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"They Are Not True Mongols"

Written By: Landysh Welieva | April 23, 2012 | Posted In: Lifestyle



UB Post

By Siarl Ferdinand

"Inner Mongolians are not true Mongolians, they are a hybrid Chinese-Mongolian race." Similar judgments can be applied to the Buriats, Kalmyks, Hazara, and many other Mongol groups beyond the borders of the Republic of Mongolia. These ethnic groups are considered to be Russians or Turks with some Mongol blood. Unfortunately, during my years in Mongolia I have heard such expressions very often. Mongolia, the Great Mongolia, is not a united country any more. The disunion, however, is not a question of borders, frontiers or lines on a map. The disunion originates in the mind of many, particularly in the minds of Mongolians themselves. The concept of "True Mongols" is a relatively new idea. The fact of assigning people a rate of purity has not previously been a dividing question amongst Mongols. From the days of Genghis Khan, a Mongol was a Mongol, all the same, all united and all with one purpose. However, we cannot ignore the existence of ideas of pure and hybrid Mongolians. Those ideas influence the behaviour of many Mongolians and even the actions of some governments. For that reason, it would be interesting to discover the root of such a point of view, starting from the very beginning: who were the first (purist) Mongols?

Genghis Khan's Mongols

Genghis Khan's aim was only one: to unite the tribes of the Mongolian plateau to be a powerful nation, a nation which did not have to be afraid of its neighbours. In order to get his objective he provided the new entity with laws, an alphabet and an efficient organization.

Many would say that those Mongols were real Mongols, the people of Genghis Khan. But who were those Mongols? Where did they come from?


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
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
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Genghis' subjects were not in a uniform nation. The Mongols consisted on a huge variety of tribes, clans, and confederations. One of the most important was the Khamag Mongol confederation. They used to live in the area watered by the river Kherlen, in eastern Mongolia and a part of nowadays China. Temüjin's clan was part of this group. The tribes of this group were not a united nation, but they often warred among them.

Another Mongol group were the Keraits. They were centered on the land where we live nowadays, Ulaanbaatar. This tribe most probably spoke a Turkic language, and most of its members were Christian. However, after their defeat by Genghis in 1203, they became a prominent part of the Mongol Empire. Even important Khans, such as Kublai and Möngke were half Kerait.

The Tatar confederation (not to be confused with modern Kazan, Crimea and other Tatar groups) inhabited the north-eastern Gobi in today's China. They spoke Mongolian and were subjugated by Genghis. Decades later the Tatars moved westwards with some Turkic tribes, gaining new lands for the Great Khan.

The other important group were the Merkit or Mergid. It is not clear if they were Mongols, Turks or even Paleosiberian such as the Chukchi in Russia, or even Tungusic, such as the Manchu in China. After their incorporation to Genghis' Empire, most Merkits were assimilated to the rest of tribes, disappearing as a separate ethnic group.

There were some other minor tribes and clans, such as the Onggirats, Queen Börte's clan and ancestors of eastern Kazakhs, some Mongolians and some Uzbeks.

Interestingly, Genghis Khan or Temüjin, a wise King with a Turkic name, not only incorporated all those tribes of different backgrounds and languages to his Empire, but also gave them privileges. He created a new nation with different bloods. To him all his subjects were 'true Mongols'.

But as usual, Genghis' Empire was not eternal. After less than two centuries, his dream came to an end. From being rulers of the world, the Mongols became servants of their slaves. Chinese Hans, Russians, and Turks took all their land and resources and the word Mongol became one of those terms referred to quasi-mythological ancient nations, such as Babylonians or Sumerians.

Mongols before the independence

However, the Mongols did still exist. About a century ago, after expelling the Chinese from some regions of the Mongolian plateau, negotiations were held with Russia in order to create a new state, a new independent Mongolia. That new country would include Inner Mongolia, Urianhai, Hovd, Holonbuir, and Central Mongolia, all considered to be 'true Mongolians'.

The treaty was never signed because in the end, Inner Mongolia and Barga were not included in it. Tserenchimid, the Mongolian representative complained that "it is unfair to divide Mongolia in this manner because Mongols live in these territories; they all suffer Chinese oppressions and equally desire independence. The nobles and princes of Halh are obliged to care for their future, otherwise we shall be accused of betraying national interests..." (cited from "History of Mongolia" by Baabar). Once again, there was no trace of true and fake Mongols, all were just Mongols.

Nowadays, Mongols are divided into three different states, namely Mongolia, Russia, and China. Inside those states Mongols are not a homogeneous people. For most people to be a true Mongolian means that that person was born in the independent Republic of Mongolia. However, that is neither an exact science because, who are more Mongolian among these modern groups: the Barga, Bayid, Buryat, Selenge Chahar, Darkhad, Dariganga, Dörbet, Myangad, Khalkha, Hotogoid, Hoton, Ööled, Sartuul, Torgut, Tuva Uriankhai, Uriankhai, Altai Uriankhai, Üzemchin, Zakhchin, Kazakh, Uyghu and so on.?

If all of them are true Mongols, why a Khalkha man born in Ulaanbaatar is more Mongol than a Khalkha man born in Inner Mongolia. Both of them have the same ancestry, both of them speak the same language and sing the same songs, the Inner Mongolian even preserves the national alphabet. On the other hand, it is true, the

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Inner Mongolian may use some Chinese words but what about the Outer Mongolian individual? Does he not use hundreds or even thousands of Russian words written with Russian alphabet? Is it because the inhabitant of Ulaanbaatar is not a true Mongolian, but a hybrid Russian-Mongolian individual?

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Genetics

A modern tool that some believers in purity of race use is genetics. Sometimes the so-called "Genghis Gene" is considered to be the water mark of the validity of a Mongol. Whether that gene comes from Genghis or not is not clear. It has been suggested that it a genetic mark of all a tribe, not only of one individual. Anyway, what have the latest studies discover about the Genghis Gene? The results appeared in an article of American Journal of Human Genetics in 2003.

The mentioned gene has been found in 16 ethnic groups of Central Asia. About 20% of the inhabitants of Mongolia have this kind of chromosome. It is a high proportion. However, if it indicates the Mongolity of the population, Khalkha would not be the purest group. Its proportion is widely surpassed by Inner Mongolians (about 25%), Hazara from Afghanistan (about 33%), and even by Hans from Inner Mongolia (almost 30%). The gene was also found in 20% of Ewenkis from Russia, Chinese Kazakh, and Uyghurs.

In definitive, if the Genghis Gene is proof of being a true Mongolian, maybe Ulaanbaatar must start its submission to Höhhot or even to Kabul.





The problem is...

For centuries nobody questioned the Mongolity of the different Mongol nations. History and genetics have proved that there is nothing as blood purity. Modern Mongolian are, like all the other nations in this world, a mixture of many ancient nations.

Nowadays many Outer Mongolians despise their brothers who did not get the independence one century ago. A closer look to the problem reveals that it is not a question of ethnicity, but of incapacity.

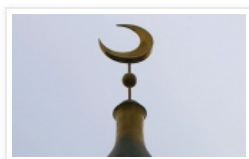
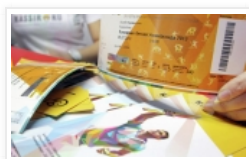
Tseremchimid urged the nobles and princes of Khalkha to care about the rest of the Mongols, without the artificial distinction between pure and hybrid Mongols, otherwise they should be accused of betraying national interests. The Khalkha have not cared, the Khalkha have betrayed national interests. No excuse and one solution: denying the Mongol heritage to those who are not under Ulaanbaatar.

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An expert in banking and finance, Landysh is the Kazan Times' columnist on business affairs, covering Tatarstan, Russia and international markets.

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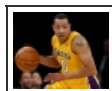
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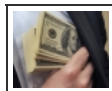
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