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国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

Expedition to the Tuvans in China, Russia, and Mongolia in 2012 : A Preliminary Report

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なる社会環境による共通点と相違点を明らかにした。トゥバ人の多くはロシアに住んでおり、そこでは共和国として地位と領域を保証されている。一方、中国とモンゴルでは、少数民族であり、領域を獲得していない。しかし、いずれの国においてもトゥバ人は、みずからの言語と習慣と文化的伝統を維持している。本稿は歴史的経緯から当該コミュニティの言語や文化環境まで、ホスト社会との関係、ならびにそれらの相互関係まで広く扱う。

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1 Introduction

The investigation of Central Asia and Siberia is one of the priority areas of the Japanese National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) (Matsubara 1993a, b; 1994a, b). As a specialist on these regions, I was given the opportunity in 2009–2010 to be a visiting professor at the Museum. I worked in collaboration with Professor Yuki Konagaya, who is one of the leading experts on the nomadic peoples of Asia. We were working on the project “Tuvans of Russia, Mongolia, and China: a comparative study.” One result of our cooperation was the monograph *One People, Three Fates* (in Russian) about Tuvans living in these three countries (Mongush 2010a).

As the next stage of our cooperation, we arranged for an international research expedition to Russia, Mongolia, and China to see with our own eyes how Tuvans there live and make an ethnographic film about them. *Minpaku* was the initiator, organizer, and sponsor of this unique international project.

The expedition took place during July and August of 2012. We were seven persons: the Deputy Director of *Minpaku*, Professor Shiro Sasaki; the former director of the Department of Social Studies, Professor Yuki Konagaya; the cameraman Kiyokazu Inomoto; sound manager Hazuki Ando; Professor of the Normal University of Nationalities (Beijing), Sarangerel; Professor of the Mongolian National University

of Science and Technology (Ulaanbaatar), Ichinkhorloo Lkhagvasuren, and myself.

In this paper, I introduce information on the Tuvans in China, Russia, and Mongolia, based on our fieldwork and previous research by Russian (Aranchyn 1975; Mannai-ool 1995; Mongush 1983; Mongush 2010a), Japanese (Matsubara 1993a, b; 1994a, b; Matsushita 2001) and Mongolian (Badamkhatan 1965; Bold 1975) scholars with one exception, all photos shown here were taken by the present author.

The academic value of our project is that it displays features of historical and cultural communications of the Tuvans with other peoples—Mongols, Kazakhs, Chinese, and representatives of other ethnic groups; illuminates the problem of the influences of surrounding peoples on the economic way of life and culture of the Tuvans; identifies both general and special features of the modern ethnic development of various parts of the Tuvan ethnos; identifies the main tendencies in the functioning of language, ethnic consciousness, ethno-demographic and ethnocultural development of the Russian, Mongolian, and Chinese Tuvans; discloses the nature of their interaction with the center in each country; and reflects on specifics of the adaptation of Tuvans to conditions of Russian, Mongolian, and Chinese statehood. Consideration of the above-mentioned topics was carried out in a number of specific directions, most of which had not been studied earlier. For example, an attempt was made to reveal problems in the development of patrimonial, ethnic and language identity among Russian and foreign Tuvans.

The majority of Tuvans live in the Russian Federation (according to the last census in 2002, the population was 243,442), where they have a recognized position and territory—the Republic of Tuva. These Tuvans are considered to be citizens of Russia. This affects their system of contact with other nationalities, and promotes the dissemination of the Russian language as the international language of communication (Mongush 2010a: 3).

Tuvan ethnic groups are settled not only on the territory of the Russian Federation, but also in Mongolia and China. These countries have quite different influences on the modern development of Tuvan communities.

In the territories of China and Mongolia, Tuvans are national minorities and do not have national-territorial status. Because of their settlement in various territories in the past, Tuvans have had to live in mixed communities with other ethnic groups: this has led to processes of assimilation, and as a result they became parts of the host population. In any case one should not underestimate the complex nature of ethnic development of Tuvans in these two countries.

2 The Tuvans of Xinjiang

The majority of the Tuvan population in China lives in the Habahe (Akh Haba) and Burjin Districts of Ili Kazakh Autonomous Province. They also live in Altai, Koktogai, Chingil, and Burultogai Districts. Tuvans living in these places are part



Map of the Tuvanian Region

of the Tuvan people by origin, language and cultural characteristics. We did our fieldwork in Habahe and Burjin Districts, where we visited several Tuvan settlements: Hanas, Khom, Tsagaan-hav, and Alag-Khaak.

According to the Russian scholar M. I. Venukov, the original Tuvan population came to Xinjiang about 200 years ago. In 1871 he noted that a small ethnic group of Uriankh (Tuvans—M.M.), with a population of over 1,000 people, lived in this area (Venukov 1871: 343).

Most Tuvans consider their ancestors to have come to this area from Tuva for the first time during the period of the Qing Dynasty (Manchurian Empire, 1616–1911). At that time there were two powerful empires in Inner Asia: the Manchurian and Dzungarian. Each of them aspired to dominate the whole area and frequent military conflicts took place between them. The territory and the original population of Tuva were controlled by Manchus and Dzungars at the same time. However, at the end of the 17th century, Bacchus gained the upper hand, which led the small part of the Tuvan population that was under Dzungar jurisdiction to move away. Thus the conflict between these two powers resulted in the dispersal of some Tuvan groups. It is for this reason that they are found in Xinjiang (Abramzon 1961: 121). But there are some scholars who tend to consider that in the past Xinjiang was a part of the ethnic territory of the Tuvans and they lived there for many centuries (Taube 1994: 6). Some of our informants support this idea and believe that the Tuvans are one of the local ethnic groups. At the same time, one of our informants said that his

grandparents had come to Xinjiang in 1913, which is two years after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. Some Tuvans came here after the Tuvan Revolution in 1921, for they could not accept the new Soviet power and the new system for various reasons.

2.1 Their numbers and identity

In the 1990s, when I visited Chinese Tuvans for the first time, they were known as ‘Kok Monchaks.’ This name had been given to them by the Kazakhs, and they have become accustomed to it. But deep down they are convinced they are Tuvans. I could not explain what ‘Kok Monchaks’ means exactly, but many of my informants were sure that it was the name of an ethnic group and clan at the same time. Actually there is a Monchak clan among Tuvans. This name is believed to exist among Tuvans in Mongolia as well. This may indicate that many years ago some Tuvans with this name came to Xinjiang from Mongolia, where they had lived before.

However, in 2012 when I visited Kok Monchaks with my foreign colleagues again, they declared: “We are Tuvans.” On the car which served us, was written in beautiful hieroglyphs: “The Tuvan House in the Khom,” using the word Tuvan instead of Monchak.

Chinese census statistics do not recognize Tuvans as a nationality. This is why they are not included in the official list of nationalities, which consists of 56 ethnic groups living in China. Our Chinese colleagues have supplied us with verbal information on this subject. Their opinion is that the number of Tuvans is approximately 2,500 to 3,000. All attempts to obtain data about population in our interviews with Tuvans failed and the information that we obtained was controversial. One can, however, be certain that the number of Tuvans is not more than 3,000 to 4,000.

However, while obtaining this information, we faced the following dilemma: Tuvans are registered as Mongols on their passports; at the same time they do not tend to identify themselves as Mongols. This problem gives rise to a number of important questions.

2.2 The language situation

The other subject we focused on was the language of the Tuvans. They definitely do speak Tuvan, a language which belongs to the Turkic language group. It is mainly used within the family and at ceremonial occasions such as weddings, funerals and religious rituals for the sanctifying of natural objects.

At the same time, Tuvans also have a good command of the languages of more numerous peoples—Kazakh and Mongolian. In this context, their perspicacious possession of these languages is the instrument they use to adapt themselves to the ethnic environment to which destiny has brought them. The interesting point is that they are close to Kazakhs in their native language, but in their religion they are, like the Mongols, Buddhists.

In 1993 I communicated with Tuvans in their native tongue and we understood each other without any language problems. The older generation's knowledge of their native tongue is greater than that of the younger. This proved that fundamentally we use the same language. If there is a difference, it is in pronunciation, a special accent, which is associated with the influence of Mongolian. While they are easy to understand, their vocabulary is a little different from standard Tuvan. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that they have been living separately from the majority of Tuvans for a long period of time. Their speech forms a very specific dialect of the Tuvan language, which was understandable to me. However, if earlier I understood everything that the Chinese Tuvans said to me, and everyone could understand me in 2012. I was often faced with language misunderstandings. This means that during the last 20 years the Tuvan language strongly degraded and became less used under the impact of Chinese which has become the dominant language in this region.

As for the Chinese language, in 1993 it seemed to be less prevalent in Xinjiang. At that time I did not meet many people who spoke Chinese very well. It is, however, studied in the schools. But there was a hidden problem in this situation. The difficulties that the Tuvan population has faced in entering higher education can be largely attributed to their poor command of the Chinese language. Although in theory they are able to enter schools of higher education, in fact they have been largely prevented from doing this by the obstacles they faced in an educational system that is predominantly conducted in Chinese.

Now the situation with the Chinese language looks different. It has become a language of international communication in Xinjiang. During the last 15 years, many Chinese moved here permanently. As a result of this, many young Tuvans speak Chinese rather well and they can write Chinese as well.

When we were staying among Tuvans, we very often observed their facility for switching between languages, depending on the nationality of the people with whom they were talking. Actually they speak four languages: Tuvan, Mongolian, Kazakh, and Chinese. Because of this, there are many Kazakh, Mongolian and Chinese borrowings in their dialect of Tuvan, which is the natural consequence of long historical interaction between these peoples.

2.3 Their basic occupations

Stock breeding is the basic occupation of Tuvans in Xinjiang, and traditional practices are followed. They breed sheep, goats, cattle, and horses. Agriculture is the secondary industry, and in some places where the climatic conditions are suitable, they normally cultivate wheat, barley, and oats. Among other activities the Tuvans prefer private market gardening, hunting, fishing, and gathering, which are the bases of their trade business. The main goal of the Tuvan economy is for them to provide themselves with the food and goods necessary for everyday life. Their

economy has a complex character: a many-sided use of domestic animals (for their milk, meat, wool, and hides) is combined with agriculture, market gardening, and sometimes with hunting, fishing and gathering.

During the most recent decades, the Tuvans have come into contact with “the continent” and have considerably extended the sphere of their occupations. Our local driver Malchyn, for example, told us about his private business. Six years ago he bought his “Mitsubishi” vehicle for 200 thousand *yuan* (1 *yuan* = 0.6 US dollars). Before this, Malchyn led Chinese tourists on horses for some years. The cost of such trips was 100 *yuan* per hour. If this was done all day from morning to night, it was possible to earn 1000 *yuan* a day.

Tuvans call tourists *sayakatchylar* (travelers). Previously there was no such word in their lexicon and they had no idea that it meant, but now work in tourism has become one of their occupations. The tourist season begins in May and lasts till the end of October. This is the most favorable time for the local population to earn money serving inquisitive guests. Most of the tourists are Chinese, and local guides have to speak to them in the Chinese language. That is why the Tuvans’s Chinese is getting better every year.

In Hanas we were accepted by a Tuvan family. This was a nice couple (the husband Zorigtu and his wife Gumey) who had their own family hotel business. They have eight local lodging houses which we rented from them. Gumey cooked simple food for us, and her two young girls helped her. As far as we understood, this is not their main occupation, but was just an opportunity to make extra money.

There is a so-called ‘Tuvan House’ in Hanas which functions as a cultural center. A young Tuvan man named Namindelek works there on a regular basis. He is a very artistic and temperamental person. He tells the Chinese tourists about the Tuvan culture, accompanying his story with demonstrations of different material objects. For example, when speaking about the making of traditional vodka (*araga*), he gives a little bit to his guests to taste. When he speaks about traditional Tuvan music, he sings along with his own accompaniment using a set of folk instruments. If necessary, Namindelek can dance. His performance lasts for about an hour and 20 minutes, after which the tourists pay him for his diligent efforts.

A new tourist center was recently built near Hanas Lake. In 1993 this place was quite wild and uninhabited. Today numerous tourists arrive here, attracted by the primordial beauty of nature. A hotel complex has been created, observation decks are arranged on different levels, there are good highways, and paved paths are laid out for walks. Excursion cutters and boats stand on the shore shore. A market is open not far away, where local women trade.

There is another example of enterprise. An old man named Skuukey, an eighty-year-old inhabitant of Khom, owns a small museum and apiary. He made part of his house into a museum where he placed samples of the material culture of the Tuvans: national clothing, traditional tableware made from trees, skins and birch bark, home

utensils, etc. An entry ticket for the museum costs 35 *yuan*. At the height of the tourist season there are many people who are interested in the museum's exhibits. Shukey offers his guests handmade souvenirs, honey, and vodka. This last item is very popular among the Chinese tourists and they buy it up in great quantities (one litre of vodka costs 40 *yuan*).

We met young ladies in Khom who have started their own enterprises. One of them, for example, earns money in the following way: She lends the tourists colorful national costumes in which to have their photograph taken. Her Chinese spouse helps her in this. Another Tuvan lady working together with a Kazakh woman has a small trading shop where tourists have a cup of tea and sandwiches, drink juice, and buy cigarettes.

The commercial boom has spread even to children. Smart boys of eight to ten years old offer their little lambs and pets to the tourists to take photos. Twenty years ago, local children were quite different: they were bashful and laconic, and they lowered their eyes when adults spoke to them.

Through the means of tourism, Tuvans expect to present themselves as an exotic people about whom little is known. In order to tell about them a special creative group arrived in Khom from Urumqi. This group consists of 25 experts of various kinds—from a cameraman and photographer to a screenwriter and journalist. Their project is supposed to present a developed picture of the life of the Chinese Tuvans in the form of photo exhibitions and television movies. Probably on the basis of this material the government of China will consider the problem of further development of this small ethnic group that still is not recognized in the official list of minorities of the Celestial Empire.

2.4 Inter-ethnic marriages

The next aspect of our research focused on inter-ethnic marriage. It is well known that marriages are an important indicator of ethnic processes taking place in the sphere of family life. Their importance lies in the way in which they can help define the character and direction of ethnic processes, or in turn be developed by the influence of these processes.

When I was in Xinjiang for the first time, the situation in the sphere of family life looked as follows: The basic ethnic partners of Chinese Tuvans were Mongols and Kazakhs. In comparison with these two, representatives of other ethnic groups are, because of their small numbers and wide dispersal, far less likely to have contact with the Tuvans. The majority of our respondents were not particularly well disposed towards marriage with members of other nationalities, considering it dangerous to the preservation of their ethnic identity. Occasionally marriage partners of Tuvans were Mongols or Kazakhs, but Tuvans were considered to be the most desired partners. It is important to note that many Chinese Tuvans fear such attitudes have resulted in marriages occurring between close family members, in spite

of the fact that marriages in Tuvan society are traditionally regulated by exogamous prohibitions along one's paternal line. Some of our informants expressed concerns that children born to such parents may be slow to develop mentally, have physical defects, and may not be capable of leading a normal life.

In 1993 there were not so many Chinese in this part of Xinjiang. However, an increase in the number of Chinese in the region is leading to a growth in the number of inter-ethnic marriages. Today marriages between Tuvan females and Chinese males have become an everyday occurrence. We met many Tuvan-Chinese families in every settlement that we visited. The children born to such parents usually do not speak Tuvan. This tendency strongly upsets the senior generation because it can lead to the complete assimilation of Tuvans by the billion Chinese people.

The Chinese authorities officially allow representatives of minority ethnic groups to have two children while Chinese couples can have only one child. When a Chinese marries a Tuvan lady, he can have two children because his wife is a representative of an ethnic minority.

While the Tuvan girls marry Chinese, the Tuvan young men dream of visiting Tuva and finding their wives there. When we asked them why they don't marry Chinese women, they explained to us, "It is impossible, because Chinese women have a very rigid character."

3 The Todja reindeer breeders

Todja is a unique area where the geographical and climatic conditions are most adapted for practicing reindeer breeding. This also is the biggest of the 17 *kozhuuns* of the Tuva Republic. Its territory is 44.8 thousand sq. km, that is 26.2% of the total area of the republic. The population density is 1 person per 10 sq. km. Additionally the Todja people are one of the most interesting and actively studied ethnographic groups of the Tuvan population.

It was the most extreme part of the trip for us. We traveled 200 km on horseback to reach the reindeer-raising pasture grounds. Our guides were local a reindeer breeder, Sergey Kyrganay, and his two sons, Andrey and Danil. Implementation of our trip would have been impossible without their help and knowledge.

We visited their summer pasture grounds which are situated high in the mountains in a place called Aaldyg Azhyk. We were impressed by literally everything: the majestic and boundless taiga, picturesque landscapes, emerald meadows, the simple life of the reindeer breeders, their stoical character and ability to overcome any difficulties that they have to face in their everyday live.

An old man named Kyrganay explained to us why his household consisted only of men: "A few years ago I became a widower. After the death of my wife, my two daughters died also, so only the three of us remained. All the female duties were heaped onto our shoulders." There are fifty head of reindeer in their herd; two

dogs help to herd them. Deer were grazed along a valley of the Oyna River, one of the tributary streams of the Ak Hem River, which flows into the Yenisei. Kyrganay's family has no horses, the role of transport animals belong to the reindeer. They use saddles like those used for horses. There were also no cows. Instead of cow's milk, reindeer breeders consume deer milk which differs in its high fat content. When milked the female deer yields no more than 500 ml of milk at a time. To prove this one of Kyrganay's sons showed us this process. We brewed tea using this milk and tasted it. There is difference between cow's milk tea and that made with the milk of cervines, the latter being thicker and more nutritious.

When Kyrganay's spouse was still alive, she made oil and cheese from the milk. The oil was generally consumed by the family, and the surplus cheese was sold. It brought in a small income to the family treasury.

According to the elder Kyrganay, in the Soviet period the Todja people had over 12,000 head of reindeer. They had collective farms and farms where these animals were raised. The republican government supported channelized farms in every possible way, paid a monthly salary to reindeer breeders, organized points of sale for the products of reindeer breeding (hides, meat, cheese, oils), and the local population were provided with vehicles for transportation of products, etc. Today reindeer breeders do not get paid salaries, nor are they provided with transport or medical care. There is only one thing that the government provides, which is a small subsidy for reindeer breeding development. That started in 2001. In the beginning it was 350 rubles for one deer, but it was raised to 500 rubles in 2004. Today Kyrganay receives 2,000 rubles per deer annually. This money hardly suffices for a living wage. In order to survive, people also have to be involved in hunting, fishing, and gathering.

While staying with Kyrganay's family, we were filming their everyday life and conducting interviews with each family member. Though we spent a short time among them, it was enough to get an idea of the modern life of reindeer breeders and the problems which they face, about their special status, and many other things.

3.1 Status of the Todja people

In 1993 there was an official "separation" of the inhabitants of Todja from the other part of the Tuvan population and they received the status of a small indigenous people within the Russian Federation. This was prompted by the following circumstances: According to many Russian and foreign researchers, the Todja people from historical, cultural, and ethnic points of view are closer to other ethnic groups occupying the East Sayan Mountains, than to the Tuvans living in central, western and the southern steppe zones of Tuva, though in household consciousness they are perceived as a part of the Tuva ethnos.

The existence of favorable conditions for reindeer breeding in Todja led to there being four closely related groups of reindeer breeders and hunters, occupying

four sectors of the Sayansky intersection. These are the Todja people in the southwest sector, the Tophas in the Irkutsk region in the northwest, Dukha or Tsaatans in northwest Mongolia in the southeast sector of the intersection, and the Soyots in the Republic of Buryatia in the northeast sector. All these people occupy a narrow transitional zone between the Siberian taiga and the steppes of Inner Asia and represent a kernel of the Southern Siberian and Mongolian reindeer-breeding complex (Donahoe and Plumley 2001). All of them speak very close dialects of the Tuvan language, though it is necessary to note that the Tuva language nevertheless is the first language for all Todja people. Their local dialect, which researchers consider to be “the most isolated and interesting of all Tuvan dialects” (Sat 1987: 73), gradually has been disappearing and giving way to the more standard central dialect which extends through the mass media and the education system.

Besides having the status of a small indigenous people of the Russian Federation, the Todja people are also considered to be an ethnographic group of the Tuvan population.

3.2 Population numbers

During the Soviet period, official statistics ignored the Todja reindeer breeders and they were not considered to be a separate ethnographic group, which is why it was impossible to establish their certain number. However, according to the local statistics from 1997, there were 1,454 in the Azass administrative area, 1,379 in Iy, 228 in Systyg-Hem, and 158 Chazylar. They made up about 5% of all Tuvans.

At the moment there are 4,442 Todja people; their main concentration live in four settlements located in the northeast part of Tuva. These are the villages of Adyr-Kezhig, with the population of 1,127 people; Iy with 1,141; Ham Syra with 156; and Systyg-Hem with 187. More than 200 reindeer breeders are registered as living in the taiga, in territories which are a part of the Iy and Azass rural administrations. The number of inhabitants of Toora-Hem, an administrative center of Todja, constitutes 2,727 people (Donahoe 2008: 186).

3.3 Crisis in reindeer breeding

The traditional reindeer breeding of the Todja people belongs to Sayan type and they use a horse saddle with stirrups and three girths for riding deer. Usually the deer are freely grazed without a hunting dog or the continuous supervision of shepherds. The results of much research has shown that the Sayan type of reindeer breeding which has developed in this region arose under the influence of horse breeding among the Turkic-Mongolian people (Its 1991: 110; Rassadin 2000: 17).

During the Soviet period, after the end of the 1940s when three collective farms were created in Todja, reindeer breeding as a type of economic activity developed and extended much more widely than it does now. However, in the 1980s reindeer-breeding farms made an unsuccessful attempt to generate income

by the annual cutting of antlers for sale in the markets of East Asia. Unfortunately, this practice appeared to be pernicious for the health of the animals, and it led to a mass extinction of the reindeer. This reached a maximum in 1996 when 400 head died, and after that the cutting of antlers was stopped. At that time it appeared that reindeer-breeding farms were not capable of surviving independently.

Disintegration of the USSR affected them in the most adverse way. The reindeer breeders who heretofore had been provided for by the state suddenly lost their most basic necessities: snowmobiles, motor boats, canvas tents, guns for the protection of herds from wolves, cross-country transport equipment for the export of products and the organization of the economic activity of communities, the equipment for processing and storage of products of the taiga trade, combustion and lubricating materials, combined forage, etc. The points of sale for taiga products were also liquidated. Veterinary help declined as well, and national methods of treatment were completely lost. A number of trade enterprises and organizations that earlier served areas of accommodation for reindeer breeders' essentials ceased their activity. Moreover, reindeer breeders did not receive a salary for a long time. Amid the circumstances of an economic crisis and runaway inflation, they had to kill deer to survive or to receive cash from the sale of venison. In aggregate, all these factors led to a catastrophic impoverishment of the Todja people and a sharp reduction in cervine herds, from 14,000 head in 1982 to 1,100 in 2001 (Donahoe 2008: 197–198).

3.4 Economic and social situation

According to the Ministry of Health of the Tuva Republic, the birth rate in Todja in 1995 had decreased in comparison with 1994 by 42.6%, and mortality increased by 30%. In 1995, the natural increase was 25 people, and in 1996, 23 persons. The incidence of disease in the local population grew sharply.

Moreover, the transition to a market economy sharply aggravated the employment situation of the population. This became especially true in small settlements where in connection with the reform of the agrarian sector there was a huge reduction in the number of workplaces. The majority of those in the list of employment seekers were young people under 30 years of age. Unemployment led to an outflow of highly skilled experts and youth to the city. According to figures from 2002, only 659 Todja people held permanent jobs.

Thus, the Todja people appeared to be on the verge of disaster; the question of their survival and preservation as original ethnographic group with the features of their economic livelihood and culture became ever more acute. Due to this situation, in June, 1995 the President of the Tuva Republic issued a decree, "About measures for reindeer breeding development in the republic." This decree meant that the deer that were livestock in agricultural enterprises and communities were their collective property, and their privatization was prohibited. The communities

were temporarily forbidden for three years from handing deer over to the state, killing them for economic needs or for giving out as wages in kind.

Some international organizations have been helping the Todja people. For example, the French non-governmental organization “An action against hunger” visited them in 2000–2001 and delivered food and clothes for the children of reindeer breeders. The American non-governmental organization “Totem Peoples Preservation Project” has worked in the region since 2000. This organization tries the help to reindeer breeders to improve the health of cervine herds, it delivers medicines to them necessary for veterinary supervision, carries out other necessary deliveries, and also organizes the training of veterinarians.

3.5 Creation of tribal communities

In 2004, the Parliament of the Tuva Republic passed a law, “On the tribal community of the indigenous minority Todja people” which urges solutions to the problem of establishment and support for the state protection of the primordial habitat of the Todzha inhabitants, and also their traditional way of life and livelihood. This law provided to Todja people legal protection which they did not have before. According to it, the community governs through a general meeting, a council of the community, and a chairman of the board; it has the right to develop a charter and hold property; some communities can unite into unions (associations) and have the privilege of using natural resources in places of accommodation; communities also have the right to observe religious practices, and create their own cultural centers. Questions of community land use and its property are regulated by the Ground and Civil codes. An association of communities of Todja people called “Tos Chadyr” was also created; the president of this is a local reindeer breeder named Svetlana Demkina. The association consists of about 1,100 individual members and five tribal communities: “Systyg-Hem,” “Ulug-Dag,” “Odugen,” “Kham Sara,” and “Tere-Hol.” Our informants the Kyrganays are members of the “Odugen” Community.

For the coordination of activities of reindeer-breeding farms at the federal level, the Association of Indigenous Minority Ethnic groups of the North and the Far East of the Russian Federation was created; its chairman is Sergey Haryuchi (Yamal). The main objective of the Association consists in preservation of the number of deer, in carrying out selection work, and creation of a breeding herd in regions where the local population traditionally is engaged in reindeer breeding. There is a special technical training college in Toora-Hem for future reindeer-breeders, and this occupation still is considered honorable and desirable. Some young people can be educated at the prestigious Institute of Reindeer in Yakutsk, in the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia.

3.6 Poaching problems

It is necessary to note that notable distinctions between the Todja and other

ethnic groups in their relation to natural resources and especially to hunting for wild animals sometimes lead to inter-ethnic friction. For example, Todja people accuse Russians of illegal hunting and shooting indiscriminately at all the animals they come across. They make the following argument: If a Russian sees five *maral* (red deer), he will kill all of them and take the antlers and the genitals, and leave all to the rest to rot; a Todja person will kill just one animal and not touch the others. However, this problem exists not only between the Todja people and the Russians, but also between the Todja people and other Tuvans, who come to Tozhda from other districts for commercial hunting and fishing (Donahoe 2008: 196).

According to B. Donahoe, the very important resources for Todja people of wild animals, which are their main source of animal protein and also provide income from the sale of furs, are now being exhausted by poachers with a view towards the illicit trade in animal carcasses in the black market. Among other threats are destruction of their dwelling environment by the mining industry connected with gold mining and timber cutting, and also the temptation of receiving easy profit from hunting tourism organized for foreign clients. From this researcher's point of view, in order to resist these threats, it is necessary to provide reindeer breeders with guarantees that they can continue to be engaged in hunting for life support, that their lands will be protected by the law from privatization and further use for industrial purposes, and that hunting will be forbidden to those who are not natives of Todja. Otherwise, the disappearance of reindeer breeding and the way of life related to it will lead to a reduction of non-recoverable biological diversity and loss of a unique cultural heritage.

3.7 Chinese expansion

There is another extremely serious problem in the Todja region. In April 2006, an auction sale of licenses for development of the Kyzyl-Tashtygsky field of poly-metallic ores in Todja took place. It is known that this field contains large reserves of zinc and lead which are in demand in the world market. The Chinese company JSC Lunsin paid Russia 740 million rubles for the right to develop this field over the next 25 years.

In August of the same year, a meeting of heads of the republic with representatives of this company took place in the House of Government in Tuva. Representatives of the company reported to the Tuvan authorities on the beginning of design works. The Chinese party assumed obligations to consider the strictest ecological requirements shown by the Tuvan party. However, both parties reached a consensus that the activities of JSC Lunsin in Todja will bring mutual advantage for both sides. It will help social and economic development of the district and workplaces organizations, including training for local young people (Mongush 2010a: 124–125).

When we arrived in Todja, development of the Kyzyl-Tashtygsky field was already actively under way. We got acquainted with four Chinese working there.

From their words we learned the following: Currently about 1,000 Chinese experts of many varied backgrounds are participating in the project. All of them work under contracts whose length depends on the circumstances. Contracts usually last for 2 or 4 years.

Our informants came to Todja because of high salaries. However, they refused to specify its amount since their contract requires nondisclosure. They have the following living conditions: They live in a hostel with a kitchen, gardens, and hot-houses where they grow all the vegetables they need. Internet, TV sets, radio and mobile communication are available to them. Once a year each worker has 50 days of vacation to visit his relatives in China.

A Chinese town with infrastructure will be built in Todja. It will help Chinese workers to come here with their families. Their children will go to the kindergarten and study at the school. In this sphere they have done much. We actually saw how they were building residential and public houses. Many of these are awaiting completion.

According to the local workers in this field, they are constructing a processing factory where they will dress ore. In order to do this they will use salts of hydrocyanic acid; all this will be dumped together into a settler and be filtered there, and the remaining waste from production will be dumped into the local Ak-Hem River, from where it will flow into the Yenisei.

Ecologists from Kyzyl, who came to Todja in 2011 to study this question, have rigorously ascertained that when the processing factory starts to operate at full power, it will not be possible to avoid an ecological disaster. Todja's fauna will start to die out, all plants will become poisonous, the incidence of disease in the local population will sharply increase, and the earth will become barren.

Besides this, the Chinese also extract large quantities of gold which they melt into ingots and send in containers to China. Local people perceive it as the plunder of natural riches by the Chinese who have received permission for this from the Tuvan and Russian governments. According to elderly informants, the strong earthquakes which were taking place at the end the 2011 have grown out of the barbarous invasion of strangers into the subsoil of Tuva. The disappearance of a large mountain, razed to the ground in connection with mining, which previously had been considered to be a sacred object, was considered by the old men to be an irreplaceable loss, and the anger of the spirit owner of this mountain and other districts seemed quite justified.

Initial promises by the Chinese to create workplaces for the local population, and through that to allegedly promote social and economic development in the district, in reality turned out to be fiction. What they actually did was to buy two cars for the local administration, and then employed some tens of Tuvans and Russians as unskilled workers. Later many of them left the project. There were some serious reasons why they did this. We listed them in the order in which they were cited by

our informants. First, the Russian (including Tuvan) workers got small salaries; second, what they were fed was disgusting (the remains of the food after the Chinese had eaten); and third, they felt that they themselves were traitors participating in the predatory plunder of the natural riches of their homeland. According to recent data, no more than 30 Russians remained working with the Chinese, they have to continue working for the maintenance of their families.

From the Todja people's point of view, the activity of the Chinese company in their territory is serious threat of not only an ecological, but also of a strategic character. According to them, "disinterested" investments of the Chinese industrialists in Tuva can have repercussions in the future. Having obtained a serious advantage in the region, it will be simpler for China to undertake development of other fields, and also for geological exploration. And when the railway to Kyzyl is constructed, representatives of the People's Republic of China can lobby for stretching it to Mongolia. The distance between Mongolia and China is rather short, and it is directly in the path of the Chinese expansion in the conditions of increasing globalization.

4 The Tuvans of Tsengel *sum*

In Mongolia, we did field work among Tuvans living in Tsengel *sum* (district) of Bayan Olgii *aimag*. They are considered to be one of the well-preserved groups of Tuvans in Mongolia. In addition to them, there are free ethno-local groups of Tuvans, who inhabit different *aimags*, set at some distance from each other. These groups are located in Buyan *sum* of Khovd, Tsagaannuur *sum* in Khovsgol, and Tsagaan-Uur *sum*, which is also in Khovsgol *aimag* though they are set apart from the Tsagaannuur Tuvans in terms of distance and ethno-historical context. Tuvans are also to be found in Selenge and Tov *aimags* (in Altanbulag and Zaamar *sums*, respectively), but because of their small numbers and wide dispersal, these two groups do not represent compact ethnic formations (Mongush 2010a: 208–209).

4.1 Distribution and numbers

As research carried out by Y. L. Aranchyn and M. Kh. Mannai-ool demonstrates, Tuvans have lived in Mongolia for a long time. According to their research, in 1757 the Tuvan tribes that travelled as nomads along the southern ridge of Tannu-OI (or Tagna-Uul in Mongolian) to the upper reaches of the Khovd River were separated from the general mass of Tuvans, who inhabited the Upper Yenisei Basin. This separation created the conditions for the foundation of four distinct ethno-local groups of Tuvans in this area (Aranchyn 1975: 214; Mannai-ool 1995: 57).

The *sums* of Tsengel in Bayan-Olgii and Tsagaannuur in Khovsgol are the closest to the border of the Republic of Tuva in the Russian Federation, where the majority of the Tuvan people are to be found. The first of these *sums* abuts the Mongun-Taiga *kozhuun* (district in Tuva), and the second is adjacent to the Tozhu

kozhuun. Many of the Tuvans who live in these *sums* assert that their land was a part of the territory of Tuva at the time when the state borders, which now divide Russia and Mongolia, did not exist. The establishment of borders between the two states in the first half of the twentieth century, however, led to the separation of a certain number of Tuvans from their native ethnoses and their consequent settlement in neighboring Mongolia.

Khovd *aimag*, which is also inhabited by Tuvans, is comparatively far from Tuva. It is understood from Chinese sources that the Tuvan tribes under the dominion of the Allan Khans (from the sixteenth to the first half of the eighteenth centuries) travelled not only within the territory of present-day Tuva, but also further south along the Khovd, and further east as far as Lake Khovsgol. In 1974, on his first visit to the Khovd Tuvans, Y. L. Aranchyn, the well-known Tuvan historian, identified remnant characteristics of the Tuvan ethnoses (Aranchyn 1975: 234).

Research suggests that the Tuvan population of Khovd was in constant contact with Tuvans from other areas. Thus, according to the statements of Ulamsurengiin Tsetsegdari (born 1972, a native of Khovd in Mongolia), her maternal grandparents were born and raised near the Eevi and Kok-Dugai rivers in Xinjiang, China, where another group of ethnic Tuvans is concentrated (Mongush 2010a). As a result of armed clashes between local Kazakhs and Chinese soldiers between 1930 and 1940, the Tuvans who lived among the Kazakhs (more than 100 households) fled to Mongolia where they settled permanently among the Khovd Tuvans.

Mongolia's northernmost border region of Tsagaannuur *sum* in Khovsgol *aimag* is home to a distinct ethno-local group of Tuvans made up of approximately 500 people who generally call themselves Dukha. Because most of these Tuvans have historically engaged in reindeer-herding, hunting and fishing in the taiga regions to the west of Lake Khovsgol and Darkhad valley, they are commonly known in Mongolia as the '*tsaatan*' (Mongolian for 'reindeer herder'). Currently, a little over thirty households lead a fully nomadic lifestyle of herding reindeer and hunting in the taiga, while the remainder of the population either live in the center of Tsagaannuur *sum* or herd steppe-based livestock in the valleys that stretch throughout the area (Wheeler 2000: 6–7).

The Tuvans found in the surrounding area of Tsagaannuur *sum* to the east of Lake Khovsgol are the descendants of those who were previously under the administration of the Lake Khovsgol Uriankhai *khoshuun* during Manchu Qing times until the early 1920s (Ewing 1981: 186–187; Wheeler 2000: 32–35). Though known as the 'Uigur Uriankhai' or 'Uuriin Uriankhai' in Mongolian sources (Badamkhatan 1965: 23; Bold 1975), when speaking in their own dialect of Tuvan, they call themselves and their language 'Dukha' as do the reindeer herders of Tsagaannuur *sum* to the west of Lake Khovsgol. While some now live in the central village of the *sum*, about ten households living along the upper reaches of the Uir and Tsagaan Rivers have most noticeably retained particular aspects of their Tuvan ethnic identity (Alan

Wheeler, personal communication).

Unfortunately, reliable reports on the numbers of Tuvans in Mongolia do not exist. What facts we do possess are inadequate and need more precise definition. For example, in 1966 Taube determined that Tsengel *sum* was inhabited by approximately 2,400 Tuvans (Taube 1994: 8). When Mannai-ool was in the same area at the beginning of the 1990s, he counted 232 households (Mannai-ool 1995: 58). The latest census of the *sum*'s population, carried out in the summer of 1999, states that the entire population of Tsengel was 7,600 people, of whom 2,000 were Tuvans belonging to 500 households.

In all, Bayan Olgii *aimag* is inhabited by approximately 700 Tuvan households. If one assumes that an average household contains between five and six people, then the Tuvan population of this *aimag* is approximately 4,000 people. Sources suggest that the Tuvan population of Khovd *aimag* is greater than 2,500 people, and approximately 1,000 Tuvans live in the Khovsgol *aimag*. Yet practically nothing is known about the population of Tuvans in other *aimags*.

Data collected from unofficial sources state that approximately 25,000 Tuvans live in Mongolia. However, as our informant Gaagiin Zolbayar (born 1966, native of Tsengel, researcher) clarifies, this number includes both those Tuvans who have retained their native language, and also those who abandoned it a long time ago but who still call themselves Tuvans. It is estimated that out of these 25,000 Tuvans, about 8,000 speak Tuvan as a first language.

Previous attempts at carrying out a census to discover the number of Tuvans have been unsuccessful, and it has become clear that, until recently, Tuvans have been labelled as either Uriankhai, Uigur, Kazakhs, or even as Mongols in their Mongolian identification passports (Wheeler 2000: 46; 2001: 23–24). Acknowledging the low status and inequality of their ethnic group in comparison with others, some Tuvans have chosen to identify themselves as Mongolian. These negative factors often influence Tuvans to try and escape the visible demonstration of their ethnicity, and sometimes even to deny it entirely. But to a certain extent these are somewhat isolated occurrences. And in the 1990s, another tendency has arisen among Tuvans, who out of their own free will, have begun to identify themselves as Tuvans using the ethnonym 'Tyva,' which is the standard designation used by Tuvans in Russia.

4.2 Clan composition

The clan composition of the Tuvans of the Bayan Olgii *aimag* has much in common with that of the aforementioned ethno-local groups. The composition is chiefly of groups of *Soyan*, *Monchak* (or *Кок Monchak*) and *Khoiyuk*. Mongush and Mannai-ool have discovered the following divisions among them: *The Soyans* group, for example, consists of the *Kara-Soyan* and *Ak-Soyan* clans. The *Kara-Soyan* clan is divided into the *Kara-Sal*, *Kara-Tosh*, *Shanagash*, *Kara-Saaya*, *Khoit*, and *Mool-Oorzhak* patrimonies; the *Ak-Soyan* clan is divided into the *Saryglar*, *Agban*,

Deleg, Burguud, Tos-Kirish, Kazak-Kyrgys, Shuudak and *Oyun* patrimonies. The *Monchak* is divided into the *Ak-Igriit, Shunguur-Igriit, Adai-Igriit, Choodu-Igriit, Oolet, Khoit-Chagtyva, Saryg-Chagtyva, Kara-Chagtyva, Kyzyl-Soyan*, and *Deleg-Khoiyuk* patrimonies. In their turn, the *Khoiyuk* are divided into the *Khaa-Khoiyuk, Mongush-Khoiyuk, Shanagash, Kazak-Khoiyuk, Dongak-Khoiyuk, Kara-Khoiyuk*, and *Kor-Khoiyuk* patrimonies (Mongush 1983: 59).

The above-listed clan designations of the Tuvans in Mongolia coincide to a great extent with the names of the familial groups of Tuvans in the Russian Federation. This allows one to confirm that the process of the formation of these groups and their respective dispersal was once closely linked to the Tuvans' ethnic territory. In this instance the unity of this territory played an important role as one of the basic factors in ethnic formation, without which it is impossible for any ethnos to develop.

4.3 Tuvan-Kazakh relations

Bayan Olgii is considered to be a Kazakh *aimag* because most of the Kazakhs in Mongolia live there. In comparison with them, representatives of other ethnic groups look like national minorities. This is the reason why there is some difficulty in Tuvan-Kazakh relations.

Due to forced resettlement that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, Tuvans had to move to Selenge and Tov *aimags* of Mongolia. In 1963, the independent Tuvan *sum* of Tsengel in Bayan Olgii *aimag* was eliminated and was unified with Ak-Khem *sum*, which had a principally Kazakh population. From that point on, Tsengel *sum* ceased to be an area with a mono-ethnic population. M. Kh. Mannai-ool writes that this action exerted a negative effect on the Tuvans, who formed a minority in this newly-created *sum*. Kazakhs filled all the important posts and senior positions, and many Tuvans were left without employment (Mannai-ool 1995: 58).

The Kazakhs not only deprived the Tuvans of work, but also of fertile pasture, without which the Tuvans no longer had any reasons for remaining in these areas. In effect, this merging of the two *sums* forced many Tuvan families (more than 1,100 people) to leave Tsengel in search of work. They moved to other *aimags*, mainly Tov and Selenge *aimags* that were engaged in a special state program aimed at speeding up their socio-economic development. The leadership of these *aimags* needed extra workers, and therefore the Tuvans found themselves welcomed.

The numerous attempts made over a long period by the Tsengel Tuvans to draw the attention of the Mongolian government to their poor situation did not produce the desired results. Then in 1995, the famous writer Chinagiin Galsan, who is a graduate of Leipzig University in Germany and himself an ethnic Tuvan and native of Tsengel, organized the return of 36 families from the Zaamar and Altanbulag *sums* to Tsengel at his own expense. This was an intentional call to the Mongolian leadership to take notice of the situation of these Tuvans. Over the course

of a month, these families made the 2,000-kilometre journey back home by camel and were shadowed the entire time by a German film crew who made a documentary about them. When this was later shown throughout the country, it had a great effect in drawing the attention of the Mongolian public to their predicament and influenced the Kazakh authorities in Tsengel to change their policy concerning the local Tuvan population. Thanks to this precedent, the flow of Tuvans migrating from Bayan Olgti *aimag* has come to a virtual standstill (Mongush 2010: 210–211). However, after the 2000s, migration from Bayan Olgti *aimag* started again. The main reason for this is the difficult social-economic situation in the *aimag* and the high level of unemployment among young people. That is why many of them have to go to other regions to search for a better life.

At the first sight, the relations between Tuvans and Kazakhs seem very positive. But sometimes our informants complained about the Kazakhs. During the last 10 years they built three mosques in Tsengel that have caused a lot of trouble for the Tuvans, who do not have their own Buddhist temple. In these circumstances, the Tuvans fear being involved in a process of Islamicization. In order to resist this tendency, the Tuvans are making all possible efforts to construct a Buddhist temple in Tsengel.

One noticeable fact is that during certain ceremonies, particularly at the ritual benediction of the *ovaa* (*ovoo* in Mongolian), a stone cairn dedicated to local spirits, the Tuvans of Mongolia were happy to invite representatives of other ethnic groups as honored guests, provided that they were of the same faith as the Tuvans (i.e. Buddhists). From this, it follows that of the Tuvans' closest neighbours, only Mongols could participate in their ceremonies, and the Kazakhs, as Muslims, were left out.

In addition, our respondents provided a very significant piece of information, which is that the difference in religious beliefs held by Kazakhs and Tuvans acts as a serious block against marriage between the two groups. For this reason, marriages with Mongols, albeit few in number, are preferable to those with Kazakhs.

Referring to the Tsengel Tuvans, we have noted that even though they live in close proximity to the Kazakh population, marriages between Tuvans and Kazakhs are so surprisingly rare that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Out of all the neighboring peoples, Mongols predominate as far as non-Tuvan spouses for the Tuvans are concerned. However, their number in Tuvan households is not really noticeable. The reason for this can be found in the answers given to questions on the family and marriage.

4.4 Extent of preservation of the native language

It is important to note that in their linguistic relations the Tuvans of Tsengel are a single unit: they all speak in particular dialects of Tuvan. Their language is wholly similar to modern Tuvan, apart from a few peculiarities in phonetics, lexis,

and melodies.

In contrast to the aforementioned groups, the Tuvans of Bayan Olgii find themselves in a more favourable situation in that they can converse freely in three languages: Tuvan, Mongolian, and Kazakh. Thanks to the proximity of Tuva and good roads, contact between the inhabitants of the Tsengel *sum* and the Tuvans in Russia has continued in full force, a factor that undoubtedly contributes to the retention of the Tuvan language's usage among the Tsengel Tuvans. They use their native language noticeably better, and the problem of its survival has not been a serious one for them. Overwhelming proof of this is provided by the 120 songs, 17 shamanic incantations, 50 benedictions, around 800 proverbs and riddles, and 90 stories and myths which were recorded by E. Taube during her period of field research among the Tsengel Tuvans (Taube 1994: 7).

Previously there was just one school in Tsengel, with Mongolian and Kazakh classes, and teaching was done in two languages, Mongolian and Kazakh. The Tuvan children usually studied in the Mongolian classes. Russian was taught as a foreign language.

In 1991 the local authorities, taking into consideration the renewed interest of Tuvans in their native language, reformed the one school into two, a Mongolian with Kazakh classes, and a Tuvan school. The initiator of this idea was the father of our guide C. Gagaa (in 1992–1994 he was the director of this school). At the beginning the new Tuvan school had the status of a secondary education establishment and operated in this status till 1997. After September 1, 1998 it became an elementary school.

The staff of the school consists of 32 people; more than 190 pupils are being trained in the school. Teachers constantly pass advanced training courses in an administrative center of the *aimag*, in Ulaanbaatar, and also in Kyzyl, in the capital of the Republic of Tuva. For example, in October 2009, a group of teachers led by Z. Narantuyaa took courses provided by the philological faculty of the Tuvan State University, organized by Professor M. V. Bavuu-Suryun and Associate Professor N. Ch. Damba. Tsengel teachers had lectures and practical classes in techniques of teaching the native language in elementary school.

In 2011 the school celebrated its 20 anniversary. The school is in good condition. It is a two-storey building; there are a boarding school for the children of shepherds, and an office for the school doctor. 87 children live in the boarding school. Classes are held five days per week. After the sixth grade, pupils go to the next school where training is conducted only in the Mongolian language and where they study together with their Kazakh and Mongolian peers.

There is no special subject of “Tuvan Literature” in the Tsengel elementary school, but in the Tuvan language lessons, children become acquainted with genres of oral national creativity and some examples of works of the Tuvan writers from Russia. The local teachers do not use the textbooks made by Russian authors for

national schools in their teaching because the language of the Tsengel Tuvans has dialect features. In the Tuvan they speak there are more than 45% of lexical, 11% of grammatical, and 44% of phonetic dialecticisms. Besides, Tsengel teachers have no experience in compiling textbooks that consider the language features of the local population. Their colleagues from the Tuvan State University, who are more skilled in this sphere, try to help them in every possible way. They conduct special research on this subject.

Our guide Zolbayar has a dream of inviting to Tsengel a group of teachers from Kyzyl and signing contract of cooperation with them. Among their number, in his opinion, there must be not only teachers of the Tuvan language, but also other subjects: stories, physical culture, and housekeeping. From his point of view, Tsengel young people need to have a cultural and information exchange with their Russian relatives.

The attachment of the Tsengel Tuvans to their native language is also indicated by the fact that they usually have two names, one in Mongolian and another in Tuvan. Though they usually fill out official documents using their Mongolian names, in everyday life they normally address each other by their Tuvan names. Thus, Tuvan names are more resonant for people than their Mongolian ones.

5 Conclusion

In any case, the data gathered shows conclusively enough that the modern ethnic development of the Tuvans in China, Russia, and Mongolia is complex and multi-faceted in character. First, having lived in a mixed ethnic environment for a long time, Tuvans have to mix with other peoples and accept their languages and culture. This leads to the natural process of their partial assimilation. However, in spite of this, they still retain such important components of ethnicity as their native language, ethnic consciousness, and some features of traditional culture, which allows them to be identified as Tuvans. Second, the process of inter-ethnic integration is characteristic of most of the Tuvan groups: this means the interaction of different ethnic groups without their amalgamating. This process is typical for Mongolia and China, where cultural and economic interaction between different peoples is the main measure for solving national problems.

If we compare the situation of Tuvans in Xingiang, Todja, and Tsengel, we can get the following picture: The main trend in the life of the Chinese Tuvans is the development of tourism. There is a serious problem of the Chinese expansion in the Todja district of Tuva. There are certain difficulties in the relations between Mongolian Tuvans and Kazakhs in Tsengel. All these questions presented here offer promising avenues for future investigation, and could serve as an initial foundation for further analysis and broader comparison.

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S. Sasaki, Y. Konagaya, M. Mongush



Tourist service car in Khom, China, July, 2012



Mountain hotel near Hanas Lake, July, 2012



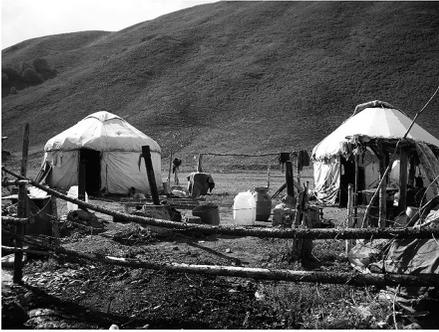
Chinese Tuvans, Hanas, Xinjiang, China, July, 2012



Performance for tourists, Hanas, China, July, 2012



Tuvan settlement Hanas, China, July, 2012



Traditional dwellings, Xinjiang, China, July, 2012



Xingiang Tuvan's oboe in Hanas, China, July, 2012



Camp of reindeer breeder, Todja, Russia, August, 2012



Deers, Todja, Russia, August, 2012



Our guide Sergei Kyrganay, Todja, Russia, August, 2012



Milking of deer, Todja, Russia, August, 2012



Supper of reindeer breeder, Todja, Russia, August, 2012



Todja hunters, Russia, August, 2012



Chinese workers, Ak-Khem, Todja, Russia, August, 2012



China town in Todja, Russia, August, 2012



Tsengel sum in Mongolia, August, 2012



Informants, Tsengel, Mongolia, August, 2012



Mongolian Tuvans, August, 2012



Milking of yaks, Mongolia, August, 2012



Man with horses, Tsengel, Mongolia, August, 2012



Grandmother and granddaughter are making blood sausage, Mongolia, August, 2012



Muslim church in Tsengel, August, 2012