Key Words in the Late Qing Reform Discourse: Classical and Contemporary Sources of Authority

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AND

National Questions and National Answers in the Chinese Revolution; Or, How Do You Say Minzu in Mongolian?

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The journalists who wrote for the Shanghai daily Shibao in the late Qing envisaged the emerging middle realm in China as a new arena of negotiation between ruler and ruled. While they continued to define this arena in terms of the dynastic structure and the fundamental principles of classical Chinese political theory, they represented it as the site of a radically new politics of contestation. Based on constitutional principles and aimed at countering the government’s efforts to recentralize dynastic authority, this new realm would alter both the structure of power and its mode of operation in the early twentieth century.

The journalists defined this middle realm in terms of three new or newly interpreted concepts associated with foreign constitutionalism. The first was the nation (guojia). Encompassing both the dynasty and society but not exclusively identified with either, the nation represented the arena where state and society would meet and negotiate China’s destiny under the authority of the constitution. The new publicists believed that this process of negotiation was further dependent on two nascent forces in the late Qing polity: popular power (minquan)\(^1\) and public opinion (yulun). While the rise of minquan would diminish dynastic power by shifting the locus of authority from the closed world of dynastic imperium into the open realm of popular politics, public opinion would be the voice of this newly emerging popular power and the tribunal of this new political realm.

The Shibao journalists’ appeal to these newly defined concepts—the nation, popular power, public opinion—reflected their training in Western social and political theory. Expanding their cultural horizons, the study of the new learning impelled them to challenge the familiar Confucian social and political constructs and to reorient their political vision. Rather than continue to look backward to the golden age of high antiquity for revelations concerning dynastic restoration, they began to look outward to new models of national reform and forward to the establishment of Chinese constitutionalism. At the

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1. The term minquan as it was used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in China is difficult to render into English. It is frequently translated as popular rights, the term used for the name of the Jiya minken movement in Meiji Japan in the 1880s, or as democracy when referring to minquan as one of Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles. Although popular power is not a satisfactory translation either, it is at least free of the connotations of popular rights or democracy. An explanation of the specific definition of the term as it was used at this time is given later in the chapter.
same time, however, the journalists had not become totally alienated from the Confucian tradition as the iconoclasts of the May Fourth period would be some five or ten years hence. Trained in the classical texts, they lived sufficiently within the Chinese cultural tradition to see it not as a monolithic entity but as an arena of tensions, alternatives, and conflicts that left room for the integration of new ideas. Continuing to uphold the classical constructs as their own most enduring points of reference, they infused these age-old precepts with a radically new spirit and fused them with constitutional principles. The result was tension rather than synthesis, with the editorialists themselves often oblivious to the contradictions that arose as they continued to support the inherited ideal of harmony between ruler and ruled while promoting the confrontational new mode of public politics.

This tension is reflected most clearly in the journalists' equation of modern Western constitutionalism with China's "ancient constitutionalism"—the classical theory of the people as the foundation of the nation (minben sixiang). An element in all of the Thirteen Classics and expounded upon in the Confucian Analects, this theory states that the key to genuine leadership is the manifestation of virtues that benefit the people. Mencius (371-289 BCE), who became one of the greatest theoreticians of minben thought, emphasized the ruler's responsibility in tending to the welfare of the people as a means of ensuring stability and prosperity in the polity. Although originally focused on the role of the ruler, this theory was later appropriated by generations of social critics who read it as an assertion of the primacy of the people. The richest source of positive social images in the Chinese tradition, it provided critics with the means of denouncing autocratic authority


3. Some of the editorialists refer to the traditional relationship between ruler and ruled as China's ancient constitutionalism. See for example "Xu Qian zouqing Qingting gai minzhu lixian zhai" [Xu Qian petitions the Qing court to adopt a democratic constitution], Shibao, 29 November 1911. This ancient constitutionalism differed greatly from the Western sense of the term, i.e., a specific document or a core body of laws that define and delineate government activities, generally linked to the primacy of law. Instead, it was more like a loose social contract through which the people recognize the ruler's right to govern and the ruler governs for the benefit of the people. The unity between ruler and ruled rests in the confidence that each side places in the other.

and calling attention to the unjust sufferings of the people. Following in the line of these critics, the late Qing reformists appealed to the theory of the people as the foundation of the nation in promoting their own political vision, claiming contemporary Western and ancient Chinese constitutionalism shared the same ultimate ideals: the unification of ruler and ruled, social welfare, and popular participation in the political process.

In constructing and validating their constitutional claims, the journalists also appealed to the age-old principle of gōng. Intimately connected to minben thought in the Confucian discourse, the concept of gōng is rich in classical resonances and multiple historical meanings. Most often conceived in a dichotomous relationship with sī (meaning privateness and selfishness, wickedness or unjustness [buzheng]), definitions of gōng range from openness and publicness to the ethical principles of moral equality (pingfen), justice (zheng), and fairness (gongping). In order to reestablish the principle of gōng in their age and lay the foundation for an open and just middle realm, the reform journalists invested this classical concept with new valences of meaning by associating it with the nation rather than the dynasty and with the expansion of popular power and the expression of public opinion.

Seeking both to recover obscured age-old ideals and to apply contemporary political solutions to the problems of the age, the new publicists thus appealed to a fusion of old and new cultural and political constructs, combining classical conceptions of society and justice with Western notions of constitutionalism, nationalism, and civil rights. While they followed the Confucian literati practice of attempting to inspire change by contrasting a troubled present with an idyllic past, they further extended this juxtaposition of past and present by equating the "glory" of the modern constitutional nations with China's golden antiquity. Advocating the principles of appropriateness and the golden mean in the Inaugural Statement to Shibao, for example, Liang Qichao quoted the Book of Rites and

5. Writers who used minben theory include Qu Yuan (339-c. 278 BCE) of the Warring States period, the poet Du Fu (712-70) of the Tang dynasty, the social critic Deng Mu (1247-1306) of the Song and Yuan dynasties, Huang Zengxi (1610-95) and Tang Zhen (1630-1704) of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Confucius alongside Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Another editorialist promoted democratic constitutionalism by likening Montesquieu’s advanced views on democracy to those of Mencius, urging the emperor to "look backward to the halcyon days of the emperors Yao and Shun, and outward to the contemporary model of the United States." The sources of authority for the journalists’ new politics were thus drawn from both "the greater meaning handed down by the classics" and from the experience of the "advanced nations" (wenneng guo) of the contemporary world.

While the journalists’ appeal to these disparate ideas—classical Chinese or contemporary foreign—reflects an underlying tension inherent in their reform project, their mode of appropriation of these ideas provides insights into China’s unique historical trajectory in the early twentieth century. Ultimately, it was not the reformists’ adoption but rather their adaptation of foreign terms and models that reveals the most about the distinctly Chinese vision of constitutionalism. And it was not the bold newness of their claims but the traditional resonances that continued to echo within them that suggests the true potential for reform in early twentieth-century China.

The Nation (Guojia)

The late Qing reformists’ primary political concern was to shift the locus of authority from the imperial court to the middle realm by replacing the dynastic interest with the national interest as the ruling principle in the polity. This shift was premised on a new conception of the nation (guojia). In ancient times, the guojia had been conceived of as the combination of the fiefs (guo) of the feudal princes (zhuhou) and the communities (jia) of the great officers of state (daifu). In later periods, the ideas of nation and the dynasty were collapsed, and guojia came to refer to the imperial system. This centuries-old theory

of imperial sovereignty was repudiated in the late Qing reformist discourse as the new
publicists drew a distinction between nation and dynasty and claimed that the guojia was
the collective property of all of those who inhabited the national territory, not the private
property of the ruling house.

This redefinition reflected the development of statecraft consciousness in the late Qing
as the reformists sought effective responses to both the foreign threat and imperial
autocracy. Realizing that the encroachment of the "great powers" on China’s territory
endangered the survival not only of the ruling house but of the nation itself—and that the
court was incapable of adequately addressing this challenge—the reformists advocated
mobilizing the entire population to defend the national interest. The notion of guojia thus
took on a new meaning in both the international and domestic contexts, representing an
assertion of sovereignty in the international arena and of popular power within the dynastic
structure.\textsuperscript{10}

Late Qing reformists such as Yan Fu and Liang Qichao, who initially articulated this
new concept of the nation as distinct from the dynasty, found historic sanction for their
ideas in the long-standing Chinese discourse on collective (gong) and private (si) interests.
The ancient text the Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr. Lû (Lûshì Chunqiu), for example,
recognized the danger of equating the broader national interest (gong) with the private,
selfish interest (si) of the ruling house.\textsuperscript{11} "The world is not the world of one man," the
text declared, "the world is the world of the people of the world."\textsuperscript{12} This theme was
articulated in other ancient texts, including the writings attributed to Confucius, Mencius,
and Xunzi. It was also salient in later periods when, for example, Neo-Confucians such as
Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) made similar critiques of rulers who failed to meet the test of
responsible rulership.

The critique of dynastic self-interest was most thoroughly developed, however, by late

\textsuperscript{10} Mizoguchi Yuzō, "Zhongguo minquan sixiang de tese" [Special characteristics of Chinese

\textsuperscript{11} Mizoguchi Yuzō, "Kô. shi kinen," 20.

\textsuperscript{12} "Guigong pian" [Essay on distinguished gentlemen], Lûshì Chunqiu [The spring and autumn
annals of Mister Lû]. This text was a collection of pre-Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE) sayings and
ancient historical documents.
Ming and early Qing scholars such as Huang Zongxi (1610-95), Gu Yanwu (1613-82), and Lü Liuliang (1629-83), who criticized the dynasty’s failure to properly serve the interests of the people.\(^\text{13}\) Contrasting rulership as a public trust with dynastic rule as the embodiment of the selfish desire to own and control everything, Huang Zongxi stated that the policies of the empire should be "for the good of all under heaven, not for the good of the ruler. For the good of the masses [\textit{wanmin}] not for the good of one clan."\(^\text{14}\) Huang’s ideas became particularly influential in the late Qing when his "On Rulership" (\textit{Yuanjun pian}) was circulated amongst members of the reform movement. Liang Qichao was so inspired by Huang’s \textit{A Plan for the Prince (Mingyi Daifanglu)} that he and Tan Sitong secretly made tens of thousands of copies of the proscribed text while teaching in Hunan in 1897.\(^\text{15}\)

Despite similarities in terms of formal logic between late Ming critiques of dynastic self-interest and the late Qing conception of the nation, the Qing reformists were much more adamantly and openly anti-autocratic than their Ming predecessors. This more polarized stance was reflected in Liang Qichao’s articulation, in a 1900 essay, of a clear semantic distinction between the terms dynasty (\textit{chaoting}) and nation (\textit{guojia}). "The nation," he wrote "is the public property [\textit{gongchan}] of all the people in the nation; the dynasty is the private property [\textit{siye}] of one clan." And while the future of the nation is very long, the destiny of one clan is very short; while the area of the nation is immense, the prestige of one clan is trifling. The so-called dynasty is nothing but an accidental and temporary phenomenon, the largest family within the greater family of the entire nation. In order for a dynasty to exist there must first be a nation. And while the nation can change the quality of the dynasty,

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the dynasty cannot absorb the nation.  

The *Shibao* journalists further expanded on this distinction between the dynasty and the nation. In 1904, an editorialist claimed that

those who have even the slightest understanding of the concept of nationhood all know that the nation is not the private property of the imperial family but that it belongs to all. Therefore, those who want to strengthen the nation need not rely on the imposing authority of a minority of heroes, militarists, and strongmen—but on the spirit of the majority.  

If this "spirit of the majority" was to triumph and the nation was to survive, the journalists insisted that the people themselves had to be capable of making the distinction between the dynasty and the nation. "A nation goes into decline when its people do not know the difference between the nation and the dynasty," an essayist proclaimed, explaining that the reason the people were ignorant of this difference was precisely because "they had been weakened under the oppressive weight of the autocratic political system."  

In addition to juxtaposing the nation and the dynasty, the *Shibao* journalists made a further distinction between this "autocratic political system" embodied in the state or government (zhengfu) and the nation (guojia). In a 1906 article on the fundamentals of constitutionalism, the author stated that the Chinese people "must understand the difference between the nation and the state." The nation included both the state and society, and the constitution was its fundamental law of organization. "Those who govern and those who are governed all act under the constitution. Therefore, it is false to say the state establishes the constitution and uses it to control society. And it is also false to say society establishes the constitution to limit the state."

Promoting the idea of the middle realm, the author declared that it was equally erroneous and dangerous to equate the nation with either society or the state. He condemned the view of populists who claimed "society and the state are one and the same,

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17. "Difang zizhi zhenglun" [Discussion of local self-government], *Shibao*, 30 September 1904.  
18. "Lun juanmin buru juanguan" [Taxing the people is not as good as taxing the officials], *Shibao*, 17 October 1904.
and the people are the main body of sovereignty." It was such a view that had given rise to anarchic populism or mob rule (baomin zhengzhi) in eighteenth-century Europe and to what he viewed as the "scourge of anarchism" in early twentieth-century China. The editorialist was equally critical of those who asserted that the state was "the main locus of sovereignty." Since ancient times, he claimed, "autocratic governments have all been guilty of this error." Such views gave rise to the form of imperial despotism (baojun zhengzhi) that had predominated in Europe before the eighteenth century. The idea of nationhood which the reformists espoused, therefore, lay somewhere in the middle ground between statism and populism. "A compromise between the theories of state sovereignty and popular sovereignty, it placed the nation above both the state and the people."  

The nation would only be able to take on its historic role, the journalists believed, if its authority was codified in a constitution that would both "inhibit the rulers from using their autocratic powers and force the ruled to abandon their passivity." While the publicists were greatly encouraged by the edict announcing a program of constitutional preparation in September of 1906, they soon realized that the court did not share their understanding of the role of the constitution. Rather than view it as a mechanism for shifting the locus of power towards the middle realm, the representatives of the dynasty were determined to use it as a means of further strengthening their own imperial authority. Over a year after the edict was published, the editorialist Hu Ma wrote that, despite the government's announcement that it would "open up all affairs of state to public opinion [shuzheng gongzhu yulun]" and establish a constitution, "all decisions continued to be made by the dynasty." While the Qing court upheld the ideal of the "unification of ruler and ruled," those who constituted the nation—including "gentry, merchants, literati, and commoners [shenshang tushu]"—were still left out of the political equation. "We lowly people [xiaoren]." Hu wrote, "continue to anxiously await the day when the

19. "Xianfa jieshuo" [Definition of constitutionalism], Shibao, 16-17 December 1906.
21. This phrase first appeared in the 9 September 1906 edict "Xuanshi yubei lixian xianxing liding guanzhi yu" [Publication of the edict concerning constitutional preparation begins with reform of the official system], in Dang an shiliao vol. 1: 44.
constitution will be established."

While Hu Ma’s criticism of the dynasty’s policies represents a bold assertion of the new politics of contestation, his appeal to the rhetoric of the "unification of the hearts of ruler and ruled" reflects the enduring power of the ancient minben ethos of social unity. Many of the Shibao writers explicitly identified their new vision of the nation and modern constitutionalism with classical minben principles. In this they followed Liang Qichao, who had equated minben theory with modern Western government in an 1898 essay on Mencius. "Mencius said the people are the most important element in the nation, and that their concerns must be immediately addressed. Therefore his entire text spoke of benevolent government, kingly government, compassionate government, all for the sake of the people. The governments of the various Western nations have almost approximated this today."

The Shibao journalist using the pen name Min, or "the people," explained the rise of the constitutional movement in China by referring not only to popular power and Western learning but also to the reemergence of minben thought. Constitutionalism would triumph over official resistance to reform, he claimed, because "he banner of popular power [minquian] was flying higher day by day, Western learning was spreading to the east," and "minben thought was increasingly realized in the nation." He drew specific references to "the ancient theories [expounded in the Shang shu (Book of history) and the Mencius], that 'Only the people are the foundation of the nation,' and 'The people are the most important element in a nation.'"

22. Hu Ma, "Du ershi yuzhi zuiyan" [Repetitious statements on the edict of the 20th], Shibao, 12 December 1907. In the 1906 edict on constitutional preparation, the phrase used to express the idea of the unification of ruler and ruled is junmin yiti (the emperor and the people as one body); in other instances it is expressed as shangxia yixin (the unification of the hearts of those above and those below), as it appears in the Hu Ma article.


24. Min, "Yubei lixian," Shibao, 27 May-1 June 1908. The first quotation is from the Shang shu [Book of history], Section 7. The quotation continues, "if the root is consolidated, the nation is peaceful." The second is from Mencius, The Works of Mencius, trans. James Legge (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), bk. VII, pt II, chapter 14: 1: 483. The quotation continues, "the spirits of the land and grain are next; the sovereign is the lightest."
Using these minben principles as put forward in the *Book of History* and the *Mencius* to emphasize the distinction between the dynasty and the nation, Min denounced the theoretical underpinning of the "modern" absolute monarchy. "Only when the erroneous theory which claims that the modern sovereign is equal to the nation [l'état c'est moi] is finally smashed," he wrote, "will the true meaning of the nation become self-evident." Min further asserted that "the ultimate objective of a nation is to plan for the survival of the collective citizenry. Therefore even the absolute power of the emperor must be exercised for the sake of the people." Since the emperor's role was premised on the existence of the people, it was the people who were the natural foundation of the nation.  

Even when the Shibao editorialists did not make specific references to classical minben texts, their descriptions of the new nation under constitutionalism resonated with the theory of the people as the foundation of the nation. "In an autocratic dynasty," Hu Ma wrote, for example, "the emperor is the foundation of the nation. In a constitutional nation, however, the people [minren] are the foundation of the nation and the monarch is nothing more than a representative of the people. The source of the nation thus differs in the two cases." Just as Min had criticized "modern" absolutism for ignoring minben theory, so Hu Ma asserted that it was only in recent history that this fundamental principle of the people as the foundation of the nation had been betrayed. "Looking at the history books," he wrote, "with the exception of the cruelty of Jie and Zhou [the last rulers of the Xia and Shang dynasties, respectively], the two generations of Qin emperors, and the tyranny of Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty, all rulers devoted themselves to the people. It is not until today that one sees such a disjunction between the dynasty and popular sentiments." Qing officials who claimed they respected the national ethical teachings actually betrayed the message of the sages and worthies by going "against the will of the people [minzhi]." In admonishing these officials, Hu Ma quoted the Confucian classic, the *Daxue* (*Great Learning*). "'Love what the people love, hate what the people hate. Those who follow these principles can be called the mother and father of the people.' The *Great Learning* further says, 'if the ruler loves that which the people hate and hates that which the people...

love, this goes against human nature and will bring disaster."

Other journalists did not see the abuse of the people as a recent trend but rather as an age-old scourge that the establishment of the nation under constitutionalism alone could finally alleviate. "From ancient times," the editorialist Jiu Jiu wrote, "the people have been betrayed and the foundation of the nation has been shaken. National affairs were disrupted and strategies disjointed. The rulers did nothing but trouble the people, agitating them and preventing them from proceeding with their own lives." He quoted at length from the ode titled "The Peoples' Labor" (Min Lao), an officer's lament over the prevailing misery of the distressed "lower people." Using this lament, Jiu Jiu indirectly admonished the late Qing officials for their neglect of the well-being of the population and urged the people to take their fate into their own hands. "Citizens, citizens!" he pleaded. "Demand that the reward of constitutionalism will have its day."

The editorialists realized, however, that the greatest impediment to the recovery of the obscured minben ideal was the self-interest of the ruling officials. Min wrote that the imperial bureaucrats had only drafted the New Policies because "they had no choice but to follow behind the great powers and whitewash their real attitude towards the people."

26. Hu Ma, "Zuiyan," Shibao, 27 December 1907. The Great Learning (Daxue) is a chapter in the Confucian classic the Book of Rites which was elevated by Zhu Xi, a Neo-Confucian scholar of the Song Dynasty, to a position of prime importance in Confucian literature. Zhu combined the Daxue with The Mean, Analects, and Mencius to form the Four Books, which became the primer of Chinese education. From 1313 to 1905 these four texts served as the basis of the civil service examinations by which scholars were selected for posts in the government bureaucracy. Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 113. This particular quotation is from the Li ji (Book of rites), Zheng Yi, Zhuan 60.


God has reversed His usual course of procedure,  
And the lower people are full of distress.  
The words which you utter are not right;  
The plans which you form are not far-reaching.  
As there are no sages, you think you have no guidance;  
You have no reality in your sincerity.  
Thus your plans do not reach far,  
And I therefore strongly admonish you.

They did not really feel responsible for the welfare of society, neither were they outraged by popular suffering. "The government's true motivation for introducing reform was nothing other than self-interest." This primacy of self-interest, Hu Ma wrote, directly contradicted the age-old principles of the collective good (gong) and the primacy of the people. The classical texts, he claimed, "clearly stated that those above should exhaust their duties for the sake of the people." The Book of History, for example, claimed that "if the people do not obtain their livelihood then it [the ruler's] fault," and the Book of Odes (Shi jing), stated that the "emperor is only happy when he is like a parent to the people." Hu Ma lamented that despite these age-old injunctions, "for the last 250 years the citizens alone have taken full responsibility for their duties in the nation."  

The centrality of the ancient principles of minben and gong to the new publicists' mission of strengthening the nation was sustained even as the their discourse shifted from advocacy of constitutional monarchy to advocacy of democratic constitutionalism and republicanism. The argument for democratic constitutionalism expressed in an essay by Xu Qian, for example, like the arguments for constitutional monarchy which preceded it, equated ancient and Western constitutionalism. "I have heard," Xu Qian wrote, that Mencius said "the people are the most important element [in a nation]; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is lightest." This is the ancient theory of democratic constitutionalism invented by China. From the time when Montesquieu advocated popular power [minquan], foreigners also began to understand this principle. Indirectly petitioning the emperor to abdicate, Xu appealed to the principle of gong in order to sanction the establishment of a republic. He argued that the ancient sage kings Yao and Shun had embraced constitutional democracy by rejecting the belief that "one family owned the whole realm [jia tianxia]," a belief which violated the "public good" (dagong).

32. "Xu Qian," Shibao, 29 November 1911. Xu Qian (1871-1940) was a jinshi degree holder from Anhui Province. In 1907 became a government compiler (bianxu) for the Hanlin Academy, a counselor (canshi) for the Ministry of Law (Fa Bu), a chief justice of the Beijing court (Jingshi
Even as they advocated dismantling the dynastic structure as the means of renewing the nation, the reform publicists continued to sanction their new political claims with appeals to age-old principles. Revealing how a particularly powerful conceptual framework can operate on different levels in evolving social and political contexts, this demonstrates how enduring these principles were in the face of fluctuating new political ideas and how embedded the new politics of contestation was in a universe of familiar cultural constructs.\(^{33}\)

**Popular Power (Minquan)**

The publicists’ concept of popular power (minquan) was intimately connected to their new understanding of the nation. The distinction they drew between the dynasty and the guojia was reflected in dichotomies between the "people’s nation" (minguo) and the "sovereign’s nation" (jinguo), popular power (minquan) and imperial power (junquan). The reform publicists also linked popular power with the inherited principle of gong. They associated minquan with the "the public nation of the citizen" (guomin zhi gongguo) and opposed it to "the private nation [siquo] of the dynasty." Opposed to the selfish interests and private rights of the emperor (dasi), popular power was at the same time the expression of the people’s legitimate self-interest (si).\(^{34}\)

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\(^{33}\) Shenpanting), and a high level procurator general of the Supreme Court (Jiancha Zhang). After 1911 he organized the Citizens’ Progressive Association (Guomin gongjinhui) and later, together with the Tongmenghui organized the Zhongguo guomindang. Zhongguo renming da cidian [Chinese biographical dictionary] (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 1990), 503. According to the Dai kan-Wa jiten [Great Chinese-Japanese dictionary] compiled by Morohashi Tetsuji, the locus classicus for the term dagong is the Zhigong chapter of the Shuoyuan by Liu Xiang of the Former Han. Its original meaning is extreme fairness or disinterestedness, a concern for the greater good rather than for personal gain, dagong wusi. I follow Ben Elman here in translating it as "public good." See, for example, Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics and Kinship: The Ch’ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 279.


\(^{35}\) Mizoguchi Yûzô, "Kô. shi kinen," 35. This idea that the si of the people (not meaning self-benefit but a practical conception of self-interest) should not be violated by the dasi of the monarch had already been articulated by Huang Zongxi (1610-95) in "Yuanjun pian." Mizoguchi Yûzô, "Zhongguo minquan," 345. Huang did not take the argument as far as the early twentieth-century
popular self interest as a source of minquan has precedents in the established discourse on gong and si—the two terms were often depicted in classical writings as part of a continuum running from the particular to the public, or as complementary rather than opposing values— the idea of the people’s practical self-interest took on a new importance in the late Qing as it became tied to the concept of the nation. The reformists believed that while the dynastic authorities neglected China’s larger public interest, endangering national survival, the assertion of the people’s practical self-interest through the development of popular power would ensure national salvation.

But whereas the nation or guojia was an old term which had been infused with a new meaning in the late Qing, popular power or minquan was a late-nineteenth-century neologism which does not appear in any ancient texts. The single character quan does, however, have many resonances which are potentially suggestive for the meaning of minquan, particularly in its New Text rendering as "political expediency." While according to the Confucian doctrine of the standard and the exceptional (jing/quan), imperial power would be considered as the political standard, according to New Text doctrine, exceptional circumstances such as the late Qing national crisis would warrant the balancing of imperial power with popular power in order to ensure the nation’s

reformists, however, in articulating the concepts of nation and popular power.

35. In Neo-Confucian terms the self-cultivation of the individual begins with the particular while its ultimate objective is the application of one’s self-knowledge to the greater society. And in the late Qing, He Qi and Hu Liyuan claimed that "separately si and gong were harmful, whereas together they were perfect." He and Hu cite the policies of the sage king Shu as evidence that the more sincere a leader’s si, the more enlightened his gong, the more true his gong the more successful his si. Xu Zhengxiong, Qingmo minquan sixiang de fazhan yu qiyi: Yi He Qi, Hu Liyuan wei li [The development of and disparities within late Qing popular power thought: Based on the examples of Hu Qi and Hu Liyuan] (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1992), 41-42. Some authors have, however, attempted to represent the gong/si dichotomy as purely antagonistic without recognizing its elements of complementarity. See, for example, Donald J. Munro, "The Concept of 'Interest' in Chinese Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41.2 (1980): 179-97, for a presentation of the view of si as selfishness. Munro’s argument has been used to support the view that individual self-interest was an unequivocally negative principle in the Chinese tradition.

survival. As the dynasty failed to use the power (junquan) it had received from Heaven to protect society, it became necessary for alternative forces to sanction a new, more popularly-based power in order to preserve the nation.

While these meanings of quan may have informed the late Qing reformists' choice of the character compound minquan to express the new idea of popular power, the inspiration for the concept itself was distinctly foreign. A rendering of the Western notions of democracy and civil rights, the term first appeared in the 19 May 1878 entry of the journal (riji) of Guo Songtao, the Guangxu Emperor's minister to France and England in 1876-77, and in Huang Zunxian's Annals of Japan (Riben Guozhi) in 1879. Guo and Huang were certainly aware that the Japanese had used the same character compound (in Japanese, minken) to translate Western democratic ideas in the early Meiji period, particularly in the context of the Popular Rights Movement (Jiyū minken undō) in the 1880s.

Minquan later figured prominently in the work of two scholars educated in Hong Kong and England, He Qi and Hu Liyuan, notably in their joint essay titled "Xinzheng zhenquan" (The Real Interpretation of the New Policies), written in 1899 and published in 1901. These authors viewed popular power as a product of Western natural-rights advocacy and as a nineteenth-century British phenomenon manifest in such practices as the expansion of the vote, the development of an inner cabinet system, and an increase in power of the lower house. Through these various foreign influences, Western and Japanese, minquan entered the mainstream of Chinese political discourse in the early twentieth century.

The late Qing publicists, however, transformed the meaning of the term as they adopted it. Rendering minquan compatible both with the Chinese conceptual universe and


38. Quan can also be conceived in classical terms as the means by which the ways of Heaven are carried out on earth; just as Heaven gives life it also gives quan, the power to protect life. Xu Zhengxiong, Minquan, 50.

39. Zhongguo renming, 522, 556. Like Guo, Huang had been active in forging relations as an attaché at the Chinese legations in Britain and Japan and as general counsel in San Francisco.

40. See Xu Zhengxiong, Minquan, 34ff.
with their own political agenda, they embedded it within the dynastic structure and imbued it with collectivist content. Despite the term's provenance in both Western and Japanese democratic discourses and its association with the new, more popularly based notion of the nation, the Shibao journalists followed writers such as Huang Zunxian, Yan Fu, Kang Youwei, and Liang Qichao in integrating minquan into their vision of a Chinese constitutional monarchy. Seeking at once to preserve the existing structure of authority and to expand popular power, the new publicists did not see a contradiction between the development of popular power and the preservation of the dynasty. Their understanding of minquan as a synthesis between the age-old minben ethos of the unification of ruler and ruled and new foreign-inspired ideas of democracy (minzhu) based on constitutional principles gave rise to a new form of political dualism which would serve to maintain the state structure (guotai) while formalizing and rationalizing its operation (guozheng).41

Associating popular power with the dynasty, the journalists clearly distinguished themselves from the revolutionaries who used minquan in its original radical sense as equivalent to minzhu or democracy.42 They defined minquan as the power or authority of the people (renmin de quanli) and minzhu as popular sovereignty (renmin zuozhu), advocating the expansion of popular power under the dynasty (minquan) and opposing the

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41. The Chinese faced a problem similar to that which confronted the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European bourgeoisie. Although the Chinese and Europeans had dramatically different reasons for wanting to preserve the absolutist state—in the Chinese case to ensure national survival, in the European case to guarantee the legal and political preconditions of a private capitalist market economy—both faced the same dilemma of wanting to preserve the existing structure of authority and expand popular power. And both attempted to resolve this dilemma by adopting the same historical solution; on the one hand preserving the modern state created by absolutism, while at the same time formalizing and rationalizing its operation. See Andrew Arato and Jean L. Cohen, Civil Society and Political Theory (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), 216; Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), 28ff, 82ff.

42. Japanese dictionaries of the period equated minquan with democracy, giving the two character compounds of minquan and minzhu the exact same definition. Xiong Yuezhi, Zhongguo jindai minzhu sixiangshi [The history of democratic thought in modern China] (Shanghai: Shanghai Peoples' Publishing House, 1987), 11-19. Minquan eventually became one of Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. It was translated in this context as democracy, with the other two principles, minzu and minsheng, representing nationalism and the people's livelihood respectively.
replacement of dynastic authority by popular power (minzhu). In an article on constitutionalism in Qingyi bao—a newspaper dedicated, in Liang Qichao’s words, to the singular objective of advocating popular power—Liang attempted to clarify the difference between minquan and minzhu by demonstrating how popular power would coexist with dynastic power. He explained that people were apprehensive about popular power only because they had not grasped the distinction between "imperial constitutionalism" (junzhu lixian) and "democratic constitutionalism" (minzhu lixian). In the former system, popular power would develop under, rather than in opposition to, the emperor.

The Shibao journalists also regarded the emperorship as a key component of the Chinese notion of minquan, at least up until late 1911. They never overtly expressed antidynastic sentiments in their articles even after the death of the reform-minded Guangxu Emperor in 1908. And while they frequently criticized imperial policies, they continued to generate their proposals for constitutional change and the expansion of popular power from within the framework of the dynastic structure. Seeking to convince the emperor that constitutionalism and the attendant expansion of popular power would secure, not imperil, dynastic rule, an editorialist wrote in 1904 that "the implementation of a constitution would guarantee the preservation of the throne." Min, writing in 1908, well after the failed reform of the official system, claimed that "the ingeniousness of constitutional politics lay in placing the emperor outside of the realm of political responsibility." The monarch would thus avoid being the target of collective anger and avert the danger of revolution, which had broken out several times in autocratic nations in the last one hundred years. As long as popular power was established in conjunction with a constitution, responsible high officials, and a supervisory assembly, "the emperorship would be as stable and secure as a massive rock." Min advised the court that "the tragedy of a revolution has never occurred in a constitutional state."  

43. Liang Qichao, "Aiguolun san: Lun minquan" [Patriotism, part three: On popular power], Qingyi bao [Pure commentary], #22.

44. Liang Qichao, "Lixianfa yi" [Discussion of constitutional law], Qingyi bao [Pure commentary], #81.

45. "Lixian pingyi" [Commentary on constitutionalism], 27 September 1904.

46. Min, "Yubei lixian," Shibao, 27 May-1 June 1908.
But while the Shibao journalists remained committed to the preservation of the monarchy, they went beyond the earlier imperial-bound writings on popular power, focusing instead on the people themselves, and particularly on the expansion of constitutional rights.⁴⁷ They attributed the development of fundamental constitutional rights in the Western liberal polity—freedom of speech, opinion, the press, assembly, and association—to specifically Western historical processes. An editorialist using the pen name Li, for example, wrote that constitutionalism had evolved out of an internal process of struggle in England. As a result, private and public citizens' rights (guomin gongsi quanli) had naturally developed. "The situation in our nation today is not at all like this, however," Li wrote. "The recent changes in the political system [zhengti] [i.e., the Qing's commitment to a program of constitutional reforms] were made in response to the external threat. Therefore, our citizens do not enjoy the rights that all constitutional citizens enjoy, and they are unequipped to supervise the government."⁴⁸

Journalists such as Li saw it as their duty to advance the reform project in China by making constitutional rights one of the central foci of their political discourse. They sought both to raise national consciousness about the notion of rights and to force the issue onto the government's agenda. Between April and July of 1907, Shibao devoted a special series of editorials to the subject of constitutional rights. It was the newspaper's duty in the sensitive period of transition between autocracy and constitutionalism, one of the editorials stated, to "conscientiously compare the strengths and weaknesses of autocracy and constitutionalism" in an effort to convince the government and the citizens of the superiority of the constitutional system.⁴⁹ Stressing the fundamental rights enjoyed by constitutional citizens as the key to this superiority, the newspaper published a translation of the full text of the French "Declaration of The Rights of Man" (Renquan zhi

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⁴⁷. In previous formulations, writers such as Yan Fu and Tan Sitong had emphasized the role of the emperor, speaking only of the need for the regent to step down from the lofty heights (tianshang). Xiong, Minzhu, 339.

⁴⁸. Li, "Lun jiandu jiguansheng shihuiyou" [The need for supervisory institutions], Shibao, 14-17 December 1907.

xuanyan) in April of 1907. Prefacing the translation was a brief explanation of the concept of natural rights and its implications for the citizens of a constitutional nation.50

As the authorities issued new press laws in January of 1908 and placed new restrictions on the freedom of association, the Shibao journalists countered with arguments for the protection of the "three great freedoms" (sanda ziyou) of expression, publication, and association.51 The journalists emphasized that the establishment of the higher authority of the constitution was the only way to ensure the government's respect for civil rights. Without a "constitution jointly observed by state and society," the citizens would never enjoy true freedom, an editorialist wrote. He explained this was the reason "the people of Europe and America had willingly struggled for a few dozen articles of a constitution, disrupting several hundreds of years of peace and risking several hundreds of thousands of lives." Only a constitution would guarantee the citizens the essential freedoms of expression, publication, association, change of domicile, religion, production, shelter, the body, private correspondence, and legal process. In addition, it would grant them "the right to petition, the right of political participation, and the right to become an official."52

The journalists' advocacy of this battery of civil rights was expressed in the context of the citizens' collective rights (gongquan) rather than the rights of the individual. This points to the second distinct characteristic of the concept of minquan in late Qing China after its association with the dynasty: its collective orientation. Because minquan was a corollary of rising national sentiments and of the constitutionalist project of national strengthening, it represented the power of the group rather than of the individual. The self-interest (si) of the people that was sanctioned in the concept of minquan was thus a collective si that would counter the self-interest of the dynasty. While the development of popular power would establish the rights and freedoms of the citizens, these rights and freedoms would be granted first and foremost to enable the citizens to take responsibility for the survival of the nation.

50. "Renquan zhi xuanyan" [Declaration of the rights of man], Shibao, 1 April 1907.
51. The dynasty decreed a strict set of Press Laws in March of 1908. See, for example, "Shu xinbaolu hou" [After reading the new press laws], Shibao, 30 March 1908.
While the notion of minquan opened up a new conceptual space and a new sphere of action in the political realm, the scope of this space was thus defined by its mandate to serve collective ends. This emphasis on the collective nature of minquan is particularly salient in the journalists’ discussion of natural rights. This concept was first introduced in Chinese in 1848 in the *Yinghuan zhilue* (Annals of the world) by Xu Jishe, a description of democratic systems in the West. In 1885 and 1886, Kang Youwei spoke of freedom and equality as part of man’s basic nature in *Renlei gongli* (Axioms of humanity), *Gongli shi* (Axioms), and *Shili gongfa quanshu* (Complete writings on implementing civil law). In the late 1890s, He Qi and Hu Liyuan also spoke of rights originating in Heaven, emphasizing that the ignorant were as deserving of these rights as the sages. These disparate references did not, however, give rise to any systematic treatment of the concept of natural rights in the late nineteenth century.

As the *Shibao* journalists integrated this new concept into their discourse on popular power in the early twentieth century, they transformed its original meaning. Consistent with their collectivist notion of popular power and in contrast to the European tradition, the journalists shifted the locus of natural rights from human personhood to the state, interpreting them not as a moral claim prior to and superior in status to the state’s laws, but as deriving from the state itself. While the author of a 1906 editorial emphasized that “the freedom of the people is based on their natural rights [tianfu],” for example, he went on to assert that it was “the state which defined the limitations to this freedom.”

53. See, for example, Mizoguchi Yūzō, “Kō. shi kinen,” 36; Mizoguchi, “Minquan sixiang,” 353.
Ma Weilong made a similar argument in 1908, claiming that natural rights were not inherent in human society but derived from some externally determined standard of political ability and then granted to the citizenry by the state. Ma, like the earlier editorialist, did endorse the importance of natural law, and he criticized the Qing for violating it by depriving the citizens of freedom of speech, association, and publication. "The dynasty has thus ensured that the people cannot play even the slightest role in politics," he claimed, asserting that this was a violation of the principles of natural law. Ma went on, however, to make one serious qualification to his argument by declaring that "the level of rights is determined in accordance with ability [nengli]." The natural outcome of this "theory" which he claimed was upheld in all advanced nations of the world, was that "citizens who lacked political ability could not enjoy political rights." Rather than a violation of natural law, he claimed this was "a proper application of natural law." 57

Although Ma's ultimate objective in this passage was to stress the importance of raising the citizens' level of political ability, he manifests the understanding of natural rights that prevailed in this period. Rather than consider these rights as anterior to the formation of political society, Ma and other late Qing political commentators viewed them as dependent on the level of popular political sophistication which could itself only be developed within political society.

While Ma's argument seemed implicitly to justify the Qing's repressive rights policy, most editorialists were explicitly critical of it. Min claimed that it was only because the government had been thoroughly humiliated by foreigners that it had attempted to "bait the citizens with some form of rights" in order to gain their support in defending the nation. These so-called rights, he continued, restricted rather than expanded previously held civic freedoms. "Before the publication of the Press Laws and the Laws of Association, the citizen's right to freedom of speech was tacitly recognized. Today, however, the freedom of speech is tightly restricted and the right of association is so limited that all organizations are approaching extinction." The government was guilty of "forcefully repressing public opinion [yulun], humiliating public sentiment [minqi], and secretly

57. Ma Weilong, "Lun guomin yu tuo zhuanzhi emo yi ju zhengzhi zhi shili" [If the citizens want to throw off the evils of autocracy they must have political power], Shibao, 7 March 1908.
implementing a policy of repression while openly discussing constitutional preparation.”\(^{58}\)

The journalists thus drew an intimate connection between popular power, constitutional rights, and public opinion in their efforts to further the development of the middle realm. An editorialist explained that the power of the absolutist state could only be diminished by the implementation of civil rights and the free expression of public opinion. "In the beginning of the seventeenth century, rights law was first announced, followed by the Declaration of Rights. These gradually formed the foundation of public opinion politics, and they served to protect against the evils of autocratic politics." A government which recognized the three great freedoms of expression, publication, and association and was willing to submit to public opinion "qualified as a constitutional government and not an autocratic government."\(^{59}\)

**Public Opinion (Yulun)**\(^{60}\)

In their efforts to expand the sphere of popular power and consolidate the nation, the Shibao journalists used the concept of public opinion as a device to limit and transform the power of the dynasty.\(^{61}\) Yulun, the character compound they used for public opinion, dated back to at least the third century and had been used throughout Chinese history to describe elite opinion within the bureaucracy.\(^{62}\) In the early 1900s, the reform publicists

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59. Ma Weilong, "Zhuanzhì emo," Shibao, 7 March 1908. Also see, for example, "Lun guomin falushang zhi diwei" [The citizen’s legal status], Shibao, 3 July 1907.

60. This section is based in part on my article, "Public Opinion and the New Politics of Contestation in the Late Qing," which appeared in *Modern China*, January 1994.


62. The locus classicus for yulun is a third century text, the *Biography of Wanglang of the Wei* in the *Sanguanzi*. The term was used throughout Chinese history to mean general elite opinion within the bureaucracy, often interchangeably with qingyi and gonglun. Yulun and gonglun were also used to denote local public opinion in the Qing. Mary Backus Rankin, "The Origins of a Chinese Public
invested this old term with a new political meaning, redefining it as the "collective opinion [gonglun] of the common people [yibian renmin] towards government and society."\(^6\) This redefinition reflected the reformists' larger agenda of forcing the transition from dynastic to public politics through the expansion of the middle realm. The Qing court unwittingly advanced this agenda by adopting the new political idiom itself, declaring in the 1906 edict on constitutional preparation that "all affairs of state would be open to public opinion" (shuzheng gongzhu yulun).\(^6\)

The Shibao journalists and editors were among the first in China to discuss in detail the nature and significance of public opinion as a factor in politics. They generally located themselves in what Liang Qichao had called "the age of transition," when it was the hero's role to be the mother of public opinion.\(^6\) Recognizing that they had not yet reached "the age of accomplishment," when the hero was to be the servant of an independent and informed vox populi, the journalists nonetheless had a positive view of public opinion as a rational and powerful force. While a small number of their peers, particularly those writing in the earlier period, claimed China had not yet passed "the age of destruction," when popular sentiment was so undeveloped that it was necessary to suppress it, most Shibao writers viewed public opinion as the motor of the new politics of contestation.\(^6\) Idealized as the embodiment of reason and progress, they believed that it

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Sphere, Local Elites and Community Affairs in the Late Imperial Period," Études Chinoises 9.2 (Fall 1990): 42.

63. Min, "Yubei lixian," 27 May-1 June 1908.

64. Dang'an shiliu, vol. 1, 44. The dynasty itself had adapted this phrase from the Japanese. Banki kōron (ni kessubeshi), meaning "all measures [shall be decided by] public discussion," was one of the three formulas presented in the Charter Oath of 1868 as a means of making Meiji Japan strong. See Andrew E. Barshay, State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan: The Public Man in Crisis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 3.


66. Writers who called for the elites to oppose public opinion argued, for example, that "in nations [such as China] where popular knowledge is not developed, public sentiment absolutely could not be relied on." "Wuxi huixue hou zhi yuln" [Public opinion after the destruction of schools in Wuxi], Shibao, 24 August 1904. Such negative views of public opinion as contradictory or false were expressed in the later part of the nineteenth century in the West by such thinkers as
would replace the inherited authorities as a new locus of authority and legitimacy.

The journalists equated the politics of public opinion with constitutional politics and considered the free expression of the vox populi to be the key to the strength and power of the "advanced" Western nations. "Today," an editorialist wrote in 1908, "the only reason the advanced nations bathe in the showers of constitutionalism and enjoy the riches of freedom is because they have benefited from public opinion." They viewed public opinion as the driving force behind political reform, "the means of abolishing autocracy and moving towards constitutionalism." And once a constitutional system was established, they believed, public opinion would be its mainstay and its "pivotal institution." They thus linked the very survival of the Chinese nation to free and open public discussion.

"All nations which have a vital public opinion are prosperous," wrote an editorialist named Jian He (meaning a vigorous style of penmanship). "Any nation which lacks a vital public opinion will ultimately perish."

The journalists believed that by refusing to advance towards constitutionalism and the creation of a sphere of open debate, the authorities were consigning the nation to a disastrous fate. They accused the government of using its perfunctory adoption of a constitutional program as a pretext for suppressing public opinion. "The government has made an appeal to the entire nation by proclaiming its commitment to constitutional preparation," Jian He continued. "For the government to then strip the people of their freedom of speech... this is the great inconsistency." He further railed against the officials for using the pretext of the complete secrecy of law in constitutional nations to constrain public opinion. "Does the government not know that freedom of speech is written into the constitutions of all constitutional nations as an inviolable right of the citizens?" he asked.


68. Min, "Yubei lixian," Shibao, 27 May-1 June 1908.


The greatest safeguard against this kind of abuse of political authority was public opinion itself, which had become the ultimate principle of authority in society for the late Qing reformists. Viewed as an independent tribunal, it was considered to be the final court of justice before which the caprices of officialdom were tried, the arbiter of moral standards, and the manifestation of reason and political insight.\(^{71}\) "Because the citizens’ political knowledge is superior to that of the government," Jian He explained, "their enthusiasm for reform is also much greater."\(^{72}\)

As the expression of reason and goodness, public opinion represented gong in the sense of justice, fairness, and equality. Jian He juxtaposed the si of the dynasty—which was based on superior power, established position, and dynastic inheritance—to the gong of public opinion. "Today," he wrote, "one person’s sense of what is right and what is wrong has become the entire society’s standard of right and wrong. And while what is right for one person is not necessarily right, the people do not dare oppose him. Therefore the society can no longer recover the real right and wrong and the nation perishes in the hands of one man." The only way to avoid this danger of national peril was to have "the standards of right and wrong determined by all of the people under heaven [tianxia zhi

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71. The first detailed discussion in English of public opinion as a tribunal was that of Jeremy Bentham. Bentham regarded the free expression of public opinion as the chief safeguard against misrule and as the characteristic mark of a democratic state. He saw in an enlightened public opinion a tribunal which would "unite all the wisdom and all the justice of the nation." This "public opinion tribunal" was an unofficial, unpaid, and uncorruptible judiciary. See Palmer, "The Concept of Public Opinion," 239-45; George Boyce, "The Fourth Estate: the Reappraisal of a Concept," in Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day, ed. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978), 20-21. This theme of public opinion as an absolute tribunal has also preoccupied Habermas; see Habermas, Public Sphere, 89-140. French historians of the Revolution Furet, Ozouf, and Baker also refer to it. See Popkin, "Public Opinion," 81.

72. Jian He, "Yanlun ziyou," Shibao, 19-20 January 1908. This view on the people's superior political knowledge resonated with that of Thomas Paine, who, remarking on Edmund Burke’s comments on the French Revolution, claimed that "the mind of the nation had changed beforehand, and the new order of things [had] naturally followed the new order of thoughts. This is to say that the habits of Frenchmen had become republican while their institutions were still monarchical... although it should be borne in mind that it was a numerically small class that had slowly changed its habits." Hans Speier, "The Rise of Public Opinion," in Propaganda and Communication in World History, vol. 2, Emergence of Public Opinion in the West, ed. Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, and Hans Speier (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), 152.
In using this phrase, Jian He invoked the celebrated passage from the *Li yun* (Evolution of Rites) section of the *Li ji*, "the world shared by all the people" (*tianxia wei gong*), conjuring up the text's image of an age of perfect openness and harmony.

While Jian He legitimized his challenge to sovereign authority by appealing to the *Li yun*, gong was no longer exclusively understood in the classical sense as the embodiment of the higher principles of right and wrong. In the late Qing reformist discourse, the concept had increasingly become associated with public opinion as a concrete political force struggling to secure these higher principles. As Chen Leng stated, the mission of the press—the voice of public opinion—was to ensure that "the collective sense of right and wrong [gongshi gongfei] in society remained clear to the eyes and ears of all." It was in the name of this higher public interest and through the medium of the press that the reformists were able to mobilize society to protest foreign loans for Chinese railways and to petition for the rapid opening of the national assembly. These popular political movements forced the dynasty to recognize public opinion as a concrete political force.

This historic shift was manifest in the government’s concession to meet with representatives of the people to discuss the Suzhou-Hangzhou-Ningbo railway dispute and in its imposition of press and association laws to restrict public opinion in 1908.

In the Suzhou-Hangzhou-Ningbo railway dispute, the journalists invested the citizens’ anti-loan groups with the moral power of gong while they portrayed the authorities as betraying these higher principles. Jian He wrote that although "everyone in society considered it wrong to borrow money" from the British for construction of the railway, the

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74. Chen Leng, "Lun baozhi zhi tianzhi jiqi jiazhi" [The mission and value of newspapers], *Shibao*, 11 July 1906.

75. Concerning the railway protest, see Mo Bei, ed., *Jiang-Zhe tielu fengchao* [The turmoil over the Jiangsu-Zhejiang railway], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Geda Shufang, 1907); concerning the Parliamentary Petition Movement, see Geng Yunzhi, "Lun Qingmo lixianpai de guohui qingyuan yundong" [The late Qing parliamentary petition movement], *Zhongguo shehui kexue* [Chinese social science] 5 (1980): 41-62.

76. Examples of such groups are the Jiangsu People’s Association for Railways and Mines and the Zhejiang Citizens’ Anti-Loan Association. See Mo Bei, "Tielu fengchao," 95-97, 139.
government attempted to force the people of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and the whole nation to accept the loan. "Now this right and wrong is not difficult to distinguish," he continued. Linking public opinion as the representative of gong to national survival, he claimed that "what the government wants to do would deprive us of our national rights while those who are struggling against the loan in Jiangsu and Zhejiang are struggling to preserve all national rights. Therefore right is on the side of the people of Jiangsu and Zhejiang and wrong is on the side of the government." The government was not only guilty of failing to "calculate the universal principles of right and wrong" but of coercing those who upheld these principles by "punishing the people of Jiangsu and Zhejiang for displaying a small degree of public sentiment and for holding honest opinions. All they want to do is to nip this nascent public sentiment and public opinion in the bud. Only then will they be happy." 77

The reformists also considered official deference to public opinion and the forces of gong to be the key to national success in the international arena. An editorialist wrote in 1909 that "in foreign affairs, the citizenry is regarded as the most important component of the nation." Therefore, the press—as the representative of the citizenry's opinion—must play a crucial role in successful diplomacy. "Although Disraeli and Bismarck had their own strategies for dealing skillfully with their international allies and competitors, even they did not dare to go against public opinion in formulating their assessments of a particular diplomatic situation. In choosing to advance or retreat, to seize lands or abandon property, they would never risk openly taking a position that was different from that of the citizens." 78

Just as the Shibao journalists had used minben theory and the principle of gong to lend sanction to their claims for the nation and popular power, so they appealed to ancient authority in constructing and validating the concept of public opinion. This method of theorizing public opinion by embedding it in a classical constellation of meanings was unique to China. Whereas Western representations of the vox populi depicted it as a

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78. "Lun cuizhe yanlung yu weichi yanlung zhi lihai" [Advantages and disadvantages of destroying or maintaining public opinion], 23 September 1909.
distinctly "modern" force that had emerged in reaction to religion and royal authority, the Chinese publicists emphasized the historical legitimacy of public opinion.  

A 1909 Shibao essay directly linked the press—the voice of public opinion—to the theory of the people as the foundation of the nation. "The establishment of newspaper offices was the original intention of the ancient sages," an editorialist wrote in 1909. He validated this statement with a citation from the Mencius: "The words of the sages are 'The people are the most important element [in a nation].'" He then cited proof from other old texts. "Pan Geng said 'With the people, all is created.' In the 'Great Announcement' [Hong Fan] it is written that 'plans should include the common people.' And the Rites of Zhou [Zhou li] states 'It is the responsibility of the ruler to gather ten thousand people and ask them their opinion.' All of these are outstanding examples of why the establishment of newspapers is the intention of the ancient sages."  

The Shibao journalists further linked China's idyllic past to the twentieth-century politics of public opinion by describing the benevolence of the former sage-kings in terms of their sensitivity to public opinion, and by attributing periods of intellectual efflorescence in former dynasties to freedom of expression. In a 1908 editorial, Confucius was said to have had a powerful impact on society because the authorities of the time honored the role of public opinion. "If the Zhou dynasty had restricted the freedom of expression, then the objectives of respecting the Zhou and ruling the kingdom of Lu could not have been achieved. And if it had restricted the freedom of association, then the three thousand people who flocked to hear Confucius at Xing Ta could not have gathered." Mencius was extolled as a promoter of "the ideology of popular power" despite the fact


80. "Cuizhe yulun," Shibao, 21 September 1909. The Mencius quote is from Mencius, bk. VII, pt. II, ch. 14: 1: 483. The quotation continues, "the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest." Pan Geng was a Shang dynasty ruler, responsible for reforming corrupt aristocratic practices and avoiding disasters. The Hong Fan reference is to the Hong Fan (Great model) section of the Shang Shu (Book of documents or Book of history), section 12. The Rites of Zhou, one of the Confucian classics, includes a description of the official system of the Zhou dynasty and the systems of all states during the Warring States period.

that the term minquan did not appear in the Chinese language until 1878.\textsuperscript{82} "Mencius's discussions of politics were exclusively premised on the ideology of popular power. He exhausted his life for the sake of political movements, and the several hundreds of people in dozens of carriages who followed behind his carriage did not cause any disturbances."

The editorialist further drew a contrast between the brilliance of the era of the hundred philosophers and the moribund state of later periods in Chinese history, suggesting that only the "revival" of the "ancient" values of freedom of expression would save the nation from intellectual and political oblivion. It was only "because the politics of the day were open to the rough and tumble of open and fair competition" that "the masters of the interval between the Spring and Autumn [722-481 BCE] and the Warring States periods [403-221 BCE] were . . . able to enrich our national tradition. The outstanding nature of their thought continues to be appreciated today." This, the editorialist pointedly continued, "is very different from the paralysis and insensibility of later periods. Since this is the case, how can freedom of speech be bad for the nation?\textsuperscript{83}

Equating their bold new political claims with traditional political practices, the journalists invested them with age-old sanction. Mass politics were described as dating from the ancient period. "According to the method of rule of Zhou dynasty officials, the masses [\textit{wanmin}] must be consulted on all major affairs. It is written in the classics and does not need to be discussed." And popular political participation was presented as a traditional institution since "in the Han, Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties, even the most lowly of people [\textit{yimingzhiwei}] could seal a dispatch or send a memorial in order to point out the sufferings of the people. It is in the historical records and cannot be denied." In this way the journalists were able to criticize the Qing, not for being insufficiently modern, but for disrespecting practices that had endured "from the time of the Three dynasties." These practices had supposedly been halted by the Mongols, only to be reinstated in the Ming. "But under the Qing dynasty limits to the discussion of affairs again began to be imposed.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{82} Xiong, \textit{Minzhu}, 11-19.
\textsuperscript{83} Jian He, "Yanhun ziyou," \textit{Shibao}, 19-20 January 1908.
\textsuperscript{84} Hu Ma, "Zuiyan," \textit{Shibao}, 27 December 1907.
The reformists' new usage of the expression "public opinion" (yulun) was itself granted historical sanction by its equation with the term qingyi or "righteous elite opinion." Qingyi was invested with the authority of the ancients. "According to Confucius, righteous elite opinion was equal to life," an editorialist wrote. From the early period of the Later Han dynasty (25-220 CE), when the term qingyi was first used, it referred to standards of Confucian moral excellence, and by the end of the later Han it further took on the meaning of a literati political movement which opposed corrupt government practices. In later history both of these senses of the term—an opinion or a group of individuals who put forward this opinion—were retained, and both were relevant to the conception of public opinion in Shibao.

As the custodians of Confucian values, righteous elite opinion, in the sense of a group of opinion-makers, frequently formed the opposition to declining regimes that had lost the moral prerogative. The term thus became associated with a patriotic tradition of remonstrance. Such movements generally arose near the end of a dynasty, as was the case in the later Han, the Southern Song, and the Ming. In the Qing, qingyi-inspired literati groups first appeared in the early nineteenth century and were followed by two related groups in the late 1870s and the 1890s, the Pure Current (Qingliu) and the Emperor's Party (Didang) respectively. Shibao was linked to these late-nineteenth-century

85. Qingyi is most often rendered in English as "pure discussion" or "public opinion." However, I find both of these translations inadequate, "pure discussion" because it is virtually meaningless in English and "public opinion" because it misrepresents the meaning of the Chinese term. The notion of qingyi is imbued with the values of Confucian morality and ethical uprightness, values not reflected in the English "public opinion." Qingyi also represents the opinion of bureaucrats—middle or lower level rather than higher, but bureaucrats nonetheless—and this is not at all suggested by the English word "public." I have therefore chosen to translate qingyi as "righteous elite opinion" in an effort to incorporate the ethical and elitist connotations of the Chinese term. Elman's translation as "voices of remonstrance" is another more acceptable alternative. See Elman, Classicism, Politics and Kinship, 276.


88. On the early nineteenth-century groups, see James M. Polachek, "Literati Groups and Literati Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century China" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1966), pt. 2; Elman, Classicism, 290.
righteous elite opinion circles by the newspaper’s founders, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who were both associated with the Emperor’s Party. In 1895 Kang had memorialized that in the Han and the Ming dynasties the conduct of qingyi harmed traitors in power but was of great benefit to the country. He appealed for the revalidation of the practice in the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{89}

After the failure of Kang’s Hundred Days of Reform in 1898, the locus for challenging official power shifted outside of the bureaucracy, with the new political press becoming the most important base of righteous elite opinion-style political opposition.\textsuperscript{90} This development is clearly reflected in Qingyi bao, the title of the newspaper Kang and Liang founded in exile in Tokyo immediately after the 1898 coup. This journal was the predecessor to such influential early twentieth-century newspapers as Xinmin congbao and Shibao.

Drawing on the moral and historical legitimacy of righteous elite opinion, a Shibao editorialist explained that the esteemed role of public opinion in the "advanced" constitutional nations was no different from the role of righteous elite opinion in the Chinese past.

The ancients said righteous elite opinion [qingyi] was more honored than coronets and royal gowns and more severe than the executioner’s ax. That which was called righteous elite opinion is probably the same thing as public opinion with a different name. In studying history it is clear that nations which allowed the expression of righteous elite opinion flourished, and nations that did not perished.\textsuperscript{91}

What is most revelatory of the reform journalists’ political agenda, however, is not how they brought history to bear on the present but how they projected their modern-day understanding of public opinion, the citizenry, and the national interest onto the traditional construct of righteous elite opinion. "Qingyi is no different from the citizens’ collective

\textsuperscript{89} Wakeman, "Price of Autonomy," 56.


\textsuperscript{91} Jian He, "Yanlun ziyou," Shibao, 19-20 January 1908.
sense of good or bad [gonghao gonge]," an editorialist claimed. "If the government uses its power and prestige to oppose public opinion, is this not tantamount to destroying the national spirit?" By imbuing righteous elite opinion with populist and nationalist content, the journalists were not simply misrepresenting the meaning of the original term. Rather, they were lending authority to their own project of expanding the parameters of the late Qing middle realm.

The construct of the new middle realm which emerges in the pages of Shibao from 1904 to 1911 was complex and often contradictory. By turns it was presented as a conduit of irrepressible social forces from below or as a site of negotiation that would be directed from the dynasty above. In some instances the nation, popular power, and public opinion were portrayed as weapons against autocracy, in others as forces of harmony that would strike a new and more enduring balance between ruler and ruled. In part, these inconsistencies reflect the uses of rhetoric in the service of politics. When the journalists' concern was to render their new ideas acceptable to officialdom, they advanced constitutionalism as a means of stabilizing imperial authority and harmonizing social and political relations. But when their purpose was to berate the authorities for betraying the reform project, they brandished the powerful instrument of public rage and popular power. Just as discourse influences praxis, ideas themselves are modified in the practice of politics.

Going beyond the level of rhetoric, the contradictory presentation of the middle realm as the site of both harmonizing negotiations between the prince and his people and a new politics of contestation reflects a deeper tension inherent in the journalists' project itself. As constitutional reformists who remained monarchists, their objective was to limit and challenge imperial power while not totally undermining the structure of dynastic politics. This tension derives from the two historically and geographically distinct sources for the middle realm: foreign notions of popular power and the nation, premised on a new epistemology compelling in its projection of an image of national wealth and power, and China's "ancient constitutionalism," based on the ideal of the full integration of the

collectivity and corresponding to the continuing power of the construct of the people as the foundation of the nation in the minds of Chinese reformists.

The appeal to such diverse sources inevitably led to disjunctions in the early twentieth-century politics of reform. The reform publicists' new concept of popular power, for example, was shaped by long-standing Chinese cultural constructs that emphasized harmony and the collective, giving it a form very distinct from its origin in Western notions of democracy. And while the journalists asserted the importance of natural rights, their representation of these rights deprived them of all "naturalness," imbuing them with a purely post-political content. Therefore the reform publicists' mode of appropriation of these classical and foreign resources reveals more about their vision of the middle realm than do the specific cultural symbols and foreign terms they appropriated.

This complex process of adoption, adaptation, and transformation, which merged classical Chinese and contemporary foreign impulses, reveals both the ambiguities within and the very real potential of the early twentieth-century reform program in China. Although the journalists' ultimate ideal remained within the familiar social paradigm of concord between ruler and ruled, their methods for achieving it—the establishment of constitutional authority, the advocacy of civil rights—had distanced them from it for all practical purposes.93 The inherited minben ideal was never displaced, however. Infused with a new contestatory political idiom, it was expanded and reconceived, a testimony both to the enduring nature of the classical ideal and to the adaptability of age-old concepts. While the new publicists were perhaps not consciously aware of the ramifications of their new politics or the discrepancies to which it gave rise, this fact does not diminish the importance of the advances they made in opening up the new middle realm.

93. I am in agreement here with, for example, Frederic Wakeman, Jr. ("The Price of Autonomy in Ming and Ch'ing Politics," Daedalus 101 [Spring 1972]: 66) in accepting the continuing importance of the symbol of unity between ruler and ruled, but I believe the twentieth-century reformists were, by the very mode of politics they were promoting, distancing themselves from that ideal for all practical purposes.
National Questions and National Answers
in the Chinese Revolution;
Or, How Do You Say Minzu in Mongolian?

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As Michael Schoenhals has noted, ideological debates in the People’s Republic of China often boil down to attempts to create the correct "formulation" (tǐfā) on a given question, a brief aphoristic statement of the Party’s current wisdom on the topic.12 Nationality policy is no different in its dependence on such formulations. Perhaps the most common and authoritative formulation on the nationality question fo in present-day China is that "Our country is a unified, multinational country." This formulation serves as the first chapter heading for Zhang Zhiyi’s 1956 work, A Discussion of the National Question in the Chinese Revolution and of Actual Nationalities Policy (Draft).2 With the addition of the word "socialist" to the description of China as a united, multinational country, it also appears in the preface to all the volumes in the "Fivefold Series on the Nationality Question," the standard reference source on the nationalities of China and the autonomous areas established for them.

The force of the formulation lies in its radical dissociation of the idea of nationality (minzu) from that of country (guojia). This dissociation also appears in the classic Maoist statement "Countries [guojia] want independence, nations [or nationalities, minzu], and the people [renmin] want liberation—this has become an irresistible historical trend."3 Liberation, then, but not independence is the proper goal for a minority within a country, and from the 1920s on the Communist Party held forth liberation as the true aim of the

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Mongols and other minorities in China. To confuse the appropriate demands of one type of unit with those of another, for example by saying that countries want liberation and nationalities want independence, would appear to be the most elementary error of political thinking.

These formulations present themselves as timeless descriptions of fact in their dissociation of country and nationality. Yet they, like all such tifas, need to be understood as normative statements, rooted both in present politics and in the longer history of the defined terms. To say that China is a unified, multinational country means first that claims of secession based on nationality (minzu) are illegitimate (China is unified), and second that claims to exclusive domination over the country (guojia) and its policy by any one nationality are likewise illegitimate (China is multinational). In other words, no one nationality should arrogate to itself either the right to monopolize a territory/country of its own or the right to prescribe its own nationality features as binding on all other nationalities. Finally, acceptance of this formulation implicitly depends upon seeing a country's frontiers as given in a way that transcends historical change. If a country such as China grew, shrunk, split apart, or united in the course of its history, it would be impossible to see it as a constant entity demanding independence while containing nationalities within it.

In fact, Chinese historical experience has violated both these normative principles and the idea of a naturally given country upon which they rest. The most obvious violation lies in the independence of Mongolia. A large chunk of territory, inhabited by a "nationality," the Mongols, which is considered one of the major minority nationalities of China, has broken away and succeeded in establishing itself as an independent country, one recognized by China since 1946. Similarly, while correct formulation claims the Chinese state is not to be monopolized by one nationality alone, the demographic, economic,

4. In place of the obsolete usage that treats Mongolia as a single area divided between "Inner" and "Outer" parts, I propose here to restrict the application of the term "Mongolia," in the twentieth century at least, to independent Mongolia. Thus "Mongolia" tout court does not include Inner Mongolia, just as "Mexico" is understood not to include New Mexico and "Ireland" not to include Northern Ireland. Where necessary for complete clarity, I will refer to independent Mongolia as "Mongolia proper." "Mongolian" as a noun refers to a citizen of independent Mongolia regardless of ethnicity, while "Mongol" as an noun refers to an ethnic Mongol regardless of citizenship.
political, and cultural domination of the Han nationality in the Chinese state and its policies amounts to a virtual monopoly.

One indication of this ambiguity lies in the dual uses of the term minzu. While it often means nationality (in the sense a people who, while preserving their heritage, are not to seek for a state to express it), it can also mean a nation (a unified body of people on a particular swath of territory endowed with a single civic tradition and a right to independence). The Han and the Mongols are two of the fifty-six nationalities (minzu) of China, yet both are part of the Chinese nation (Zhonghua minzu) which is historically destined to assert its claim to indivisible sovereignty over the territory of China. Despite the normative weight attached to the distinction, no watertight wall divides the notions of ethnicity or nationality on the one hand from that of the nation, country, and state on the other. Still, drawing such a distinction has proved to be one of the most important ways that the Chinese state allows members of minority nationalities to reconcile loyalty to their nationality as an ethnic community with loyalty to China as a state and country.

Formation of the appropriate political vocabulary and usage evidently would be a crucial precondition for such a system of nested loyalties. In order even to translate, let alone find satisfying, the statement "Our country is a unified, multinational country," a language needs to have distinct terms for nationality as an ethnic community and for a country/nation as a unitary civic community living within a particular territory. And if one wants to envision the Han as merely one of China's fifty-six nationalities without any special role, it is necessary to have clearly differing words to refer to the Han (those of Han ethnicity) versus the Chinese (those of Chinese citizenship). It is not only overtly political terms such as socialism that have to be erstood in their multiplicity of contested meanings. The Chinese revolution radically reshaped and reinvented virtually all the vocabulary that came into its sphere, including seemingly unremarkable or basic words as well as newly coined political terminology. Thus Michael Schoenhals has shown how the modern Chinese binome renmin (people), one composed of two classical Chinese terms that would seem to have an obvious meaning, has acquired a very different meaning in
current discourse in the People's Republic of China.  

By not putting the relevant key words in the context of historical change, current discussions of ethnicity and nationality issues in China have often assumed the transparent existence of such distinctions. In particular, the confusion of Han with Chinese (e.g., in referring to conflicts between Mongols and Chinese in Inner Mongolia) is often treated as a sort of clumsy faux pas made solely by foreigners in culpable ignorance of China's true multinational nature. Yet usage in China today indicates the distinction between Han (Han) and Chinese (Zhongguo) has not been not consistently applied. While the Chinese language is referred to in official or multiethnic contexts as Hanyu, it is still commonly referred to on the mainland as Zhongguohua, Zhongwen, or Huayu, all terms which carry more or less the connotation of being the language of China (the whole country). Growing concern and ties with Han Chinese outside the borders of the PRC, whether as "compatriots from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao" or as "overseas Chinese," only serves to underscore the role of Han ethnic-nationalist sentiment in the articulation of Chinese state policy. This sentiment becomes especially evident when both political leaders and popular dissidents envision these ties with Han Chinese imagery of common descent from either the dragon or the Yellow Emperor.  

In Mongolian usage as currently established in Inner Mongolia, language indeed separates the concept of nationality, meaning ethnicity (undüsüen), from the concept of


6. This assumption that the distinction between Han and Chinese need only be stated to be obvious can be seen in Dru C. Gladney, Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991), 21. June Teufel Dreyer, China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3-4, simply treats the distinction of Han and Chinese as self-evident and not worthy of comment.

7. Frank Dikötter, "Racial Identities in China: Context and Meaning," China Quarterly 138 (1994): 404-12. In 1987, Deng Xiaoping declared that reunification of Taiwan with the mainland was something that deeply concerned all the children of the Yellow Emperor. A Mongol friend of mine expressed with sarcasm his great relief in hearing this: if the mainland should ever invade Taiwan, he would undoubtedly not be sent to fight, since as a Mongol he had nothing to do with the Yellow Emperor.
country or nation (ulus). Likewise, there is one word for the Han nationality (khitad ündüsüten) and another for China (Dundadu ulus, middle country or realm, a calque translation of Zhongguo). It appears at present transparently meaningful to say in the Mongolian of Inner Mongolia: the Mongols (Monggol) and Han (Khitad) are two of the nationalities/ethnic groups (ündüsüten) in the country of China (Dundadu ulus). Similarly, in Tibetan, rgya-rigs refers to the Han Chinese and their language, while the recent loan word Krung-go designates China as the country. In Uyghur, the terminology for the Han and China is borrowed directly from that of the Chinese language—xänzu(chä) is the Han Chinese (language) and Junggo is China the country.

Yet the history of such terms in particular minority languages in China shows the difficulty in ascribing any self-evident validity to the distinction between ethnicity/nationality and nation/country. In the cases of Tibetan and Uyghur, the terms for China as a country are borrowed directly from the Chinese language and seem to have been brought into common usage only after 1949; in Uyghur, even the term for Han Chinese is an obvious recent loan word. In the case of Mongolian, where the terms are less obviously recent, a fuller examination of the backgro of modern terminology demonstrates the extent to which it is intimately linked to current political practice and theory.

In independent Mongolia, for example, where such nested loyalties are neither common nor encouraged, the Mongolians see no clear distinction between the Han as a nationality and China as a country. Khitat refers to both Mongolia’s southern neighbor as a whole (China) and to the dominant ethnic group within it (the Han). Similarly, the concepts of nation and national in standard Mongolian usage are rendered by the word ündüsü(n), one which is related to ündüsüten (ethnic group/nationality) and which carries clear connotations of common (ethnic) ancestry. In other words, to be a full member of the Mongolian nation or civic community (ündüsü) it is virtually mandatory to be also a member of the Mongol nationality or ancestral group (ündüsüten). The Inner Mongolian

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8. In order to reduce confusion, I will transcribe all Mongolian-language terms according to the Mongolian script forms currently used in Inner Mongolia, rather than according to the Cyrillic-script forms current in independent Mongolia.
word for nation (ulus) is there restricted to mean the state, as in, for example, "state property" (ulus-un khörönggö, from Russian gosudarstvennoe imushchestvo). The only ethnic differences officially acknowledged within the population of Mongolia are described as yasutan, a word with clearly felt sub-ethnic or "tribal" connotations. All the yasutan mentioned in official or semi-official literature, with the exception of the traditionally Muslim and Turkic-speaking Kazaks, are considered to fall within the Mongolian cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical sphere.

While in Inner Mongolia currently constructed language leads unreflectively towards conceptions of nested loyalty to both ethnic group and nation, in Mongolia proper language leads rather towards a unitary fusion of ethnicity and nationhood, moderated only by small and unideologized sub-ethnic differences. Clearly these semantic distinctions accord with the actual differences between the political salience of the ethnic issue in China (and especially its minority regions, such as Inner Mongolia) on the one hand and Mongolia on the other. Yet Inner Mongolia and Mongolia both were once parts of the Qing empire along with China. This fact would indicate that the accord between language and the ethnic-political situation in both Inner Mongolia and Mongolia is not something inherently obvious but rather fashioned in the course of the turbulent years since 1911.

This is indeed the case. Nineteenth-century Mongolian usage for countries, peoples, and other human communities was different from and considerably simpler than that of either present-day Mongolia or Inner Mongolia. An examination of the history of these keywords in the Qing and Republican periods illustrates how new beliefs about the proper forms of social and political organization emerged in the increasingly tumultuous encounter with Chinese ideas and how these newer beliefs then merged with and modified older ones. It also illustrates the sleight of hand by which the concept of China as a country was (partly) detached from that of the Han as a nationality and extended to those who would never before have believed it applicable to them.

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Country-Consciousness in the Qing Dynasty

In his *Muslim Chinese*, Dru Gladney has taken his cue from Clifford Geertz and put forward the notion of

country as a more simple and basic concept by which many people erstand their nationality. Most people think of themselves as living in a certain locality within natural boaries rather than as members of "nation-states," "nationalities" or other political entities. Nations rise and fall, but countries usually stay much the same, though the people in them may be in one administration or another.10

Recent work in the political theory of medieval Europe has refined the degree to which medieval kingdoms were also secular communities, both by common participation of elites in governance and by strong sentiments of common descent and common custom. As Susan Reynolds writes, "Kingdoms were units of government which were perceived as peoples."11 This country-consciousness appears to have been applicable to the Mongols in the Qing empire as well. Although the Mongols had been brought er the Manchu dynasty, along with the Chinese, the Tibetans, and the Muslims of Turkestan, an investigation of Mongolian historical writing of the time generally shows no breakdown of the idea of a separate "Mongolia country." The concepts of a Mongolian nationality nested within a overarching "China country" never appear. Only in eastern Inner Mongolia during the late Qing do certain types of terminology appear which would later form the building blocks of the modern Inner Mongolian nested hierarchy of nationality and country.

Inner Mongolia as a whole came er the rule of the Manchu Qing dynasty in 1636. After the fall of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), ruled by the Mongols, the ruling family, descended from Chinggis Khan, had continued to dominate the Mongolian plateau. Yet while the last of these Khaans lost his throne in 1636, the Qing emperors ruled Inner Mongolia (and subsequently Outer Mongolia or Mongolia proper) through a nobility composed mostly of Chinggis Khan's descendants. The switch of ultimate sovereignty

10. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 94. Gladney refers to unpublished work by Clifford Geertz. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any work by Geertz since then where this discussion might have taken place.

from a Mongol Khaan to a Manchu emperor thus seems to have had little direct impact on the country-consciousness of the Mongols. Through the Qing period, the Mongols continued to see the Mongolian banners as collectively forming a single realm, one on a level with that of China, Tibet, Korea, and so forth.

In Mongolian chronicles of the seventeenth century, the world described appears divided into realms or countries (ulus), each with its own customs, languages, and traditions of rule. Neither political disunity within a realm nor a realm’s incorporation into a larger empire disrupted this sense of a historically continuous domain. A vivid illustration of this country-consciousness lies in the numerical and color schemes which Mongolian historians used to order these realms in space. One common trope in these chronicles was that of the "five colors and four aliens" (tabun öngge dörben khari) which together made up the "nine great realms" (visün yekhe ulus). These nine great countries were distributed in terms of the four cardinal directions plus the center and each identified with a particular color. Invariably at this time, the "great blue Mongol realm" (yekhe khökhe Monggol ulus) was placed in the center. To the east lay the white Solonggos and Bitüüd realms, meaning roughly Korea and Manchuria. To the south was the red Khitad and Khiliyed realms—Khitad is the name for the realm of China. To the west lay the black realms of Tibet (or Tanggud) and Tajik, while to the north lay the yellow realms of Sartuul (Sarts or Central Asian oasis dwellers) and Tokmak (a city in present-day Kyrgyzstan, but probably indicating the Turkic nomads of Central Asia as a whole). In their political narrative, of course, the chronicles focus on the Mongols in relation to particular realms. The 1607 biography of Altan Khaan, titled "The Sutra Entitled the Jewel Translucent" (Erdei tunumal neretü sudur oroshiba), speaks of how Altan Khaan pacified

12. Liu Jin Suiwé [Liu Jinsuo], ed., Arbán buyantu nom-un cagan teüke [White history of the dharma of ten virtues] (Khökhkekhot: Inner Mongolian People’s Publishing House, 1981), 86, 99; Dharm-a, Altan kürdüün minggan kegesütü [The Golden wheel of a thousand spokes], ed. Coyiji (Khökhkekhot: Inner Mongolian People’s Publishing House, 1987), 77, 340. There is considerable variation between the exact distribution of the colors and the countries, especially those to the north and the west. The Mongols (with or without their closely related rivals, the Oirads) are always in the center, with the Koreans to the east and the Chinese to the south. The color assignments for these are also regular. See the detailed commentary on these geographical notions in Klaus Sagaster, Die Weisse Geschichte: Eine mongolische Quelle zur Lehre von den Beiden Ordnungen Religion und Staat in Tibet und der Mongolei (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), 307-16.
the "great realms of Mongolia and China" (Mongol khitad khoyar yekhe ulus) and "merged the great states of China and Mongolia" (khitad monggol-un yekhe törü-yi neilüülbe).¹³

Each of these realms had their own defined ruling lineages, languages, traditions, and customs, about which the Mongolian chronicle writers were quite self-conscious. In describing how the Mongols conquered Tibet in 1240, Sagang Sechen wrote in 1662 how a Tibetan lama dreamed of a messenger coming from "Kötön, incarnation of a Bodhisattva and Khaan of a realm/people called the Mongols [Mongol khemekhü ulus], with hats like a sitting falcon, boots like a pig’s snout, houses like a wooden net, and an accent that says echige after every three or four words."¹⁴ This description—which clearly notes the peculiar Mongol hats, their boots with the distinctive upturned toe, the yurts built of wooden lattice-work, and the typical sos of Mongolian ceremonial speech as heard by foreigners—demonstrates a vivid awareness of how the Mongols appeared to others. The anonymous Altan Tobci or "Golden Chronicle" (c. 1624-34) also notes the astonishment of the Oirad Mongol ruler Esen Taishi at the way the Chinese soldiers never fled in a losing battle but always stayed at their posts even when it only meant useless sacrifice.¹⁵

Nowhere, however, do we see this image of the Mongol customs, language, and ancestry detached from the idea of the Mongol lands. As Gladney noted, the country is still imagined as a natural unit of geography, ethnography, and traditional governance.

In the eighteenth century greater familiarity with Chinese historical sources and their focus on the dynasty (guo) as the unit of time introduced a new element of complexity in the vocabulary of realms, states, and countries. In 1644, the Qing court sponsored the translation into both Manchu and Mongolian of extracts from the official histories of three

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preceding foreign dynasties, the Liao, the Jin, and the Mongol Yuan. In these translations, as in other official works, the translators established Mongolian ulus as the proper word to render Chinese guo in all its meanings, including that of "dynasty." This usage in effect expanded the previous sense of ulus, meaning a geographical domain inhabited by people of a given character, into something closer to the modern idea of the "state." By focusing on the notion of a particular swath of territory as controlled by a single state, this expansion of the term ulus opened a door for viewing such traditional realms as being part of a larger state.

In seventeenth-century works, this usage of ulus to mean dynasty had not yet penetrated into the Mongolian historiographical tradition. The usual usage was not to speak of the emperor of the Dai Ming dynasty (ulus), but the Dai Ming emperor of China country (Khitad ulus). Sagang Sechen, for example, in summarizing the history of the various dynasties of China, never uses ulus for the dynasty names, instead always referring to the Jiu khaan (Zhou emperors), the Khan khaan (the Han emperors), and the Tang khaan (the Tang emperors).

By the eighteenth century, however, authors within Mongolia’s "country" historiographical tradition, well outside the court tradition of Beijing, had come to adopt the use of ulus to mean state or dynasty. In "The Golden Wheel of a Thousand Spokes" (Altan khürdün minggan kheesütü), the Jarud lama Dharma Güushi in 1739 regularly attached the term ulus to Chinese dynastic titles, thus writing Süngh ulus (Song dynasty), Ming ulus (Ming dynasty), Altan ulus (Golden or Jin dynasty), Da Yuwan ulus (Great Yuan dynasty), and, most commonly, Daiching ulus (Great Qing dynasty). The source


17. Sagang Secen, Erdeni-yin tobcīt-a, 92-100.

18. See, for example, Dharma, Altan kārdün minggan kegesütü, 151, 73, 109, 116, 202, 227, 239, 241.
of such usage was certainly the earlier Mongol translations of Chinese histories; at one point Dharma Gùushing explicitly refers to the *Dai Yüwan ulus-un bicig* ("Book of the Great Yuan Dynasty") of 1644 as a source.\(^{19}\) The Baarin nobleman Rashipunsug's "Crystal Rosary of the Great Yuan Dynasty" (*Dai Yüwan ulus-un bolor erike*), written in 1774-75, included this usage in his very title and referred throughout to Chinese dynasties as ulus.\(^ {20}\)

The idea of organizing China's long history into dynasties also influenced the Mongols to analyze their own history in this fashion. Thus Dharma Gùushing labelled the period from 1206 to 1368 the "Great Yuan dynasty" (*Da yuwan ulus*), while that from 1368 to 1636 was "the Yuan dynasty solely in the north" (*umara daki gagcha yuwan ulus*).\(^ {21}\)

Rashipunsug, in a more explicit confrontation with Chinese concepts of legitimacy, considered that the legitimate succession of the throne passed from the earlier Yuan to the later Yuan (1368 to 1636) and directly to the Qing dynasty, bypassing the Ming usurpers altogether. He therefore considered all the Yuan from 1206 to 1636 to be the Great Yuan and divided it into Former and Latter Yuan (*Uridu Yuwan* and *Khoitu Yuwan*).\(^ {22}\)

Yet this usage of ulus as a dynasty or state did not eclipse its previous meaning as a natural geo-ethnographic unit. Both Dharma Gùushing and Rashipunsug, for example, continued to speak of China as *Khitad ulus* or China country, even directly in the context of China's various dynasties (also called ulus).\(^ {23}\) Nor did the use of the term ulus as dynasty for the two Yuan dynasties and the succeeding Qing dynasty which ruled Mongolia eclipse the continuing usage of ulus for Mongolia as realm persisting through all these administrative changes. Rashipunsug wrote in the present tense of the distinctive characteristics of the continuing Mongolian realm:

> The people of other realms [ulus] make a living exerting themselves in manual

\(^{19}\) Dharma-a, *Altan kürdän minggan kegesüü*, 118.

\(^{20}\) For example, Rasipunsug, *Bolor erike* [Crystal rosary], ed. Köke’öndör (Khökhekhot: Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House, 1985), 6, 8.


labor such a farming, handicrafts, commerce, and so on. The people of our Mongolian realm [Monggol ulus] make a living herding livestock, living off of the yearly increase and in between using them for riding and transport and selling the excess to buy goods.24

The great Khalkha Mongolian poet Danzanrjabai (1803-56) described the characters and customs (aburi yosu) of the people of the three realms (ulus) of China (Khitad), Tibet (Tanggud), and Mongolia:

The Chinese, since he is of the dragon’s ancestry, dines on vegetables, has a bad temper, does not know shame, is always thinking up something, and is greedy for profit. The Tibetan, since he is of the demoness’s ancestry, dines on flour, is lustful, quick-witted, and his main thought is envy and jealousy. The Mongol, since he is of the monster’s ancestry, dines on meat, is proud, likes to talk, is not reliable in his thinking and erstanding, and will be trying to strike back.25

In this sense, Mongols of the eighteenth century saw Mongolia, China, and Tibet as all ulus (natural geographic, civic, and ethnographic realms) er the power of a single Great Qing ulus (dyntastic state).

In both Outer Mongolia (Mongolia proper) and western Inner Mongolia, this ambiguity in the erstanding of ulus, either as a natural geo-ethnographic unit or as a dynasty, continued up until the very fall of the Qing dynasty. In his 1905 history of Mongolia, Erdeni-yin tobci ("Bejewelled Chronicle"), the famous Ordos poet and scholar, Kheshigbatu, described how the Qing dynasty (ulus) was composed of several realms, each with its own administrative tradition:

When this emperor [the Shunzhi emperor of the Great Qing dynasty] of the Manchu received all in the world, without lifting a single weapon, the eighteen province of China [Khitad] to the south, the great Kökemur-Tibetan realm [Tanggud Töbed yekhe ulus] in the west, the Korean realm [Gaoli ulus] also called the "white Solonggos," and the great Mongolian realm [yekhe Monggol ulus] to the north, he all ruled with great mercy and harmony. In China [Khitad], the Zongdus and Zongfus were placed to administer the fu and xian, in Kökemur-Tibet he appointed deliberative ministers [khubi-yin said (sic) for khebei said] and imperial residents [amban jangjun]. Sharing out this great Mongolian realm [yekhe ene Monggol ulus] amongst the noble-born descendants of Taizu Chinggis Khaan and

descendants of the eleven sovereign children of Batumöngkhe Dayan Sechen Khaan, he created banners and sumus and placed one ruler over each banner.

No clearer picture could be drawn of the "realms within the realm" character of the Qing dynasty. The use of ulus for dynasties within China also did not mean Kheshigbatu had lost the sense that all these dynasties belonged to one realm, China; he refers to the "Tang dynasty of China [Khitad]," the Mongol ruler Esen’s capturing "China’s [Khitad] Ming Jingdi emperor," and Mongols invading the realm of China (Khitad ulus). In the same manner, Kheshigbatu’s division of Mongolia’s pre-Qing history into the Great Yuan and the Latter Yuan dynasties did not at all weaken his sense of Mongolia as a distinct realm continuing on despite administrative changes and the loss of full independence er the Qing.

Thus, as Nakami Tatsuo has noted, on the eve of the 1911 revolution the vast majority of Mongols lacked the concept of Dumdadu ulus/Zhongguo (the Middle Country) as a national community centered on the Chinese heartland, yet including the outlying territories of the Qing empire and separate in conception from the Han Chinese. Nor did the Mongols find it useful or relevant to distinguish between countries and nationalities. The layering of the idea of dynastic states onto the Mongols’ country consciousness did not mean that the Mongols even saw the possibility of an ulus, in its primary sense as realm, having many different nationalities within it. Ulus as dynasty


27. For example, Kesigbatu, "Erdeni-yin tobei," in Ords kümün-ü teükên tulgur bicig-ün emkidkel, 1: 224, 158-59.

28. Kesigbatu, "Erdeni-yin tobei," in Ords kümün-ü teükên tulgur bicig-ün emkidkel, 1: 133 and 150 refer to the founding of the Latter Yuan dynasty and its replacement of the Great Yuan. Yet Chinggis Khaan and Khubilai are said to be two great rulers of Mongolia (Monggol ulus), while in referring to Esen’s invasion of the Ming in 1449, he refers to Mongolia (Monggol ulus) attacking China (Khitad ulus); see 158-59. For the term "Great Mongolian realm," see the quotation above and also 76.

involved, rather, the idea that one realm might be divided into warring states, or that one
dynasty might rule several separate realms at once. In that case, however, the Mongols
accepted that the dynastic state would rule each realm as a separate domain with its own
peculiar institutions. Throughout the Qing, Mongolian historical and political literature
reveals nothing like the Ottoman concept of *millet*, self-governing religious communities
living permanently on common territory yet governed by their own distinct religious
leaders and institutions. Rather, the Mongols saw territorial separation of the major peoples
of the empire as an unquestioned part of Qing, and indeed any legitimate, statecraft. To be
sure, numerous Chinese traders, artisans, and settlers lived in Mongolia but, according to
both Qing law and Mongolian political thought, they were not permanent residents in the
Mongol realm but guests residing temporarily outside their proper place in the Chinese
realm.

The result was that ulus, in its primary, non-dynastic usage, continued to carry the
ifferentiated signification of "country" (a place with particular geographic features),
"nation" (a civic community with a particular ruling class and traditions of governance),
and "nationality" (a people with particular customs, religion, dress, script, and language),
all rolled up in one. The idea propoed by Sun Yat-sen in 1905 and enshrined in the
constitution after 1911, that China, or the Middle Realm, was a single, indivisible country
held in common by five nationalities, had simply no place in Mongolian political theory of
the time.

**Nineteenth-Century Trends in Eastern Inner Mongolia**

Nakami Tatsuo, however, has gone too far in his assertion that the Mongolian calque
translation of Zhongguo, Dumdadu ulus or Middle Country, was totally unknown in the
Mongolian language before 1911. The term was known in eastern Inner Mongolia, the
Mongol area most profoundly influenced by Chinese literary culture. Before the 1911
revolution, however, it was rarely if ever used in the post-1911 sense of a unitary supra-
ethnic national community including both the ethnic Chinese lands and Inner Asia. Yet the
very existence of the term and the history of its growth shows a drift in the nineteenth
century from the view of Mongolia as a realm of its own to that of the Mongol lands as
peripheral areas bordering China. The East Mongols\textsuperscript{30} advanced to a position of intellectual leadership in Republican Inner Mongolia in part because of their ability to adapt quickly to this Chinese view of the Mongols as a nationality within the territory of the republic, not as a separate realm.

Ironically, in its earliest usage the term Dumdadu ulus actually referred to Mongolia itself. As I noted above, traditional Mongolian geography divided the world familiar to the Mongols into five realms, each with a characteristic color, with the blue Mongols in the middle. In the "Golden Wheel of a Thousand Spokes" of 1739, Dharma Guushi, an East Mongol of Jarud Banner, incidentally referred to Mongolia as the "middle center realm" (dumdadu gool ulus) are which the other four were ranged.\textsuperscript{31} In 1775, Rashipungusug, from the neighboring Baarin Banner, also mentioned Mongolia as the "great middle realm" (dumdadu yekhe ulus) bearing the color blue and surroed by the other four major countries.\textsuperscript{32}

About a century after Rashipungusug, the historian Injannashi, from Josotu League on the southernmost frontier of Inner Mongolia,\textsuperscript{33} revolutionized the Mongols' erstanding of their own past in his "Blue Chronicle of the Rise of the Great Yuan Dynasty" (Yekhe yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törii-un khökhe sudur). One aspect of this transformation was the implicit removal of Mongolia from a central position in the world to a northern one. Turning the traditional trope of the "five colors and four aliens" into "the four colors and the five aliens," he placed the blue Mongols to the north, the white Koreans to the south, the red Chinese to the south, and the black Tibetans to the west. He then reinterpreted the five aliens, not as smaller peoples included with the other realms, but as a general term for

\textsuperscript{30} This term refers to the Mongols of eastern Inner Mongolia who lived east of the Great Khinggan Range and were strongly influenced by Chinese civilization. In the Qing Dynasty and Republican periods, it included those who belonged to Josotu, Jirim, and Juu Uda Leagues. At present, this means the Jirim and Khinggan aimags and Chifeng Municipality of Inner Mongolia, and the Mongol autonomous counties and nationality townships of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provinces.

\textsuperscript{31} Dharma-a,\textit{ Altan kürdün minggan kegesütü}, 340.

\textsuperscript{32} Rashipungusug,\textit{ Bolor erike}, 137.

\textsuperscript{33} His home place of Tümed Right Banner occupied present-day Beipiao county in Liaoning and is not to be confused with Tümed Special Banner near Khökhekhota.
the racially alien peoples even further west, along with the Dog-Head Country, the Girl Country and other legendary realms. He also refers at least once to his own people as "those called the Mongols who are outside the Great Wall" (Chagan kherem-un gadana bükhiin Mongol khmemegchi), clearly adopting a China-centered viewpoint. Even more directly, he wrote that China (Dumdadu ulus) is generally contemptuous towards the outer tribes (gadaadu aimag), including the Mongols, just as the upper class oppresses the lower class.34 While Injannashi’s explicit purpose was to accuse Chinese historians of petty bias, he implicitly accepted the Sino-centric world-view that generated this bias.

This displacement of Mongolia to the north meant that dumdadu ulus was no longer an appropriate term for the Mongolian realm. Instead, as seen in the last quotation, Injannashi was apparently the first Mongolian to use Dumdadu ulus in writing as a term for China. Speaking of the situation at the rise of the Mongols, Injannashi describes how China, or the Middle Realm (Dumdadu ulus) was divided into numerous dynasties, such as the Song dynasty (Süng ulus), the Jin dynasty (Altan ulus), and so forth.35 Injannashi also uses the loan word Zhongyuan (Central Plains; transcribed in Mongolian as Jüng yuwan) to refer to China proper, a usage which reflected that of traditional Chinese histories. He thus speaks of his own Josotu League as being "practically right within the jüng yuwan."36 That Zhongyuan means roughly the same as Dumdadu ulus becomes clear when Injannashi speaks of how the divisions of Dumdadu ulus into differing dynasties in the time of Chinggis Khaan brought the lands of Jüng yuwan into chaos.37

The use of either Jüng yuwan or Dumdadu ulus resulted for the first time in the

34. Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törü-yin kõke sudur [Blue chronicle of the rise of the great Yuan Dynasty], (Khökhekhotu: Inner Mongolia People’s Press, 1979), 1: 24, 67; Hangin, Köke sudur (The Blue Chronicle), 66, 93. Injannashi elsewhere referred to the "Chinese people" (Khitaad khümün) as living in "the interior land of the south" (emünetü jüg-un dotogadu gajar), a locution which again indicates his sense of being on the periphery. See Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törü-yin kõke sudur, 1: 76-77; Hangin, Köke sudur (The Blue Chronicle), 98.

35. Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törü-yin kõke sudur, 1: 31; English translation in Hangin, Köke sudur (The Blue Chronicle), 70-71.

36. Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törü-yin kõke sudur, 1: 10; Hangin, Köke Sudur (The Blue Chronicle), 56.

37. Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törü-yin kõke sudur, 1: 31; Hangin, Köke sudur (The Blue Chronicle), 70-71.
Mongolian language in a terminological separation of two notions of China: that of a territorial entity and that of the ethnic Chinese as a nationality. For the latter meaning, Injannashi used either the traditional khitad or two relatively new terms, irgen or nanggiyad. The former meant "subject" and was the standard term in Mongolian-language Qing legal literature to distinguish Chinese subjects in the provinces from the privileged bannermen, either in China proper or in the Mongolian territorial banners. By the late nineteenth century, irgen had come to mean the Chinese as an ethnic group among most of the Mongols. The third term, derived from Chinese nanjia (southern families), perhaps reflected the growing role of family migration in the Chinese influx into Inner Mongolia. Whatever terms for ethnic Chinese were adopted, their dissociation from those terms for China as a country or geographical unit opened important new possibilities in the Mongolian lexicon.

How big was Injannashi’s Jüng yuwan or Dümđadu ulus? One area which it did not include was Mongolia—the fact that he referred to Josotu as being on its borders would indicate that. At one point he also notes how the dynasties of China before the Yuan were all confined to the area between the Great Wall in the north, Tibet in the west, Yunnan and Guizhou to the south, and the ocean to the southwest. Here Injannashi works with an implicit erstanding of traditional Chinese territory similar to the Western idea of China proper. He tends toward the same point when he speaks of the Mongols fighting for two thousand years against Dümđadu ulus and not submitting. At one point this identification becomes explicit as Injannashi pulls together all his various terms for the Chinese. Discussing the four colors, he refers to the red Chinese in the south as the "the

38. See, for example, Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan töür-yin köke sudur, 1: 10, 14, 17. This usage was also widespread among the Khalkha Mongols of Mongolia proper by at least 1891. See, for example, the text in Alice Sárközi, Political Prophecies in Mongolia in the 17-20th Centuries (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 127-28, and English translation, 129-31. For the use of irgen for Chinese in Ordos, see the documents from 1903 on in Henry Sarruy, "Documents from Ordos on the 'Revolutionary Circles': Part I, " Journal of the American Oriental Society 97.4 (1977): 487, 488-89.


40. Injannasi, Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan töür-yin köke sudur, 1: 69; Hangin, Köke sudur (The Blue Chronicle), 93.
Khitad, the Nanggiyad of the land of the Middle Realm, the Zhongyuan" (*Dumdadu ulus Jüng yuwan-u gajar-un Khitad Nanggiyad*).

Elsewhere, however, Injannashi seems to adopt a more expansive view of China, including Korea, the Xiyu or Western Regions (modern Xinjiang), the Huihu (that is, Uygurs), the western Qiang, and even India within the Zhongyuan. Similarly, Injannashi often referred to "northern lands" (*khoit u gajar or ar u gajar*) as Mongolia, extending from the Jurchin in Manchuria in the east to the Karhuk and other Turkic peoples of modern Kazakhstan in the west. Aro these two, the Zhongyuan and the northern lands, lay various "different and strange foreign [or outer] countries" (*sonin öhere gadaadu ulus*), such as Tibet, Nepal, India, Uyguria, Russia, and Kazakhstan. Injannashi clearly had no great interest in the precise delineation of these differing areas; he lists both India and the Uygurs twice, first among the warring states of the Middle Realm and then among the far-off foreign countries. At the same time, however, we see a vague sense of Dumdadu ulus or the Middle Realm as being something larger than just the area inhabited by the ethnic Chinese. The Mongols in their "northern land" are in some sense closer and not so foreign to this Middle Realm as are those "different and strange foreign countries." Elsewhere he refers to these distant countries as the "completely equal foreign nations" (*gadaadu teng sachuu ulus*), implying that those realms within the larger Middle Realm and the Northern Lands are somehow not fully independent of each other. Perhaps appropriately, it is only in discussing "our" (i.e., Chinese) contempt for foreign countries (*gadaadu ulus*; evidently Western countries) that Injannashi speaks of "our Middle celestial realm" (*man-u Dumdadu tngri-yin ulus*).

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41. Injannasi, *Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törlü-yin köke sudur*, 1: 33; Hangin, Köke sudur (*The Blue Chronicle*), 72. He also refers to the Chinese (Khitad) of the Middle Country (Dumdadu ulus)—see Injannasi, *Yeke Yuwan ulus-un mandugsan törlü-yin köke sudur*, 1: 65; Hangin, Köke sudur (*The Blue Chronicle*), 91.


(Han) Chinese institutions of counties and prefectures, Injannashi makes it hard to tell if he is including the Mongols as a whole within China so much as taking on a (Han) Chinese persona himself. Such implications, however, remain in the background; Injannashi’s foreground attention is on the various dynasties and tribes as they contended for power in the arena of East Asian politics.

The 1911 Revolution and the Sudden Birth of Nationality Discourse

The 1911 Revolution marked a radical change in the political environment of Mongolian intellectual life. The most important fact was the division, eventually proving to be permanent, between Mongolia proper, which declared its independence from China in November 1911, and Inner Mongolia, which was unable to resist the imposition of control by the new Republic of China. These political facts also dramatically transformed the Mongolian political lexicon. In the new independent Mongolia, the old use of ulus as a combined geographic-national-ethnic unit continued, as did the tendency to designate China and the Chinese as both a country and an ethnic group by a single term, Khitad. In Inner Mongolia, however, the approved term for the Republic of China—Dumdadu irgen ulus, "Middle Commoners’ Realm," a direct translation of Zhonghua Minguo—and the simplified Dumdadu ulus or "Middle Realm" gained common currency as terms for the country of China in which the Inner Mongols were now included. Still, the old term Khitad by no means went out of use even as an unofficial term for China as a whole. The most rapid and complete change lay in the Inner Mongols’ designation of their own situation. From 1911 to the present, the Mongols of Inner Mongolia have referred to themselves overwhelmingly as a nationality, tribe, or ethnic group, never as realm or ulus. From this point on, a virtually unbridgeable gap opened between the self-understanding of the Mongols of Mongolia and those of Inner Mongolia. While the former have continued to think of the idea of Mongol as a country, nation, and nationality all rolled into one, the Inner Mongols from the 1911 revolution on have erred Mongol to refer to a nationality only, without its own land or civic expression. The Inner Mongols in a few short years had gone from being a part of the Mongol realm to being a mere minority.

The shift was so rapid that there was great confusion even about how to render the very concept of nationality (a stateless and country-less ethnic group), confusion that
lasted until the 1940s. The earliest attempt in Mongolian I know of to render the idea of nationality as an ethnic group came from Bayanbilküü, a Kharachin Mongol of Josotu League, and foreshadowed the confusion. Writing of the Mongols' need for modern cultural education, he spoke of the necessity to strengthen "the one tribe-race-nation of the Mongols" (Monggol-un aimag ugsaa ündüsü). While the phrase is clumsier in English than it is in the original Mongolian, where binomes and even trinomes are a standard device for forming abstract concepts, the particular binomes for this concept remained variable for decades. Even in this particular source, the author tended to speak more of the Mongolian lands (Monggol gajar or Monggol gajar orun, contrasted to foreign lands, gadanakhi gajar orun) than of a Mongolian nationality.45

The three terms used by Bayanbilküü in 1908, aimag (tribe), ugsaa (race or stock), and ündüsü (nation), all later became building blocks of the vocabulary of nationality. Aimag referred to named regional groups within the Mongols, such as the Kharachins, Ordos, or Khalkha, with separate dialects, costumes, and customs; it can be translated in English as "tribe" as long as it is eroded in the sense in which the Bavarians or Saxons of Germany, for example, are often called tribes.46 Ugsaa derived ultimately from the word ug (stump, base, origin, or beginning and, as an adjective, original, basic, or initial). It was primarily used in the Qing period to mean a lineage, as in khaan-u ugsaa (royal lineage). Ündüsü had a similar primary meaning (root, beginning, origin, base, or, as an adjective, original, basic, famental, or principal). It was often used as a term to describe the legitimate ancestry of the Mongolian nobility, as in phrases such as khad-un ündüsü, "the origin/lineage of the sovereigns." Along with ijagur, another term primarily meaning


46. The term "tribe" is somewhat controversial due to its perceived derogatory or "primitive" connotations. Yet there is also a common belief that nomads (and hence Mongols) naturally organize themselves into the relatively small, acephalous, egalitarian, and kin-based social units traditionally designated in anthropology as tribes. Whatever one thinks of the continued utility of the term "tribe" in general, the Mongols of Inner Mongolia and Mongolia proper from the sixteenth century on certainly did not have a tribal organization in this anthropological sense. The Mongols of the Qing dynasty period would actually be much better envisioned as a kind of nomadic peasantry, that is, a basically demilitarized commoner class formed not of corporate lineages but of nuclear or extended families engaged in subsistence production and ruled by a highly privileged hereditary nobility.
"root" and latter applied to royal lineages in particular, these three terms, combining and recombining in a variety of binomes, formed the main lexical resource out of which the post-1911 terminology of nationalities (as distinct from countries) would be formed.

The initial efforts to render the proclamations of the 1911 revolutionaries into Mongolian showed, in their very clumsiness, the novelty for most of the Mongols of separating nationality or ethnicity from the country-cum-nation-cum-nationality complex represented by the word ulus. Adopting Sun Yat-sen’s idea of a quinque-racial republic (wuzu gongheguo) and quinque-racial harmony (wuzu gonghe), the new Republican government under Yuan Shikai aimed to put across the idea that the Han and the Mongols were just two of the races or nationalities (zu) in the supra-ethnic country-nation of China (Zhongguo). The Republican government also claimed that this supra-ethnic Zhongguo had been in existence, as a supra-ethnic entity, from time immemorial.

Not surprisingly, the translation of these terms borrowed from the East Mongolian usage developed since Injannashi’s time in designating the Han nationality as Khitad and the country-nation, China, as Dumdadu ulus. The area which the Mongols had referred to as China (Khitad ulus or occasionally Dumdadu ulus), the new documents consistently rendered as dotoodu gajar, a calque translation of neidi, "interior land."47 This rendering made the distinction between ethnicity and country-nation at least formally possible. Still, most Mongols outside of East Mongolia had probably never heard of the term Dumdadu ulus (China) before 1911, and even those in East Mongolia learned for the first time that they were not on the northern border of Dumdadu ulus, as Injannashi thought, but had actually been deep within it for hreds of years.

Even stranger was the term officially used to render the crucial idea of zu (race or nationality). The Chinese government’s Mongolian language translators ignored Bayanbilitü’s essay in rendering this concept and translated zu as törül, a term connoting

"kind" or "sort" and one nowhere else used to designate nationality. For the official name of the Republic of China (Zhonghua minguo), Mongols in Beijing chose to translate the word "republic" (minguo, literally commoner-realm) as irgen ulus, literally again meaning "commoner [or subject] realm." The problem was that, by the second half of the nineteenth century, irgen (subject or commoner) had also come to mean "ethnic Chinese" throughout much of Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. As a result, the so-called "republic" or irgen ulus came across to many if not most Mongols as "the Han [or ethnic Chinese] realm." Probably no translation could have overcome the famental differences in understanding between the existing Chinese and Mongol conceptions of the nature and extent of China as a nation, but such hasty mistranslations made the gap of misunderstanding all the larger.

The new vocabulary and rhetoric of multi-ethnic nations (or multi-national countries) had no real impact on Mongolia proper, which was able to escape from the control of the Republic of China. In this new state, essentially equivalent in territory to the old Outer Mongolia of the Qing dynasty and the future Mongolian People's Republic, the old unity of the country-cum-nation-cum-nationality still applied and was even unified with the idea of a centralized state embedded in the secondary meaning of ulus as "dynasty." The new realm's name was Monggol ulus, meaning "Mongolia realm" or "Mongolian dynasty." As a result of this overlapping of geographic, civic, ethnographic, and political categories, the idea of a nationality as opposed to a country or state remained virtually invisible in the early years of independent Mongolia, even among intellectuals acquainted with some aspects of Western political theory.

Tsyben Zhamtsarano, a Buriat Mongolian scholar, intellectual, and publicist writing in

48. Thus Yuan Shikai was translated as claiming the Mongols were Dumdadu ulus-un nigen törül, "One type (or stock) within China (the Middle Realm)." Another early telegram referred to the Han, Manchu, Mongols, Muslims, and Tibetans as the "five great stocks of commoners" or tabun yekhe irgen-ü törül, evidently rendering wu da minzu. See Dindub, A Brief History of Mongolia in the Autonomus Period, 39, 31. The Buriat scholar Tsyben Zhamtsarano, in Mongolia's first newspaper, in 1912 translated "quinque-racial republic" (wuzu gongheguo) as tabun törül-i ngedkhen bügüde nairamdakhulu ulus; "Monggolcuud tus ulus bayigulusan ucir dörbü, "Sine toli kemekü biczig 1 (20 Dec. 1913): 34. (Note how republic or gongheguo was translated literally into Mongolian as bügüde nairamdakhulu ulus, showing the fluctuating nature and lack of independence in Mongolian political terminology in this period.)
theocratic Mongolia, could discuss the development of humanity, the Mongolian declaration of independence, and the systems of government in the world without ever drawing explicit attention to the idea of the nation (as apart from the country). As he described it in the first journal to be published in Mongolia, new states (ulus törü) are formed by those people having similar language (khele), ancestry (ijagur), religion (shashin), customs (yosu), and teachings (surtal) who all live in one region (orun). 49

While the explicitness of the criteria for statehood may well derive from Zhamtsarano’s familiarity with nationalist debates in Russia, the very confidence with which he joins them into an indivisible complex shows the power of the Mongolians’ divided country-consciousness.

The attention to ancestry (ijagur), a term often used for aristocratic lineages, heralded a summoning up into a more conscious political existence of the traditional notion of Mongolian ancestry. Pronouncements of the Mongolian government in the telegram war of 1912 defined the purpose of the new state as "defending the lineage [ündüši], guarding our faith [shashin]), and preserving the integrity of our territory [gajar orun]." A later statement repeats this formula but changes the term for lineage to speak of "defending our ancestral lineage" (ijagur-aca ündüsi)—a concept not far from "defending the nation" as a historical community of origin. 50 In his publicistic endeavors, Zhamtsarano touched once upon the same point, basing Mongolia’s need for independence on China’s desire to suppress "our Mongolian nation (ijagur ündüsi) and its traditional teachings [yosu surtal]," and change its privileges (erkhe), language (khele), religion (shashin), and ways and manners (jang jirum). 51

When Mongolian writers of the time wished to emphasize one or another aspect of the


50. Dindub, A Brief History of Mongolia in the Autonomous Period, 36, 43. The translations in Onon and Pritchett, Asia’s First Modern Revolution, 61, 63, make no attempt to render the nuances of this evolving political vocabulary.

notions subsumed er the modern word "nation," they would use quite separate words.

Speaking of the mass of citizenry, these documents tend to use "all the realm" (būkhū ulus); as a race with common origin, either ündūsū or ijagur or some combination; while for the Mongols as a people among other people, they occasionally borrow Chinese usage and use törül or "stock." In the vast majority of cases, where no such special emphasis was needed, however, the Mongols of Mongolia proper continued to use ulus to cover the concepts of country (geographic unit), nation (civic community), and people (ethnographic unit).

The sudden division of their southern neighbor into a supra-ethnic "China" (Dundadu ulus) on the one hand and the Han or Khitad inhabiting the "heartland" (dotoodu gajar) on the other did not take hold among the Mongols of independent Mongolia. The confusion in usage curiously foreshadowed the terminological difficulties in the West which would greet the change from "Russia" to the "U.S.S.R." after the Russian Revolution. Government documents used the new official designation, while unofficial writers used either the old name with which they were familiar or various shortened or mixed forms of the new and old terminology. Looking at the 1912 telegrams and the articles of Zhamsarano, the Mongolian officials referred to the new Republic as Dundadu irgen ulus, but in common usage still as Khitad or Khitad ulus. Simplified and mixed forms included Dundadu ulus, Khitad irgen ulus, Khitad-un Dundadu ulus, and simply Irgen ulus.

The conservative theocratic regime in Mongolia eventually gave way, via Chinese and

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52. For būkhū ulus, see the telegram from the Tibet and Mongolia Unification Assembly in Dündub, *A Brief History of Mongolia in the Autonomous Period*, 33; "Delekei degerki kūmmūn-ū aju törūkū-yin ucir-a," *Sin-e toli kemekū bicig* 1 (20 Dec. 1913), 31; "Oros Monggol-un ger-e toctogaysa-un ucir-a," *Sin-e toli kemekū bicig* 1 (20 Dec. 1913), 33. The final telegram in the telegram war has *Bidan-u Mongol törül* (our Mongolian stock/nationality) and *busu törül* (other stocks/nationalities); Dündub, *A Brief History of Mongolia in the Autonomous Period*, 51; Onon and Pritchatt, *Asia’s First Modern Revolution*, 65.

White Russian occupation, to a revolutionary regime supported by Soviet Russia installing itself in Mongolia. Given the prominence of the national question and national revolutionary movements in the Leninist program for relations with the colonized countries, one would expect that terms for nation would acquire greater prominence in Mongolian political vocabulary. This was indeed the case, but only to a certain degree. Literature from the early formation of the Outer Mongolian People’s Party (later simply the Mongolian People’s Party, forerunner of the present Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party) shows the terms āndūsū and ijavur, either alone or in combination, taking a distinctly larger role in political discussion. Thus the People’s Party’s first manifesto denounced “vicious enemies hostile to the nation and the faith [shashin āndūsūn]” and proclaims the Party’s aim “to guard against the nation’s [āndūsū ijavur] being lost.”\(^\text{54}\)

Early issues of Mongolia’s Truth (Monggol-un ünen), a magazine produced by Khalkha and Buriat Mongols under the supervision of the Siberian Party apparatus, also evidence this substantial increase in the use of terms for nation, particularly ijavur āndūsū as opposed to the rather differently conceived term ulus. Thus for the first time I am aware of we come across the use of the adjectival form, "national," when the newspaper pledges to "establish a truly national [ulus āndūsūn-û] government." Elsewhere ijavur āndūsū or āndūsū ijavur appears as the most common rendering of the concept of the nation.\(^\text{55}\)

At this time, the concept of nation and nationality as an ethnic collectivity also began to be important enough that new terms were brought into existence to express it. These terms were formed by adding the suffix -tan, which indicates a class of people characterized by the said noun. Ijavurtan, "those with a root or ancestry," appears twice here as a word for the nation.\(^\text{56}\) Ironically, this word would eventually become fixed as a term for the aristocracy. Ugsaatan, however, derived from ugsaa, and āndūsūteten, derived from āndūsū, would soon join the lexical soup as possible words, either alone or in combination, to designate the concept particularly of a (minority) nationality. This growth

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55. Mongol Ardyn Khuvsgalt Namyn tüükhent khorbogdoxh barimt bichgütüd, 1: 14, 16, 19.

56. Mongol Ardyn Khuvsgalt Namyn tüükhent khorbogdoxh barimt bichgütüd, 1: 14, 15.
in the currency of terms specifically translating "nation" was only modest, though. Even in these works, the old term ulus, indicating country or nation indiscriminately, prevailed. "Oppressed and exploited minority nations" became literally "oppressed and exploited small countries/nations" (darulagdagsan khikhdagsan olan baga ulus-ud). Occasionally the anonymous authors linked the idea of "nation" with "country," as when they spoke of "countries [ulus]" of one nation [ijagur] oppressing and exploiting countries of another nation."\(^{57}\) In the vast majority of cases, though, ulus remained the unmarked term for nation or country through World War Two.

There is no need to go through the rest of the history of the concepts of nation, country, China, and Han Chinese in independent Mongolia. Suffice it to say that through the final replacement of the Mongolian script by Cyrillic in 1945-51, ulus remained the major word for both country and nation. At the same time ündsü and ündsüten were established as the more precise words for the concepts of "nation" and "nationality," respectively. Thus the Mongolians translated the important term "National Revolution" as ündsüün-ü khubishkhal. The Mongolian tradition of using binomes to form abstract nouns continued, and ulus was still sometimes joined to ündsüten to put across the idea of a nation-state. Only after the shift to Cyrillic and a strong influx of Russian lexical influence, however, did the two concepts decisively part ways in common usage, the idea of "country" being taken by orun (originally "region") and that of "nation(al)" by ündsü (n-û). When the United Nations was first formed in 1945, for example, it was rendered in Mongolian as the Nigedügsen ulus ündsüten-ü baigusalga, while it is now translated as Nigedügsen ündsüün-ü baigusalga. Meanwhile, ulus came to have the sole connotation of "state" (something formerly rendered by either törü or the binome ulus törü); ulus, which previously meant the country and nation as a whole, was now applied only to the government apparatus.

Official usage in Mongolia for "China" fluctuated along with Sino-Mongolian relations. When relations went well, as in 1925-27 and in 1945, the Mongolian government scrupulously referred to China as Dumdadu ulus or even more officially Dumdadu irgen ulus, but when they went badly or indifferently, as in all other periods, the

\(^{57}\) Mongol Ardyn Khuwisgalt Namyn tūkhend khölbdogdokh barimt bichgūd, 1: 13, 14.
Mongolian government referred to China as simply Khitad or Khitad ulus. Only after the period of 1949-51, when Mongolia’s bureaucracy finally switched to Cyrillic and China changed from a Republic to a People’s Republic, was this ambiguity resolved. Influenced no doubt by Russian Kitai for China, the official translation of the People’s Republic of China in Mongolia become Bügüde Nairamdakhu Khitad Arad Ulus, finally eliminating Dumdadu ulus as a usable term in Mongolia proper.58

**Inner Mongolian Vocabulary of Nationality or the Chinese Republic**

In Inner Mongolia, the separation of nation-state from nationality was an unavoidable reality from the first turbulent years of the Republic onward. Confronted by the established fact of a regime or dynasty claiming to rule over a natural historical and political unit it called "the Middle Realm," the Mongols had little choice but to acquiesce and give this regime and unit the title of Dumdadu ulus. The Mongols of Inner Mongolia were definitely no longer in a Monggol ulus or "Mongolia country." Since it was quite inconceivable that the mass of Mongols should suddenly abandon their sense of difference due to cultural traditions and a separate ancestry, the result was a firm separation of the concept of "nationality" from that of "country," leaving the idea of "nation" (legitimate civic traditions) in a contested and ambiguous terrain between them.

The term törül for the Mongol nationality did not, however, catch on. While it was used in a few official documents from the early Republic, it never seems to have entered popular usage.59 Instead the Mongols chose from those terms I have already mentioned—aimag, ugsaa, ündüsü, and i jagur. In a poem from Ordos in western Inner Mongolia from aro 1915, the author declares that the Chinese (irgen), Manchu, Mongols,

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58. This elimination has left Mongolian historians and sinologists with the question of how to translate the Chinese idea of "Han," given that Khitad ulus now represents Zhongguo. The Mongolians could simply transcribe the term, but khan', the transcription resulting from the standard rules, is the same as the Mongolian word from "friendly," which hardly describes the Mongolians' sentiments towards the Han. Dropping the soft sign makes the Han Chinese China's Khan nationality, which has imperial and sovereign connotations the Mongolians equally dislike. No ready solution to this problem appears in sight.

Muslims (khotong), and Tibetans are the aimags (tribes) of China (Dumdadu ulus), and the five great races (tabun yeke ugsaa) of the age. Even official documents often used these more natural Mongolian translations; one spoke of how "the tribes [aimag] of the five races [tabun ugsaa] living together in harmony in our China [Dumdadu ulus] all loving each other" are reforming customs and spreading culture. In the remotest Shili-yin Gool League, on the border of Mongolia proper, the minstrel Gamala sang of how the Qing dynasty (Ching ulus) was overthrown and replaced by the Zhonghua minguo (Jüng khuwa min güwê). The president (Da dzünltüng), he went on to chant, was enthroned and unified the five tribes (tabun aimag).

The retention of the peculiar Mongolian political institutions undoubtedly contributed to a continuing sense of a Mongolian political identity, but the utilization of the nobility by the Republic as an instrument of control discredited these institutions in the eyes of many Mongols. By 1925 a widespread, if disunited, revolutionary sentiment had arisen in Inner Mongolia. Dominated by younger members of the East Mongolian intelligentsia, this new movement was prepared to accept, if not to welcome, the status of the Mongols as a nationality like the Han (Khitad) within China (Dumdadu ulus). Inspired by the revolution in Mongolia, these Inner Mongolian nationalists publicly aimed for a democratic reconstruction of an autonomous Inner Mongolia, although pan-Mongolist ideas were never far from their mind.

Influenced perhaps by Mongolian terminology, where ündüsü had become the most common word for "nation" and "national," theInner Mongolian nationalists brought this word more prominently into nationalist discourse. Ündüsü for "nation" or "nationality"


achieved currency in part by being fixed in certain set phrases, such as "National Revolution" (үндүүсүңүү үхүүшкхал), drawn directly from usage in Mongolia proper. Yet this word, with its revolutionary, (Outer) Mongolian, and socialist overtones, did not replace the more traditional Inner Mongolian ugsaa. The manifesto of the 1925 rationalist congress which established the People’s Revolutionary Party of Inner Mongolia spoke first of Mongols reviving their nation (үндүү үгсөө). Elsewhere the revolutionaries translated the five races (wu zu) of Republican ideology as tabun ugsaa, and advocated the realization of the equality of the five nationalities (tabun угуусат). Other official writings of the Inner Mongolian party used aimag ugsaa or угуусат to describe the Mongolian nationality.

The people and institutions of China proper—whether they be the common people of the towns, the farmers colonizing Inner Mongolia, the merchants fleecing the Mongols, the county and prefecture system, or the warlords—were all described as Khitad or Han Chinese, while the country itself was the Middle Realm (Dumdadu ulus). To this degree, the authors clearly accepted that the Inner Mongols were a nationality within a country and not a country or realm in their own right. Indeed, the manifesto even accepted the key Republican tenet that Dumdadu ulus had always included the Mongols—"It has been many long years since we Mongols have became citizens [кхарийату] of China [Dumdadu ulus]." The revolutionaries also changed the official translation for the "Republic of China" from Dumdadu irgen ulus to Dumdadu arad ulus, switching the word irgen (subject, with its longstanding connotation of Han Chinese) to the word arad (people or

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63. See, for example, a letter by the Khölön Buir politician Mersé in September 1928 in Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party Central Party Archives, 7-1-19: 25, which discusses strategies of this revolution, and the July 1929 pamphlet Kitad-un üiledbüricin tariyacin-u qubisqal ba. Dotogadu Monggol-un arad tümen erke cilöge ba temecegsen qubisqal-un tuqai farlan uqagulqu bicig (Dolonnuur, 1 July 1929), 5-6.


65. Dotogadu Monggol-un arad-un qubisqaltu nam-un nigeđäjer yeke qural-aca olaan tümen arad neyite-dür tungaqgalan jalaq bicig (Ulaanbaatar: Oros Monggol kebilel-үн qorjy-a, Dec. 1925), 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, etc. We also see here the use of jacketan as "aristocrat" (3), thus eclipsing it as a term for the Mongol nationality.
commoners.⁶⁶

The terminological variation noted earlier continued in the private writings of the revolutionaries in this period. Still, usage tended to converge on the constellation of terms established by the Party in its official manifestos. By 1926, even relatively unpolitical writers, such as the pioneering publisher Temgetü, had adopted new terminology such as arad ulus in place of irgen ulus, and ugsaatant for nationality.⁶⁷ By the beginning of 1929, the new terminology—Dundadu arad ulus for Republic of China, ugsaatant for nationality considered as a single people (translating the Chinese minzu), and ulus for country or nation considered as a union of equal citizens—had become codified in the approved Mongolian translation of Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles.⁶⁸ Once established, this vocabulary—with ugsaa and its two derivatives, aimag ugsaa and ugsaatant, as the words for nationality—continued into the period of Japanese domination of Inner Mongolia. Perhaps the only change in that period was the revival of the term Dundadu irgen ulus, the better to incite sentiment against the Chinese Republic among the Mongols.⁶⁹

The Chinese Communist Transformation of the Mongolian Lexicon of Nationality

The final drama, both in the history of the Mongols’ relations with the Republic of China and in the development of the Inner Mongolian vocabulary of their minority situation, came in the Chinese Civil War which followed the fall of the Japanese empire. Most of Inner Mongolia came er occupation by Soviet and Mongolian troops. After a period of uncertainty, it became clear the occupiers would not unite Inner Mongolia with

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⁶⁶. See, for example, Altan’orgil, Kôkeqota-yin teüken monggol surbulji bicig, vol. 3, Anggi-yin qaricag-a, 528, 531. The same document also uses Dündadu-yin irgen ulus (524), presumably by force of habit.

⁶⁷. See his autobiographical essay in Gereltü, Monggol jokiyalcid-un sigümji ögülel, 1721-1945, 344-46.

⁶⁸. Arad-un gurban jorilta-yin tobciy-a ögülel/San min zhuyi qianshuo (Beiping: Monggol bicig-ün qoriy-a/Mengwen shushe, Jan. 1, 1929).

⁶⁹. See, for example, the usage in Böhekhesig’s 1940 essay in Rincingawa, Monggol orcigul-a-yin teüke-yin quriyanggui tovimu (Khóhekhota: Inner Mongolia People’s Publishing House, 1986), 138-40, and Sayaningbu, Sin-e Monggol (Zhangjiakou: Obesüben jasaqu Monggol ulus-un aguu medügülel-un balagad, 1943), 10-11.
the Mongolian People’s Republic. They did, however, encourage young Mongol nationalists to set up new autonomous regimes on the soil of Inner Mongolia. These regimes soon faced the growing strength of the Chinese Communist Party. In the end, most of the influential Mongol nationalists merged their movements, regimes, and military forces with those of the Communists, expelling and persecuting the minority of Mongols who either supported the Guomindang or advocated neutrality in the Civil War.

It was the Communists who brought the final wave of changes to the vocabulary of nationalities and nations in Inner Mongolia. The Mongol nationalists who foed the short-lived autonomous regimes of 1945-46 generally continued to use the terminology which had been set since 1929. The word for nationality was ugsaa, ugsaatan, or sometimes, in literal translation of Chinese minzu (people-lineage), arad ugsaatan. Örlüge, a crudely printed organ of a nationalist Mongol youth league, carried the slogan "All the Mongol nationality [ugsaatan], unite!" on its masthead. The only change, albeit a major one, was a tendency among the more purely nationalist politicians to follow the ordinary usage in Mongolia proper and render China as Khitad ulus. By identifying China as a country with the Han nationality (Khitad ugsaatan), the Mongol nationalists were implicitly rejecting the very possibility of a genuinely multi-ethnic China; it would always be in fact, if not in name, "Han country."70

At the same time, Chinese Communist usage came to stand out by its consistent and exclusive adoption of ündlüüten for nationality. The small group of ethnic Mongol interpreters for the Chinese Communists almost certainly borrowed this term from usage of the Mongolian People’s Republic.71 During the brief period of propaganda for

70. See, for example, the petitions of November, 1945, in Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party Central Party Archives, 7-1-33, letter no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. and BNKhAU-yin Öwör Mongolyn öörtöö zasakh oron (Ulaanbaatar, 1981), 45. "Uuls-un arad-un nam kiged eb qamtu-yin nam-un arad ugsagatan-u jasag-un bodol-ga," in Örlüge 2 (11 December 1945) is a discussion of nationality policy which commonly uses arad ugsaatan for "nationality." The same article also regularly uses Dumdadu ulus for China, which probably indicates the influence of the Communist minority policy extolled in these articles.

71. There was apparently a small number of Mongolian-language books produced by Chinese Communists from Yan’an during World War Two. I have not seen any of them, but one title given in a survey of translations uses the word arad ugsaatan, a calque translation of minzu, in what is clearly a Communist work of this period; Rincingawa, Mongol orcigul-a-yin teüke-yin quriyanggui toyimu, 141. This suggests that ündlüüten was not in vogue among communists before
unification in 1945, the press of Mongolia proper usually spoke of the whole Mongol nationality as an ùndüüsen. Ironically, it was not the ardent pan-Mongolian Inner Mongols but the Chinese Communists who adopted this language, and into 1946 its use served as a marker of Communist discourse on nationalism, as opposed to that of the Guomindang or the Mongol nationalists. By mid-December 1945, the use of ùndüüsen had become fixed in the Communist terminology.72 There is also very clear evidence as to when this usage began to dominate the language of the younger East Mongol nationalists. On 5 March 1946, as the radical Mongol nationalist movement merged with the Communists, the above-mentioned newspaper Örlüge changed its masthead slogan. It still meant "All the Mongol nationality, unite!" but now the word for "nationality" was changed from ugsaatan to ùndüüsen. Two issues and ten days later the organ was closed, as not only the terms of the masthead but the sentiment itself became obsolete.

Along with the merger of the greater part of the Mongol nationalist movement with the Communist Party came an end to any idea that China was not a multi-ethnic Dumdadu ulus. By 1945, this term and the idea it embodied had penetrated deeply into Inner Mongolian usage; Khitad ulus faded quickly. The one problem was that the name of the Communist Party, intended to be the main nucleus of inter-ethnic harmony in the New China, had carried in Mongolian up until 1945 or so the unquestionably ethnic title of Khitad-un eb khamtu-yin nam, or the "The Han Chinese Communist Party." The origin of this translation seems to be fo in the process of translation from Russian; the Russian word for China and Chinese, kitai (skii), is so clearly similar to Mongolian khitad that the latter was used as a rule to translate the former. Even when left-wing Mongol nationalists were turning from the Guomindang to the Chinese Communists, they would still refer to the former as the Dumdadu ulus-un Gomindan nam (The Guomindang Party of the Middle Realm), and the latter as the Khitad-un eb khamtu-yin nam (The Common Property Party

the end of World War Two.

72. See the Mongolian language translation of the proceedings of the First Congress of the Federation of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement, the Communist front organization in Inner Mongolia, Dotogadu Monggol-un öberüben jasaqu ködelgegen-ü qolbun neyieldügsen qural-un bayigulugsan yeke qural-un tüsqt darumal (n.p., December 15, 1945), 1 and throughout.
of the Han). While such usage did not necessarily denote hostility to the Communist Party, it did encourage an understanding of the Party’s mission that the Party itself would urgently restricting, especially during the Civil War and after.

Just as the Party translators rapidly replaced ugsaatan with undüsüten as their favored term for “nationality,” they also replaced Khitad-un eb khamtu-yin nam with Dumdadu ulus-un eb khamtu-yin nam. This change, again like that from ugsaatan to undüsüten, seems to have taken place rapidly in the fall months of 1945. In Mongolian-language translations of the speeches of the leading Inner-Mongolian Communist Yun Ze dating from 15 December 1945, the translators used both Khitad-un eb khamtu-yin nam and Dumdadu ulus-un eb khamtu-yin nam indifferently. Such ambiguity rapidly disappeared, and by 1947 the Communist Party had, in its name at least, finally been dissociated from its ethnic origins and reequipped in Mongolian for its new role as the leader of a multi-ethnic Middle Realm. A stable Communist vocabulary in Inner Mongolia both reflected and furthered the ability of the Party to co-opt Mongol nationalist sentiment and project a convincing image of Inner Mongolia’s place in a multi-ethnic China.

Conclusion

The evolution of the Mongolian words that would eventually be used to describe the

73. As in the fall, 1927 manifesto of the Inner Mongolian Party, found in the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party Central Party Archives, 7-1-26: 70.

74. Dotogadu Monggol-un Òbesüben jasaq kodelgegen-ü qolbun neyileldügsen qural-un bayigulugsan yeke qural-un tusqad darumad, 1 and throughout.

75. The lack of Mongolian-speaking Mongols in the Communist Party in 1945 was reflected in the clumsy and literal translations from Chinese. These translations also reflected official usage in the De Wang government in western Inner Mongolia, which differed somewhat from that current in eastern Inner Mongolia. As the Communists acquired more and better translators and shifted their base of operations east, the Party’s official usage in Mongolian changed considerably. Thus the official 1945 translation of the Federation of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Movement was originally Dotoodu Monggol-un Òbesüben jasakhu khodelgeen-ü kholbon neyileldügsen kural. By 1947 and perhaps as early as 1946, this had been changed to Òbör Monggol-un öberteen jasakhu khodelgeen-ü kholbootu kural. This later usage, with Òbör Monggol (Southern Mongolia) for Dotoodu Monggol (Inner Mongolia) and öberteen jasakhu not Òbesüben jasakhu for “autonomous,” is that followed at present in Inner Mongolia.
Mongols' own minority situation demonstrates that the idea of a multi-ethnic state in general and China as the home of five or fifty-six nationalities in particular is not natural or self-evident. This perception of nationality (defined by customs, language, and ancestry) as something different from citizenship in a country (defined by residence in a particular area with one sovereign government) did not exist among the Mongols in any explicit form before 1911, although its intimation can be seen in eastern Inner Mongolia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Such an emphasis on the historical contingency of ethnic and national identity broadly speaking is not new. Much previous work, typified by Benedict Anderson's influential *Imagined Communities*, has rightly focused on historicizing the national/ethnic categories which often had been treated as primordial substances detached from any historical expression. The foregoing narrative has pointed up the degree to which such analyses of the historical creation of nations and ethnic groups have, by their silence on the historical creation of the state as a government entity, implicitly privileged the strong, modern state as a entity more basic and potent than the civic community. The tendency of these authors to exaggerate the dichotomy between an international clerisy and a purely parochial peasantry has unfortunately obscured the degree to which country-consciousness was widespread long before the influx of modernity. As Prasenjit Duara has pointed out, this approach replaces a one-sided fixation with the nation as the collective subject of history with a similarly one-sided attention to modernity as an all-powerful force for change.  

Moreover, medievalists such as Susan Reynolds have shown how even in medieval Europe, used by Anderson as the type-case of a purely ecumenical civilization, "ideas about kingdoms and peoples were very like modern ideas about nations."  

The unseemly eagerness with which some historians have jumped to the conclusion that Mongolian national-ethnic identity is wholly a creation of the nationality policies of the People's Republic of China suggests that the denial of pre-modern ethnic identity reflects an implicit loyalty to the modern state as the only institution able to create ethnic

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77. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe*, 900-1300, 9.
order out of a tribal chaos. Similarly, Dru Gladney, in studying the Hui and Uyghurs of modern China, has taken (individual) self-definition and state-definition as the two interactive elements in his dialogical approach to ethnogenesis. This approach in practice completely omits the role of political concepts and corporate institutions in mediating between the ultimate sovereign power and the individual. The virtual abolition of such corporate units in the PRC makes such an approach more plausible than it would be in other regimes, but that very abolition is a historically abnormal and, most likely, transient phenomenon.

Among the Mongols the formation of an ideology of a modern multi-ethnic state involved not the creation of Mongol and (Han) Chinese as categories—these existed from the sixteenth century at least—but their reorientation from country-nations to nationalities within a (predominantly Han) Middle Realm or China. Analyses that see national identities as solely the product of modernity are not convincing. The perception of their place in the Qing dynasty relied upon the Mongols’ concept of the ulus (country-cum-nation-cum-nationality), which positively and self-consciously valorized the idea of separate Mongolian customs, religion, dress, language, and script. At the same time, the integral association of these ethnographic features with a particular set of institutions—in particular the Mongolian banner system, the Borjigin nobility, and the established Buddhist church—gave these ethnographic features a “thick,” mediated link to the political idea of sovereignty, one absent in abstract modern theories of nationality based solely on ethnography, as in the cultunit approach.

The 1911 Revolution’s redefinition of the Mongols, Tibetans, Muslims, Manchus, and Han of China as merely zu, "lineages" or töril, "kinds," represented a dramatic delegitimation of all of these national institutions for the Qing dynasty. This ideology

78. See Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China," Late Imperial China 11.1 (1990): 24-25. I have dealt with her arguments in "Revolutionary Nationalist Mobilization in Inner Mongolia, 1925-1929" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1994), 72, and more broadly, 33-90.


80. See Gladney, Muslim Chinese, 66-74.
implicitly changed these peoples from historically formed civic communities endowed with prescriptive rights into a sort of ethnic modelling clay fo in various colors but capable of being fitted or molded into any centrally determined political structure. The subsequent history of the vocabulary of minority status in Inner Mongolia shows the rapidity with which this naked and de-institutionalized vision of ethnicity succeeded in reworking the Inner Mongolian self-concept, especially that of the emerging intelligentsia. The delegitimation of national institutions and their replacement by the abstract principles of revolution and national utility as the standards of political life led not only to the chronic instability of post-1911 Chinese politics but also to the similarly chronic inability of the Republic or the People's Republic to fabricate a stable basis of power-sharing in the borderlands. It has proved virtually impossible to derive any idea of limited sovereignty from the dominant Chinese political notions of integral nationalism, "revolution to the end," or the total transformation of the country through economic development. In turn, the Mongol intelligentsia has responded to these Chinese notions not with a defense of their prescriptive rights and historic institutions but with their own equally abstract and uncompromising ideologies of legitimation, such as national self-determination, national revolution, and anti-imperialism.

The study of (Han) China's relations with present-day minorities or border peoples cannot assume unhistorically the peripheral situation or the sociological minority status of the non-(Han) Chinese nationalities. For the Mongols such a status grew only from the peculiar political conditions of the 1911 Revolution and the 1915 settlement of the Mongolian question by division between Inner Mongolia and Mongolia proper. One of the keys to bringing this issue of peripheral or minority status into history lies in the exploration of "native" perspectives through the reading of native sources.

The results of this study emphasize again how the most key word in the rhetoric of the Chinese revolution may not be "revolution" but "China." The current distinction between Han and Chinese is as profound ideological as would be an unthinking conflation of the two. As suggested by the frequent use of "(Han) Chinese," I find the question of connection and continuity between these two terms highly involved and certainly not susceptible to the cut-and-dried division commonly advanced. As Prasenjit Duara has suggested and as I have tried to show in this working paper, both Han and Chinese
(Zhongguoren) have themselves been defined through a complex history of contestation and change, one which is only beginning to be fully explored. Since the convergence or divergence of these two terms takes place particularly in the realms of (Han) China’s relations with the (now) peripheral peoples, it cannot be separated from how the peripheral peoples themselves have or have not made such a distinction.
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