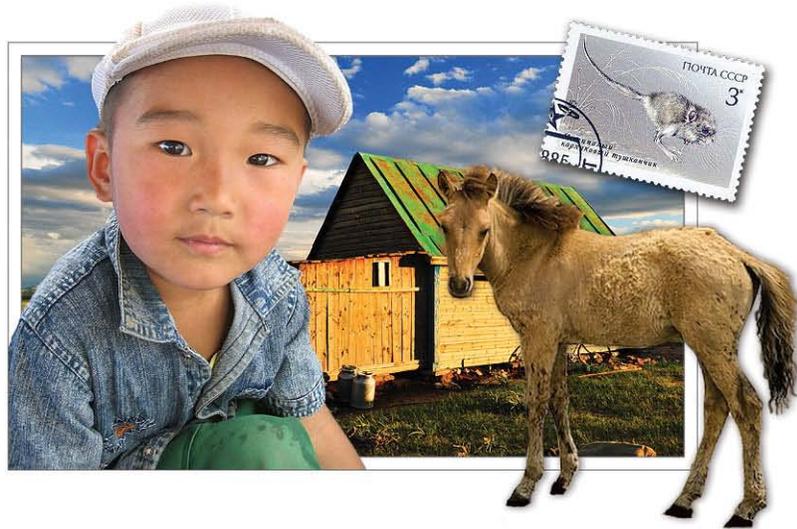


Mongolia in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



Technology Integration Division
August 2011



DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Geography	5
Introduction.....	5
Geographic Regions and Topographic Features	6
Climate.....	7
Rivers and Lakes.....	9
Rivers	9
Lakes.....	10
Cities	11
Ulaanbaatar	12
Erdenet	13
Darhan.....	13
Choybalsan.....	14
Moron.....	14
Environmental Concerns.....	15
Natural Hazards	17
Chapter 1: Assessment.....	19
Chapter 2: History.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Pre-Mongol History	20
The Mongol Empires	22
Genghis Khan.....	22
Genghis Khan’s Successors	23
The Yuan Dynasty	25
Post-Imperial Mongolia	26
The Oirat-Khalkha Division	26
The Qing Dynasty.....	27
20th-Century Mongolia.....	29
Autonomy and the Struggle for Independence	29
Collectivization and Threats from the East.....	30
Mongolia and the Sino-Soviet Conflict	31
Mongolia’s Democratic Revolution.....	32

Recent Events.....	33
Chapter 2: Assessment.....	35
Chapter 3: Economy	36
Introduction.....	36
Agriculture	36
Livestock.....	36
Cultivation.....	37
Forestry	38
Industry	38
Energy Resources.....	40
Mineral Resources	42
Trade	43
Tourism.....	44
Banking and Currency	45
Investment.....	46
Transportation.....	47
Standard of Living	48
Chapter 3: Assessment.....	49
Chapter 4: Society.....	50
Introduction.....	50
Ethnic and Linguistic Groups	51
Religion.....	51
Buddhism	51
Other Religions	52
Gender Issues	53
Traditional Clothing.....	54
Arts.....	55
Painting and Sculpture	55
Music.....	56
Architecture.....	56
Sports and Recreation	57
Chapter 4: Assessment.....	59

Chapter 5: Security	60
Introduction.....	60
U.S.-Mongolian Relations	61
Relations With Neighboring Countries.....	62
Russia.....	62
China.....	63
Military	65
Terrorist Groups and Activities	66
Other Issues Affecting Stability.....	67
Mineral Wealth, “Dutch Disease,” and Corruption	67
Chapter 5: Assessment.....	69
Final Assessment	70
Further Reading	72
Films	72

Chapter 1: Geography

Introduction

Mongolia is one of Asia's bigger countries, but it was once much larger. Up until the 20th century, Mongolia contained much of southern Siberia and all of Inner Mongolia. These regions are now part of Russia and China, respectively. Nevertheless, Mongolia today is still twice the size of Texas and is the world's second-largest landlocked country. (Only Kazakhstan is larger.)^{1, 2} Within

Mongolia's southern vast expanses lie some of Earth's most arid terrain, historically a treasure trove for hunters of dinosaur fossils.³ Grasslands, mountains, numerous freshwater and saltwater lakes, and even glaciers are some of the geographical features observed in other parts of the country.⁴

Located between Russia and China, Mongolia contains vast reserves of natural resources—including the world's largest undeveloped copper and gold reserves worth an estimated USD 5 billion.⁵ Other natural resources in Mongolia include coal, zinc, and “nearly one million tons of reasonably assured uranium.”⁶



© DoD image
Map of Mongolia

¹ Michael Koln, “Environment: The Land,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 48.

² Central Intelligence Agency, “Country Comparison: Area,” in *The World Factbook*, 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2147rank.html?countryName=Mongolia&countryCode=mg®ionCode=eas&rank=19#mg>

³ American Museum of Natural History, “Fighting Dinosaurs: New Discoveries From Mongolia,” n.d., <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/fightingdinosaurs/>

⁴ Kadota Tustomu and Davaa Gombo, “Recent Glacier Variations in Mongolia,” *Annals of Glaciology* 26, 185, <http://www.igsoc.org/annals/46/a46A148.pdf>

⁵ Mark Fonseca Rendeiro, “Mongolia’s Mining Wealth a Cause for Concern,” *The Guardian*, 15 May 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/may/15/mongolia-mining-wealth-concern>

⁶ Mongolia-Web.com, “Mongolia to Start Uranium Exploration Next Year,” *Mining and Minerals*, 11 March, 2011, <http://mongolia-web.com/mining?start=5>

Geographic Regions and Topographic Features

With an average altitude of 1,580 m (5,180 ft), Mongolia is one of the world's highest countries.⁷ Mountains and mountain steppes occupy much of its western, central, and northern regions, with three major mountain ranges dominating the terrain. In the far north, to the northeast of the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, lie the Hentiyn Mountains. Here, the peaks reach elevations of more than 2,700 m (9,000 ft).^{8,9} Higher yet are the Hangayn Mountains, which trend northwest–southeast through central and north-central Mongolia and reach heights above 3,900 m (12,800 ft).¹⁰ The Hentiyn and Hangayn Mountains contain most of Mongolia's forests.¹¹



© Vera & Jean-Christophe
Mongolian landscape

The third major mountain range in Mongolia is the Altai. This range runs in a generally northwest–southeast direction to the southwest of the Hangayn Mountains and straddles the western section of Mongolia's border with China. Within the Altai is Nayramadlin (Huyten) Peak, Mongolia's highest point at 4,374 m (14,350 ft). It is located near where the Russian, Chinese, and Mongolian borders meet. A section of the Altai Range also extends eastward into the Gobi Desert region of southern Mongolia.¹² Unlike the Hentiyn and Hangayn Mountains, the Altai contain limited forestlands. Most of these forest clumps are scattered along river valleys.¹³ Elevations and precipitation decrease in the basins between the Hangayn and Altai Mountains. These desert steppes host numerous desert lakes and salt pans, and they also support limited grazing for sheep, goats, and camels.^{14, 15} In far southern Mongolia, the climate becomes even more arid, marking the

⁷ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Geography: Landforms," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 61.

⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Hentiyn Mountains," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/262170/Hentiyn-Mountains>

⁹ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Geography: Landforms," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 61.

¹⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Hangayn Mountains," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/254297/Hangayn-Mountains>

¹¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Mongolia: Forested Areas," 13 May 2010, <http://www.fao.org/forestry/country/en/mng/>

¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Altai Mountains: Physical Features: Physiography," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/17446/Altai-Mountains>

¹³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Altai Mountains: Physical Features: Plant Life," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/17446/Altai-Mountains>

¹⁴ Michael Koln, "Environment: The Land," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 48.

¹⁵ Legend Tour, "Information for Travelers: Geographical Features," 2000, http://www.legendtour.ru/eng/mongolia/informations/geographical_features.shtml

beginning of the Gobi Desert. Some of this region receives rainfall only once every two or three years. While climatically a desert, few sand dunes occur in the Gobi. Gravel-covered plains and rocky outcrops are the more common types of Gobi landscape.¹⁶

Much of eastern Mongolia consists of rolling grassland steppes that transition into level plains toward the country's eastern border with China.¹⁷ This region of Mongolia is one of the world's largest unspoiled grassland systems.^{18, 19} It also is the site of more than 200 extinct volcanoes in the Dariganga area, located near the Chinese border.²⁰

Climate

Mongolia lies far from any ocean influence that might moderate its climate. As a result, it experiences an extreme continental climate marked by long, bitterly cold winters, short summers, large daily and annual swings in temperature, and little rainfall in most locations.^{21, 22} Winter runs from November through February, and in many places the temperature may never rise above freezing during this time.^{23, 24} Ulaanbaatar, with an average daily temperature of -1.3°C (29.7°F), is possibly the coldest capital city in the world.²⁵ (It has *never* recorded a temperature above freezing during the months of December and January.)²⁶ Snowfall during winter months is generally light due to a high-pressure



¹⁶ Rogier Gruys, "The Gobi Desert," BluePeak Travel Photography, 2009, <http://www.bluepeak.net/mongolia/gobi.html>

¹⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: The Land: The Plateau and Desert Belt," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia>

¹⁸ Michael Koln, "Eastern Mongolia," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 164.

¹⁹ Wildlife Conservation Society, "Eastern Steppe, Mongolia," 2011, <http://www.wcs.org/saving-wild-places/asia/eastern-steppe-of-mongolia.aspx>

²⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: The Land: Climate," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia>

²¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: The Land: Drainage," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia>

²² Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Geography: Climate," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 63.

²³ Michael Koln, "Directory: Climate Charts," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 252–253.

²⁴ Blue Wolf Expeditions, "Preparing to Come to Mongolia: What Kind of Weather Conditions Should I Pack For?," 2000, <http://www.mongoliaaltaexpeditions.com/FAQ.htm>

²⁵ Matt Rosenberg, "Coldest Capital Cities: Is Ottawa the Coldest Capital City?," About.com, 2011, <http://geography.about.com/od/physicalgeography/a/coldcapital.htm>

²⁶ BBC Weather, "Ulaanbaatar: Average Conditions," 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/forecast/1799?#>

system that lodges itself over the northwestern part of the country.²⁷ In fact, winter is generally the sunniest season in Mongolia.²⁸ Some winters, however, can bring heavy snow or frozen films of ice following premature thaws. Such conditions can produce a *zud* (“lack of grazing”), leading to catastrophic livestock losses for Mongolian herders.^{29,30}

Mongolia’s short frost-free period generally runs for about 100 days, from late May to the end of August. The brevity of the growing season both hampers crop production and limits the diversity of Mongolia’s plant life.³¹ Daytime temperatures increase dramatically during Mongolia’s summer. The Gobi Desert region can become very hot during this time of year, with recorded temperatures as high as 40°C (104°F).³² The summer months also receive much of Mongolia’s annual rainfall.³³ Precipitation amounts generally decrease from north to south, with the wettest areas occurring to the far north near Lake Hovskul and in the Hentyn and Hangayn Mountains.^{34,35}

²⁷ Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 7–9.

²⁸ Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 8.

²⁹ Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 8.

³⁰ Michael Koln, “Environment: The Great Zud,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 49.

³¹ Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 8.

³² Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 8.

³³ Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 7.

³⁴ Jane Blunden, “Background Information: Climate,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 7.

³⁵ Donald R. DeGlopper, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Geography: Landforms,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 64.

Rivers and Lakes

Rivers

Broadly, Mongolia's rivers flow in three different directions: northward to rivers draining into the Arctic Ocean, eastward to rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean, and southward into desert basins with no outlets to the sea.³⁶ The largest Mongolian river is the Selenge, which originates in the north-central part of the country. The Selenge's main tributary, the Orhon River, joins it near the Russian border, from which the Selenge then flows northward into Lake Baikal (the world's deepest and oldest lake).³⁷ The Selenge is only navigable from the late spring to early fall, with ice blocking the river the rest of the year.³⁸



© Takeshi Kitayama
Selenge river

In eastern Mongolia, the two main rivers are the Herlen and the Onon, both of which originate on the eastern flanks of the Hentiyn Mountains. The Herlen eventually flows into Hulun (Dalai) Lake in northeastern China. In rainy years, Hulun Lake overflows its banks and connects to the Argun-Amur River, a long river system that forms the boundary between Russia and China for much of its distance. The Onon also connects to the Amur River via a route that swings north through Russia.³⁹

Most of the Mongolian rivers that end in desert basins are relatively short. Two exceptions are the glacier-fed Hovd River and the Dzavhan River. Both of these rivers eventually drain into the Great Lakes Depression of western Mongolia.⁴⁰

³⁶ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Geography: Landforms," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 63.

³⁷ EarthRacts.net, "Lake Baikal," 2011, <http://www.earthfacts.net/places/lake-baikal/>

³⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Selenga River," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/533218/Selenga-River>

³⁹ Amur-Heilong.net, "Amur-Heilong River Basin: Where is the Tail of the Black Dragon?," n.d., http://amur-heilong.net/http/01_climate_waters/0124watermongolia.html

⁴⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: The Land: Drainage," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia>

Lakes

Mongolia has several thousand lakes larger than 1.3 sq km (0.5 sq mi).⁴¹ Many of these lakes lie in desert depressions and are salty and without outlets to the sea, including Lake Uvs in the Great Lakes Depression, Mongolia's largest.⁴² Other large lakes in the Great Lakes Depression include saline Lake Hyargas and freshwater Lake Har Us.⁴³ Mongolia's largest freshwater body of water is Lake Hovsgol, located in the country's far northern reaches just south of the Russian border.



© Holly Pierce
Lake Hovsgol

Known as “Mother Sea” by nomadic tribespeople, Lake Hovsgol contains 74% of Mongolia's and 1% of the world's total freshwater resources.^{44, 45} Its only outlet ultimately feeds into the Selenge River.

⁴¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mongolia: The Land: Drainage,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia>

⁴² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Aquastat, “Mongolia,” 2010, <http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries/mongolia/index.stm>

⁴³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mongolia: The Land: Drainage,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia>

⁴⁴ Mongol Environmental Conservation, “Lake Hovsgol Management,” n.d., <http://mongolec.org/programs/lake-hovsgol-management>

⁴⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Aquastat, “Mongolia,” 2010, <http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries/mongolia/index.stm>

Cities

City	Census Population 2000 ⁴⁶	Estimated 2008 Population ⁴⁷
Ulaanbaatar	760,077	907,802
Erdenet	68,310	88,243
Darhan	65,791	62,696
Choybalsan	40,123	42,798
Moron	28,903	38,547
Ulaangom	25,993	26,889
Olgii	25,791	20,112
Hovd	25,765	26,600
Suhbaatar	22,374	20,764
Bayanhongor	22,066	22,171

⁴⁶ CityPopulation.de, Thomas Brinkhoff, "Mongolia," 1 April 2010, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Mongolia.html>

⁴⁷ MongaBay.com, "2005 Population Estimates for Cities in Mongolia," 2007, http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/2005_world_city_populations/Mongolia.html

Ulaanbaatar

Ulaanbaatar is Mongolia's only metropolis. Its population dwarfs that of all other Mongolian cities. Founded as Orgoo ("Palace-Yurt") in 1639 as the migratory monastic center of the Bogdo Gegen ("Living Buddha"), the tent city moved frequently during its first century and a half.⁴⁸ In 1778, the Buddhist seat finally found a permanent location on the Tuul River (a tributary of the Orhon River) at the site of the present-day city. Thereafter Ulaanbaatar—then known as Yihe Huree ("Great Monastery") to the local populace and as Urga to foreigners—became a trading center on the route between China and Russia while remaining the center of Mongolia's Tibetan Buddhism theocracy.^{49,50} Yihe Huree became Niyslel Huree ("Capital of Monastery") in 1911 when Mongolia declared independence from China. The city was later renamed Ulaanbaatar ("Red Hero") in 1924 after the nation became a secular state.⁵¹



Today, Ulaanbaatar dominates all facets of Mongolian society. Besides being the nation's political capital, the city is Mongolia's industrial center, contains most of the country's colleges and universities, is home to its primary international airport, and is a hub for the only railroad linking the nation with both China and Russia.⁵² Ulaanbaatar's population has exploded over the last 20 years owing to a large amount of migration from provincial centers, motivated not only by job opportunities but also by better educational facilities.⁵³ The city is now home to roughly 40% of Mongolia's population.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Michael Koln, "Ulaanbaatar: History," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 63.

⁴⁹ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Religion: Buddhism," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 101–102.

⁵⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Ulaanbaatar," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/613112/Ulaanbaatar>

⁵¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Ulaanbaatar," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/613112/Ulaanbaatar>

⁵² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Ulaanbaatar," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/613112/Ulaanbaatar>

⁵³ B. Bulgamaa, Chalkboard, "Mongolia: Out in the Cold," 18 May 2009, <http://chalkboard.tol.org/mongolia>

⁵⁴ CityPopulation.de, Thomas Brinkhoff, "Mongolia," 1 April 2010, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Mongolia.html>

Erdenet

Mongolia's second-largest city began life in the mid-1970s as a joint Soviet-Mongolian venture to exploit the large nearby deposits of copper and molybdenum ore. With virtually no infrastructure in the area, all roads, rail connections, water pipelines, electric lines, and housing had to be built from scratch.^{55, 56} Besides its huge open-pit mine and associated concentrating plant, Erdenet also hosts Mongolia's largest carpet manufacturing plant, as well as food-processing and timber-processing facilities.^{57,58}



© Takeshi Kitayama
Erdenet train station

Darhan

Darhan is also a recently developed industrial city, built within Mongolia's most important agricultural region.⁵⁹ It sprang to life in the late 1960s with the construction of a large industrial complex built with extensive Soviet and eastern European assistance. Construction materials (cement, bricks, steel), food processing, wool textiles, and sheepskin processing are some of the industries that have taken root in Darhan. A local coal-fired power plant provides electricity for these industries. Its power is also delivered to Ulaanbaatar to the south and Suhbaatar to the north.^{60,61} The nearby Sharyn Gol coalfield provides the coal both for this plant and for another power plant in Erdenet.⁶² Plans are also in the works for a Japanese-led consortium to build Mongolia's first oil refinery in Darhan, scheduled to open in 2014.⁶³

⁵⁵ Roxane D. V. Sismanidis, "Chapter 3: The Economy: Industry: Mining," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 141–142.

⁵⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Erdenet," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/191128/Erdenet>

⁵⁷ GMDU.net, "Erdenet Carpet," n.d., <http://www.gmdu.net/corp-304139.html>

⁵⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Erdenet," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/191128/Erdenet>

⁵⁹ Michael Koln, "Northern Mongolia: Selenge," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 133.

⁶⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Darhan," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/151546/Darhan>

⁶¹ LegendTour.com, "The Regions of Mongolia: Darkhan - Uul Aimag," n.d., <http://www.legendtour.ru/eng/mongolia/regions/darkhan-uul-aimag.shtml>

⁶² Sharyn Gol JSC, "Annual Report of 2009," 2010, 3, http://sharyngol.com/literature_68176/2009_Annual_Report

⁶³ Business Council of Mongolia, "Marubeni to Help Build Oil Refinery in Darkhan, Mongolia's First," Reuters/Monsame, 1 October 2010, <http://www.bcmongolia.org/news/744-marubeni-to-help-build-oil-refinery-in-darkhan-mongolias-first>

Choybalsan

Choybalsan is eastern Mongolia's most important city and only true industrial city.⁶⁴ Located on the Herlen River, Choybalsan historically evolved from a monastic center to a trading post lying along the route between Siberia and China. In 1939 a branch rail line was built to the Soviet city of Boryza, providing linkage to the Trans-Siberian rail network. The city also lies on a major east–west road network connecting it to Ulaanbaatar and points to the west. Local industries include flour milling, meat processing, and brickworks.⁶⁵

Moron

Pronounced “mu-roon,” Moron translates as “river” in Mongolian, appropriate given the city's location just north of the Delgermoron River.^{66,67} The town serves primarily as an administrative center for Hogsvol Aymag. Nearby is one of the world's best collections of deer stones, ancient monoliths depicting flying deer.⁶⁸



© Yaan / Wikipedia.org
Mörön

⁶⁴ Roxane D. V. Sismanidis, “Chapter 3: The Economy: Industry: Structure of the Economy,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 123.

⁶⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Darhan,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/151546/Darhan>

⁶⁶ Michael Koln, “Northern Mongolia: Mörön,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 149.

⁶⁷ Jane Blunden, “Northern Region: Mörön,” in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008), 325.

⁶⁸ John Brundall, “Doing the Tourist Loop in North and Central Mongolia,” Suite101.com, 21 February 2011, <http://www.suite101.com/content/doing-the-tourist-loop-in-north-and-central-mongolia-a350831>

Environmental Concerns

Mongolia's low population density and traditional subsistence economy has allowed the country to generally avoid severe environmental problems.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the nation does face some important challenges. Among these are overgrazing and its attendant problem, desertification. With Mongolia's transition to a market-based economy in the early 1990s, the number of livestock increased and the proportional balance of livestock species changed.⁷⁰ In particular, the population of goats, valued for their cashmere wool but notoriously voracious grazers, spiked dramatically. As a result, roughly 70% of all the nation's pastures are now degraded.⁷¹ In marginal pasturelands in arid and semi-arid regions, overgrazing is leading to an increase in the amount of land lost to desertification.^{72,73}



© Michael Chu
Herding sheep and goats

In fast-growing Ulaanbaatar, a variety of sources produce dangerous amounts of air pollution during the winter months. These include the black fumes from coal-burning stoves used to heat *gers* (felt-lined tents used as traditional Mongolian housing), exhaust from the city's increasing number of cars and trucks, and airborne dust.^{74,75} Ulaanbaatar's average particulate matter concentrations run 14 times higher than suggested maximum levels set by the World Health Organization.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Michael Koln, "Environment," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 53.

⁷⁰ Jane Blunden, "The People: Future Concerns," in *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd.), 78–79.

⁷¹ Michael Koln, "Environment," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 53.

⁷² Zambyn Batjargal, "Desertification in Mongolia," RALA Report, no. 200, 1997, 107–111, <http://www.rala.is/rade/ralareport/Batjargal.pdf>

⁷³ Kit Gillet, "High Cost of Cashmere on Mongolia Plains," CNN.com, 12 September 2010, http://articles.cnn.com/2010-09-12/world/mongolia.cashmere.herders_1_goat-population-mongolia-global-cashmere?s=PM:WORLD

⁷⁴ Arshad Sayed, "Ulaanbaatar's Air Pollution Crisis: Summertime Complacency Won't Solve the Wintertime Problem," WorldBank.org, 23 April 2010, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/ulaanbaatar-s-air-pollution-crisis-summertime-complacency-won-t-solve-the-wintertime-problem>

⁷⁵ UrbanEmission.info, "Urban Air Pollution Analysis for Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia," May 2010, <http://www.urbanemissions.info/model-tools/sim-air/ulaanbataar-mongolia.html>

⁷⁶ Arshad Sayed, "Ulaanbaatar's Air Pollution Crisis: Summertime Complacency Won't Solve the Wintertime Problem," WorldBank.org, 23 April 2010, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/ulaanbaatar-s-air-pollution-crisis-summertime-complacency-won-t-solve-the-wintertime-problem>

Mining is a pillar of the Mongolian economy. Most extraction operations are of the open-pit type. Mongolian law requires that all open-pit mines be reclaimed after the mine closes, but in practice the law is not uniformly enforced. In some cases, mining companies get around reclamation requirements by simply going out of business, leaving no other corporate entity legally responsible for the clean-up.^{77,78}



In some rural areas, artisanal (small-scale) mining has increasingly become a means of livelihood for tens of thousands of poor Mongolians.⁷⁹ The “ninja” miners—so-called because of the green gold-panning bowls carried on the miners’ backs that remind some of the cartoon characters the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*—have had a significant negative effect on many of Mongolia’s rivers and lakes and on its grasslands.^{80, 81} Water dredging and diversions for mining have caused some rivers and lakes to go dry.⁸² In addition, environmentally damaging chemicals such as mercury and cyanide have been used by some of the ninjas.⁸³

Several international companies are also operating large-scale mining projects in Mongolia.⁸⁴ With this international investment comes consequences for the environment. According to one analyst, “[a] mining boom in Mongolia is threatening to devastate the country’s rivers and is forcing nomadic herders to abandon their land and traditional way

⁷⁷ Morris Rossabi, “Culture and the Market Economy,” in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 177.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=wmQLorr9QCgC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

⁷⁸ Brian Awehali, “Mongolia’s Wilderness Threatened by Mining Boom,” *Earth Island Journal*, *The Guardian*, 11 January 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/11/mongolia-wilderness-mining-boom>

⁷⁹ World Bank, “A Review of Environmental and Social Impacts in the Mining Sector,” May 2006, 1, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMONGOLIA/Resources/Mongolia-Mining.pdf>

⁸⁰ Louis Lim, “Mongolians Seek Fortune in Gold, But At a Cost,” *National Public Radio*, 7 September 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112516360>

⁸¹ Stefan Lovgren, “Mongolia Gold Rush Destroying Rivers, Nomadic Lives,” *National Geographic News*, 17 October 2008, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/10/081017-mongolia-mining-missions.html>

⁸² Stefan Lovgren, “Mongolia Gold Rush Destroying Rivers, Nomadic Lives,” *National Geographic News*, 17 October 2008, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/10/081017-mongolia-mining-missions.html>

⁸³ Louis Lim, “Mongolians Seek Fortune in Gold, But At a Cost,” *National Public Radio*, 7 September 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112516360>

⁸⁴ Mark Fonseca Rendeiro, “Mongolia’s Mining Wealth is Cause for Concern,” *The Guardian*, 15 May 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/may/15/mongolia-mining-wealth-concern>

of life.”⁸⁵ In addition to contaminating drinking water, mining in Mongolia has caused hundreds of rivers and lakes to dry up.⁸⁶

Natural Hazards

Many of Mongolia’s most damaging natural disasters are weather related. In the winter of 2009–2010, for example, Mongolia experienced some of its harshest winter weather in nearly 50 years, marked by bitter cold and higher-than-average snowfalls. Coupled with a drought the previous summer, the extreme winter weather led to a lack of pastureland and the eventual death of 7.8 million livestock animals. This *zud* event directly affected more than 750,000 Mongolians, or roughly 25% of the country’s population, and was by far the most damaging *zud* in the nation’s history.^{87,88}



© Iwan Gabovitch
Flooding in Mongolia

Massive dust storms, wild fires, and flooding are other relatively common natural disasters that take place in Mongolia.⁸⁹ Less common, but potentially more deadly, are large-magnitude earthquakes. Even though Mongolia is not near any plate boundaries, three earthquakes of magnitude 8 and above shook Mongolia during the 20th century.⁹⁰ The most recent of these, which occurred in December 1957, killed 30 people and left the world’s best-preserved earthquake-induced surface rupture.^{91,92} Fortunately, this

⁸⁵ Stefan Lovgren, “Mongolia Gold Rush Destroying Rivers, Nomadic Life,” National Geographic News, 17 Oct. 2008, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/10/081017-mongolia-mining-missions.html>

⁸⁶ United Nations Human Rights Team Group, “Discussion Paper: Mining and Human Rights in Mongolia,” 2006, [http://www.rimmrights.org/Documents/final%20discussion%20paper%20amended%20CHRD%20\(i\).pdf](http://www.rimmrights.org/Documents/final%20discussion%20paper%20amended%20CHRD%20(i).pdf)

⁸⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “Mongolian Dzug Appeal 2010,” 11 May 2010, <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/tce-appfund/tce-appeals/appeals/emergency-detail0/en/item/42611/icode/?uidf=17866>

⁸⁸ James Sawyer, National Geographic Newswatch, “Mongolian Dzug Kills Millions of Domestic Animals,” 26 April 2010, <http://blogs.nationalgeographic.com/blogs/news/chiefeditor/2010/04/mongolian-dzug-kills-millions.html>

⁸⁹ United Nations Public Administration Network, “Mongolia: Top 10 Natural Disasters,” 5 January 2003, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan009406.pdf>

⁹⁰ U.S. Geological Survey, “1998 USGS Expedition to Mongolia,” 29 January 2009, <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/research/geology/mongolia98/>

⁹¹ NOAA National Geophysical Data Center, “6 Significant Earthquakes Where (Year <= 2010 and Year > = 1800) and Country = MONGOLIA,” 10 March 2011, http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/nndc/struts/results?bt_0=1800&st_0=2010&type_17=EXACT&query_17=None+Selected&op_12=eq&v_12=MONGOLIA&type_12=Or&query_14=None+Selected&type_3=Like&query_3=&st_1=&bt_2=&st_2=&bt_1=&bt_4=&st_4=&bt_5=&st_5=&bt_6=&st_6=&bt_7=&st_7=&bt_8=&st_8=&bt_9=&st_9=&bt_10=&st_10=&type_11=Exact&query_11=&type_16=Exact&query_16=&display_look=1&t=101650&s=1&submit_all=Search+Database

earthquake occurred in a sparsely populated part of the Altai Mountains, or the loss of life would have been much greater.

⁹² R. A. Kurushin et al, "Abstract," in *The Surface Rupture of the 1957 Gobi-Altay, Mongolia, Earthquake* (Boulder, CO: Geological Society of America, 1997), 2.

Chapter 1: Assessment

1. A *zud* is a natural disaster that occurs during some severe Mongolian winters when heavy snowfall or ice limits the amount of grazing land.

TRUE

In *zud* winters, heavy snow or frozen films of ice following premature thaws can lead to a lack of grazing land, causing catastrophic livestock losses.

2. Ulaanbaatar often suffers from severe air pollution during the summer.

FALSE

A variety of sources produce dangerous amounts of air pollution in Ulaanbaatar during the winter months. These include the black fumes from coal-burning stoves used to heat *gers* (felt-lined tents used as traditional Mongolian housing).

3. All of Mongolia's rivers eventually drain into the Pacific Ocean.

FALSE

Mongolia's rivers flow in three different directions: northward to rivers draining into the Arctic Ocean, eastward to rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean, and southward into desert basins with no outlets to the sea.

4. The major cause of Mongolia's desertification is the clear cutting of forests.

FALSE

Overgrazing by a rapidly growing livestock population has caused roughly 70% of Mongolia's pastures to be degraded. In marginal pasturelands in arid and semi-arid regions, overgrazing is the most critical human-induced factor in the increasing amount of land lost to desertification.

5. Mongolia's average elevation is one of the highest among the nations of the world.

TRUE

With an average altitude of 1,580 m (5,180 ft), Mongolia is one of the world's highest countries.

Chapter 2: History

Introduction

For most contemporary Westerners, Mongolia is one of the lesser known countries of Eastern Asia. Its two large neighbors, China and Russia, have dominated Mongolia's history for the last several centuries. The situation, however, was dramatically different 800 years or so ago when the Mongolian steppes hosted the center of the largest empire the world had ever seen. This was the time of Genghis Khan, whose name is found with Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon on the list of the world's greatest conquerors. His army of nomad warriors swept the grassy plains of Mongolia and did not stop until they were at the doorstep of some of the great cities of Europe.^{93,94}



© Questionhead / flickr.com
Grassy plains

Pre-Mongol History

Much of what we know about the nomadic tribespeople who inhabited the Mongolian steppes prior to the 13th century comes from Chinese sources. During the late third century B.C.E., the Xiong-nu tribal confederation emerged. Their mounted warriors waged nearly constant wars with the Chinese Han Dynasty for more than 150 years.⁹⁵ As with succeeding tribal confederations in Mongolia, the pastoral nomadic life of the steppes made it difficult for the Xiong-nu leaders to control their scattered clans and tribes.⁹⁶ In the mid-first century C.E., civil war broke out among factions in the Xiong-nu confederation that resulted in a split between southern and northern Xiong-nu groups.⁹⁷ Eastern nomadic tribes and the Chinese



© bdearth / flickr.com
Deer stone

⁹³ Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note on Mongolia," 8 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2779.htm#history>

⁹⁴ Robert L. Worden and Andrea Matles Savada, eds., *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Mongolia%20Study_1.pdf

⁹⁵ Valerie Hansen and Kenneth R. Curtis, "Chapter 4: Blueprint for Empire: China, 1200 B.C.E.–220 C.E.," in *Voyages in World History*, vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010), 109.

⁹⁶ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 2: Mongolia Before the Mongols," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 19.

⁹⁷ Rafe de Crespigny, "The Division and Destruction of the Xiongnu Confederacy in the First and Second Centuries, AD," Faculty of Asian Studies at the Australian National University, 2004, http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/han_xiongnu.html

imperial army conquered most of the northern Xiong-nu within a few decades after the split. The southern Xiong-nu state declined more slowly but suffered a similar fate. By the end of the Han Dynasty in 220 C.E., the Xiong-nu Empire had dwindled to no more than a few settlements in the northern China hills.⁹⁸

From the fourth century through the eighth century C.E., a new series of tribal confederations arose on the Mongolian steppes and adjoining areas of Central Asia. In succession, the Rouran (mid-fourth century–555 C.E.), Gokturk (552–744), and Uighur (745–840) empires spread across the lands of Inner Asia.^{99,100} Historians generally consider the Gokturk Empire to be the first Turkic political entity. Unlike earlier nomadic confederations, the Gokturk rulers implemented a primitive state structure that led to the development of some of the first cities in the steppes.¹⁰¹ Trade relations with the “sedentary world” became more prominent as Silk Road caravans passed through the Empire on their way to or from China.^{102,103} The Uighurs that overthrew the Gokturks spoke a language similar to their predecessors. They ruled from Karabalghasun, a city on the Orhon River whose foundations are still visible today.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Rafe de Crespigny, “The Division and Destruction of the Xiongnu Confederacy in the First and Second Centuries, AD,” Faculty of Asian Studies at the Australian National University, 2004, http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/han_xiongnu.html

⁹⁹ Ulrich Theobald, “Chinese History–Non-Chinese Peoples and Neighboring States: Rouran,” ChinaKnowledge.org, 2000, <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Altera/rouran.html>

¹⁰⁰ Stanford J. Shaw, “1: The Turks in History,” in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 2–3.

¹⁰¹ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., “Chapter 2: Mongolia Before the Mongols,” in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 21.

¹⁰² Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., “Chapter 2: Mongolia Before the Mongols,” in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 21.

¹⁰³ Stanford J. Shaw, “1: The Turks in History,” in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 2–3.

¹⁰⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “History of Central Asia: The Middle Ages: The Uighurs,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/102315/history-of-Central-Asia/73538/The-Uighur-empire#>

The Mongol Empires

During the 10th century, the nomadic Khitans rose to power in northern China. They also controlled most of present-day Mongolia. The Khitans were a Mongol people from Manchuria, in northeastern China.¹⁰⁵ The Liao Dynasty formed by the Khitans ultimately dominated northern China and the Inner Asian steppes for more than two centuries.¹⁰⁶ Historically, however, the Liao Dynasty was later overshadowed by another Mongol empire that emerged from the steppes during the early years of the 13th century. Genghis Khan, the founder of this empire, remains to this day as one of the most famous conquerors in world history.



© Luigi Guarino
Genghis Khan monument

Genghis Khan

Accounts written by those Genghis Khan conquered tend to dwell on the death and destruction left in the wake of the Mongolian armies.¹⁰⁷ Certainly, Genghis Khan used fear as a significant weapon, annihilating those who refused to surrender. Less noted were the lasting changes that Genghis Khan instituted on the organization of Mongol culture. Prior to his rule, the clan and tribal alliances that had characterized earlier dynasties of the Mongolian steppes were inherently unstable and inevitably broke down. However, through a system of political patronage, Genghis Khan laid the foundation that would support the Mongol Empire's growth through several generations of conquest.

Under Genghis Khan's rule, military leaders and governmental administrators, representing numerous tribal affiliations, swore allegiance to Genghis Khan himself, who in turn rewarded them with fiefdoms and powerful positions.¹⁰⁸ Genghis Khan also instituted something of a feudal structure by giving custody of potential rival clansmen to his family and loyal colleagues.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Manchuria: Manchuria to About 1900," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/361449/Manchuria>

¹⁰⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "History of Central Asia: The Middle Ages: The Khitans," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/102315/history-of-Central-Asia/73538/The-Uighur-empire#>

¹⁰⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Genghis Khan: Historical Background," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/229093/Genghis-Khan>

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Streissguth, "Chapter 1: The Rise of Genghis Khan," in *Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire* (Detroit, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 20–21.

¹⁰⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Genghis Khan: Rise to Power," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/229093/Genghis-Khan>

Genghis Khan was born as Temujin, son of a Mongol tribal leader, most likely in either 1162 or 1167.^{110, 111} Temujin's early life was far from easy. After neighboring Tatars poisoned his father, Temujin and the rest of his family lived as tribal outcasts, enduring extreme poverty for several years. He eventually became a warrior for another Mongol tribal leader, Toghrol Khan. Temujin's battlefield exploits allowed him to consolidate considerable power for himself that ultimately proved a threat to his patron. Temujin defeated Toghrol Khan in battle in 1203 and by 1206 had consolidated complete power over the tribes of the steppes. The latter date marks the founding of the Mongol Empire and Temujin taking a new title: Genghis Khan.¹¹²

Thereafter, for the last 21 years of his life, Genghis Khan focused his attention on lands beyond the Mongolian steppes. By the time of his death in 1227, the Mongol Empire extended westward across Central Asia to the Black Sea, eastward into the Korean Peninsula, and southward through North China.¹¹³

Genghis Khan's Successors

After Genghis Khan's death, each of his sons or his sons' descendants received parts of the Mongol Empire as their personal domains to rule.¹¹⁴ Jöchi, Genghis Khan's eldest son, preceded his father in death, but Jöchi's sons received the western part of the empire. Batu, one of Jöchi's sons, received the northwestern portion of the empire. From here, Batu and his great general Subedei launched raids into eastern and central Europe, culminating in the conquest of Poland and Hungary in 1241.

Only the death that same year of Ögedei, Genghis Khan's third son who had been proclaimed the Great Khan (Khagan) two years after his father's death, stalled the Mongol assault on Europe.^{115,116} Batu and his forces, which had reached the



© Enerelt / Wikipedia.org
Ögedei's statue

¹¹⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Genghis Khan: Early Struggles," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/229093/Genghis-Khan>

¹¹¹ Thomas Streissguth, "Chapter 1: The Rise of Genghis Khan," in *Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire* (Detroit, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 16.

¹¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Genghis Khan: Rise to Power," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/229093/Genghis-Khan>

¹¹³ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Era of Chinggis Khan, 1206–27: Rise of Chinggis Khan," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 14.

¹¹⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Jöchi," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/304336/Jochi>

¹¹⁵ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Successors of Chinggis 1228–59: Subetei and the European Expedition," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 21.

outskirts of major European cities such as Venice and Vienna, withdrew to the southern Russian steppes. Here Batu was better able to protect his interests in the struggle to anoint Ögedei's successor as the Great Khan.¹¹⁷ Centered in the steppes and plains of modern-day Ukraine, southern Russia, and easternmost Kazakhstan, Batu's Khanate (commonly referred to as the Golden Horde) ultimately outlasted all the other khanates within the Mongol empire. The empire itself did not completely fall until 1502 after decades of steady decline.¹¹⁸

To the east, the Great Khans Mengke (1251–1259) and Khubilai (1261–1294) focused their sights on China. Under Khubilai (or Kublai) Khan, the Mongol winter capital moved south to Khanbalik (also known as Daidu), located at the modern-day site of Beijing. Khubilai Khan's summer residence remained north of China's Great Wall in what is today the Chinese autonomous region of Nei Mongol ("Inner Mongolia").¹¹⁹ The Southern Song Dynasty of southern China battled against the Mongol invaders for several decades. A turning point for Khubilai Khan's army came in 1276 with the capture of the Song capital Hangzhou (located southwest of modern-day Shanghai). Within the next three years, the Mongol forces overcame the remaining pockets of Southern Song resistance.¹²⁰ For the first time in history, nomadic invaders from the north had conquered all of China, not just the regions north of the Chiang Jiang (Yangtze) River.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 3: The Mongol Conquest (1150–1279)," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 56.

¹¹⁷ David Morgan, "Expansion to the West: The Mongols in Russia and Persia," in *The Mongols* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 140.

¹¹⁸ David Morgan, "Expansion to the West: The Mongols in Russia and Persia," in *The Mongols* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 144.

¹¹⁹ Shangdu, the summer residence of Kublai Khan, is perhaps best known as Xanadu, a name now metaphorically linked to opulence and wealth.

¹²⁰ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Khubilai Khan and the Yuan Dynasty, 1261–1368: A New Khan," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 23.

¹²¹ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 3: The Mongol Conquest (1150–1279)," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 64.

The Yuan Dynasty

In 1271, eight years prior to the final defeat of the Southern Song, Khubilai Khan declared himself founder of the Yuan Dynasty. It was the latest in a long string of Chinese dynasties. Breaking from traditional practice, the Mongols appointed foreigners from many of their Central Asian lands as the governmental administrators and privileged officials. Members of the Chinese Confucian civil service in turn found themselves politically and socially marginalized.^{122,123}



© artdaily.org
Khubilai Khan

Over time, these foreigners increasingly used their positions for personal profit. As the authority of the Mongol army lessened, dissension increased and peasant uprisings became increasingly common.^{124,125} During the 14th century, floods, earthquakes, and a loss of agricultural land given over to pasturelands contributed to famines and disease outbreaks. As a result, instability increased within China.¹²⁶

In 1368, the rebel leader Zhu Yuanzhang (and ultimately founder of the Ming Dynasty) led his army to the north toward the Mongol capital of Daidu. The last Yuan emperor, Toghon Temür, fled northward from the Daidu palace toward Karakorum, the original Mongol capital during the reign of Genghis Khan.¹²⁷ Never again would the Mongols have a significant presence in China. They would, however, continue to pose a threat to future Ming emperors. Much of the Great Wall of China, still observable today, is a lasting testament to the seriousness with which the Ming rulers viewed the Mongol threat.¹²⁸

¹²² Robert L. Worden, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Khubilai Khan and the Yuan Dynasty, 1261–1368: The Yuan Dynasty,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 26.

¹²³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Kublai Khan: Unification of China: Social and Administrative Policy,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324254/Kublai-Khan/3993/Unification-of-China?anchor=ref67148>

¹²⁴ Robert L. Worden, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Khubilai Khan and the Yuan Dynasty, 1261–1368: The Yuan Dynasty,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 26.

¹²⁵ Thomas Streissguth, “Chapter 6: The Decline of the Mongol Empire,” in *Genghis Khan’s Mongol Empire* (Detroit, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 88.

¹²⁶ Thomas Streissguth, “Chapter 6: The Decline of the Mongol Empire,” in *Genghis Khan’s Mongol Empire* (Detroit, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 86.

¹²⁷ Thomas Streissguth, “Chapter 6: The Decline of the Mongol Empire,” in *Genghis Khan’s Mongol Empire* (Detroit, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 86.

¹²⁸ David Morgan, “The Mongols in China,” in *The Mongols* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 135.

Post-Imperial Mongolia

The Oirat-Khalkha Division

Many changes took place after more than 60,000 Mongols retreated back into Mongolia from China.¹²⁹ Cycles of unity and disunity once again became the norm on the steppes as new tribal confederations took root. The largest of these new tribal groups were the Oirat, located in the Altai region of western Mongolia, and the Khalkha of the central and eastern regions north of the Gobi Desert.¹³⁰ Eventually, the Oirat emerged as the most powerful force in Mongolia. The Oirat leader Esen Taishi¹³¹ briefly united many of the Mongolian tribes and led a foray into China in 1449, capturing the Ming emperor in the process.¹³² Esen Khan died in battle four years later, after which followed the seemingly inevitable period of Mongol disunity.¹³³



© Tsasaa12 / Wikipedia.org
Esen Taishi

The fortunes of the eastern Mongol tribes revived toward the end of the 15th century under the leadership of Dayan Khan, who ruled from 1479 to 1543 and spurred a period of unification among the Khalkha and other central and eastern Mongol tribes.^{134,135} His grandson, Altan Khan, also unified the Khalkha tribes after a brief period of unrest following his grandfather's death.¹³⁶ One of Altan Khan's most important

¹²⁹ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 31.

¹³⁰ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 31.

¹³¹ The title Taishi ("noble") was applied to Oirat leaders, as they did not directly descend from the Genghis Khan lineage. Prior to his death, Esen took the title Khan after killing Tayisung Khan, one of the figurehead Khans put forward by the Oirat leaders.

¹³² Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 31.

¹³³ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 31.

¹³⁴ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 5: Age of Disintegration (1350–1691)," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 102, 110.

¹³⁵ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 31.

¹³⁶ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 32.

legacies was in the area of religion. After converting to Tibetan Buddhism (also known as Lamaism) during one of his raids in Tibet, Altan Khan commissioned the construction of the first lamaist monasteries in Mongolia and made Lamaism the state religion.¹³⁷ Sonam Gyatso, the leader of the Yellow Hat order of Tibetan Buddhism, later visited Altan Khan in Mongolia. There, the Mongolian leader conferred the title of Dalai Lama upon him (the first such use of that title).¹³⁸

Mongolia received its own Buddhist spiritual lineage in 1635, when a Khalkha Khan identified his son as the living reincarnation of an ancient Tibetan Buddhist scholar whose virtue was Buddha-like. The young prince was given the title Jebtsundamba Khutuktu (loosely translated as “Living Buddha”), thus starting a line of reincarnated Mongolian lamas similar to the Dalai Lama in Tibet. The Jebtsundamba Khutuktu lineage continued for nearly 300 years.¹³⁹

The Qing Dynasty

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Manchus, a nomadic group from Northeast China (Manchuria), increasingly pressured Mongolian lands from the south and east. As the Manchus prepared for their assault on the Ming Dynasty, they first took control of southern Mongolia (modern-day Inner Mongolia in China), which they administratively organized into their burgeoning empire.¹⁴⁰ Ligdan Khan, leader of a southern Mongol tribe affiliated with the Khalkha, had some success resisting the Manchus and the Khalkha tribes that had joined forces with the Manchus. Ultimately, however, he had to flee westward, and his death in 1634 effectively marked the end of eastern Mongol resistance to the Manchus.¹⁴¹ Subsequently in



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org
Depiction of a man hunting

¹³⁷ Robert L. Worden, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Return to Nomadic Patterns,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 32.

¹³⁸ The title Dalai Lama is actually a marriage of the Tibetan word (“lama”) for “guru” or “spiritual teacher” and the Mongolian word for “ocean.” The latter word is a translation of the Tibetan personal name Gyatso, which also means “ocean” in Tibetan. See London Tibetan Productions, “His Holiness The WIV Dalai Lama’s 75th Birthday Celebration 6 July 2010,” n.d., <http://www.londonney.com/dalailamabirthday/celebration.html> and *Webster’s Online Dictionary*, “Extended Definition: Gyatso,” 2011, <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/GYATSO?cx=partner-pub-0939450753529744%3Av0qd01-tdlq&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=GYATSO&sa=Search#906>

¹³⁹ Robert L. Worden, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Caught Between the Russians and the Manchus,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 34.

¹⁴⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mongolia: History: The Ascendancy of the Manchu,” by Owen Lattimore, 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia/27423/Intermecine-strife>

¹⁴¹ Robert L. Worden, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: Caught Between the Russians and the Manchus,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 33.

the 1680s, the Oirat tribes in the west, under the leadership of Galdan Khan, attacked the weakened Khalkha. The Khalkha leaders turned to the Manchus for military assistance. Using artillery, the Manchu forces quickly beat back the Oirat attack. A subsequent 1691 treaty signed by the Khalkha nobles formalized the Manchus' overlordship of the Khalkha lands.¹⁴² The Oirat tribes continued to resist, but by 1759 all of modern-day Mongolia was part of the Qing Dynasty (the Chinese dynastical name for the Manchu Empire).¹⁴³

The Manchu rulers treated southern Mongolia and northern Mongolia differently. Southern (Inner) Mongolia virtually became a part of China. Northern (Outer) Mongolia, essentially equivalent to the modern-day country of Mongolia, received much less administrative attention. This situation changed to some extent in the 19th century, when Russian expansionist actions caused the Qing emperor to take a more active role in the social and economic development of the northern Mongolian region. Chinese settlers soon began to pour into Outer Mongolia as part of a colonization policy.¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Mongol tribes known collectively as the Buryats continued to reside on the northern Mongolian border in lands under Russian control. Thus, Outer Mongolia became a buffer region lodged between two great imperial powers, a state of affairs that loomed large in the coming history.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: End of Independence," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 33.

¹⁴³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: History: The Ascendancy of the Manchu," Owen Lattimore, 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia/27423/Internecine-strife>

¹⁴⁴ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 7: Twentieth Century Mongolia," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 143.

¹⁴⁵ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: End of Independence," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 37.

20th-Century Mongolia

Autonomy and the Struggle for Independence

The Qing Dynasty weakened during the later decades of the 19th century and broke apart completely in 1911. As the Qing Dynasty crumbled, Outer Mongolia declared its independence in December of that year, an action that the new Chinese government did not recognize.¹⁴⁶ The eighth reincarnation of Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, Mongolia's Buddhist spiritual leader, now also became its political leader and received the title of Bogdo Khan ("holy ruler"). A flurry of treaties and agreements between the Mongolian, Russian, and Chinese leadership served to establish Outer Mongolia's autonomy (if not its independence).¹⁴⁷ Russia, in earlier treaties and agreement with Japan and Great Britain, considered Outer Mongolia part of its "sphere of interest" and did not recognize Outer Mongolia's complete independence.¹⁴⁸ Inner Mongolia, meanwhile, remained firmly under Chinese control.¹⁴⁹



© Baldugin 'Marzan' Sharav
Bogdo Khan

The Russian Revolution of 1917 set the stage for an invasion of Outer Mongolia by Chinese forces in 1919. A year later, White Russian troops (i.e., tsarist loyalists), partially funded by the Japanese, marched into Outer Mongolia from the north and pushed the Chinese out of Nijslel Huree (Ulaanbaatar).¹⁵⁰ In return, Mongolian nationalists organized a resistance movement, advised by Communist officials in Moscow. After establishing the Mongolian People's Party and forming a provisional Mongolian government from their base in Siberia, the Mongolian nationalists joined forces with Soviet troops and dispatched the White Russian forces from Nijslel Huree in July 1921.¹⁵¹ Once again Mongolia declared its independence from China.¹⁵² The new

¹⁴⁶ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Mongolia in Transition, 1368–1911: End of Independence," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 38.

¹⁴⁷ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Period of Autonomy, 1911–21," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 38.

¹⁴⁸ Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman, eds., "Sino-Russian Competition Over Outer Mongolia," in *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1999), 29.

¹⁴⁹ The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed., "Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region: History," Infoplease.com, (Columbia University Press, 2007), <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0858831.html>

¹⁵⁰ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Period of Autonomy, 1911–21," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 39.

¹⁵¹ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Period of Autonomy, 1911–21," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 40.

Mongolian leaders immediately established a constitutional monarchy, sharply diminishing the Bogdo Khan's political powers.¹⁵³ The new Mongolian People's Government forbade a search for a reincarnation of the Bogdo Khan after his death in 1924, thus eliminating the last vestige of Mongolia's Tibetan Buddhist theocracy.¹⁵⁴

During a congress of the Mongolian People's Party in August 1924, the party embraced a closer relationship with the Soviet Union and was renamed the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP). By November 1924, the newly established Mongolian People's Republic had a constitution modeled after the Soviet Union's and a renamed capital city of Ulaanbaatar ("Red Hero").¹⁵⁵ It was during this period of time that Horloyn Choybalsan, a nationalist leader who established close links with Soviet leader Josef Stalin, began his rise to power.¹⁵⁶

Collectivization and Threats from the East

As the Soviet Union continued to forge close political and trade relations with newly independent Mongolia, political figures within Mongolia opposing the Communist faction in the government found themselves on the defensive. By the late 1920s, the Mongolian government was implementing radical collectivization policies on a population that continued to largely consist of nomadic herders. Buddhist monks and tribal nobles found themselves under attack by the government. At the same time angry and frightened herders, facing the loss of their private livestock, began slaughtering their herds.¹⁵⁷ Uprisings in western Mongolia in 1932 resulted in Soviet leaders pushing the Mongolian government to back off on its rapid push toward a state-controlled collectivist economy.



© Переводика
Japanese pilots, 1939

¹⁵² Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Revolutionary Transformation, 1921–24," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 40.

¹⁵³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: History: Mongolia Since 1900," Owen Lattimore, 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia/27423/Internecine-strife>

¹⁵⁴ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Revolutionary Transformation, 1921–1924," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 42.

¹⁵⁵ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Revolutionary Transformation, 1921–1924," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 42.

¹⁵⁶ Ronald E. Dolan, "Chapter 5: National Security: The Mongolian Army, 1921–68: Early Development," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 229.

¹⁵⁷ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Purges of the Opposition, 1928–1932," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 45.

After the subsequent purges of the Mongolian party leaders who had directed the ill-fated rapid collectivization program, Mongolia's focus turned toward the east. In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria and established a puppet government. Both Mongolian and Soviet leaders viewed the Japanese Manchurian colony as a launching ground for an invasion of Mongolia. Japan, for its part, tried to elicit the loyalty of the Mongols by portraying itself as the one true supporter of Mongolian nationalism.¹⁵⁸ Soviet-Mongolian military cooperation increased after the signing of a 1934 mutual-defense agreement. By 1938, military spending made up more than half of Mongolia's budget. With Soviet aid, the Mongolian government rapidly developed its transportation and communications infrastructure to help improve the country's security position.¹⁵⁹ Between May and September 1939, Japanese forces fought the combined Mongolian-Soviet army in a prolonged battle along the Khalkha River of eastern-most Mongolia. The Japanese suffered large losses and ultimately signed a truce. Thereafter, the Japanese never challenged Mongolia's borders during the remainder of World War II.¹⁶⁰

Mongolia and the Sino-Soviet Conflict

After World War II, Mongolia's ties to the Soviet Union strengthened even more. Choybalsan, by now firmly in power, emulated many of the policies of his patron, Josef Stalin, including massive purges of potential rivals and the creation of a personality cult.¹⁶¹ The government's second attempt at collectivizing livestock herding, carried out in the late 1950s, was more successful than the first in the 1930s.^{162,163} In foreign affairs, Mongolia became a firm supporter of Soviet positions in matters of international importance. The Russian Cyrillic



© PD-MONGOLIA
Horloogiyn Choybalsan

¹⁵⁸ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 7: Twentieth Century Mongolia," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 155.

¹⁵⁹ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Economic Gradualism and National Defense, 1932–45: The New Turn Policy, 1932–40," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 47.

¹⁶⁰ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Economic Gradualism and National Defense, 1932–45: National Defense, 1940–45," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 49.

¹⁶¹ C. R. Bawden, "Chapter 8: The Destruction of the Old Order, 1932–1940: The Emergence of Choibalsang as Dictator," in *The Modern History of Mongolia*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: Kegan Paul International, 1989), 328–346.

¹⁶² C. R. Bawden, "Mongolia and Mongolians: An Overview," in *Mongolia Today* (London, UK: Kegan Paul International, 2001), 21.

¹⁶³ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Society: Collectivized Farming and Herding: Modernized Nomads," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 88.

alphabet became the standard script for written Mongolian in schools and the military during this time as well.¹⁶⁴

Choybalsan's death in 1952, followed to the grave by Stalin in 1953, marked a gradual shift in Mongolia's relations with its neighbors. China, which recognized Mongolia's independence in 1949 (the year that Communist leader Mao Zedong took power), once again began to take an active role in Mongolia's economy. Increased trade and numerous construction projects brought a large number of Chinese workers into the country, many from the Inner Mongolia region.¹⁶⁵ During the 1960s, as relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated, the Soviets took a renewed interest in Mongolia. Mongolia, forced to take sides between the two Communist adversaries, chose Moscow. China's long history of claiming Mongolian lands played large in this decision.¹⁶⁶

Mongolia's Democratic Revolution

The late 1980s saw a change in Mongolian political history, coincident with similar changes taking place in the U.S.S.R. and other Eastern Bloc countries. As the Soviets pulled their troops out of Mongolia, reflecting an easing in tensions between the U.S.S.R. and China, Mongolia quickly began repairing its political and trade relations with China. Perhaps more importantly, the Mongolian government began to establish relations with the West, including the United States.¹⁶⁷ The government leadership also proposed reform measures intended to supply greater local autonomy and increase productivity.¹⁶⁸



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org
Sukhe-Bator

Such measures, however, were unable to keep pace with the tides of change. Young educated Mongolians returning from their studies in the Soviet Union during the mid-1980s carried with

¹⁶⁴ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Economic Gradualism and National Defense, 1932–45: Peacetime Development, 1946–52," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 50.

¹⁶⁵ Larry Moses and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr., "Chapter 7: Twentieth Century Mongolia," in *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985), 164–165.

¹⁶⁶ Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Modern Mongolia, 1911–84: Economic Gradualism and National Defense, 1932–45: Socialist Construction Under Tsedenbal, 1952–84," in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 52.

¹⁶⁷ Morris Rossabi, "Chapter 1: Mongolia: A Peaceful Transition," in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 8–9.

¹⁶⁸ Morris Rossabi, "Chapter 1: Mongolia: A Peaceful Transition," in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 8.

them the ideas of *perestroika* (economic and political reconstruction) and *glasnost* (openness and transparency).¹⁶⁹ Several of them soon organized a new reform movement. Beginning in December 1989, the young protesters carried out demonstrations and hunger strikes in Ulaanbaatar's Sükhbaatar Square (named after one of the nationalist leaders of Mongolia's 1921 revolution).¹⁷⁰

By May 1990 the MPRP, which by this point contained several members sympathetic to the protesters' goals, had relented. Mongolia's first multi-party elections took place in July 1990. Some economic reforms, including the privatization of Mongolia's livestock herds, began thereafter, even though the MPRP retained control of the government after the 1990 elections.^{171,172} A new constitution passed in 1992 removed the last traces of the socialist past, including the country's name. The Mongolian People's Republic was now simply "Mongolia" once again.¹⁷³

Recent Events

Mongolia's transition to a market economy, which began in 1991, has been particularly difficult.¹⁷⁴ The nation's long economic dependence on assistance from the Soviet Union caused immediate shocks in the early 1990s when Russia went through its own economic troubles.¹⁷⁵ The MPRP-led government also hesitated in carrying out the wrenching economic changes necessary to retool the economy. In 1996, Mongolian voters in turn showed their frustration by electing Mongolia's first non-MPRP government.¹⁷⁶



© Otgonjargal Sharav
Tsakhia Elbedorj

¹⁶⁹ Morris Rossabi, "Chapter 1: Mongolia: A Peaceful Transition," in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 5.

¹⁷⁰ Morris Rossabi, "Chapter 1: Mongolia: A Peaceful Transition," in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 1–2.

¹⁷¹ Morris Rossabi, "Chapter 5: Herders and the New Economy," in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 120.

¹⁷² Nicholas D. Kristof, "Mongols to Elect New Parliament With China Watching the Results," *New York Times*, 28 June 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/28/world/mongols-to-elect-new-parliament-with-china-watching-the-results.html?ref=mongolia>

¹⁷³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mongolia: History: Mongolia Since 1900," Larry William Moses, 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389335/Mongolia/27423/Internecine-strife>

¹⁷⁴ United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Mongolia Country Report," 23 Feb. 2011, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/asia-oceania/mongolia/?profile=all>

¹⁷⁵ Nicholas D. Kristof, "Mongols, Ignored by Stepmother Russia, Are Left Adrift by Democracy, Too," *New York Times*, 5 July 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/07/05/world/mongols-ignored-by-stepmother-russia-are-left-adrift-by-democracy-too.html?ref=mongolia&pagewanted=1>

¹⁷⁶ Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Mongolia," 8 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2779.htm>

The MPRP returned to power in 2000, lost parliamentary elections in 2004, and regained power again in 2008. That year, charges of fraud by the losing Democratic Party ignited violent protests in Ulaanbaatar.¹⁷⁷ Following the country's first incident of election violence, Mongolia's Prime Minister responded by putting the capital city under a state of emergency.¹⁷⁸ In the shadows of such political discontent, the presidential election in 2009, won by Tsakhia Elbedorj, proved peaceful and was judged fair by all competing parties and international observers. Primary issues during the presidential campaign were the elimination of governmental corruption and the fair distribution of Mongolia's mineral revenues.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ James Brooke, "A Cunning Opposition Turns Tables in Mongolia," *New York Times*, 8 July 2004, http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F00F16F73E5F0C7B8CDDAE0894DC404482&fta=y&incamp=archive:article_related

¹⁷⁸ Edward Wong, "In Election Dispute, a Challenge for Mongolia's Democracy," *New York Times*, 8 July 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/08/world/asia/08mongolia.html?pagewanted=1&ref=mongolia>

¹⁷⁹ Jason Subler, "Opposition Wins Mongolia Presidential Election," Reuters, 25 May 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/05/25/us-mongolia-idUSTRE54O2HX20090525>

Chapter 2: Assessment

1. The Xanadu were a tribal confederation that emerged in the Mongolian steppes during the third century B.C.E.

FALSE

During the late 3rd century B.C.E., the Xiong-nu emerged as a tribal confederation whose mounted warriors waged nearly constant wars with the Chinese Han Dynasty for more than 150 years.

2. Khubilai (Kublai) Khan founded the Chinese Yuan Dynasty

TRUE

In 1271, eight years prior to the final defeat of the Southern Song, Khubilai Khan declared himself founder of the Yuan Dynasty. It was the latest in a long string of Chinese dynasties.

3. Mongolia's capital was invaded by the Japanese army from 1911–1921.

FALSE

Chinese forces invaded in 1919. A year later, White Russian troops (i.e., tsarist loyalists), partially funded by the Japanese, marched into Outer Mongolia from the north and pushed the Chinese out of Niyslel Huree (Ulaanbaatar).

4. Following the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty, Mongolia was once again beset by tribal competitions leading to periods of unity followed by disunity.

TRUE

Many changes took place after more than 60,000 Mongols retreated back into Mongolia from China. Cycles of unity and disunity once again became the norm on the steppes as new tribal confederations took root.

5. An attempt to collectivize Mongolia's herders during the late 1920s through the early 1930s proved unsuccessful.

TRUE

By the late 1920s, the Mongolian government was implementing radical collectivization policies on a population that continued to largely consist of nomadic herders. Angry and frightened herders, facing the loss of their private livestock, began slaughtering their herds. Uprisings in western Mongolia in 1932 resulted in Soviet leaders pushing the Mongolian government to back off on its rapid push toward a state-controlled collectivist economy.

Chapter 3: Economy

Introduction

Mongolia's economy—reliant on the prices of commodities, such as minerals and cashmere wool—was hit hard by the global recession of 2008–2009. Although general economic conditions rebounded in 2010, the agricultural sector, a major component of Mongolia's overall economy, has continued to suffer owing to livestock losses from harsh winter weather known as a *zud*. Inflation has also remained a threat to the economy's health, fueled by rising prices on imported food staples and large increases in public assistance.¹⁸⁰



© UNDP Mongolia
Cattle covered with snow

Agriculture

The agricultural sector in 2010 generated about 15% of Mongolia's gross domestic product (GDP) and provided employment for roughly 40% of the country's population.¹⁸¹ Most of this agricultural production involves livestock, with meat (sheep, cattle, goat, horse, and camel), milk (cow, goat, and sheep), and wool making up 9 of the country's 11 most valuable agricultural products.¹⁸²



© Antoine Roy
Woman milking a horse

Livestock

Mongolia's mix of livestock animals has changed dramatically in recent years. In 1985, sheep outnumbered goats by more than a 3-to-1 margin.¹⁸³ By 2005, however, Mongolian herders possessed more goats than sheep, a change driven in large part by the lucrative (by Mongolian standards) cashmere trade.¹⁸⁴ While Mongolia's goat stock increased by nearly 285% between 1985 and 2005, all other livestock species (camels, horses,

¹⁸⁰ Mongolian Views, "World Bank Outlines Mongolia's Economic Trends," *Mongol Messenger*, 2 January 2011, <http://www.mongolianviews.com/2011/02/world-bank-outlines-mongolias-economic.html>

¹⁸¹ Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Mongolia," 8 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2779.htm>

¹⁸² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "FAOSTAT: Commodities By Country: Mongolia: 2008," 2011, <http://faostat.fao.org/desktopdefault.aspx?pageid=339&lang=en&country=141>

¹⁸³ J. M. Suttie, "Country Pasture/Forage Resource Profiles," Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2000 (data amended by S. G. Reynolds in October 2006), <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Mongolia/mongol1.htm>

¹⁸⁴ Finance Business News, CNN Business, "High Cost of Cashmere on Mongolian Plains," 12 September 2010, <http://www.financebusinessnews.net/high-cost-of-cashmere-on-mongolia-plains/>

cattle/yaks, sheep) either declined or increased only slightly during this period. The severe *zud* in 2010, which led to a 27.7% reduction in Mongolia's total livestock herds compared with the previous year, hit the goat population the hardest. For the first time in five years, Mongolia's sheep population outnumbered its goats.¹⁸⁵

Cultivation

Overall, only about 10% of Mongolia's agricultural production, measured by value, comes from food crops.¹⁸⁶ It is not surprising that Mongolia grows little food, given that only 0.75% of the nation's land area is arable.¹⁸⁷ Wheat, potatoes, and various garden vegetables are the primary food crops.¹⁸⁸



© Luigi Guarino
Regenerating wheat and barley

During the period following World War II, Mongolia's socialist government attempted to increase crop production—mostly grains—by cultivating previously unused areas for crops. Farming practices were also modernized, which increased yields, and by the mid-1980s Mongolia was self-sufficient in grain production.¹⁸⁹ Beginning in the early 1990s, however, when state farms were disbanded, a large amount of the wheat acreage began to fall out of production. Some of this land simply reverted to steppe, but even where farming continued, yields were significantly lower than before.¹⁹⁰ The primary reason for this decline is that many credit-strapped farmers could no longer afford seeds, fertilizers,

¹⁸⁵ Mongolian Views, “Livestock Population Decreases 27.7 Percent,” 12 January 2011, <http://www.mongolianviews.com/2011/01/livestock-population-decreases-277.html>

¹⁸⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “FAOSTAT: Commodities By Country: Mongolia: 2008,” 2011, <http://faostat.fao.org/desktopdefault.aspx?pageid=339&lang=en&country=141>

¹⁸⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “Mongolia: Quick Country Facts,” 2011, <http://www.fao.org/countries/55528/en/mng/>

¹⁸⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “FAOSTAT: Commodities By Country: Mongolia: 2008,” 2011, <http://faostat.fao.org/desktopdefault.aspx?pageid=339&lang=en&country=141>

¹⁸⁹ Lester R. Brown, “Chapter 3 Data: Eroding Soils and Expanding Deserts: Grain Production, Area, Yield, Consumption, and Imports in Mongolia, 1961–2010,” in *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), http://www.earth-policy.org/books/wote/wote_data

¹⁹⁰ Lester R. Brown, “Chapter 3 Data: Eroding Soils and Expanding Deserts: Grain Production, Area, Yield, Consumption, and Imports in Mongolia, 1961–2010” in *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), http://www.earth-policy.org/books/wote/wote_data

pesticides, machinery, and fuel.¹⁹¹ As a consequence, by 2010 Mongolian farmers were producing less than 50% of the nation's grain needs.¹⁹²

Forestry

Mongolia's forests are state owned and managed.¹⁹³ Most tree harvesting goes toward fuel needs, with only a small amount allotted for private or industrial uses.¹⁹⁴ Because the harvesting limits are significantly lower than actual usage of wood products, illegal logging is a persistent problem.¹⁹⁵

Industry

Mining dominates Mongolia's industrial sector. Manufacturing, in contrast, is limited to just a few market niches. Up until the end of 2004, Mongolia had a successful cotton textile industry with 30,000 workers employed in as many as 70 garment factories producing clothing for export, mainly to the United States.^{196,197} Most of the raw cotton came from China, and most of the factories were owned by Chinese or other East Asian companies.¹⁹⁸



© Shreyans Bhansali
MSG plant

¹⁹¹ Morris Rossai, "Chapter 4: Poverty and Other Social Problems," in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 144.

¹⁹² Lester R. Brown, "Chapter 3 Data: Eroding Soils and Expanding Deserts: Grain Production, Area, Yield, Consumption, and Imports in Mongolia, 1961–2010," in *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), http://www.earth-policy.org/books/wote/wote_data

¹⁹³ Batukh N., "Mongolian Forest Ecosystems," World Wildlife Federation, March 2004, 2, http://www.assets.panda.org/downloads/forest_ecosystems_in_mn_march04.pdf

¹⁹⁴ T. Erdenechuluun, "Chapter 1: Forests and Forestry in Mongolia," in *Wood Supply in Mongolia: The Legal and Illegal Economies* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2006), 11, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/MONGOLIAEXTN/Resources/mong_timber_int_for_web.pdf

¹⁹⁵ T. Erdenechuluun, "Chapter 3: Illegal Timber Harvest and Trade," in *Wood Supply in Mongolia: The Legal and Illegal Economies* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2006), 31, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/MONGOLIAEXTN/Resources/mong_timber_int_for_web.pdf

¹⁹⁶ Chuluunbat Tsetsegmaa, "Coping With Restrictive Policies and Maintaining Competitiveness: Mongolia," 9–10 April 2007, http://www.unescap.org/tid/mtg/weaving_mong.pdf

¹⁹⁷ James Brooke, "Down and Almost Out in Mongolia," *New York Times*, 29 December 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/29/business/worldbusiness/29mongolia.html>

¹⁹⁸ James Brooke, "Down and Almost Out in Mongolia," *New York Times*, 29 December 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/29/business/worldbusiness/29mongolia.html>

With the 2005 termination of the World Trade Organization's Agreement of Textile and Clothing, however, Mongolia and many other less developed countries lost their competitive advantage in the clothing/textile sector as export quotas were lifted.¹⁹⁹ Mongolia's apparel and textile exports to the U.S. dropped precipitously from USD 225 million in 2004 to USD 2.4 million in 2010.²⁰⁰ Only the Mongolian garment factories producing cashmere clothing weathered this storm. The abundant local supply of raw material (only China produces more raw cashmere than Mongolia) has given Mongolian companies some advantages in this market, although they face extreme competition from Chinese cashmere-clothing producers.²⁰¹ A few manufacturing operations, mostly in Ulaanbaatar and Erdenet, also produce wool carpets and blankets.²⁰²

Other significant Mongolian manufacturing segments are food processing and construction materials. Flour mills, meat-processing factories, and milk and dairy plants make up the bulk of the small- and medium-sized food operations.²⁰³ Non-dairy beverages, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, are also produced for the local market.^{204,205} Among the construction materials produced in Mongolian plants are brick, cement, reinforced concrete, and lumber.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁹ Keith Yearman and Amy Gluckman, "Falling Off a Cliff," Dollars&Sense, September 2005, <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2005/0905yearman.html>

²⁰⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Imports From Mongolia by 5-Digit End-Use Code, 2002-2010," 2011, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/product/enduse/imports/c5740.html>

²⁰¹ USAID, "Current Status of Mongolian Textile Industry," June 2007, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADN868.pdf

²⁰² USAID, "Current Status of Mongolian Textile Industry," June 2007, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADN868.pdf

²⁰³ Choimboroljav Sumiyabazar, "Food Industry," Investment Mongolia, 14 May 2007, <http://investmongolia.blogspot.com/2007/05/food-industry.html>

²⁰⁴ Choimboroljav Sumiyabazar, "Food Industry," Investment Mongolia, 14 May 2007, <http://investmongolia.blogspot.com/2007/05/food-industry.html>

²⁰⁵ Liquid Brands Management, "Sales of Coca-Cola Products in Mongolia Increase 16 Times in 6 Years, Coca-Cola Press Release, 27 August 2008, <http://www.liquidbrandsmanagement.com/coca-cola-opens-us22-million-new-plant-in-mongolia-2/>

²⁰⁶ Pang Guek Cheng, "Economy: Construction," in *Cultures of the World: Mongolia* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 44.

Energy Resources

Mongolia possesses significant coal and lignite deposits that are presently being extracted in roughly 30 open-pit mines.^{207,208} Coal production increased dramatically in 2008 after a new coal mine in the Gobi Desert began operations. The Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi mine, which is state owned, is very close to the Chinese border and provides exports to China.²⁰⁹ Among the 6 billion tons of reserves being tapped by the mine are deposits of coking coal, an important ingredient for making steel. This is economically advantageous to Mongolia given that China, home of the world's largest steel industry, is one of Mongolia's two neighbors.²¹⁰



© Peter Riccio
Open pit copper/moly mine

As a result of mining operations, coal generated nearly 19% of Mongolia's total export revenues in 2009 compared to less than 3% in 2006.^{211,212} With another big jump in coal exports in 2010, Mongolia's share of China's coal exports rose from 11% to 39%.²¹³ Most of Mongolia's coal that is not exported to China is used internally to run the nation's five power plants and to fuel home stoves used for heating and cooking.²¹⁴

²⁰⁷ Susan Wacaster, U.S. Geological Survey, "The Mineral Industry of Mongolia," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, February 2011, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2009/myb3-2009-mg.pdf>

²⁰⁸ Global Methane Initiative, "Chapter 22: Mongolia," in *Coal Mine Methane Country Profiles*, December 2010, 174, http://www.globalmethane.org/documents/toolsres_coal_overview_ch22.pdf

²⁰⁹ South Gobi Resources, "Ovoot Tolgoi," n.d., <http://www.southgobi.com/s/OvootTolgoi.asp>

²¹⁰ Michael Kohn, "Mongolia Targets Global Mining Role as Investments Soar," BBC News, 20 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13078336>

²¹¹ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia–27 Mineral Fuels, Oils, Distillation Products, etc (2006, in USD Thousands)," 2011, http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2006&IL=27_Mineral_fuels,_oils,_distillation_products,_etc&TY=T

²¹² International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia–27 Mineral Fuels, Oils, Distillation Products, etc (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011, http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=27_Mineral_fuels,_oils,_distillation_products,_etc&TY=T

²¹³ Michael Sainsbury, "Mongolia Heats Up the Market for Coal Exports," *The Australian*, 9 September 2010, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/mongolia-heats-up-the-market-for-coal-exports/story-e6frg9e6-1225916136003>

²¹⁴ T. Bulgan, "Air Pollution and Coal Fired Power Plants," North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation, 2009, http://www.neaspec.org/documents/airpollution/PDF/S2_17pm_Bulgan.pdf

In recent years Mongolia has been producing a small but steadily increasing amount of crude oil, all of which is exported to China.^{215,216,217} Estimates on the total amount of Mongolian oil reserves vary widely, but government officials announced in 2010 that they hoped to increase crude oil production by a tenfold with the help of foreign investors. Presently, Mongolia has no domestic refinery, and thus all of its processed oil products come from Russia.²¹⁸

Mongolia is believed to possess some of the world's largest reserves of uranium, but no uranium mines are presently operating. (A Russian firm did operate a uranium mine in eastern Mongolia between 1988 and 1995.)²¹⁹ Governmental and corporate entities from Russia, France, India, and Japan have all signed agreements since 2009 pledging to help develop Mongolia's uranium resources.²²⁰

²¹⁵ The Business Council of Mongolia, "Mongolia Seeks Foreign Investment to Boost Crude Oil Output," Upstreamonline.com, 17 June 2010, <http://www.bcmongolia.org/news/503-mongolia-seeks-foreign-investment-to-boost-crude-oil-output>

²¹⁶ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia–27 Mineral Fuels, Oils, Distillation Products, etc (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011, [http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=27&Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc&TY=T](http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=27&Mineral%20fuels,%20oils,%20distillation%20products,%20etc&TY=T)

²¹⁷ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia–27 Mineral Fuels, Oils, Distillation Products, etc (2005, in USD Thousands)," 2011, [http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2006&IL=27&Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc&TY=T](http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2006&IL=27&Mineral%20fuels,%20oils,%20distillation%20products,%20etc&TY=T)

²¹⁸ The Business Council of Mongolia, "Mongolia Seeks Foreign Investment to Boost Crude Oil Output," Upstreamonline.com, 17 June 2010, <http://www.bcmongolia.org/news/503-mongolia-seeks-foreign-investment-to-boost-crude-oil-output>

²¹⁹ World Nuclear Association, "Uranium in Mongolia," 2011, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/inf125-mongolia.html>

²²⁰ Wise Uranium Mining Projects, "New Uranium Mining Projects–Mongolia," 10 January 2011, <http://www.wise-uranium.org/upmn.html>

Mineral Resources

Mongolia is richly endowed with mineral resources. Even though many of its mineral deposits have yet to be exploited, they still constitute a majority of the nation's total exports.²²¹ Foremost among these mineral riches is copper, which is mined at Erdenet from the second-largest copper deposit in Central Asia.²²² Another huge open-pit copper and gold mine—known as the Oyu Tolgoi mine—is under construction in Dornogovi and is projected to eventually produce more than one-third of Mongolia's GDP after it reaches full production.²²³ The size of the mineral deposits at the Oyu Tolgoi mine, which is expected to open in August 2012, has been compared to the island of Manhattan in New York City. It is estimated these deposits could last through more than half a century of active mining.^{224,225} The Canadian company Ivanhoe Mines is building the multi-billion-dollar facility, which some investors believe will help raise the per capita income of the Mongolian people from its current level of USD 3,200 to exceed USD 10,000 within 10 years.²²⁶



© kptice / flickr.com
Copper plant

Several other minerals currently mined in Mongolia are also important to its economy. The nation is the world's third-largest producer of fluorspar (behind China and Mexico), and it also exports significant amounts of gold, iron, zinc, and molybdenum.^{227,228,229} Construction materials (such as lime and stone) and salt are also mined for domestic use.

²²¹ Susan Wacaster, "The Mineral Industry of Mongolia," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, February 2011, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2009/myb3-2009-mg.pdf>

²²² Erdene Gold, Inc., "Copper and Gold: Mongolia Projects," 2007, http://www.erdene.com/assets/pdf/Erdene_Cu_Au.pdf

²²³ Mining-Technology.com, "Oyu Tolgoi Gold and Copper Project, Mongolia," 2011, <http://www.mining-technology.com/projects/oyu-tolgoi/>

²²⁴ Bloomberg News, "Oyu Tolgoi May Start Earlier Than Planned, Executive Says," 6 April 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-07/oyu-tolgoi-copper-project-to-start-in-aug-2012-executive-says.html>

²²⁵ BBC News, "Mongolia on Verge of Mineral Boom," 7 April 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8605549.stm>

²²⁶ Michael Kohn, "Mongolia Targets Global Mining Role as Investments Soar," BBC News, 20 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13078336>

²²⁷ Susan Wacaster, "The Mineral Industry of Mongolia," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, February 2011, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2009/myb3-2009-mg.pdf>

²²⁸ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia—26 Ores, Slag and Ash etc (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011,

Trade

Mongolia's land-locked position between two of the world's largest countries limits its trading options. Until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, most trade (primarily Mongolian imports) was with Russia. Today, however, China is Mongolia's major trading partner, receiving more than 80% (in trade value) of Mongolia's exports and providing nearly 44% of Mongolia's imports. Russia still provides a sizable percentage of Mongolia's imports (27%), most of which consists of refined oil products.^{230,231} Overall, Mongolia in recent years has run a narrow trade deficit, although the gap increased significantly during the worldwide recession in 2008.²³²



© Herry Lawford
Coal mine

Most of Mongolia's export revenues come from minerals and energy resources (coal, crude oil). Combined, these two categories generated roughly 89% of Mongolia's export revenues in 2009. Wool, cashmere, and cashmere clothing are the only other significant exports, totaling roughly 6% of the export trade.²³³ Major import categories include oil (more than 17% of import revenues), machinery (11%), clothing (8.5%), electronics and electrical equipment (6.7%), and articles of iron and steel (5.8%). Wheat and flour are the primary food imports.²³⁴

http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=26&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=26
Ores, slag and ash&TY=T

²²⁹ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia–71 Pearls, Precious Stones, Metals, Coins, etc. (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011,
http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=71&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=71
Pearls, precious stones, metals, coins, etc&TY=T

²³⁰ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Imports of Mongolia–00 All Industries (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011,
http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_IP_CI_P.aspx?IN=00&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=00
All industries&TY=I

²³¹ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Imports of Mongolia–27 Mineral Fuels, Oils, Distillation Products, etc (2009, in USD Thousands), 2011,
http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_IP_CI_P.aspx?IN=27&RP=496&YR=2009&IL=27
Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc&TY=I

²³² Economy Watch, "Mongolia Trade, Exports and Imports," n.d.,
http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/mongolia/export-import.html

²³³ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Mongolia–71 Pearls, Precious Stones, Metals, Coins, etc. (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011,
http://www.intracen.org/appli/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI.aspx?RP=496&YR=2009

²³⁴ International Trade Centre, "Trade Map–International Trade Statistics: List of Products Imported by Mongolia," 2011, http://www.trademap.org/tradestat/Product_SelCountry_TS.aspx

Tourism

Mongolia attracted an average of 420,000 tourists annually between 2005 and 2010.^{235, 236} Most of these visitors are either from East Asian countries (57% in 2010) or Europe (37%). Overall, tourism and related businesses generate roughly 10% of Mongolia's GDP.²³⁷ Ecotourism and adventure travel make up a significant portion of Mongolia's tourism sector. The Mongolian tourism office estimates that roughly three-quarters of all tourists are "backpackers."^{238,239} In rural areas, tourist camps are common, allowing visitors to experience something of the Mongolian nomadic tradition with a semblance of Western-style conveniences.²⁴⁰



© Jason Lindley
Tourist ger camp

²³⁵ The World Bank, "International Tourism, Number of Arrivals," 2011, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL>

²³⁶ Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism, Mongolia, "Discover Mongolia—Official Tourism Website of Mongolia: Statistic," 6 April 2011, <http://www.mongoliatourism.gov.mn/trade/statistic>

²³⁷ World Travel & Tourism Council, "Mongolia: Key Facts at a Glance," 2011, http://www.wttc.org/eng/Tourism_Research/Economic_Research/Country_Reports/Mongolia/

²³⁸ Michael Kohn, "Destination Mongolia," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 55.

²³⁹ Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism, Mongolia, "Discover Mongolia—Official Tourism Website of Mongolia: Plans to Increase Tourism Revenue," 6 April 2011, <http://www.mongoliatourism.gov.mn/trade/statistic>

²⁴⁰ Michael Kohn, "Directory: Accommodation," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 249.

Banking and Currency

Mongolia's official unit of currency is the tögrög (currency code MNT). During 2010, the tögrög (MNT) rose 15% against the U.S. dollar, the largest increase against the dollar of any world currency, primarily because of Mongolia's natural resources.^{241, 242} As of mid-April 2011, the dollar-to-tögrög exchange rate was 1 USD = 1,200 MNT, compared with a rate of 1 USD = 1,400 MNT one year prior.²⁴³



© Takeshi Kitayama
Bank in Ulaanbaatar

Mongolia's banking system consists of the Bank of Mongolia (the Central Bank) and 16 commercial banks (two of which are in bankruptcy proceedings as of early 2011).²⁴⁴ Numerous other financial institutions—such as insurance companies, securities companies, and savings and loan cooperatives—also exist, but their total assets are negligible compared to those of the banks.²⁴⁵ All but one of the banks are privately owned. The recession of 2008–2009 caused liquidity problems for many of these banks, as individuals began withdrawing their savings deposits in fear of a banking collapse. In addition, the number of non-performing loans jumped during this period.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ Alex Frangos, "Hot Money Roils Growth Currencies," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 January 2011, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703814804576035533789268602.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

²⁴² Mongolian Views, "World Bank Outlines Mongolia's Economic Trends," *Mongol Messenger*, 2 January 2011, <http://www.mongolianviews.com/2011/02/world-bank-outlines-mongolias-economic.html>

²⁴³ XE.com, "XE Currency Charts (USD/MNT)," 11 April 2011, <http://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=MNT>

²⁴⁴ Tsolmon Erdene, "Mongolia: Banking Sector," Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia, December 2010, 3, www.erna.or.jp/en/Research/dp/pdf/1004e.pdf

²⁴⁵ Tsolmon Erdene, "Mongolia: Banking Sector," Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia, December 2010, 3, www.erna.or.jp/en/Research/dp/pdf/1004e.pdf

²⁴⁶ Tsolmon Erdene, "Mongolia: Banking Sector," Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia, December 2010, 5, www.erna.or.jp/en/Research/dp/pdf/1004e.pdf

Investment

Mongolia's policies generally favor foreign investment, although some laws passed in 2009 by the Mongolian parliament regarding investor rights may have a chilling effect on future investment.²⁴⁷ In recent years, most of Mongolia's foreign direct investment has been toward mining, involving projects that require a great deal of infrastructure investment. One of the biggest of these foreign-financed mining developments is the Oyu Tolgoi copper-gold mine, jointly owned by Ivanhoe Mines of Canada and the English/Australian multinational Rio Tinto. The Government of Mongolia holds a 34% interest in this mine, which is expected to cost more than USD 7 billion to fully develop.²⁴⁸ Planned future construction projects associated with mining include power plants, coal washing plants, oil refineries, and a new rail link to Russia, where Mongolian minerals and other products can be transported to Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.²⁴⁹



© shagai / flickr.com
Thermal power plant

²⁴⁷ U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar Mongolia, "2010 Mongolia Investment Climate Statement," 15 January 2010, 3–6, <http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/root/media/pdf/2010-mongolia-investment-climate-statement.pdf>

²⁴⁸ U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar Mongolia, "2010 Mongolia Investment Climate Statement," 15 January 2010, 5, <http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/root/media/pdf/2010-mongolia-investment-climate-statement.pdf>

²⁴⁹ Michael Kohn, "Mongolia Targets Global Mining Role as Investments Soar," BBC News, 20 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13078336>

Transportation

Mongolia has many thousands of miles of road, but only 3.5% are paved.²⁵⁰ The road density, measured as kilometers of road per 100 square kilometers of land, is also quite low (3.3%). Another problem is that road maintenance has been neglected on many of these roads.²⁵¹ One of the most important projects currently under development is the North–South Road Project, which will finally provide a completely paved link between the Russian and Chinese borders. It follows a path that largely parallels the Trans-Mongolian Railway.²⁵²



© Michael Chu
Trans-Mongolian Railway

Mongolia has 1,815 km (1,125 mi) of railroad track, most of which makes up the Trans-Mongolian Railway.²⁵³ This route links Jinning in China with Ulan Ulde in Russia, where it reaches a junction with the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Ulaanbaatar’s Genghis Khan International Airport serves as Mongolia’s hub for international and domestic flights. Mongolia has 22 other airports, but only 4 of them have paved runways and lighting for night and bad-weather landings. The majority of Mongolia’s air passenger traffic arrives and departs via international flights.²⁵⁴

Mongolia’s rail systems mostly consist of spur lines connecting mining centers with the main Trans-Siberian Railway.²⁵⁵ Over 95% of Mongolia’s freight turnover (freight tonnage times miles transported) is carried on trains, with roads primarily used for carrying goods only short distances.²⁵⁶ Railways are also the primary form of passenger transportation in Mongolia for longer trips.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁰ Eurasia Capital, “Infrastructure in Mongolia: Challenges and Opportunities,” April 2009, http://www.associm.com/newsletters/pdf/INFRASTRUCTURE_final.pdf

²⁵¹ Eurasia Capital, “Infrastructure in Mongolia: Challenges and Opportunities,” April 2009, http://www.associm.com/newsletters/pdf/INFRASTRUCTURE_final.pdf

²⁵² Millenium Challenge Corporation, “Millenium Challenge Account Mongolia,” 2009, <http://en.mca.mn/static/1288.shtml>

²⁵³ B. Manduul, “Transportation Statistics of Mongolia,” Road Research and Supervision Center, Mongolia, 1 March 2008, 19, http://www.kokudokeikaku.go.jp/wat2/23_mongol.pdf

²⁵⁴ B. Manduul, “Transportation Statistics of Mongolia,” Road Research and Supervision Center, Mongolia, 1 March 2008, 22–23, http://www.kokudokeikaku.go.jp/wat2/23_mongol.pdf

²⁵⁵ Michael Kohn, “Getting Around Train,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 285.

²⁵⁶ B. Manduul, “Transportation Statistics of Mongolia,” Road Research and Supervision Center, Mongolia, 1 March 2008, 8, http://www.kokudokeikaku.go.jp/wat2/23_mongol.pdf

²⁵⁷ B. Manduul, “Transportation Statistics of Mongolia,” Road Research and Supervision Center, Mongolia, 1 March 2008, 19, http://www.kokudokeikaku.go.jp/wat2/23_mongol.pdf

Standard of Living

Results of an October 2009 poll of Mongolians from various parts of the country revealed that more than one-fifth of the respondents felt that the low standard of living was Mongolia's biggest economic and sociopolitical problem. Even more (nearly 29%) thought that high unemployment, one of the markers of a low standard of living, was the nation's biggest problem.²⁵⁸ In Ulaanbaatar, in particular, a rapidly escalating population has led to the spread of slums around the city's outer edges. Many of these areas lack basic necessities, such as running water and connections to the city's central heating grid.²⁵⁹



© Michael Chu
Apartment, Ulaanbaatar

However, Mongolia's vast untapped wealth in coal and minerals, such as copper and uranium, provides hope that the nation's overall standard of living will rise once mines start operations.²⁶⁰ Concerns persist, nevertheless, about how much of the coal and mineral revenues will circulate down to the general population and be used to provide much-needed infrastructure to many areas. Furthermore, an economy's overreliance on mining income often results in making the local currency more valuable (because of all the foreign investment) and thus lessening the competitiveness of other economic sectors such as manufacturing.

In response to these concerns, the Mongolian government plans to set up a sovereign wealth fund that will be stocked by the mineral royalties and taxes. The government will funnel part of the fund's monies to cash and stock programs that will provide annual income to all Mongolians, similar to other such programs in resource-rich areas such as Alaska and Norway.²⁶¹ The fund will also be used to develop processing industries and improve the nation's education, science, and technology capacities.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Mongolian Views, "Sant Maral Foundation Politbarometer (Part I)," 20 October 2009, <http://www.mongolianviews.com/2009/10/sant-maral-foundation-politbarometer.html>

²⁵⁹ Mongolian Institute for Sustainable Economic Development, "Sustainable Housing and Urban Planning: Ger Districts," 2011, <http://www.mongolia-institute.org/Sustainable-Housing-and-Urban-Planning/sustainable-housing-and-urban-planning.html>

²⁶⁰ Patrick Allen, "Mongolia: Boldly Go Where No Investor...," CNBC.com, 14 April 2011, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/42584629>

²⁶¹ BBC News, "Norway Country Profile," 18 October 2010, http://www.dermundo.com/www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1023276.stm

²⁶² Bloomberg News, "Mongolia Fund to Manage \$30 Billion Mining Jackpot (Update2)," 11 September 2009, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aWm8u8kb0R5E>

Chapter 3: Assessment

1. Mongolia has been slow to privatize its banking system, with most banks still under state control.

FALSE

Mongolia's banking system consists of the Bank of Mongolia (the Central Bank) and 16 commercial banks (two of which are in bankruptcy proceedings). All but one of the banks are privately owned.

2. Most of Mongolia's tourism trade currently revolves around ecotourism and adventure travel.

TRUE

Ecotourism and adventure travel make up a significant portion of Mongolia's tourism sector. The Mongolian tourism office estimates that roughly three-quarters of all tourists fall in the "backpacker" category.

3. Mongolia's most important energy resource is coal.

TRUE

Coal generated nearly 19% of Mongolia's total export revenues in 2009 compared to less than 3% in 2006. Most of Mongolia's coal that is not exported to China is used internally to run the nation's five power plants and to fuel home stoves used for heating and cooking.

4. Mongolia's forests are plagued by illegal harvesting of trees.

TRUE

Most legal tree harvesting in Mongolia goes toward fuel needs, with only a small amount allotted for private or industrial uses. Because the harvesting limits are significantly lower than actual usage of wood products, illegal logging is a persistent problem.

5. Mongolia has numerous mineral resources, foremost of which is tungsten.

FALSE

Mongolia is richly endowed with mineral resources. Its copper deposit is the second-largest in Central Asia. Mongolia's other mineral resources include gold, coal, uranium, iron ore, and oil.

Chapter 4: Society

Introduction

While ancient tales of fierce, 15th-century warriors may still worry some, visitors to modern Mongolia most certainly will encounter miners and businessmen before barbarian tribes on the steppes of Central Asia.

Far from emulating the sword-swinging terror of Genghis Khan, Mongolians are known for their hospitality to strangers, in part because of their traditional nomadic culture that fosters strong inter-dependency within and outside the family. Living in an extremely isolated region in eastern Asia, Mongolians have never had the option of choosing to withdraw from their neighbors, who through trade relations offered many necessities not readily available in Mongolia's sometimes harsh environment. Thus, hospitality in Mongolia has long been a survival technique, not only a matter of politeness.²⁶³



© Ralph McConaghy
Mongolian girls

The past and present are both evident in Mongolia today. Centuries-old traditions thrive in Mongolia—most readily observable in the many tent-like houses known as *gers* that dot the countryside.^{264,265} However, most Mongolians today also embrace modern conveniences and are generally open but not slavish to the ways of the outside world.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Michael Koln, “The Culture: The National Psyche,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 31.

²⁶⁴ Ministry of Tourism, Government of Mongolia, “The Ger,” Asia-Planet.net, 2002, <http://www.asia-planet.net/mongolia/culture.htm>

²⁶⁵ Bioregions.org, “Traditional Mongolian Ger,” n.d., <http://www.bioregions.org/pdfs/GerOwnersPamphlet.pdf>

²⁶⁶ Michael Koln, “The Culture: The National Psyche,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 31–32.

Ethnic and Linguistic Groups

Mongolia is a very ethnically homogeneous country, with the large majority of the population speaking one of several dialects of the Mongol language. The dominant dialect, Khalkha Mongol, is the national language and is spoken by more than 80% of the population.^{267, 268} The various other Mongol ethno-linguistic groups, primarily differentiated by their dialects, make up no more than 3% of the total population.²⁶⁹ Most of these minority Mongol ethnic groups live in the western part of the country.^{270,271} Kazakhs, located in western Mongolia, are the principal non-Mongolian minority and make up slightly more than 4% of the nation's population. Their population in Mongolia used to be greater, but after the Soviet Union broke up in 1990, a large percentage of the ethnic Kazakhs moved to newly independent Kazakhstan.²⁷²



© Julie Laurent
Mongolian boy

Religion

Buddhism

Buddhism is the first organized religion that made substantial inroads into Mongolia. During the late 16th century, Altan Khan, a powerful western tribal leader attempting to unify the Mongol tribes, converted to Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism). The religion quickly spread among the nobles and eventually the masses throughout the Mongol lands.²⁷³

By the end of the 19th century, converts to the monastic religion had built 583 monasteries and temples across Outer Mongolia (the territory of the modern nation).²⁷⁴ Roughly one-third of men



© Radek Krol
Monk, Gandan Monastery

²⁶⁷ Christopher Kaplonski, "Ethnic Groups," n.d., <http://www.chriskaplonski.com/mongolia/ethnicgroups.html>

²⁶⁸ Mongoluls.net, "Mongolian Language," 2007, <http://mongoluls.net/mongolianlanguage>

²⁶⁹ Christopher Kaplonski, "Ethnic Groups," n.d., <http://www.chriskaplonski.com/mongolia/ethnicgroups.html>

²⁷⁰ GoHovd.com, "The Ethnic Groups of Hovd Aimag," 11 May 2009, http://www.gohovd.com/wiki/Ethnic_Groups

²⁷¹ Christopher Kaplonski, "Ethnic Groups," n.d., <http://www.chriskaplonski.com/mongolia/ethnicgroups.html>

²⁷² Mongolia Today, "Hunting With Golden Eagles," 2002, <http://www.mongoliatoday.com/eagle.html>

²⁷³ Sechin Jagchid, "Tibetan Buddhism, The Mongolian Religion," n.d., http://www.innermongolia.org/english/tibetan_buddhism.htm

²⁷⁴ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Religion: Buddhism," in *Mongolia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991), 101.

in Mongolia in the 1920s were Buddhist monks, living both within and outside the monasteries. However, during the late 1930s, Mongolia's communist leadership purged the Buddhist clergy, killing as many as 100,000 monks and destroying nearly all of the country's monasteries.^{275,276} Thereafter, three generations of Mongolians had little or no exposure to Buddhist teachings, thus greatly weakening the religion's hold on the national culture.²⁷⁷

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Tibetan Buddhism has begun a slow revival in Mongolia. Gandantegchinlen Monastery (or simply Gandan Monastery) in Ulaanbaatar, one of the few Tibetan Buddhist sites that survived the destruction of the 1930s, serves as the country's religious center, with more than 400 monks in residence.²⁷⁸ By the end of 2010, the re-emergence of the religion was represented by more than 250 Buddhist temples and monasteries throughout the country—roughly half of the total religious places of worship within Mongolia.²⁷⁹

Other Religions

The Kazakh minority in western Mongolia practices Sunni Islam. Like their Buddhist counterparts, Mongolia's Muslims were persecuted during the 1930s under Soviet rule. Few mosques were destroyed, however, because of the informal nature of Kazakh Islam and the corresponding lack of religious infrastructure.²⁸⁰ Since 1990, more than 40 mosques and seven Islamic centers have opened in Mongolia. By one estimate there are now roughly 150,000 Muslim adherents, equivalent to about 5% of the population.²⁸¹



© Sainjargal Sambalhundeov
Ovoo

²⁷⁵ *New York Times*, "Mass Buddhist Grave Reported in Mongolia," 23 October 1981, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/23/world/mass-buddhist-grave-reported-in-mongolia.html>

²⁷⁶ Michael Koln, "The Culture: Religion: Buddhism," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 36.

²⁷⁷ Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, "Revival of the Great Buddhist Culture of Mongolia," 11 January 2011, <http://www.fpmt.org/projects/other/mongolia/history.html>

²⁷⁸ Mongoluls.net, "Gandan Monastery," 2007, <http://mongoluls.net/khiid/gandan.shtml>

²⁷⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Mongolia," in *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148885.htm>

²⁸⁰ *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, "Islam-Mongolia," BookRags.com (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2002–2007), <http://www.bookrags.com/research/islammongolia-ema-03/>

²⁸¹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Mongolia," in *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148885.htm>

Another religious minority in Mongolia is the growing Christian population, now estimated at more than 4% of the nation's population. Most Mongolian Christians are Protestant; about 9% are followers of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons).²⁸²

Gender Issues

Women have traditionally held a relatively higher social position within Mongolia compared to most other Central and East Asian societies. This is because Mongolia's herding economy required women to take an important role in sustaining the family, which included tending sheep, the most valuable resource for most families. During Mongolia's communist era, women increasingly worked outside the home, particularly in teaching and medicine.²⁸³



© Michael Chu
Father and son

Today, the family and economic rights of women are legally guaranteed in Mongolia.²⁸⁴ In fact, more Mongolian women are educated than men, have more economic opportunities and better health than men, and participate more in politics than men.²⁸⁵ Indeed, Mongolia in 2009 ranked better than any other country in the world in the Global Gender Gap Index's comparisons of women's economic participation and opportunity.²⁸⁶ Only in measurements of participation rates at the highest levels of national government do males outnumber females in Mongolia.²⁸⁷

²⁸² Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Mongolia," in *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148885.htm>

²⁸³ Donald R. DeGlopper, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Society: Position of Women," in *Mongolia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991), 94–95.

²⁸⁴ International Fund for Agricultural Development, "Mongolia: Project for Market and Pasture Management Development (PMPMD): Design Completion Report, June 2010, 11, <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/design/102/mongolia.pdf>

²⁸⁵ Richard Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, "Table 3a: The Global Gender Gap Index 2009 Rankings :Comparisons With 2008, 2007 and 2006," in *The Global Gender Gap Report 2009*, 8, <https://members.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2009.pdf>

²⁸⁶ Richard Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, "Table 3b: Detailed Rankings 2009," in *The Global Gender Gap Report 2009*, 8, <https://members.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2009.pdf>

²⁸⁷ Richard Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, "Table 3b: Detailed Rankings 2009," in *The Global Gender Gap Report 2009*, 8, <https://members.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2009.pdf>

Traditional Clothing

In Ulaanbaatar and other Mongolian urban areas, European-style clothes are now commonly worn, but in rural areas traditional clothing is still the norm. Most important of these garments is the *del*, a loose wool gown with a high collar that is cinched at the waist with a sash.²⁸⁸ It is worn by both men and women, with little difference in style and cut. Men's *dels* tend to be wider and more subdued in color than those of women. The *del's* practicality in Mongolia's harsh conditions has ensured its continuing popularity—it serves as a coat, a blanket, and even as a primitive form of privacy when relieving oneself on the treeless steppes. In cold times of the year, people commonly wear a *del* that is padded with sheepskin or cotton wool.²⁸⁹



© Zbigniew Kulak
Young girl in traditional dress

Headwear is another necessity on the Mongolian steppes, and several varieties are commonly worn. Baseball hats, felt or straw short-brimmed fedoras, and even Australian-style “cowboy hats” are some of the more recently imported styles.^{290,291,292} The traditional Mongol headwear, an ornately decorated spike-topped hat known as the *loovuz*, is now generally only seen at holiday and ceremonial events.^{293,294}

²⁸⁸ Daniel Roy, “The Del,” n.d., <http://danielroy.tripod.com/cgi-bin/alternate/mongolia/clothing.html>

²⁸⁹ Ministry of Tourism, Government of Mongolia, “Clothing,” Asia-Planet.net, 2002, <http://www.asia-planet.net/mongolia/culture.htm>

²⁹⁰ Daniel Roy, “Hats and Boots,” n.d., <http://danielroy.tripod.com/cgi-bin/alternate/mongolia/clothing.html>

²⁹¹ Asia-Insider-Photos.com, “Mongolian Clothes for Men: Functional and Warm,” 2010, <http://www.asia-insider-photos.com/mongolian-clothes-men.html>

²⁹² Foxlily.com, “Nadaam: The Three Manly Sports,” 2009, <http://foxlily.com/2010/04/nadaam-the-three-manly-sports/>

²⁹³ Daniel Roy, “Hats and Boots,” n.d., <http://danielroy.tripod.com/cgi-bin/alternate/mongolia/clothing.html>

²⁹⁴ Foxlily.com, “Nadaam: The Three Manly Sports,” 2009, <http://foxlily.com/2010/04/nadaam-the-three-manly-sports/>

Arts

Painting and Sculpture

Traditional Mongolian art is heavily imbued with religious imagery and reminiscent of styles seen in Tibetan art, not surprising given the long history of cultural ties between these two regions.^{295,296} These paintings were typically done on cloth and framed with silk. In some cases, the religious “paintings” were actually silk appliqués sewn onto the cloth.²⁹⁷



© Karina Moreton
Turkic Man Stone, Altai Mountains

Popular in the 19th and 20th centuries, *Zurag* is a later style of Mongolia art. It emphasizes secular themes—in particular, daily life on the Mongolian steppes. Balduugiyn Sharav (1869–1939) is the best-known artist of this style.²⁹⁸ His *One Day in Mongolia* is often credited as Mongolia’s most famous painting.²⁹⁹ Its depiction of a nomadic encampment is sweeping in its detail, providing a glimpse into nearly all aspects of the nomadic lifestyle.

Mongolia’s sculptural works, like its paintings, long displayed a religious orientation. Bogd Gegeen Zanabazar (1635–1723), the first Mongolian to hold the title *Jebtsundama Khutuktu* (“Living Buddha”), is renowned to this day for his bronze casts of Buddhist deities. Many of his sculptures remain in monasteries and museums throughout Mongolia.³⁰⁰ A direct descendent of Genghis Khan, Zanabazar is known as the “Michelangelo of Asia” and is remembered fondly for “offering a regional renaissance in theology, language, astronomy, and art.”³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ Terese Tse Bartholomew, “Mongolian Exhibition: Introduction to the Art of Mongolia,” AsianArt.com, 7 September 1995, <http://www.asianart.com/mongolia/introduct.html>

²⁹⁶ Michael Koln, “The Culture: Arts: Painting and Sculpture,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 40.

²⁹⁷ Pang Guek Cheng, “10: Arts: Painting and Sculpture,” in *Cultures of the World: Mongolia* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 101.

²⁹⁸ Pang Guek Cheng, “10: Arts: Painting and Sculpture,” in *Cultures of the World: Mongolia* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 102.

²⁹⁹ Face Music, “Mongolian Artwork, Handicraft,” 1998, http://www.face-music.ch/bi_bid/trad_oilpainting.html

³⁰⁰ Michael Koln, “Zanabazar: The Michelangelo of the Steppes,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 142.

³⁰¹ Tibetan Mongolian Museum Society, “Zanabazar, Bogd Gegeen—the First Respondent Saint of Mongolia, n.d., <http://www.tibetan-museum-society.org/tibetan-art-museum-gallery/exhibit.php?id=1&sortby=category>

Music

Throat singing (also referred to as overtone singing) is a style often associated with the Tuva region on Mongolia's northwestern border. Western Mongolia also has many practitioners of this style, which is known as *koomei*. The *koomei* singer—expertly manipulating the larynx, throat, diaphragm, and palate—generates two tones at the same time, one a growling low-to-midrange note similar to a bagpipe drone and the other a higher-pitched flute-like sound.^{302,303}



© Julie Laurent
Elderly Mongolian man

Another traditional Mongolian musical style is *urtiin duu* (often translated as “long song”), typically a 32-verse vocal piece marked by trills, a sweeping melody cascading up and down a vast octave range that peaks at falsetto, and a complex rhythmic pattern.³⁰⁴ *Urtiin duu* singers frequently perform at ceremonial festivities, such as weddings, new home inaugurations, child births, and livestock brandings, as well as at national celebrations such as Naadam and Tsagaan Sar (Lunar New Year).³⁰⁵

Architecture

Visitors to Mongolia are immediately struck by the numerous tent-like homes known as *gers*. Modern *gers* reflect Mongolia's long nomadic tradition, and they are as likely to be seen in urban areas as in rural areas. The *ger*, typically 3.7–9.1 m (12–30 ft) in diameter, is easily transportable due to its wooden, latticed framework that folds and unfolds like a circular baby gate. Felt covers the walls and wooden-raftered roof.³⁰⁶ A hole at the top of the *ger* is the only window and is used



© Karina Moreton
Ger

³⁰² Ken-Ichi Sakakibara et al, “Growl Voice in Ethnic and Pop Styles,” 2004, <http://www.soundtransformations.btinternet.co.uk/GrowlVoiceinEthnicandPopStyles.htm>

³⁰³ Theodore C. Levin and Michael E. Edgerton, “The Throat Singers of Tuba,” *Scientific American*, 20 September 1999, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-throat-singers-of-tuv>

³⁰⁴ The Silk Road Project, “Urtiin duu (longsong),” 2011, <http://www.silkroadproject.org/MusicArtists/Instruments/Urtiinduulongsong/tabid/331/Default.aspx>

³⁰⁵ UNESCO, Intangible Cultural Heritage, “Urtiin Duu—Traditional Folk Long Song,” n.d., <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00115>

³⁰⁶ Bioregions.org, “Traditional Mongolian Ger,” n.d., <http://www.bioregions.org/pdfs/GerOwnersPamphlet.pdf>

to let smoke escape from indoor heaters during the winter. The floor, either wood or dirt, is also covered with felt.³⁰⁷ The door is always set to the south side of the *ger* in order to avoid the strong northern winds and to receive additional inside light.^{308,309}

Sports and Recreation

Mongolia's three traditional “manly” sports—wrestling, archery, and horse racing—are the focus of Naadam, a festival celebrated each July in Ulaanbaatar and numerous towns around the country. Of the three sports, wrestling is the most popular. Wrestling competitions do not have weight classes, so frequently the best wrestlers are among the largest.³¹⁰ Mongolian wrestlers use simple grips and holds while standing on their feet, with the sole goal being to get one's



© Dietmut Teijgeman-Hansen
Bone game

opponent on the ground first. Some of Mongolia's better wrestlers also compete in judo, where some of the wrestling techniques translate well. Overall, Mongolians have won 19 medals in the Summer Olympics since the nation first began competing in 1964—13 of the 19 medals were for wrestling and judo.³¹¹

Horse racing—which occurs on the open steppes rather than on an oval circuit—is another popular sport in Mongolia. Jockeys are young (between 6 and 12 years old), and distances are long (15–30 km or 9.3–18.6 mi).³¹² The oldest horses run the longer distances. Winning horses receive the title of *tumnii ekh* (“leader of ten thousand”) and special attention from spectators after the race.³¹³

Of the three traditional Mongolian sports, archery is usually the only one in which women participate.³¹⁴ The bent bows are made in the traditional fashion, using wood,

³⁰⁷ Ministry of Tourism, Government of Mongolia, “The Ger,” Asia-Planet.net, 2002, <http://www.asia-planet.net/mongolia/culture.htm>

³⁰⁸ BBC Two, “Darhad Life,” n.d., <http://www.bbc.co.uk/tribe/tribes/darhad/index.shtml>

³⁰⁹ Bioregions.org, “Traditional Mongolian Ger,” n.d., <http://www.bioregions.org/pdfs/GerOwnersPamphlet.pdf>

³¹⁰ Michael Koln, “The Culture: Sport,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 35.

³¹¹ DatabaseOlympics.com, “Mongolia: Medals Won,” 2011, <http://www.databaseolympics.com/country/countrypage.htm?cty=MGL>

³¹² Rebecca Byerly, “Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Naadam Festival,” CNN, n.d., <http://www.mongolia-attractions.com/ulaanbaatar-mongolia-naadam-festival.html>

³¹³ Michael Koln, “The Culture: Sport,” in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 35.

³¹⁴ Rebecca Byerly, “Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Naadam Festival,” CNN, n.d., <http://www.mongolia-attractions.com/ulaanbaatar-mongolia-naadam-festival.html>

sheep's horn, and sinew.³¹⁵ As with wrestling and horse racing, archery contests contain equal parts ceremony and competition. The archers are sung to by the scorer, using a different style of singing for each type of archery event, to indicate the results of the competitors.³¹⁶ Other singers serenade with invitational songs and songs that recognize both good and bad shots.³¹⁷

Perhaps the most unique Mongolian sport is anklebone shooting. In this ancient game, which has some similarities to marbles, anklebones of sheep are flicked at targets (also anklebones) about 3 m (10 ft) away. Since 2000, anklebone shooting contests have joined wrestling, archery, and horse racing in the rotation of Naadam events.^{318,319}

³¹⁵ Munkhtsetseg, "Mongolian National Archery," *Instinctive Archer*, 18 July 2000, http://www.atarn.org/mongolian/mn_nat_arch/mn_nat_arch.htm

³¹⁶ Munkhtsetseg, "Mongolian National Archery," *Instinctive Archer*, 18 July 2000, http://www.atarn.org/mongolian/mn_nat_arch/mn_nat_arch.htm

³¹⁷ Rebecca Byerly, "Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Naadam Festival," CNN, n.d., <http://www.mongolia-attractions.com/ulaanbaatar-mongolia-naadam-festival.html>

³¹⁸ Rebecca Byerly, "Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Naadam Festival," CNN, n.d., <http://www.mongolia-attractions.com/ulaanbaatar-mongolia-naadam-festival.html>

³¹⁹ Michael Koln, "The Naadam," in *Mongolia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 96–97.

Chapter 4: Assessment

1. Despite the country's name, the modern-day population of Mongolia is evenly split between ethnic Mongols and ethnic Kazakhs.

FALSE

Mongolia is a very ethnically homogeneous country, with the large majority of the population speaking one of several dialects of the Mongol language. Kazakhs, located in the western part of Mongolia, are the principal non-Mongolian minority and make up slightly more than 4% of the nation's population.

2. Tibetan Buddhism was the dominant religion in Mongolia until a communist purge during the 1930s.

TRUE

Roughly one-third of men in Mongolia in the 1920s were Buddhist monks, living both within and outside the monasteries. During the late 1930s, Mongolia's communist leadership purged the Buddhist clergy. As many as 100,000 Buddhist monks may have been killed during this time, and nearly all of the country's monasteries were destroyed.

3. In terms of educational achievement, Mongolian women outperform their male counterparts.

TRUE

In Mongolia there is a reverse gender gap at all levels of the educational system (i.e., the ratio of women to men in all levels of schooling favors women).

4. *Urtiin duu* is a traditional Mongolian musical style that is often performed for special events and on ceremonial occasions.

TRUE

Urtiin duu singers frequently perform at ceremonial festivities—such as weddings, new home inaugurations, child births, and livestock brandings—as well as at national celebrations, including Naadam and Tsagaan Sar (Lunar New Year).

5. The Naadam festival features competitions in Mongolia's three traditional “manly sports”: wrestling, fencing, and boxing.

FALSE

Mongolia's three traditional “manly” sports—wrestling, archery, and horse racing—are the focus of Naadam, a festival celebrated each July in Ulaanbaatar and numerous towns around the country.

Chapter 5: Security

Introduction

In the period of Mongolian history between its declaration of independence in 1921 and the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Mongolia's security concerns and needs were strongly tied to and supported by Moscow. The Soviets supplied all military training and equipment for the Mongolian People's Army. Soviet troops were also stationed in Mongolia from the 1960s until the early 1990s, a period during which a Chinese-Soviet rift made Mongolia a tense buffer region lying between the two communist rivals.



U.S. Marine Corps / CPL Tyler L. Main
Live fire training

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mongolia was forced to rethink its security posture. With Moscow no longer its central political, economic, and military partner, the Mongolian government shifted to a more equitable foreign policy. Ulaanbaatar's relations with Moscow and Beijing became more balanced, and political and economic relations were fostered with the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea, several European Union countries, Australia, Canada, and other nations.³²⁰ In the case of the United States, these improving relations eventually led to military and counterterrorism cooperation.³²¹

Overall, Mongolia's isolated location between two global powers has helped ensure its internal and external security, despite its more than 6,000 km (3,700 mi) of relatively porous borders. Mongolia has been spared any direct attacks, but the government takes potential terrorist threats seriously and has committed resources to counterterrorism training and cross-national counterterrorism cooperation.³²²

³²⁰ Sharad K. Soni, "Mongolia's Security Thinking and Outside World: A Reappraisal," Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, 32, n.d., <http://www.mtac.gov.tw/mtacbook/upload/09511/0202/2.pdf>

³²¹ Wang Peiran, "Mongolia's Delicate Balancing Act," *China Security* 5, no. 2, 2009, 20–21, <http://www.chinasecurity.us/pdfs/WangPeiran.pdf>

³²² Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Chapter 2: Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific Overview," Country Reports on Terrorism 2009, 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140884.htm>

U.S.-Mongolian Relations

The United States and Mongolia did not formally establish diplomatic relations until January 1987.³²³ Until then, Mongolia's sensitive relationship with the Soviet Union, its economic and military patron, hindered the development of relations with the United States, considered a Soviet ideological adversary during most of the Cold War era. The Government of Taiwan, a U.S. ally, also complicated recognition efforts by its continued insistence that Mongolia was part of mainland China and not an independent state.³²⁴



© UN Photo / Eskinder Debebe
Mongolian Peacekeepers

Beginning in 1989 and continuing through the peaceful transition to democracy in 1990, the U.S. began to develop cultural and economic ties with Mongolia. The two nations forged a trade agreement in 1991, followed by an investment agreement in 1994. Between 1991 and 2011, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded USD 214 million worth of programs in Mongolia. These programs aim to help foster private-sector economic growth and to strengthen government institutions.^{325,326} In 2007, Mongolia signed a USD 285 million compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, an independent U.S. foreign aid agency providing large grants for “country-led solutions for reducing poverty through sustainable economic growth.”³²⁷ Mongolia, for its part, has committed to five programs under their compact that aim (1) to increase access to vocational education training; (2) to improve the nation’s land tenure and land purchasing system so as to provide greater opportunities for generating income; (3) to improve the key North–South Highway; (4) to better detect and treat non-communicable diseases and injuries; and (5) to provide greater energy efficiency and lowered air pollution in Ulaanbaatar.

Trade between Mongolia and the United States has dropped since the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing expired at the end of 2004. Up until 2007, Mongolia was a net

³²³ Richard Halloran, “U.S. and Mongolia in Ceremony Establishing Diplomatic Relations,” *New York Times*, 28 January 1987, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/28/world/us-and-mongolia-in-ceremony-establishing-diplomatic-relations.html?ref=mongolia>

³²⁴ Neil A. Lewis, “Washington Talk: Diplomacy; Yes, a Mission in Mongolia,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1987, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/07/03/us/washington-talk-diplomacy-yes-a-mission-in-mongolia.html?ref=mongolia>

³²⁵ Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Mongolia,” 8 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2779.htm>

³²⁶ Kerry Dumbaugh, Congressional Research Service, “Mongolia and U.S. Policy: Political and Economic Relations,” 22 June 2007, 9, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/r134056.pdf>

³²⁷ Millennium Challenge Corporation, “About MCC,” n.d., <http://www.mcc.gov/pages/about>

exporter to the United States, but in the years since then Mongolia has imported significantly more from the U.S. than it exports.³²⁸

The U.S. has additionally helped Mongolia develop its military forces. Much of this assistance has targeted peacekeeping capabilities, as Mongolia faces no real internal or external threats.

Relations With Neighboring Countries

Russia

In the decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Mongolia's relationship with Moscow evolved toward one in which the two nations were on more equal footing. However, even as Mongolia developed strong relations with other East Asian nations, such as Japan and South Korea, it continued to retain important strategic ties with Moscow. The greater balance in the bilateral relationship was formalized in 1993 through the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.



© Nicholas Lan
Mongolia / Russia Border

Moscow's investment in Mongolia during the Cold War era left Mongolia with a legacy of massive debt from Soviet loans. Several key Mongolian economic assets, including the huge copper mine complex at Erdenet and the Trans-Mongolian Railway, remained under joint Mongolian-Russian ownership.³²⁹ In 2003, the Russian government agreed to write off virtually all of Mongolia's large debt to Russia, estimated at one time to be as high as USD 11 billion. A remaining USD 180 million debt was later written off by the Kremlin in October 2010.³³⁰

Mongolia remains very dependent on Russia for its energy needs. Imports from Russia provide roughly 95% of Mongolia's petroleum products, and the Russian electricity exporter, Inter RAO, generates about 8% of the power consumed in Mongolia.^{331,332}

³²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Trade in Goods With Mongolia," 2011, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5740.html>

³²⁹ Sergei Blagov, "Russia Struggles to Develop New Joint Ventures With Mongolia," *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 7, no. 199, 3 November 2010, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37125](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37125)

³³⁰ Sergei Blagov, "Russia Struggles to Develop New Joint Ventures With Mongolia," *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 7, no. 199, 3 November 2010, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37125](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37125)

³³¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Mongolia: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mg.html>

During recent years, Moscow has also begun to reassert itself in Mongolian economic affairs.³³³ The two nations have recently been involved in plans for several mining and infrastructure development projects in Mongolia, including uranium mines, a rail extension linking the Gobi coal and copper fields with a port in Russia's Far East, and the construction of coal-fired power plants.^{334,335,336} The rail project, in particular, has attracted attention because it signals that Mongolia wishes to develop an alternative to its primary trading port of Tianjin in China. However, the increased transportation costs from the Russian port seem to provide little or no economic rationale for the project.³³⁷

China

For much of the Cold War era, Mongolia's reliance on the Soviet Union and its fears about lingering Chinese territorial claims on its lands led to tensions between the two neighboring states. During the mid-1980s, however, with all territorial issues ostensibly settled and strained Chinese-Soviet relations in a period of thaw, Ulaanbaatar and Beijing began taking the first steps toward a normalization of relations.³³⁸ As Russia's economic woes in the 1990s forced it to take a much more limited role in Mongolian affairs, China gained a stronger economic foothold.³³⁹



© Nic Shepherd
Erenhot border crossing

³³² Sergei Blagov, "Russia Struggles to Develop New Joint Ventures With Mongolia," *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 7, no. 199, 3 November 2010,

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37125](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37125)

³³³ Sergei Blagov, "Mongolia Drifts Away From Russia Toward China," *China Brief* 5, no. 10, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=3855&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=195&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=3855&tx_ttnews[backPid]=195&no_cache=1)

³³⁴ Yurly Humber and Daniel Ten Kate, "Mongolia Rail Boom Seen Breaking China's Rare Earths Greip: Freight Markets," Bloomberg, 20 April 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-20/mongolia-rail-boom-eases-china-rare-earth-grip-freight-markets.html>

³³⁵ Vinay Shukla, "Russia, Mongolia Ratify Agreement for Uranium Mining," MSN News, PTI, 6 January 2011, <http://news.in.msn.com/international/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4772099>

³³⁶ Sergei Blagov, "Russia Struggles to Develop New Joint Ventures With Mongolia," *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 7, no. 199, 3 November 2010,

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37125](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37125)

³³⁷ Justin Li, "Chinese Investment in Mongolia: An Uneasy Courtship Between Goliath and David," East Asia Forum, 2 February 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/02/02/chinese-investment-in-mongolia-an-uneasy-courtship-between-goliath-and-david/>

³³⁸ Marcia R. Ristaino, "Chapter 4: Government and Politics: Foreign Policy: China," in *Mongolia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, June 1989), 207–209.

³³⁹ Sergey Radchenko, "Mongolia Between Russia and China," April 2004, www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/ideasToday/04/04_Mongolia.pdf

Today, China is Mongolia's leading trade partner and its largest source of foreign direct investment, with much of the Chinese investment in Mongolia focused on mineral extraction and the associated infrastructure.^{340,341,342} Several analysts have noted, however, that despite friendly relations and economic connections, there are concerns about establishing too close a relationship with China. Mongolian politicians and general public worry that close ties could lead to Mongolia's political and economic domination by China.^{343,344,345}

The Dalai Lama's periodic visits to Mongolia have been one of the few obvious thorns in China's otherwise cooperative relations with its northern neighbor.³⁴⁶ Mongolia and Tibet have traditionally been linked through their mutual embrace of Lamaism, and the Dalai Lama continues to be a revered figure among a significant segment of the Mongolian population. In 2002, during one of the Dalai Lama's visits to Ulaanbaatar, the Chinese government briefly delayed trains heading toward Mongolia.³⁴⁷

Another potential irritant in Mongolian-Chinese relations is the development of a small but not insignificant ultra-nationalist movement in Mongolia. This fringe movement embraces Nazi-era iconography and espouses extreme anti-Chinese rhetoric.^{348,349}

³⁴⁰ Wang Wei-fang, "'Pan-Mongolism' and U.S.-China-Mongolia Relations," *China Brief* 5, no. 10, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=30361&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=195&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=30361&tx_ttnews[backPid]=195&no_cache=1)

³⁴¹ Migeedorj Batchimeg, "Future Challenges for the PRC and Mongolia: A Mongolian Perspective," *China Brief* 5, no. 10, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=3853&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=195&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=3853&tx_ttnews[backPid]=195&no_cache=1)

³⁴² Justin Li, "Chinese Investment in Mongolia: An Uneasy Courtship Between Goliath and David," East Asia Forum, 2 February 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/02/02/chinese-investment-in-mongolia-an-uneasy-courtship-between-goliath-and-david/>

³⁴³ Robert G. Sutter, "10: Relations With South Asia and Central Asia," in *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy Since the Cold War* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 311–313.

³⁴⁴ Sergey Radchenko, "Mongolia Between Russia and China," April 2004, www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/ideasToday/04/04_Mongolia.pdf

³⁴⁵ Morris Rossabi, "Beijing's Growing Politico-Economic Leverage Over UlaanBaatar," *China Brief* 5, no. 10, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=3852&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=195&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=3852&tx_ttnews[backPid]=195&no_cache=1)

³⁴⁶ Robert G. Sutter, "10: Relations With South Asia and Central Asia," in *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy Since the Cold War* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 311–313.

³⁴⁷ BBC News, "Dalai Lama Welcomed in Mongolia," 22 August 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/5275590.stm>

³⁴⁸ Mitch Moxley, "The Neo-Nazis of Mongolia: Swastikas Against China," *Time*, 27 July 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1910893,00.html>

Credible reports of threats and even violence against Chinese residents living in Mongolia have been widely reported in the media.³⁵⁰ To date, the Chinese government has not publicly protested the treatment of Chinese citizens in Mongolia.³⁵¹

Military

Mongolia's limited armed forces consist of an army and air force, with a total of 5,800 personnel. Given Mongolia's position between two of the world's biggest nations with correspondingly large military forces, Mongolia's military has no real capacity to resist a sustained invasion. Thus, Mongolia's defensive strategy is based on the assumption that any external threat will be countered by one of its powerful neighbors.³⁵² Much of Mongolia's military equipment is from the Soviet era and is badly outdated. Given its strictly defensive posture, the Mongolian Army mostly needs new "early warning systems, air and satellite surveillance, and border-protection assets."³⁵³ The Mongolian Air Force is very small and has no combat capability. The few aircraft in service primarily fulfill transport duties.³⁵⁴



© MATEUS_27_24&25 / flickr.com
Mongolian soldier

Since 2002, Mongolian military observers and troops have been deployed in some United Nations peacekeeping missions (most notably, in Sierra Leone and Chad/Central African Republic) and in the U.S.-led military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.^{355,356,357} In recent years, the Mongolian Army has taken an increasing role

³⁴⁹ Kirril Shields, "The Naivety of Mongolia's Nazis," 4 December 2008, http://ubpost.mongolnews.mn/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2446&Itemid=42

³⁵⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "2009 Human Rights Report: Mongolia: Section 6," 11 March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136001.htm>

³⁵¹ Alicia Campi, "Mongolia's Uneasy Relationship With China," 26 May 2010, <http://www.asiafinest.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=233772>

³⁵² Jane's Information Group, "Army, Mongolia," 9 October 2009.

³⁵³ Jane's Information Group, "Army, Mongolia," 9 October 2009.

³⁵⁴ Jane's Information Group, "Air Force (Mongolia), Air Force," 2009, <http://articles.janes.com/extracts/extract/cnasu/mongs120.html>

³⁵⁵ Agence France-Presse, "Mongolia to Send Troops to Afghanistan," 22 July 2009, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ijohhR3_8jwVXdLihL7miTKeMWw

³⁵⁶ Jane's Information Group, "Army, Mongolia," 9 October 2009.

³⁵⁷ United Nations Mission in Liberia, "UNMIL Force Commander Assures Sierra Leoneans and Liberians of Continued Peace and Stability," 14 May 2008, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:tHKCuC4BcHMJ:unmil.org/1article.asp%3Fid%3D2762%26zdoc%3D1+UNMIL+Mongolia&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&source=www.google.com>

in multinational peacekeeping training exercises, including the U.S.-led “Khaan Quest” and “Tempest Express,” and the bilateral (Mongolia-Russia) Darkhan exercises.³⁵⁸

Terrorist Groups and Activities

No known terrorist groups operate in Mongolia or are known to have bases of support within the country.³⁵⁹ Further, the Mongolian National Police report that no organized criminal gangs are known to be carrying out operations within the country.³⁶⁰ Ultra-nationalist groups, such as Tsagaan Khass (“White Swastika”), the Mongolian National Union, and Dayar Mongol (“All Mongolia”) are perhaps the largest source of concern. These groups appear to have increased xenophobic attacks on foreigners, especially those who appear to be ethnic Chinese or Korean.^{361,362,363} Mongolian women seen in the company of foreign men have also been subject to attacks and threats.³⁶⁴



³⁵⁸ Joshua Kucera, “Mongolia: Ulaanbaatar Performs Strategic Juggling Act With US, Russian Military Maneuvers,” Eurasianet.org, 24 August 2009, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav082509a.shtml>

³⁵⁹ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, “Chapter 2. Country Reports: East Asia and Pacific Overview,” Country Reports on Terrorism 2009, 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140884.htm>

³⁶⁰ Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Mongolia 2001 Crime and Safety Report: Ulaanbaatar,” 8 March 2011, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportPDF.aspx?cid=10580>

³⁶¹ James Wasserman, “The Neo-Nazis of Mongolia: Swastikas Against China,” Time.com, 27 July 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1910893,00.html>

³⁶² Tania Branigan, “Mongolian Neo-Nazis: Anti-Chinese Sentiment Fuels Rise of Ultra-Nationalism,” *The Guardian*, 2 August 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/02/mongolia-far-right/print>

³⁶³ Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Mongolia 2001 Crime and Safety Report: Ulaanbaatar,” 8 March 2011, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportPDF.aspx?cid=10580>

³⁶⁴ Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Mongolia 2001 Crime and Safety Report: Ulaanbaatar,” 8 March 2011, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportPDF.aspx?cid=10580>

Other Issues Affecting Stability

Mineral Wealth, “Dutch Disease,” and Corruption

Mongolia sits on vast mineral wealth that is just beginning to be exploited to its full potential. How the nation manages the expected influx of wealth generated by these resources may have important ramifications on its political stability. In several resource-rich countries such as Nigeria and Venezuela, new wealth has not translated into a growing gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.³⁶⁵ In some such cases, the so-called “Dutch Disease” has been part of the problem.



© www.kremlin.ru
Mongolia's Parliament in session

Foreign currency flowing into the country causes local currency to appreciate. This appreciation damages the competitiveness of other local economic sectors in the world economy. To some extent, Mongolia’s cashmere industry has already felt the effects of such a currency appreciation.^{366,367} Another problem Mongolia faces is the highly volatile nature of mineral prices. When world demand slackens, as it did in the recession of 2008–2009, prices may drop sharply, leading to significant budget shortfalls.

The Mongolian government has proposed several measures to address these issues. One such measure is a stability fund, consisting of surplus revenues set aside when mineral prices are high. This fund will make up for shortfalls when mineral prices decline. While there is significant political pressure to disperse much of the government’s mineral windfalls into cash payments to Mongolia’s many poor citizens, some legislators are also pushing for a development fund that will promote improvements in infrastructure and other areas that will help spur job growth.³⁶⁸

Corruption is a persistent problem in Mongolia. The degree to which the government negotiates its mineral licensing agreements and allocates its newly obtained wealth in an open and transparent manner will strongly influence how the Mongolian public reacts to the ultimate choices that are made. Mining has traditionally been viewed as one of the most corrupt sectors of the Mongolian economy in annual surveys about corruption, a

³⁶⁵ Michael Forsythe, “Mongolian Harvard Elites Aim for Wealth Without ‘Dutch Disease,’” 15 February 2010, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aONmVLraqtO8>

³⁶⁶ Bloomberg, “Mongolia Seeks Balanced Growth to Avoid ‘Dutch Disease’ From Mining Boom,” Business-Mongolia.com, 8 March 2011, <http://www.business-mongolia.com/mongolia/2011/03/08/mongolia-seeks-balanced-growth-to-avoid-%E2%80%99dutch-disease%E2%80%99-from-mining-boom>

³⁶⁷ Chris Devonshire-Ellis, “What if the Wolf Snarls? Mongolia’s Macro-Economic Risks,” 7 March 2011, <http://www.2point6billion.com/news/2011/03/07/what-if-the-wolf-snarls-mongolias-macro-economic-risks-8767.html>

³⁶⁸ Michael Forsythe, “Mongolian Harvard Elites Aim for Wealth Without ‘Dutch Disease,’” 15 February 2010, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aONmVLraqtO8>

situation that the government has publically tried to address by creating “corruption-fighting action plans.”^{369,370}

³⁶⁹ William Foerderer Infante, “In Mongolia: Elections, Mining and National Security,” Asia Foundation, 25 June 2008, <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2008/06/25/in-mongolia-elections-mining-national-security/>

³⁷⁰ The Asia Foundation, “Mongolia Corruption Benchmarking Survey,” 2011, <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/MGBenchmarkingsurveyEnglish.pdf>

Chapter 5: Assessment

1. The Mongolian Air Force, while small, has served in several combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

FALSE

The Mongolian Air Force is very small and has no combat capability. The few aircraft in service primarily fulfill transport duties.

2. For nearly 70 years following Mongolian independence in 1921, the Soviet Union dominated Mongolia's security relations.

TRUE

Between 1921 and the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Mongolia's security concerns and needs were strongly tied to and supported by Moscow. The Soviets supplied all military training and equipment for the Mongolian People's Army. Soviet troops were also stationed in Mongolia from the 1960s until the early 1990s.

3. While much of Mongolia's trade is now with China, the nation still relies on Russia for energy imports.

TRUE

Mongolia remains very dependent on Russia for its energy needs. Imports from Russia provide roughly 95% of Mongolia's petroleum products, and the Russian electricity exporter, Inter RAO, generates about 8% of the power consumed in Mongolia.

4. Ultra-nationalist groups in Mongolia have emerged in recent years, embracing fiery anti-Russian positions resulting from Cold War-era domination.

FALSE

A potential irritant in Mongolian-Chinese relations is the development of a small but not insignificant ultra-nationalist movement in Mongolia. This fringe movement embraces Nazi-era iconography and espouses extreme anti-Chinese rhetoric.

5. The activities of several active organized crime groups in Mongolia are a serious source of concern for the government.

FALSE

The Mongolian National Police report that no organized criminal gangs are known to be carrying out operations within the country.

Final Assessment

1. Even though most of Mongolia is very cold during the winter, snowfall amounts are generally light.
2. Lake Hovsgol is Mongolia's largest freshwater body of water.
3. Because Mongolia is not near any plate boundaries, it is not susceptible to large earthquakes.
4. The city of Erdenet was built to support mining operations in the nearby area.
5. Mongolia is the world's largest landlocked country.
6. Genghis Khan was able to consolidate his power by requiring that top administrators and military officials swear allegiance to him, thus weakening their clan and tribal affiliations.
7. After the Qing Dynasty broke apart in 1911, Russia immediately recognized Outer Mongolia's full independence from China.
8. After Genghis Khan's death, the Mongol empire was divided between his four sons or their heirs.
9. By the early 16th century, all of modern-day Mongolia was under the control of the Manchu Empire.
10. Protests during late 1989 and early 1990 were unsuccessful in forcing the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) to implement more political openness.
11. A large part of Mongolia's recent direct foreign investment has targeted the cashmere clothing industry.
12. Mongolia's neighbors, Russia and China, are its dominant trading partners.
13. Mongolia's most valuable exports are minerals and energy resources.
14. Mongolia's cotton textile industry continues to be the nation's most important manufacturing segment.
15. Rice is the most important food crop grown in Mongolia.
16. Islam is a minority religion in Mongolia.
17. The most commonly worn traditional garment of clothing in Mongolia is the *del*.
18. The famous Mongolian painting, *One Day in Mongolia*, was commissioned by Genghis Khan to commemorate his accession as leader of the Mongol tribes.
19. Mongolians used to live in tent-like homes known as *gers*, but these have been almost completely replaced by traditional-style houses.
20. Within the last 15 years, the ancient game of anklebone shooting has become one of the competitions that take place during Naadam.
21. Because of Mongolia's isolation, it has become a haven for various terrorist organizations.

22. Since 1989, the U.S. has strengthened its economic, political, and military relations with the Mongolian government.
23. An aftereffect of the Soviet Union's collapse was a massive debt owed by Mongolia to Russia for Cold War-era development loans.
24. China is Mongolia's chief trading partner and its most significant provider of foreign direct investment.
25. Mongolia's vast mineral wealth has raised concerns that other parts of the Mongolian economy could suffer if mineral revenues drive up the value of the Mongolian currency.

Further Reading

- Akiner, Shirin, ed. *Mongolia Today*. London, UK: Kegan Paul International, 1991.
- Bawden, C. R., trans. *An Anthology of Mongolian Traditional Literature*. London, UK: Routledge, 2002.
- Blunden, Jane. *Mongolia*, 2nd ed. Chalfont, St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2008.
- Cheng, Pang Guek. *Cultures of the World: Mongolia*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010.
- Kahn, Paul. *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chingis Khan (Yüan Ch'ao Pi Shih)*, expanded ed. Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1998.
- Koln, Michael. *Mongolia*, 5th ed. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008.
- Kotkin, Stephen, and Bruce A. Elleman, eds. *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1999.
- Morgan, David. *The Mongols*, 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2007.
- Moses, Larry, and Stephen A. Halkovic, Jr. *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985.
- Robinson, Carl. *Mongolia: Nomad Empire of the Eternal Blue Sky*. Hong Kong: Odyssey Publications, 2010.
- Rossabi, Morris. *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists*. Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005.
- Streissguth, Thomas. *Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire*. Detroit, MI: Lucent Books, 2005.
- Worden, Robert L., and Andrea Matles Savada, eds. *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.

Films

- Die Geschichte Vom Weinendem Kamel* ("The Story of the Weeping Camel"). Directed by Byambasuren Davaa and Luigi Falorni (in Mongolian, with English subtitles), 2003.
- Die Hohle des gelben Hundes* ("The Cave of the Yellow Dog"). Directed by Byambasuren Davaa (in Mongolian, with English subtitles), 2005.
- Mongol*. Directed by Sergei Bodrov (in Mongolian and Mandarin, with English subtitles), 2007.
- Nohoi Oron* ("State of Dogs"). Directed by Peter Brosens and Dorjkhandyn Turmunkh (in Mongolian, with English subtitles), 1998.