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LITERATURE IN TURKIC AND MONGOLIAN

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Part One

LITERATURE IN TURKIC

(*R. Dor*)

The Turkish word *literatür* has bureaucratic connotations. It conjures up an image of great heaps and drifts of paper, instructions, memoranda, working papers and much more

of the like, none of it of any conceivable relevance, none of it of any further use or any lasting interest. The purpose of this preliminary remark is to illustrate the vast conceptual distance separating us from anything that can reasonably be referred to as 'the Turkic literature of Central Asia'. If, indeed, such a concept is graspable at all, for it seems highly unlikely that literature as such can ever be intuitively understood in its full extension, as it were encapsulated, at any particular moment.

In the geographic region that is the subject of our present concern, however, there is a word that summarizes and defines literature in the conventional sense, and that is *adabiyāt*. *Adabiyāt* originally denoted a practical standard of conduct, one that was doubly resonant in that it purported simultaneously to inculcate virtue and to have been handed down from previous generations. The Turkic literature of Central Asia is thus primarily a form of *humanitas*, i.e. a sum of knowledge that imparts urbanity and courteous behaviour to the individual. It is essential to realize that oral tradition and literature are organically related: the Word was nurtured in the virgin spaces of the steppe, but no sooner was it transplanted to an urban setting than it was caught in the trap of Letters.

In nineteenth-century Central Asia, literature as humanism gave way to literature as an academic pursuit. The boundless ocean of the great poetic tradition of preceding centuries ebbed away from the emergent strand of renewal. The Jadids (moderns) aspired to bring about the intellectual renovation of society by transforming educational structures. Literature was becoming less of an art of living and more of a necessary practical skill.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries foreshadow the great Soviet levelling process with its forced literacy: every language must have its own alphabet, every language must have its own literature. Alphabets were made as diverse as possible, in an effort to induce irremediable differentiation between languages. Literary themes, in contrast, were unified: we find the same subjects repeated *ad nauseam* in the literature of one ethnic group after another.

In the pages below, we shall seek to present a fragmentary overview of some aspects of the authors, works and literary trends that marked the literature of the cities, considered in their role as bastions of sedentary culture, as in Uzbekistan, and those that marked the literature of the steppe, shaped as it was by the traditional life of nomadic herdsmen, as in Kyrgyzstan.

Urban literature

As mentioned earlier, the torrent of classic Chaghatay poetry dwindled during the second half of the nineteenth century to a trickle that ultimately vanished among the sands of

modern civilization. Khiva, to begin with, could boast of Muhammad Riza Agahi (1809–74) and Kamil Khwarazmi (1825–99).[1] Khwarazmi celebrated Tashkent in a magnificent ode (*qasida*):

Rushan etkän dek sipihr ayvānïnï sham-i nujūm,

Shabni rūz äylär chiraghān u fanār-i Tashkand.

Just as the sun, blazing in the vault of heaven, illuminates the portals of the world,

The lights of Tashkent, its torches, lamps and lanterns, turn night into day.

This lyricism ultimately prevailed in the rival khanate of Kokand as well, where Muhammad Amin Mirza Khwaja (1851–1903), more familiar under his *nom de plume* of Muqimi,[2] wrote:

Navbahār achïldï güllär, sabza boldï bāghlar,

Suhbat äyläylik kelinglär jūralar ortaqlar.

Spring is here, with its blooming roses and flowering gardens;

Friends and companions, come, let us talk and reflect together.

However, it was not long before literature descended into the political arena. The *qadim*s (traditionalists; ancients), conservative clerics who were primarily to blame for the progressive ossification of Uzbek thought, were implacably hostile to the Jadids, with their advocacy of intellectual change.

'Abdurrauf Fitrat (1886–1937) championed the cause of Jadid thought in a copious stream of poems, articles, essays and other works, including *The Discussion*, *Tales of an Indian Traveller*, *The Way to Salvation*, *Do Not Weep, O Islam*, *Snow* and *East*. Like all lettered men of that age, he had acquired a knowledge of Arabic and Persian in the course of his *madrasa* education. His eventful life coincided with the period of the great revolt against Russian oppression.[3] At the height of his fame and fortune he was minister of education in the government of the short-lived People's Republic of Bukhara, but he subsequently fell into disfavour and suffered an ignominious death in one of Stalin's purges. In 1918 he founded the ' Chaghatay circle' (*Chaghatay gurungi*), which served as a vessel, a lighthouse and a haven for poets, writers, men of letters and intellectuals.

The following year was marked by the death of the great Mahmud Khoja Behbudi (1875–1919),[4] who was buried alive on the orders of the emir of Bukhara because of the

[1] Yunusov, 1956, pp. 89–102.
[2] Muqimi, 1942.
[3] Carrère d'Encausse, 1966, p. 168.
[4] Cabbar, 2000, p. 152.

views he had expressed in the journal *Khurshid* [Sun], successor to the defunct *Taraqqi* [Progress], which had been suppressed in 1906. In having him put to death, the *qadim*s had silenced an eloquent voice and muzzled the dissident press. They had hated Behbudi with particular rancour in that he had been the father of the modern Uzbek drama and was widely known throughout Central Asia for his numerous plays, notably *Padarkush* [The Patricide], which was first performed in 1913. Their hatred was unavailing, however, for young poets had been quietly honing their skills: Tavallo (1882–1939), Batu (1903–40), Elbek (1898–1939) and above all Cholpan (1895?–1938),[5] the leading light of the 'Young Uzbek Poets' group.

If anyone can be termed the founder of Soviet Uzbek literature, it was Hamza Hakimzoda Niyazi (1889–1929).[6] The question of whether he was primarily an essayist and dramatist or an educator is of no interest for our present purpose; the intellectuals of that age wrote to advance their cause, and we shall do well to adopt a holistic outlook. At all events, Niyazi was deeply interested in education and founded schools, which the authorities lost no time in closing. When he was sent into exile, he took advantage of the opportunity to travel throughout the Ottoman empire. The play that brought him success, *Yangi saodat* [New Happiness], was first performed in 1915. Niyazi himself summarized the plot in the following terms:

> Alimjan [the hero] loves learning and studies with tireless dedication, thereby bringing new happiness to the lives of his parents, who had been languishing in poverty, humiliation and obscurity under the oppression of tyranny.[7]

Niyazi's ideas on education were the underlying theme of the play, and in 1916 he founded the Society for the Development of Education among the Muslim Peoples of the Ferghana Region in an attempt to put them into practice. In the wake of the October revolution, he organized a troupe of actors and traveled all over Central Asia, presenting his plays. Some of those plays, such as *Who is Right*? and *Victims of Tyranny*, are rather bland by today's standards; *Bay va batrak* [Master and Servant], in contrast, is a powerful work. It is a drama that is actually an extension of the lyrical tradition of songs about unhappily married women: a wealthy old man attempts to obtain a poor young girl in marriage by lavish outlays of money, which he uses to bribe officials and prominent members of the community. He himself cynically remarks:

[5] Dudoignon, 2002, pp. 140 et seq.
[6] Kedrina and Kasymov, 1967, pp. 29 et seq.; Mirbaliev, 1969, p. 87.
[7] Tretiakoff, n.d. [1966], p. 38.

> My gold is a spy of such cunning, a thief of such skill, a holy man of such power, a scholar of such learning, that if you were to sink into the ground, it would pull you out by the ears; if you were to rise up to heaven, it would pull you down by the feet.[8]

The play was performed at the front before an audience of Red Army soldiers and was an immediate success. Niyazi subsequently became a zealous propagandist for socialist ideas, especially after the establishment of the Uzbek SSR in 1924. He took to organizing meetings at which women publicly cast aside their veils, and after one such meeting he was assassinated by a fanatic.

The Uzbek novel was initially historical in nature, owing to the prominent figure of Sadriddin Aini (1878–1954), who denounced the emirate of Bukhara in a series of novels, notably *Bukhara jalladlari* [The Butchers of Bukhara] in 1922.[9] Aini subsequently turned to scholarly historical research, publishing *Materials for the History of the Revolution in Bukhara* at Moscow in 1926.

That same year saw the advent of a new avant-garde that rejected Jadid thinking. This was the *Qizil Qalam* (Red Pen) group, led by H. Alimjan (1909–44), who was an apostle of Sovietization and a form of Russification. His complete works (Tashkent, 1971, five volumes) are a paean to collectivization, secularization, industrialization and the liberation of women. These themes were echoed in unison by the other writers of his generation. His narrative poem *Zaynab and Aman* (1938)[10] deserves a closer look: two orphans working together in the fields fall in love, but the girl subsequently learns that she was betrothed in infancy (a common practice at the time, and one that has not entirely died out even now) to someone else, a man named Sobir. When this person returns home from his studies at the university and learns of the situation, he decides to set the girl free. The story as such is somewhat banal; the interesting feature of this work, which was regarded as impeccably orthodox, is that it is Uzbek to the core, containing not a single reference to the USSR, the Russians or Marxism-Leninism.

This was far from being the rule. As D. C. Montgomery has pointed out,[11] all the poets, novelists, playwrights, critic and essayists of that age were cast in a single mould, one that had been meticulously shaped by the Soviet Party-State. Most of them were orphans, and consequently had not been influenced by the bourgeois nationalism of their parents, whether the latter had been Jadids or *qadim*s. They had grown up within the Soviet system of education; none of them knew a word of Arabic or Persian, never having so much as set foot in a *madrasa*, but they were all Slavophiles who spoke perfect Russian, and they had all

[8] Tretiakoff, n.d. [1966], p. 80; see also Kedrina and Kasymov, 1967, pp. 32–3.
[9] Mirbaliev, 1969, pp. 77 et seq.
[10] Montgomery, 1987.
[11] Montgomery, 1986, pp. 205–20.

attended universities in Moscow or Leningrad on scholarships. Upon returning home, they paid their tribute to Soviet education by teaching for a short time, then turned to careers in journalism. There was an extraordinary proliferation of newspapers and magazines during those years: new titles included *Red Uzbekistan*, *Young Leninist*, *Construction*, *Soviet Literature* and many more. Thanks to their profession, these young writers were in close touch with the world of politics, and hence were able to keep up with its successive twists and turns, with the result that ideological changes of line were immediately reflected in their literary works. Uniformity is the mother of boredom, so it is said, and the literary production of the 1930s was uniform. What made it all the more off-putting was that mastery of style and depth of inspiration had been replaced by political opportunism and a cosy relationship with the bureaucracy. Conformity was enforced by the ever-alert censorship exercised by the Union of Writers, which was established in 1932.

In the event, their dutiful conformity did not save them from Stalin's purges, which swept away nearly all of them. H. Alimjan spent the remainder of his life struggling to put the shattered pieces of the Uzbek literary world back together. After his death in 1944, his work was continued by his half-brother, Sarvar Azimov, who took over as President of the Union of Writers in 1981.

The late 1940s and the 1950s were marked by the rise of Sharaf Rashidov. He won instant fame by publishing a short story consisting of undiluted socialist realism, *Pobediteli* [The Victors], which features Komsomols, careerists and Basmachi fighters. The work is one long harangue on behalf of the submission of the individual to the Party, and, indeed, this theme was the *leitmotiv* of all Rashidov's subsequent work. He avoided like the plague anything that might have been interpreted as a hint of Uzbek chauvinism, and openly advocated the use of Russian in preference to his native language, writing on one occasion, 'Some languages perform an international function, others do not.'[12] Such dutiful orthodoxy deserved its reward, and with the help of Nikita Khrushchev, Rashidov became a member of the Politburo and President of the Uzbek Republic. It was the culmination of a flawless career for the representative of an ideology that had annihilated any trace of freedom or spontaneity in literature.

The literature of the steppe and mountains[13]

We shall begin with *A Short Life* of Toktogul Satïlganov (1864–1933), who is universally acknowledged to have been the first Kyrgyz writer. His father gave him an apotropaic

[12] *Kommunist Uzbekistana*, No. 5, 1969, p. 16.
[13] See Joldosheva, 1977; Kerimjanova, 1951; Samaganov, 1976.

name, as was frequently done among the steppe-dwellers: *tokto* means 'remain alive!'. Young Toktogul grew like a wild plant amid horses, yaks and sheep in the Ketmen-Töbö valley, in the mountainous heart of the Kyrgyz country. In childhood he was lulled to sleep by the songs and stories of his mother, who gave him his first *komuz*, the melodious lute of the steppe. Like a good many young children, he was hired out to a leading man of the community, Kazanbek, as a goatherd. Recalling that period of his life in his later work, the *Shepherd's Song*, he says:

> If I lie down to sleep outside the yurt, the goat steps on me; if I lie down to sleep inside the yurt, the *baybiche* [the *bay*'s senior wife] orders me out: the stick is incessantly falling on my shoulders.

As an adolescent, he pitted his talent against that of the bard Arzïmat in a song contest and subjected him to public ridicule. Satïlganov had found his vocation: from that time onward he was a bard and poet. His specialty was the lampoon, *kordoo*, and this made him a number of implacable enemies, whose hostility led to his arrest on a charge of having taken part in the Ferghana insurrection of 1898. He was condemned to death, but the sentence was subsequently commuted to life imprisonment. However, he succeeded in escaping, and between 1910 and 1917 led a wandering life which he recounted in his songs and poems. Satïlganov was an ardent proponent of Marxist ideas, publishing volume after volume of poetry celebrating the Soviet Union and its rulers, until his death in 1933. In 1965 the Kyrgyz SSR instituted a Toktogul Prize (analogous to the *prix Goncourt*).

The following literary generation was led by the combative trio of Tokombaev, Elebaev and Tïnïstanuulï, who advocated a type of reformism with a strong nationalistic tinge. They embraced the ideology of the Kazakh Alash-Orda movement, while rejecting Kazakh itself, and, indeed, Uzbek as well. A new Kyrgyz alphabet was therefore adopted (Judakhin and Tïnïstanuulï had been working to develop one since early 1925, with varying success).

A small literary group calling itself the 'Serial Writers' (*Janïtma*) soon gathered around Aalï Tokombaev. The members were simultaneously journalists, writers and educators: it is noteworthy that Tïnïstanuulï was People's Commissar for Education.[14] The first Kyrgyz novel (*Ajar*, by Kasymaly Bayalinov, 1902–79), which was published in 1926, described the hardships endured by a young girl during the turmoil of 1916.[15] Later, in the 1930s, many writers (notably Ashubaev, Jantöshev and Sïdïkbekov) abandoned journalism altogether, devoting themselves to literary composition exclusively.

But the Kyrgyz writers were becoming mired in the slough of nationalism, and on 6 June 1934, Moscow sent out a team of Russian literary men, Egart, Briskin and Nikulin,

[14] On this period, see Erkebaev, 1999, pp. 177 et seq.
[15] Concerning this revolt, see Altay, 2000, pp. 194–210.

with a mandate to rescue them willy-nilly from revisionist error; Tokombaev was subjected to violent attacks from which he was fortunate to escape with his skin. Kyrgyz literature therefore changed course, turning away from historical themes, which had become excessively dangerous, in favour of lyricism (a love story was less likely to earn its author a one-way ticket to Kolyma!). The resultant romantic novels were at any rate well crafted, displaying a mastery of technique, well-rounded characters and plausible situations.

Kyrgyz drama also flowered in the late 1930s: both *Ajal orduna*, by Jusup Turusbekov, and *Altïn kïz*, by Joomart Bökönbaev, were performed in 1938. The literature of the war period (1941–5) was marked by an outburst of productivity:

> Just as our valiant soldiers at the front use their rifles incessantly, let us here at home wield our pens indefatigably; let every word we write be a bullet that strikes the enemy![16]

In accordance with this collectively worded promise, Kyrgyz writers churned out stories by the kilometre about the front, the rear, the restrictions, the pain of separation afflicting lovers, friends and families, and much more along similar lines.

In the immediate post-war period, the sixth Plenum of the Kyrgyz Communist Party seized upon Tokombaev's 1947 novel, *Tañ aldïnda* (Just Before Dawn), as a pretext for launching a virulent campaign of denigration against its author. The work in question, which, like many another before it, dealt with the 1916 revolt, was written in the spirit of the 'Situationist school' (*Faktografiyalïk Maktap*) developed in Moscow. As such, it was ideologically quite inoffensive, but the authorities used it as a detonator none the less. Beginning in 1952, Kyrgyzstan, along with the rest of Central Asia, was swept by a tidal wave of anti-nationalism emanating from Moscow: all the national epics were suppressed, and the use of indigenous languages was stringently discouraged. The jewel of the Kyrgyz oral tradition, the epic poem *Manas*, was dragged through the mud by *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya.*[17] The entire Kyrgyz press reacted vigorously, coming to the defence of the epic or joining in the attack upon it. Intellectuals entered the fray, as did the University and the Academy of Sciences; no one could remain indifferent. Never in the history of the USSR had there been such a controversy. Disconcerted at having stirred up such a hornets' nest in the ranks of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, the Party-State retreated, but in retreating it crushed the unfortunate Tokombaev, who was stripped of all his titles, prosecuted and proscribed.

In this passionate, agitated context, a young journalist, Chingiz Törökülovitch Aytmatov (b. 12 December 1928), began to attract attention with his articles in *Kïzïl Kïrgïzstan* [Red Kyrgyzstan] and *Literaturniy Kirgizstan*. His grandfather Aitmat was something of

[16] *Sovettik Kïrgïzstan*, No. 9, 1941.
[17] Bennigsen, 1953.

an eccentric of catholic interests. He was known as ‘the machine man’ (*mashinechi*), from a sewing machine that he had brought back from a trip to the city, to the astonishment of his neighbours. In due course he became a railway worker and moved to Maymak, sending his son Törökül to the Russian school in Jambul. Törökül subsequently joined the Party, obtaining a salaried post within it and settling in Sheker. It was there that Chingiz Aitmatov, the leading literary light of Kyrgyzstan, was born.

He burst into prominence with *Jamiyla* (1959), which won him an international reputation, but *Ak keme* [The White Ship], a story published in *Noviy Mir* in 1970, revealed him as a consummate master of his art. The depth of its inspiration, the subtlety of its psychological portrayals and its admirable craftsmanship were unprecedented in Soviet Kyrgyz literature. The theme of *Ak keme* is the tragic impossibility of remaining faithful to a traditional culture in a changing world.

Aitmatov went on to win fame and recognition both in his own country and abroad. Although increasingly occupied with political duties, he continued to write, trying his hand at what was not merely a novel, but a science-fiction novel. Unfortunately, this form proved much less well suited to his talents. *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* (1980) is a blend of legend and science fiction, but the mixture never quite comes to the boil. In contrast, when he returned to his favourite theme of humanity contemptuous of nature (*Mechty volchitsy* [Dreams of the She-Wolf], *Noviy Mir*, 1986), Aitmatov showed that he had lost none of his power.

His most recent thematic work, *Tavro Kassandry* [The Cassandra Brand], which was published in 1994,[18] is in the same ‘biblical’ vein that he had explored in *The Log* (*Noviy Mir*, 1986). It is clear that the figure of Christ fascinates Aitmatov, as he himself acknowledges in an interview printed in *Literaturnaya gazeta* (13 August 1986): ‘Christianity presents us with an extraordinary example in the person of Jesus Christ. The religion in which I grew up, Islam, has no comparable figure.’

Conclusion

Perestroika and the dawn of independence for the Central Asian republics were accompanied by a sharp change of direction in the Turkic literature of the region. The historical novel made a triumphant return. In Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the works of authors who were banned during the Jadid and Alash-Orda periods are being reprinted. The complete works of Shakerim Qudayberdiev, a Naturalist poet who was arrested and shot in 1931 and had been utterly forgotten, were issued in a new edition at Alma-Ata in

[18] *Znamya*, No. 12, pp. 9–109.

1986. Furthermore, there has been a tendency to bask in the reflected glory of heroes of world stature with Central Asian connections: the great Timur, Mahmud of Kashghar and Ibn Khaldun have appeared on the Tashkent stage in plays by B. Akmedov and G. Karim. Science-fiction novels and murder mysteries have proliferated: Khojiakbar Chaykhov and T. Malik are producing best-sellers in these genres. Esenberlin, with his novels describing present-day situations and contemporary characters, has become a household name.

The international literary scene, however, continues to pay homage to such Soviet establishment figures as Aitmatov in the case of Kyrgyzstan and Suleïmenov in the case of Kazakhstan. They write in Russian, needless to say, and that in itself is one of the major problems.

We may be confident, however, that there are still some hopeful dreamers in Tashkent, Almaty and Bishkek. A writer needs time to mature, as the twenty-first century will doubtless show.

Part Two

LITERATURE IN MONGOLIAN

(*G. Kara*)

The period from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1990s saw the enhancement of regional tendencies and national identity. It brought the development of separate literatures of the various Mongolic-speaking peoples. Rabjai (Dulduitu's son Dandzinrabjai, 1803–56), the greatest nineteenth-century poet of northern Mongolia and one of the last representatives of Buddhist monastic poetry, who continued the tradition of the eighteenth-century Urat Mergen Gegen

Lubsangdambiijaltsan, belongs to the previous period. He wrote and composed many pious and less pious songs in Mongolian and Tibetan, and long didactic poems about the vicissitudes of the world, rewrote the Buddhist story of the Moon Cuckoo and arranged it for the stage in his East Gobi countryside. Some of his songs (or the songs ascribed to him) were popular even in the twentieth century. Sandag the Fabler (1825–60), his contemporary, is best known for his allegorical poems about life's transitoriness, the *Lament of the*

Melting Snow, *What the Tumbleweed Blown by the Wind Said* and other soliloquies (of the aged male camel, of a beaten guard-dog, of a captured wolf, and so on).

Four of the eight sons of Wangchingbala (1795–1847), an East Mongolian (Tümed) Chinggisid nobleman – Gungnechuke (1832–66), Gularansa (1820s–51), Sungweidanjung (1834–not before 1898) and Injannashi, the seventh son (1837–92) – left behind thoughtful lyric verses. Injannashi completed a Chinese-style historical novel, the *Blue Book of the Yuan Empire* (Köke Sudur), that was begun by his father. To it he wrote a long introduction (a philosophical essay) entitled the *Short Summary* [*Tobchitu Tolta*]. He also penned the melancholic saga of the *One-Storey Pavilion* and the *Red Tears' Chamber.* His prose is intertwined with fine verses like these quatrains:

> Asking my brushes and inks about the cases and causes of a thousand years
>
> I discuss with the books and writs the deeds and events that gleam and glow.
>
> Would the future's fearless sages perceive
>
> why my body and tongue and heart are so tired, or won't they?
>
> If poetry that is full of desired novelty
>
> is unable to move the heart of man
>
> as the wind rolls the clouds of the blue,
>
> why should one lift the light brush to write?

Ishidandzinwangjil (1854–1907), a South Mongolian (Chahar) Buddhist priest, wrote his moralistic *Golden Teachings* in many richly flowing, isosyllabic and alliterative quatrains, uniting Mongolian and Tibetan traditions of versification. He also compiled a *Fire Ritual* in Tibetan. A didactic *Bright Crystal Rosary* in 108 quatrains is ascribed to another South Mongolian (Ujumchin) monk, the Mergen Güüshi Lubsangdanjin (1870–1907).

Lubsangdondub (1854–1909), also known as General Lu, who rose from poverty to the high rank of general in the Manchu administration of Mongolia, was a skilful Khalkha poet, a writer of songs rich in metaphors. He composed poems like *The Stag of the Lofty Khangai*, *The Pleasures of Moving with the Camp* and a eulogy of the Khan Kökü̈i range in 400 alliterative lines.

Gamala (1871–1932), the eldest son of an East Mongolian (Ujumchin) herdsman but literate since his early childhood, became a clerk and a poet of songs, odes and conventional and ceremonial verses (for instance, a eulogy of his homeland, a praise of the soldiers, 40 quatrains about the feast of wrestlers and a poem on the *Twelve Years Cycle*). His *Summary of the Stories* chastised the minstrels of Chinese tales.

Keshigbatu of the Khatagin clan (1849–1916), a South Mongolian (Ordos) scribe and man of letters, was the author of love songs, odes glorifying the famous shrines in his homeland, songs mocking his enemies (for instance, the *Sixty Hee-Hows*, a sarcastic response to a hostile official), political verse, a moralistic poem in more than 300 stanzas, a versified enchiridion (*Mirror*) of a strong beat and a chronicle (the *Jewel Summary of the Past and Present*) in verse and prose. Loroisangbuu (1884–1939) was another Ordos author of moralistic verses.

With the fall of the Manchu empire in 1911, northern Mongolia struggled for independence under theocratic rule. Its constitution printed in many fascicles (but left unfinished because of the Chinese occupation in 1919) mirrors the country's first cautious steps from the still prevailing medieval world towards modernity. The first periodicals of Mongolia – the *Shine toli* [New Mirror] and the *Neyislel Küriyen-ü sonin bichig* [Capital City News] – were printed in the Russo-Mongolian Printing Shop in the capital city and seat of the theocratic ruler. When Baron von Ungern-Sternberg's White Russian troops defeated the Chinese Republican forces in Mongolia, and when his troops as well as the rest of the Chinese forces were defeated in 1921 by the Red Army of the Far Eastern Republic and the soldiers of the Mongolian People's Party, a new era began in northern Mongolia.

After the death of the theocratic ruler, the Great Assembly led by the party, now the People's Revolutionary Party, proclaimed the People's Republic, and gradually this party and its government established a Soviet-type totalitarian regime. Nevertheless it was this rule, harsh as it was, that began the modernization of the country, and it was this period that saw the rise of modern literatures of the Mongolian nations.

Theatre was the first main forum of new literary activities. Enthusiastic young revolutionaries popularized the new order. Some of them also worked in the newly established Academy of Books and Letters (*Sudur Bichig-ün Küriyeleng*). Its journal, *Mongghol kele bichig-i sayijiraghulqu bodorol* [Thoughts to Enhance the Mongolian Language and Writing], published essays and translations. Instead of xylographs and manuscripts of the old 'palm-leaf ' format, modern typeset books were printed, among them such literary anthologies as the *Uran üsüg-ün chighulghan* [Assembly of Beautiful Words] (1929), edited by the Team of Writers (the beginning of the later Writers' League). The MARZ (1930; also MARP and MARL, abbreviations of the Russian names of the Revolutionary Writers' Association) published the journal *Kubiskaliin uran zokiol* [Revolutionary Literature] (1932). Classical and modern Russian literature was the main model and the Russian language served as the principal key to the treasures of world literature. Young Mongols were trained in Russia, Germany and France; later, for a long time, training abroad was restricted to educational institutes in the Soviet Union. Foreign poetry was usually

transplanted in Mongolian alliterative verse (see, for instance, Khödöögiin Perlee's version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*).

New contents and new forms, and modern genres, appeared in a new literary language first in Mongolian script, then in Latin and finally in Cyrillic orthography. Plays, lyrics and short prose developed first; the modern novel only came in the second half of the twentieth century. The bimonthly *Tsog* [Ember], the journal of the Writers' League, was founded in 1944 and it is still an important periodical of new writing and literary criticism in Mongolia. A literary and cultural weekly under changing names, *Utga dzokhiol urlaga* [Literature and Arts], etc., has been published since 1955.

The ruling literary doctrine required 'socialist content in national form' and 'socialist realism'. Elements of folk poetry served to enhance the national form, and these often resulted in a folkloric style and schematic expression. In the service of politics, literature was a kind of applied art, under tight, but from time to time loosening, party control for more than 50 years, and so was the whole cultural life. Disobedience was labelled as nationalism, cosmopolitanism, reactionary or anti-party action, and used to be severely punished. Leftist deviations of the 1930s took the heaviest toll in Mongolia's intellectual history. Since the fall of totalitarian rule in 1990, the freedom of the press has brought a fertile chaos in the cultural life of the country but that is another story.

One of the first revolutionary writers was Buyannemekh, Sonombaljir's son (1902–37, executed). In didactic plays he popularized the 1921 revolution (*Summary of Recent Events*, the 1924 version of the 1922 play *Sandoo Amban*) and new morals (*Miss Deer and Miss Yellow*: two girls, one clever and decent, the other lazy and lewd; 1924/1928), celebrated Chinggis Khan's youth (*Brave Son Temüjin*, 1924/1928), blamed the sombre past (*Dark Rule*, 1932) and glorified the *Master of the Jewel-like Soyombo, the Martial General Sükhbaatar* (1934). Many of his verses written in refined form served political propaganda, for instance, the *Mongol Internationale*, but some dealt with more 'secular' themes (e.g. *Time and Life*; *Brandy*; *The Sun's Rotation*). His prose works include *Towuudai the Herdsman*, the story of an exemplary herder, a short story entitled *The Golden Fish Who Headed for the Ocean* and sophisticated essays on arts and versification.

Natsagdorj, Dashdorj's son (1906–37), another short-lived revolutionary but a versatile author and one of the founders of modern Mongolian literature, wrote several plays, including a tragedy in verse, the *Three Fateful Hills*, in which two lovers are separated by tyranny. He composed the musical drama *Ushaandar*, based on the Indian Buddhist story of the generous Prince Vessantara. A song from one of his lost dramas has become a part of folk poetry. He was also a poet of patriotic lyrics, the author of the solemn *My Homeland* and the proud *Poem on History*, merging the glory of the past and the revolution. He

popularized Western medicine and hygiene in a series of verses (*Health; The Old and the New Medicine; Infectious Disease*); wrote love poetry (*Desire; Secret Love*); composed a cycle of elegies of desperation when in prison (*Longing for Liberty*); published sketches and novellas (*White Moon and Black Tears* about social injustice; a story ridiculing *The Respected Lama's Tears* shed for the lost favours of a prostitute; *The Swift Grey Bird*, a lyric tale of a young man riding to his sweetheart; and *Dark Cliff*, a melancholic sketch about a lost love); and wrote a prose verse itinerary of his long travels from Mongolia to Germany.

Damdinsüren, Tsend's son (1908–86), a writer, literary historian and prominent public figure, was imprisoned in 1937, then became editor of the daily *Ünen* [Truth] and a member of parliament for several terms. He was the author of good novellas, more than one about the changing fate of Mongolian women (*The Despised Girl*, 1929; *How Mrs Change Was Changed*; *The Teacher and His Pupil*); wrote stories about horses and horsemen (*The Ambler*; *Two White Things*); composed poems (*My Grey-Haired Mother*; *Strolling Outdoors*; *Your Gentle Eyes*; also a folklore-style benediction for Marshal Choibalsan's birthday); rewrote Natsagdorj's tragedy to give it a revolutionary happy end (this is the text of the national opera, *Three Fateful Hills*); translated Pushkin's tale of *The Golden Fish*; and edited a rich anthology of Mongolian traditional literature (1959) and many important books on Mongolian literary history, among them the *Historical Roots of the Geser Cycle* (in Russian, Moscow, 1959), with which he broke a taboo in Soviet literary history. Damdinsüren also translated the thirteenth-century literary chronicle, the *Secret History of the Mongols*, into modern Mongolian and wrote the essay *Let's Defend Our Cultural Heritage* (1959). He is one of the fathers of the Cyrillic orthography of the modern Khalkha Mongolian written language.

Rinchen, Byamba's grandson, of the Yöngshööw clan (1905–77), was a writer and scholar. After five years spent in prison (1937–42) for being 'a Japanese agent and an enemy of the people', he became one of the editors of the daily *Ünen*, where he tried to improve its clumsy language, uprooting the alien clichés, and wrote fresh reports about countryside events. He wrote a film script (1944) on *Prince Tsogtu* (who fought for his nation's independence in the seventeenth century) and a historical novel (*Rays of Dawn*, in three volumes) depicting Mongolia's world under late Manchu rule, the theocracy, the revolution and the so-called socialist period through the life of the protagonist, an adopted son. Rinchen was also the author of a long Stone Age tale for young readers (*Dzaan Dzaluudai* and *The Great Migration*), short stories (*Lady Anu*; *The Princess*; *Bunia the Hang-Glider*; *The Last Dream of Monster Do*), lyric verses (*Maybe*; *The Grassland in the Autumn*; *Emperor Kubilai*, an allegory against the Cyrillic orthography) and a narrative

poem (*Scabiosa*). He translated Gorky's *Thunderbird*, Jack London's stories, the *Communist Manifesto*, Tolstoy's *Silver Prince*, Czech tales, Polish and Hungarian poetry, etc. His *Travels to the South* (1958) and *Travels to the West* (1959) were criticized as anti-party writings. He published several volumes of folklore and folk religious texts in the former Federal Republic of Germany and edited several great works of literature.

Nawaan-Yünden, Nasan-Ochir's son (1908–85), was the author of songs (his *Rich Mongolia*, written during a 'rightist deviation', remained popular for a long time), a writer of short stories and a translator. He survived the Great Purge though he was one of the young Mongols who had studied in Weimar Germany.

Amar, Agdanbuu's son (1886–1941, died in a Soviet prison), was a politician and a high official under the theocracy and even after the revolution. He is the author of a *Short History of Mongolia* (1934).

Dambadorji, Tseren-Ochir's son (1899–1934; pen-name, Ulaan Otorch, or 'Red Cowboy'), was a leading revolutionary intellectual. He wrote a literary account of the battle with White Russian forces at *Lake Tolbo* (1924) only some years after the event (in which he had taken part).

Ayuush, Shirneng's son (1903–38), was a poet, writer and playwright. His most successful play is *Serf Damdin and Lady Dolgor* (1937), while his essay *The Art of Theatre* (1936) was a guide for his contemporaries.

Yadamsüren, Mördendew's son (1904–37, executed), was at one time president of the Revolutionary Writers' Association. He was the author of a play called *Behind the Locked Door* and several realistic novellas, among them *A Young Couple* and *Three Girls*.

The history of *How the Mongolian People's National Revolution Began* (a prose work with verses inserted) was compiled in 1934 by Choibalsan (1895–1952), Losol (1890–1940) and Demid (1900–37). It was abridged and altered several times after Losol and Demid perished.

Namdag, Donrow's son (1911–84), was a poet, writer and playwright. His play *The Three Sharaigol Khans* (1941), inspired by a chapter of the *Geser* Cycle, transformed the protagonists of the old story into heroes defending the homeland and struggling for the welfare of the people. In his novel *Turmoil of Time and Power* (1960), he offers a wide-screen picture about life in the theocratic period and in the revolution and gives a subtle portrayal of the psyche of his heroes.

Tsewegmid, Dondog's son (1915–91), was an educator and a writer of prose and verse. He wrote children's books and short stories, such as the life of *Naidan the Shepherd*, *Ganbat the Student* and a *Gobi Travelogue*. Later he became a high-ranking member of the establishment.

Sengge, Dashdzeweg's son (1916–59), was a teacher, security officer, party official and, for a time, secretary and president of the Writers' League. He was also a poet and the author of the story of the brave soldier *Ayuush* (1947).

Gaitaw, Tsegmid's son (1929–79), spent most of his undoubted talent in composing voluminous political poems about *Sükhbaatar*, *Choibalsan*, *Marx*, *Lenin*, *Engels* and *War and Peace*, mostly in Mayakovsky's style of broken lines.

Badarch, Luwsandash's son (1919–60), teacher, proofreader and journalist, faithfully followed the party line in prose and verse. His ingenious tale-within-a-tale, *The Flame of the Joss Stick* (1947), blames the monks' preference for the Tibetan alphabet and speaks out in favour of learning the new Cyrillic script. Bardach's satirical writings hold up a critical mirror to society.

The novella *In the Altay* (1949/1951) by Lodoidamba, Chadraawal's son (1917–69), a writer and playwright, is about the joint work of Mongolian and Russian geologists guided by a local hunter. Lodoidamba was one of the first to recall the memory of the victims of the Stalinist purges in his short story *Infrangible Backbone* (1959), while in another, *The Iron Pillar* (1965), he tells how a woman was murdered by the insurgents of 1932 for her loyalty to the new order. In his short story *Chuluun* (1965) he examines two love affairs of a woman journalist. His main work is *The Pure Water Tamir River*, a well-written novel with protagonists of flesh and blood who made Mongolian history in the first quarter of the twentieth century (*Tungalag Tamir*, 1962). In his play *Five Fingers* (1966) he scrutinizes the problem of divorce.

Oidow, Choijamts's son (1917–63), a soldier and reporter in the war against Japan of 1945, held that after so many sufferings his nation deserved the right to laugh. He is remembered for his short stories and particularly for his plays, such as *Mönkhöö Who Wished To Be Happy* and *The Hero of Seventy Cheats*, a good comedy based on a folklore character.

Numerous plays and comedies by Wangan, Lamjaw's son (1920–68), such as *The Physicians* (1952), *Tojoo the Driver* (1954), *Common People* (1965), etc., deal with contemporary topics in a vivid colloquial language. Wangan also wrote a folklore-based opera libretto about the legendary origin of the horse-head fiddle (*Cuckoo Namjil*, in co-authorship with Ch. Chimed).

Udwal, Sonom's daughter (1921–92), published prose writings. In her novella *Starlight* (Odgerel, 1957), a Gobi woman tells the story of her hard life. Udwal's historical novel *Great Destiny* (1973) celebrates Commander Khatanbaatar Magsarjab's way to the revolution. For many years, Udwal served as a leading official in various political and cultural organizations.

Baast, Bökh's son (b. 1921), of Uriankhay descent, first published some verses (*Lake Tolbo*, 1947) and then became a popular writer of often humorous short stories about hunters and other people of his mountainous west Mongolian homeland (*On Altay Trails*, 1959; *Swan's Song*, 1970; *Two Stories*, 1981).

Tarwa, Dalantai's son (1923–93), a poet and prose writer, had his debut in 1940 and went on to edit more than 20 smaller and larger collections of poetry, songs, short stories and children's books. His *Damirang's Folks* (1951) is one of the overly idyllic stories of the time about the over-fulfilled industrial plan.

Chimid, Choijil's son (1927–80), an urban intellectual and a high official in various institutions, was a prolific writer of lyric and narrative poetry (*I am Mongolian*, 1959; *Verses and Poems*, 1969), plays (*By the Heart's Call*, 1964; *Top Secret*, 1978) and novels (*Spring and Fall*, 1962; *Where Did Magellan Go Through?*, 1975). In his mellifluous and lucid style, he translated Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and some of Shakespeare's works.

Erdene, Sengge's son (1929–2000), of Buriat descent, was trained as an army officer and studied medicine before starting as a lyric poet. He later became a noted author of many psychological and poetic, highly emotional (sometimes sentimental, sometimes overly loyal to the party) short stories (*Khongordzul*, 1960, about a woman's tragic fate before the revolution; *Solitude*, 1961, about an old man hesitating to enter the cooperative; *Just a Bit Away from the Horizon*, 1962, including the story of an old handyman who tries to make a *Machine to Go to Paradise*). He also wrote a romantic novel, *Dzanabadzar*, about the seventeenth-century Buddhist high priest and famous sculptor of the Northern Mongols (1989).

Battulga (1919–74), son of Dzong Pai-jing, a Chinese settler, worked for many years as a police officer before embarking on his literary career in 1954. He is the author of several novels (*Töwshintögs*, 1957; and *Blue Sky*, 1962, on the tragic love of a poor girl and the son of a rich man, and the struggle against Manchu rule; its language abounds in classical Mongolian elements).

Natsagdorj, Shagdarjaw's son (1918–2004), was a noted historian, the biographer of the revolutionary leader Sükhbaatar and co-author of the three-volume official history of the Mongolian People's Republic. He also wrote a film script and a historical novel, *Empress Mandukhai Setsen* (1981), as well as short stories.

Pürew, Jamba's grandson (b. 1921), was a novice in a monastery as a child, a cobbler in a factory as a teenager, and then a soldier, party worker and agricultural administrator. He wrote more than 200 short stories and 14 voluminous novels on historical and

contemporary topics (*Lightning*, 1968; *Three Knots*, 1971; *Rainstorm*, 1977; *Fog*, 1989; *The Soul's Song*, 1991; etc.).

Yawuukhulan (1929–82), son of Begdz, a hunter, was the most fecund and versatile poet of modern Mongolia, its nature, its changing pastures and growing cities, his own and his country's place in the world. He was a great master of lyric verse (*To My Mother*, 1949; *Tinkle of Silver Stirrups*, 1961; *The Reed of the Black Lake*, 1965; *Midday's Sky*, 1973; *The Heart that Loves the Ladies*, 1982; *Poetry Is My Life*, 1983) and long narrative and philosophical poems (*I Was Born with a Purpose*, 1959; *The Stag's Trail*, 1959; *Where the Ibex Stands*, 1969; *The World*, 1977; *The Bavarian Hyena*, 1979). He experimented with writing alliterative 'sonnets' without the sonnet rhyme scheme. The strength of his poetical art is felt even in those poems he loyally contributed to the ruling ideology of his time and country.

Tsedendorj, Mishig's son (1932–82), was a poet of refined verses such as the *Nine Wishes* (1965) or the *Pleasure of the Living* (1969; including *Night Rain, Sixteen Girls*, *There Is No Impossible in the Universe*) and short stories (*A Lace of Pearls*, 1959, with the philosophical *Road* about human destiny; *Sixty Million Golden Jewels*, 1980). His bitter poem about his own funeral, entitled *Last Will*, was banned by the authorities.

Myagmar, Dembee's son (1933–97), was a sensitive author of fresh lyric and narrative poems, short stories (*History of a House*, 1964; *The Miller*; *The Miller's Daughter*, both in 1965; *Ten Lyric Stories*, 1972), novels (*Where the Roads Meet*, 1964; *The Hunter*, 1968) and plays (*Why Me?*, showing the negative sides of the planned economy in the 1970s; *The Mutton Rump on the Banquet Table*, 1980, a witty comedy).

Pürewdorj, Dendew's son (b. 1933), was a teacher before becoming one of the editors of the satirical weekly *Tonshuul* [Woodpecker]. Now a publisher and a celebrated poet, he has mastered a wide range of forms and genres and introduced many poetical innovations. His poetry (*My Name is Mongol*, 1961; *Long Autumn*, 1972; *To Ernest Hemingway*, 1963; *I'm a Citizen of Mongolia*, 1972; *Chinggis*, 1962; *Independence*, 1962/1989) has appeared in more than a dozen booklets and books (*Song of Springtime*, 1956; *Light in the Grassland*, 1960, a versified chronicle of the herders' uneasy introduction to cooperative farming; *Milk on the Stirrup*, 1987). Pürewdorj is also known for his long anti-religious poem *Buddhas and Humans* (1985) and his *Homage to Chinggis* (1991).

Dulmaa, Shagdar's daughter (b. 1934), is a noted poetess conscious of the power of femininity. The volume of her selected verse, *Fire God* (1989), includes sensitive love poetry and the patriotic *I Love My Land*.

Dashdoorow, Sormuunirsh's son (1935–99), published poetry (*Eulogy of the Gobi*, 1963; *The Plain and I*, 1978), novels (*The Height of the Gobi*, 1963–1971, tracing the

long way of a young man from the Gobi to urban life), short stories (*Aligermaa, the Girl in the Neighbourhood*, 1974) and film scripts.

Tüdew, Lodong's son (b. 1935), is a journalist and politician, and also a successful writer of novels (*Mountain Flood*, 1960, describing the corruption of the Buddhist clergy and the theocracy; *Move and Settlement*, 1964, 1974, in 2 vols; *The First Year of the Republic*, 1981; etc.), short stories (for instance, *The Vulture*, on the dilemma of killing for food and killing for revenge) and essays on a wide range of social, cultural and even scientific issues.

Sürenjaw, Sharaw's son (b. 1938), is the poet who composed the patriotic ode *Mongolia, My Homeland* (1962). He is also the author of collections of verse, among them *The Flower That Grew in the Night* (1963) and the *Azure Mountains of My Native Land* (1967), of a garland of novellas from the life of Mongolia's East (*Finish on the Kherlen River*, 1991) and of film scripts. He became the first president of the Free National League of Writers (1990).

Lochin, Sonom's son (b. 1940), is a novelist (*The Colour of the Heart*, about the coal miners' life, 1971; *The Way of Life*, 1984; *Hearth*, 1989; etc.), author of short stories (*Springtime Birds*, 1980) and literary historian.

Galsan, Tangad's son (b. 1932), of Oelet origin, is a teacher, journalist, translator and a courageous poet. His collection of poems, *Fragrant Flower of the Lowland*, was banned in 1964 and he lived in the countryside in exile for years; a book of his verse received the D. Natsagdorj Award in 1984. He published several volumes in his native south-western province of Bayankhongor (*The Word of My Son*, 1962; *Songs of the Sons of the Native Land*, 1962; *The Camel Bull that Choked Down the Grass*, 1989; etc.). With his sharp four-line poems he won the Crystal Cup (*Bolor Tsom*) Competition of Poets (held annually since 1983) in 1988. The following example is from 1969:

> It's more shameful to be butted by a goat than to be gored by a bull.
>
> It's more irritating to be stung by a fly than to be bitten by a tiger.
>
> It's more painful to be slandered by a notability than to be knifed by a butcher.
>
> It's more distasteful to be accused when innocent than to face a gun.

Shirchinsüren, Mishig's son (1933–98), was a lyric poet who quickly found his own style and a new voice. His collections of verse include *Hearth* (1966), *The Steed of the Wish, the Wing of the Verse* (1984) and *Steep Road* (1990).

Choijilsüren, Lhamsüren's son (b. 1932), poet and writer, became a celebrated novelist (*Dew on the Grass*, 1963; *Rain with Sunshine*, 1985).

Maam, Dügerjaw's son (1935–93), of Dariganga descent, worked as a teacher, diplomat and historian, and published verse and prose. His main work is the four-volume novel *Earth*

(1977–89) about all kinds of people who made the history of the Dariganga region under the Manchus.

Choinom, Renchin's son (1936–79), a typesetter, painter, and writer and poet of great individuality, rebelled against the established order and was imprisoned as a criminal and a dissident. He wrote poems on the most varied themes (*Mongolian Woman*; *Buriat*; *My Mongolia*; *Letter to the Future*; *My Youth Will End Tomorrow*) and left an unfinished saga, *Man* (1964–90), in 6,800 verses. Many of his works, among them some strong, bitter poems, were published posthumously:

> Every space is bordered
>
> Every step is ordered
>
> This time is like a wrong music
>
> There is no better joy than drunkenness.

Gal, Jargal's son (1937–2000), wrote science fiction, e.g. *Crystal Mirror's Secret* (1973), a novel about genetics, humans, extraterrestrials and androids; Crystal Mirror is the name of the protagonist.

Baramsai, Jargal's son (1950–97), penned witty satirical prose, sketches and plays about contemporary urban life. He was the first to reflect the modern slang of youngsters, one of the reasons that he was sharply criticized.

Dashbalbar, Ochirbat's son (1957–99), a lyric poet, journalist and politician, published *The Melody of the Stars* (1984), *Almanac of the Dariganga Land* (1986), *The Silvern Bird of Dream* (1990) and other books of poems and short stories.

Inner Mongolia and Dzungaria

In Inner Mongolia the Kharachin Prince Güngsangnorbu (1871–1931) was one of those leaders who realized the importance of modernization and a secular education. He founded schools in his region and encouraged young Mongols to study abroad. One of his protégés was Temgetu, or Wang Ruichang (1887–1939), the Kharachin printer, creator of a Mongolian font, who founded the Mongolian Publishing House in Beijing and edited numerous old and new books: monuments of traditional literature including parts of Injannashi's *Blue Book*, textbooks for the newly established Mongolian schools, bilingual and multilingual dictionaries, and translations. Their contemporaries were Keshingge (1888–1950), a Khorchin poet, who wrote lyric poems in the Chinese traditional style, and the much younger Humpback Gochoo (1908–64), a Sunit serf and folk poet, an improviser of tongue-in-cheek verses. Both belonged to the pre-modern world.

Poetry and short stories were the main forms of literary expression of the Mongols in twentieth-century China, and there too literature served primarily as a means of political indoctrination. Nevertheless after 1949 a great many Mongolian books and journals, and a number of important series of literary and folkloric great works and histories, were published in Mongolian script in Höhhot, Hailar, Chifeng (Ulaankhada), Zhangjiakou (Chuulalt Khaalga), Beijing, etc. The first full edition of Injannashi's works, a larger version of the *Geser* Cycle and Paajai's new *Geser* as well as the *Janggar* epic were printed then. Oirat Clear Script writings were printed in Urumqi for the Mongols of Dzungaria.

Choiwang (1856–1928), Muu-Okhin, Paajai, Ösökhübuyan and Norji were noted East Mongolian story-singers. Paajai (1907–60), one of the Jarut bards and Choiwang's disciple, used to sing ceremonial songs, versified stories of Chinese origin (among them those from the *Three Kingdoms*), a renewed oral alliterative version of the Mongolian *Geser* epic of the 1716 edition, benedictions and songs (mostly of the *kholboo* genre, which is a catalogue-like poetic list of features) in the service of ongoing campaigns, for instance, against fleas. He accompanied his words with the music of his four-stringed fiddle.

Rinchenkhorlo (1904–63), from the Khüriye banner, author of the *Tale of Him Who Struggles in Bitterness* (1940), was one of the first modern prose writers in Inner Mongolia.

Saichungga (1914–73), a bright Chahar poet and essayist, who studied in Japan and Mongolia, flourished under Prince Demchigdongrub's autonomous government and also after 1945. In 1947 he renounced his earlier works, his diary notes (1942) on his native sand-dunes, his poems, the *Rising Songs of Our Mongolia* (1945) and so on, and under the new name Na. (= Nasundelger's son) Sainchogtu, began to publish not only writings loyal to the Communist Party, but also genuine poetry, for instance, a pictorial poem inspired by the beauty of a Nepalese dancer. His poem *Blue Silk Gown* (1954) celebrated the emancipation of women. In a narrative (*Nandir and Sümbür*, 1957, some 1,200 verses) he sang about the difficult love of a young couple during the harsh era of collectivization. He himself barely survived the darkest years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). After the Cultural Revolution, Bürinbeki (b. 1928), another poet, preferred to glorify Chou En-lai instead of praising Mao Tse-tung. Among the prose writers of Inner Mongolia, Batumöngke (b. 1951) was one of the first who dared to retrieve the grim memory of those tragic years in a novella (*Evening Warmth*, 1984).

History, social problems, human destiny and dignity, love and liberty were the main issues treated in the short stories published after 1976. The following are only a few examples. Choirawjaa's *Marble* is written in memory of a dear friend who was imprisoned. The humiliation of a Mongolian girl, her mother, a physician, and her husband, a university professor, is the theme of Jalafungga's short story *Family Breakup*. Badawaa's *The Yellow*

River that Never Dries Up has a similar tragic theme; his *Darkhan Dagaa* is about the natural beauty of his native land. In Sainjugaa's *Reconciliation* a mother who first lost her son and daughter-in-law, and was then separated from her grandsons by the Red Guards and herself treated as a 'devilish ghost', harbours the hope of joining her lost family in the next life.

Kalmukia

A group of the Oirats (Western Mongols) known as Kalmuks (see Volume V, Chapter 6) migrated at the beginning of the seventeenth century to what is now Kalmukia in the Russian Federation. They share a cultural heritage with the Oirats of Dzungaria and western Mongolia, the people of Zaya Pandita, creator of the Clear Script alphabet (1648), and with the other Mongolic-speaking nations. In the twentieth century they developed their new written language and their own literary identity.

Janggar, their great epic cycle, in the Kalmuk bard (*janggarchi*) Elaen Owla's version, was recorded in the Clear Script and lithographed in St Petersburg in 1910. After the Russian revolution of 1917, the Kalmuks received a number of experimental orthographies in the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets; the 1940 edition of the *Janggar* by the poet, playwright, writer and journalist Basangaa (Basangov) Baatar appeared in the last-but-one Cyrillic orthography. At present the Kalmuks use a Cyrillic orthography which has five additional letters but marks the short vowels in a first syllable only.

Narmin Liji (Lidzhi Narmaev), poet and writer, compiled a primer and reader (*Sarul mör* [Bright Path], 1925) in a Cyrillic orthography for Kalmuk schools. It also gives the outlines of the traditional Kalmuk way of life.

Erenjaenae (Erendzhenov) Konstantin (b. 1912), the lyric poet of the *Glowing Tulips*, published *The Ways of Joy* (1961, poetry), *Beginning* (1987, a booklet with the poems *My Felt Tent Home* and *The Heart of the Steppe*), short stories (*The Hunter's Son*), a novel (*Keep the Fire Alive*), a study of Kalmuk crafts and a little book of Kalmuk cuisine. He celebrated the homecoming of his nation after long years in exile with a moving poem.

Two promising poets, Dawaan Ghaerae (1913–36) and Erdniin Muutl (1914–42), both died young. The first wrote poems such as *Death in the Steppe*, *The Changing Steppe* and *The Future's Ballad* and translated Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin.* The second, whose *Song of the Kalmyk Fighters* became the battle song of a division of his compatriots, died in combat on the Don.

Badmin Aleksei Balduevich (Badmaev, 1917–91) was a writer of prose; his novel *Dust Cannot Destroy Gold* (1964) tells of the Kalmuk tragedy and survival after the Second World War. In his novel *Zalturgan* (also in Russian translation, 1979) he reflects on the

events of the first third of his century. Twentieth-century Kalmuk history is the subject of *The Black-Tongued Crane* by another novelist, Narmin Markhaaj (Narmaev, 1915–93), and of the two-volume *Straight Road* (1963–4) by Dorjin Basng (Basan Dordzhiev).

Kögltin Dawaa (in Russian: David Kugul'tinov, b. 1921) is a poet who fought against Hitler's army in the Second World War; he was then sent to prison and labour camps as a member of a 'sinful' nation. This bitter experience transformed his poetry, giving it great depth and strength. Later, in the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, he fought for his nation's rights. His *oeuvre*, translated into Russian, was printed in three volumes in the polar city of Noril'sk where he had spent several years in forced labour. Dawaa also wrote short lyric songs (*Noril'sk, Noril'sk*), paid homage to Musa Jalil, a Tatar poet who died in Hitler's Berlin prison (*In the Moabit Prison*), and authored long meditative poems (*The Birth of Word*; *Revolt of Mind*; *Murder in the Church*) and two-line poems like the following:

> Do not ask for awards because you did not do evil deeds
>
> as you have not done any good that the world so badly needs.

In one of his long poems, *Poet, Love and God*, Dawaa summed up his 70 years.

Bosya Sangadzhievna Badmaeva is a poetess and writer; her novel *Storm*, about the rural life of young Kalmuks in the 1960s, has also been translated into Russian (Moscow, 1980).

Balykov Sandji Basanovich (1894–1943), a Buzaawa Kalmuk and an *émigré* after the Russian civil war, wrote abroad in Kalmuk and Russian (*Stronger than Power*, short stories, 1976; *A Maiden's Honour*, a historical novel, 1983, both published posthumously).

Buriatia

Buriat literature began with the chronicles compiled by Tugultur Toboev (Khori, 1863), Ubashi Dambi-Jaltsan Lombo-Tserenov (Selenga, 1868), Vandan Yumsunov (Khori, 1875) and Nikolai Tsyvanzhab Sakharov (Bargazhan, 1887). These are mostly genealogies with some narrative material, for instance, the myth of the Eleven Khori Fathers, scions of the Swan Maiden.

Galsan Gomboev (nineteenth century), abbot of the Buddhists in Siberia, was the supervisor of block-printing in Buriat monasteries and a learned editor of traditional literature. Rinchen Nomtoev or Sumatiratna (1871–1909), another Buddhist scholar, compiled a large Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary and moralistic writings.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the still-living heritage of Buriat epics, also studied by Jeremiah Curtin (who met, for instance, the Western Buriat epic-singer

Manshuud Emegeev or Emegein), was explored by the Aga Buriat folklorist, scholar, editor, politician (one of the founders of the Mongolian People's Party) and writer Tsyben/Tseween Zhamtsarano (1881–1942, died in prison). He recorded the epic of *Alamzha Mergen the Son and Aguu the Beautiful His Younger Sister*, the longest Buriat epic *Abai Geser* (some 20,000 lines), *Yerensei* and many other gems of oral poetry. Between 1908 and 1913 Buriat rural theatres used to show such plays as *Death* by D. Abasheev, *Guilty Is the Wine* by I. Barlukov and *The Card Players* (1912) by Choizhil-Lhama Bazaron (1878–1940, executed), also a successful playwright in the 1920s.

Agvan Dorzhiev, alias Vagindra (1853–1938, died in prison), was a Buddhist monk, Tibetan diplomat, creator of a Buriat alphabet, and the founder of a Buddhist temple in St Petersburg. His versified *Account of Travelling around the World* relates his life and travels.

Apollon Andreevich Toroev (1893–1981), a Western Buriat farm labourer, lost his sight early and became a folk poet, singer of the *Geser* epic, keeper of the oral tradition, whose art was later used in the service of the new order. Sergei Petrovich Baldaev (pen-name, Abgain Türgen; 1893–1979), also a Western Buriat, trained as a teacher. He was not only a great connoisseur and explorer of his people's lore, but also a playwright (*The Feast of Truth*, 1925; *The Woman's Share*, 1933).

Bazar Baraadiin (Bazar Baradievich Baradin, 1878–1937, executed), an Aga Buriat scholar, teacher, writer and playwright, studied in St Petersburg, travelled in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Mongolia and Tibet and edited a selection of oral literature in Latin script in 1910 when he taught Mongolian at the University of St Petersburg. He became the first commissar of culture in the Buriat Republic (1923–6). His drama *Lady Choizhid* (1920) is about the loss of Buriat lands in the early twentieth century; his tragedy in verse, *The Great Shamaness Abazhaa*, dramatized the life of an eighteenth-century Buriat heroine who sacrificed herself for her nation (1921). Both plays adapted many elements of shamanist lore. His poem *Legend of the Origin of the Buriat People* is rooted in the oral tradition.

Zhigzhitzhab Batotsyrenov (1881–1938, executed) was the author of short stories about traditional life in the Buriat countryside (*Blizzard*, 1929; *Horse Breeder*, 1935; *Brisket*, 1936). In 1930 he was entrusted with the creation of the Latin-based 'new Buriat alphabet'.

Khotsa Namsaraevich Namsaraev (1889–1959) was a teacher, the 'founder of Soviet Buriat literature', a poet, playwright and writer, a member of the Supreme Council of the USSR and a great survivor. He was the author of the revolutionary plays *Darkness* (1919) and *The Prince's Whip* (1948) and a novella about the life of a poor labourer and his way to the revolution (*Tserempil*, 1935), a theme he later expanded into a novel (*Daybreak*, 1950). Namsaraev also published short stories, many poems, a long poem (*The Old Geleng's*

Words, 1926), a folkloric epic (*The Boy Sagaadai the Wise and the Girl Nogoodoi the Smart*) and children's books. His collected works appeared in five volumes (1957–9). One of his merits is that he kept alive and developed his native language and enriched his literary works with the traditions of folk poetry that he loved and knew well.

Ts. Don (Tsydenzhap Dondupovich Dondubon, 1905–38, executed) was a revolutionary, journalist, editor, poet of propagandistic songs, and author of the folk-style epic *The Wise Oldster Zhebzheenei* (1936, more than 2,400 alliterative lines). He also wrote short stories (*Blood Bath*, 1930, about the struggle of the Bolsheviks with the White Russians; *The Deal Is Done*, 1931, on the organization of communes), a long novella (*Eclipse of the Moon*, 1932) and novels (*Poisoned by Feta*, published also in the new, Latin-based Buriat orthography in 1935; *In the Pine Forest*, 1937, lost). He translated political literature and Raspe's *Adventures of Baron Münchhausen* into Mongolian.

Solbone Tuya ('Light of the Morning Star', pen-name of the Aga Buriat Petr Nikiforovich Damdinov, 1892–1937, executed) wrote in Russian (*Tsvetostep'* [The Steppe in Flowers], Chita, 1922) and in Buriat (*Oyuunbilig*, a play; *Tseren*, a short story; *Balto, a Prehistoric Boy*, a long poem).

Apollon Innokentievich Shadaev (1902–69), a Western Buriat writer and playwright, edited Buriat folk tales (1941, 1950) and authored *Mergen*, a comedy (1952), *Old Man Shampii*, a story of the first journey by air of an old hunter, collections of verses and legends (*Three Sages from Gurgaldai*, 1965; *A Golden Egg*, 1967).

Bavasan Dorzhievich Abiduev (1909–40) survived the Great Purge, was the author of political lyrics, folkloric writings, tales for children (*Shalai and Shanai*) and a celebrated poem about the *Airplane* (1934), and translated Mayakovsky's poetry.

Bato Bazarovich Bazaron (1907–87) taught Mongolian script to adults when only 11 years old, published collections of verse (*Flood of the Selenga*, 1934–57; *The Polar Star*, 1967), short stories and children's plays, and translated classical and modern Russian literature.

Zhamso Tumunovich Tumunov (1916–55) was an Aga Buriat writer of stories (*The Steppe Eagle*, 1942, about events during the war), plays (*Sesegma*, 1938, a young woman's revolt against forced marriage) and poems (*Morning over the Baikal*, 1949; *Sükhe Baatar*, 1950, a narrative about the Mongolian revolutionary leader). His *The Steppe Awakens* (1949) was the first post-war novel in Buriatia. Tumunov spent the war years at the front, where he was wounded.

Dolyoon (Il'ya Nikolaevich) Madason (1911–84), a Western Buriat lyric poet, writer, folklorist and teacher, established a literary club in 1935–7 that became famous throughout the country. He published collections of verse (*Light of Springtime*, 1932; *Lyrics*,

1941; *When the Cuckoos Sing*, 1958; etc.) and short stories, and recorded folk poetry, riddles, proverbs and a version of the epic *Abai Geser*. Madason fought in the Second World War and suffered contusions.

Dashirabdan Odboevich Batozhabai (1921–77), an Aga Buriat writer, and a pilot during the war, wrote stories (*Songs of the Horse Herders*, 1955; *Unopened Letters*, 1968), novels (*The Happiness Stolen*, 1958, a trilogy; *Mountain Eagles*, 1978), plays (*The Barometer Indicates Storm*, 1957; *Catastrophe*, 1980) and the autobiographical *Stories of Rabdan the Restless* (posthum., 1991).

Namzhil Garmaevich Baldano (1907–1984), an Eastern Buriat playwright, worked in the Buriat theatre of Ulan-Ude, wrote more than 40 plays on folkloric and contemporary themes, and also a ballet story (*The Beauty Angara*) and the libretto of the opera *Enkhe Bulad Baatar*.

Chimit Tsydendambaevich Tsydendambaev (1918–77) wrote poetry, stories and novels, among them an unfinished trilogy about the life of the nineteenth-century Buriat scholar *Banzar's Son Dorzho* (1952) and *Far Away from the Homeland* (1958). His satirical novel *Hunters for Blue Gees* was first published in Russian (Moscow, 1977), then in Buriat (1989). Tsydendambaev also translated classical and modern Russian poetry.

Tsyren-Dulma Dondogoi/Dondukova (1911–?) was a teacher in her mother tongue and a poetess. Her first collection, *Two Loves* (1946), received harsh criticism from the authorities, and her writings were not in print for many years. Later she published *Heart Beat* (1959) and *The Stones Sing* (1968, a narrative poem).

Nikolai Garmaevich Damdinov (b. 1932), a Barguzin Buriat poet, is the author of more than 50 collections of verse (including *Bargazhan*, 1955, and *Geser's Trail*, 1985), long poems such as *Father's Name*, the *Songs about Dorzhi Banzarov* and *Lenin Is My Teacher* (it was sweeter to praise him than Stalin) and a garland of Buriat sonnets. He also wrote plays, film scripts, short stories and essays. His love of his nation inspired his poem *Mother Tongue and Native Land*, similar to the beautiful lines of *My Buriat Language* by Dondok Aiusheevich Ulzytuev (1936–72) from southern Buriatia, a short-lived poet of great expressive powers and with a rich imagination (she was also a songster and journalist):

> Pure and limpid
> like the Baikal's water
> Mild and warm
> like a sweet girl's smile
> Such is my Buriat language.

Both poets experimented with new forms, blank verse, and the combination of rhyme and alliteration.

CONCLUSION

Madhavan K. Palat

The sixth volume brings this UNESCO series to an end as it takes in the whole of the modern period from colonial conquest and domination to decolonization, the Cold War from start to finish, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and renewed instability in major parts of the region.

The colonial and semi-colonial experiences were in common as the region was subjected to the metropolitan controls of St Petersburg and London, but they generated their own set of differences that competed with the diversity that has been frequently noted earlier in the series. Colonialism introduced immensely variable patterns of development in the region. For example, parts of Russian Central Asia were settled by Russian and Ukrainian settlers, especially peasants, but also workers and even some intelligentsia, which lent their unique colour to the politics of the region during the revolution of 1917–21 and to the Soviet construction thereafter. On the other hand, there were no settlers anywhere in the British colonial empire in India, nor in Afghanistan or Iran, despite both being subject to colonial controls. Similarly, Punjab enjoyed higher levels of investment and development thanks to British recruitment of the army chiefly from that region; and the consequent prosperity was visible throughout the twentieth century.

None of these regions had ever been isolated from the rest of the world in pre-modern times, and new forms of integration with the rest of the world took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; but, exceptionally, Afghanistan became more isolated as a result of colonial domination – unlike neighbouring India and Pakistan, Russian Central Asia or Iran. This is of course explicable in terms of the Russian and British policies of maintaining Afghanistan as a 'buffer state' between the two empires and keeping it relatively insulated from modernizing initiatives, whether from either of the two empires, or from their European rivals like Germany, or from an anti-imperial nationalism. This form of seclusion has been proudly or self-servingly described as 'independence'; but it was an independence like the Tibetan, leading to greater stagnation and incapacity as a modern state. Although

Afghanistan started out promisingly in the twentieth century, it was swept up in the maelstrom of international rivalries. It descended into an arena of tribal and warlord politics, and international proxy wars, recognizable features of a 'modern' 'failed' state. Modernity meant very different things in different parts of this world.

On the other hand, Soviet Central Asia, a region that was not independent – that is, it did not enjoy sovereign status in international politics – surpassed all others in levels of development as measured by the usual indicators of health, literacy and education, employment, urbanization and social infrastructure, law and order, and international security. During the post-war Soviet stability, it escaped underdevelopment, the morass from which the other states were struggling to extricate themselves. This was due not merely to membership of a strong state, but even more to a superpower that could afford the necessary investment to ensure regional development and security. The sovereign and independent Indian, Pakistani and Iranian states occupied an intermediary position between these two extremes. Thus the overall picture is of a single region, perhaps, but certainly one with many histories.

Not only did the colonial regimes lay a new patina over the region, but the many nationalisms remoulded all old identities into a series of new ones. That process of the twentieth century was perhaps the most transformative of all after the colonial subjugation of the nineteenth; and while it has been the basis of remarkable stability in vast stretches of the region, it has been a fertile source of tension and even wars in other parts.

Anti-colonial national movements germinated everywhere, but, typically, each of them related more to its specific metropolitan centre, St Petersburg or London, rather than to each other. Only the Iranian, belonging to a nominally independent country, was able to seek out sources of inspiration elsewhere in Europe. As with all nationalisms, new national territories were identified, new cultures were propagated, and new memories devised, to define the new nations; and, as everywhere, the greatest antiquity was claimed for each of them. Entirely new national leaderships now replaced the old ruling classes, even if many individual members of both were the same. Again, Afghanistan was exceptional rather than an extreme case, for it was not sufficiently galvanized by nationalism to sweep away older structures or to breathe new and modern energies into them. But each of these nationalisms had to contend, not only with competition between each other in contiguous territories, but as much with the receding colonial power (the British and the Russian) or the new supranational one (the Soviet). In each case, however, the British or the Soviets were able to put their own stamp on the eventual arrangement of territory.

Thus the Soviet Union substituted and promoted multiple nationalisms in lieu of the single Turkestani nationalism favoured by the Pan-Turkic Jadid intelligentsia; and in the course of the 1920s and 1930s, five new national republics were created, with two

autonomous republics within them, all as the territorial foundations for a new series of nationalisms. The five principal republics became national states and emerged from the Soviet Union as territorially stable independent entities.

The British empire toyed with more than one nationalism and eventually settled for the Pakistani and the Indian states in 1947 after hiving off the Burmese state in the 1930s and setting up Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) as an independent state. Afghanistan and Nepal remained independent, while Sikkim and Bhutan remained subordinate to the Indian Union by special treaty relations. The three nationalisms of Pakistan, India and Kashmir clashed in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the tension continues into the twenty-first century. The Pakistani national state collapsed under the challenge of Bengali nationalism, leading to the creation of an independent Bangladesh. While the Russian and British colonial empires both fell victim to nationalism, the Soviet Union successfully mobilized those energies to the point of stability in Central Asia. Unlike the Soviet ones, the British settlements were messy and pregnant with future conflicts. Curiously, however, the Soviet Union disintegrated under the pressure of the internal reformers of the Communist Party after losing in the Cold War and not as a result of nationalist revolt; consequently, the national states of the Soviet period survived the Soviet Union itself and they are now major players in international politics.

If the experience of the region over this century and a half is to be summed up, it is characterized by colonial domination, nationalist mobilization and modernization, with their implications in each walk of life; but the impact and the results of each of these were astonishingly variable despite the proximity of these states to each other and their being subject to or driven by virtually the same compulsions.

MAPS*

* The maps have been compiled on the basis of various sources and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.