</sup> "In the 1991-1992 Congress, they finally managed to elevate their status to a full *ündersten* as opposed to Mongol" (Bulag 1998: 96).

<sup>27</sup> A research project on the language of the Dukha is now being carried out by Elisabetta Ragagnin, see Ragagnin (2000: 276-277).

Tuvans of Bayan-Ölgii, traditionally define themselves as Buddhists. According to Professor Qaržaubaj (interview) the Tuvans are rather to be seen as a Mongolized Turkic people.

### 5. The Tuvans as *ethnie* in Bayan-Ölgii

If we take Smith's definitions of an *ethnie* as a basis for analyzing the situation of the Tuvans in Bayan-Ölgii, it is possible to see the following:

- A collective name. A collective name for group-internal use has been there since time immemorial, and there is no tendency to identify with the Kazakhs. The use of the term Mongol is more problematic, but it is, in my view, rather to be seen as a social marker and does not affect the group-internal use of the self-designation Tuvan.
- A common myth of descent. The Tuvan myths about the origin of the Tuvan people as well as other Tuvan mythology are still very much part of the cultural heritage in Tsengel and are transferred from generation to generation by more or less professional storytellers in the area.<sup>28</sup>
- A shared history. The memory of non-mythological history stretches back at least to the beginning of the 19th century, as there are stories from this time about how the Tuvans allowed the first Kazakhs to come to the area of Tsengel for their summer pasture.
- A distinctive shared culture. The Tuvans have a particular kind of yurt, clearly distinctive from that of the Kazakhs. Furthermore, they have their own variety within the nomadic culture of breeding yaks, preparing marmot skins and making yak milk vodka. In the sphere of religion, the adherence to strict Tengrism, without acknowledgment of Buddhism, distinguishes the Tuvans of Bayan-Ölgii not only from the surrounding peoples in Mongolia, who are either Buddhists (albeit with Shamanist influence) or Muslims, but also from the Tuvans of the republic of Tuva, who generally practice a mixed form of Buddhism and Shamanism.
- An association with a specific territory. The Altai (which is nowadays divided between Mongolia, China and Russia) as the homeland of the Tuvans and with Tsengel hairhan uul as its symbolic centre.
- A sense of solidarity. This sentiment was already present previously, as a strategy of protecting their own culture against Kazakh influence, but it has recently been strengthened by Galsan Chinag's work on making the Tsengel Tuvans conscious of their value as an ethnic group.

<sup>28</sup> The myths of the Tuvans in Tsengel have been recorded, analyzed and published by Erika Taube in a large number of publications, see, e.g., Taube (1992: 112-162).

Furthermore, Smith regards the following factors as fundamental for the forming of an *ethnie*:

- Sedentariness and nostalgia. Of course, sedentarization is not a valid concept when discussing traditionally nomadic populations, but in practice the nomadic life in Tsengel only means moving around within the homeland and coming back to the same places each year according to the seasons.
- Organized religion. The Tuvans of Tsengel have their own Shamanist religion, which traditionally has no higher level of organization than the village level. It is clearly distinct from Mongolian Buddhism and Kazakh Islam, and during the last decades also more organized, as Galsan Chinag became the central shaman, who also organizes common rituals for all the Tuvans of Tsengel at the *ovoo* of Kunshkunnug.
- Inter-state warfare. Concrete inter-state warfare is clearly lacking, as the Tuvans in Bayan-Ölgii have never constituted anything even remotely similar to a state, but there still is a strong feeling that a potential conflict was ward-off, as Galsan Chinag and Qaržaubaj agreed on the future of Bayan-Ölgii.

#### **6. Towards a theory of sub-minority—majority ethnic identification**

The different levels of ethnicity among the Tuvans is most clearly analyzed as a strategy of increasing their own autonomy in the ethnic sense, in the same way as the Basques generally have been much in favour of the EU Project in order to be able to be Basques and Europeans (a vague, and hence harmless identity), but avoid being classified as either French or Spanish.<sup>29</sup> By adopting the Mongolian ethnicity parallel to their own, an ethnicity which was both more prestigious and more neutral than the Kazakh ethnicity, the Tuvans were even able to strengthen their own ethnic consciousness as Tuvans. As the number of Mongols (Khalkha Mongols) in the local area, i.e. the province of Bayan-Ölgii is only around 0.4%, they are not perceived as a threat by the Tuvans, whereas the Kazakhs, who constitute 86% of the population, could easily by mere strength of numbers force the Tuvans to leave their focal places, like the valley of Hargant, near the holy mountain of Tsengel hairhan. After the return of a relatively large group of Tuvans from other parts of Mongolia, the group once again gained the critical mass necessary for maintaining a more developed ethnic consciousness. Due to the strengthened position of the Kazakhs in the 1950s and 1960s, a significant part of the Tuvans had moved to other parts of Mongolia,

<sup>29</sup> A similar case is found among all the various peoples in the former Soviet Union, who still, explicitly or implicitly, prefer to identify themselves as Soviet, rather than subjugating themselves to the local requirements for ethnic adaptation. This is particularly clear among many of the Mingrelians living in Abkhazia, who prefer to join the Russian Federation (as the successor state of the Soviet Union) instead of identifying themselves as Georgians.

where the possibilities for supporting their families were much better, but thanks to the strong dedication of Galsan Chinag this exodus trend was changed, and hence his personal role in this development can hardly be overestimated. Thus, the prerequisites for a sufficiently large ethnic group could be fulfilled, a group comprising at least more than one thousand persons, and, as many of them had received their education in other parts of Mongolia, they possessed a better command of the Mongolian language and a stronger connection to the Mongolian majority society than the local Kazakh population, who had fostered their ties to Kazakhstan already during Soviet times.

As a conclusion, the following criteria can be advanced as fundamental for a situation where this type of ethnic identification levels appear:

- A population which at least at a low administrative level could constitute the majority (village, county).
- Language skills, education and religion which link this particular group closer to the country's majority population than the regional majority population.
- Perceived advantages of acting in the name of the country's majority population.
- Real or perceived negative treatment from the part of the regional majority population.

### **Acknowledgment**

I am most indebted to the Tuvans and Kazakhs of Bayan-Ölgii, who readily accepted to be interviewed on short notice, and also to my hosts Mr. Khompaj in Ölgii and to Ms. Mөндөр in Kushkunnug, Tsengel *sum*. Furthermore, I received much help from my Uyghur host in Hovd, Mr. Yura, and last, but not least, from Prof. Sumiabaatar and Dr. Xurmetxan Muxamadi at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences in Ulaanbaatar.

### **References**

Printed publications<sup>30</sup>

- A. Saraj 1992. *Revolyciyadan buriny Monyoliya qazaqtari* [The Kazakhs of Mongolia before the revolution]. Ölgii: Monyoliya G'ilim Akademiyasiniñ tarix institutı [The Institute of History, Mongolian Academy of Sciences].
- A. Saraj 1999. *Töñkeristen keyingi Bayan-Ölgey qazaq, uryanxylari (1921-1940)* [The Kazakhs and the Uriankhai after the revolution (1921-1940)]. Erdenet: Bayan-Ölgiy aymayı-

<sup>30</sup> Mongols, as well as Kazakhs and Tuvans living in Mongolia, are usually known only under their personal name. In case the patronymic is known, in the following list of sources, it is indicated in the form of an initial before the personal name in accordance with the Mongolian practice.

- nij qoyamdıq yilimdar ortalıy [The Centre for Social Sciences of the Province Bayan-Ölgii].
- A. Saraj 2001. *Revolyciyadan burınyı Monyolya qazaqtarı attı kitapıñ (1993 ž.) qosımşası* [Supplement to the book "The Kazakhs of Mongolia before the revolution" (1993)]. Ölgii: Bayan-Ölgiy aymayı qoyamdıq, ekonomikalıq yilimdar zertew ortalıy [The Science Center for Society and Economy of Bayan-Ölgii province].
- Anderson, Gregory D. S. & Harrison K. David 2003. *Tuvan dictionary*. (Languages of the World/Dictionaries 28). Unterschleissheim/München: Lincom Europa.
- Aydemir, Ahmet 2002. Attributive Nebensätze im Altai-Tuwinischen. In: Demir, Nurettin & Turan, Fikret (eds.) *Scholarly depth and accuracy. A Festschrift to Lars Johanson*. Ankara. 39-50.
- B. Baabar (Batbayar) 1999. *History of Mongolia*. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Balci, Bayram 2003. *Missionnaires de l'Islam en Asie centrale—Les écoles turques de Fetullah Gülen*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose.
- Baian-Ölgii aimgiin statistikiin heltes [Department of Statistics of the Province Bayan-Ölgii] 2001. *Baian-Ölgii aimgiin ediin zasag, niigmiin baidlyn tuhai taniltsuulga 2000* [Introduction to the economy and society of Bayan-Ölgii for the year 2000]. Ölgii.
- Benson, Linda 1988. Osman Batur: The Kazaks' Golden Legend. In: Benson, Linda & Svanberg, Ingvar (eds.) *The Kazaks of China: Essays on an ethnic minority*. (Studia Multiethnica Upsaliensia 5.) Uppsala. 141-187.
- Bulag, Uradyn E. 1998. *Nationalism and hybridity in Mongolia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Enwall, Joakim 1992. Some remarks on the language debate in the Mingrelian newspaper. Qazaqıñi Gazeti. In: Hewitt, George (ed.) *Caucasian perspectives*. Unterschleissheim/München: Lincom Europa. 278-284.
- Enwall, Joakim 1999. Towards a sociolinguistic history of Sinkiang. In: Juntunen, Mirja & Schlyter, Birgit N. (eds.) *Return to the Silk Routes: current Scandinavian research on Central Asia*. London et al.: Kegan Paul International. 119-131.
- Enwall, Joakim 2000. Gräshoppornas anfall: En studie av kinesiska lånord i mongoliska. [The attack of the grasshoppers: A study of Chinese loanwords in Mongolian], *Orientaliska studier* 103-4, 63-80.
- Enwall, Joakim (forthcoming). *The Mingrelian factor in the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict*.
- Finke, Peter 1999. The Kazaks of Western Mongolia. In: Svanberg, Ingvar (ed.) *Contemporary Kazaks: cultural and social perspectives*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press. 103-139.
- Hashimoto, Masaru & Pürevjav, Erdene 1999. Baruun Mongol dax' tuva, uigur helnii ügsiin tuhaj. In: Fujishiro, Setsu & Shögaito, Masahiro (eds.) *Issues in Turkic languages: description and language contact*. Kyoto: Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Letters. 145-155.
- Mandelstam Balzer, Marjorie 1999. Dilemmas of federalism in Siberia. In: Alexseev, Mikhail A. (ed.) *Center-periphery conflict in post-Soviet Russia: a federation imperiled*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 131-166.
- Mawkanuli, Talant 1999. *The phonology and morphology of Jungar Tuva*. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Mongush, Marina V. 1996a. Tuvans of Mongolia and China. *International Journal of Central Asian Studies* 1, 225-243.
- Mongush, Marina V 1996b. The Tuvinians in China: aspects of their history, language and culture. In: Humphrey, Caroline & Sneath, David (eds.) *Culture and environment in Inner Asia, 2: Society and Culture*. Cambridge: The White Horse Press. 116-135.

- Potantin, G. N. 1881. *Očerki severo-zapadnoj Mongolii*, 2. Sankt-Peterburg.
- Ragagnin, Elisabetta 2000. The Turkic Dukha of northern Mongolia. *Turkic Languages* 4:2, 276-277.
- Rešetov, A. M. 1983. *Ėtničeskij sostav naselenija severo-zapadnogo Kitaja*. Novosibirsk.
- Rešetov, A. M. 1990. Tuvincy i altajskie urjanxajcy v Kitae: problemy istorii, ėtnosa i jazykovoj situacii. In: *Obščestvo i gosudarstvo v Kitae*. (XXI naučnaja konferencija. Tezisy dokladov 2.) Moskva.
- Sanders, Alan J. K. 2003<sup>2</sup>. *Historical dictionary of Mongolia*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.
- Sat, Sh. Ch. & Doržu, L. Ju. 1989. K izuženiju tuvinskogo jazyka v KNR. *Sovetskaja tjurkologija* 5, 93-96.
- Schubert, Johannes 1971. *Paralipomena mongolica*. (Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, 19.) Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The ethnic origins of nations*. Oxford & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Taube, Erika 1992. Zur ursprünglich magischen Funktion von Volksdichtung. *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 11, 112-162.
- Taube, Erika 1996. Zur gegenwärtigen Situation der Tuwiner im westmongolischen Altai. In: Árpád Berta et al. (eds.) *Symbolae Turcologicae: Studies in honour of Lars Johanson on his sixtieth birthday 8 March 1996*. (Transactions 6.) Stockholm: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. 213-225.
- Tschinag, Galsan 2000. *Der weiße Berg*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag.
- Vladimircov, B. J. 1923. O dvux smežannyx jazykax Zapadnoj Mongolii. In: *Jafetišeskij sbornik* 2: 2.

#### Map

- Map of Tsengel *sum*, from Mongolia Road Map, Avto zamyn zurag, Ulaanbaatar: Cartographic Enterprise of State Administration of Geodesy and Cartography, s.a.

#### Unpublished written sources

- Čislennost' naličnogo naselenija i kazakov proživajužžix v Mongolii (po predvaritel'nym itogam perepisi naselenija 2000 g.), na 15 nojabrja 2000 g. [Population figures and number of Kazakhs living in Mongolia (according to the preliminary results of the 2000 census), for Nov. 15, 2000]. Document provided by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Mongolia, Mr. Kajrat Isagaliev, June 18, 2001.

#### Internet materials

- <http://www.swartmore.edu/SocSci/Linguistics/aslep/tsengel.php>  
<http://www.ufmts.org>

#### Interviews

- A. Saraj. Former governor of Bajan-Ölgij province. Ölgij, July 27, 2001.
- Ariunaa. Director of the Mongolian School. Ölgij, July 29, 2001.
- Batırbek. Imam of the Abu Bakr Mosque. Ölgij, July 28, 2001.
- Činag [Tschinag], Galsan. Shaman and writer. Kuskunnug, Cengel sum, Bajan-Ölgij, July 30, 2001.
- Isagaliev, Kajrat Isagalievič. Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Mongolia. Ulaanbaatar, June 18, 2001.

Lašyn. Entrepreneur and owner of the Ölgii printing office. Ölgij, August 2, 2001.

Mizamxan. Bajan-Ölgij representative of the World Association of Kazakhs. Ölgij, July 28, 2001.

Raxat, Q. Editor of *Žaŋa ömir* 1955-1969. Ölgij, August 1, 2001.

Qaržaubaj. Professor of Turkology, Evrazijskij University. Astana, February 8, 2002.

Selahattin. Educator, Mongolian Turkish School. Ölgij, July 27, 2001.

Šynaj, R. Writer and journalist. Ölgij, July 27, 2001.

Tau. Executive director of the Bajan-Ölgij branch of the East Kazakhstan University. July 28, 2001.

Tömör-uyal. Director of the Department of Education at the provincial administration of Bajan-Ölgij. Former director of the Tuvan school in Tsengel. Ölgij, July 28, 2001.