

## STATEHOOD TRADITIONS OF THE MONGOLIAN NOMADS

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### INTRODUCTION

First of all, it must be made clear that being civilized does not ultimately mean urbanized. Majority of researchers and scholars in the field of civilization study define a civilization as a harmoniously coherence of social life, administration, law, letters and culture, education, technology, science and art.

According to this definition, state, governance and statehood tradition are the elements of civilization.

Therefore, there is no ground to regard nomads, who had their own state and a highly developed statehood doctrine as uncivilized, uncultured or barbarian. The statehood tradition of Mongolian nomads have a history of 2200 years and they influenced the establishment of a distinct nomadic civilization which belongs to the treasure of civilizations created by the humanity.

Derived from their way of living, traditions, religion, mentality and values, the statehood tradition of Mongolian nomads is the intellectual foundation of their state. While we consider the statehood traditions from the point of view of civilization studies the statehood is regarded as implementation of the governance idea expressed by the state writing, the ways of treatment by state of its subjects and people, the rules, concept, policy and ideology of perception by citizens of their state.

Second, we cannot consider the statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads separately from the history of establishment of the Mongolian state.

The history of the classic statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads /III BC-XIII AD/ can be classified into 3 inter-related periods, namely birth, heritage and restoration.

Following this principle and from the point of view of civilization development, the present report attempts to overview the establishment and development of classic statehood traditions of mongolian nomads through following periods:

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- Ancient period III BC-III AD.
- Early states established on the Mongolian soil III AD-XI AD.
- The Mongol State, Empire. XII-XIII AD.

### **The Role Played by Hun Empire, which Founded Classical Statehood Traditions in the Civilizations**

The period of the Hun Empire (III BC-III AD) and establishment of Great Mongol State and the Mongol Empire are of our particular interest. Because in these periods the classical statehood traditions of mongolian nomads was established and developed and Mongolians have left their traces in the development of world civilizations. The Hun State was founded in 209 BC /3/. We believe that the statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads originated at this time.

First, these traditions based on the culture originated from nomadic husbandry and customs derived from particular geographic and natural conditions. **The sky** was the supreme belief of the Hun Empire and became essential spiritual content of Central Asian nomadic people.

Introduction of writing had an extraordinary impact on state development of Hunnus./6/ Hunnus had a state seal and used a special seal in relations with other states. The Hun Empire maintained official contacts with neighboring states and concluded treaties of friendship. /3,5/

Preservation of territorial integrity was the foundation of statehood concept.

We consider that development of this concept formed one of the key elements of statehood, which is protection and development by the state of its society, civilization and culture.

Second, to compare with sedentary civilization states Hunnus established a relatively simple system, organized governance able to conduct independent domestic and foreign affairs. They developed an army organized into a system of 10, 100, 1000 and 10000 units, divided the country into the central, eastern and western administrative parts and promoted the view of heaven above, which ment the respect for state power. /5/ This leads to a conclusion that during the time of the Hun Empire another key element of statehood was formulated, which is perception, trust and attitude of citizens towards the state.

Third. Hunnus ensured security of the famous Silk Road and developed the world trade network. They reached cultural centers of Mesopotamia from the western China through mountainous and steppe regions of Central Asia. Furthermore, it is considered that the great road linking Rome, Muslim countries and the Western Europe served as the road for interaction of nomads. City-states emerged along this road in Asia, Arabia and Africa, as well as Buddhism, Muslim,

Daos and Christian religions peacefully co-existed along this road. The nomads used this road to introduce the Chinese paper-making technology in Egypt and Europe and the modern military technology in Eurasia.

### **Statehood of the Ancient Mongolian and Other States on the Mongolian Territory**

Although subsequent Mongolian ancestor states, such as kingdoms of Hsianbi (I-III AD), Jujani (IV-VI AD), Khyatan (VIII-XII) and Tureg (VI-VIII AD) emerged as successors of previous states and inherited statehood traditions in some extent, certainly they brought their own particularities of statehood because of their unique culture and writing.

First, the history evidences that the notion of qagan came into being during the Hsianbi state period./5/ The Hsianbi state like the Hun empire divided its territory into the central, east and western administrative parts, had 10 unit system, state laws./8/ This state was a nomadic civilization with own writing, shamanism, nomadic customs and morals. Elevation to royal rank was introduced in Hsianbi era which was inherited by the Great Mongol State in XIII century.

Second, the Jujani State introduced the state tradition to decide important state affairs such as proclamation of qagan by a quraldai (council) of nobles. /5/

A Qagan of the Jujani State as a supreme leader conducted foreign affairs, sent envoys, maintained correspondence, determined foreign relations priorities and used state representation credentials “Gerege”.

The Jujani State had own writing /9/ and an official in charge of public affairs. At early stage shamanism dominated in state affairs, and the king was considered as emissary of the sky. Later on Buddhism prospered and became the state religion developing the idea of dual state tradition.

Third, kingdoms of Tureg, established on the territory of Mongolia (VI AD), inherited many ideas from the statehood traditions of the Jujani State.

The chief of the Tureg State possessed the title of qagan, the territory was divided into the eastern and western administrative parts and had military organization of society. According to documents there were 28 civilian and military grades under the king./5/ It shows that this state had sophisticated governance procedure and traditions. They advanced the nomadic culture and left rich literature and poetry heritage. The state affairs were conducted and their history was written in a sound script called “Orkhon-Enisei”.

Turegs believed in shamanism and worshipped for the father sky.

Fourth, the Uighur Kingdom was established on the Mongolian territory after the Tureg Kingdom. They adopted scripture from Central Asian civilized

Sogdians, adapted it to own language sound, developed and made the uighur scripture as the state writing, conducted official papers, wrote books in this scripture and translated sastras from foreign languages. Uighurs unlike other nomads built cities and villages. Archaeological findings at the site of the Uighur capital– “Khar balgas” in Orkhon valley show that the city had a royal palace and developed artisan made production and trade.

Fifth, the Khyatan state developed industries, art and technology in addition to animal husbandry, promoted intellectual education to a level higher than previous states, combined nomadic culture with sedentary culture. In VII AD they elaborated own scripture, recorded state affairs and made the state writing in X century which became known later as “Yeke bičig” (Big letter). A scientific institute was established to collect the papers of Uighur state. In addition to Uighur writings libraries of nobles and royal palaces contained scriptures in Chinese, Indian and Korean languages.

The state power was in the hands of the qagan and implemented by various ministers having different civilian and military ranks. Rashid Al-Din wrote that Khyatans and Mongolians had little difference before and became similar as for language and customs.

### **Development of the statehood during the period of Great Mongol State**

Mongolian nomads in the beginning of XIII<sup>th</sup> century was formed “Qamag” Mongol and then the Great Mongol State was established in 1206. “The Secret History of Mongols/10/”, which is considered as a true mirror of then nomadic Mongols’ life and civilization and the great monument of oriental history and poetry, noted that the great khural dai of Mongolian nobles convened in 1206, raised the 9 support white banner, conferred on Temujin the title of Chinggis Khaan and established the United Mongol State.

- The most important part of the statehood traditions of the Great Mongol state were the **idea of unity** as a state priority, integrity and greatness of the country. According to the scholar Ch.Dalai /9/ the idea of unity originated in the era of Hunnus. After break up of the Hun Empire Mongols lost their unity, disintegrated and fought each other.

Perception of this idea became even more accentuated in the period of united Mongolia and it was realized and became a component concept of the statehood traditions during the period of Great Mongol State established by Chinggis Khaan, according to the last will of Alangua Borte Ujin.

- The idea of the sky, which was the basic concept of statehood since the period of the Hun empire, was connected and developed with the concept of state governance by **genius intellectual approach** during the Great Mongolia period.

Chinggis Khaan established a Council of Wise Men (Seced-ün zöblöl) from intelligent and experienced people who contributed their advises and assistance to the formulation and implementation of the state policy. This was a new concept of Mongolian statehood to run the state by the power of wisdom. Chinggis Khaan made the **uighurjin** as the official scripture which was inherited till now.

- The concept of eternal heaven, which became one of the foundations of the classical statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads, was the expression of further development of the idea of trusting and respecting the state by citizens.

Since the era of Chinggis Khaan the Mongolian nomads have honored their qagan as “destined from heaven”, and that became an ideological component of statehood traditions of nomads and formed a distinctive system of governance. It can be said that regulated social relations were set up from the time of Great Mongol State which adopted the traditional system of 10 units ensuring the governance of 10s, 100, 1000s and 10000s and the administrative division into the central, eastern and western parts.

- In addition to the power of “Holly master” Chinggis Khaan used the special state consultative body known as quraldai to implement his governance. The Khuraldai discussed and advised on the most important state affairs such as proclamation of new khagans, wars, battles, etc.

- Establishment of an early social organizational unit of nomads- khishigten as a privileged military-administrative body at the qagan strengthened the nomadic statehood during the period of Great Mongol State. The institution of Khishigtens included court soldiers, clerks, decree-criers, litigation administrators and served as a foundation of administrative staff of Great Mongol State.

One of the innovations brought by Chinggis Khaan to develop the nomadic statehood was introduction of the first Mongolian state litigation /zarqachi/ and law enforcement administration /qauli yosu-yig keregjigülügči/.

- The ability of Chinggis Khaan to consolidate the foundations of the state through law was new phenomenon of the Mongolian nomadic statehood. Adoption of the state basic law – “Yeke Jasa” legally strengthened the social relations. The “Yeke Jasa” law was a written law which had codified ancient nomadic customs and norms.

The “Yeke Jasa” was the supreme law and contained specific provisions on procedures of elevation to the rank of khagan, rules of conducting foreign relations, state great khuraldai, duties of people, immunities, military service, battue, finance, taxation, criminal and civil law, family and heritage law.

The **state symbol** was renewed during the period of Great Mongol State

developing the content of the statehood traditions of Mongols.

The big white and black banners were the state banners of Chinggis Khaan's Mongolia. The big white banner with 9 tails flew at each ceremony of proclamation of new khagan or assembly of khuraldai. This tradition is maintained to some extent now in the form of "banner of honor". The black banner of Chinggis Khaan served as a symbol of might and ability of nomads to defend own country.

It is the fact that the state seal was created after the establishment of the state by Chinggis Khaan, though it did not reach us today. Scholars consider that the seal put on the letter addressed by Guyuk Khaan to the king of France and the Pope in 1248, was the state seal used since Ogodei Khaan and contained the following text: "In the power of the eternal heaven, the order of the oceanic khan of the people of the Great Mongol State, the conquered people must respect it and fear them"

The capital city of Great Mongol State was established in the valley of Orkhon where the Hun empire had its capital. Chinggis Khaan founded "Qorum-a saguhu bagasun" or the capital of Great Mongol State in 1220.

### **The Contribution of Chinggis Khaan and his State in the World Civilizations**

Therefore, it is obvious that development of classic statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads during the period of Great Mongol State contributed not only to the progress of the Mongolian but also world civilization.

The present report focuses on the following issues in order to clarify the above mentioned conclusions.

First, there are a lot of writings portraying the said push of the Mongolian nomadic society from the point of view of waging of wars and impeding national development of some nations.

It is true, the Mongolian Empire conducted conquests but it performed great deeds for the development of world civilization which any previous empires did not accomplish.

Second, from the historical moment of establishment of Great Mongol State it became impossible to rule the Mongolian nomadic society by old means, and a challenge emerged to put in order many tribes residing on such a big territory.

It was in fact a historical demand which required fundamental changes in the development of the nomadic society and establishment of Mongolia as a true nation state. Chinggis Khaan was the first to appreciate this moment, and he initiated and organized great changes of social, political, military, economic and intellectual life combining statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads and renovations.

Great Mongol State founded by Chinggis Khaan and after that the Mongol Empire, which occupied the half of the world, fully qualified the main requirements of a civilized society. /18/ The basic standards of a modern civilization include:

- A “civilized” state upholds the fundamental rights such as the right to life, reputation, property, and especially the freedom of tourism, trade and religion;
- A “civilized” state must be able to defend itself and have a political machinery to efficiently conduct state affairs;
- A “civilized” state must have a judiciary and a legal system compatible with the universally recognized international law, including the rules of war, which guarantee legal fairness for foreigners under its jurisdiction and its own citizens;
- A “civilized” state maintains permanent and appropriate diplomatic relations enabling fulfillment of international obligations.

Third, the main policy of Chinggis Khaan was to renovate and develop the political and economic life of nomads using material and intellectual assets of advanced civilizations. Although he was a genuine product of the nomadic civilization, as a great statesman he was able to appreciate and apply achievements of foreign advanced civilizations in the state policy and activities. The fact that he used intellect of educated and skillful people of many nations in the conduct of state affairs and consulted foreign scholars and religious personalities, proves this.

Chinggis Khaan linked the East and the West through narrow cultural relations and formulated a distinct philosophy of international relations. He became a driving force of the whole human development through interaction of economies, intellectual culture, means and technologies of eastern and western people, introduction of pluralism, openness and freedom.

The fact that the capital of Great Mongol State not only showed application of achievements of sedentary civilizations but also became a refined harmony of different civilizations.

Fourth, Mongolians created a horse relay system throughout the territory of the Empire which was the most expeditious mean of transportation of that time. Western and eastern traders, tourists, the clergy, political and military people traveled using this network, and the relations between Asia and Europe flourished as never before during the period of Great Mongol State. Furthermore, new maritime ways were discovered whereby in addition to land transportation European traders reached India and China via Persian harbors, and Russian traders went to Italy, Mediterranean and Asia Minor through the sea of Azov. Besides the flow of Western goods to the East, there was increase of circulation of coined moneys and paper currencies, and trading and handcrafting cities and ports were built. The policy of the Mongol Empire to promote free trade had an important

influence on interaction of different cultures and strengthening relations between different nationalities. In this sense the transportation network and the trade road, which were situated on the territory of the Mongol Empire and linked major parts of Europe, Asia and Middle East, served as a bridge between many civilizations in the eastern part of the globe. /19/

The history provides evidence that new food, inventions and ideas used to follow only this road.

## CONCLUSION

– The role played by Hun Empire, which founded classical statehood traditions in the civilizations.

– The statehood traditions of Mongolian nomads was developed during the Great Mongol State.

– The Mongolian Empire founded by Chinggis Khaan and his successors played a significant role in the history of world civilization and left its inerascable trace.

– Respect for democracy became an important principle in international relations, and globalization is gaining momentum. This situation urges Mongolia to preserve its national culture and civilization, to boost its economy and strengthen its independence, to learn from own statehood traditions and successfully build a civilized modern nation.

## END NOTES

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