

## 世界史のなかのノモンハン事件(ハルハ河会戦)

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ハルハ河会戦(ノモンハン事件)70周年を記念し、関口グローバル研究会主催により、2009年7月2日から5日にかけてウランバートルで国際学術シンポジウムが開催された。

愛知大学現代中国学部の高明潔教授が私にこのシンポジウムのことを教えてくれた。私はそのことをとても感謝している。彼女は愛知大学の他の多くの先生にも教えたと思うのだが、前期試験の直前というとても不便な時期だったので、結局愛知大学から参加したのは私一人となった。

私の発表のタイトルは「Khalkhyn Gol: a British Perspective」だった。私とノモンハン事件とのかかわりは次のようにして始まった。この27年間、私は豊田市岩倉町の古い農家に住んでいた。大家さんはこの5月に92歳で亡くなったのだが、1939年8月に独ソ不可侵条約が締結されたとき、ノモンハンに向かう途中だった。彼は日本に帰還しトヨタ自動車で数か月働いた後、また兵隊としてマラヤ、シンガポール、ビルマを転戦し、最後にはインパールでイギリス軍の捕虜となった。彼の90歳の祝いの会で彼にももらった回顧録を読むまで、私はノモンハン事件のことを聞いたことがなかった。この夏私はイギリスに帰った時にイギリス人の友人に、「ノモンハン事件のことを聞いたことがありますか。ハルハ河会戦のことを聞いたことがありますか。」と聞いたところ、「いや、知らない」と彼らは答えた。「どこで起こったのか、誰が戦ったのか、我々とは何の関係もないだろう」と聞き返された。ハルハ河(ノモンハン)で起こったことが我々イギリス人にとってどれほど重要だったか、この論文のなかで私は説明しようと思う。この戦いがなければ、第二次世界大戦の結果はずいぶん違ったものになっていたかもしれない。

# **KHALKHYN GOL: A BRITISH PERSPECTIVE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

I understand how the battle at Khalkhyn Gol (Nomonhan as it is known to people in Japan) can be regarded as a signpost to Pearl Harbor, and also as a signpost towards Stalingrad and Kursk, and ultimately towards Allied victory in World War II. So Nomonhan, although a relatively small battle, was very important. Nevertheless it is a battle not known to many people in England.

I will introduce myself. I come from England, but I live in Japan and work at Aichi University. The owner of my old farmhouse in Aichi Prefecture – I lived there for 27 years – was actually on his way to Nomonhan in 1939 when the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed. So he returned to Japan to work for a few more months with Toyota, before being called up again. He spent the war in Malaya and Singapore and in Burma, and was finally captured by the British at Imphal. He died in May this year aged 92. I had never heard of Nomonhan before I began to read his memoirs, which he gave me on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Before I leave Japan I want to complete a good translation of Shibata Yukinori's memoirs.

But for this conference I have looked at another source which is my mother's wartime diaries and letters dating from the same period. She was Lavinia Ponsonby then, and was working for the British Ministry of Information. In March 1944 (5 years after Khalkhyn Gol) she went on an Arctic Convoy to Murmansk and Archangel in the USSR, and then to Moscow where she worked in the British Embassy. In January 1945 my grandfather who was Charles Ponsonby, and at that time a British Member of Parliament for Sevenoaks in Kent, joined a Parliamentary Delegation to visit the Soviet Union, and my mother accompanied that delegation. The delegation visited Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Stalingrad, Baku, Tashkent, Ferghana, Samarkhand, Ashkabad and Tehran. She came back to England through Baghdad and Cairo. Her diary is the starting point

of my paper ‘Khalkhyn Gol: a British Perspective.’

There are two other people who worked for the Ministry of Information who I would like to mention, though both are no longer alive. The first is Sir John Pilcher, British ambassador to Japan 1967 to 1972. Before the war the embassy in Tokyo sent him as a language student to Kyoto, and he also spent time in diplomatic posts in China and Manchuria. During the war he worked briefly with my mother in London, and after a diplomatic career in various places, in 1967 he came back to Japan. It was he and his wife Delia Pilcher who took care of me when I first came to Japan in 1969, and it is thanks to him that I had good feelings towards Japanese people from the start. But he always said “You must study Japanese and you must study Chinese, and you must be friends with both Japanese and Chinese people”, and I have tried to stick to that.

The second person is Ye Chunchan – I know his son Nianlun and I am presently reading with great interest the memoirs of his wife (Nianlun’s mother) Yuan Yin. Ye Chunchan was a Chinese intellectual and brilliant linguist who translated Hans Andersen’s Fairy Tales from Danish into Chinese, and later Mao’s poems (as part of a committee) from Chinese into English during the Cultural Revolution (dangerous work!). In 1944 and 1945 Ye Chunchan had a job as far as I understand – Nianlun calls it the British Ministry of Propaganda but there was no such organization - with the Ministry of Information in England (he was recruited in Sichuan) explaining to the British people what the Chinese were doing on the other side of the world at that time.

I would like to mention four other very recent encounters. One was a conversation with a Polish friend, Adam Poludniac, who lives in Hamamatsu with his wife and five lovely children. Adam’s father and mother lived in L’vov and were moved to Silesia in 1946. Adam was talking about Katyn, and how the British had tried to cover up the fact that the Russians had done it. (This is indeed a very emotional subject).....Adam also did not think that Nomonhan was so

important. In his view the Japanese armies at that time were already over-extended in China. The supply lines in Siberia would have been too long and exposed, as indeed they were to be in the Pacific. And in his view the Russian winter would have been too much for them. It did not need Nomonhan to persuade Japan to move south, in his opinion. The next encounter was with a Russian teacher, Tatiana sensei at Chukyo University. Yes, she said, we know it as Khalkhyn Gol not Nomonhan. Talking with her I was reminded that a lot of Russian young men were killed there too. On the same morning I talked with Hideo Yanagisawa who is a Hemingway specialist. Yes, he said, Hemingway was in China at the time Matsuoka signed the Japanese Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in early 1941..... And my last encounter was with Simon Sanada in the English Literature Department of Aichi University in Toyohashi. I mentioned that I was going to Ulaan Baatar for a conference about Nomonhan. Simon is quite well informed about the world. “What is Nomonhan? I have never heard of it” he said.

So it seemed to me that my subject “Khalkhyn Gol: a British Perspective” was worth having a go at. I will just mention the books that I have been dipping into. There is Peter Calvocoressi’s ‘Total War’ and there is Toshiaki Kawahara’s ‘Hirohito and his times’.

## **MY MOTHER’S DIARY (MARCH 1944 - JUNE 1945)**

She was 24 years old. I include here a copy of her map and extracts from her diary and some photographs.

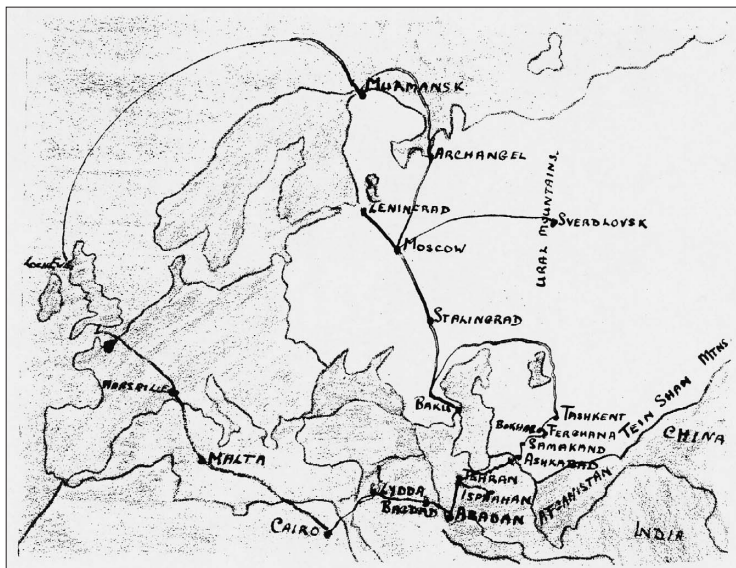
1. The Arctic Convoy
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### **1. The Arctic Convoy.**

March, 1944 I left Euston Station with two large trunks, two other girls and a ticket to Inverness. From there we had orders from the R.T.O. to go to Achnasheen, and on by highland bus at breakneck speed north-west to Loch Ewe. After showing our papers we were taken to our ship – a Canadian built merchant ship called Fort Kullispell. The sailors had great difficulty getting my dead weight trunks up from the tug. From the first moment we realized we were going to be welcomed and well fed – fresh vegetables, eggs, meat in great quantity, and very well cooked food was provided. It was a lovely contrast from rationing at home. The Master (Mr Russell) seemed a nice man, and made us comfortable in the hospital, in a four bunk cabin on deck with shower and WC adjoining. He told us quite cheerfully that the ship was carrying so many tons of high explosive and a factory for the Russians, that if anything hit us, we should be spared any icy swimming, but nevertheless it was the ship's orders never to be without a Mae West.....

After 8 days, we came in sight of the bleak Russian coast, and were met by a Russian escort of low-lying, fast destroyers; the British escort turned for home. We sailed up the Kola Inlet, and sat in Vianga Bay, about three hours from Murmansk. There were sea-planes camouflaged under the snow, and we heard the guns of the battle firing on the Russian-Finnish front. We had one air raid but no damage was done. The Russian customs officials came aboard, a man and a woman. They were most intrigued at our baggage, as we were the first girls to come to Russia via Murmansk. Everything had to be unpacked and every garment was looked at suspiciously.



## 2. How foreigners lived in Moscow

The immense, cosmopolitan Metropole Hotel was our home. We each had a room and a bathroom. I had a maid called Pasha, who used to brush the floor with a bundle of sticks, and fill her mouth with water which she spat out on my clothes to damp them down for ironing. I used to give her tins of bully beef for her pains, which was considered good payment, and she wept buckets when I left.....

## 3. The Moscow Conference of November 1944

The Moscow Conference was a noteworthy occasion, as it was the first time that Stalin had dined at a foreign embassy. The party went very well and they reeled out of dinner at midnight to settle the fate of the world in a long conference that went on until 4 o'clock.

The only time I saw Stalin was during that conference. There was a command performance at the Bolshoi Theatre. Stalin and Churchill arrived unseen after the curtain had gone up, and before the lights went on for the entre-act, Stalin stepped behind the scenes so that Churchill should get the cheers; then after a

minute he stepped up by his side, and the two stood together acknowledging the applause, not only from the auditorium but from the stage too. Stalin was half a head shorter than Churchill, with iron grey hair. I was sitting in a box at the side and watched the Royal Box throughout. Stalin's face was mask-like and did not alter, while Churchill laughed and yawned whenever he felt inclined. Molotov, Eden, Harriman (the U.S. ambassador), Miss Harriman and Clark Kerr, were also in the Royal Box.

#### **4. Stalin's Dacha**

I once got into Stalin's garden at his country "Dacha" by mistake. I climbed up the river bank with an American to ask whether we could borrow a boat off the owner of the house. It was small, with a tidy garden with strawberry plants, and obviously belonged to someone important. We tapped at the door and were nearly eaten by a dog. We could get no reply so tapped at the window. A livid scarlet face looked out, still in pyjamas, and balled at someone inside the house. A trembling housekeeper rushed out to us, and walked us sharply down the drive. The faces of the N.K.V.D. outside the gate were a picture. We were cross-questioned, and found out from some village boys that it was Stalin's house..... I used to go out each Sunday into the country to explore, and usually landed up under arrest.....

#### **5. Getting to know the Russians**

Every foreigner arriving in Moscow was convinced that it was possible to have Russian friends, but nearly all returned to their respective countries frustrated. Countless times you would meet Russians who were anxious to see you again; perhaps a meeting would be arranged, then suddenly they would ring up and cancel the date. Or more often than not, they would just fail to turn up. Many Russians do not realize that they may not have foreign contacts until they have one, then every time the N.K.V.D. (secret police) were on to them. A few girls I knew refused the warning, and were later arrested and taken off, God knows where, and their families were not even told.

## **6. Meeting with Madame Litvinov**

I had a letter of introduction which H.E.Clerk Kerr said very pessimistically I could send by the Narkomindel (F.O.), but he assured me nothing would come of it. However it had effect. The Narkomindel, knowing I was small fry, presumably, felt that there was no harm in my meeting Madame Litvinov, so therefore gave her permission to invite me. She had a flat in the government building on the Moscova River. The front stairs were like the sordid back stairs of some London flats, and there was a police girl at the desk. She asked me my name and whether I had permission to enter the building. She rang up the N.K.V.D. to check up. The door was opened by a rather slummy looking char. Madame Litvinov is a stout woman with a determined air; she adores Trollop and other classics, and is writing a book about her youth up to the time of her marriage to Litvinov, ( after that has to remain a closed book). She became very chatty, and I asked her whether she thought there was any hope for good relations between us now that we had fought for the same thing. She was very pessimistic, and said that nothing could make relations good, as the Russian outlook was so different. She said that no foreigner was allowed to visit her unless she had permission to receive them from the Narkomindel. I was one of the first she had been allowed. None of the diplomats had ever been to tea. On parting she said, "I would like to see you again. Would you know who it was if I rang you without giving my name?" She also asked me to bring some English papers. After an hour or so alone, Madame Maisky came along, and the conversation was immediately turned to cats and the weather.....



## 7. Charles Ponsonby's letter about the arrests

Mr. Warner.

My daughter Lavinia seems to be continually arrested by the OGPU. See the enclosed. I wonder whether we could stiffen up a bit as it does seem rather derogatory that British subjects with perfectly good passes should shut up by these ignorant people.

*Charles Ponsonby*

27th September, 1944.

## 8. The British Parliamentary Delegation to the Soviet Union

### Kent M.P. Sees Marshal Stalin

#### His Family's Long Connection With Russia

**T**HE visit of Colonel C. E. Ponsonby, M.P. for Sevenoaks, to the Soviet Union as one of the Parliamentary delegation, recalls that his family have long been interested in Russia.

As long ago as 1856, a cousin of his, the Hon. Gerald Ponsonby, who was Private Secretary to Lord Palmerston, was attached to Earl Granville's Special Mission to that country.

His daughter, Miss Lavinia Ponsonby, has been working in Moscow for nearly a year.

#### YOUNGEST BRITISH GIRL

##### THERE

She is 24, and is the youngest of the seven British girls in the Information Department of the British Embassy there.

Miss Ponsonby is very keen on her work in Moscow, and is much interested in the collection of material for articles about the Russian and British Youth Movements.

Colonel Ponsonby has had the opportunity of a meeting with Marshal Stalin. He has also been able to go to Leningrad, as well as seeing the work of some of the factories in the Ural districts.



*C.P. turns up in Moscow.*

## **9. Visit to Leningrad, 20<sup>th</sup> January 1945**

We sailed off from the National Hotel, Moscow in a fleet of cars, and were met at the station by the blinding lights of the news reel arc lamps, and various station masters and Narkomindel officials.

We arrived at Leningrad after one night in the train. About ten miles from it we began to see signs of desolation – torn up ground, trees with no tops, trenches, burnt out vehicles, cemeteries and heaps of rubble where houses had once been. The station was very knocked about. We were met by the local nobs and plenty of cameras and driven off to the Astoria Hotel. It had been specially heated for us, and everything was laid on in the best fashion. Baronov, the chief architect of the town, mealed with us and took us round everywhere. There was a gorgeous silk bromo, and bathrooms attached to our rooms.

I was surprised most by the extreme quietness of the town. It was a city just coming to life. There were very few people in the streets, and no cars. People shuffled around in shawls and valinki (felt boots). Old ladies were sweeping the streets free from snow, which was blowing in a blizzard. Of the pre-war population of three million, only 1,500,000 were left, although about 2000 are returning daily. Hundreds and thousands died of hunger in 1941, for during the worst period of the siege workers only got 250 grams of bread a day and no other food whatsoever. There was not much sign of bomb damage. The town had suffered mostly from shelling. It had been a very severe winter, and wooden houses had been pulled down for fuel, but no trees were cut down from the gardens and parks. They told us with pride that houses could be rebuilt in a year or two, but trees took a hundred years. The Leningradites are very town-proud. The cold winter had really saved the situation as they were able to start earlier the evacuation of some 600,000 people across the ice track over Lake Ladoga. Also there had been no epidemics.....

## **10. Visit to Sverdlovsk, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1945**

We arrived in Sverdlovsk at 10 in the morning. We were all disappointed at the lack of the Urals. The town is in a broad hollow. The real hills are further north.

We were met by the locals and the loudspeaker was playing a bright military march, which rather bucked some of the delegates who thought they were being met in style with a military band.....

### **11. Stalingrad, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1945**

Stalingrad is a very long town built along the banks of the Volga. We arrived in the morning on a bright sunny day with a blue sky and crisp snow. There is just not one building ungunned. It is the most desolate place, but yet very grand somehow. One feels at once as one does in the badly blitzed parts of London that these people have guts and that even if the Germans wreck their town, they could never get them down. The people were very like the Leningradites to talk to – very open-hearted, and had suffered enough to be able to be generous in their feelings as to the amount we had suffered in England, not like the Muscovites who think that they are the only people who have had a tough time in this war with their 200 tons of bombs and practically no damage to be seen.

At present there are about a quarter of a million people living in Stalingrad. They live in the temporary hutments which cover a hill like locusts, looking somewhat like a very dowdy Peacehaven. They also live in cellars and old railway coaches. The health has been very good considering the 60,000 corpses the Germans left in the town, and there have been no epidemics. Even now the drains are not working except in one or two places. They seem to do a lot of inoculating to keep things under control.

We were taken all round the town. We saw where Paulus had surrendered. We saw and went into one of the dugouts which had been the headquarters of the defenders of the town. All the people who took us round had been in Stalingrad during the siege, and showed us where they had lived, and fought for house after house. They were very modest and unassuming and rather ‘British’ as they took us round. We saw the H.Q. of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Army which was dugout under the banks of the Volga, reminding C.P. very much of Gallipoli.

The official dinner was a very cheery affair. I sat as usual down the bottom of the table among the toughs and hard drinkers. But I am pleased to say that I drank them both under the table. They drank tumblers of vodka so were soon out. I had to do another toast to the women of the Soviet Union. I did not have a moment to think so wondered what would come out, but all was well. I felt it was much easier to talk to these people because I sincerely felt what I said. All went well and I did not get lost in the middle. It is quite marvelous making a speech through an interpreter as one has time to make up the next sentence while the interpreting is being done, so there is no awful flap or black outs. Pa brought out the goods in a toast to Stalin, Elliot the Red Army, Faringdon the Reconstruction, and I forget what the others did. Toasts seemed to go on all the time. After supper we were shown a film of the reconstruction of Stalingrad and one of the defence of Stalingrad which was interesting to see. We sorrowfully said farewell and went back to our train at 12 a.m. and started for Baku....

## **A BRITISH PERSPECTIVE**

In this paper I will try to give a British perspective of the Battle at Khalkhyn Gol. As I said at the beginning, most British people today have never heard of Khalkhyn Gol.

To us it was the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the Americans into the Second World War. When the British heard the news of the Pearl Harbor attack, and the French too, they knew that they were in with a chance. In our eyes this was the turning point of the war. To what extent the Battle at Khalkhyn Gol in the summer of 1939 persuaded Japan not to attack Russia in 1941 and to attack America in December of that year, I leave to other people at this conference. At the beginning of 1941 England was very isolated. All of continental Europe was occupied by the Germans. At this time America was neutral, and Russia and Germany were busy dividing up Poland. In June 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union from the west, and Japan did not attack from the east. In December

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1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. At the same time Marshal Zhukov (the victor at Khalkhyn Gol ) counterattacked in front of Moscow using armies brought back from Siberia.

By the end of 1941 there was an alliance in place – England, America and the Soviet Union - which could win the war. As I understand it, it was thanks to Japan that this alliance came into existence. But what an extraordinary alliance it was. There were the British. There were the Americans, so many of whom had been isolationist and determined that this time America would not be drawn into a world war. And there was the Soviet Union, the Communist empire led by the dictator Stalin. The rest of the war was about keeping this extraordinary alliance together.

How does my mother's diary ( a 'primary source' ) fit with the big picture?

The ARCTIC CONVOYS in World War II travelled from the UK and the USA to the northern ports of the Soviet Union, Archangel and Murmansk. There were 78 convoys from August 1941 to May 1945 (with two gaps, July to September 1942 and March to November 1943). 1400 merchant ships delivered supplies to the Soviet Union under the Lend-Lease program. 85 merchant vessels and 16 Royal Navy Warships were lost. The Germans lost a battlecruiser, 3 destroyers and more than 30 U-boats, and many aircraft.

The route around occupied Norway was particularly dangerous due to the proximity of German air, submarine and surface forces, and the likelihood of severe weather, fog, strong currents, drift ice, and the difficulties of navigation in the winter darkness, and the dangers of being attacked around the clock in the constant daylight of summer. The worst losses were suffered in July 1942 by Convoy PQ17. Only 11 out of 35 merchant ships escaped the German U-boats and bombers. Early on the convoys played an important part supplying Leningrad under siege.

By the time my mother sailed on Convoy JW58 in March 1944, the material

significance of the supplies was not as important as their symbolic value to the Grand Alliance. By this time the convoys were safer, partly because of improved intelligence (the cracking of the Enigma code at Bletchley Park ) .

Nevertheless the *Tirpitz* battleship was still in the Tromso fjord.

The MOSCOW CONFERENCE, also called the Tolstoy Conference because of its code name Tolstoy, took place between October 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944, and was attended by Stalin with Molotov, and Winston Churchill with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. Roosevelt was not there, but in his place there was Averell Harriman, US ambassador to the Soviet Union. There were also delegations from the London based Polish Government in Exile and the Provisional Polish Communist Government based in Lublin. Issues discussed were the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan, the post war division of the Balkans in the form of the strange Percentages agreement, and the future of Poland. Under the Percentages agreement, Greece was rated 90% a Western sphere and 10% a Russian one. Romania was rated 90% a Russian sphere, and 10% a Western one..... The British also agreed to return to the Soviet Union all former Soviet citizens who had been liberated from the Germans. My mother just happened to be in Moscow at this time. The conference was about holding the Grand Alliance together. Churchill was worried about the balance of Europe after the war.

Finally, very briefly I will write about MAXIM LITVINOV (1876-1951) described as a Russian-Jewish revolutionary and prominent Soviet diplomat. He came from a wealthy Jewish banking family in Bialystok in former Polish Lithuania. In 1898 he joined the Social Democratic Labour Party which was an illegal organization. In 1901 he became a member of the Kiev Party committee, but the entire committee was arrested in 1901. After 18 months in captivity he led an escape of 11 inmates from the Lukanovskaya prison and lived in exile in Switzerland. In 1903 he joined the Bolsheviks and returned to Russia. In 1906 the Russian government began arresting Bolsheviks. Litvinov left the country and

spent the next ten years living in London. In England he met and married Ivy Lowe, daughter of one of the most distinguished Jewish families in Britain. Miss Lowe's ancestors emigrated from Hungary to England following the unsuccessful 1848 revolution. Her father Walter Lowe was a prominent writer and a close friend of H.G.Wells. After the October Revolution of 1917 Litvinov was appointed by Lenin as the Soviet government's representative in Britain. It was largely through his efforts that Britain agreed to end its economic blockade of the Soviet Union. In 1930 Stalin appointed Litvinov as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Litvinov believed in collective security and a closer relationship with France and Britain. In 1933 he successfully persuaded the United States to officially recognize the Soviet government. Roosevelt sent comedian Harpo Marx to the Soviet Union as a goodwill ambassador, and Litvinov and Marx became friends.

But the Germans did not like Litvinov because he was a Jew. In 1939 Stalin wanted to do a deal with Hitler. On May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939 Stalin replaced Litvinov with Molotov, and the Russian foreign ministry was purged of Jews. Hitler went ahead with the Nazi-Soviet Pact.....However on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Stalin re-appointed Litvinov as Deputy Commissioner of Foreign Affairs. From 1941 to 1943 Litvinov served as Ambassador to the United States, and significantly contributed to the lend lease agreement signed in 1941.

So it was his wife whom my mother met in Moscow in 1944. Litvinov was one of the important people on the Russian side who kept the Grand Alliance together.

So my conclusion..... The title of my paper is “Khalkhin Gol: a British Perspective.” I think it comes back to Pearl Harbor. The British and the French have a big debt to Japan for attacking Pearl Harbor and thereby bringing the Americans into the war, and at the same time helping the Russians to survive on their western front. If the battle at Khalkhin Gol two years before from May to August 1939 did indeed dissuade Japan from attacking the Soviet Union in 1941

and point her towards Pearl Harbor in December 1941 of that year, then it was very important. We British should be very grateful to the Japanese boys and also the young Russians and Mongolians who were killed at Nomonhan (Khalkhyn Gol).



- Toruk, Fraser, CP, Roberts - Parker - Lawrence - Lucia  
The Chairman - L.P. ENRIOT.

A photograph of my mother with the British delegation in Uzbekistan in February 1945.

## NOTES ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

The symposium really began on the plane from Inchon to Ulaan Baatar. There I found myself sitting next to Kanako Kodama from Chiba University and behind Yaroslav Shulatov, presently at Keio University in Tokyo. We were right at the back of the plane and I think we were the last people to be squeezed on. I had had difficulty until the last moment getting my ticket confirmed, as a lot of people were going to Ulaan Baatar at that time because of the Naadam festival of wrestling , archery and horse racing which takes place during that week. It was terribly exciting to be actually going to Mongolia at last. I was really pleased to meet those two. At least somebody else was going !

Later at the symposium Kanako Kodama read an interesting paper about Ejine, an oasis on the southern side of the Gobi Desert, with some good photographs of



camels and poplar forests. She is Japan's expert on Ejine. It was a pleasure to meet her.

Yaroslav Shulatov (hometown Khabarovsk) was completing his second doctoral thesis at Keio University in Tokyo. The first had been on Russian-Japanese relations 1904-1914, a diplomatic history, already published in Russian. We talked about Benkendorf, the Tsarist ambassador in London, who he knew quite a lot about. Benkendorf's son had been a prisoner of war in Matsuyama in 1905. At the symposium Yaroslav read a paper about Shtern Biryukov's report on the Battle of Khalkhyn Gol, contrasting this account with that of General Zhukov.

While waiting for my umbrella to arrive (in vain) at Ulaan Baatur airport, I met Han Suk-Jung from Pusan in South Korea. Koreans also took part in the Battle of Khalkhyn Gol as Korea was then a colony of Japan. His area of enquiry was how in so many countries, soldiers who had been in the colonial armies, became the rulers of their countries after the Europeans or other colonial powers left. Examples in Asia included Park Chung Hee in South Korea, Aung San and Ne Win in Burma, Suharto in Indonesia, and Zia in Pakistan. There are many more examples in Africa. He was interested in the story of Choibalsan in Mongolia.

The hotel for symposium participants looked like a Japanese love hotel – the walls of the building were painted purple and it was called the Hotel Eros – but actually it was a perfectly normal hotel (I think). The next morning at breakfast I met Christopher Atwood from Indiana University in America. I later saw in a guidebook that he was the author of an 'Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire' which I ordered for Aidai library and it arrived at the beginning of the autumn semester. It looks like a very useful book, indeed a great work of scholarship. Christopher made his presentation at the symposium in Mongolian with powerpoint English text on the screen and simultaneous translation into Japanese and Russian. Also at breakfast was Junko Imanishi from the Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA) and Husel Borjigin. The two of them had

done all the work organizing the symposium. Husel Borjigin was originally from Inner Mongolia. His father also attended the symposium. Later I heard his father talking about the popularity of Korean dramas on Chinese television. He was amazed that T'ang dynasty manners still survived somewhere in Asia. Was it really like that in Korea? he asked Han Suk-Jung. On the bus to the Mongolia-Japan Center I met Uradyn Bulag originally from the Ordos region of Inner Mongolia, now a professor at Cambridge with an office in the J Needham Research Institute. I think he is an anthropologist. Mongolia had the Stalinist purges in the 1930's and the Socialist follow-up until 1989. These decapitated the society of Outer Mongolia. And Inner Mongolia had to put up with the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless a few civilized people like Bulag seem to have slipped through the net. One person who didn't show up at the symposium, but who had been expected, was Chris Kaplonski, also from Cambridge. His name plate was there in front of an empty seat. In the bookshop at the airport I picked up Baabar's History of Mongolia (From World Power to Soviet Satellite) which is edited by Chris Kaplonski. It is easy to read and very interesting. In Kyoto a friend had given me an introduction to the American ambassador to Mongolia, Mark Minton. I had e-mailed him from Japan and he had said he would be at the symposium briefly and unofficially to listen to the presentation of a friend of his called Stuart Goldman. I had a chance to meet him on the first day, but then he disappeared. I read in the newspaper just before leaving Ulaan Bataar that the Obama administration had just appointed a new ambassador, so Mark Minton's time there was at an end. He had been there for 4 or 5 years. Stuart Goldman and Christopher Atwood were the two Americans at the symposium. Stuart's paper about the Battle of Khalkhyn Gol was an excellent one. He was interested in a Lt. Col. Tsuji Masanobu who played a prominent part in the battle and who subsequently in 1941, after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, argued forcefully against the Japanese army attacking the Soviet Union from the east, supporting instead the navy's southward course towards the Dutch East Indies and the attack on Pearl Harbor. I had never heard of Tsuji Masanobu so I am looking forward to Stuart's book about him! I think it will not be easy to research it.

At the end of the first day there was a banquet in the President's palace a little way out of town. Before dinner started, there was a musical performance of Hoomii – a kind of guttural yoodling. It was called 'A Song for a Dead Horse'. Subsequently I heard more of this at the Chojin Lama temple. It is rather fun, and I have a cassette so now I can practice in the bath here in Japan. The other musical entertainments were Morin huuri (pronounced 'hurh'), and horse guitar, and Bielgee (a shivering dance like the waves of the sea). I was on the same table as the Assistant Russian Military Attache, my neighbour, Sulimuk Gennadiy. I regretted that I had not kept up my Russian. However I did learn that he had three sons. The eldest, Roman, aged 14 was a military cadet in St Petersburg. He had already made his first parachute jump. His father was very proud of him. The next, Andrei, liked canoeing and the third was Gleb. Also from the Russian embassy was Vladimir Basanov (He had a cat called Murik), and Irina, and Svetlana Dymbrylova, a girl from Ulan Ude in the Buryat Autonomous Region south of Lake Baikal. She is now studying in Moscow. I think she is half Russian, half Buryat Mongol. They all thought I was from MI6. We were joined by Undraa Togosbold, the interpreter from English into Mongolian and I was able to tell her about the paper I was going to give the following day. This was very fortunate. Half the people at the symposium were Mongolian and all they heard was her translation. The next day it was clear that what she said was amusing and interesting to the audience. How closely it resembled what I had been saying I do not know. But the result was that the Mongolian participants were friendly and welcoming after I had spoken. The lesson drawn by me was that it is a good idea to make friends with the interpreters!

The next day at breakfast the conversation was about the Kiba Minzoku Ron, Egami Namio sensei's theory about the arrival of horseriders in Japan from the continent during the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It was not only the armies of Genghis Khan who travelled long distance on horses at breathtaking speed. It had happened before and it happened after. It is quite possible that the horseriders who built the Keyhole tombs in Osaka and elsewhere in Japan came from as far away as

Mongolia. My question was: how long would it take to ride from Ulaan Baatar to Pusan, and then over the stepping stones of Tsushima and Iki to Japan. The nomadic people used to ride day and night sleeping on their horses. The answer is: about three weeks .....?? Kanako Kodama left her passport and money on the breakfast table after this conversation! That day I gave my paper. Because of all the cancellations I was the only European to give a paper. Using power point I was able to put the photograph of my grandfather in Moscow and the article about him in the Kent newspaper up on the big screen behind me. As I spoke, I could hear the drone of the simultaneous translators' Mongolian and Russian and Japanese in the background. I felt that my paper was like an unfinished artwork, actually like something out of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Were my words really being translated into Russian, Mongolian and Japanese as I spoke? There seemed to be no connection between my mother's wartime diary and the battle of Khalkhyn Gol. And yet there was a connection: the Japanese unwittingly created the Grand Alliance of the UK (then the British Empire), formerly neutral America, and the USSR, and that alliance did hold together (Arctic convoys, the role of Litvinov), and its eventual victory in the Second World War does all go back to that battle on the eastern border of Outer Mongolia which nobody in England today has ever heard of. There was not a mention of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the English newspapers this summer. After my presentation I talked with a Russian professor who was the grandfather of the symposium. He had first visited Ulaan Baatar more than 50 years before and had met Molotov who at that time was the Russian ambassador to Mongolia sent there by Khrushchev who wanted him off the scene. It was Molotov who had replaced Litvinov in May 1938, and Litvinov's wife with whom my mother had tea in 1944 in Moscow. The symposium ended with dinner at the Japanese embassy not far from our love hotel. The ambassador was saying that Mongolia could be another Georgia. Mongolians had short memories he said. I put this to Christopher Atwood: Why would Mongolia not be another Georgia? The answer seemed to be that there were no issues quite like Abkhazia and South Ossetia. And more significant, there was the point of view of Beijing. Mongolia is a buffer state, a shock

absorber, between Russia and China. For both parties it is best to leave it that way. On this fact rests Mongolian independence. An embassy girl suggested I go up to Selenge if I wanted to meet beekeepers. Subsequently I learned that Khalkhyn Gol is also a beekeeping location. But Mongolia is a big place and on this first short trip I did not have time to do both.

The day after the symposium concluded, the Khalkhyn Gol exhibition of photographs and newsreels opened at the National Archives Museum of Mongolia.

After that, in two buses we went out to the grasslands for a banquet in a Ger encampment. It was a great feast, indeed two feasts. First there was mutton (cooked with hot stones) and washed down with bowls of airag (also known as Koumiss) which is fermented mare's milk, and shots of Mongolian vodka. A lot of songs were sung. Tanaka Katsuhiko, formerly of Chukyo University and one of the keynote speakers, could not stop singing and talking about Pan-Mongolism. 'Vodka brings out the truth', he said. Everybody had to sing. I sang 'My Bonnie lies over the ocean', and later with the Director General of the Archive Museum (our host) Ulziibaatar Demberel 'Yesterday, all my troubles were so far away'. He knew the words better than me. After lunch there was wrestling outside the Ger. Among the guests there was a professional wrestler – not a big man, but a very skilful one, and a number of the guests took him on, but failed to trip him up. I opted for a siesta in a smaller Ger. And some members went galloping around the encampment on little ponies. In the late afternoon we started dinner. This time it was a goat – a cashmere goat – washed down with more vodka. Somewhere along the way I learned that Junko Imanishi had a son at Shrewsbury School in England and that her great interest in life was dressage. I remember Ulziibaatar Demirel drinking a toast to the Tanaka Memorandum. No Chinese were attending this symposium. Christopher Atwood was sick on the bus going back to Ulaan Baatar. I was sorry for him. Incidentally I am now finding that

his Encyclopedia of Mongolia is excellent. The next morning I moved out of the Hotel Eros and went to meet beekeepers in Selenge in the north of the country.. I write about this part of the trip in another article ( Ippan Kyoiku Ronso March 2010).

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