

ON THE TRADITIONAL NOMADIC CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SHAPE OF MONGOLIAN AND EDUCATIONAL FORM

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Because of different origins of culture and various directions of cultural development, people from different territories will have to face up to different environments and suffer from diverse problems, each of which need suitable shape of knowledge for people to survive and develop. According to various cultural types and knowledge shapes, the educational forms for both culture-survival and knowledge-application will be various necessarily.

Nomadic culture is the traditional culture of Mongolia. The traditional nomadic culture of Mongolian started from the Mongolian ancestors westward moving in the latter half of 8th century and finalized at the beginning of 13th century when the Mongolian Plateau was unified, the Great Mongol State was founded and an ethnic community was formed. During this period, Mongolia experienced several historical stages from clans, tribes, tribal alliances to the early classed-nations. In the aspect of shape of knowledge, the historical knowledge of tribe, knowledge of Shamanism worship and knowledge of military and the Mongolian characters occupied the main position at that time. Therefore, the relating educational form is necessary to impart and expand all those knowledge.

Tribal History and Family Oral Instructions

Clan, basic regime in the primitive Mongolia, is tracing descent through male line so called Patrilineage in which each member is the quality of being descended from the same ancestor. The marriage between tribes was encouraged and the one within the tribe was rejected. Mongols have a habit of memorizing their own tribal history since early days. Unlike the other tribes, because they have nothing special on religion and belief to admonish their offspring, the parents would like to tell orally their new-born babies their ancestor and tribal history. By force of habit, they follow this way till today. Because of their habit, Mongols can trace their families back easily and clearly. They tell their own new-born babies where their family is from as the other nations do. So no one can get confused about his or her descent except Mongols, Arab is the only nation having the habit of tracing their ancestral roots. From above, obviously, Mongolia, at her tribal era, for culture survival, had already had educational activities that are totally beyond face-to-face form from parents to children. And what the parents deliver to their children are fully the knowledge on their origin,

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lineage, stories of ancestors and their ancestors will. Till today, in the eastern area of Inner Mongolia, these kinds of activities still exist but differ in forms, contents and ranges. Gradually, the activities evolved into a modern community cultural education that is Mongolian folk art. Subsequently, with characters coming up and palace schools appearing, the ruling class monopolized advanced cultural knowledge and school education. Therefore, tribal historical knowledge, especially the Mongolian noble history, became an important part of school education. The other parts were preserved and passed as folk education by word of mouth and oral instruction.

Primitive Religion and Shamanism Rite

Like the other nations in North Asia, Mongols believe in Shamanism. Shamanism is one of the earliest primitive natural religions, deriving from hunting nationalities in the forest. The original Mongols lived in the virgin forest and hunted wild animals to survive, so called nomadic living style. At their early age, Shamanism was their only religion by which they believe in the deity, admire ancestry and even worship certain natural phenomenon, but the situation was changed at the mid-16th BC when Tibetan Buddhism turned out.

In the Mongolian Shamanism, Sky deity is the most powerful numen who can determine if they can have ample food and clothing next year, if they will have good luck in future, if they have plentiful stockbreeding and if they can win their battle. They even believe their ancestor was God chosen person. Another one secondary to the Sky is earth deity. Till present, this kind of worship is still popular among Mongolian areas. Originally, it was used to perform sacrifice for earth deity. Mountains in the endless field of grassland are mysterious and towering so that many deities prefer building their tents on the peak of the mountains. Relying on mountains, rivers and lakes for cattle breeding, the original Mongols even considered the natural things, like mountains, rivers and lakes and so on, as their powerful deities. Without exception, sun, moon and stars figured as honor and water and fire considered as sanctity were naturally worshipped as sacred totems. Anyway, at that time, in the ancient Mongolian society, Shaman is a special group of people who play very significant role, connecting the deity with the people, foretelling the future and even knowing the past. They are the combination of passengers, interpreters of dreams, necromancers and astrologers, wandering in Mongolian tableland. At tribe age in Mongolia, politics and sacrifices were attached to each other. Sometimes sacrifice ceremonies were held by tribal chieftain and sometimes were held by Shamans. However, in some cases, chieftain and shaman were combined in one called Beki who has upper-

level social status. The significance of sacrifice in tribal policy is another equally important. Only the tribal members have the right to join the sacrifice rite. That means if you are not invited for the rite, you will be get rid of from the group. From other perspective, those Beike who lead the people to worship mysterious powers and communicate with deities were the clerisy and teachers in Mongolian society. And students are all of those attending the rites. The information conveying between them, or so-called educational contents are tribal totems, etiquettes and taboos relating to fete, tribal history and family's foe, social rules. This kind of religious rite is somehow one form of classroom with civilizing, educating and selecting which has special meaning to the original Mongolian society. And it is necessary for the masses to obtain their social memberships, share social rights and carry out social obligation. Shamanism belief really fades in today, but it is very mysterious, ritual and profound for Mongol at that day. Especially, Mongolian Shamanism concerning polytheism are very essential for the development of Mongolian empire in multi-culture education policy and connection between minority and majority. Specially, it paved the way for Mongolian national fane education in 16th century.

Military Knowledge and Guardsman Institution-Keshig

Mongolian is titled as the nationality on the horseback. Why? The name is not only for her nomadic style but also for her braveness and bellicosity. Battles and campaigns went along with this nation's evolvement since the clan age. Apparently, the national history is formed by the history of her battles. About Mongol's bellicosity, some people agree, but others disagree. Concerning culture foundation and history development, it is not hard to understand. The biggest problem for this nomadic economy was inner-supply deficiency which consequentially required Mongolia to seek outer-resources in varieties of forms, such as paying tribute, inter-trading and invasive expanding. Additionally, nomadic economy was subject to climate changing, relied on farming cooperation and was in a condition of hysteresis in arts and crafts. Inter-trading and the invasive expanding are the most common methods for the nation to enlarge pastures and complement the inner-supply. Especially at the early age when the nation did not have enough power to compete with the other nations, the inter-battles among tribes in the whole nation are far more frequent than the trading and mainly are consanguineous vengeance. So it's necessary for them to learn military knowledge and master the skills for battle.

Firstly, shooting on horseback and enclosed hunting. Wrestling, horse racing and toxophily are their main sports game and are also the necessary skills for men. Especially, toxophily are the main performs for adult men,

including standing shooting and shooting on horseback. Taking the shooting on horseback as an example, it was to show and teach the skills of how to using bow during the war. After 7th century A.D. when Mongols roamed along the Erguna River westward, their production method was transferred from hunting-nomadic style to nomadic-hunting form. Hunting was also a main method of production, the purpose of which was to meet their needs for the livestock. The other point I need to point out is that hunting for the Mongolian was also some kind of drills and recreation. There were two ways of hunting: one is large-scale grouped enclosed-hunting that we call “Aba” in Mongolian; the other one is small-scale catching called “Ang”. Everyone who will be soldiers in the future will have to take trains ahead of time for many skills, like how to use weapons, how to be familiar with hunting, how to approach to wild animals, how to obey rules and how to enclose animals according to how many partners you have. Before hunting, scout is necessary. When no war coming, Mongol will hold hunting to get their army trained and drilled, whose intend is not just for food. It is for training soldiers, exercising skills and practicing mind. Shooting on horseback and enclosed-hunting were both good martial drills. Especially later on, with its military function, enclosed-hunting gradually became an important representation of military practice and drill to build up tribal discipline and consolidate campaign capacity. For hunting is as good as training army. During hunting, there are several tasks such as keeping sentry, camping, assaulting and so on, which have the almost same functions as those in training army. So that somebody even said the process of enclosed-hunting is similar to the one of doing battle

Secondly, along with Mongolia’s evolution, dependant and Kesig (guardsman institution) was shaped and finally became an unique path for bringing up high-ranking servants in its society. Guardsman institution evolved from dependants, so they two were in father-son relationship. In 11th and 12th centuries, in the clan, extra and spare products were accumulated therefore barter were coming up, which classified society into a few classes, like the wealthy (in Mongolian, called bayan), slave (called bogol), freedman (called darxan) and so on. Afterwards, clans were broken up and then reorganized back and forth. Finally, tribal alliances were established, the leaders of which, called Khan, were considered the most powerful, capable, intelligent and wealthy. Khans’ rights and obligations are both leading the campaigns and managing enclosed-hunting. Consequentially, clans based on consanguineous relationship began to be replaced by the tribal alliances based on complex social relationship. It was naturally and consequentially that wars were broken out among Khans to spoliaste pastures, cattle flocks, hunting grounds, slaves and even Khan’s

title. At the meanwhile, more and more people began to settle down under un-consanguineous Khan's protection if the Khan had the ability to protect their cattles and hunting grounds. This special group of people was called dependants, evolving into guardsmen who played important role for Mongolia unifying and empire establishing. Dependent in Mongolia is called "Nokur". Its plural form is Nokud, literally is friend. Most of dependents were from other clans or tribes and throw themselves into the lap of a more powerful and promising tribal Khan. They admitted that the Khan is their emperor. Of course, the emperor also has responsibility to the dependents relying on them. The latter are attached to the former. Dependents differed from slaves belonging to tribes and were also different from plebeian. At that time, actually, dependents were Oneiromancy and guardsmen and even did some housework. Equally, the Khan should support dependent's life and offer them protection duty. For the Khan, foreign dependents were problem-killers for inner-clan issues and competitive tools for the outer-clan battles. Genghis Khan's achievements of conquering the world and unifying Mongolia contributed to his amounts of dependents. Genghis Khan's four outstanding dependents were Bo'ortchou Mouqali, Tchila'oun and Boro'oul, who were typical representatives at that point. Because of their proud battle achievements, they four became eupatrids and organized four powerful Kesig groups and benefits their offspring the best education and tiptop privilege. Accompanying with his influence enlarging and reputation spreading, Genghis Khan accepted more and more dependants and then created the guardsman institution, so-called Kesig. The original Kesig was organized by Genghis Khan in 1198 when he was elected as Mongolia grand Khan. He enlarged his group and specialized every duty unit. For example, he appointed shooters (long-shoot and short-shoot), bowmen, chefs, shepherders, cutlers, grooms and majordomo. Also he nominated Djelm and Boortchou as leaders of Keshig. In 1203, he appointed 80 guarders and 70 patrolmen, the combination of them were guardsmen called Kesig. During the war, they charged in the battlefield, usually warded the emperor off danger. In 1206 when Genghis Khan established Mongolian grand empire, the group of guardsman was enlarged to troop with 1000 guarders, 8000 patrolmen and several bowmen, totally 10000 members. The functions of Kesig are: Kesig is not merely imperial bodyguard, household organization, central army of Sovereign but also is central administrative institution, and even hostage camp and war college. At the beginning of Yuan Dynasty, impacts of Kesig were considerable and the leaders of Kesig had special privilege in both political and economic regions. At the middle age of Yuan, Kesig began to fade. However, in a word, dependents and Kesig were necessary

for Mongolian martial society. They played a very significant role in providing warriors for Mongolian Empire. At that time, some dependants became the directors of clan troops, the others formed special well-chosen army. After long-time co-operating and getting along with each other day and night during the wars, the friendship relationship between dependants and Khans was the beginning of the army and even the germination of Kesig. Every dependant will possibly be military officer and commander in the future. Therefore, to some extent, the groups of dependants somehow were special military schools in primitive Mongolia.

Mongolian Characters and Palace schools

In the history process of development, appearance of characters and palace schools is a milestone for Mongolia, a nomadic nation. Openness of nomadic Mongolia determines that the nation have to evolve in two directions, horizontal and vertical. In vertical direction, Mongol inherited Northern Asia Hun, Tungusic and Turk's over 1000 years classic civilization in many aspects including politics, economy and military affairs. For example, Mongol preserved decimal military administrative classification, loan words from Hun and Turk. In horizontal direction, Mongol integrated his cotemporary various states' culture and take advantage of their essential parts and then created a Multi-cultural Mongolian Empire. When Genghis Khan established Mongolian tribe, the new-born state had no characters. When his communications with Liao and Jin became more and more frequent, this Mongolia tribe realized that it was necessary to borrow characters from neighbors. Because of the Multi-culture inheritance in vertical direction and the amalgamation in horizontal direction, Genghis Khan cost 17-years efforts to unite hundreds of tribes with different languages, various religious beliefs, diverse sizes and disparate cultural levels into an united national community with same region, same language, same economic level and same psychology, called the community Mongolia. Then in 1206, announced establishment of Mongolia Empire. Establishment of, enlargement of Kesig guardsman, ordination of constitution and appearance of characters indicated Mongolia was entering a developing civilization. With national system consummating and campaign extending, the nation needs more and more specialized people in many aspects. Traditional educational form like oral instruction and imitation can not meet the new nation's needs. Therefore, schooling had been brought into focus. And the cultural level of that point provided a platform for stimulating Mongolian standard education.

Character is an important factor for educational standard. According to history, in the early date, Mongolia had no character and used wood craving

to record instead. Before Mongolian unification, characters have no standard. People from Uighur used uighuric character, people from Han, Liao and Jin used Han character. At that time, Mongolian tribe bordered upon tribe of Naiman. In 1204 when Genghis Khan invaded the tribe, the person in charge of signet called Tatatonga was looking for his Khan and was arrested by Genghis as a captive. Genghis found he was honest and good at character and therefore nominated him to do some paperwork. History of Yuan says: Tatatonga, Uighur, was accomplished in his tribal character thereby was assigned to teach princes this kind Character. It is the first time that Mongol used character and also is the first time Mongol used it to teach. Of course, it is not just who propelled characters and taught royal children. History of Yuan also says: Halayihachibeilu, Uighur, was intelligent and studious. When Genghis saw him, Genghis was very happy and nominated him as prince's teacher. Additionally, the wife of Genghis Khan's youngest son, used to ordered uighurian to teach Kublai Khan reading and writing. The royal family always looked out teachers for the royal children. The oldest son of Genghis Khan once invited the Uighurian from western region to teach children. Obviously, at the early date of 13th century, during the period of the amalgamation between tribes, Uighur influenced Mongolia's culture and education. They not only created characters but also propelled the usage of characters and even played imperial teachers role called Baghshi. By uighuric creating characters and playing teacher's role, Mongolian education system had been transferred from primitive oral form to specialized, supported and standard one. Unfortunately, this educational form based on language characters was limited to palace and royal family and was aimed at royal children and princes. After Genghis Khan unified tribes and established Mongolian Empire, the Mongolian dominator realized that it was necessary to cultivate personnel they need to control the nation. So education to the noble offspring and royal children had been brought into focus.

Appearance of Character and Palace school was the foundation of systemic education and indicated a new schooling would be coming up accompanying with the knowledge transferring. Mongolian nation schools and language teaching were good examples.

In a word, Mongolian nomadic culture was established and formed in this period. From knowledge perspective, in this period, tribal history, primitive religious knowledge, military skills and Mongolian Character came up in turn, which were needed for that society. From impartment perspective, educational forms like oral instruction, Shamanism rite, Kesig of guardsman and palace schooling evolved step by step. These knowledge are Mongol crystal of wisdom, delivering the information provides a stage for Mongolian evolvement and development.

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