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Institute of South and Central Asia, Seminar of Mongolian and Tibetan Studies

Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague

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The Would-Be Mongolist: an account of Lt G C Binstead's travels in Mongolia in the context of British encounters with Mongolia 1900–1921

SUE BYRNE, Independent Researcher, United Kingdom

Summary: This paper describes how a young British Army officer, Lt. G. C. Binstead, who sought Extra Regimental Employment in 1911–14 to improve his language skills in Russian and Chinese, became fascinated by Mongolia. Travelling in Mongolia and surrounding areas five times in an 18-month period at a time of a great political upheaval, it seems he became co-opted by the British Legation in Peking to become an amateur agent. This was in line with the British practice in the decade before when British diplomats 'on leave' had been sent to Mongolia to gather intelligence. In the years 1912–1914 the Legation having no representation in Mongolia once more had an urgent need to understand the intentions and actions of Russia in the newly independent Mongolia. Binstead's reports on Mongolia drawn from his experience and his wider reading of Russian and other sources provided timely and invaluable intelligence for the British Legation in Peking.

Introduction

In this paper I will describe how a young British army officer, Lieutenant G C Binstead (1885–1915), whose military background, character and particular set of skills coupled with determination, came to be of value to the British Legation at Peking in providing intelligence on Mongolia in the crucial years 1912 and 1913, although his original motivations for travel were to hone his language skills and to write about 'this little-known country and its people'.¹ He visited the country and its border region five times in a two-year period (1912 to 1913) writing extensively about it but was killed early in World War I before he fulfilled his literary intention. His

1) Binstead 1914a, pp. 847–900.

travels seem to have been prompted by his love of languages, his adventurous spirit, his overwhelming confidence and his personal fascination with Mongolia and, more circumstantially, by his curiosity to understand the changes in the country after the declaration of independence in late 1911.

It is open to speculation as to whether or not he was, what could be called a spy.² The author considers he was a first and foremost a traveller in the great tradition of British adventurer-explorers who, using his professional rank of Army Officer, became caught up in and ended up reporting on momentous political events, none of which could have been anticipated at the time he planned his travels in 1910. His high intellect, his Army background with scout training, his linguistic abilities and his undoubted passion for all things Mongolian made him ideally suited to be a trusted source of intelligence. It was also established practice in British Legations around the Empire to gather intelligence from citizens or people from friendly nations, with knowledge of countries or regions adjacent to the Empire. As a serving Army officer he would, no doubt, have been encouraged to check in with the British Legation once he arrived in Peking in 1912. John Fisher, in his paper 'Gentlemen Spies in Asia', writes about the evidence of what he terms the amateur spy or agent among the adventurous young army officers proceeding home or on language leave.³ This would seem to describe Binstead as the story below demonstrates.

Britain's search for intelligence on Mongolia in the early part of the 20th century

Until the turn of the twentieth century the British did not seem to have ordered official investigations of conditions in Mongolia, with the British

2) The use of the word spy is a moot point given that the professional spy services had not been established in Britain at the time Binstead was travelling. A Secret Service Bureau had been set up in 1909, which ultimately led to what is now referred to as MI5 and MI6, but this was after his time in Mongolia. As John Fisher writes *'much information was obtained from unofficial sources both before and after the creation of the Secret Service Bureau.'* See Fisher 2010, p. 203.

3) Ibid.

Legation at Peking seemingly relying on intelligence from Mongolia being given by occasional British and other European traders with contacts in Urga (present-day Ulaanbaatar) or passing gentlemen travellers, missionaries or explorers.⁴ In terms of the typology suggested by Kollmar-Paulenz these would be described as mercantile, professional and religious travellers rather than political although their reports could well have furnished political intelligence for those receiving them.⁵ Some of them, particularly if they were British, could be described by Fisher as amateur spies or agents (Fisher 2010, p. 203).

However, in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion (1901) the British were keen to have intelligence on Mongolia (at the time they tended to see the country as one entity, referring to geographical areas in the country rather than making a distinction between Inner and Outer) and did so by sanctioning investigations by diplomats travelling there either ‘on their way back to Britain’ or ‘on their leave’ – in this way circumnavigating the proscription on Consuls ‘from personally obtaining information by covert means’ (Ibid.).

The retiring British Consul in Wuzhou (Campbell: Wuchow), Charles Campbell, who travelled for 5 months through the Gobi desert and then through eastern Mongolia (present day Outer Mongolia) to reach Urga, and then to Kyakhta on his way back to London in 1902, made the first of these investigations. He submitted a report to the Foreign Office, which was published as a parliamentary paper in early 1904.⁶ Not long after his visit George Kidston, first secretary at the British legation in Peking, made a three-month journey along a similar route, though bad weather prevented him and his companion from reaching Urga. Again his report was submitted to Parliament.⁷

4) Fisher writes ‘much intelligence was obtained informally and / or by means of networks of civilians, army officers on leave and other travellers who were simply doing their bit, occasionally, perhaps, with an eye to preferment, by offering to provide useful information to their superiors’. See Fisher 2010, p. 203.

5) Kollmar-Paulenz 2017, p. 9.

6) Campbell 1904.

7) Despatch from His Majesty’s Minister at Peking, inclosing a report by Mr. George J. Kidston on a journey in Mongolia. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty. May 1904 [Cd. 1954]. China. No. 3 (1904).

At the time of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which could be said to have brought ‘the Great Game’⁸ to an end, the British considered Mongolia to be in the Chinese or, more precisely, the Manchu sphere of influence (as was Tibet) notwithstanding the undoubted Russian and Japanese spheres of influence in the country, which had risen and fallen over time. They had always been opposed to Russian annexation of (Outer) Mongolia and were suspicious of her intentions. However, once again they felt it necessary to have a further investigation into the affairs of Mongolia. They were aware, Fisher writes, in reference to Outer Mongolia, ‘(that) China had been trying to consolidate its power in Mongolia. This related among other things, to the enforcement of anti-opium edicts. In addition, as a response to these measures, the Russian government had stated that it might be obliged to strengthen its garrisons on (Outer) Mongolia’s northern borders.’⁹ The consolidation of power referred to above denotes the introduction of the New Policy by the Qing in 1902, which by 1907 was causing ‘alarm and rebellion, leading to Mongolian independence in 1911’.¹⁰

In 1908 William James (Jack) Garnett, a career diplomat serving as Secretary in the British Legation in Peking, having stated his intention to travel to Mongolia on his leave and hoping to write a book, had his journey sanctioned by the Head of the Legation. Garnett kept detailed diaries of his 8-month journey in which he visited Urga, Uliassutai (present Uliastai) and Kobdo (present Khovd) among other places, at the end of which he wrote an extensive report,¹¹ which he submitted to the Foreign Office though this was never posted as a blue book.¹² Garnett’s personal intention was to publicise his travels by writing a book aimed at the

8) ‘For nearly a century the two most powerful nations on earth – Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia – struggle to out-manoeuvre one another in Central Asia. Those who engaged in this shadowy contest in the vast no-man’s land to the north of India called it “The Great Game” (Hopkirk 1990 [2016]).

9) Fisher 2011, p. 61.

10) Bulag, Uradyn, E. Personal communication, 7/4/2017.

11) Garnett 1908.

12) ‘...he was told to condense his report on Mongolia and to remove such extraneous, non-political material as he might wish to use elsewhere. ... Hardinge considered his report ‘unnecessarily diffuse’ ... while other Foreign Office officials

general public but his diplomatic status and the semi-official nature of his journey caused Lord Hardinge, then permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, to intervene 'to prevent Garnett writing up his expedition for the Royal Geographical Society, and Garnett suspected that he would also have vetoed a book.'¹³

Mongolia declared its independence on the 29th December 1911, some months before the fall of the Qing Dynasty in early 1912.¹⁴ The new Mongolian Government in Urga wished to form an independent, theocratic state embracing Inner Mongolia, Barga (also known as Hulunbuir), Upper Mongolia, Western Mongolia and Tannu Uriankhai ("pan-Mongolia"). Once again these momentous changes led the British to have a heightened need for first-hand knowledge of developments in the country: ever suspicious of their motives, the British wanted to know what political alliances the Russians were making with the new Mongolian government in Urga; whether or not the Russians had taken up the trade and commercial opportunities left by the departing Chinese; what openings were there for British traders in Peking to export British goods into Mongolia; what could be learned about the rumoured worsening military situation. Binstead appeared in Peking in early 1912 after his first short visit to Urga, and by the time he left Peking in early 1914, the Legation came to welcome his reports if not request them appreciating the depth of his knowledge of the country, his linguistic ability enabling him to mix with and communicate with Russians and Chinese and through them, the Mongolian Princes and dignitaries, in Urga giving him valuable insights into political manoeuvrings as well as his direct experience of trade and communications.

deemed his official report 'interesting and exhaustive', it was considered too long for a blue book.' (Fisher 2012, p. 78).

13) ¹ Ibid.

14) Bulag 2012, p. 1.

Lieutenant Gerald Charles Binstead

Who was Lieutenant Gerald Charles Binstead? He was the son of Major Charles Binstead who distinguished himself in the Boer War, and was born in Cairo in 1885. He received a traditional upper class British education for a boy from a military background, first at Wellington College, a school for Army officers' children, and then at the Royal Military College in Sandhurst as a Gentleman Cadet. He became an officer in the Essex Regiment and then a scouting intelligence officer at the Curragh, a British garrison in Ireland. He was an able linguist.¹⁵ Maybe it was his language ability and, perhaps, his work as a scouting officer, which led to him to seek secondment in 1910 known as Extra Regimental employment (during which time he would be on full army pay), to study Russian in Russia (permission was given for his study leave to begin in 1911) and Chinese in China (in 1912).¹⁶ He was a high achiever passing out first or near the top at his school and at Sandhurst. He seems to have developed an interest in the Far East by, among no doubt other things, reading George Morrison's articles in the London Times.¹⁷

In January 1912, the London Times correspondent in Peking mentions he 'was wandering' around the region' to his ex-Times colleague, George Morrison.¹⁸ Concurrently Binstead wrote to Morrison from Tomsk, Russia,

15) De Ruvigny, 1917, Vol 1., p. 34.

16) Email correspondence with Ian Hook, Keeper of the Essex Regiment Museum, Chelmsford, June 2013.

17) Morrison, G. E., MLMSS 312. Papers. Letter from Binstead in Tomsk, Jan. 14th, 1912: 'I have long been a reader of your correspondence from Peking and other parts of China.'

18) Footnote on p. 50 in Morrison (1978, p. 50): G C Binstead (d.1917), British soldier, of whom D D Braham wrote to Morrison on 26 January 1912: 'a Lieutenant Binstead is wandering around Asiatic Russia and sending us articles, some of which we hope to publish. He may get as far as Peking, and if so he will call on you.' Apparently a gifted linguist, Binstead, drawing on his own experience as well as information from books in many languages, including Russian, helped Morrison to compile a long and detailed memorandum on Mongolia, which Morrison sent to Lu Cheng-hsiang and Ts'ai T'ing-kan in order to aid the Chinese Government in formulating its Mongolian policy. It was not printed in the

expressing his wish to 'have the pleasure of turning the acquaintance into a personal one, as I am coming to Peking for two years to learn Chinese'. In February he wrote again, this time from Urga. They met in Peking soon after and struck up a working friendship with Binsteed working on a catalogue of Russian books on Mongolia for Morrison.¹⁹ In this and other ways he assisted Morrison, then an adviser to the new Chinese Republican government,²⁰ to compile a memorandum on Mongolia, which was sent in May 1913,²¹ to the Chinese Foreign Minister, Lu Cheng-hsiang, to aid the Chinese Government's policy on Mongolia.

Binsteed's first visit to Mongolia

This first visit to Mongolia was only a few weeks after the country's declaration of independence in December 1911. He entered and exited the country through Kyakhta in Eastern Russia taking the telegraph route via Mankhatai to reach Urga.²² In his February 1912 letter to Morrison, he enclosed a long article²³ hoping to have it printed in *The Times*. He explained how he had met Mongolian officials claiming they refused 'to have any communications with (China)' and also sought out Russians, Chinese and European traders in the city. A recent search of Mongolian records has revealed no official mention of Binsteed's stay in Urga or any details of his meetings with Mongolian or other officials.²⁴ Maybe it was an opportunistic visit spurred on by being in eastern Russia on his study leave as momentous changes were happening in Mongolia and her two powerful neighbours, coupled with his growing interest in the country.

selection. Binsteed was still young when killed in action during the European War.

19) Morrison, G. E., MLMSS 312. Papers.

20) *Far Eastern Review*, August 1912, p. 105.

21) Morrison, G. E., MLMSS 312. Papers. Cover note of report sent to Mr. Lu by G E Morrison 7th May 1913.

22) Lt G C Binsteed Route map from Urga to Kyakhta. Royal Geographical Society. RGS-IBG mr China S.148.

23) Morrison, G. E., MLMSS 312. Papers.

24) Email correspondence with K. Zygmanska, 23rd April 2017.

After his stay in Urga of a matter of a week or two, he arrived in Peking by rail in March 1912 to begin his 2-year leave to study Chinese. In August 1912 he submitted a short report²⁵ to the British Legation at Peking accompanying a letter he had received from a contact, one Khaisan Gün (Binsteed: Hai San Gun), which he had made on his February stay in Urga. Khaisan Gün was in fact Duke Khaisan (also known as Hai-Shun-Gung)²⁶ who was a distinguished Inner Mongolian who had by now become the Councillor for Home Affairs in the newly formed government (December 1911) of the Bogd Khan under Tserenchimed, the de facto Prime Minister. Khaisan was a Mongol nationalist who had led uprisings against the Chinese in Inner Mongolia in the early 1900s before fleeing to Harbin, eventually arriving in Urga on foot in 1907 where he became a leading and influential figure in the movement towards Mongolian (Outer and Inner) independence alongside Tserenchimed, a lama and an equally fervent advocate. In February 1912 these two were attempting to gain Russia's recognition for Mongolian independence as well as trying to reach out to 'the Powers' to press their case.²⁷

In his letter dated 30th July 1912, Duke Khaisan pleads with Binsteed to try and determine whether or not the Russian Consul in Urga had delivered the proclamation of independence and letters the Bogd's government had requested them to send to 'all great Powers and Authorities'. In his report accompanying the letter, Binsteed, drawing no doubt on the discussions he held with Duke Khaisan and others in Urga earlier in the year, states the Mongols distrust the Russians and their stated desire to have another power, preferably England, to lessen their influence on them. Another concern was about Russians having all the concessions for gold (mining) east of the Urga – Kyakhta line. Mention is made of a secret gold deposit of great wealth west of this line known only to Mongol princes and of their wish to 'divulge and concede to a foreign company, preferably English'. In an Appendix Binsteed reports details of Russians

25) Binsteed 1912.

26) (He was) ennobled as a duke in December 1911... he was given a noble title, a new tradition established by the new Mongolian government of Bogd Khan (Bulag, Uradyn, E., Personal communication, 7/4/2017).

27) Nakami Tatsuo 1980, pp. 106–120.

delivering arms to the Mongols, thereby assisting them to form an army. (An account of how Duke Khaisan's letter came to be sent to Binstead is recorded in a letter dated 5th November 1912 from Rustad, a Norwegian working for British American Tobacco Company who spent periods of time in Urga, to George Morrison).²⁸

A Legation functionary who forwarded Binstead's report to the Head of the Legation noted 'Binstead should make it clear that he is corresponding in a purely private capacity and that he in no way represents H M Govt. In any case, it seems risky to give the Mongols any advice on matters, which closely concern China & Russia.'²⁹ Clearly, the Legation did not want to be seen to be giving advice to the Mongols nor for Binstead to be seen to be acting as a representative of the 'great power' referred to in Duke Khaisan's letter.

This first report and another he submitted concerning the military presence encountered on his February journey³⁰ – from the northern border of Mongolia to Urga and back again – might well have prompted the Head of the Legation to request a more wide-ranging report on Mongolia. The British were aware of the great changes taking place but, given they had no representation in Mongolia, had to depend on travellers such as Binstead and others for direct information about conditions in Mongolia.

A visit to Tsitsihar

Before this, Binstead had made his second visit to Mongolia or the border regions, when he went to Tsitsihar, a town north of Harbin in Manchuria in September 1912, after which he de-briefed Robert Willis, the British Consul in Harbin, on Russian troop movements in the area. Nothing else is so far known about this journey.³¹ However, he wrote a paper on

28) Morrison & Lo-Hui Min 1978, Vol. 2, pp. 47–52.

29) Binstead 1912.

30) Binstead 1913d. The report referred to above was mentioned in this later work but has yet to be found in the archives.

31) Enclosure in No 1 Consul Willis to Sir J. Jordan. Harbin, September 20, 1912. IOR P 4273.

Northern Manchuria, then under Russian control, for the Legation³² using a variety of Russian and British sources. In this, he highlights how Russia's policy was remarkable for its indecision and goes on to outline some of the courses open to them. It could be that the information in this paper, and possibly the information in the Notes on Barga section of his later report to the Legation, came from this visit.

First report to the British Legation in Peking

In March 1913 Binsteed submitted a lengthy report covering both Inner and Outer Mongolia.³³ This was sent to the British Foreign Secretary by Head of Legation with a note explaining '(these) have been prepared by Lieutenant Binsteed . . . , and have, I understand, been chiefly drawn from Russian sources.' He then writes 'Lieutenant Binsteed has passed some time at Urga, and has acquired a knowledge of Mongolian affairs, which is altogether remarkable.'

This comprehensive report demonstrates the extensive research Binsteed seems to have done before he visited Mongolia and, in the first months of his stay in Peking, as he worked on Morrison's extensive Russian collection not to mention his discussions with Morrison who was immensely knowledgeable about the affairs of the region. Much of the information in this report came from Russian publications supplemented by interviews with 'knowledgeable people'.³⁴ He seems to have embraced both what became known as Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia in his

32) British documents on foreign affairs: reports and papers from the Foreign Office confidential print, 1991. Series E Asia Vol. 15 China. 1993. Doc.122. Undated. Notes by Lieutenant Binsteed on the Position and Policy of Russia in Northern Manchuria at the present moment. (pp. 108–112).

33) IOR/L/PS/10/364, File 1235/1913 Pt 3, 1889.

34) Binsteed 1913c. In Volumes 1 and 2 of his Journals Binsteed makes several references to Pozdneyeff's (sic!) work. Here he is referring to the famous work 'Mongolia and the Mongols Volumes 1 & 2' by Aleksei Matveevich Pozdnev published in 1896. In his Journal Volume 1 covering his journey to Jehol (Chengde) he gives a reference to this work: 'See Pozdnev, A. M. (1896, [1898]): Mongolia and the Mongols. T. 1–2. Saint-Petersburg. Vol. 11., p. 282.'

approach to the subject. He describes the tribal and administrative system throughout Mongolia along with an historical and ethnographical overview. He claims to have consulted widely to support his conclusions about Russian aims in Mongolia and the internal trouble among Bogd Khan's adherents, no doubt drawing on his meetings with contacts including Duke Khaisan in Urga. The trade section is based on the accounts of two 1910 Russian expeditions to Mongolia. The report concludes with a 'Note on Barga', a territory adjoining (Outer) Mongolia in the North East, which, after Mongolia's declaration of independence, had opted to be part of Mongolia and remained so until 1915.

Binsteed continued to write about Mongolia in 1913 and produced a considerable amount of material given the travelling he also did. He exchanged frequent letters with Morrison about their joint cataloguing of Russian books on Mongolia. He wrote two pieces for the monthly magazine, *Far Eastern Review*.³⁵ In one, 'A Non-Partisan Commentary on the Urga Protocol signed in Urga in November 1912',³⁶ Binsteed concludes that this was essentially a trade agreement between Russia and Mongolia. The second article 'The Tribal and Administrative System of Mongolia' is a lengthier version of the section in his report to the Legation months earlier.³⁷

Second and third visit to Mongolia

By May 1913 Binsteed was on his 'Journey the Second'³⁸ heading for Dolon Nor in Inner Mongolia (present day Duolun City) by way of the old Qing summer capital, Jehol (modern day Chengde). By this time the

35) 'The *Far Eastern Review* ... was originally founded in 1904 in Manila by an American national, George Bronson Rea, an American journalist' (Wei Shuge 2017, p. 37).

36) Binsteed 1913a, p. 519.

37) Binsteed 1913b, pp. 41–48.

38) Binsteed left no notes on his visit to Qiqihar (Binsteed: Tsitsihar) some time around August or September 1912, and so refers to his intended visit to Dolon Nor as his second.

Bogd Khan's government in Urga had adopted a strategy to unify Outer and Inner Mongolia and war with the Chinese was looming. In his diary³⁹ Binsteed does not give a precise reason for visiting Dolon Nor but it was no doubt for its historical associations with Kublai Khan and its importance as a religious centre for Mongols.⁴⁰

In his journal he details his route with place names in Roman and Chinese characters, noting and naming the temples he passes, and commenting on the road and the landscape. When he reaches Jehol the Dutong (Binsteed: Tu T'ung) or Garrison Head vacillated about his request to travel to Dolon Nor despite a letter of introduction from Morrison and the Dutong knowing Binsteed had been in Urga the year before. Binsteed explained his wish to travel to Dolon Nor as he was 'occupied with the study of Mongolia for the purpose of writing upon the subject.'⁴¹ While he was waiting for a decision, he wasted no time in Jehol spending a week in two monasteries while visiting and writing meticulous notes on all 12 Buddhist temples in the city. At a later meeting the Dutong finally told Binsteed he was not to go on to Dolon Nor because the presence of brigands and warlike preparations made his passage unsafe. Notwithstanding his disappointment (he refers to it as a 'death blow'), he decided he would make the best use of his time to 'make a short journey into the country of the Kalachin Aimak [Karchin] to see with my own eyes the extent to which the Chineseification of the Chosotu League Mongols had progressed'⁴² thus illustrating again how his study was of the whole of Mongolia i.e. embracing both Inner and Outer Mongolia.⁴³

Binsteed, unlike some contemporary British travelers in Mongolia such as Campbell (1902) and Kidston (1903) who neither often stopped to visit monasteries nor showed much interest in Buddhism, seemed fascinated

39) Binsteed 1913e.

40) Encyclopaedia Britannica: Duolun, China. On: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Duolun>.

41) Binsteed 1913e, Vol. 1.

42) Ibid.

43) 'They (Kharchin) are now divided into Inner Mongolia and Liaoning Province. Their League Chosotu (Josotu) is no more. Jehol/Chengde used to be their territory, 'offered to the Qing emperor' (Bulag, Uradyn, E. Personal communication, 7/4/2017).

with all things Mongol and most especially by the monasteries: the architectural styles and the Buddhist religious practices. Critical as he was of the Mongol character and ways, he openly stated his preference for spending time in their company rather than with the Chinese, echoing a sentiment expressed by many other travelers to Mongolia. He was a diligent and determined researcher, no doubt drawing on his Army Scout training, making extensive, detailed notes on this and subsequent journeys. He also seemed to have a great capacity for friendship with people he met along the way, as shown in his sympathetic photographs where his subjects seemed relaxed in his presence. Binstead's seriousness of purpose is reminiscent of a much earlier British traveller, Ney Elias, who travelled from Kalgan to Uliassutai, Kobdo and beyond in 1873. Despite extraordinary physical hardship, he meticulously took geographical readings everyday along the whole journey to fulfill his intention of producing a map: his biographer, Gerald Morgan, writes 'the resulting corrected map was a beautiful example of accurate draftmanship'.⁴⁴ Elias also had no truck with what he called 'adventure travellers'.

By late June of 1913, just weeks after his trip to Jehol (present-day Chengde), he made a 5-day trip to Kalgan (present-day Zhangjiakou), the main trade entry port to Mongolia. The sparse entries in this diary for this his fourth journey to Mongolia and its border regions, mostly concern trade: British and other foreign trading companies. In a page titled 'Kalgan's Trade with Mongolia', he observes 'trade is at a standstill as regards the movement of goods between Kalgan and all parts of Outer Mongolia.' Trade and commerce were emerging as an abiding theme in his Mongol studies – he recorded the exact price of the goods, the taxes and levies paid, the names of the trading company and the number of employees. His interest, perhaps stirred on by British Traders in Peking and the British Legation's desire for information, was trying to identify whether or not the Russians had taken up the trade vacuum left by departing Chinese traders following Mongolia's declaration of Independence.

44) Morgan 1971, p. 70.

Final visit to Mongolia

In August 1913, he set off for Mongolia on his great, but what was to be his fifth and last, journey.⁴⁵ He engaged a Mongolian interpreter Baljir, a monk in the Great Lama Temple of Peking (Yonghegong), who was introduced to him by a Mr Gamboyeff, a Russian subject, whose father was a Buryat. Binsteed's ability to speak Russian had given him an entrée into the Russian community not only in Peking but also on his first visit to Urga. He also made use of the language along his entire route through the country and in his second stay in Urga, contrasting him with other contemporary British travellers who did not have such skills to assist their journeys in Mongolia.

He chose to travel by rail from Peking via Mukden (present day Shenyang, then called Fengtian, previously called Shengjing) and Harbin to Hailar in Barga (present Hulunbuir), arriving on 5th August 1913. This was the time the Bogd Khan had sent 5 army battalions to liberate Inner Mongolia with fierce battles being fought, making an approach to Urga via Kalgan unsafe. This may well have determined his decision to go to (Outer) Mongolia using this longer route. News of the worsening military situation in what is described as 'Southern Mongolia' reached George Morrison in a report prepared by Frans Larson, a Swedish Missionary settled in Inner Mongolia, who spent time in Urga. Morrison passed this to the British Legation at Peking in March 1913.⁴⁶ It is likely that Binsteed had been given sight of it as well as being briefed by the Legation Military Attaché on more recent military intelligence they had received. (It could be he chose this route because he had already known it, having travelled from Kyakhta to Peking by rail in March 1912 as well as making the undocumented visit to Harbin and Tsitsihar (present Qiqihar in Heilongjiang) in September 1912).⁴⁷

45) Binsteed 1913c, Vol. 3.

46) Military Situation in Mongolia. A report written by an unnamed British Legation Consul based on information received from Mr Larson relayed by Dr Morrison. Dated March 12th 1913. FO 228/2400.

47) Enclosure in No 1 Consul Willis to Sir J. Jordan. Harbin, September 20, 1912. IOR P 4273.

Once in Hailar he spent several days gathering information about the presence of Chinese and Japanese in the area as well as having discussions with the Russian Consul about the administration of the region, and the different ethnic groups and their interaction. He visited the Amban, a Daur, in order to obtain a Mongol passport. Using Russian contacts of the Consul he bought a cart and two ponies and on the 10th August set off for (Outer) Mongolia along with Baljir, his guide. He entered the country via the Dalai Nor (present Hulun Lake) and thereafter followed the Kerulen (present Kherlen) River.

The diaries of this journey⁴⁸ are wide-ranging and detailed, reflecting Binsteed's aim to provide in-depth personal experience of the country for his intended book. He seldom complains about the hardship of travel, nor is he as dismissive of Mongolia or Mongols as seen in other travellers' accounts, though he is highly critical at times. He is constantly observing and recording: from the geography, vegetation, rivers and tributaries, to the density of the local population and their characteristics. He measures the daily distances they travelled each day and is quick to comment on the inaccuracies in the Russian map he used, producing his own on his return.⁴⁹

His keen interest in commerce, trade and traders and other economic activities is evident. His first significant encounter with trade is in the settlement of San beisiin [khüree] (Binsteed: San Peitzu) the remains of which are in present day Choibalsan Khot, Kherlen Soum in Dornod Aimag, one of the key trading centres in Eastern Mongolia, where he observes the situation had changed radically over the last year, pointing out that 'this year no goods have come here from Dolon Nor and Kalgan across the Gobi as usual, owing to the warfare and brigandage on the roads.' This, he finds, has impacted negatively on the Chinese traders in the area.

He notes the seven remaining Chinese shops in the San beisiin [khüree] have very few goods for sale with the Chinese personnel, almost without exception, waiting to either clear debts or be sent funds before leaving Mongolia or simply planning to leave when the situation is safe enough: 'Shih Ch'eng Hei, a Dolon Nor house, which had traded here for 20 years.

48) Binsteed 1913c, Vol. 3–5 (August 1st 1913 to Sept 16th 1913).

49) Binsteed 1912–1913.

There are 11 assistants here, but only a very few goods remain unsold. They do not know what they will eventually do, but are waiting to see how things turn out. They dare not travel back across the Gobi to China for fear of their lives and property, the Mongol authorities refraining to give them passports for this purpose. On the other hand the journey round by rail is too expensive. They had their own oxen and carts, which used to carry for them to and fro Dolon Nor.⁷

In contrast the Russian yurt shop of Chubin and Tarantin, who had started the business earlier in the year, had a full complement of goods on sale including 'towels (small rough) Daliangpu and Suyumbu (dyed sheeting of English or Anglo Chinese origin), basket bags with chain handles, tools (various), Chinese silks, enamel ware of all kinds, thread and mending wool, toys and coarse china ornaments (dogs and figurines etc.), paint for marking sheep, tea (Russian and brick), sugar, padlocks, Chinese boots, pails, bits and stirrups, haberdashery, buttons and beads, braid, screw rings, tobacco (makhorken), matches, dust goggles, buckles, Russian uncleaned spirit for consumption, shot for guns, pocket knives, soap, hinges, mirrors, nails, tin basins, rugs, gauze vests, Russian vinegar, leather pocket cases.'⁵⁰ In a nearby shop also run by Russians, he found similar goods with some interesting additions: 'gun, pistols, candles, English Jamaican Rum, Singer sewing machines (the latter I was told could not be sold)'.

Notwithstanding these successful enterprises, he was of the opinion that, with only three Russian enterprises in the settlement, the Russians were not yet taking up the trading opportunities left by the departing Chinese. He notes the Russians who paid no import duty to bring goods (mostly of European origin with many of them British) into this part of Mongolia, were importing their goods from China via the railway at Manchuli (present Manzhouli) from whence they travelled by cart to San beisiin [khüree] (Binsteed: San Peitzu). The Chinese traders who were able to afford the rail freight costs, had to pay 5% ad valorem duty on goods imported on this route.

And there are notes of the monasteries on his route: he did not pass them by but took every opportunity to make contact with the monks and spend

50) Binsteed 1913c, Vol. 3-5 (August 1st 1913 to Sept 16th 1913).

time with them. And all along the route he took photographs – almost 150 on this journey. Following the purges the records and photographs of these monasteries are invaluable: he photographed monasteries along the Kherlen valley including the great Setsen Khany Khiid of which, to date, no other photograph exists. (The collection of his photographs is in the archive of the Royal Geographic Society in London.)

Binstead had made a deal with his Mongolian lama guide, Baljir: he would stay for one week in the monastery⁵¹ in the *khoshuun* of Sait Sujigt Gün (Binstead: Sait Sudjigt Kung), while Baljir visited his family who lived nearby and who he not seen for 16 years. Sait Sujigt Gün was on the Kerulen river between the Urgo (Khalkha örgöö – residence),⁵² and the Urgo of Sain Beise (Binstead: San Peit'zu).⁵³ He makes the most of this time. He attempts to learn Mongolian by asking the young lamas the Mongolian names of ritual objects and the deities. He seems to enjoy mixing with the lamas and local people. He attends ceremonies and records them in careful detail observing the action, though his records are not specific enough to be able to identify the ceremonies or rituals with accuracy. He based the paper he later wrote on Sujigt Gün⁵⁴ on the vivid accounts in his journals.

The diary entries end on 16th September when he reaches Urga although we learn something of his stay from a report he wrote on the military situation in Mongolia.⁵⁵ In the capital, no doubt playing on his army rank, his Russian language ability and Russian contacts he had made on his 1912 visit, he first stayed as a guest in the mess of the Russian Officer Instructors of the Mongolian Brigade and the Officers of the Second

51) The site of the monastery is in present day Bat Norov Soum in Khentii Aimag. See information on the monastery on <http://mongoliantemples.org/index.php/en/component/domm/1781?view=oldtempleen>.

52) Present day Öndörkhaan, Kherlen Soum in Khentii Aimag. See information on the monastery on <http://mongoliantemples.org/index.php/en/component/domm/1872?view=oldtempleen>.

53) Present day Choibalsan Khot, Kherlen Soum in Dornod Aimag. See information on the monastery on <http://mongoliantemples.org/index.php/en/component/domm/1427?view=oldtempleen>.

54) Binstead 1914a, pp. 847–900.

55) Binstead 1913f (Military Report by Lt Binstead dated 23.10.1913).

Transbaikal Battery.⁵⁶ He writes that the Russian officers treated him 'with great frankness and much of the information below (in the report) was derived from them.' Later he stayed in the Urgo of Sait Sujigt Gün (Binsteed: Sait Sudjict Kung) who he had met when he stayed in the monastery of the same name. At the time Sait sujigt gün was one of the Assistant Ministers of War and he could well have given Binsteed an entrée to other Ministers and officials in the government in addition to those he had met on his first visit 15 months before. By staying with Sait Sujigt Gün Binsteed was able to circumnavigate the 'systematic isolation' being forced on the powerful Khalkhas by the Russians who were refusing to allow them to meet foreigners.

From Urga he made his way north to Kyakhta, this time traveling via the Iro Goldfields and Kornokovka.⁵⁷ He returned by rail to Peking. We learn something of this part of his journey from an indignant article in *The Far Eastern Review* entitled 'Some Russian Enterprises in North Eastern Mongolia and Barga'⁵⁸. He opens with a blast about '[how] wild statements have appeared in the Far Eastern press as to the commercial part now being played by Russians in Outer Mongolia'. He goes on to claim he knows the facts due to his extensive and recent journey. He maintains that the Russians had not taken advantage of the 1912 trade protocol giving them favourable financial terms, having failed to capitalise on the abandonment of shops and trade. Russians had not extended the cultivated acreage or developed fisheries, beyond one successful enterprise in Barga (Hulunbuir). In his view the sole successful Russian commercial operation in Mongolia was mining in the Iro River basin. His detailed description of mining activity again reveals the thoroughness of his field research coupled with constant reading on the subject to keep up to date.

In the Royal Asiatic Society paper published in late 1914 about his stay in the Lamasery, Binsteed again explains his wish to write about Mongolia: 'In August, September, and October, 1913, I was engaged on one of a series of journeys in Mongolia, which I hope, if I am given the opportunity to

56) Ibid.

57) Binsteed, Lieut. G.C., 1913.

58) Binsteed 1914b, pp. 377–381.

complete them, will enable me to collect sufficient data for a work about this little-known country and its people, a subject upon which English literature is perhaps even poorer than that of the other Western European nations, and certainly far poorer than that of Russia.’⁵⁹

A series of reports on Mongolia submitted to the British Legation

Notwithstanding Binsteed’s personal motivation, this fifth and most ambitious journey to (Outer) Mongolia was taken in the full knowledge of the British Legation at Peking if not at their request. Having arrived back in Mongolia some time in October 1913, he lost no time in preparing reports for the Legation, submitting the first on the military situation later in the same month.⁶⁰ Days later, in early November 1913, he sent in a report covering two of his key interests in Mongolia, the political and commercial situation. When forwarding his report to the Foreign Secretary in London, Mr Alston, Head of Legation, described Binsteed variously as ‘a language officer attached to His Majesty’s Legation’⁶¹ and ‘of H M’s Legation’. Mr Alston wrote: ‘Binsteed, in addition to having undertaken two previous journeys in Mongolia, is possessed of a fluent knowledge of the Russian Language, and has thus been in a position to converse freely with the Russian authorities at Urga, and with other Russian officials who are endeavoring to guide the fortunes of the semi-independent Mongolian state.’

59) Binsteed 1914a, pp. 847–900.

60) Binsteed 1913f (Military Report by Lt Binsteed dated 23.10.1913). There is no record in the Foreign Office Archives of this report being sent to London. It could be because Binsteed’s only real encounters with Russian and Mongol Military were in Urga, which was peaceful at the time, or in the Iro goldfields where small numbers of troops were sent to protect the mining enterprises from bands of Chinese Hunghutzu. (Honghuzi, meaning bandits) The Legation would have been more interested in the military activity in Southern Mongolia (Inner Mongolia) where the troops of the Bogd Khan were pitted against the Chinese. Throughout this period the Legation was receiving reports on military manoeuvres from Lt-Col Robertson, the resident Military Attaché.

61) Extract from a report by Lieutenant Binsteed on a Journey from Hailar to Urga, and then to Kyakhhta. IOR/L/PS/10/364, Pt 2, 1914–1915, 4977, File 1235/1913.

The report's political section demonstrates how his understanding of the situation was due to his wide consultation within the Russian, Mongolian and foreign communities during his relatively short stay in Urga. He had again met up with [Duke] Khaisan (Binsteed: Hai San), as he refers to him, and learnt that the Duke feared for his life after the suspected poisoning of Biritu Wang, an emissary of Peking sent to Urga 'to bring over the Khalkha princes to the Chinese cause.' He describes how the Mongols were becoming increasingly frustrated and antagonistic towards the Russians because of the latter's high-handedness and unwillingness to allow the Mongols to press their case or develop trading relations with any powers other than Russia. In concluding his analysis of the factional forces among the Mongol rulers, Binsteed, himself a child of Empire, concurs with views commonly held by the Russian officials and military officers he met and echoes their contempt for the Mongols. Part 2 of his report delivered days later deals with agriculture, mining, fisheries, hunting, geography and means of communication.⁶² The reports seem to have been well received in London. In December a Foreign Office official wrote on behalf of Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State, to the British Legation at Peking asking them to 'express my thanks to Lieutenant Binsteed for his able and comprehensive report which has been read with great interest.'⁶³

At some point Binsteed had submitted a roughly drafted hand-written proposal (undated) to the Legation entitled 'A Memorandum dealing with certain aspects of British Relations with and Interests in Outer Mongolia.'⁶⁴ This was his very direct attempt to make the case for and influence British policy on the issue of a trade agreement with Mongolia. He sets out in detail how the British could navigate this with the Mongolian Government

62) Extracts from Report by Lieutenant Binsteed regarding his Journey through Mongolia. IOR/L/PS/10/364, Pt 2, 1914–1915, 5074, File 1235, 1913.

63) Letter 1913 (Letter from the Foreign Office to Alston, Head of Mission in Peking, signed by W. Langley for the Secretary of State, thanking Binsteed for his report enclosed in Alston's Despatch 406).

64) 'Memorandum dealing with certain aspects of British Relations with and Interaction in Outer Mongolia', Undated 12-page report in Binsteed's handwriting. FO 228/2401, D39, 1913 July – December.

taking into account all the ‘considerations, which would affect the negotiations’. His argument was based on the fact that many of the goods already imported into Mongolia by the Russians (and before them by the Chinese) with no duty added, were in fact British, as the list of goods he found in San Beisiin [khüree] (Binsteed: San Peitzu) illustrated. He also asserts not without basis that the Mongol people liked and were used to these goods while some of the key members of government (including Duke Khaisan) wished to engage with the British who they regarded as a great power. Binsteed’s suggestion concerning how to clinch a trade deal with the Mongolian Government was to propose that unless formal assurance could be given to allow British goods to continue to be traded without any extra duties, Britain would not recognize the autonomy of the government.

He submitted an extensive article on 1st January 1914 to *The China Year Book 1914* – and perhaps, in his mind, this was the first drafting of what, he thought, would be part of his book. In the introduction the Editors acknowledge their indebtedness to Binsteed for writing the monograph on Mongolia, the first time the country had been included in the *Year Book*.⁶⁵ The 34-page Chapter somewhat echoes the report he submitted to the British Legation in March 1913 while bringing it up to date with sections on the events in Mongolia since independence was declared, the outlook for the country and a comparison of Russian and Chinese trade at the close of 1913 in a section labeled ‘Mongolia as a market’. He also includes the full text of the Treaty between Mongolia and Tibet of 11th January 1913, the Russo-Mongolian Agreement of 3rd November 1912 and the Russo-Chinese Agreement (in French) of 5th November 1913. The account ends with a set of detailed tables giving information on Mongolian Tribes and Banners. Here he gives information for the 8 different areas including Outer and Inner he considers make up ‘Mongolia’ at this time.

65) Woodhead; Montague 1914, pp. 609–643.

Binstead killed in 1915

Within months, in March 1914, Binstead's two-year study leave in China came to an end and he returned to England. He continued his writing on Mongolia, submitting his article on his stay in "Sudjict Kung"⁶⁶ for publication in the Royal Asiatic Society and a short article⁶⁷ to the Geographical Journal to accompany the maps of his journey published by the Royal Geographical Society.⁶⁸ He was assigned to the War Office until the outbreak of World War 1 in August 1914 when he joined his Battalion at the Front in Belgium, where he was rapidly promoted first to Captain then to Major before, only months later, in April 1915, he was killed in action aged 29.⁶⁹ He was held in great affection by his men⁷⁰ and distinguished himself with his gallantry in the field,⁷¹ and was one of the first officers in World War 1 to receive the Military Cross.⁷² With his death, Binstead neither reached his potential as a chronicler of Mongolia nor was he available for the Legation to be a valuable source of information on events there when they badly needed intelligence about Russian political and economic activity and the agreements, if any, they were making with the Mongols.

66) Binstead 1914a, pp. 847–900.

67) Binstead 1914c, pp. 571–577.

68) Binstead, Lt. G.C., 1912–1913.

69) Cole 2014, p. 24. 'According to the Second Essex Battalion History, on April 8th 1915 Major G C Binstead was killed whilst looking out of the observation hole half way up the back wall of Central Farm.'

70) A plaque in Essex Regiment Chapel reads: In affectionate memory of Captain G C Binstead, Military Cross killed in action near Le Bizet, Belgium on the 8th April 1915 – aged 29 years. Erected by the NCO's and men of A Company 2nd Battalion Essex Reg.

71) De Ruvigny 1917, p. 34.

72) The Third Supplement to the London Gazette of Tuesday 29th December 1914, Friday 1st January 1915, p. 8.

Britain's search for intelligence on Mongolia post 1914

In the early part of 1914, after Binsteed had left for England, the Legation continued to be pressured by British traders in Peking who were eager to capitalize on trading opportunities should such exist. Binsteed's proposal on trade does not appear to have been sent to London although the idea of a trade agreement with Mongolia and a Consul in Urga were being given serious consideration during this time, as evidenced by a series of communications between the Legation, the Foreign Office, the India Office and the British Board of Trade.⁷³ The latter wrote to the Legation in January 1914⁷⁴ instructing them to ask Binsteed to send a list of goods and details of Mongol trading customs but by the time the letter reached Peking, he had already left. The Legation replied in mid-March 'Lieut. Binsteed has left Peking for England on the expiration of his study leave of the Chinese language. I would venture to suggest the Board of Trade might be moved to place themselves in touch with Lieut. Binsteed, whose address could be ascertained from the War Office.'⁷⁵ The issue of trade with Mongolia and setting up a Consul in Urga was to rumble on over the coming years with correspondence back and forth between the Foreign Office and the India Office as well as urgent requests from commercial companies such as the British American Tobacco Company for a British Consul to be opened in Urga.⁷⁶

There was then the thorny issue of Tibet which, given the close relationships between it and Mongolia, and the 13th Dalai Lama's recent return to Tibet, caused concern for the British who were trying to find a solution on Tibet in relation to China. This made them very sensitive to any overtures from the putative Mongolian government for British recognition for

73) Mongolia 1914–1917, 7 & 8, FO 228/2725.

74) 'Lieutenant Binsteed might be asked to forward – for use when occasion arises, in the Board's Commercial Intelligence Branch – copies of the lists of goods in use among the Mongolia and the detailed information concerning the Mongol trading customs which are referred to in the Note at the conclusion of the Extract from his Report.' FO 228/2725, 7.

75) Mongolia, 1914–1917, 8, FO 228/2725.

76) Letter from Oscar Mamen of the British American Tobacco with accompanying report. FO 228/2725, Mongolia, 1914–1917, 10.

their recently declared independence. The Mongol mission arrived in St Petersburg in late 1912 and sent a letter translated into French signed by Sain Noyon Khan Namnansuren (Translation: Sain Noin-Khan Naman-Souroun) around the 20th December to the British Ambassador pressing their case for independence.⁷⁷ The British Ambassador in St. Petersburg referred the request to the Foreign Office and in February 1913 received instructions not to meet them.⁷⁸ The Ambassador later reassured the Foreign Office that he had spurned a second request from the Mission to meet shortly before it departed St. Petersburg in March 1913.⁷⁹

These issues formed the core intelligence needs in the immediate years following Binstead's departure, notwithstanding the hiatus caused by World War I with British attention being drawn back towards Europe. By 1918 the situation in Mongolia had become more acute when Russia was thrown into disorder following the Bolshevik revolution. China, who sought to exploit Russia's weakness, threatened to re-take Mongolia militarily, if necessary having annulled Mongol autonomy. They were driven out by a segment of the old White Russians guard under Baron von Sternberg who had fled to Siberia and eventually, in autumn 1920, arrived in (Outer) Mongolia. In turn, barely one year later, Von Sternberg's forces had either been destroyed or expelled from Mongolia by the Mongolian revolutionaries supported by the Red Army. The Legation tried to keep up with the ever-changing and tumultuous events in Mongolia, while still having no official diplomatic relations. Regional Military attachés sent dispatches on troop movements and arms supplies, and further insights and reports came from the few British and other Europeans who had been working or passing through Mongolia.

77) Sir G Buchanan to Sir E Gray. St Petersburg, December 24th, 1913. FO 228/2725.

78) Handwritten memo from Sir E Gray. Mongolian deputation at St Petersburg having asked H. M. Ambassador to receive them, H. E. has been instructed to decline to do so. FO 228/2400, D11.

79) Sir George Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey. FO 228/2400, D11. "The Members of the mission last week again requested me to receive them, but in accordance with the instructions conveyed to me in your telegram No 96 of the 4th ultimo, I declined to do so."

In 1919, and for the next two years during these turbulent events, the Legation sent staff members to Urga 'to make discreet inquiries about the situation and to report the actual state of affairs': in 1919 (Sir Somerville Head, second secretary in the British Legation)⁸⁰, 1920 (Eric Teichman, 'at present acting second secretary')⁸¹ ⁸² and 1921 (James Harding, 'assistant Chinese Secretary of this Legation').⁸³ The British concern for trade and the possibility of opening a Consulate in Urga were also still alive and the 1921 visit was made at the request of Sir B Alston (Head of British Legation at Peking) 'as a consequence of requests from British merchants for information as to present conditions there'.⁸⁴ As such these were 'political' travelers, although in each case the three diplomats travelled as private citizens. Unlike Binsteed none of them spoke or read Russian or Chinese (a point not lost on one reader of the reports) nor did they have the extensive network of contacts that Binsteed had developed, so the information they gathered came mainly from observation or conversation with Russians and other Europeans living or visiting Urga. By now the British government had tacitly accepted Mongolia's leaning

80) Report by Sir Somerville Head, Second Secretary, His Majesty's Legation, Peking, on a journey to Urga, April 22 to May 11, 1919. With maps, pp. 1–15. India Office Political and Secret Annual Files IOR/L/PS/11/159 1919, P7200/1919. 100283.

81) *Autonomy for Outer Mongolia*. Report on a visit to Urga by Mr. Eric Teichman, August 1920. Jan 15th 1921. With Sketch Map, pp.1–17. India Office Political and Secret Annual Files IOR/L/PS/11/159 1919, P7200/1919, F3009/152/10.

82) Covering note by R.H.Clive on Teichman's report explains his knowledge of Tibetan affairs: 'I venture to draw your Lordship's attention to Mr Teichman's observations on Mongolia in relation to Tibet, which are of special interest owing to Mr Teichman's intimate knowledge of the Tibetan situation.' Teichman was posted to the British Legation in Peking from 1919 to 1935 after which he became Consul in Urumqi then known as Dihua. (*Autonomy for Outer Mongolia*. Report on a visit to Urga by Mr. Eric Teichman, August 1920. Jan 15th 1921. With Sketch Map, pp. 1–17. India Office Political and Secret Annual Files IOR/L/PS/11/159 1919, P7200/1919, F3009/152/10.)

83) Report on conditions in Mongolia. Peking, October 21st 1921. Enclosure 1 in No. 1. Confidential Report on a Journey to Urga by Mr Harding, September 22 to October 10, 1921, pp. 1–10. India Office Political and Secret Annual Files IOR/L/PS/11/159 1919, P7200/1919, F4590/590/10.

84) *Ibid.*

to Russia and, after Mongolia became the Mongolian Peoples Republic in 1924, rather gave up on their quest to keep abreast of events or to pursue matters of trade.

Conclusion

In just two years, from early 1912 to the beginning of 1914, Binsteed made five journeys in Mongolia (both Inner and Outer) and its border areas (Kalgan – present-day Zhangjiakou – and Tsitsihar – present-day Qiqihar) and wrote a plethora of articles and reports as well as producing three maps of his summer 1913 journey: to date 13 reports and articles have come to light with 7 of them written for the British Legation in Peking, three articles for *The Far Eastern Review*, an article for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, a Note for the *Geographical Journal* and a lengthy monograph constituting a chapter in *The China Year Book 1914*.

The initial driving force for his travel was his genuine desire to extend his language skills to include Russian and Chinese, having already mastered French. It seems he first discovered Mongolia (Inner and Outer) through the writings of the great Russian 19th century expeditions as well as, more prosaically, through Morrison's contemporaneous accounts in *The Times*. At some stage he seems to have become fixated on writing about the country, wanting to appeal to the 'curiosity and wish for knowledge'⁸⁵ among the general British public, and, in so doing, right the lack of books on Mongolia in the English language. As such, this reflects a common trait among British travellers of the time who wanted to be the first to achieve one thing or another. (Binsteed who was well aware of the Russian writings on Mongolia, makes no reference to the accounts or writing of earlier British travellers in Mongolia such as Elias Ney, 1873, James Gilmour, 1880s, Charles Campbell, 1902, or Douglas Carruthers, 1909 among others.) He also seems to have wanted to present an account of Mongolia as it was at the time through the lens of his own empirically gained local knowledge rather than simply translating Russian works.

85) Kollmar-Paulenz 2017, p. 9. In Kollmar-Paulenz's suggested typology Binsteed would be described as a scholarly traveller.

It appears that he made the first substantive contact with the British Legation in Peking (rather than the other way round) when he presented his handwritten report in August 1912 accompanying Duke Khaisan's letter. (It is likely he made a courtesy visit on arrival in the city in the spring, given his military rank and secondment for language study.) It is highly possible that his September 1912 trip to Qiqihar in Inner Mongolia via Harbin was requested by the Legation, given his knowledge of the area having travelled through it earlier in the year and the subject matter, concerning as it did Russian policy in Northern Manchuria, rather than an investigation to further his knowledge of Mongolia. Thus, it could be argued that he was effectively conscripted by the British to become, in Fisher's term, 'a gentleman spy' or intelligence agent. It was after this he wrote the further 6 reports for the Legation in 1913. He ended up being described as 'a language officer attached to His Majesty's legation.' He did not play the part of the disinterested observer being ready to offer his somewhat imperialistic opinions on contemporary issues concerning British policy matters on Mongolia, especially in relation to trade.

Concurrently, Binsteed stuck to his self-defined brief of gathering information for his intended book by making hazardous journeys at a very volatile time as well as fulfilling, in part, his wish to raise awareness of Mongolia (Outer and Inner) among English speakers by publishing articles on his new-found knowledge. In this sense the needs of the Legation and Binsteed's own requirements were in harmony and as such he fits perfectly the description of 'amateur spy or agent'.

Abbreviations:

FO	Foreign Office
IOR	India Office Records
RGS-IBG	The Royal Geographical Society-The Institute of British Geographers
SSC/5	Shelf mark for the Binsteed Journals.

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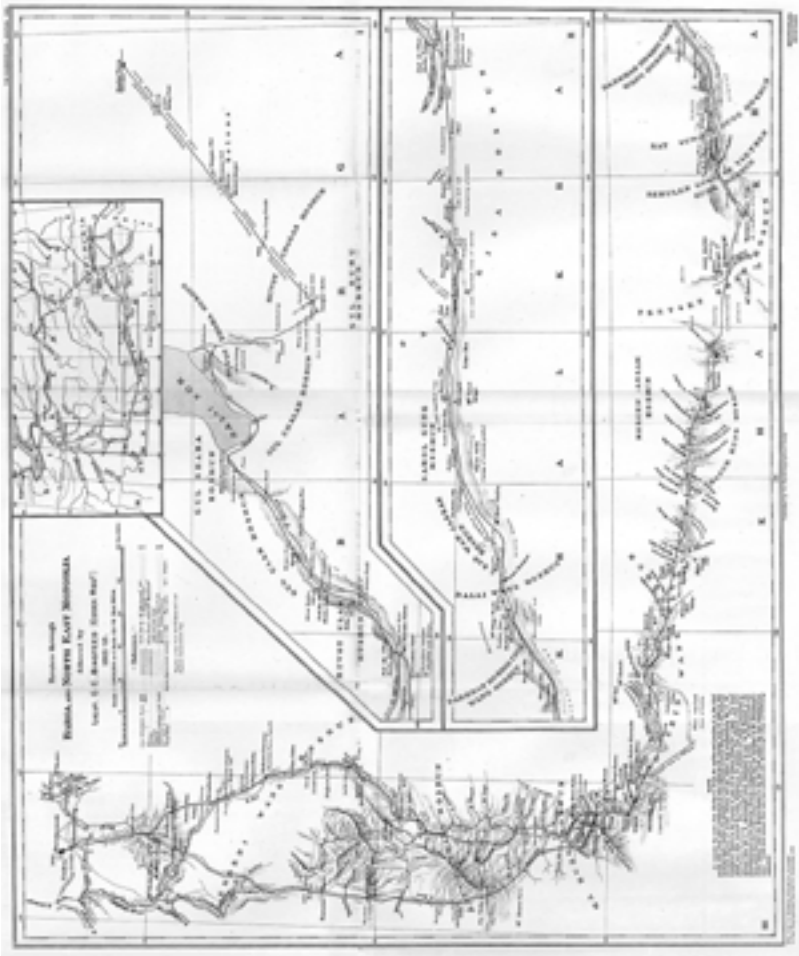
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1. G. C. Binstead at Wellington College, 1903. Copyright: Wellington College.



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4. San Beisiin Urgo (The residence of Sain Beise). The lower lamasery. Photo: Lt. G. C. Binstead, 1913. Copyright: Royal Geographical Society.



5. Boy lamas at Süjict Gün (monastery). Photo: Lt. G. C. Binstead, 1913. Copyright: Royal Geographical Society.



6. Women and girls at the prayer barrel shed, Süjict Gün (monastery). Photo: Lt. G. C. Binstead, 1913. Copyright: Royal Geographical Society.



7. Süjict Gün Khoshuun. Lamasery & the Gold Sumu (temple). Photo: Lt. G. C. Binstead, 1913. Copyright: Royal Geographical Society.



9. The central figure is Lieut. Binsteed, the others are Buriats, Monguls of Trans-Baikalia. Copyright: The Far Eastern Review.

Among the “Open-hearted People of Chingis Khan”. The Hungarian Traveller, Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna’s Notes about the Mongols of Urga from 1873

ÁGNES BIRTALAN, Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Mongolian and Inner Asian Studies, Budapest, Hungary



Portrait of Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna (source: *Vasárnapi Újság* (“Sunday News”) 1875, 48. (drawing by Zsigmond Pollák) On the Internet: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Szentkatolnai_Bálint_Gábor.jpg (11.11.2017)

Summary: Being not published for more than a century, only a few scholarly remarks in articles mention the invaluable materials of the Hungarian linguist, Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna (1844–1913). He recorded folklore and ethnographic texts in the spoken languages, i.e. in Kalmyk and Khalkha vernacular (1871–1873). His materials not only recorded the spoken language of that time, but also perpetuated ethnographic and folklore data of 19th century Mongols.

In the present paper the following points are discussed: the intention behind Bálint’s travelling, the typology of his narratives and some examples from his personal impressions about the “Heart of Asia,” which are also attached for further research purposes. As source material Bálint’s unpublished manuscript of Khalkha language, folklore and ethnography, his letters, reports (accounts), popularising articles written for the larger public and his diary are displayed.

0. Introduction

In recent years I have dealt with the manuscript heritage and research journey of Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna, the 19th century Hungarian (Transylvanian) researcher in numerous articles and conference papers. As the present collection of essays is an “encyclopaedic” overview of the travellers and their narratives about the Mongols, it is necessary to repeat some facts about Bálint’s life and to summarise the invaluable results of his legacy. My project was aimed – first of all – at making public his unpublished manuscripts on Kalmyk and Khalkha spoken languages and vernacular culture. To date I have managed to publish his Comparative Grammar of vernacular Khalkha and Kalmyk (further *Grammar*, cf. Birtalan 2009), a philological study on Kalmyk vernacular language and folk culture based on the 184 manuscript pages noted down by him in Astrakhan (Birtalan 2011a).¹ The Khalkha manuscript (88 pages) collected from his informants in Urga is being worked up. Besides, I have devoted some articles to particular texts of Bálint’s manuscripts and also to the travel accounts he wrote during his journey² or issued after his return.³

In order to make the academic audience more acquainted with Bálint’s travel narratives and the folklore genres he noted down, I dedicated a particular article to the unique source entitled “The Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan”.⁴ Furthermore I devoted some descriptive studies to the

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- 1) Here I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Kalmyk Institute of Humanitarian Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and particularly to T. G. Basangova (Bordžanova) and B. B. Gorjaeva, who helped me to decipher the sometimes obscure 19th century Kalmyk texts.
 - 2) First of all his letters to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and to his main patron, János Fogarasi (1801–1878), the prominent, but “self-made” linguist. For a detailed account: Birtalan (2009 and 2011b).
 - 3) I. e. The “Report to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences”, which is a first-hand source material of his methodology and Kalmyk and Mongolian folk life at that time.
 - 4) I focused my analysis on the possible sources of this brief Chingis-narrative and the symbolical role of the ruler’s (khan’s) insignia described in the text Birtalan (2012a).

linguistic value of his records⁵ and – among other things – I surveyed Bálint’s Khalkha and Kalmyk ethnographic materials.⁶ One article of mine is concerned with the religious identity of the 19th century Mongols on the basis of Bálint’s travel narratives (Birtalan 2012b). From his Khalkha material I have published the riddle-corpus (Birtalan 2014b).

1. The traveller. A Hungarian researcher among the Mongols with scholarly and political intentions and private endeavour

In accordance with Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz’s typology of travellers and travellers’ intentions,⁷ I try to “tag” to which type Bálint belonged. Firstly some details about Bálint’s life are given in order to create the politico-cultural context of his journey. Even from a less detailed life story it is evident how complex his endeavour was and how it fits into a personal, national and international frame of the 19th century travellers’ curricula. Although Bálint was not the first traveller visiting Urga, but still an “early-bird” among other explorers whose travelogues offer valid and substantive information on the multicultural city life, the inhabitants and religious situation. During the next decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries several well-equipped researchers (cf. the articles in the present volume) with complete entourage carried out successful field research in the area; Bálint was alone and could rely only on the support of the Russian Consulate (cf. below). His observations on the 19th century Mongolian capital city written almost exclusively in Hungarian have been published partly during his life-time, but some of them only recently. According to the main purpose of the present volume I chose some illustrative passages from his travelogue narratives in order to make accessible his material for

5) E. g. a comparative study on Bálint’s and Kotwitz’s descriptive grammars of Kalmyk language (Birtalan 2014a), and a brief introduction into the linguistic features of the still unpublished Khalkha records (Birtalan 2016a).

6) The *Ethnographica* consists of brief narratives on the nomadic way of life, the rites of passages and the Buddhist monks’ everyday life in Urga (Birtalan 2015).

7) Cf. The *Introduction* in the present collection of essays.

the international scholarly audience. Bálint's data shall certainly complete the well-known descriptions on the "heart of Inner Asia".

Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna was born in 1844 and died in 1913. He was a researcher of more than thirty languages and cultures. He had an exceptional talent in learning languages, and was trained in the methodology of descriptive linguistics – as it can be verified on the basis of his grammar of Christianised Kazan Tatar⁸ and his comparative grammar of East and West Mongolian languages (Birtalan 2009).

He was born at the time of the emergence of Hungarian nationhood and the formation of Hungarian prestige culture in all social spheres. Scholars' findings, like those of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (Hung. Kőrösi Csoma Sándor 1784–1842) became widely known and a national movement was formed for tracing back the land of origin (Urheimat) of the Hungarians (and Transylvanian Seclers; Hung. Székely) and the possible affinity of the Hungarian language.⁹ His main purpose was to study spoken tongues *in situ*, during field research: i. e. vernacular languages in a folk (vernacular) cultural context. Despite his invaluable records on many Eurasian languages, and some early descriptive grammars, his achievements have not been accepted even by some of his contemporaries, due to his later extremist and unscholarly ideas. His studies on the linguistic affinity of Hungarian with numerous Asian languages served political views of that time rather than sincere academic purposes. Consequently this led to his exclusion from scholarly circles. However, his later life and unacceptable ideas on the Hungarians' language contacts and ancient history should not belittle his path-breaking achievements in research into some vernacular idioms of the Altaic language community.¹⁰ His invaluable manuscript legacy is internationally less known, although at the beginning of his academic career he produced scholarly books and unique manuscripts – unfortunately unpublished during his lifetime – of the highest academic value.

8) New critical edition with some additional corrections and notes, cf. Berta (1988).

9) For details about the epoch Bálint grew up in and when he carried out his journeys, cf. Birtalan (2016b, pp. 22–33).

10) For details on Bálint's ideas about language affinity, cf. Introduction in Birtalan (2009).

For Mongolian studies Bálint should be esteemed as the first scholar who recorded large corpora of the Kalmyk and Khalkha vernacular languages in a fairly good transcription, perpetuating in this way the 19th century pronunciation of two Mongolian languages. The Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences keeps three Mongolian manuscripts not published during Bálint’s lifetime under the following titles and shelf numbers:

- *Nyugati mongol (Kálmik) szövegek.* (184 pages), Nr.: M. Nyelvtud. 4/109; [Western Mongolian (Kalmyk) texts].
- *Bálint Gábor: Keleti mongol (khalkha) szövegek.* (88 pages), Nr.: Ms1379/2; [Bálint, Gábor: Eastern Mongolian (Khalkha) texts].
- *A Romanized Grammar of the East- and West-Mongolian Languages. with popular Chrestomat[h]ies of both dialects. ...* (222 pages), Nr.1: 81 szám, Nr.2: Ms 1379/1.¹¹

When he finished the fair copy of the transcription of his field records, he was already almost excluded from academic circles.¹² In fact only the manuscript of the *Grammar* can be considered to be an entirely complete one. The manuscripts of the two text corpora of field records contain only the transcription without any explanation, analysis or translation. But the Chrestomathy part of the *Grammar* includes many specimens of Khalkha and some of the Kalmyk texts in a simplified transcription and in Bálint’s English translation.¹³

11) The entire title of the *Grammar* is: *A Romanized Grammar of the East- and West-Mongolian Languages. With popular Chrestomaties [sic!] of both Dialects. Containing alliterative Folk-Songs, Anecdotes, Conversations, Fables, Proverbs, Prayers, Letters, Writs and the Description of the Characteristical Usages and Housekeeping of the Mongolians; every piece with faithful Translation, by Professor G. Bálint of Szentkatolna.*

12) In his manuscripts Bálint calls “dilettantes” some of the authoritative scholars of the epoch, like Pál Hunfalvy (1810–1891) and József Budenz (1836–1892) in an extreme sarcastic tone; cf. his Introduction to the *Grammar* (Birtalan 2009) and Bálint 1877 among others.

13) While working on the Kalmyk records, I consulted Bálint’s translation, and if I thought it to be relevant, I included his proposals for the interpretation of particular words and expressions in my translation.

Concerning Bálint's private intentions, they almost completely coincided with the expectations of his patrons and sending institution (the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). Being an enthusiastic student of learning foreign languages and being a Székely/Hungarian, he desired to discover the original homeland of Hungarians first of all by means of studying and researching languages.

2. Bálint's research journey among Mongolian speaking people with special focus on his travel to Urga

In the above-described political and cultural milieu of the 19th century Hungary Bálint was chosen by some scholars to travel to the East and record spoken languages, above all Mongolian; e. g. the Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) supported his goals and – as mentioned above – some enthusiastic people who wanted to prove the linguistic affinity of Hungarian with Mongolian and Turkic languages, such as János Fogarasi. Bálint started his research trip to Turkic and Mongolian speaking peoples in the summer of 1871 in Kazan where he dealt with the spoken dialect of the Christianised Tatars on the advice of N. Il'minskij (Bálint 1875, pp. 4–10, cf. Kara 1973 and Berta 1988, p. 6). He had already started his Kalmyk studies in Kazan with V. V. Mirotvorcev (1838–1891), a teacher of Mongolian language at Kazan Spiritual Academy (Bálint 1871a, p. 242, cf. Kara 1973; in more detail: Birtalan 2011a, pp. 10–11). As Bálint noted, they used the Kalmyk grammar of A. A. Bobrovnikov published in 1849. “After living two and a half months in Kazan I mastered the spoken Kalmyk tongue so that I speak and write in it. After hearing them I collected words, folk tales, folk songs, riddles, materials representing the purest folk tongue for a little Chrestomathy.”¹⁴

14) “1 harmadfél hónapi Kazánba [sic!] lételem alatt magamévá tettem a kalmik népnyelvet annyira, hogy rajta beszélek és irok [sic!]; gyűjtöttem [sic!] egy kis Chrestomathiára való anyagot, mely áll tulajdon hallomásom után följegyzett szók, népmesék, népdalok és talányokból, a lehető tiszta népnyelven.” Bálint (1871a, pp. 244–245, cf. Kara 1973).

The centre of his researches in Astrakhan was the “Kalmyk foster home and school” (he named it in Hungarian “Khalymik növelde és iskola”). “As with the Christian Tatar School in Kazan, so also the Kalmyk foster home and school – which is supported by the Kalmyk nation – was a lucky choice for me. To hear the seventy-five young Kalmyks from various tribes every day and to talk to them continuously was the best method of studying their folk tongue.”¹⁵ In fact he mentioned twice in the Preface to the *Grammar* that “stationary fieldwork” among the shepherds in their yurts is a desirable method of collecting linguistic and folklore material. Working with the teachers and schoolboys for a shorter period, however, seemed to be just as successful: “I am convinced that, had I lived under the tents of the Oirat- (Öiräd)-Mongolians – so the Khalmiks call themselves when speaking with confidence – many years long, I could hardly have had a better opportunity to pursue my propose than I had in the Institute mentioned.” (Preface to the *Grammar*. p. III (Birtalan 2009, p. 4). He spent several months among the Astrakhan Kalmyks (end of September 1871 – May 1872) and worked with many infomants. He mentioned by name in his *Report* and in the Preface to the *Grammar* Šamba, a teacher of the Kalmyk language and culture who worked in the boys’ and girls’ schools.¹⁶ So the fieldwork method tested among the Tatars in Kazan was used by him among the Kalmyks as well; he looked for a school where he was able to find teachers of the language and also students from different parts of the country, to master various dialects. With the permission of the school director he visited Šamba’s lessons every day and talked to the pupils. Besides the teacher, the surgeon of the school Manĵin Sawyr (in Bálint’s transcription Mandsin Szabghar) also helped him in mastering the language. From among the students he mentioned Mučk(a) Baldr (in Bálint’s transcription Mucska Baldir) who provided him with a large

15) “Valamint Kazánban a keresztyén tatár iskola, úgy Asztrakhánban is a khalymik növelde és iskola, mely a khalymikság költségén tartatik fön [sic!], nagy szerencsémre szolgált, mert a különféle törzsből összegyűjtött [sic!] 75 fiatal khalymikot naponkét hallani s velök folytonosan társalogni, a lehető legjobb mód volt tanulmányozhatnom a nép nyelvét.” (Bálint 1975, p. 10), cf. Kara (1973); also the Preface to the *Grammar* p. III. (Birtalan 2009, p. 4).

16) Cf. Bálint (1871a, p. 244), Kara 1973; quoted by Nagy as well (1959, p. 312).

amount of material on Kalmyk folk life. Despite his previous Kalmyk studies in Kazan he first used Russian, but owing to his excellent capability in learning languages he became able to communicate in Kalmyk very soon. He collected language material from the illiterate Kalmyks as well who visited the market in Astrakhan.”¹⁷

The result of his fieldwork is a text corpus that was published by me (Birtalan 2011a). Bálint’s manuscript contains conversation sample texts (6 pages), riddles (2 pages), proverbs (2 pages), blessings (Kalm. *yöräl*, 1 page), folk songs (20 pages), folk tales (103 pages), texts on folk life (30 pages), juridical documents (8 pages), and a text on funeral customs (3 pages).

Following his return to Hungary, he worked on the Kalmyk records besides the Kazan Tatar material. He intended to publish it with a German translation and with notes (Bálint 1872b, p. 211) He introduced the transcription to the Linguistic Committee of the Academy in 1879, but he never completed it. Bálint mentioned in the Preface to the *Grammar* that he prepared a Kalmyk part of his comparative grammar on the basis of his texts: “After having gathered a good number of folksongs, fables, proverbs and other materials for a dictionary and made a draft of the Khalmik-Mongolian grammar, I left Astrachan for St. Petersburg to study the Finnic and other related tongues, ...” (Birtalan 2009, p. 4).

Bálint left Astrakhan (12 May 1872) by train and arrived in Saint Petersburg (18 May) (Bálint 1872a, p. 208). He contacted – among others – A. F. Schiefner (1817–1879), the philologist of the Imperial Academy in Saint Petersburg and presented him his results and introduced his future plans. Schiefner supported Bálint’s attempt to write a grammar of vernacular languages, as Bálint noted down: “Mr. Schiefner favoured my efforts to study the Kalmyk [spoken] language with my Hungarian ears.”¹⁸ But his unwillingness to follow his plan and to travel through Siberia into

17) Bálint (1875, p. 13), Kara 1973; Preface to the *Grammar*. p. III (Birtalan 2009, p. 4).

18) “Schiefner ur [sic!] helyeselte, hogy a khalymik nyelvet magyar fülemmel tanulmányoztam.” Bálint (1872a, p. 208, cf. Kara 1973. Schiefner also supported his efforts to study “Finnic and other related languages”. Introduction to the *Grammar*. p. III (Birtalan 2009, p. 4).

Innermost Asia to the Mongols shows up from his lines (Bálint 1872b). In one of his letters Bálint tried to assert that it was not necessary to travel to the Mongols living in Mongolia, as his main task was to study the Mongolian and Ugrian languages further in Saint Petersburg¹⁹ and go back to Hungary “to introduce the Kalmyk folk tongue in German language.”²⁰ Towards the end of his letter he made his plans not to visit the Khalkha Mongols even more obvious, claiming that to have an understanding of the Mongolian language his Kalmyk fieldwork (materials about the spoken tongue) and the dictionary of O. Kovalevskij (J. É. Kowalewski 1844–1849) were enough, therefore it was not necessary to travel to the Mongols. He was unconvinced concerning the result of his journey as well: “Even if I were able to finish the journey successfully, what could be its outcome? A few folk songs and folk tales. I have collected such things in the Kalmyk language.”²¹ Nevertheless he changed his mind and in his letter of 5 September 1872 he reported to Fogarasi the following: “I look forward to every day that I have to see the Chinese Mongols with my eyes.”²²

Bálint continued his journey on 20 February 1873 (Birtalan 2009, p. 4) in order to study the language(s) of the Eastern Mongols, primarily of the Khalkhas. After a long sledge journey through Russia he arrived in Urga (Mong. Yeke Kūriyen, today Ulānbātar) in April 1873. We learn from his *Report* that he changed the fieldwork method he had followed among the Tatars and the Kalmyks and did not search for an educational institution in the capital city of Mongolia. He based his work mainly on one person; his language tutor, and his main informant was a forty-five-year-old lama Yondonjamc (in Bálint’s transcription Yanden Dsamcza) “... a Khara²³ lama (a Mongolian married clergyman), who had wandered in

19) Cf. “Az én itteni teendőm a mongol nyelv tovább tanulmányozása és az ugarság-való ismerkedés.” Bálint (1872a, p. 209, cf. Kara 1973).

20) “Visszatértem után pedig a khalmik népnyelvet kell megismertetnem német nyelven.” Bálint (1872a, p. 209, cf. Kara 1973).

21) “Föltéve, hogy szerencsésen bevégném az utat, mi lehetne eredménye? Néhány népdal és népmese. Ezt gyűjtöttem khalmik nyelven.” Bálint (1872a, p. 210, cf. Kara 1973).

22) “Mindennap tapasztalom, hogy a sinai mongolokat saját szememmel kell megélnem.” Bálint (1872c, 211, cf. Kara 1973).

23) Mong. *qar-a*, Khalkha *xar* “black, laic, lay”.

several parts of Mongolia ...” (Birtalan 2009, p. 5). Firstly Bálint recorded from him words and secondly sentences. Owing to the Kalmyk language he was able to learn the Khalkha vernacular easily and started to collect folklore materials. He began his research with transcribing a *Geser epic* variant into spoken Khalkha on the basis of Schmidt’s publication, written originally in Uigur Mongolian script.²⁴ “During 150 days I did nothing else than write down phonetically all things my lama or other persons called by him to me were able to dictate to me. I read the whole fable of Geser Khān with my lama and transcribed it in the spoken language. I must remark that my lama was no literator [sic!] but cleaverer [sic!] and more experienced than many of the learned ones.” (Birtalan 2009, p. 5). As among the Kalmyks he was interested in collecting folk songs, in his *Report* he mentioned that his lama tutor started to produce folk songs himself and that was why he looked for other informants as well (e. g. Lusīn Dorĵ, in his transcription Lusīn Dords) to record folk songs (Bálint 1875, p. 14).

Bálint intended to collect language material from the Inner Mongolian Chakhar (Čaxar) merchants in Urga, and although he was not able to record folklore texts, he could compare the phonetic systems of the Khalkha and Chakhar languages (Bálint 1875, pp. 15–16).²⁵

In Urga he also decided to learn some spoken Manchu from a nobleman, called Nayintai (in Bálint’s transcription *Nainté*) (Bálint 1875, p. 16 and Preface to the Grammar p. IV; Birtalan 2009, p. 5). As he wrote in his *Report*, all the officials knew spoken Manchu.

The result of his research among the Khalkhas is an 88-page manuscript of Khalkha folklore materials and sample texts of the vernacular language.²⁶ Many of his texts represent probably a Western Khalkha dialect – as György Kara determined in his study devoted to a brief survey of the unedited texts of Bálint (Kara 1962, p. 163).

24) For the text, Bálint used, cf. Šmidt (1836) and Schmidt (1839); also cf. the Preface to the *Grammar* pp. IV, VIII (Birtalan 2009, pp. 5, 9).

25) The Čaxar (Mong. Čaqar) language belongs to the South-Mongolian (Inner Mongolian) languages, the Inner Mongolian standardised language is based on it; cf. e. g. Sechenbaatar (2003).

26) A detailed list of the content cf. Kara (1962, p. 162).

3. The travelogue. The traveller’s narratives: genres and content of letters, reports/accounts, a diary and popularising articles

In my previous studies (cf. above) I have dealt predominantly with particular texts Bálint recorded in the field. Nonetheless, I have always referred to some parts of various sources of his traveller’s narrative in order to put the folklore or ethnographic texts into the context of the travel and also with the intention of making accessible Bálint’s opinion and information about his working methodology, published only in Hungarian for international readers. A summarising article devoted to Bálint’s travelogue narratives I have issued for the Kalmyk academic public, focusing on the letters, accounts, and the fragments of Bálint’s diary that are concerned with the visit in Astrakhan (Birtalan 2011b). The source corpus, i. e. the traveller’s narratives – to be presented below – consists of the following genres:

- Accounts, official reports. *i)* Bálint wrote two reports to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the first one was sent by him as a kind of a brief “mid-term report” from Kazan in 1872 (2 September); *ii)* and a detailed report (or account) that he delivered after his arrival back in Hungary at the session of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2 March 1874). This was published in 1875. Both reports were included in Kara’s booklet comprising Bálint’s letters and reports. (Bálint 1871a, Bálint 1875, Kara 1973). Both documents offer valuable information about Bálint’s fieldwork methodology and also data about the politico-social environment of the places he visited, namely, Kazan, Astrakhan, Kyakhta and Urga.
- Letters written either to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences or to his main patron János Fogarasi, the decisive figure in 19th century Hungarian academic and political life (cf. above). In these letters Bálint tried to share his results of studying vernacular languages and mentioned his doubts about undertaking a journey to Mongolia. In these letters one can observe some traces of Bálint’s private life as well. They were read for an academic audience and then published in the series of the Academy: *Akadémiai Értesítő* i. e. “Proceedings of the Academy” in the years 1871–1873 (republished by Kara 1973).

- A fragmentary diary. Notes about Bálint's childhood and about his first Eastern journey²⁷ written in a “diary” format were found in the Library of the University of Szeged. Handwritten slips of papers were compiled into a “diary” by Jenő Zágoni, a dedicated researcher of Bálint's heritage. The information included in this narrative and especially the “travelogue” parts are more personal reminiscences about the life of Kalmyks and Mongols (interestingly fewer data are mentioned about the Kazan Tatars). The description of the everyday life and Bálint's observations about the religion, history and peoples' mentality are sources as valuable as his official reports. The compiled diary was published by Zágoni (Zágoni 2005).
- Articles with the aim of popularising the habits and customs of people he has visited. These brief, but very informative narratives about the Mongols (again, these writings only concerned his Kalmyk and Mongolian experiences) for the wider public were issued either in Hungary or in Transylvania. Some details, especially what he found relevant for the Hungarian cultural environment about his journey, were written in an easy-flowing, style dedicated to Hungarians being interested in the history of their origin and connections: e. g. *Százötvenöt nap a Khalkha-Mongol Földön* “One-Hundred and Fifty-five Days in the Khalkha-Mongolian Land” (published in 1874 in the series *Földrajzi Közlemények* “Geographic Publications”). (republished by Zágoni 2005, pp. 109–116, in a shortened version). Another example of a traveller's narrative is his introduction to the Mongols' religions: *A mongolok régi vallása* “The old religion of the Mongols” published in the *Unitárius Közlöny* “Unitarian Gazette” in 1891.
- Narrative parts in academic works. The preface to his *Grammar* of Eastern and Western Mongolian languages can be listed among the traveller's narratives as well. Bálint summarised his methodology, referred to some of his informants and propagated his ideas about the language contacts of Eurasian languages with Hungarian (Birtalan 2009).

27) Later Bálint was asked to join to two Asian expeditions organised by the members of the Hungarian elite (counts), but this does not concern with his Mongolian studies (in detail and for further literature, cf. Birtalan 2016b pp. 30–33).

From his narrative the lamas, officials and herders of that time come to life; what is more, they seem to “talk to the readers”. One learns from Bálint’s writings about the main events in Urga in 1873 and his remarks on contemporary Buddhist and lay life are important pieces of first-hand historical information. What attracted Bálint’s attention? Concerning their content, Bálint’s data can be categorised as follows:

- The life in the Russian consulate where he lived, the activity of Ja. P. Šišmarjov and I. V. Panderin, the well-known figures of Russian-Mongolian relations.²⁸
- The Buddhist life of Urga, the Maitreya temple which existed at the time as one of the centres of Buddhist religious practice.
- The lamas’ life. His main informant was a “black Lama”, so he could gain first-hand information about the life of the religious specialists.
- Lay life, especially people in the streets, in the markets, and herders who came to Urga, the officials’ duties, the peoples’ appearance, etc; everyday life of Mongolian nomads in Urga. NB! He did not visit the nomads’ camps outside of the capital city.
- Mentality of people. He tried to outline national characteristics about the Mongols, the Kalmyks, the lamas, the officials, the Chinese and the Russians he met during his journey. This “characterology” is, however, based on his quite subjective judgement, reflecting Bálint’s sympathy as well.

4. Examples from travel narratives

Below some fragments from Bálint’s various narratives are quoted in order to demonstrate how significant and noteworthy pieces of information are included in the above-mentioned genres. Here I selected data that are particular from the following points of view: *i*) they are not mentioned in other sources, *ii*) they reflect Bálint’s peculiar view about that time Mongolia.

28) In detail about the religious identity of Mongolian society cf. Birtalan (2012b).

4.1. THE RUSSIAN CONSULATE (FROM BÁLINT'S DIARY; ZÁGONI 2005, pp. 51–52)

“Outside the town a mounted Kozak came to meet me and escorted me to the precincts of the Russian consulate. In the yard of the compound fenced round with planks, the secretary of the consulate I. V. Paderin welcomed me in English and led me to the room assigned to me. I gave Bolot²⁹ a little purse with silver 10 kopek pieces worth one and a half Rubbles. He thanked me with the “Be happy!” greeting and started back for Khüren, which they call Urga in Mongolian, with a joyful face. I got out my pulp wash basin and washed myself for the first time in a week, then put on my grey suit brought from Budapest, for I took no black suit abhorred by the Mongols with me. When I had had a hearty meal from the snack sent to me by the secretary, I went upstairs to the consul who welcomed me warmly and told me he had been instructed by the Asian Department to give me board and lodging while I was there because I could get no accommodation or food in Urga. Soon the consul’s wife Maria Nikolaevna, a blond woman of 30, appeared and her husband introduced me to her. The most respectful address among Russians, both men and women, is to say the person’s Christian name and the name of the father with the suffix meaning N’s son or daughter. Maria Nikolaevna (pron. [in Hung.] Nykolayevna) is thus Maria, the daughter of Nicholas. The consul Jakob Parfenteevich Shishmarev [Jakob Parfenteevič Šišmarjov] as the surname indicates is of Mongolian origin, speaks Mongolian and is a practical man. His secretary studied Manchu-Mongolian and Chinese as well as law at Saint Petersburg University. The consul’s wife is the daughter of a rich doctor in Irkutsk who finished secondary school, learnt French and English but for lack of practice forgot both. She called me Mister Bálint in the English way, her husband addressed me as Gabriel Andreevich. While we were conversing, the consul’s wife brought a samovar to the table and after drinking a few cups of fine tea, we parted. I made my bed with the bedding I had bought from Kazan and slept till morning.”

29) Bolot (Khalkha Bold) was Bálint’s guide on the way to Urga.

4.2. BUDDHIST LIFE (FROM BÁLINT’S DIARY; ZÁGONI 2005, p. 51)

Concerning Buddhist life in Urga, there are quite numerous data from various sources written by Bálint. Below are given Bálint’s remarks on famous Maitreya cult of that time and the temple with a brief extract from orally transmitted apocalyptic revelation.

“Riding fast all day, by sunset we arrived in the capital of Mongolia, Urga, just at the time when two *gecüls* (Lama candidates) [Khal. *gecüil*, Tib. *dge tsul*] were blowing a flourish on their instruments similar to the Sekler [Hung. Székely] alpine horn to celebrate Májderé [Khal. Maidar, Mong. Maidari, Skr. Maitreya]. Buddhist Lamas claim she will be the female [sic!] Buddha of the next age when women will rule and the horses will urinate like dogs now. The statue of this goddess [sic!] rising 75 ells high reaches to the top of the temple built of pine logs.³⁰ Urga, the seat of the *khutuktu* (archbishop or high priest) [Khal. *xutagt*, Mong. *qutuytu*] of the Mongols consists of tents surrounded by pine fences, which form the irregular streets. Apart from the temple of Májderé, the temples are all large tents.”

4.3. THE LAMAS (FROM BÁLINT’S REPORT; BÁLINT 1875, pp. 13–14.)

Concerning the life of the lamas and Buddhist clergy Bálint made lots of observations, as he mainly worked with them. The pieces of information he recorded and issued can complete the invaluable work of A. Pozdneev: *Očerki byta buddijskih monastyrej* (Pozdneev 1887, republished 1993).

“Upon arrival in Urga, I contracted a widely travelled and wandered lower-ranking hence married Lama (that is, priest) aged 45 to teach me, because among the *khara khun* [Khalkha *xar xün*] (black people), i.e. the common people that is, only office administrators could undertake

30) Why did he state the above ideas about the Maitreya cult? The solution can be found in one of his records dictated from his main informant Lama Yondonjamc in the so called “Black book of the Holy Chingis Khan”. I have dealt with this source in a previous article of mine published in the journal of Sendai University (Birtalan 2012a).

tuition, but their official engagements would not have let them devote the time I needed to me.

My Lama tutor called Yanden Jamca had little to do. He was well known for his fluency in speaking. He could not write in Mongolian but only in Tibetan; for the Mongolian clergy find it beyond them to write, or even speak, in the language of their native folk. Money however loosened his tongue, and I was glad that he had not been concerned with anything else but the sacred Tibetan language and writs, for in this way he did not know the language of the Mongolian religious books which is rather well known through Kowalewski's dictionary and could teach me the vernacular."

4.4. LAY PEOPLE AND RELIGIOUS SPECIALIST (155 DAYS IN KHALKHA-MONGOLIAN LAND; BÁLINT 1874, QUOTED BY ZÁGONI 2005, p. 113)

"Two classes are differentiated among the Mongols: the class of Lamas [Bálint *láma khun*, Khal. *lam xün*] or priests and the class of seculars [Bálint *khara khun*, Khal. *xar xün*] or common people. The former is differentiated from the latter by the head being close shaven, the normally thin moustache and beard being torn out. The costumes of both genders are cut in the same way, the clerical class may wear red or orange, the two colours reserved for them. Women may also belong to the priests' class, also with bald heads. The clerics among whom anyone may enter are unmarried except in the lower ranks; their occupations are teaching, healing, and divine service. Each priest, including the high priest, has a farm of livestock, for a priestly existence does not absolve anyone of the struggle for subsistence. Poorer and lower-ranking Lamas, priests pursue handicrafts or trade, or hire themselves out to others. That means that among Mongols occupations that need some training can be found in the priestly class. According to the Mongolian concept, priesthood is not an office that provides for one's living – though this may hold true in some regards – but it is advancement, a manner of improvement in Buddhist terms.

By contrast, the khara-khun who are little concerned with religious knowledge are looked upon as inferior because they contribute less to salvation as it is understood by Buddhists."

4.5. WAY OF LIFE, RITES OF PASSAGES (155 DAYS IN KHALKHA-MONGOLIAN LAND; BÁLINT 1874, QUOTED BY ZÁGONI 2005, pp. 113–116)

Among Bálint’s records written in the Mongolian and Kalmyk languages there is invaluable information about contemporary customs and important terminology of particular phenomena about the rites of passage. Bálint’s Mongolian language records contain material on birth, wedding and funeral in Khalkha language. His travelogue narratives – written in Hungarian – complete these data considerably.

“When a Mongol is dying, a priest is called again who teaches him with admonitions to resign from earthly goods and encourages him to enter into the realm of the spirits. If possible, the dying person takes leave of his family between the tasting of milk and yellow butter, trying to adopt a pose that is worthy of a person ready to die. Facing west, with legs drawn up and left hand on his hip, he stops his right ear with the thumb of his right hand and his right nostril with his nameless [i. e. ring] finger. For three days the dead body remains in the tent, another tent is erected for the family where the believers and the priest pray for three days. The officiating lama asks, that is, designates a place on a mountain top for the spiritlord. He takes a yellow thread and measures out a piece of land on the slope and draws it round with a piece of horn. At that spot the heirs of the deceased give nine heads of the livestock of each and objects of the same number, which go to the priest designating the place. On the third day the two closest relatives of the deceased wrap the body in white linen and transport him on camelback to the given place where the believers and priest have already gathered, make a fire and cook meals and tea to serve and pray.

When the corpse arrives, the believers are about to leave for home. The two persons place the corpse in the middle of the designated place and hoist the flag which was flying above the funeral tent and on which the Lama [Zágoni 116] conducting the ritual had written the six syllables om-ma-ni-pad-me-hum after the death. The two carriers and the priest are the last to return home where the priest purifies them washing them with a holy ointment of saffron sugar called holy water [Bálint *arsan*, Khal. *aršān*] and water.

The predators devour the carcass in a few hours.”

4.6. MENTALITY, CHARACTEROLOGY (FROM BÁLINT'S DIARY;
ZÁGONI 2005, P. 57 AND 155 DAYS IN KHALKHA-MONGOLIAN
LAND; ZÁGONI 2005, p. 112)

In most of his accounts and reports, letters Bálint tried to describe the Mongol and Chinese peoples' mentality as he had judged on the basis of his subjective observation. Did he talk with some prejudice about the Chinese and Manchu people? Might be. But he loved Mongols and in the 1870s considered them as one of the possible kin folk of the Hungarians.

“On the whole, Mongols – whatever kind they belong to – do not lack in intellectual capacity; what they need is an example to emulate and a little pressure. The former is granted with the foreign ethnic groups, particularly the Chinese who constitute the towns in Mongolia, but they are despised by every more affluent Mongol who scorns their achievements and proudly says: “let the Chinese work, my kind is not reduced to working.” There will be no compulsion before they are forced into a smaller space by other ethnicities, but then it will most probably be too late to get rid of idleness.”

“The traveller tries to clarify that labelling the Chinese as swindlers without scruples is unjustified; he adduces in proof the letters of credit issuable to the amount of one's wealth by merchants of Khüree and Maimachen (Bálint Khuren, Mai-mai chin, Khal. Xürē, Maimačen) ; these *tedza*-s introduced because of the tediousness of shopping with blocks of tea and hemispheres of pure silver are based on mutual trust, and it never happens that someone issues so many *tedza*-s in return for blocks of tea that he is unable to pay immediately as his *tedza* is presented. A corroborating argument is that the traveller had not seen a single Chinese convict with a penal wooden board round his neck.

Finally, he touches on the relationship between the merchant and his assistant: the assistant works for a set ratio of the profit, which rises after each year of service until it is equal with that of the capitalist.”

5. Conclusion

By introducing Bálint’s notes, remarks issued in his accounts written to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and letters to his patron János Fogarasi, extracts from his diary and articles devoted to a larger public, I aimed to demonstrate how valuable data can hide in miscellaneous sources, such as the above mentioned types. In the present article I have not exhausted either all the possible topics from Bálint’s works or the possible approaches to selecting and analysing pieces of information and data. But I would like to draw the researchers’ attention to such archival materials as Bálint’s notes offer to us. From his lines it is obvious that he loved the Mongols he visited and shared his life with them. His main motivation was, however, also followed by the challenge of the epoch, to find the Hungarians’ roots, and the detailed studies of the Mongols were carried out with this goal in his mind as well.

Characterising the Mongols Bálint emphasised two qualities, namely that the Mongols were known worldwide as the descendants of Chingis Khan, and that they were open-hearted – all people whom he met among the Mongols he found kind and helpful to him. He as a Hungarian/Secler (Székely) felt at home among them.

And let me end my article with the hope that the so far almost completely hidden treasure of the sources I have discussed now, will be much quoted and referred to in articles devoted to the history, Buddhism and traditional life of the Mongols.

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On After-Death Ritual Texts Mentioned by Travellers (A. M. Pozdneev and Bálint Gábor of Szentkatolna)

ZSUZSA MAJER, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Summary: In the present article I analyse after-death ritual texts mentioned by A. M. Pozdneev and Bálint Gábor of Szentkatolna, both from the 19th century, describing two different geographical areas of the Mongols: where Bálint Gábor is concerned, Khalkha and Kalmyk, and where Pozdneev is concerned, Khalkha areas. The article aims at identifying the texts mentioned by the above travellers, comment on their role among the after-death rituals according to the special aims of the texts and related rituals, place them into the time frame of after-death rituals (before death, immediately after death, disposal of the body, after the funeral/disposal, remembering the deceased), and into the twofold aims of the death rituals of the Tibetan tradition (helping the deceased to find the best possible rebirth, protecting the bereaved from potential danger caused by the death event) The article also gives parallels from present-day practice. The other aim is to show an example of how descriptions of travellers can be used for research purposes following one's own interest.

Introduction

In addition to the data found in early historical sources, even early travellers to Mongolia, for example Plano Carpini, Willelmus Rubruk (both of them middle of the 13th century) and Marco Polo (end of 13th century) mentioned the death-related customs of the Mongols. However, these customs relate to the early traditions and mostly describe some details of the mourning traditions, the burials themselves, and several connected rites such as cleansing rituals by fire and water after the funerals, or taboos related to death and dying. These customs, mirroring mainly the soul beliefs of the Mongols, are well documented. Later the co-existence of Folk

religion and Buddhism was mirrored in the burial customs. Most travelers of the 18–20th centuries, in the descriptions or diaries I had a chance to read, only mention the most ‘strange’ customs of open-air disposal of the bodies and open-air disposal cemeteries near the monasteries, while even the few available photographs concentrate on this ‘strange’ custom.

However, describing or even mentioning the names of different kinds of Buddhist death rituals, which are in fact abundant in number, occurred only later on the part of researchers with a proper background knowledge for doing this. Among the early descriptions, Pallas described the burial customs of the Mongols (Pallas 1801, pp. 249–306), giving the translations of two texts, one of them being the *Khal*. *Altan saw* burial manual (which in itself includes names of other rituals recommended for the dead or their bereaved). Also among the pictures in his book we find three related to the burial customs showing cremation of a high-ranked monk (Pallas 1801, XVII., XVIII., XIX.), and one showing a funeral ritual at a *cac* [T. *tsha tsha*, originally meaning miniature conical figures molded of clay and used as offerings, also the name for Kalmuks burial monuments of the same shape] (Pallas 1801, XVI.).

In the present article I analyse texts mentioned much later by A. M. Pozdnev and Bálint Gábor of Szentkatolna, both from the 19th century. Bálint Gábor’s materials are from the middle of the century, and Pozdnev’s from the end of century, describing two different areas inhabited by the Mongols: in the case of Bálint Gábor, Khalkha and Kalmyk, and in the case of Pozdnev, Khalkha areas. There exist other records of after-death and funeral rites among the Mongols, or of different Mongolian ethnic groups, but for this present article these two travellers’ descriptions were chosen. The article aims to identify the texts mentioned by the above travellers, comment on their role in the after-death rituals which follow the special aims of the texts and related rituals, place them into the time frame of after-death rituals (before death, immediately after death, disposal of the body, after the funeral/disposal, remembering the deceased), and into the twofold aims of the death rituals of the Tibetan tradition. These aims are to help the deceased to find the best possible rebirth, and protect the bereaved from potential danger caused by the death event. I also give parallels from present-day practice based on my own recent fieldwork on the same topic. So this article is one of my

publications related to the topic of Tibetan after-death rituals as practised in Mongolia, for the study of which I received a three-year postdoctoral fellowship and research grant from NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office) under the title “*Tibetan After-Death Rites in Mongolian Buddhist Practice: Ceremonial System, Text Typology and Analysis*”.¹ The other aim of the current article is to show an example of how materials from descriptions of travellers can be used for one’s own research purposes, be it even such a specialized area in the study of Buddhist rituals as after-death rites.

After-death rituals of Mongolian Buddhism, their texts and aims

All required measures taken and ceremonies performed upon someone’s death – with the aim of ensuring the best possible rebirth for the deceased, including rites performed for guiding the ‘consciousness’ of the deceased after death, rites needed in preparing for funeral, funeral rites, rites after the burial and commemoration of the dead – is called Khal. *buyanii ajil* in Mongolian (‘merit making work’). Actually, all Mongolian lamas meet and fulfil this duty – necessary after-death rites can be performed by any lama or group of lamas – but there are still specialized lamas, mainly specialized astrologer lamas trained in the science of Khal. *Altan saw* ‘The Golden Vessel’ (T. *gser gyi sgrom bu*), the special burial manual, though only for settling all details of the measures that have to be taken, texts to be recited and all other details of the burial (mode, time, direction, etc.) based upon calculations (Khal. *Altan saw neekh*, T. *gser gyi sgrom bu* ‘bye ‘Opening the golden vessel’ or Khal. *Shinjee neekh* ‘Opening / Analyzing the signs’) from birth and death dates.

Buddhist lamas have a twofold role in relation to any death event. First, they are to help the deceased by helping his consciousness through the difficulties he faces after death through guidance in the intermediate

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state by reciting texts and performing rituals and by cleansing his negative karma through purification rituals, recitations and merit making – thus promoting better rebirth and better future life for him (Khal. *khoidiin buyan* ‘virtue of the future’, that is, ensuring a virtuous future life (Khal. *buyan* is the equivalent of the Tibetan term *dge ba* ‘virtue’). All of this is in fact, from the point of view of the Buddhist Bardo teachings, a work with the consciousness of the deceased, who is believed to be able to hear and follow the teachings by a kind of clairvoyance, whose karma it is still possible to clean and whose rebirth it is still possible to have an impact on by the above means. In addition, they are to protect the bereaved as well – this means again different types of rites and texts, though the two areas are closely interconnected.

The main aims of the recitations and rituals therefore are guiding the consciousness of the deceased in the intermediate state, helping him to attain a new rebirth soon and to suffer less in the intermediate state, helping him to find a better rebirth or even attain liberation from the cycle of existence (*samsara*), urging him to be reborn in a special buddha-field, helping his detachment from the living and from material objects and this life (which could result in him or her not being able to find the next rebirth), averting the occurrence of further death by preventing the evil spirits from causing further sickness and death to the relatives or loved ones of the deceased, preventing the ‘souls’ of the deceased from becoming ghosts (Khal. *chötgör*) or souls (Khal. *süns*) not being able to find a rebirth and coming back to haunt, performing rites to comfort the evil spirits, etc. Several of the texts aimed at restoring health and averting death are used also as after-death rituals (for example Khal. *Manal*, T. *sman bla* ceremony of the Medicine Buddha; and the Tantric Khal. *Lüijin*, T. *lus sbyin* ‘body-offering ritual’). Also, the different burial types (Khal. *orshuulga*) have their own texts: burial in soil, cremation, feeding to the vultures or simply ‘leaving or losing the body’ or abandonment of the body, disposal in water (very rare), etc. [also mummification which was practiced for high lamas]. Various short prayers are recited, too, for the deceased, several of them being special ones aimed at helping to find a better rebirth. There are also texts recited in the event of the death of a relative, however, not for the deceased but with the aim of defending his or her relatives and friends from risk caused by his or her death.

Here I provide only a short summary of these text types as an introduction to the descriptions of Pozdneev and Bálint and the texts mentioned by them. For more details and a list of many other related text titles see an article of mine on the different types of after-death texts as used in today's Mongolian Buddhist practice (Majer 2018a). The same work can be consulted for references to scholarly works and articles on the study of Tibetan funeral rituals, as in the current article I do not have space for detailing the research background of the topic.

Pozdneev, end of the 19th century

It is Pozdneev from whom we have the most detailed and valuable descriptions of monastic life in Mongolia at the end of the 19th century. He gave detailed accounts of different rituals, ceremonial events, as well as life in the monasteries. His descriptions are an invaluable source material even for today's researchers elaborating research on any aspect of Mongolian Buddhist practice. It is no wonder that in the case of after-death rituals, it is in his works that we find the more precise data and the most texts listed and explained.

In one of his books Pozdneev described Mongolian burial customs (Pozdneev 1887, pp. 453–474). In one of his other books, we find frequent mentions of burial grounds around the monasteries (Pozdneev 1971). In his third book he described several after-death rites in detail (Pozdneev 1978, chapter 5, pp. 591–617). Here the titles of 16 related texts or rituals are mentioned – unfortunately some still remain unidentified. In the current article I try to give an analysis of the relevant material from this book, and comment on the texts titles and their descriptions given by him.

The fifth chapter in his book starts with rituals for curing serious illnesses (ibid. pp. 591–594), such as the *jolij yaryaqu* rite² (Written Mongolian *jolij yaryaqu*, Khal. *zolic gargakh*, destroying the substitute for the sick person / 'exorcism ritual of the effigy of devil'), a rite for ransoming the sick person's soul from death. However, the biggest part of the

2) The spelling of the English edition of Pozdneev's book is kept in this article.

chapter is in connection with the death rites (ibid. pp. 594–601, subchapter [Death rites]³).

According to Pozdneev's description: "It is necessary according to Mongolian custom, to provide the soul of the dying person with useful advice for life beyond the grave." He adds: "No one dies without a lama being present... it is his sacred duty to deliver the soul from evil rebirths, and to guide it into the blissful fields of Sukhāvati paradise."⁴ (ibid. p. 594).

Here he mentions the first text, the *Jayuradu-yin sudur*,⁵ saying that "to the dying person they read the jayuradu-yin sudur". He gives parts of the translation of the text (ibid. pp. 595–601) and adds that the text is "Composed by Padmasambhava – contains information about just what the soul will meet and experience after leaving the body." Later he says: "I happened to be present several times in the yurts of dying persons, and listen to the jayuradu-yin sudur", and adds, giving details of the circumstances in which the text is recited, that "[The lama] puts his gusun-tuk⁶ on the bosom of the dying person and begins recitation." The text he mentions and partly translates here, ("then the lama begins approximately the following speech" (ibid. p. 595)), what he calls *jayuradu-yin sudur*, translated into Khalkha would be Khal. *Zuurdiin sudar / yerööl* 'The sūtra of the Intermediate State / Bardo sūtra', is the well known short prayer known today in Mongolia as *Bardiin yerööl / Bardo molom*, T. *bar-do smon-lam* 'Prayer of the intermediate state). This is one of the most frequently chanted of such prayers even today. The text is recommended "for the deceased, to attain a new rebirth soon and to suffer less in the intermediate state". There is another text under a somewhat similar title, *Bard soldiw / Bardo soldiw* (T. *bar do'i gsol 'debs* / full title: T. *bar do'i 'phrang*

3) In the present article I give the subchapter titles of the English edition (not given by Pozdneev in his original work) in square brackets.

4) Khal. *Diwaaĵin*, T. *bde ba can*, the Blissful Realm (the pure land of Amitābha Buddha).

5) For the titles given by Pozdneev, the spelling of the English edition is kept. I give the Khalkha version and the Tibetan form, if known in square brackets in the text or in the quotations from his book.

6) Khal. *güsüntüg*, T. *sku gsung thugs* 'body, speech and mind', sacred objects symbolizing the enlightened body, speech, and mind, usually being a Buddha statue, a sūtra and a stūpa.

sgrol gyi gsol 'debs 'jigs sgrol gyi dpa' po 'Prayer of the intermediate state, 'Prayer saving from the perilous journey of the intermediate state, hero saving from fears') written by Lobzang Chokyi Gyeltsen (Luwsan Choji Jaltzen in Mongolian pronunciation, T. Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan), the 4th (1st to be given the title) Panchen Lama. The text's general recommendations are the same as for the above-mentioned other Bardo prayer "for the deceased ones, to attain a new rebirth soon and to suffer less in the intermediate state". In today's Mongolia, it is much more widely used.

After mentioning the *ḥayuradu-yin sudur*, in his description Pozdneev goes on to (1978, p. 601) say that, besides this, the lama reads the following Tibetan sūtras. About the aim of their recitation, he adds: "these three noms (Khal. *nom* 'book, scripture') consist entirely prayers of penitence, which establish a calmness of spirit". So here we have three more titles needing clarification.

The first of the three is *Maidari-yin dam-bca*,⁷ about which he says (ibid. p. 601): "the story about Maitreya's solemn oath is quoted, viz, not to allow the souls of animate beings to fall into the three ill-starred rebirths." This text, *Maidari-yin dam-bca*, Khal. *Jambiin / Maidariin damjaa*, T. *byams-pa'i dam-bca*, S. *Maitreyapratijñā* is the text on the 'Dedication / oath of Maitreya'. Though we have parallels from today's practice to almost all other texts mentioned by him, no data was acquired on the use of this text in present-day Mongolia during my two pieces of fieldwork on Mongolian Buddhist after-death rites made in 2016 and 2017, which makes its mention by him interesting.

The second of the three texts is *Mingtingiin toytayal*. Pozdneev only lists this title (1978, p. 601), without giving any detail about it or explaining its exact use, and the identification is missing from the English translation, too. *Mingtingiin toytayal*, Khal. *Mintügiin togtool* or *Mintüngiin sün*, T. *mi-'khrugs-pa'i / mi bskyod-pa'i gzungs*, is not a ceremonial text, but simply the 'dhāraṇī of Akśobhya, the Unshakable Buddha', who is one of the five wisdom tathagatās, emanations or representations of the five qualities of the Buddha (T. *sangs rgyas rigs lnga* 'the five buddha families', the term five dhyani buddhas is also used for them in western literature

7) The Tibetan term is correctly *dam bca*, but here the transliteration of the English edition was kept, which gives a Mongolicized version.

only). From today's practice, I only heard about using it after somebody's death, as explained to me by the lamas of the newly established two temples of the Jonangpa sect in Ulaanbaatar (Jonan Dagdan mindollin opened in 2014 and Jonan Dagdanchoipillin opened in 2015), and their Tibetan master residing in the summers in Mongolia.

The third of these three texts, *Gundelegin zarak*, is also only listed by Pozdneev, without details (1978, p. 601). Krueger makes the following guess for identifying this: "T. *kun bde legs* + mong. *jaryu*?" Unfortunately, I can not identify it. I can confirm only the first part, T. *kun bde-legs* 'auspiciousness/happiness to all / everywhere', but have no guess for the term *zarak*.

In the next chapter (Burial rites and decrees concerning this) Pozdneev (1978, pp. 601–615) gives some details of the first duties after someone's death: "when a Mongol dies, everyone leaves the yurt... some of the relatives go to the dzurukhaichi⁸ in the monastery and advise him on the death of the sick person ask him to determine who can prepare the deceased for burial, which khurals⁹ must be held for him, on what day he can be buried, at what hour, and on which side he must be carried out, and finally, how his burial must be performed." (ibid. p. 602). They solve these questions concerning the burial from the evidence of different astrological works, among others, the 29th chapter of the *Vaidurya dkar-po*. These works prescribe the person who must clean the deceased, ..." (ibid. p. 602.). What is mentioned here, is not a ceremonial or ritual text, but the astrological treatise based on the Tibetan system of elemental divination called 'White Vaidūrya', 'White Beryl' by regent Sangye Gyatsho (T. sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653–1705) and the death horoscopes in it. This is similarly used today by astrologer lamas in Mongolia for calculating, based on birth and death dates, the procedures to be taken after someone's death.

Pozdneev then goes on by describing the way in which the body of the dead person is arranged: "The person who cleans the deceased is called buyanči,¹⁰ 'a person who performs a virtuous deed'" (ibid. p. 603). [He]

8) Khal. *zurkhaich* 'astrologer'.

9) Khal. *khural* 'ceremony, ritual'.

10) Khal. *buyanch*.

“washes the body of the deceased, wraps it up in ta-pu, lays it on its right side, puts the right hand of the deceased under his right cheek, and with his fourth finger stops up his right nostril, straightens his right leg, and bends his left one at the knee; the left hand however he stretches out as much as possible, and puts it on the pelvis of the deceased.” Pozdneev adds that this posture is used for all corpses which are not embalmed and are not buried in a sitting posture and says that Shakyamuni died in this position, called in Mongolian *arsalan-u kebtelge* ‘lying like a lion position’. In several cases, actions to correct evil signs are also needed, which are also carried out by the buyanči. “Bad signs are often disclosed at the death of a person, and to suppress them a lama is invited by the buyanči as an advisor and instructor” (ibid. p. 603). As for these bad signs, Pozdneev lists the followings: if someone dies with his mouth open, with his eyes open, squeezes his hands together or dies in the gesture of beckoning someone. These arrangements described by him above are not practiced any more in Mongolia due to the changed funeral methods, which means today being placed in coffins or cremated, for which a different arrangement of the body is needed. The corrections of bad signs mentioned by him, however, are still practiced today.

As Pozdneev describes, only after this can the readings for the deceased be performed: “only when all his [the buyanči’s] duties to the deceased are finished can the reading of noms for the deceased be performed” (ibid. p. 604). “These are not carried out in the yurt where the deceased is, but in a neighbouring one, uninterruptedly by day or night, the lamas are almost always divided into shifts.” He then continues his description mentioning other three text titles: “There are innumerable readings for the deceased, but whenever I happened to see funeral rites I found that the lamas only read the yeröols [Khal. *yerööl*, T. *smon lam* ‘prayer, aspirational prayer’] known as Öljei dabqur and Naiman gegen, and twice I encountered the Sonosuyad yekede tonilyayci neretü yeke kölgen sudur” (ibid. p. 604). The term he uses here, Khal. *yerööl*, T. *smon lam*, means prayer, aspirational prayer, and many repetitions of various short dedication and aspiration prayers are recommended as after-death recitations to enhance the chances of a better rebirth. Today, the most used among them in Mongolia are the six prayers known collectively as Khal. *Zurgaan yerööl* (T. *smon lam drug*) ‘The six prayers’, namely Khal. *Püljin* or *Diwaajingiin yerööl* /

Diwaajin molom (T. *phul byung* (beginning of the text), T. *bde ba can gyi smon lam*, full title: T. *bde ba can du skye ba'i smon lam*) 'Accomplished / Excelled' / 'Prayer for being reborn in Sukhāvati, the Blissful Realm (the pure land of Amitābha Buddha)'; Khal. *Dagii janchiw* or *Bod'satwagiin yerööl* (T. *bdag gis byang chub* ('Shall I attain enlightenment...,' beginning of the text), *spyod 'jug smon lam*) 'the Prayer of entering to the bodhisattva's way', a prayer on Bodhicaryāvatāra by Śāntideva; Khal. *Sanjid molom* or *Yerööliin khan* (T. 'phags pa) *bzang spyod smon lam (gyi rgyal po)*, S. Bhadracharyāpranidhā / Bhadracharyā-pranidhānarāja sūtra) 'The (noble) (king of prayers), prayer of good actions / excellent deeds', known alternatively by two names in Mongolian as 'Prayer of good actions' (*Sanjid molom* in distorted Tibetan) or 'King of prayers' (*Yerööliin khan* as translated to Mongolian); Khal. *Sanje gūnla / Sanjaa gūnla* (T. *sangs rgyas kun la* ('To all Buddhas ...,' beginning of the text (in fact, its second line)) or Khal. *Maidariin yerööl / Jambiin yerööl* (T. *byams pa'i smon lam* (as given in the title) 'Prayer to Maitreya', T. 'phags pa byams pa'i smon lam *gyi rgyal po* 'The noble king of prayers to Maitreya'). Known in Mongolian by the distorted Tibetan form of the beginning of the text as *Sanje gūnla* or by its distorted Tibetan title as *Jambiin yerööl*, as well as in the Mongolian translation of this later form as *Maidariin yerööl*; Khal. *Gewaan di / Gawaan di* or *Sandüin molom* (T. *dge ba 'di* ('this virtue', beginning of the text), T. *gsang 'dus smon lam*), 'Guhyasamāja prayer' composed by Tsongkhapa; and Khal. *Chogjü jalwa / jalba* (named after the beginning of the text, T. *phyogs bcu(i) rgyal ba*, the full title is: T. *thog mtha' bar gyi smon lam*) 'The victorious one of the ten directions' or 'Prayer from beginning to end', composed by Tsongkhapa.

In his description Pozdneev does not mention any of these prayers, but mentions three other titles. The first of these is named by Pozdneev as *Öljei dabqur*, literally meaning 'Double/twofold auspiciousness' (the Tibetan term for Written Mongolian *öljei*, Khal. *ölzii* is T. *bkra-shis* 'auspiciousness, good fortune, blessing). This text must be the same as the widely used Khal. *Dashzewge / Dashzeweg*, T. *bkra shis brtsegs pa* (long title: 'phags pa bkra shis brtsegs pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo) 'Heap of auspiciousness' / 'The mahāyāna sūtra entitled the noble heap of auspiciousness', which is frequently chanted today, as the short descriptions displayed in temples to inform devotees say, "For all types of remedies:

moving to a new house or a new place, starting new work etc.”¹¹ and also after someone’s death, usually for the benefit of the bereaved. It is part of the Khal. *Sundui*, T. *gzungs bsdus* ‘Collection of recitations’.

The second is the text of *Naiman gegen*. This is the well-known *Naiman gegeen* or *Nanjid*, T. *snang brgyad* / long title: *’phags-pa gnas-sa snang brgyad zhes bya-ba’i theg-pa chen-po’i mdo (bsdus-pa)* ‘Eight brightnesses / illuminations’, ‘(the shortened version of) the mahāyāna sūtra entitled the eight brightnesses of the noble sacred place’, a widely used remedy prayer (Khal. *zasliin nom*), recited for example ‘in the event of moving to a new place, starting a new work or setting up a new yurt.’ As seen also from this description, in fact, this text is not in connection with death rites, but even today it is recited also for the bereaved after a death in the family, being among the various, but not specialized texts used for the purpose of protecting the living ones after death or rather ensuring their better future life.

The third *yerööl* text mentioned here by Pozdneev is the so-called *Sonosuyad yekede tonilyayci neretü yeke kölgen sudur* ‘The mahāyāna sūtra entitled The great liberation through hearing’. In my interpretation, this title could stand for the text known as the ‘Tibetan Book of the Dead’, the most well-known text for the dead in the West, which is, on the other hand, not a mahāyāna sūtra (the title given by Pozdneev includes zhis, as ‘*yeke kölgen sudur*’). This text is not a prayer (and thus not really a *yerööl* as Pozdneev says, though it has prayers in its text as well) in fact, but a longer text in which directions are given to the dying person or to the consciousness of the dead, traditionally read at the bed of a dying person or beside the dead body.¹² The text is called today in Mongolian *Toidol* / *Bardo toidol (songgood)* / *Songgood toidol* or *Songgood tonilgogch*, T. (*bar-do*) *thos-grol* ‘Text which liberates through hearing (in the

11) With the aim of giving some data on these texts from today’s ceremonial practice, I give a short description of what a certain text is recommended for, as included on the list of the different temples displayed for the information of devotees after each title in this article, where available. This is done with the aim of giving some insight into how the texts are used today in Mongolian temples.

12) Besides the ‘Tibetan Book of the Dead’ as known in the West, there were many texts aimed at leading the consciousness through the intermediate state.

intermediate state)' / 'Liberation through hearing (in the intermediate state)' / 'Text which liberates through hearing (in the intermediate state)'. The recitation of this text, according to the short descriptions used today "saves from sudden and premature death and from the dangers in the intermediate state – it is enough only to hear it and one will find the virtuous way. Against stealing and lies. The text should be recited within 49 days after the death, as it is for the intermediate state (Khal. *zawsariin töröl*)". As seen also from this short explanation given for the believers, it is still in use today, though all my informants said it is not recited any more at its full length at the bed of a dying person, nor beside the dead body.

Then Pozdneev (1978, p. 604) mentions the next ritual done: "Besides the lamas that read at the funeral, two more lamas are indispensable. They perform a khural according to the Serdebe chakjai outside the yurt, and from time to time go around the yurt with a censer (boipur)¹³." The ritual can not be identified by the title Pozdneev gives: we find the following guess in the English translation by Krueger: "T. *gzer bde ba'i ph'yag-rgya?*" of which only T. *phyag-rgya* 'seal, mudra, hand gesture' sounds like a possibly correct Tibetan transliteration. Unfortunately I don't have a clue for the other part of the term, which remains unidentified. Anyway, from Pozdneev's description it is clear that this must be a rite for the purification of the yurt or home of the deceased, which is done even today using different *san* (T. *bsangs*) or smoke-offering texts, usually right after the burial, as soon as the relatives get home, and involves the circling of the yurt by a censer. Pozdneev (1978, pp. 604–605) writes the same about the purpose of this rite: "The purpose of all these readings and rites is to drive evil spirits away from both the corpse and his relatives in the khoton ['settlement']. Such readings are usually performed right up to when the deceased is removed from his home, and his burial".

Pozdneev then gives a short passage from the astrological work on instructions on the hour the deceased must be carried out, depending on his death hour (ibid. pp. 605–606).

In the next chapter he gives descriptions of burials (Ways of burial, burial places, burial of princes and rich Mongols) saying that "Lamas do not point out the day of burial, but the hour when the deceased must be

13) Khal. *boipur*.

carried out of the house, on which side he must be carried, and how he must be buried.” (Pozdneev 1978, pp. 604–612). On the ways of burying a dead person he gives an account of the burial according to the elements (earth, water, fire, air and wood) and recounts also that the direction in which the deceased must be carried out of his house, the direction his head must be facing at the burial place, and how the burial is to be performed are all determined by the instructions in the astrological books. Then follows a more detailed description of different burial types according to the elements, and an account of which type is the best, middling and worst way of burial for the deceased (ibid. pp. 606–609). He then also describes how “the modern Mongols have considerably simplified funeral rites” (ibid. p. 610), first mentioning burials according to the fire element: “very few are burned, corpses of the poor are never burned”, then describing burial into earth: “graves are not dug at all deep: only enough to place the corpse in and to cover it with a layer of dirt from above”, then saying: “in all other burial modes they simply carry the deceased into the steppe and put them in an open area”, then mentioning how burials according to the water element are executed: “they pour out water at the burial place of those who must be buried in water” and giving details of when somebody is buried according to the wood element: “those who are to be delivered unto wood are also laid in the steppe, simply having been placed on a plank beforehand”, and accounting this about funerals according to the air element: “those to be buried in the air are simply carried out and laid in the steppe”. These simplified ways of burials according to the elements can be seen today, in even more modernized versions, where for example cremation became widespread, but even in this case urns for example can be made of different materials according to the elements, or the urn can be buried by a tree (wood element), or the body be wrapped in silken cloth coloured according to the element needed.

Afterwards Pozdneev (1978, pp. 610–612) describes the custom of putting up 4 or 5 poles with dartsoks¹⁴ with manis¹⁵ sketched on them on the 4 sides of the grave or the corpse, and additional details of the burials of ‘Better-off Mongols’: “The burial of princes and rich Mongols [...] is

14) Khal. *dartsag*, T. *dar lcog* ‘flagstaff, prayer flag’.

15) Khal. *maan*, T. *ma ni* ‘mantra’.

marked by greater luxury.” As he describes, for the funeral many lamas gather for days, and the bodies of these rich Mongols “are not left on the open steppe, but small pyramids of a special kind are always built from raw brick called *bunkhans*.”¹⁶ “The bodies of princes are for the most part buried in a sitting posture, and their arms and legs are put together in prayer posture.” “Still more often the bodies of princes are given to be burned”.

Afterwards, Pozdneev (1978, pp. 612–613) speaks about other rites for purification: “When the funeral rites for the corpse of a Mongol have been concluded, the lamas always return to his yurt and there perform a *khural* of purification, the purpose of which is to guard the living from misfortunes which may have been cast about by the spirit of the deceased. The prayer read at this ceremony is performed in the presence of all who lived in the same *khoton* as the deceased.” Here Pozdneev (*ibid.* pp. 613–614) gives the translation of a text for purification, but without its title being given, saying that “this prayer which purifies and preserves one against the deceased is always read after every burial.” However, the text itself says (*ibid.* p. 613) that it is against misfortunes, obstacles, demons, illnesses, and the misfortunes brought by *ada*’s,¹⁷ *albin*’s¹⁸ and *čidkür*’s,¹⁹ so it is meant rather for protection against the benevolent spirits than against the deceased himself. He does not give the title for this ritual he mentions, but still we can conclude it is one of the many kinds of ritual aimed at the protection of the bereaved, the relatives (Khal. *zasliin zan üil* ‘protective rituals’, *zasliin nom* ‘protective texts’). The aim of these is to protect the relatives threatened after a death in the family from dangers (Khal. *khlorol* ‘danger, harm, damage’), and to clear away the danger of death (Khal. *ükheeriin buzar* ‘contamination / dirt of death’), which is believed to be greater after a death in the family. These dangers are believed to be twofold and this explains Pozdneev’s description. On one hand, they could be caused by the benevolent spirits (Khal. *bug, chötgör*) that caused the death of the deceased. They may still be nearby, thus endangering the relatives as well. In this case they should be removed, averted or stopped

16) Khal. *bunkhan*.

17) Khal. *ad* ‘benevolent spirit’.

18) Khal. *albin* ‘benevolent spirit, goblin’.

19) Khal. *chötgör* ‘benevolent spirit, demon’.

in order not to harm the living ones. The other reason is that the soul, or using the Buddhist term, the consciousness of the deceased itself, in the event that it has not found its way to its new rebirth, may turn into a benevolent being (Khal. *bug, chötgör*) and thus may still be around the relatives, putting them into danger (Khal. *khorkh* ‘harm’). In this case measures have to be taken so that it does not harm relatives – this is helped by the different rituals and readings aimed at guiding his consciousness away. In the meantime, there are also those rites which aim at protecting the bereaved from such dangers. Several of such *zasal* rituals involve the offering of a *balin* (T. *gtor ma*) ritual cake, or other offerings. These protective rituals are closely connected to the astrological calculations, based upon which the lamas calculate what problems are present in the given case, what rituals are needed to solve them, or which relative is in potential danger and exactly which ceremony should be performed to avoid it. Though here Pozdneev does not give any ceremonial name or title, in what follows he mentions several of these kinds of protective rituals.

Then Pozdneev (1978, p. 614.) continues by saying that “there are cases when the deceased dies with clear unlucky signs for the living” and quotes parts from the astrological work on how it is determined who is threatened by that misfortune, which is needed so as to take due measures against the threat in time.

In the next subchapter (Rites after the burial and commemoration of the dead) he first describes in detail two rites which are performed for the protection of the bereaved (Pozdneev 1978, pp. 615–617).

About the first one, which he says is done “in order to ward off misfortunes from living persons who are threatened by danger from a dead person on account of having the same birth year as the deceased” he says: “a special ceremony is performed, usually on the second or third day after the funeral. [...] the lamas make two small figures of dough, both depicting persons, and color one of them white, the other black. Then they spread out two sheepskins in the middle of the yurt, one of them white and the other black, and on the white sheepskin they put the white person, and on the black, the black one. Again they add to each of these figures small stones, seven white and seven black” (ibid. p. 615). Then he mentions the text read during this ritual, calling it *tačiyal-un qariyulya* (ibid. p. 616), and adds that “it ends by pronouncing the *jirüken-ü tarni* of the seven

burkhans, when uttering each *dhāraṇī*²⁰ they strike the white person with a small white stone, and the black person with a black one, and after that everything is thrown out onto the steppe.” The title of this ritual, if translated, would be Khal. *Tachaaliin khariulga* in Khalkha, meaning ‘Stopping or preventing grasping’, literally ‘To turn back/cut off grasping’. We do not find it under the same title today, but the second part of the term, *khariulga* equals the Tibetan term, T. *bzlog* ‘to reverse, ward off, cast back, turn away, drive out, exorcize’, or T. *bzlog bsgyur*, exorcism, rite of exorcism, and we can meet many kinds of texts of this type today. There are also a wide variety of texts for separating the living ones from the dead ones, as the evil spirits that caused a death are believed to be still dangerous for the bereaved: they may take more lives if they are not prevented from doing this. Therefore one form of prevention is to separate the living ones (relatives of the dead) from the dead ones – in this way the evil spirits would not find new subjects among the ones left here. For example, special protection is needed for those relatives born in the same year of the 12-year cycle as the deceased or with the same astrological constellations (Khal. *suudal*) as they are believed to be at extreme risk due to their ‘similarity’ to the dead person. In today’s practice²¹ a similar ritual, with the same content and accessories used as described by Pozdneev, is called *Gar salgakh / Gar salgakh zasal*, T. (*gson gshin*) *lag ‘brel* ‘(Remedy) separating hands (of the living and the dead)’. Its recitation is recommended „if one ‘sits on the same seat’ as the deceased (Khal. *nas baragchtai khamt neg suudald suukhad*), i.e. if one was born in the same year of the 12-year cycle as the deceased. The requester must come with a drawing of black and white hands”. Alice Sárközi analyses a Tibetan-Mongolian manuscript of this text in her two articles (Sárközi 1987, 1993), and I published a translation of its two versions from today’s practice, too (Majer 2018b). As for the *dhāraṇīs* Pozdneev mentions as the *jirūken.ū tarni* of the seven burkhans, I propose that probably these are the *dhāraṇīs* of the seven

20) Khal. *tarni*, S. *dhāraṇī*.

21) On the topic of the text types for the protection of the bereaved, with a more precise list of these text types and their titles an article of mine was published in Hungarian in the volume published for the 75th birthday of Alice Sárközi (Majer 2018b).

buddhas who already appeared in our kalpa preceding Gautama buddha, called ‘seven heroic buddhas’ (T. *sangs rgyas dpa’ bo bdun*) or ‘seven universal buddhas’ (T. *sang rgyas rab bdun*). There is no data on its use from today’s practice, so this remains an assumption only.

In Pozdneev’s work, after this ritual another one is mentioned for the protection of a relative considered to be in danger (1978, p. 616): “After returning from the steppe to the yurt, they again make a three-sided baling²² as a propitiating offering to the dokshits,²³ and prepare a lamp and a dish with some grain. In a short prayer the lud [T. *glud*] read on that occasion, the patronage of the dokshits is requested for the person who has the misfortune to have his birth year correspond to that of the deceased”. This ritual called Khal. *Lüd*, T. *glud* ‘Ransom ritual’ / ‘the ritual of substitute effigy for a person’ / ‘Offering an effigy as a ransom to malevolent spirits’, whereas the substitute effigy is destroyed, is still used in today’s practice to avert the evil spirits and prevent them from causing further misfortunes to relatives. In most cases however the ritual is performed for sick persons, by the substitution of the effigy for the sick person and ransoming his soul from death. The recitation of the text is recommended “for the deceased and their family and relatives. Also to ask protection from the wrathful deities. Offering an effigy as a ransom to malevolent spirits”. We can meet the same ritual also as Khal. (*Amiin*) *zolic* (*gargakh / gargal*), ‘(Performing) the exorcism ritual of the effigy of devil or enemy’. Its recitation is recommended “as protection against illnesses and sufferings. It is also performed to ensure safety in the intermediate state (between death and rebirth) and ensure quick rebirth”. In this case, the case described by Pozdneev, when the *Lüd* is performed after someone’s death, it can be part of the beforementioned *Gar salgakh* ritual (whereas two dough figures are used). These are among the most widespread rituals averting the evil spirits and preventing them from causing further misfortunes, sickness or death to the relatives or loved ones of the deceased.

Pozdneev (1978, p. 616) finishes the description of the *Lüd* ritual saying that: “then 3 yeröols are uttered, which express good wishes for that

22) Khal. *balin*, T. *gtor ma* ‘dough offering, sacrificial cake’.

23) Khal. *dogshid* ‘wrathful deities’.

person. When uttering each of these *yerööls* the unlucky person is strewn round about with the grain mentioned. Here the ceremony ends". Here Pozdneev mentions three *yörööl* texts, 'prayers/blessings', but unfortunately does not list the titles of these here. These are the beforementioned various Khal. *yerööl*, T. *smon lam* 'prayer, aspirational prayer' texts.

After describing the rites for the protection of the living ones, the bereaved relatives, Pozdneev (1978, pp. 616–617) goes on to describe other rites for the deceased: "Having protected the persons living from the influence of the deceased on their lives, the lamas continue fulfilling their duties to the latter." "These duties consist in performing *tülesi*, or a commemoration for the dead, which for princes and rich Mongols continues uninterruptedly for 49 days and nights, but for the poor is restricted to a *khural* performed for one day only. The third or seventh day is mostly chosen for this purpose" (ibid. p. 616). The term he uses here, *tülesi*, Khal. *tülsh*, means literally 'fuel', but the ritual named *tülesi-yin öglüge*, T. *sbyin-sreg*, is a kind of 'fire-offering'. Pozdneev adds the name of the text that is recited on these occasions: "The content of the *khural* is exactly the same. It consists of reading the Tibetan nom *dod-yanga* [T. 'dod-yon lnga?]" (ibid. p. 617). Neither Pozdneev, nor the English editor Krueger commented on this. Apart from giving the Tibetan equivalent of the term, T. 'dod yon lnga, which means 'five sense pleasures, five objects of desire', and also relates to a group of offerings 'pleasing the five senses, I have no exact idea either on what text he mentions. My suggestion is that it must be in connection with the different offerings to the deceased (when for example food, sweets, milk, incense, etc. are placed with the body at funerals or cremations), often in a symbolic form, as for example described by Kelényi (Kelényi 2011). However, the text itself remains one of the texts mentioned by Pozdneev remaining unidentified. As for the ritual called *tülesi-yin öglüge*, T. *sbyin-sreg* 'fire-offering' by him, I can conclude that this term today, pronounced as *Jinsreg*, relates to a certain kind of Tantric fire-offering ritual performed on various occasions, such as, for example, after a meditative session period to clear away possible mistakes, thus it is not exclusively in connection with after-death rituals. What is meant under the term by Pozdneev is called today (and also in Tibetan) the *Sür / Tsasür / Sür tawiulakh* (T. *gsur / tsha gsur*), 'Burnt offering' / long title: 'the method of performing burnt offering'. It is a remedy including the

burning of tsampa (barley flour) and sacred substances with a meditation on Avalokiteśvara to comfort the evil spirits by its good smell, also performed for the deceased and those in the intermediate state, who are believed to feed upon smell. If performed regularly it clears away all obstacles. This text is mostly read during the nights. The text should be recited within 49 days after the death, as mentioned also by Pozdneev. (A name variation is *Janraisegiin süur*, T. *spyān ras gzigs (gyi) gsur* ‘Burnt offering performed to Avalokiteśvara’).

Another text is mentioned here, during the description of the same ritual: “To this, according to the rule bequeathed by the Dalai lama Ngagdbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho, a reading of the Manla-yin čoya is added. This khural cannot be performed by less than four lamas, and furnishes a very large profit to the monasteries. [...] to commemorate the soul of the deceased, one-tenth of the entire property of the deceased must be given, but usually even more is taken” (Pozdneev 1978, p. 617). The ritual he mentions, *manla-yin čoya*, Khal. *Manaliin choga*, T. *sman-bla'i cho-ga*, is the ‘ritual of the Medicine Buddha’. Several of the texts aimed at restoring health and averting death are also used as after-death readings, and among them the Medicine Buddha ritual is performed similarly today in this situation, for the health of the remaining family members.

Bálint Gábor of Szentkatolna, end of the 19th century

Hungarian researchers, starting as early as the 19th century with the linguist Bálint Gábor of Szentkatolna, have conducted research with lamas and collected data on Mongolian Buddhist rituals, among them after-death rites. The Hungarian linguist Bálint Gábor of Szentkatolna (1844–1913) recorded folklore and ethnographic texts in Kalmyk and Khalkha areas (1871–1873). In these, he recorded contemporary spoken language, as well as ethnographic and folklore-data in the spoken languages Kalmyk and Khalkha. The particular richness of Bálint’s material lies in the fact that he gave records of many aspects of the everyday life of that time. As part of this, he also collected data on after-death rites. His works are published in several publications by Ágnes Birtalan (Birtalan 2016, 2015, 2014, 2012, 2011, Bálint 2009), together with her own interpretations of the texts. She

has already published the Kalmyk material (Birtalan 2011), but Bálint's manuscript of Khalkha language, folklore and ethnography is still unpublished, or at least only parts of it have been published (Birtalan 2016).

In this article I include and comment on the relevant part of the already published Kalmyk material of Bálint Gábor. The unpublished Khalkha material was not available to me, only a brief extract from his descriptions (Birtalan 2015, handout), therefore it is not analysed here, but may form the basis of another article.

Bálint spent about 8 and a half months among the Kalmyks (September 1871–12th May 1872). The material he collected there is available in an edition by Ágnes Birtalan (Birtalan 2011). In this volume, the relevant part of his Kalmyk material consists of the translation by Ágnes Birtalan of the material collected on after-death rituals by Bálint Gábor (Birtalan 2011, *The Death among the Kalmyks, Bálint: Xal'imigīn üküül, Kalm. Xal'mgīn üükl*, pp. 144–146), the facsimile of his original manuscript (Birtalan 2011, pp. 181–184); and the explanations to these by Ágnes Birtalan (Birtalan 2011, *Rites du passages 2. The Last Transformation*, pp. 145–148).

In this otherwise highly valuable material only 4 texts are mentioned in a short description of the different tasks carried out after someone's death, but he provides in this a full description of the measures taken after death and the method of burial.

His description starts with the measures taken in the event of a fatal illness (ibid. p. 144). Here he says that family members send for a physician and monks of *gelng-rank*²⁴ to pray (Bálint: *mörgöl unḡšituya*, Kalm. *mörḡl unḡštxā*²⁵) *in addition to the healing treatment and that the physician and the monk[s] diagnose the patient's illness from his urine and pulse, before prescribing a remedy. The first text is mentioned here. Bálint writes that "Then in addition to praying, the The Book of the Dead [as identified in footnote 1048 by Birtalan: Bálint Zūradīn sudur gedek dektek, Kalm. Zūrdīn sudr or Zūrdīn nom], the Mongolian translation of the Tibetan 'Book of intermediate state' (T. bar-do thos-grol)] will be read above the sick person's head. The monks used to say that if the The Book of the Dead is read above the head of an ill person, the sickness (Bálint, Kalm.*

24) Khal. *gelen*, T. *dge slong* fully 'ordained monk'.

25) All Kalmyk terms here are taken from Birtalan's book (Birtalan 2011).

gem) will improve, that is why our Kalmyks are keen on it, if the [monks] read The Book of the Dead when they are sick.” The text he mentions here, Khal. *Zuurdiin sudar* ‘The sūtra of the Intermediate State / Bardo sūtra’, was of course mentioned by Pozdneev, too, so its role in today’s practice is already described there. Bálint uses the name *Zūradīn sudur gedek dekter*, which literally means ‘the sūtra of the Bardo / Intermediate state’, and here it relates not only to a prayer, but the whole text that became known at the west as the Tibetan Book of the Dead. Here in Bálint’s description we see similarly how it is used as a preparation for death, as the directions on how to proceed well in the intermediate state given in it are read to the dying person.

Then his description continues with the measures taken in the event that someone dies (ibid. pp. 144–145), when they call many monks. “Then the astrologer monk (Bálint: *zurxāči geleng*, Kalm. *zurxāč gelng*) looks at that person’s heart and touches the corpse (footnote 1051: Bálint: *yasaīn’i köndädek*, Kalm. *yasīg n’ könddg*), too. [The monk] also designates the burial place (Bálint: *orošiūlxu yazar*, Kalm. *oršālynā yazr*), and furthermore instructs what kind of cloth [the corpse] must be dressed in. [Then tells] whether [the corpse] must be washed or not (Bálint: *uyaxu ese uyaxun’i*, Kalm. *uyāx es uyāx n*).” As soon as the first preparations are made, the next text is mentioned in his description: “Then he reads the blessing of intermediate state (footnote 1053: Bálint: *zūradīn yöräl ungšidok*, Kalm. *zürdīn yörāl*).” This text was also mentioned by Pozdneev and described there. No wonder both authors mentioned it, as it is still among the most used texts today, called as Khal. *Bardiin yerööl / Bardo molom*, T. *bar-do smon-lam* ‘Prayer of the intermediate state’.

Then Bálint describes how a horse is prepared to carry the body (ibid. p. 145).

Afterwards two other texts are mentioned (ibid. p. 145): “Thereafter the *jangya* and the *danjik* books are read above the corpse (footnote 1059: Bálint: *yasa dēren’i*, Kalm. *yasn dēr n*) of that person.” On *jangya* Birtalan has the following explanation in footnote 1057: “Bálint: *jangya*; Pallas provided a detailed description of the ceremony transcribed by him as Dshanga “Seelmesse” (Pallas II. p. 293), cf. Kalm.Ö. *jangya* “Glocke (Musikinstrument)” (R. 108). *jangya* refers probably to the texts recited during the above ceremony.” On the *danjik* books Birtalan explains in

footnote 1058: “Bálint: *danjik gedek nom*, [...] might be in connection with the danšig-ceremony (T. brtan-bžugs, Mong. dangsuy, translated as batu orusil into Mongolian) the maṇḍala-offering to the high ranked Lamas.” My own interpretation of this is different, I propose that maybe this is the text entitled *Dünshig*, T. *ltung-bshags* ‘Confession of downfalls’, the confession before the Thirty-five Buddhas of Purification, the text of prostrating chanted to clear away sins by confessing them. My opinion is based on the fact that practicing rites such as purification (especially the Khal. *Dünshig* ‘Confession of downfalls’) is among advice given to Buddhist believers after the death of a relative to help their deceased. However, there is no proof of this linguistically.

Following this, concerning the protection of the relatives Bálint has a short note only (ibid. p. 145): “After finishing these books, if that person’s brothers and [other] relatives are [born] of the same year (?), they ask about their year from that man [i. e. that monk].” This short note relates to the investigations into whether any relative is in potential danger after the death in the family, through calculations based upon astrological works. From the birth and death dates of the deceased, and from the birth dates of relatives, they advise on what protective rituals should be performed for whom, what texts should be recited or what other measures should be taken in order to avoid further problems. In Pozdneev’s more detailed description we have seen several such protective rituals mentioned (Pozdneev 1978, pp. 615–617), and have discussed them and their usage in today’s practice above.

Then Bálint describes forms of burial (Birtalan 2011, p. 145) but mentioning only burial in the ground. In short, if the deceased is to be buried in a nice cloth, the corpse is washed and a cloth worn by him when he was healthy is put on him. The corpse is put into a coffin (Bálint: *xáircäk*, Kalm. *xārcg*) or a chest (Bálint: *abder*, Kalm. *awdr*), taken and buried. Four prayer flags are raised at the four cardinal points around the grave (Bálint: *mān’i*, Kalm. *mān’* prayer [woods]), and on them white kerchiefs with Buddhist prayers written on them are hung.

Bálint also mentions (ibid. p. 145) that “For the merit (footnote 1066: Bálint: *kūnān’i buyindu*, Kalm. *kūnā n’ buyind*) of that dead person his/her remaining family members offer [to the monks?] much of livestock and money.”

Afterwards we have a mention (ibid. p. 145) of purifying rituals performed at the home of the deceased after the burial, but unfortunately without knowing which texts are used: “After the monks have buried the corpse, they return and through praying purify (footnote 1067: Bálint: *ariüldik*, Kalm. *Arüldg*) his/her home. Further the astrologer monk tells when the [so called] “period of the deceased” [up to the next ritual] will end.” Apart from averting any possible danger, illness, loss, even further death, in the period after death, emphasis is also put on ensuring good or improved living conditions for the bereaved. It must be ensured that they remain healthy, live in peace, have long life, and are abundant in money, wealth, food and drink, and that all obstacles are removed from their way. These rituals are performed mainly after all measures related to the burial have been taken (Khal. *buyanii ajil* ‘deeds of virtue/merit’, the term meaning all measures related to death and burial), and after the burial itself has already been concluded, and the ‘period of grieving’ has already ended (Khal. *gashuudal tailakh* ‘ending the grieving period’). When the dangers have been averted, and measures taken to guide the consciousness of the deceased away, emphasis is put on ensuring for the bereaved a life of better quality. From among the texts used widely for this purpose we can mention the smoke-offering or *san* (T. *bsang(s)*) texts, used for example to clean the home of the deceased, and to ensure health for the bereaved. Basically in the old times after the death of someone, the yurt was moved to a new site. If that was not possible, the yurt or today the flat was thoroughly cleaned, and the *san* ceremony performed for purification. *San* texts exist in many variations, for example *Ariun san / Nolsan* (T. *mnol bsangs*) ‘Smoke offering for purification’, *Dashchiiraw san* (T. *bkra shis char ’bebs(kyi) bsang(s)*) ‘Smoke offering causing a rain-fall of fortune’, *Khiimoriin san / Lündai san / Madjün jinlaw* (T. *rlung rta’i bsangs*, *rmad byung byin rlabs* (beginning of the text) ‘Incense offering for vitality’ / ‘Excellent blessing’, *Galiin san* (T. *me’i bsangs / me lha’i bsangs*) ‘Incense offering to the fire (god)’, *Tsagaan öwgönii san* (T. *rgan po dkar po’i bsangs*) ‘Incense offering to the White Old Man’. Another type of texts, the *dallaga* (T. *g.yang ’gugs*) texts or texts ‘calling prosperity’ have a similarly central role in ensuring the health of the bereaved. These are also today used after burial, when people arrive home, and also at the ritual when the ‘period of grieving’ is at an end (Khal. *gashuudal*

tailakh ‘ending the grieving period’), which is held before the 49th, usually on the 48th day. Such texts include *Altangereliin dallaga* (T. *gser 'od kyi g.yang 'gug(s)*) ‘Golden Light sūtra for calling forth prosperity’, which is also called *Buyan khishgiin dallaga* ‘ritual calling forth prosperity and merits’; and the *Dashchiirawiin (sangiin) dallaga / Dashchiiraw san dallaga* (T. *bkra shis char 'bebs kyi bsangs g.yang 'gugs*) ‘(incense offering) and ritual calling forth prosperity, causing a rainfall of fortune’, also known as *Ölzii khutgiin dallaga* ‘Ritual calling forth prosperity’ in its Mongolian title. All of these *dallaga* texts are recited for wealth, abundance in food, health, and to collect merits.

After mentioning the purifying rituals, Bálint says that after the mentioned days have passed, the fire offering will be undertaken (Bálint: *yal täidik*, Kalm. *yal tādḡ*) (Birtalan 2011, p. 146). Pozdneev also mentioned a kind of fire ritual under the name *tülesi-yin öglüge*, which refers to T. *sbyin-sreg*, as “a commemoration for the dead, which for princes and rich Mongols continues uninterruptedly for 49 days and nights, but for the poor is restricted to a khural performed for one day only. The third or seventh day is mostly chosen for this purpose” (Pozdneev 1978, p. 616). In Bálint’s description, however, it is mentioned under the name *yal täidik*, Kalm. *yal tādḡ*, Khal. *gal takikh* ‘fire offering’, and as a closing ritual after the required days of the after-death period have ended. This must stand for the same *Sür*, T. *gsur* burnt offering ritual performed for beings in the intermediate state, already mentioned above.

At the end Bálint gives a short description (Birtalan 2011, p. 146) of differences if a novice, a master monk, a nobleman, a *zääsng*²⁶ or a monk of *gelng* rank of good fame dies, saying that “they are not buried as the commoners, they will be cremated (burnt) [Bálint: *činderledek (tüledek)*, Kalm. *čindrlxe*], describing how the cremation takes place on the top of a hill, and how a small square house (footnote 1076: Bálint: *caca*, Kalm. *cac*) is erected for the dead person at the site, with a [Buddhist] image (footnote 1077: Bálint: *šüten*, Kalm. *šütēn*) and a candle burning night and day inside.

26) Khal. *zaisan* ‘general’.

Concerning the period after death till the taboos are kept he writes: “Until these forty-nine days have ended, the family members do not go to others’ homes”, and this is where his short description ends.

Conclusion

Both materials cited and analysed in the article are invaluable in terms of providing detailed descriptions of how the Mongols buried their dead, and what Buddhist ceremonies accompanied this. Several rituals or measures carried out after death are described by both authors (for example reciting the Book of the Dead at the bed of a dying person, the necessity of astrological calculations, the preparation of the body for the funeral, protective rites for the bereaved, the funeral itself and its procedures (Bálint mentions only burial in the ground and the cremation of high ranked lamas and nobles), purifying rites after the funeral at the yurt, a fire ritual), again some are only mentioned by one of them. Also, both descriptions emphasise the differences between the burial of a common person and the funeral of a lama or a wealthy Mongol. Though the descriptions concern different areas (Kalmuk and Khalkha), apart from some unique features in the burial customs of the different Mongolian ethnic groups, the main Buddhist rituals, and the texts used were the same, a fact which is partly mirrored in the descriptions, too.

As for the texts themselves, Pozdneev, an expert on Mongolian Buddhism, whose main works concentrate exclusively on this topic, has of course more titles mentioned in his book on Mongolian Buddhism than Bálint, for whom the description of these rites was only part of his ethnographic material, with short descriptions of different topics concerning daily life. As analyzed in the current article, where I tried to identify these texts on the basis of my recent fieldwork on after-death rituals in Mongolian Buddhist practice today, several of the texts continue to be used today, among them well-known ones such as the *ḡayuradu-yin sudur* (*Zūradīn sudur gedek dekter* in Bálint’s material), *zūradīn yōrāl*, *Sonosuyad yekede tonilyayci neretü yeke kölgen sudur*, and several rituals for the protection of the bereaved, such as the *tačiyal-un qariyulya* performed under a different name today, the lud ritual, and the *manla-yin*

čoya mentioned also by Pozdneev. On the usage of several texts mentioned, for example *maidari-yin dam-bca*, we have no parallel data from today's practice. Unfortunately, some texts and their rituals mentioned by the two travellers could not be identified, even on the basis of present-day data: *Gundelegin zarak*, *Serdebe chakjai*, 'dod yon lnga from Pozdneev's description, and the *danjik* ritual in Bálint's description.

The texts and rituals mentioned in the two descriptions show well the many types of after-death rituals and texts in terms of their particular purposes (helping the deceased to find the best possible rebirth, protecting the bereaved from potential danger caused by the death event, ensuring prosperity and well-being to the relatives), the descriptions and thus the texts mentioned follow the appropriate order of the measures taken after death (before death, immediately after death, disposal of the body, after the funeral/disposal, remembering the deceased), and also the different locations of the different rituals (home of the deceased, place of burial, monastery). By reading these descriptions, even though there exist a great many other texts from the different text types used in today's practice, according to the different traditions, or requiring different initiations to perform them, the reader still gets a complete view of the aims, methods and text types of Mongolian Buddhist funeral practices. In the same way, the rich treasury of the descriptions of travellers can be utilized for studying any other research topic, looking at parallels from the past centuries.

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Our Contributors

SUE BYRNE, Independent Researcher, London, United Kingdom
susanc.byrne@gmail.com

Postal address: 111 Gloucester Avenue, London, NW1 8LB, UK

Graduated at the University of Bristol (1963) in Geography BSc, and University of Cambridge (1977) with a Certificate of Social Anthropology. Worked as marketing researcher and strategist in global advertising agencies and brand consultancies (1964–2010). Managed Tibet Foundation's Buddhism in Mongolia programme (1993–2004). Initiator now Director of Documentation of Mongolian Monasteries Project 2005 - present (www.mongoliantemples.org). Collaborating with Professor S. Chuluun, Head of the Institute of History and Archaeology in Mongolian Academy of Sciences on publishing Binsteed's records and research on British travellers to Mongolia from 1700 to 1935.

BIRTALAN ÁGNES, Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Humanities, Institute of East Asian Studies, Department of Mongolian and Inner Asian Studies, Hungary
birtalan.agnes@btk.elte.hu
birtalan@hotmail.com
Website: birtalan.innerasia.hu

Postal address: Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Mongol and Inner Asian Studies, H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 4/B, Hungary

Graduated from Eötvös Loránd University: Mongolian Philology (1985), Russian Language and Literature (1985), History (1985), defended her dissertation on Oirat dialectal folklore (1991), completed her habilitation on Mongolian folk religion (2001). After graduation she studied Manchu (Bonn and Budapest), Korean religions (Seoul) and ethnology of religions as a Humboldt fellow (Köln).

Her main research interest is the philological textology of Mongolian ethnic groups, mainly shamanic and folk religious texts and their context. She teaches numerous subjects connected to Mongolian and Korean studies. She has carried out fieldwork more than fifteen times among various Mongolian ethnic groups in Mongolia, China and Russia and also in Korea. A complete list of her publication and citation index can be found on the site of the Hungarian National Bibliography: <https://vm.mtmt.hu/search/slist.php?lang=o&AuthorID=10005877> and some publications on [Birtalan Ágnes.academia.edu](http://Birtalan_Agnes.academia.edu)

ZSUZSA MAJER, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
majerzsuzsa0710@gmail.com

Zsuzsa Majer graduated as Tibetologist and Mongolist from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE, Budapest, Hungary) in 2002 and 2003, and as a Teacher of English from Berzsenyi Dániel Teacher Training College in 2004. She received her PhD in Mongolian Linguistics in 2009 at ELTE. Her main research areas are the history and revival of Mongolian Buddhism, its monasteries, the present-day ceremonial and ritual practice and the ceremonial system in the old monasteries, the terminology concerning the offerings, accessories and equipment of monasteries, and the history of the old Mongolian monasteries ruined in the 1937 purges. Currently she is a research fellow at the Department of Mongolian and Inner-Asian Studies, ELTE University. Her current research focuses on the after-death rituals of Mongolian Buddhism and their Tibetan texts.