Ethnic Identity of Tumed Mongols in Inner Mongolia

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Historically, since they were geographically positioned at the junction of nomadic and agrarian societies, the Tumed Mongols (also referred to as Tumeds) of Inner Mongolia were exposed to agriculture more than three centuries ago. Over time, the Tumed Mongols have been influenced by Han Chinese culture, and as a result, lost many of their Mongolian characteristics, and even lost their own language. Even so, before 1949, the Tumed Mongols belonged to a diverse administrative system with the Chinese. Many Tumed Mongols did not farm; they just rented out their land. In respect to religion and customs, the Tumed Mongols were also distinguishable from the Chinese and they remained partially independent.

This paper chronicles the transformation in Tumed Mongol identity that have taken place in two villages, Village X and Village Z, in Inner Mongolia, based on surveys carried out there over a number of years. It also examines how the Tumed Mongols adapted to changes caused by factors such as changes in government policy, and the effect these had on the Tumeds' perception of their own ethnicity and identity.

From 1950, land reform and communisation were carried out, and the two formal administrative systems of Mongol banners and Chinese counties were unified, with the result that the special features of the Tumed Mongols decreased rapidly. During the Cultural Revolution, communality was stressed, and many Mongols were persecuted, from their top leaders to the common people and the distinction between Mongols and Chinese was eliminated completely. Then, following rectification in the late 1970s, some preferential policies were reintroduced. But these did not cause an expansion of national identity, on the contrary, inter-ethnic marriages increased, especially for the younger people, and diverse identities are observed. In the conclusion, the effects of the central government’s national policies and the internal and external social relations that related to the identity of Tumed Mongols are discussed.

This study takes as its subject two villages in the Tumed area and considers expressions of ethnic identity through observation of daily life. By way of participant observation, an attempt was made to examine expressions of this identity intuitively and dynamically by focusing on subjective personal experiences, emotions, and patterns of lifestyle in everyday life.

THE CULTURE AND ETHNIC IDENTITY OF TUMED MONGOLS BEFORE 1949

Village X is called “Xiao Yingzi” “Yingzi” is a Han Chinese word originally referring
to the place where Mongols temporarily set up camp. The character at the beginning "Xiao," meaning small, is due to the relatively small population of the village. Village X is situated 30 kilometres to the south of Huhhot, and is near the road that joins Huhhot to Helingeer county and Shanxi province.

Before 1949, Village X had a population of less than one hundred, and all were Mongol. Nearly all households held the same last name, Yun, though they did not all belong to the same lineage. Upper Yingzi had one large lineage, with seven or eight extended families. Lower Yingzi had a few, smaller lineages.

Village X was primarily agrarian, with its families owning all of the village land, which was decommissioned by the Qing government (Hogiil 1992: 60). The people of Upper Yingzi were relatively affluent, hiring outside labourers on either a permanent or temporary basis to work the land. The people of Lower Yingzi chiefly worked the land themselves, but did occasionally hire temporary labourers. We will take as an example the case of Serguleng (all the names in this paper are assumed ones), of Lower Yingzi. Serguleng owned close to 100 Mu (1 Mu = approximately 666.7 m²) of arable land. He was unable to plant himself, so he had to hire Chinese workers to do the planting. Serguleng also had other land under his name, but it was "permanently leased" to Chinese farmers. One of Serguleng's children (now age 69) remembers getting tenant's rent, but claims it was a meagre sum. In addition to these plots, he also originally possessed another 110Mu, but since it was not properly registered with the government, he lost possession of the land. Among the farmers and landowners of Village X, few have the ability to farm themselves, and are by most standards they are not ideal farmers. No members of Village X became tenant farmers.

Of the few young residents of Village X, a few became farmers, one a Buddhist monk, and a notable five became mercenaries. Children of affluent families engaged in opium smoking and other forms of recreation on holidays. Some children were sent to the town (Guihua) Tumed Elementary School. Of those, several returned to the village without finishing their scholastic course. Of the children of Village X, only one was to go on to become a notable public figure. Yun Yu participated in the anti-Dewang movement of the 1930's as a member of the organized Bailingmiao rebellion, and would eventually become an influential Communist Party official. His niece, Yun Liwen, went to Yan'an after leaving Tumed Elementary School, and became the wife of Wulanfu.

Before 1949, there were no marriages between members of Village X and ethnic Chinese, yet there was also no intermarriage with members of other Mongol regions. All marriage was confined to Tumed Mongols. The one exception is Yun Yu, who married a Chinese schoolteacher, although he almost never returned to his native village. The practice of adoption, on the other hand, was quite common among the two sectors. Marital ties were formed almost without exception with members of neighbouring villages. This occasionally resulted in marriage between cousins. Among all the children born between 1910 and 1950, only one person had a Mongol name, the rest using Chinese names.

According to an elderly villager, the festival at Oboo was still being celebrated in the 1920's, and although it was never to be held again after that, Oboo remained a place of significance. In the 1930's there were two elderly women who spoke the Mongol language fluently, but by that time the younger generation was thoroughly unable to understand them.
There were many more areas which had been influenced by Chinese culture. However, they did not adopt all Chinese cultural traditions. For example, the people of Xiao Yingzi do give symbolic offerings to Mawang and the Dragon God at the New Year’s celebration, yet Mongols do not, as Chinese do, build and give offerings to shrines of their ancestors, which is called “Rongzi” in Chinese. Mongols also generally wear the same clothes as Chinese, but for ceremonial occasions (funerals, weddings, etc.) men and women alike must wear Paozi (a robe which mixes both Mongol and Manchu influences). Mongols never mix with Chinese for such ceremonies.

The name of Village Z is “Zhuhai,” which is Mongol for “red willow.” It is 40 kilometres east of Huhhot. The population of Village Z at the beginning of the 1950s was approximately 1,400. There were 130 houses, with 13 Mongol households, the remaining majority being ethnic Chinese. The Mongols of Village Z were chiefly employed in farming, although overall the situation was significantly different from that of Village X. In Village Z, although most Mongol families were landed farmers, there were almost no landowners (i.e., people with enough land to lease out). There was one case of a Mongol as a tenant farmer. Especially after the natural disasters of 1927, selling off their land became a means of survival for the Mongols of Village Z. Many villagers were forced by the circumstances to sell all of their land.

There are, however, examples of people who became successful in the farming industry as a result of this. One such example is Yun Wansheng, who came late to Village Z. Yun Wansheng’s ancestors lived in Hetan-bansheng, where they hired labourers to plant, and where they maintained their household with small amounts of money from tenants’ rents and from selling grass. But after the spring drought and fall flood of 1927, they were unable to salvage even one grain of their crops for harvest. As a result, the Yun family went completely bankrupt. Wansheng’s younger brother became a tenant farmer, while Wansheng fled with his wife and children to his sister’s house in Village Z. At first, he became a tenant farmer, but through diligent effort he was able to gradually buy land and become a landed farmer.

The Mongols in Village Z are divided into the family names Yun, Ma, and Bo. The population saw no significant increase, and there was no concept of lineage. Before 1949, the Mongols of Village Z preserved the custom of marrying within the Tumed region, and there were no marriages with Han Chinese. There are, however, examples of adopting Chinese children, particularly boys. Once the adoption takes place it is usual for the adopted child to cease all relations with his biological parents. In order to maintain a smooth line of succession, in Village Z there were five cases of adoption of Chinese boys.

Although the Mongols of Village Z did co-exist with Chinese, they still preserved characteristic Mongol customs. With regard to religion, Chinese worship the shrines of Mawang, Guandi, Wudao, Nainai, and Dragon God (Niu 1996: 39). Although Mongols believe in Chinese gods, they do not go into the shrines and worship them. In Village Z there was a Lamaism temple, although by the latter part of 1940s, there was no priest to preside over its ceremonies. Every year during the New Year’s celebration, the Mongols would gather and go around to each household in turn and read Buddhist scriptures. This custom was preserved until 1949. Among the villagers there was one man who emigrated to Huhhot and became a Lama of Qiaoqizhao, but he never returned to the village. At other ceremonies
the villagers of Z, just as those of X, did not mix with Chinese. Yun Cunzhong (now age 63) still remembers lending a Paozi to a relative and participating in a wedding ceremony. At the beginning of the new year, the Mongols of Village Z also made chaomi (a kind of special Mongolian fried rice).

Although in comparison to the life of those on Village X, the life of those in Village Z was relatively stable, there were serious economic and social crises among the villagers of Z. The economic crisis resulted in the selling off of land, and socially, the low birth rate began to express itself as a population crisis. It was against this backdrop that the Mongols would face the new era that started in 1949.

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF TUMED MONGOLS DURING LAND REFORMS

In September 1949, Suiyuan province, which at present includes Huhhot, Baotou, Yikezhaomeng, Bayannuoermen, and some parts of Wulanchabumeng, was peacefully liberated. The Mongol banner system was also maintained, and the administrative units continued to co-exist as separate entities, the Chinese belonging to the county and the Mongols to their banner. The underlying Mongolian system of organization, however, was abolished.

In January 1954, the banner and county systems that had coexisted in the Tumed region for over 300 years were completely merged and unified. Soon after, Suiyuan province was merged with the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which was established in 1947 with Wulanfu as Chairman. Guisui, which was a contracted abbreviation of Guihua, meaning “assimilation,” and Suiyuan, meaning “to quell,” was renamed Huhhot (“blue city” in Mongol), and was made the capital of the autonomous region. The previous Tumed region was redrawn into seven counties and banners (now a geographically fixed unit), each one now falling under Huhhot, Baotou, or Wulanchabumeng. After the administration officially adjusted the land divisions (Chingeltu 1990: 54), the original Tumed banner was never to exist again. After unification and division, Mongols were now a minority ethnic group in each banner/county.

Village X was now a part of Tumed Left Banner, and Village Z was a made a suburb of Huhhot. The traditional conceptual sense of “ethnicity” was replaced by a sense of “region.” The Mongols of Village Z, particularly the younger generation, were now more conscious of themselves as Mongols within a Capital suburb, and their consciousness as Mongols of the Tumed banner began to fade.

At the end of 1951, land reforms began in the counties and banners of the Tumed region. The basic method of reform was to first identify the class elements, and then to redistribute land based on that. To a certain extent, special consideration was given to Mongols. Classification as a large or middle landowner required the authorization of the provincial government. The land of middle and small landowners was not confiscated, and as a rule nor their other assets.

In the winter of 1951, a special reform implementation team entered Village X and began to conduct the reforms. There were several Tumed Mongols within the team, and there was not that much of a perceived distance between the team and the villagers. The team did,
however, run into difficulties.

First, there was the problem of "class" and "family." Some of the households of Upper Yingzi were relatively wealthy, and according to the criteria utilized were large landowners. Yet at the same time they were also the family or relatives of Yun Liwen and Yun Yu, who were Revolutionary executives. From the point of view of class, it was necessary to draw a stern line between the exploiting class and the Revolutionary administration. Not even Yun Liwen herself was able to express her sympathy for the people of her village. Even when she returned home in 1956 for the first time in 10 years, Liwen chose not to eat with or even visit her relatives. The villagers said she had no idea of family, but it may have been that this was the proper attitude for a Revolutionary executive.

In Upper Yingzi, there was another special case: a man named Yun Wanwan. When Wanwan was young his family lost their fields, and Wanwan was sent to his maternal grandmother's house to be raised. After the disaster of 1927, Wanwan's father went completely broke, so it was decided that Wanwan should stay in Village X. Wanwan was raised on his uncle's property, but unlike his cousins, he was made to live with the tenant farmers. When Wanwan came of age his uncle did arrange for him to be married and gave him a small piece of land, making him independent. Wanwan was at first considered a valuable asset by the implementation team. They broke his familial ties and enlisted him in the fight against large landowners. In the end, however, his lack of enthusiasm disappointed them. Wanwan was eventually classified as a "poor farmer," putting him in a "class" separate from his relatives.

In Village X there was another notable case. The village head, Yun Erdan, was born to a poor farming family, but his grandfather had been adopted from an Upper Yingzi family by one from Lower Yingzi. For various reasons, both families kept this fact to themselves. Previously, it was customary in the case of adoption for the two families concerned to avoid contact once the adoption took place. Yet the investigations into who was of what birth and belonged to what class unearthed these previously hidden relationships and made them a very sensitive matter. Although there was no direct confrontation between these two particular families during the land reforms, they were to become increasingly antagonistic to each other in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution.

After being subjected to the exhaustive and repetitive explanations of the implementation team, the concept of "class" was finally established in the minds of the villagers. They became quite knowledgeable of the correct answer to the question, "which is more precious, your class or your family." At first they did not even understand the question, and some became the object of laughter for misinterpreting the word "class" to mean "sister" (the pronunciations are similar). In much the same way that they previously had a distinct awareness of themselves as Mongols, people were now very conscious of their own class status and that of those around them. The idea that "even Mongols belong to different classes" had taken root.

Land reform in Village Z was implemented for both Mongols and Chinese. The 130 Chinese households were made the primary focus of the reforms. Mongols participated in every step of the implementation process. The Mongols were categorized as follows: one "tenant farmer" (no land), one "middle farmer" (landed small farmer) and the rest "poor
farmers” (subsistence level or below, landed small farmer). Eventually, the tenant and poor farmers were able to get a share of land out of the divisions. For the villagers of Z, the most significant effect of the land reforms was breaking the barrier between Mongols and Chinese. Just as in the case of Village X, the land reforms stressed the distinctions in class, and not the barrier between different ethnic peoples. The land reforms in Village Z unified Chinese and Mongols at the administrative level.

The next problem was that of land and land rents. As stated before, some Tumed Mongols still had nominal possession rights to land on “permanent lease,” and a few Mongols were collecting land rents, albeit meagre. During the land reforms, this purely nominal land system was abolished, and the permanently leased land was either given to the farmer working it, or to the local hamlet. The Tumed Mongols’ right to collect rent, from land that had been historically left to them, was abolished with it.

Particular stress was laid on “ethnic cooperation” during the land reforms. Clear and concrete policies toward Mongols were announced. For small families, a method of land distribution based on the number of family members was adopted: e.g., two portions for one member, three portions for two members, etc. In selecting local officials, special care was taken to appoint Mongols. One man from Village Z became head of the local Xiang (an administrative unit consisting of several villages). Favourable treatment of Mongols was not the only result of the policy of “ethnic cooperation.” In the name of “ethnic cooperation” Village X was forced to donate part of its already reduced portion of land to neighbouring villages.

The spread of public education was of particular significance for the Tumeds. In 1949 the Tumed Elementary School in Guihua (Huhhot) had already existed for 300 years and the Tumed middle school had a history of over 20 years behind it. There had been, however, a limit on the number of students, and these slots were taken up by wealthy Mongols. After 1949 the existing Tumed Elementary and Middle schools were expanded. A new series of tribal schools were built, dormitories were added, and a full scholarship system was established. The majority of the children in Village X of school age enrolled in the new tribal elementary school. Village Z, on the other hand, already had a shortage of children of school age, and those who were the appropriate age were often kept at home to work. As a result the enrolment level was substantially lower than that in Village X. Beginning in the 1950’s several universities, including Inner Mongolian University, were founded. Each academic institution adopted “preferential policies” towards ethnic minorities. Five students from Village X and one from Z attended Universities and vocational schools and all went on to become engineers, Communist Party officials, etc.

Another notable phenomenon was the spread of the surname “Yun.” The family name “Yun” was thought to be related to the Tumed’ ancestor (Buyanküü 1986: 6). But, before the end of the Qing Dynasty, the name of all Tumeds was not universally “Yun.” Yun became a common Tumed surname in the 1920’s. During the land reforms, the vast majority of Tumeds registered their name as Yun. Village X consisted entirely of people named Yun, with the exception of an elderly man named Serguleng. He registered the surname Shi, although when his children entered elementary school they, like their classmates, began using the name Yun. Most of the villagers of Village Z also have the surname Yun. Mongols rarely use...
Mongol last names.

During this period the people of Village X basically maintained the custom of marrying within their banner. One Mongol with a Chinese wife immigrated to Village X. In addition to marrying through introductions of relatives (distant and close), the people of Village X also married Mongols who had recently migrated to the village. The introductions of friends made at work or school outside the region was also a valuable and common means of finding a potential spouse. One might, for example, introduce his schoolmate A to his cousin B and arrange for their marriage; and A might introduce his schoolmate C to his cousin D, etc. However, the approval of their parents was necessary.

Village Z differed from X in this respect. Soon after the land reforms, Mongols and Chinese began to marry. Of the 14 registered marriages of Mongol men and women before 1963, four of them were with Chinese. Since Yun Suangan was poor, he found difficulty in finding a bride. In addition, he had only a few living relatives and there was no one to arrange for him to be married. After the land reforms he married a Han widow. The children from her previous marriage also took the name Yun. That was the first marriage of a Mongol and a Chinese in Village Z. In the eyes of the Chinese and Mongol observers, it was not an ideal wedding. The ceremony was extremely simple, brief, and hurried. He was poor and she was “used.”

Although marriages with Chinese had been approved of for some time, there were still those who, concerned about appearances, pushed for restricting marriages to within one’s own ethnic group. Some time later a man named Ma Fuzhao married a Chinese woman. The marriage was arranged through a go-between, and the wedding was held openly and primarily according to Mongol customs. Ma Fuzhao’s household was average. He had three brothers. Two of them became soldiers outside of the region and Fuzhao himself was also very active. Fuzhao’s marriage was changing the attitudes of the Mongols of Village Z toward marriage with Chinese. Fuzhao later became the secretary of a people’s commune and became extremely prosperous. When people argue about the merits of marrying a Chinese, the advocates frequently invoke Fuzhao’s example and say, “Ma Fuzhao married a Chinese, and look at his (splendid) lifestyle.”

The new government went to great efforts to enforce public morals and discipline. Gambling, opium, and general debauchery were restricted. The government reformed local customs and drastically decreased the level of religious activity, resulting eventually in its disappearance altogether. The village officials were regularly called to Xiang meetings, whence they would return to the village with new edicts and mandates. Party headquarters would frequently dispatch teams to the villages to see that they were carried out. In 1965 the Inner Mongolia Party Commission conducted a long-term survey of Village X, and with the cooperation of the village constructed a dam and reservoir. The new philosophy and new spirit were having a profound influence on Villages X and Z.

It is generally recognized that the period after the founding of the People’s Republic to 1957 was one of transition in which ethnic peoples peacefully adapted to the new system. After the land reforms, the unification of Qi (banner) and Xian (county), and the formation of people’s communes, the Tumed Mongols would never again become an independent body in their own right. They were carefully incorporated into the new political and economic
structure, and the expressions and content of their own ethnic awareness began to change.

First we will consider the division of Mongol groups. Before 1949, the Tumed Mongols formed one distinct group. After the unification of Qi and Xian, Tumed Mongols began to form their concept of thinking of land in geographical units of banner and Xian. Furthermore, during the land reforms the theory of “class” was introduced, which to a certain degree did further damage to the previously held sense of ethnic unity.

The next problem deals with the relations with Chinese. Before 1949 there was antagonism between Mongols and Chinese, brought due to land disputes. Land reforms completely transformed the previous contradictions among Mongols and Chinese and brought to the surface differences and contradictions in class. The contradictions between Mongols and Chinese were given a secondary position.

Third was the complete “Chinesezation” of the social life of the Mongols. Before 1949, there were still considerable disparities between the lifestyles of the Mongols and Chinese. After land reforms, and especially after Mongols and Chinese began working together, the Tumed Mongols became thoroughly agrarianized. The notion that farming is to be held in disdain was also remodelled. In reality Chinese culture itself was also remodelled, with things like religious activity disappearing. Mongols and Chinese alike accepted the new philosophies of socialism and ethnic cooperation.

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF TUMED MONGOLS DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The end of the 1950s saw the Tibetan uprising, border disputes between China and India, and the Uighur disturbance. Areas with ethnic minorities were unstable. In 1963, Mao Zedong made the assertion that ethnic disputes were actually problems of class. In 1966, Wulanfu, the chief secretary of the Inner Mongolian Party Commission, was criticized and removed from office. The Cultural Revolution had officially begun in Inner Mongolia. During this period the area of land that was under the jurisdiction of Inner Mongolia was reduced to one third of what it had been previously. The posts of all important leaders of the Autonomous Region’s Party government were filled with Chinese. The “preferential polices” directed toward minorities were abolished. After the Lin Biao incident in 1973 Wulanfu was pardoned and became a member of the central leadership. The situation had slightly improved, but on the whole real redress was not achieved until after 1979.

Wulanfu was born in 1906. He was from Tabu village in the Mongol Left Banner. His birth name was Yunze. He participated in student movements at a young age. In 1925 he joined the Communist Party in Beijing. He later studied in the Soviet Union and after returning became the Secretary of the Eastern Mongolian wing of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1935 he participated in the armed uprising against Dewang (Demchigdongreb), in which he controlled a military force. In 1942 he entered Yan’an and was appointed Chief of the People’s Commission of the Communist Party’s frontier government in Shanganning. During the anti-Japanese resistance, many young Tumed Mongols fled to Yan’an. After the Japanese surrender, under the leadership of the Communist Party, Wulanfu successfully divided and absorbed all of the Inner Mongolian autonomy movements. The “Inner
Ethnic Identity of Tumed Mongols in Inner Mongolia

333

Mongolian Autonomous Government” was established in 1947, with Wulanfu as Chairman. He played an instrumental role in the Communist Party’s establishment of political control in the Inner Mongolian region. From 1949 on, he served as both the Chairman of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and as the Party Commission’s Chief Secretary. But in 1966 he was criticized and labelled an “anti-communist traitor” and dismissed from office. This incident, the subsequent February Countercurrent Incident, and the New Inner Mongolia People’s Party (NIMPP) Incident, were the three major incidents of false accusations in Inner Mongolia. Of these three, the one with the most far-reaching repercussions was the NIMPP Incident. Based on incomplete figures, of the total Mongol population of 346,000, the number of people investigated, tortured, or imprisoned is estimated at about 25 percent. Close to 80,000 people were persecuted, and more than 16,000 were killed.

**Village X in the Cultural Revolution.**

The downfall of Wulanfu sent shock waves through Village X. This was due to the special relationship with the wife of Wulanfu. Landowners of Village X were made to wear the label of “anti-revolutionary elements and their families.” The higher levels often held meetings in Village X, where former large landowners were made the target of “struggle” and villagers were forced to participate.

In 1967 the Mongol schools, including Tumed Elementary and Middle School, were shut down, resulting in over 20 students from Village X returning home and being unable to continue their education. The chances for them to advance to higher education, or go to the city and find work were closed. In the fall of 1968 about ten young intellectual cadets from Beijing came to Village X. Villagers were threatened and forced to give their homes to the youths. In addition, in the winter of 1968, the Campaign for Purging “New Inner Mongolian People’s Party” (in reality a witch hunt to identify the suspected members of the NIMPP) began. The first to be detained were the former landowners and their families. Next, a public official and a relatively active villager were investigated. One former landowner was driven to suicide.

The Village secretary at the time was Yun Erdan. As representative of the “poor farmers” and spokesman for many, he was often elected. When Erdan came to office, the decision to house the cadets was also his. Erdan was forced to sever his already unclear (blood) ties with Upper Yingzi. Sometime later, Erdan was forced to pay a large amount of compensation. In 1979 he was sentenced to imprisonment for life. The judgements passed on the villagers of Village X in this period would affect or determine their fortunes in important areas of life: appointments to public office, entrance to the military, entrance to universities, etc. About eight people who went through these processes left the village. On the other hand, all such future possibilities for the children of landowners were closed off.

There was much unrest in the social order, yet villagers still preserved their old traditions. The custom in Village X of marrying within the Tumeds did not disappear. The majority, poor farmers and landowners alike, still married through introductions via their friends and relatives. In 1967 Village X saw its first Chinese bride. The groom’s father was the well-known and clever Yin Gaosheng. Gaosheng’s family belonged to Upper Yingzi, but they were “middle farmers” and neither affluent nor poor. Gaosheng had, however,
committed a political crime during the Siqing Movement. His son did not therefore meet the most favourable requirements for an ideal husband. The bride’s household was average in appearance, and they asked for nothing in their daughter’s potential mate. They kept the cost of the wedding low. Gaosheng also arranged for his daughter’s marriage. The groom was a Mongolian wrestler from the nomadic regions, and was also a national official. This wrestler was older in age, and was of “unfavourable birth” (i.e., from a house of low social standing). The marriage was arranged through the introduction of a relative working in the city. This was also the first marriage in Village X with someone from a nomadic region. With regard to Gaosheng some villagers’ opinions were negative, feeling that he was “somewhat too clever.” However, the two families both lived in contentment thereafter.

There was one more unique phenomenon in Village X. There was a group of six girls over 28 years of age that had yet to be married, which was quite rare for a small farming village. They were all former students of Tumed Middle School. What troubled them was not being able to find people who were both Mongol and cultured. At the end of the 1970s four of them finally married classmates from Tumed Middle School. Another woman married a Mongol from the east. The last woman (the daughter of Yun Erdan) married a Chinese man, although she was at the time living in adverse circumstances and her father was already serving a prison sentence.

Village Z in the Cultural Revolution.

After the establishment of people’s communes, the Tumed Mongols and Chinese of Village Z did the same jobs and received the same pay. In 1966, under influence from the cities, Village Z enacted the Breaking Four Olds Campaign (i.e., elimination of four old evil customs). Both Lamaism temples and Chinese shrines were torn down. In 1967, in accordance with a high-ranking edict, the land that had been distributed in slightly larger portions to the Mongols was taken away. A little distinction between Mongols and Chinese that was left in Village Z was eradicated.

In the winter of 1968 an anti-New Inner Mongolian People’s Party special team entered Village Z. Most of the team was made up of Huhhot public peace officials. All adult male Mongols of Village Z were detained as NIMPP members. The Mongols of Village Z were living in poverty and had participated in very few political activities, but the situation was unavoidable. Shortly after, two of Fuzhao’s younger brothers, who were then working in the next village and who had military experience, were brutally murdered after being suspected of being NIMPP members. When the bodies were brought back to Village Z, it sent a wave of fear through the people. Suspected members were strung up and beaten until they confessed the names of their co-conspirators. With no way to avoid persecution, they gave the names of their already small number of relatives and friends, who then in turn suffered the same fate.

In this manner the anti-New Inner Mongolian People’s Party movement spread through Village Z. Yun Zhongzhong was betrayed by a relative. He was never to have contact with his relatives again. His children also knew of this affair. This event had a devastating effect on the relationships of trust between Mongols and their relatives. Zhongzhong eventually fled the village. Fortunately, no members of Village Z were ever killed. In the spring of 1969, the
central government issued an order to prevent the further spread of accusations, which brought a gradual end to the NIMPP Incident. Even after Wulanfu re-emerged in 1973, there was no official apology. The names of those accused would not be officially cleared until after 1979.

After 1963 there would be no more Mongol brides in Village Z. This was because the men all chose Chinese wives. Roughly half of the women spouses over the age of 45 were Mongol and the other half Chinese. The situation was markedly different from that of Village X, where more than a few men married women from the village. One of the reasons for this can be found in the fact that the Mongol population in Village Z before 1949 was relatively small, and they did not have developed familial ties. There were also few Mongols in the surrounding areas. The next reason is that they did not have much regular contact with the outside world. Before 1949, the Lamaism temple, Tumed Elementary and Middle Schools, and the Banner Office were all places where Mongols were concentrated. Before 1949 there was a Lama in Village Z, though sometime after 1949 he moved to Huhhot (his children all married Mongols). Only two village children attended Tumed Elementary and Middle Schools (one of whom married a Mongol). There was very little exchange with other Mongols. Thirdly, there were some advantages to marrying a Chinese of this village. Chinese also showed a preference for marrying Mongols, and no disparity was evident whatsoever. Aside from a period during the Cultural Revolution, there were significant merits. These circumstances made Tumed Mongol women to hardly find their Mongol husbands.

The turmoil of the Cultural Revolution exerted new influences on the identity in the Mongols. First of all, it eliminated all apparent differences between Mongols and Chinese. Mao Zedong’s assertion that “ethnic problems are actually only class problems,” theoretically denies any special character of ethnic minorities. Ethnic awareness was seen in the same light as regional ethnocentrism, and the character of regional ethnocentrism meant that the struggle against it was essentially the same as the struggle against the opposing class. Ethnocentrism was negated in theory. In this era, the transition to socialism and the strengthening of ethnic cooperation became the guidelines for ethnic groups. After the criticism of Wulanfu and the tribulations suffered during the NIMPP Incident, the preferential policies toward minorities were negated from top to bottom. Special ethnic group education policies and land subsidies were completely erased. Ethnicity was something preserved only in customs within private homes.

Next, the divisions within the Mongol community intensified. The class categories formed during the land reforms were transformed into a violent class struggle. For the leader Yun Erdan and the landowners of Village X, events did not progress as they had hoped and they were pushed into positions of conflict. The violent hunt for the New Inner Mongolian People’s Party not only brought antagonism between the movement’s leaders and the accused, but it also produced misunderstandings among ordinary people. The case of Yinn Zhongzhong and his relatives is one such example.

During the Cultural Revolution the special cultural characteristics of the Mongols were repressed, while the common points shared with Chinese emphasized, as marriages to Chinese increased. At the same time, however, the NIMPP Incident bred overall Mongol mistrust toward Chinese and clarified the boundaries between the two. This is particularly apparent in the Mongol women’s choice of a potential spouse.
ETHNIC IDENTITY OF TUMED MONGOLS AFTER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In 1979 China entered a period of structural reform. The names of the victims of the three false accusation incidents were cleared. The area under Inner Mongolian jurisdiction was returned to its original pre-Cultural Revolution level. Preferential policies toward ethnic minorities were re-established, tribal schools were reopened, and religious activities resumed. Furthermore, under the “Ethnic Regions Autonomy Law” passed in 1984, the autonomous rights of ethnic minorities were legally recognized in areas such as the following: the enactment of political policies, the distribution of occupational duties, the development of natural resources, financial administration, trading with foreign nations, population control, etc.

For Village X the event with the most impact to emerge from this era, was the clearing of any wrongdoing of those who were implicated in the NIMPP Incident. First of all, they were, by government order, paid medical fees and aid towards living expenses. With these their positions and standards of living improved. Yun Liwen returned to her home village and met with her relatives in 1979, but this time as the mature wife of a central leader. These very women who had been beaten down by political movements could now hold their heads high in public. In contrast, because he had enthusiastically participated in the Cultural Revolution, Yun Erdan was sentenced to a life of penal servitude for crimes against the Revolution. In the same way that he did not at first understand the meaning of “revolution,” he could not now fathom why he was an “anti-revolutionary.”

Another compensatory policy put into effect was to find employment for one or two children of each victimized family. Through this policy most young people of Upper Yingzi left for the cities, where the government arranged for them find to work. The majority of those who left became store clerks, waiters and waitresses, carpenters, etc.; but for farmers, even these were enviable jobs.

All through the country the young intellectual communist cadets returned to the cities. The students who were denied education when Tumed Elementary and Middle Schools closed were given the same treatment as returning intellectual youths, and they found jobs in the cities. In that period two or three people from Village X graduated from two-year college. By this time, there were few young people left in the village.

The young people who were sent to the cities for work were assigned to either one of two categories of publicly-owned enterprises: state work unit and collective work unit. Jobs with state work units have perquisites such as stability, better pay, dormitories, and medical benefits, but the chances for getting these jobs are slimmer. The benefits are not as attractive at group run companies, but most of the young people were assigned to these. There were people who, through “connections,” found employment in branches of the government and civil service. These connections, also called “backdoors,” encompass a variety of relationships. The most valuable of these are blood relatives (i.e. nepotism), but friends and former classmates are also important. Of the young people of Village X, some used connections to transfer to better jobs, but others, without connections continued to be labourers. There was a tendency to preserve familial ties, but not the ties of merely being
from the same village.

The flow of young people out of Village X continued even after the NIMPP Incident compensatory measures ended. There were a variety of government related routes: higher education, inheriting one's parents post, application to state run companies, military service, etc. By the 1990s these avenues had become more difficult, and the number of people who went to the city for temporary jobs increased. The people from Village X in the city from this era worked as police, bank employees, private factory workers and such; there was a considerably wide range of incomes and social standings.

In 1979 the contract system of land was adopted in Village X. Three families of Chinese had arrived in the village since the 1960s. The last to come was Changfu. He was hired as the village shepherd, and was given residency status in the village on the condition that he continues being a shepherd. The pay of a shepherd is quite low and it is not very glamorous work. The previous shepherd was a former landowner, but after the Cultural Revolution he quit. When the contract system was established, Changfu requested a plot of land. The villagers of Village X opposed the request, but in the end they were forced by a higher-level order to distribute land to him, and he soon quit herding sheep. Since there was a shortage of young people to help with farming, the village began the practice of inviting surrounding Chinese into the village to assist. This practice was called “Banzhong,” meaning “accompanied planting.” At present there are about ten households of Banzhong Chinese in Village X. If these are counted, the Chinese percentage of the total population comes to 40%.

After 1979 Tumed Elementary and Middle Schools were reopened, and schools geared toward Mongols were opened in each banner and county. The Mongol language was taught as a secondary language. In order to train language instructors, and under the 1981 directive of Buhe (Inner Mongolian Chairman and son of Wulanfu) Tumed teachers were sent to nomadic regions, where they lived for a period and studied the language. All young Tumeds of Village X attended these schools. These ethnic schools, however, were often not of the highest standards, and it was often difficult for graduates to go on to university. For this reason, Tumeds who resided in cities often chose to send their children to regular Chinese schools. Village X has only one university graduate and only three graduates of vocational colleges. At present the Mongol language is taught only once a week at Tumed schools. It has become a purely symbolic activity, and the students themselves are not very enthusiastic. All of this year’s elementary school graduates chose to advance to a private secondary school in a nearby village rather than going to Tumed Middle School. The influence this historic school has on the Tumeds has diminished. Minority-oriented schools began accepting Chinese students.

Since young people began finding city jobs in the 1980s, the number of men from Village X marrying Tumeds rapidly decreased. Aside from one man marrying his classmate from Tumed Middle School and another who married a Ordos Mongol woman after leaving the army, all men took Chinese brides. Nearly all women currently over 35 years of age are married to Mongol men. From the 1990s on there are more marriages (for both men and women) with Chinese than with Mongols (Ma 1990: 91). During my survey, I asked a newly married woman who runs a beauty boutique whether or not her husband was ethnic Mongol. Her discomfort at the question was obvious. She said her parents were not
at all opposed to her marriage with her Chinese husband. In 1991 for the first time a Mongol woman left Village X to marry a Chinese man in a neighbouring village. Despite the fact that the village is separated by only one kilometre, there had never been any marriages between the two.

When Chinese and Mongols are married in the Tumed region, the children take their father's family name (be he Mongol or Chinese) and record their ethnic background as Mongol. In Village X it is usual to use a Chinese surname (i.e., a name in the Chinese language), and there are only two examples of people using Mongol last names. When people go to the city, however, many switch to Mongol last names (names in the Mongol language) and give those names to their children. There are a total 13 examples of this phenomenon. One of the reasons for this is that the surname Yun is now quite famous due to the visible political figures of Tumed birth, and some people do not wish to reveal their Tumed backgrounds. Yet this may also be seen as attesting to the contact with other Mongol peoples and changing perceptions of ethnic identity. Of the 13, six are men, hence there is no clear difference based on sex. This is different with the observation by Jankowiak, R.W. in Huhhot (Jankowiak 1993: 52).

When the land contract system was established in the 1970's, strategies were modelled on the previous land reform and early Communisation era policies, which meant that Mongols were distributed larger quantities of land than Chinese. Throughout the numerous land policies enacted over the years, if one discounts the Cultural Revolution, the government has recognized the special situation of ethnic Mongols and has treated land issues with considerable caution. For the Mongols this policy was simple a continuation of guidelines laid out during the period of the first land reforms, but some of the Chinese complained that this was unfair.

The men of Village Z, including both those remaining in the village and those living in the cities, almost without exception married Chinese women. Of the 11 women ages 35-45, six work for publicly-owned companies and five remain in the village. This is not a coincidence. Five of the former married Mongols and the latter five all married Chinese men. The two married daughters of Ma Fuzhao both married Mongol men. When combined with the data from Village X, we can see that of the Tumed women married before 1985, more women married Mongol men than married Chinese men.

According to a study, the ethnic background of the parents has an influence on who the children choose to marry. If both parents are Mongols, the probability of the children marrying Mongols is greater. If one parent is Chinese, then the probability decreases. Yet when we examine the data of men from Village Z married after 1963, we see that all of them, regardless of their parents ethnic background, married Chinese women. It seems that the parents' background has no effect on the men's decision, but it does influence women.

From 1980 onward the awareness of ethnic identity as Tumeds is summarized as follows. This stage of the preferential policies toward minority ethnic groups to a certain extent clarified the ethnic awareness of the Tumeds. Their awareness of identity was raised through situations like land distribution in farming villages, employment, and the raising and education of children.

As the Tumeds flocked to the cities to seek employment, they became even more
dispersed. Because of increasing disparities in housing, social standing and type of employment their natural and traditional ties were broken. Expressions of ethnic identity also became varied. For example, some people freely admit to their Tumed birth while others prefer to conceal it. With regard to minority-oriented schools, some people enter them, while others avoid them.

With regard to marital ties, marriages between Mongols and Chinese continue to increase, and the restrictions and hesitations are clearly diminishing. While the tendency for women to marry only Mongol men did persist for some time, from the late 1980s this phenomenon also began to disappear.

CONCLUSION

The social changes and changes in perceptions in ethnic identity in Villages X and Z over a 50 year period were illustrated above. Based on this, I would like to examine the current identity issues of the Tumed Mongols. To begin with, their identity as an ethnic minority in a unified nation was established. Before 1949, the Mongols and Chinese belonged to separate administrative systems, and there existed many economic and cultural differences between them. The Mongol people had a clearly separate ethnic identity. Since then, through events such as the unification of Banner and Xian, land reforms, the formation of people’s communes, the Cultural Revolution, and system reforms, Mongols were first incorporated into the unified state administration, and the livelihood and lifestyle of Mongols became more and more like those of ethnic Chinese. As a result, their identity as an ethnic minority within a unified nation was firmly established.

Furthermore, the Tumeds’ awareness of their identity as Mongols continued due to differences with Chinese. These differences include the following. 1) the Tumeds still preserve to some degree traditional customs unique to Mongols or characteristic of the Tumed region (e.g., wedding ceremonies, etc.). In addition, since the Tumed region became the capital, there was further contact with Mongol culture, including nomadic peoples. This resulted in cultural differences. 2) Due to the government’s minority policies and concrete preferential systems, many hold important political positions. In the area of social life too, e.g., the sensitive, planned birth (population control) system, there are significant differences. 3) The radical measures against the Mongol people as a whole during the Cultural Revolution also exerted a large influence. 4) There exist struggles and contradictions between the ethnic minorities and the ethnic majority.

Thirdly, personal perceptions of identity are extremely diverse. There is an evident trend of division within the Tumeds themselves. The new divisions of banner/county jurisdictions, the labelling of Mongols according to class, the struggles among Mongols following the NIMPP Incident, the disparities in social status and occupation brought about by system reforms, all of these factors contributed to the near elimination of any kind of unity within the Tumed ethnic group. On the other hand, over a 50-year period, and particularly since 1980, they were connected to Chinese through various social relations, and they began to co-exist as members of a new social body. As a result, attitudes toward ethnic identity are by no means unanimous. For example, a variety of attitudes can be seen with regard to passing
on surnames, in the selection of potential spouses, etc.

The factors in the formation of ethnic identity of the Tumeds can be summarized as follows. First is the influence of national policies. The state’s ethnic minority theories, minority policies, and various political movements in each period all exerted a deep influence on the identity of the Tumed people. As a result of the political unification of Mongols and Chinese, Mongols came to belong to various banners and counties. Shortly after, their identities were determined in each period by events like the class divisions, the NIMPP purge, and enactment of preferential policies.

The second is the population ratio. The overwhelming majority of the population of Inner Mongolia is Chinese. Mongols comprise only 12.4 percent of the population and Chinese culture is the dominant culture. This situation, first of all, clarified their awareness of their identity as both citizens of the state and as Mongols. Against the background of this population makeup, Mongols began marrying Chinese, and there have been many cases where Mongols chose a thoroughly Chinese cultural education.

The last is Tumed emigration to the cities. The flow of Tumeds into towns and cities continued, increasing especially after the late 1970s. Before 1980, this flow mainly was from people who had attended Tumed schools, and they preserved their school and familial ties. After this period the focus of their social life shifted from the Mongol group to co-workers and acquaintances around them. This led to a clear diversification of their identity as Mongols.

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