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Introduction

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► **To cite this version:**

Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, Roberte N. Hamayon. Introduction. Charleux, Isabelle, Roberte Hamayon & Grégory Delaplace. *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, transmission and the sacred*, Western Washington University, pp.1-35, 2010. halshs-00702132

HAL Id: halshs-00702132

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00702132>

Submitted on 15 Sep 2015

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Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, and Roberte Hamayon, "Introduction" of the two volumes *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred*, and *Representing Power in Modern Inner Asia: Conventions, Alternatives and Oppositions*, Bellingham: Western Washington University, 2010

Authors' own file

Foreword

The papers collected in the present works are the fruit of a collective reflection on conceptions, institutions and techniques of power in the Inner Asian world. They were presented at the international symposium 'Representing Power in East Asia: Legitimizing, Consecrating, Contesting,' held in Paris in March 2006.¹ The symposium was organized in the framework of an agreement between the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Centre d'études mongoles et sibériennes) and the University of Cambridge (Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit). It came as a continuation of a symposium on 'Inner Asian Statecraft and Technologies of Governance' held in Cambridge in March 2004, which gave rise to the publication in 2006 of two volumes edited by David Sneath in the collection of the Center for East Asian Studies at Western Washington University (Studies on East Asia, Vols. 26 and 27).

¹ This symposium was held in Paris in March 23-25, 2006. It was organized by the Centre d'Études Mongoles et Sibériennes of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) and received support from the EPHE (Paris), the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit (MIASU, Cambridge, UK), the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Paris), the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Paris), the Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcité (CNRS-EPHE, Paris) and the French Ministry of Research.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, Roberte Hamayon

Key Issues

The present volumes are mainly concerned with the types and techniques of power representation in Inner Asian societies, in other words, the various ways power is ‘represented’ in these societies, whether nomadic or sedentary, state-controlled or not, centralized or headless. We wanted to avoid framing the contributions to these volumes from the outset in too narrow a definition of ‘representation.’ Our call for papers thus used a very simple and broad definition of the notion, and each contribution addresses the topic from a different perspective, some considering material representations such as seals, others imaginary figures of power and social institutions.

The representation of power and its intrinsic duality

As a point of departure, we propose to understand ‘re-presented’ in a very literal sense, as ‘made present again,’ i.e. made perceptible as such. Ernst Kantorowicz (1957) and Ralph E. Giesey (1960), in their celebrated studies of French and English medieval monarchies, have shown the pivotal importance of representation in the exercise of power, and thus in the study of power’s manifestations to understand how it operates. These authors describe how from the fourteenth century onwards, when an English king died, he was to be ‘re-presented,’ i.e. ‘made present again’ until a new king was crowned so that the royal power would not be vacant. The *King*, indeed, wouldn’t die with the *king*: the *dignitas* of his position was supposed to live on in what contemporary lawyers called his ‘mystical body’ which, contrary to his ‘natural body,’ was imperishable. To ensure the continuity of power despite the discontinuity of rulers, lawyers actually invented the fiction of the king’s ‘two bodies,’ the

expression which gave its title to Kantorowicz’ book. All through his life, the king’s natural body conveniently ‘embodied’ his mystical body, but when the first was to be buried, the second then needed to be represented as an enduring entity. Hence the intrinsic duality of power representation, which will be further explored below.

This need for power to be represented—made not only ‘present’ but properly conspicuous—did not, however, begin in medieval Europe, nor was it ever confined to the moment of the ruler’s death. In their study of the uses of the monarch’s image in the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, Richard Fowler and Olivier Hekster (2005: 9) have put this in a nutshell: ‘Visibility lies at the heart of power: the ability to create and manipulate images is itself an indication of power and (arguably) a means to accumulate greater power.’

Representations of the living ruler have obviously been crucial at various moments of Western history, and particularly in the Roman world. The emperor’s face, of course, was represented on the currency, as well as on the war banner, and his name was engraved on the soldiers’ shields—where such a representation could be held to have a direct function of protection. The worship of the Roman emperor’s portrait became compulsory under Caligula, and at that time the ruler’s image not only had a religious function, but also a juridical one: it could indeed ‘take the place’ of the emperor himself, and become a juridical substitute. When a city submitted to the empire for instance, the gates’ keys could be handed over to the victorious army in the presence of the emperor’s image if the emperor himself wasn’t there.²

The living ruler’s portrait is but one among many possible ways for power to be represented—the reason why this volume, ‘Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia,’ and its companion, ‘Representing Power in Modern Inner Asia,’ do not confine their scope to it. Although one of the chapters is dedicated to Mongol emperors’ portraits, the aim of this book is to explore the techniques of power representation in Inner Asia, whatever form they may have taken: references to dead rulers, external symbols, words, attitudes... The core idea underlying this research, beyond all possible types of distinctions, is that *no power can do without some kind of representation*. This does not mean that power cannot at times operate invisibly, or in a state of secrecy (to the contrary, secrecy is often a good trump for working efficiently). But even then, it cannot do so without offering some representation behind which to conceal some of its operations, or temporary weakness or deficiency.

² See Sandler (1981: 16). See also Schneider (2002: 26) about early eighteenth century court ceremonial: ‘En ce qui concerne le portrait d’un souverain, il se trouve dans les salles d’audience, près des ambassadeurs, entre le baldaquin et le siège de parade, généralement sous forme de portrait en buste. Il représente la personne, tout comme si elle était présente, c’est pourquoi il n’est pas facile de lui tourner le dos étant assis, et personne, sauf les ambassadeurs, ne peut paraître la tête couverte dans la pièce où se trouve le portrait d’un potentat régnant’ (1733).

The power of representation

Representations can be intended to make up for the effective absence of actual power-holders. But they may also be aimed at conveying a certain image of their power, which varies with the context, with the addressee, or with the planned operation. Keeping subjects obedient may involve a shaping of the image they have of both power and power-holders, unless the latter choose to resort only to coercion. Therefore, power structures use material representations to express or confirm their legitimacy and to impose their authority, as well as to make their governance effective. Conversely, representations of power-holders may be manipulated by their opponents, a possibility that may have appeared to some historic rulers as sufficient reason to refrain from being represented. There are also moments when the represented collapses into the representer, a question to which we return at the end of this introduction. Thus, while destroying a ruler's portrait may affect his *dignitas* without actually killing him, it may lead him to die if he himself and/or people around him believe it should.³

On the other hand, representations produced or used by dissident subjects or hostile forces are intended as arms of blame or statements of transgression, as challenge or contest, and they may ultimately alter a given power's legitimacy or effectiveness. This could be why one of the first measures taken by dictators is usually directed against humorists. On the whole, the efficacy assigned to the very act of harming a ruler's portrait, distorting his image (for instance, through caricatures),⁴ burning a flag or vandalising a monument is the best acknowledgement that representations have the power to manifest the existence of the represented.

A plurality of techniques of representation

Representations may be material or immaterial, exterior to the ruler or constituent of his/her person ('force,' 'fortune'...). There may also be significant differences in the sources and groundings of representations, reflecting different logics, particularly continuity or rupture. Representations may be claimed as continuing a tradition associated with past rulers, rooting legitimacy in the ancient, so as to make it more familiar to people and affirm it as well established (see Chapter 5 in volume 1 on the transmission of the seal by Françoise Aubin).

³ In Chapter 6 of Volume 1, Isabelle Charleux reports the widespread belief among Mongol peoples that drawing a portrait or taking a photo of a person could have a direct effect on that individual. The belief that a person's effigy imparts the power to act on his/her very body is almost a universal one, documented by anthropologists working in many different societies following James George Frazer's early and controversial account of 'sympathetic' magical practices. Finally, in his celebrated paper on 'the idea of death suggested by the collectivity,' Marcel Mauss has first pointed out the fact that a person who was supposed to die, after the breaking of a taboo for instance, *would* actually die in most cases (Mauss 1968 [1926]).

⁴ See Boespflug 2006.

Conversely, representations may be marked with innovation—through creation anew or borrowing—in order to make it obvious that the power represented is a new, regenerated one: for instance, by changing the location of the capital city or the national emblem, as shown by Sedenjav Dulam and Isabelle Bianquis in their discussion of the Mongol *sülde* in Chapter 1 of Volume 2. A change of power may entail a change of currency, of seal, of the style of ornaments, not to mention the multiplication of alphabets—Uyghur, *'phags pa*, *soyombo*, cyrillic—in Mongolian history. The emergence of a new power may imply not only the creation of new symbols but also the destruction of representations of the former power. Thus, in China, it was usual that a new dynasty destroyed the imperial palaces of former dynasties. Similarly, the Chinggisids plundered the tombs of past rulers so that their clan line could not be protected anymore; and the socialist power in Mongolia destroyed many monasteries, especially those of Yeke Kūriye (Urga, present-day Ulaanbaatar). More recently, some modern states formerly included in the USSR destroyed the statues of Communist heroes.

In addition to this, a single power-holding authority may produce different representations, destined for different peoples. Hence the Qing dynasty steles in different languages, with a slightly different meaning in each version according to the language. It has been argued (Farquhar 1978; Crossley 1999; and others) that the Manchu emperors changed their narratives and their image when addressing different constituents of their empire: they figured as literati for the Confucian Chinese, as a Bodhisattva for the Tibetans and Mongols, as heir of Chinggis Khan, called the Holy emperor (Boγda Ejen), for the Mongols, as warriors and hunters for the Manchus... Similarly, the Manchu emperors—especially Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong—had many disguises to fit the multiple facets of their power.

We thus believe that the techniques of power representation addressed by the contributions to these two volumes give an unprecedented insight into Inner Asian conceptions of power. Whether material (as monuments or seals), or immaterial (as titles or codes of behavior), these representations are the focus of a series of investigations which address the topic from different points of view—production, types, functions, symbolical background, etc., all of which intersect with and overlay each other. In all these respects—types of representations and ways of crafting or using them—these volumes raise the question of an Inner Asian specificity, a question which remains to be answered at the outcome of this project.

The contributions to these two volumes cover not only a large area around Inner Asia, from Syria to Manchuria, but also a huge time-span, going back to the Xiongnu and addressing most historical periods since then until today. There was no fully satisfying solution to the question of how to organize these chapters in two separate books, a physical necessity imposed by their number. Thus, we have chosen the one that would provide two reasonably balanced, and possibly independent, volumes. Volume 1 assembles the

contributions that concern what we will call ‘ancient Inner Asia,’ i.e. from the second century BC to the seventeenth century AD. Volume 2 is comprised of those which relate to ‘modern Inner Asia,’ that is from the eighteenth century onwards—even though some of them make occasional reference to earlier periods. We also chose to give what is essentially a single introduction for both volumes, so as to emphasize the common questioning that underlies them and the unity of the initial project.

Material and non-personal symbols of power

Several chapters in both volumes show that, throughout their ancient and modern history, Inner Asian societies have produced highly varied types of material signs and regalia. These can be immobile, as are palaces or stone inscriptions, or mobile, like emblems, types of scripts, seals, tablets of authority (*paizi*), or banners. Those listed above would be impersonal symbols, in contrast to a ruler’s portraits or statues, which are personal representations.

Seals have been used as important bases for legitimacy within both nomadic and sedentary societies, and the long history of their appropriations, re-appropriations, confiscations and recoveries has been a crucial factor in many conflicts. Françoise Aubin highlights in Chapter 5 (Volume 1) how the Chinese seal and the Mongol *tamya* (livestock brand) were combined in the later Mongol seals. Arguing that the very crafting of the seal was linked to the building of a certain notion of power, she goes on convincingly to show how possession of a seal legitimized the authority of its holder, and how subsequent transfer of a seal involved transmission of the associated power. Losing the seal, conversely, like losing some other symbol of power such as the dynastic treasures for dynasties that ruled over China,⁵ could mean losing altogether the legitimacy for governing.⁶ The seal of the Mongol banner princes (*jasaγ*) of the Qing dynasty was their most precious treasure; it followed the prince when he went to the league meetings.

Inner Asian history provides various examples showing that such material representations of power could be transmitted or appropriated in order to give a new power legitimacy over the subjects of the old. Part of the reason why the Manchus could ultimately convince the Inner Mongol groups to rally to them in 1636 was that they held two major symbols of

⁵ *Guobao*, ‘national treasure,’ designated particularly wise people in ancient China, and ‘precious item preserved by the sovereign as a symbol of the good fortune of the country’ in classical China. Holding such national treasures equated to being in possession of Virtue; speaking of the ruling dynasty, they signified ‘holding the celestial Mandate.’ See Anna Seidel 1981.

⁶ Thus Qin Shihuang, the first Chinese emperor, is said to have lost his legitimacy when he proved incapable of hoisting an ancient bronze from the bottom of a river. Some statues presumed to be very old could also legitimize the dynasty that could take hold of them: the famous Udyana statue, for instance, called ‘the Sandalwood Buddha,’ was supposedly transmitted since the Han from one to another of the dynasties ruling over China. (It was, in reality, re-carved several times).

Mongol power: the seal of Qubilai Qan—allegedly the seal of Chinese emperors since the Han dynasty—and the statue of Mahakala made at the instruction of 'Phags pa Lama for Qubilai. As a representation of power, Mahakala's statue is itself quite illustrative of the power of representations: this statue was indeed said to have helped the Yuan to defeat the Song armies. In 1635, a Sakyapa lama who had deserted the court of Ligdan Qan brought it to the Manchu ruler Hung Taiji in Mukden. The Manchus built a temple to house it, first in Mukden and then in Beijing, and Mahakala Gur mgon po, formerly a protector of the Yuan dynasty, thus became one of the main protector deities of the Qing dynasty. These dynastic treasures followed their owners in their peregrinations: for instance, the move of the Mahakala to Beijing came when the Qing dynasty founded the new capital. Similarly, the treasures of the ancient dynasties were necessary for Chang Kai-shek to perpetuate the Republic of China in Taiwan: he therefore took away the most precious and most transportable part of the Forbidden City's imperial collections when he left the continent in 1948 (Elliott and Shambaugh 2005).

Unlike the Chinese dynastic treasures, material representations of power in nomadic societies typically embodied the soul of one or more ancestors. The black and white standards of Chinggis Khan are today among the most sacred objects of the Mongolian state, embodying the nation built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They do this despite the fact that they are not the original standards, but new ones carefully made according to the ancient rules. Not considered fakes, they are instead valued as the original ones would have been, and even more, since they are not damaged as the originals would be if they still existed. In Chapter 1 (Volume 2), Sedenjav Dulam argues that the worship of the standards is a major part of the newly invented state cult in 1990.

Furthermore, material goods that would have been included among the dynastic treasures of China's emperors, such as precious silk cloth, were not kept by the Inner Asian ruler but would on the contrary be redistributed among his subjects and vassals (Allsen 1997 for the period of the Mongol empire). Such redistribution takes as a model the sharing of game in hunting lifestyle as argued by Sergei V. Dmitriev in Chapter 8 (Volume 1), on the basis of the analysis of the term *sülde*. Nikolay N. Kradin also shows in Chapter 9 (Volume 1) the importance of the redistribution of Chinese gifts and war booty among imperial relatives and tribal chieftains of the Xiongnu (second century BC to second century AD), and the lack of understanding of the Chinese on how these goods were actually used to support the stability of political power in the steppe. '[T]he gifts flowing through their hands not only did not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthened the ruler's power and influence in the imperial confederation' (Barfield [1989]-1992: 36-60; quoted by Kradin in Chapter 9 of Volume 1).

Redistribution as opposed to accumulation of wealth has often been regarded as an important attribute of power and element of authority within the nomadic world. However, it

would be too simple to oppose nomads exchanging mobile goods to sedentary states accumulating treasures in the palace. Although architecture and monumental statuary have often been seen as characteristic of sedentary states, they were obviously not unknown to the world of the steppes. Archaeological excavations show that nomadic states such as the Xiongnu could have fortresses and monumental tombs.⁷

The Buddhist clergy has also produced more than a few pieces of sedentary architecture in southern Mongolia, from the late sixteenth century on. In many places, while nineteenth-century encampments of princes in both southern and northern Mongolia were small and itinerant, large sedentary monastic towns and stupas figured as the only human fixed settlements on the map, reflecting religious authority's domination of the secular banner nobility. It is quite clear that the Buddhist clergy used monumental architecture as a tool to impose their authority on Mongol territory, visibly and durably marking the land with permanent buildings. And contrasting entirely with attitudes towards architecture held by clergy and nobility, Mongol herders avoided, and continue to avoid, as far as possible, leaving marks on the land, by living in mobile tents, and by laying their dead on the ground or burying them in discreet graves.

Similarly, to resume here a comparison made by Chayet and Jest (2001) about Amarbayasgalant monastery in Mongolia, the large imperial monasteries built by the Qing dynasty acted as a Manchu seal affixed to the Mongolian landscape. Architecture was in that case a conspicuous mark of Manchu power upon Mongol land. Other marks as well were placed upon nomadic territories to manifest the state's power: cairns (*ovoo*) used as boundary markers, stone inscriptions, walls, garrisons, triumphal arches, custom posts, roads, postal houses, etc.⁸

Monumental statuary and architecture may, of course, be politically significant in the contemporary Inner Asian world too, as shown by several contributions to the second volume. Ai Maekawa recounts in Chapter 10 (Volume 2) how the monumental Soviet architecture of the 1930s turned Ulaanbaatar into a modern capital city, symbolizing the new power of the communist state. Arguing that architecture was designed to be 'socialism in material form,' she questions whether it met its original ideological aim. On the basis of interviews held with old people originally from the countryside who have memories of their first experience of the city, Ai Maekawa shows that while some people's perception of the city met the initial

⁷ Let us mention, for instance, the current discoveries by the French archaeological mission at Golmod in Mongolia (André 2002); one may also take into consideration the inscriptions of Kül Tegin and other Orhon Turks.

⁸ In the other kinds of representation, we could for example include the calendar, the currency, as well as the maps of every Mongolian banner territory that Qing demanded from local administrations. As a matter of fact, possessing the maps of a given land, a practice widespread within literate cultures, may guarantee certain rights over it. It is particularly so when a sedentary empire delimits a nomadic people's territory.

intention of the government, that of others was completely at odds with it. She argues that this complexity generates the dynamic urbanization of contemporary Mongolia.

In a similar perspective, Morten Pedersen highlights in Chapter 8 (Volume 2) how a famous monastery of northern Mongolia destroyed during the violent religious repression of 1937 and 1938 continues to exist as a 'Virtual Temple' in people's minds. Analyzing the peculiar fate of a Green Tara statue, he stresses the paradox that whereas attempts to re-institutionalize Buddhism have failed, Buddhist artifacts remain today primary objects of worship for many Darhad Mongols. Pedersen's point is an important one, for he manages to show how an artifact might keep an agency of its own (in the sense of Alfred Gell 1998), while no longer representing what it was originally crafted to represent. A striking illustration of this is his reports of people's descriptions of the Temple of Shambhala, which has come to also be known as the Temple of America and 'remembered' as depicting the American and Western Way of life in the most colorful way. What made the statue stand for the temple instead of just being used as a cultic object?

Personal representations of living, dead or imaginary figures

At the core of reflection on the representation of power is the question of the living ruler's portrait, mentioned at the very beginning of this introduction. Quite noticeably, the Chinese dynasties almost never used pictorial representations of their emperors to represent the empire. And portraits of past emperors were first and foremost objects of worship, following the custom of having portraits of dead ancestors intended only for members of the family and close friends (Stuart and Rawski 2001; Pirazzoli 2005). It is only under the Manchu emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng and above all Qianlong that imperial portraits of living rulers—made verisimilar thanks to the influence of the Jesuit painters at court—were publicly exposed to non-family members. Although these displays were at times done in the midst of relaxed, unconventional everyday life, the portraits were kept within the imperial palace.⁹ Some monarchs had themselves represented as Bodhisattvas: Qianlong as Manjushri and Cixi as Guanyin; this was intended to remind the viewer that the emperor is held to be an emanation of a Bodhisattva. Such representations were destined for Tibetans and Mongols only.

In contrast to Chinese habits regarding imperial portraits, Inner Asian rulers had past emperors' figures carved as statues, as shown by Isabelle Charleux in Chapter 6 (Volume 1), or painted on walls, manuscripts or hanging scrolls. These were public or semi-public representations. In Inner Mongolia, Jönggen Qatun—Altan Qan's third wife—had herself represented in the posture and with the attributes of the Bodhisattva Tara, whose emanation she claimed to be. As standards and 'relics,' these objects were believed to embody the soul

⁹ Never was a Chinese emperor's portrait printed on coins, as were those of Roman emperors.

of one or several ancestors, and thereby to make them present. Stimulated by the development of Buddhism and the decline of the aristocracy, among other possible factors, Mongols turned from three-dimensional representations of their Khans that received food offerings, to two-dimensional ones.

In another linked phenomenon, in modern times, the statues of Chinggis Khan together with two of his descendants, Ögödei and Qubilai Qan, recently erected on the central square in Ulaanbaatar, in front of the Government palace, reflect how omnipresent the reference to the great founder is in post-socialist Mongolia. Furthermore, as Grégory Delaplace reminds us in Chapter 3 (Volume 2), the fact that these statues replaced a mausoleum containing the remains of Sühbaatar, the main hero of Mongolian independence, and Marshall Choibalsan, the 'Mongolian Stalin,' illustrates quite plainly the change that has in recent times occurred in Mongolian power symbols. This event thus illustrates, as Grégory Delaplace stresses, not only the promotion of Chinggis Khan as ancestor to the Nation, but also the relegation of Sühbaatar and Choibalsan to being merely dead people. Delaplace's contribution is followed by a 'living testimony' from Françoise Aubin, who publishes here a description of the funerals of Mongolian President Sambuu in May 1972 that she herself was able to attend.

As a substitute for the unlocatable tomb and remains of Chinggis Khan and his successors, the 'relics' of the 'eight white yurts' of Ejen qoriya kept by Ordos Mongolians in Inner Mongolia and dedicated to the cult of Chinggis Khan illustrate at once several aspects of the topic dealt with here: they represented the power of the founding ancestor (the power of the Chinggisids); they were used to legitimate candidates for supreme power; and lastly, they were subject to appropriation by foreign powers in order to affirm their own domination by capturing the prestige of these relics. (Japan failed in this, but China succeeded.)

In many cases, contesting power has involved the construction of imaginary figures to support the dream of an alternative locus of power, or at least of an alternative ideology or identity. Such is the case, for instance, with the process aimed at making Geser—the mythical epic hero common to Tibetans, Mongols and Buryats—into a national cultural emblem of Buryatia when that Autonomous Republic proclaimed its sovereignty in 1990, after the collapse of the Soviet regime (Hamayon 1998). Much the same thing happened at the same time in Kyrgyzstan, but with the hero Manas (see below). Let us note, by the way, that the type of power supported by such imaginary figures is doomed to remain only ideal, for these figures have, in Kantorowicz's words, only 'one' body, the 'mystical,' and not the 'natural.' More precisely, they are doomed abstractly to represent ethnic identity or political ideology, rather than real power wielded by an actual individual.

Another example is that of Burkhanism in the Altai, an early twentieth century movement, which took as a messianic figure Oïrot, the more or less historical Oïrad Mongolian chief who had defeated Altaians two centuries earlier (cf. for instance Znamenski

2005). The contemporary *tengriantsvo* movements (a Russian neologism built on the Turco-Mongol word *tengri* 'sky') of Yakutia, Altai and Kyrgyzstan are other examples of attempts in the Inner Asian region to build alternative political ideologies.

However, as demonstrated by Aurélie Biard and Marlène Laruelle in Chapter 2 (Volume 2), the leaders of the Kyrgyz movement resorted to the figure of the epic hero Manas to personalize the underlying concept of *tengri*, which is an abstract politico-religious concept. The authors thus describe a poster published recently in Kyrgyzstan, which represents Manas in full glory, wearing the Kyrgyz traditional hat, the *kalpak*, and sitting enthroned on an eagle (fig. 1). One could ponder over the need of these intellectuals, more or less consciously felt, for a personal and representative figure to support their abstract ideal. In the same fashion, we may stress that the absence of representative figures can be detrimental to the consolidation of political processes, such as the rebuilding of national identity after a crisis. As shown by Marat (2007), newly established republics of Inner Asia have, as a rule, chosen the 'manly warrior' figure. Svetlana Jacquesson stresses in her contribution (Chapter 7, Volume 2) that 'these celebrations contributed to an ever closer association of the president with Manas, giving a mystic turn to the election and role of the chief of state.' She goes on to quote Aamantur Japarov to the effect that '[t]hese celebrations made possible the consolidation of the power of the president and the growth of his authority.'

Likewise, Roberte Hamayon examines in Chapter 5 (Volume 2) a recently released Buryat calendar created by a small circle of Buryat intellectuals depicting Chinggis Khan in a very curious way. Analyzing the posture he is given and the many different symbols displayed around him, she highlights the ambiguous character of this representation: it not only makes Chinggis Khan an ahistorical power figure but also dooms this depiction of him to remain a mere figment of the imagination. Far from expressing a real hope for alternative power and identity, this calendar is an example of a subtle process to show at one and the same both illusion and disillusion about possible changes, revealing the ideological uncertainty of the Buryat circles which created it. Chinggis Khan is a historical character, which is to say that in contrast to such epic heroes as Manas he truly did exist. In the calendar, however, he is dealt with as if he, like that hero, was nothing more than a mythical figure; furthermore, incorporated into his name on the calendar is the word *tengri*, which serves to further remove him from political realities.

These two chapters highlight that abstract ideas and ideals are more easily promoted if associated with personalized figures, which allows stories to be told about them and insertion of ideas into an easy-to-remember narrative process. In situations where elites dream of a change of regime, the figures they produce serve to personalize the alternative ideology or identity in the shape of an imaginary power-holder. However these studies, as well as Svetlana Jacquesson's chapter on the failure of the attempt to use Manas in Kyrgyzstan,

suggest that employment of such purely ideal figures fails to arouse emotions or create conditions for attracting popular adherence.

The figure of Chinggis Khan currently found at every corner of Ulaanbaatar does not so much incarnate the medieval emperor's power as the prestige associated with it, reinterpreted and reinvented as the core of the identity of the modern Mongols. Similarly, through Chapter 10 (Volume 1) by François de Polignac, we understand how the figure of the Greek conqueror Alexander the Great was in earlier times transformed into a model of sovereignty for Muslim princes. This chapter addresses the question of the use of religious institutions to legitimize and even sacralize political power. Polignac reminds us that in medieval Arabic legend, Alexander the Great often interacts with the figure of al-Khidr, a symbol of inspired knowledge whose model is found in the *Koran (Qur'an)*. Comparing these two figures, the author shows that, far from representing a simple opposition between mundane kingly authority using learned knowledge and prophetic spiritual authority, these two categories share many similarities and complement each other. The consubstantial relation between the gift of immortality and that of universal power accounts for the many religious and eschatological implications of the Muslim conception of inspired sovereign.

Social And Ideological Constructions

Immaterial and non-personal representations

Inner Asian societies also abound in immaterial kinds of representations. Thus specific words can be used as symbols of power, as, for instance, those designating the well-known concepts of *küciü*, ‘force,’ and *su*, ‘good luck’ or ‘fortune,’ which are necessary to qualify as ruler in Inner Asian history. Denis Sinor, in Chapter 1 (Volume 1), calls attention to the way medieval leaders' figures are marked with features that make them remarkable, extraordinary and even monstrous or part animal (counting an animal among their ancestors, or having one eye in the middle of the forehead). From a different perspective, Tatyana Skrynnikova in Chapter 4 of Volume 1—drawing on such names as Börte Činua, ‘Bluish Wolf,’ and Гооа Maral, ‘Fallow Doe’—argues that not just one but both components of the many dual ethnonyms at the time of the formation of the Mongol empire should be translated as animal designations. Sinor argues that such features are typical of a hunting imagery still present and crucial among Inner Asian herders. From this can be derived the interesting suggestion that pastoralism was not taken into account in the descriptions given the leader; it should be noted that medieval leaders are not reported to have owned large flocks. Sinor nevertheless argues that it was the economic advantages a man was able to secure for his followers that induced other groups to recognize him as their ruler, a proposition confirmed by Sergei Dmitriev in Chapter 8

(Volume 1).

But acquisition of power in this manner was insufficient to justify ongoing rule: to gain an enduring legitimacy, appeal was made to what the author calls the 'supra-natural.' Sources like *The Secret History of the Mongols* thus make the claim that 'heaven grants him strength,' i.e. helps him. This does not, however, mean 'mandates him,' as it has often been interpreted, since he is not supposed to act on heaven's behalf and since a 'human decision' is necessary to confirm this 'supra-natural' help. In other words, the ruler's legitimacy is the outcome of a two-step process: the humans should first acknowledge the supernatural support, and then enforce the power it implies. What matters is that the initial sign is attributed to the 'supra-natural.'

On the other hand, as shown by Tseveliin Shagdarsürüng in Chapter 11 (Volume 1), medieval Mongol emperors did not make recourse to any 'supra-natural' power to claim peace. Contrary to the image they left in people's imaginations, Shagdarsürüng stresses that Mongol rulers in their diplomatic relations did not represent themselves as warriors, but as peacemakers. Examining the correspondence between two Mongol Emperors, Öljei-tü Qan and Aryun Qan, with the French king Philip the Fair, he emphasizes the importance given by them to peace and the maintaining of harmonious relations. 'Nothing is better than concord,' writes the conciliatory Öljei-tü Qan. Shagdarsürüng goes on to suggest that this policy was actually the continuation of a principle inherited from the founder of the Great Mongol Empire, Chinggis Khan, and maintained by all his descendants until the last ruler of the Yuan dynasty, Toiyuqan Temür.

As an example of social construction, Christopher Atwood in Chapter 3 (Volume 1) gives an account of another technique used by the Mongols to impose authority upon conquered populations. Reconsidering current interpretations of the Mongol successor states as marking the victory of agrarian ideologies over Mongol traditions, he stresses that Mongols created in each realm an intermediate buffer class, which was more offensive to the agrarian-bureaucratic class than the Mongol nobility at the top. Atwood then goes on to show how agrarian ideologies treated the intermediate class as an alien intrusion into their projected plan of a smooth transition of the Mongols from nomads into rural gentlemen.

The coexistence of nomadic and sedentary populations within a single state structure is always problematic. Thus, Linda Gardelle offers in Chapter 9 (Volume 2) a contemporary view of the places held by pastoralists, in the consciousnesses of politicians, in Mongolia and in Mali. She stresses that while Mongolian herders strongly adhere to their state and regret the decline of the strong education system set up under communist rule, Tuareg nomads do not recognize themselves as part of the Malian state. Whereas nomadism is regarded as an essential feature of the national character of Mongolia, in Mali it defines a minority.

Social constructions are more easily identified when they are expressed by specific

terminologies. Thus Rodica Pop in Chapter 11 (Volume 2) examines the Mongol word *tör*, which has always carried a great political significance on top of being one among many terms conveying ideas of tradition, habit, or practice. While almost synonymous, these words have semantic differences that point to a hierarchy of traditions in a society such as that of the Mongols that emphasizes clan relationships. The analysis of the term *tör*, which designates at the same time the wedding ritual and the state, therefore suggests that exogamous alliance is the basic rule of the society, which explains why the wedding ritual is considered to be a ‘state affair.’ In Chapter 4 (Volume 1), Tatyana Skrynnikova underlines the importance of marriage relations in the building of the Mongol empire itself, a process in which their role was more complex. She shows that the Tayiči’ut and the Mongols, the two leading groups that determined this political process at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, were both marriage partners and rivals in the struggle for power in the region throughout this entire period. These ambiguous relations formed a dual structure that eventually gave rise to a polity, with an internal hierarchy of identities serving to limit access to power.

On the whole, conceptions and structures of power can be made concrete not only by words, but also by ritualizing its enforcement. Thus, during the Qing period in Mongolia, social hierarchy was made material through differences in funerary practices. Indeed, while dead bodies of the nobility were embalmed and installed in wooden huts, buried, or cremated and enshrined in stupas, those of the commoners were abandoned in the open air and left to carnivorous animals; the preservation of ‘white bones’ stood in opposition to the scattering of ‘black bones’ (Delaplace 2006). In this connection, we may consider the Chinese bureaucracy created by the ideal of Legalism under the first Chinese emperor, Qin Shihuang, as a highly ritualized power structure based on the law. This structure, with its highly ritualized character, created a respectability of power, allowing the actual ruler-in-chief to remain in the background while state officials were its effective agents at each level, allotting to subjects both rewards and punishments (Vandermeersch 1987). This way of ruling—where the ruler sees everything but remains himself invisible—can be compared to the ‘panoptic’ device analyzed by Michel Foucault (1977[1975]) on the basis of Jeremy Bentham’s theory. Panoptism makes surveillance superfluous; prisoners, by being always susceptible to being watched, constantly submit to discipline. However, this way of ruling requires, in practice, representations of all kinds, more or less ritualized, including such strictly material representations as forms to fill out and stamps to put upon the forms. Those who accept such representations cannot attack the supreme power-holder, or contest the nature of his power, since the only thing accessible is what is exhibited—the form or the stamp, and not the lord.

Immaterial and personal representations

Most often, power is linked to a specific ruling clan, class or dynasty, which means that any candidate for power-holding must be in the line of the dead members of this clan or dynasty. However, in her analysis of Sultan Baybars' singular access to power through double regicide in Chapter 2 (Volume 1), Denise Aigle shows how killing a king does not mean destroying the kingdom. Baybars was a Mamluk who managed to take the place of the Sultan he had killed. He even managed to be blessed with the qualities of the ideal Muslim leader, despite his complete lack of lineage—he had been bought as a slave in the Qipchaq steppe—and the double regicide he had committed.

While it is common in both sedentary and nomadic societies to claim legitimacy on the basis of purported ascendants, the way this is expressed can differ. Thus, in his oral presentation at the Paris conference in 2006, François-Ömer Akakça stressed that having a prestigious ancestry, religious or secular, is one of the best ways to stake a claim to political role in contemporary Turkmen society. Lacking legitimizing ancestry, however, a candidate for power may instead maneuver to insert himself into a lineage of 'warriors aided by God.' Thus, there are two main, and not mutually exclusive, ways of making social relationships fit the descent principle: firstly, by embedding non-related groups into the main genealogy; and secondly, by promoting parallel and therefore concurrent forms of lineage organization (for example religious vs. secular). Focusing on the political economy of late-nineteenth-century Turkmen saintly lineages (small groups that claim descent from the Prophet or one of the four Caliphs and act as religious specialists), middlemen and traders of slaves, Akakça showed how descent helped formalize or even disguise client-patron relationships as legitimate relations between putatively equal lineages.

Writing the genealogies of Mongol and Türk nobilities was also an important element in the construction and clarification of the Qing dynasty's power network through the regulation of intermarriage. Conversely, such practices as destroying genealogical records or tombs, and suppressing clans' names, were sometimes performed so as to de-legitimize previous dynasties.

As a counterpoint to these discussions about the place of kinship relations in Inner Asian power structures, David Sneath (Chapter 12 of Volume 1) proposes a critical reflection on the discourse of 'tribalism' usually employed to describe pastoral society's so-called 'traditional' polities. Going through the literature dedicated to socio-political organization, he pitilessly deconstructs the idea that pastoral societies were originally segmentary societies, wholly organized as egalitarian unilineal descent groups. Instead, Sneath shows that whatever period of Inner Asian history one considers, hints of the presence of a ruling aristocracy may be found. Sneath thus quite convincingly shakes the assumption that Inner Asian societies are originally segmentary, tribal societies, in which the clanic institution decayed as their

integration to foreign states progressed. On the contrary, he highlights that in many cases, such as the Kazakh and Kyrgyz societies, state structures like the Tsarist regime emphasized the importance of clanship to buttress political domination. This analysis confirms the impression produced by reading the results of the 1897 census, where, for instance, no Buryat ulus coincides with a single clan (Patkanov 1912), in spite of efforts made by the Russian administration to have only one counterpart in each camp.

Furthermore, genealogy may not suffice to legitimize the ruling group. Titles, as shown by Nicola Di Cosmo in Chapter 7 (Volume 1), may be more efficient. The author examines the many titles that Nurhaci gave himself as founder of the Manchu dynasty in China, analyzing how these titles were granted and changed across time and space and the ways in which the titles' claims to specific qualities were taken up and then discarded. Drawing a composite portrait of the founder of the Manchu dynasty, Di Cosmo thus investigates the ways in which the ruler's persona was emphasized in contrast with various material symbols of power or other tools of legitimation.

Rituals as representations

Whatever the type of power, its functioning necessarily has some kind of ritual expression. This is often directly tied to the power holder's person. Sometimes, however, it is disconnected from him. In his chapter (Volume 1), Denis Sinor stresses that apparently no specific ceremony marked the enthronement of the emperor in the medieval period: the source of the ruler's legitimacy was the will of those who had chosen him as their leader. Tatyana Skrynnikova, on the other hand, in her Chapter 4 (Volume 1), considers the event marking access to power called *mongqol-un jirqalang*, 'happiness of the Mongols,' as an 'enthronement ritual.' Reminding the reader that Temüjin, the future Chinggis Khan, was granted a double enthronement, she suggests that such a repetition of the enthronement ceremony can only be understood in the context of the rivalry between the Mongols and the Tayiči'ut: Temüjin's authority needed to be legitimized on the sacred place where, before him, had been enthroned the Tayiči'ut khan Qutula. From this point of view, the sacred character of the place where the event is held makes it into a ritual.

The role of another ritual, the 'cup-rite,' is stressed by Isabelle Charleux in Chapter 6 (Volume 1). This entailed sprinkling alcohol towards the four directions or to the ancestors, as a representation of the cohesion of the Inner Asian communities. Indeed, individuals excluded from the community had no right to participate or receive their share of the meat in the banquet given to the ancestors, as illustrated by the famous episode of *The Secret History of the Mongols* where, after her husband's death, 'Lady Hö'elün [...] was left out of the sacrificial meal' (§70, Rachewiltz 2004: 17) as well as by the Buryat *tailga(n)* of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Hangalov 1958-60; Tugutov 1978; Sanžeev 1926-

1927; Hamayon 1990: 637-43).

Similarly, while sharing game does not constitute a ritual in and of itself, when used to sacralize the leader's authority it necessarily becomes more or less ritualized in its form, and more importantly, in its function. Thus, Dmitriev (Chapter 8 of Volume 1) argues that a potential leader generously distributes material goods so as to increase his authority within his community. The more he distributes, the greater his prestige and the more persuasive his argument that he should become the leader. The author shows that this practice comes from the hunting lifestyle, where game is allegedly obtained thanks to the hunter's 'fortune,' a concept that commands one's authority; referring to several sources (including §252 of the *Secret History of the Mongols*), he stresses that what the leader redistributes is what he had his followers collect in his name.

In modern times as well, the legitimation of power is still highly ritualized, as Dulam and Bianquis show in Chapter 1 (Volume 2). Examining the state rituals organized by the government of Mongolia in 2006, the authors of that chapter point to the fact that they were mainly inspired by the evocation of Chinggis Khan, even if it meant re-creating new standards and forms of worship. But it also included references to the 85 years of the Revolution, the *Naadam* and some changes in the capital city. The purpose of this 2006 celebration was all-encompassing, with Chinggis as keystone of the whole.

A wide variety of social performances can play a role in the image a given power enjoys in traditional societies, including performances of epic tales, rituals, satirical songs and various other pieces of oral 'poetry' aimed at praising, cursing, or blaming. In Chapter 7 (Volume 2), Svetlana Jacquesson offers an insight into the official attempts at political 'modernization,' and describes various nationalist or neo-traditionalist groupings, in opposition to the government, which claim to present an alternative 'Kyrgyz way.' Situated in the north, the country's capital is itself a symbol of power. Jacquesson argues that comparison of references and representations chosen by the capital with those preferred by local powers may clarify the conception of power in Kyrgyzstan as well as the continuity and change of its representations. Thus, while the state administration placed itself under the auspices of the epic hero Manas in 1992, 'what was to be taken into consideration by the "bottom" were not claims of destiny but claims of descent and origin,' to such an extent that the genealogies had come to compete with the state since both institutions aimed at encompassment by invading the public space. 'Those who contested the state and its chief...used descent and genealogy to legitimize their aspirations to power and the right to exercise it.'

Finally, in Chapter 4 (Volume 2), Rebecca Empson shows that it was not only official state rituals that were used to represent political claims. Describing how the Buryats emigrated to East Mongolia, she goes on to explore their history through their shamanic rituals and to discuss how they have managed to represent their relationship to different parts

of the land they inhabit by claiming communication with local spirits or 'land masters.' Recounting a ritual of regeneration performed at a particular cave, in which people are supposed to enclose themselves, Empson stresses the opposition between two conceptions of the relationship between people and the land. In one, enacted by shamans, land and people 'create each other' through mutual inclusion. The other, promoted through the newly established 'National Park,' assumes that land will not grow unless people are excluded from it.

Human beings as representations

But representations of power can be human beings themselves, as stressed already by Olivier Hekster and Richard Fowler (2005) in their discussions of Roman and Near Eastern antiquity. Inner Asia also abounds in such examples: the first Manchu emperors organized ritualized hunts at Mulan and grandiose receptions at Chengde for the Mongol lords; on these occasions, the Mongol lords could be close to the emperor in a much less formalized relation than that featured at the Beijing palace. If he could not appear to his people, then the emperor had to make himself visibly absent, through a wide broadcast of his travels to South China or of his military campaigns against the Jungars.¹⁰

Power was represented not only by the king or emperor alone, but also by his officials, civil and military servants, policemen, ambassadors, etc. These were often distinguished through a particular costume or uniform, as in the Qing dynasty, where a complex hierarchy of dress-codes—with differences in the precious stones used for the hat button, the number of eyes of the hat's peacock feathers, the animal represented on the 'mandarin square' of their robe—corresponded to each rank, and made them immediately recognizable to commoners. It must also be remembered, however, that what such individual leaders or officials incarnate or embody is often not power per se, but rather a country, a nation, a regime, an ideal, an identity. Thus, the Queen of England represents the United Kingdom as a national entity, but she neither holds nor represents any power in the United Kingdom.

In Chapter 12 (Volume 2), David Sneath and A. Hürelbaatar describe the manipulation of Injannashi, a famous Inner Mongolian intellectual of the nineteenth century. Injannashi was successively praised by the Nationalists, the pro-Japanese and the Communists, each of whom selected different facets of his personality and work to convey their messages about the obscurantism of the Buddhist clergy, the crudity of Mongol pastoralists, the feudal nature of Mongol nobles, or the narrow-mindedness of some Chinese scholars. Eventually, in its implementation of their 'minority policy' in the Autonomous region, the Chinese state turned

¹⁰ Similarly, Olivier Hekster (2005: 156-76) describes the importance of the Roman emperor's appearance at such occasions as the games that he was supposed to organize frequently.

him into a herald of Mongolian nationality, and recarved the popular image of Injannashi for easy consumption by the local tourist industry.

Caroline Humphrey proposes in Chapter 6 (Volume 2) to revisit the theory of complementary political and religious rule, well known in Mongolian politics from the Yuan Dynasty onwards, by examining precisely how mundane rulers and religious dignitaries interacted in practice at particular places and times. She discusses the relation between the Dukes of the Urad Three Banners and the monasteries in that territory, and specifically the relationship between the Dukes of the West Urad Banner and the Mergen Monastery. In the end, Humphrey argues that an extremely close relation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries affected, on the one hand, the values by which the Dukes ruled, and on the other hand, the ways in which Buddhism was practiced. The political and religious aspects tend all the more to be merged since power is associated with one specific person to the point of being identified with it, i.e. 'personified.'¹¹

Arthur M. Hocart (1970[1936]: 214) emphasized the political advantages of the personalization of power in a famous ironical comment:

We have lost the secret [...] of making it a joy to pay taxes. We have eliminated the personal element, and think ourselves mightily superior in that we have done so. It is that personal element which has been the success of monarchy in the past [...]. There is no one to whom one can give, and no one from whom one can receive: just a vast automatic machine into which the money must be dropped, and from which some may be returned.

With the 'personalization' of power, it seems that we reach the limits we have set for the notion of 'representation': in such cases, it might be more appropriate to speak of 'incarnation' or 'embodiment' of power rather than merely of its 'representation.' Such personalization may occur with very different types of power: with dictators on the one hand (Turkmenbash, Mao Zedong), but also with particularly charismatic leaders on the other, and more broadly with all the instances resorting to what is called 'personality cult.' Anyhow, such leaders make their followers feel not only 'represented,' but also, so to speak, incorporated in and transcended by their person. The degree to which a leader is allowed or expected to personalize power also varies according to situations: while he is only expected to 'represent' his country in international meetings or visits, in cases of important political events, crises or war it may become pivotal that the head of a state give his citizens the feeling that he 'incarnates' or 'embodies' the nation.

¹¹ Cf. for instance the merging of political and religious power in the historical figure of the Dalai Lama until 1949.

The non-identity of the representer and the represented

Nevertheless, as stressed at the beginning of this introduction, the notion of representation implies by definition a *non-identity* between what the agent aimed to represent and what is actually represented, as we see, for instance, when comparing a given power and the emblem aimed at making it operate. To put it another way, there is a *distance* between a given power and its representations. This point has been phrased brilliantly by Louis Marin (2005[1980]: 72), whose work on French monarchy also stressed the pivotal use of representations in the exercise of power:

Dans cette acception du terme, dans le lieu de la représentation, il y a une absence, un autre, et représenter c'est au fond opérer une substitution, la substitution de quelque chose à la place de cet autre, de quelque chose qui est, si j'ose dire, le 'même' que cet autre; qui lui ressemble, qui lui est proche: c'est là ce que j'appellerai le premier effet de la représentation, faire comme si l'absent était ici maintenant. Entendez bien 'faire comme si.' Il ne s'agit pas de sa présence mais il s'agit d'un *effet de présence* (emphasis added).

Marin emphasizes that representing consists in 'doing as if' the absent was present; such representation thus produces not only mere presence, but an *effect of presence*, conveyed by the inalienable distance between the absent thing and its present representation. We want to stress three important implications of this necessary, irreducible distance.

Firstly, the non-identity between the representer and the represented implies that a given power structure may be represented through several possible props, which do not have the same implications and effects. Different aspects or functions of power may be represented through different artifacts or institutions, and the process of representing therefore implies a choice depending on the intended use. This is what makes representations more than mere signs: representations are actual means of action applied to those who perceive them. Their efficiency depends on their appropriate use. From this point of view, there seems to be no specifically nomadic type of power representation, and more broadly, no difference between sedentary and nomadic states; the chapters of this volume rather suggest that in both nomadic and sedentary power structures, various representational techniques are used at different times in different situations. One difference in the exercise of power within nomadic and sedentary societies has been pointed out by Denis Sinor, who astutely remarked that while nomads can escape the political power by flying away to remote parts of their country, sedentary people cannot.¹²

Secondly and correlatively, this non-identity between what represents and what is represented creates space for manipulation, hence for distortion; powers find it hard not to

¹² One should note however that this argument applies only insofar as the leaders themselves are not nomads, a very rare case in ancient times. See also the comments of David Sneath, in Chapter 12 of Volume 1.

manipulate their own representations in some way or another. We might even go so far as to say that representations of power are meant to do what the power-holder himself cannot do. Let us recall that the management of the dead occupies a special place in the procedures of political representation: a domain where manipulation is particularly frequent is the use of genealogies, as addressed by several papers, and more broadly all types of lineage strategies, insofar as they imply reference to dead people. Within nomadic societies, the marking of land with funerary prints represents and actualizes rights over a given space. Baldaev (1970) relates several stories where members of displaced lineages moved their 'ancestors' stones' (both sacrificial altars and territory markers) from their former to their new territory in order to take with them the immaterial goods that go with the stones: protection, 'grace,' and territory rights. Similarly, let us remember how the Mongolian Communist Party erected statues for its dead heroes, toppled at the end of its rule, not to mention how Chinggis Khan became the tutelary power of post-socialist Mongolia, guarantor of the legality of the present regime's rhetoric and symbolic support of some of the modern world's most prized values: defense of human rights and protection of the environment (Aubin 1993).

In a more general manner, it is not unusual for a candidate for leadership to manipulate or appropriate symbols of power characteristic of stronger rulers. Thus, in 1572, according to Mongolian narratives, Altan Khan appropriated a major symbol of power from the Chinese when he had Chinese workers build his capital, Hohhot (Kökeqota), on the model of the Yuan dynasty's Dadu (Beijing) (Charleux 2007). The Chinese saw this differently: they granted the city (actually a castle) the title 'City returned to [Chinese] civilization' or 'city of those who have come to recognize civilization' (Guihua cheng 歸化城). The Chinese rejoiced that the Tümed Mongols had adopted Buddhism and (apparently) become acculturated,¹³ believing that they would as a consequence become 'cooked barbarians' and respect the peace treaty. It would be worth examining thoroughly cases of nomads borrowing, rejecting, or diverting the symbols of power of sedentary societies, whether in order to forge an alliance or to harden opposition.

Thirdly, the distance created by the non-identity between what is 'represented' and what is 'representing' makes it impossible to dissociate the political from the religious or at least sacred aspects of power. The question is rather to what extent political power necessarily resorts to religion to be legitimized and exerted, relying upon connections with the sacred in order to be respected. This aspect, further investigated and nuanced in Chapter 10 (Volume 1) by François de Polignac, and Chapter 6 (Volume 2) by Caroline Humphrey, is a strong incentive to consider the involvement of religious institutions in access to, or exercise of,

¹³ However, Altan Khan did not act as a Chinese sovereign: his biography does not reveal him following the way of such as Qubilai in adopting Chinese technologies of governance like the proclamation of a new era or dynasty, or publication of a new calendar or currency (see the criteria established by Franke 1994 [1978]: 25).

political power; or, conversely, to consider the use of religious procedures to confirm a power-holder’s position. One could, for example, discuss attempts at promoting a supreme deity as a source of legitimacy—as Biard and Laruelle do in Chapter 2 (Volume 2) with the example of the Kyrgyz *tengriantsvo* movement—or question the respective attitudes of political and religious institutions towards one another.¹⁴

The distance between the representing and the represented can be reduced to almost nothing when, as already stressed, power is highly personalized and its ‘effect of presence’ thus made pervasive throughout society. Even in these cases, though, the merging is never fully realized, as we know that dictatorships do not always die with dictators. Grégory Delaplace shows in Chapter 3 (Volume 2), through a description of Marshal Choibalsan’s funerals, that Kantorowicz’ paradigm of the king’s two bodies can be quite adequately transposed to Soviet-style power structures, although in this case the emphasis on the natural body of the leader—the body with which he fought to liberate the country, the body he exhausted at work for the sake of the nation—is much greater. The natural body of the communist leader—above all, that of Lenin, of course—is thus conceived and manipulated as a means of mystical communion with the spirit of communism; in this context, the spiritual body is collapsed into the natural one. In such cases we see an apparent *merging* of the representer and the represented. But even there, the powerful effect of the denial of the intrinsic duality of representation resides in the fact that these (i.e. the representer and the represented) *are* (i.e. *remain*) actually distinct. Although the spirit of communism (the represented) was initially made to merge with the body of Lenin or Choibalsan (the representer) through highly emotional funerary rituals and commemorations, they can be separated again through reverse rituals relegating the body to a mere natural envelope. Therefore, even in this case the power of representations comes from the ‘effect of presence’ (Marin cf. *infra*) created by the fact that the representer substitutes for the represented.

The notion of merging could apply at another level, as well: between enforcing power and manipulating its representations. Indeed, the contributions to these volumes have led us to wonder to what extent representations, after all, *make* power. As Clifford Geertz (1983: 124-5) puts it:

The very thing that the elaborate mystique of court ceremonial is supposed to conceal – that majesty is made, not born – is demonstrated by it. A woman is not a duchess a hundred yards from a carriage.

But conversely, would a carriage with a mere peasant inside ‘represent’ power? Isn’t that

¹⁴ Thus, while it is usually said that the early Mongol rulers presented an image of religious tolerance in their rule, they in fact wanted officiants of other religions to pray for the Khan and in exchange exempted them from paying taxes (Atwood 2004).

what Louis Marin (2005 [1980]: 75) says when he argues that power—or rather the transformation of ‘might’ (French ‘puissance’) into actual ‘power’ (French ‘pouvoir’)—is created through the process of representing? In the same way as we wondered whether exerting power could be reduced to the manipulating of its representations, we might wonder, on the contrary, to what extent challenging or opposing it can be achieved through merely distorting or even ‘hijacking’ them. In other words, the representations of power are not mere depictions. They are double-edged weapons: while they are originally aimed at serving the power structures that produce them, they may well be turned back against them.

Whether one uses representations for or against those who produce them, the key issue all these contributions finally address is that of the efficacy of those representations. Is there a single identifiable source of efficacy? That question will need to be explored in more detail elsewhere. But be that as it may, the process of making representations always involves a device—whether a mere convention or a more sophisticated ritual—that makes them credible and therefore effective. In other words, not only do representations legitimate the power structure, but the power structure should in turn legitimate its representations. But even though everything has been done to legitimate and to a certain extent animate representations, this aim is not necessarily achieved. Representations may fail to gain adherence. No one can compel citizens to respect the symbols of a power structure, or force them to feel emotionally attached to it.

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