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ON THE POSITION OF KHAMNIGAN MONGOL

Revised version of a paper presented at the 33rd annual meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Budapest, June 1990

For a long time, Khamnigan Mongol remained a blank spot on the map of the Mongolic languages and dialects. It is, indeed, a paradox that this extremely «old» and conservative type of Mongolic was the last to become scientifically explored and documented. Such a distinguished authority as POPPE (1955.14–23) was still unable to mention Khamnigan Mongol in his classification of Mongolic idioms. It was only through the works of KŐHALMI (1959), MISHIG (1959), DAMDINOV (1962, 1968), and RINCHEN (1968), that relevant material began to become available. Nevertheless, Khamnigan Mongol continues to be ignored in, for instance, the Mongolic comparative dictionary recently published in China under the editorship of SUN ZHUZHU (1990).

To be exact, Khamnigan Mongol lexical material was indirectly recorded by many travellers and scholars after the arrival of the Russians in the part of Transbaikalia known as «Dauria», for many of the ethnonymic and toponymic items occuring in early notes from this region actually derive from Khamnigan Mongol. A small lexical corpus was also recorded by CASTRÉN (1856), who, in the course of his field work on Evenki dialects (1848), wrote dōwn Khamnigan Mongol words, as used in the Evenki speech of his presumably bilingual informants. The first to collect extensive samples of Khamnigan Mongol language material in its own right seems to have been ZHAMTSARANO, but the results of his field work (1911) remained unknown until published by DAMDINOV (1982).

In spite of the gradual accumulation of material, there are still many unsolved problems connected with the incorporation of Khamnigan Mongol into the context of Mongolic comparative studies. A preliminary attempt at determining the genetic position of both Khamnigan Mongol and Khamnigan Evenki was made by DOERFER (1985), who lists a number of diagnostic features characteristic of Khamnigan speech. Unfortunately, the corpus available to DOERFER did not allow him to make a consistent distinction between the two languages of the Khamnigan, nor between different varieties of Khamnigan Mongol. He also

abstains from making a definitive statement concerning the taxonomic status of Khamnigan Mongol, as a whole.

Until recently, it was thought that Khamnigan Mongol is nowadays only spoken by a few scattered individuals in the Onon-Borzya region, on both sides of the the Siberian-Mongolian border. The forms of Khamnigan Mongol distributed on the Siberian side have often been counted among Buryat dialects, while in Mongolia Khamnigan Mongol (like Buryat) is normally considered an aberrant type of general Modern Mongolian. However, the present author (1990) has shown that Khamnigan Mongol also survives among a remarkably vigorous emigrant population on the Manchurian side. The Khamnigan identity of this population had been hidden behind the official ethnic taxonomy of China, which identifies the people in question simply as a variety of the «Evenki» nationality.

The aim of the present paper is to demonstrate that Khamnigan Mongol should be recognized as an independent Mongolic language. Like Buryat and Dagur, this language was formed in the northeastern periphery of the Mongolic language area under a strong adstrate (to some extent also substrate and superstrate) influence of the neighbouring Tungusic languages, particularly Evenki. Khamnigan Mongol came to function as the Mongolic language of the bilingual population historically known as the «Equestrian Tungus of Transbaikalia». Even today, bilingualism in Evenki is common among the speakers of Khamnigan Mongol in Manchuria.

It must be noted at this point that the fact of bilingualism in Evenki does not in any way affect the status of Khamnigan Mongol as an independent language. Thus, Khamnigan Mongol is *not* a form of deteriorated Mongolian, spoken by people whose native language is actually Evenki. For the bilingual individuals Khamnigan Mongol and Evenki are simply two parallel native languages, but, importantly, there have apparently always also been monolingual speakers of Khamnigan Mongol. Although Khamnigan Evenki certainly deserves attention in the context of Evenki dialectology, it is Khamnigan Mongol that must be recognized as the dominant and distinctive language of all the historical and contemporary groups that can be identified as belonging to the Khamnigan ethnos.

The material available at present allows a distinction to be made between two main varieties of Khamnigan Mongol. The difference between these varieties is one of areal orientation: as the one shows a number of diagnostic features common with Khalkha, the other is somewhat more reminiscent of Buryat. This is not to say that there would exist a simple dialectal continuum from Khalkha through Khamnigan Mongol to Buryat, for, as will be shown below, the two

varieties of Khamnigan Mongol are much more closely connected with each other than either of them is with either Khalkha or Buryat. On the other hand, there are indications that the two varieties of Khamnigan Mongol are (or have been) themselves mutually bridged by a number of transitional subdialects and idiolects.

The «Khalkha-type» of Khamnigan Mongol has been most systematically recorded by DAMDINOV (1968) on the basis of data deriving from the Siberian side, but this is also the idiom reflected by the bulk of the information coming from Mongolia. The «Buryat-type» of Khamnigan Mongol is, on the other hand, today best preserved by the emigrant group in Manchuria, as described by the present author (1990), though scattered references to an idiom of this type may be found in other sources, as well. Judging by the information supplied by DAMDINOV (1962), this variety is (or was until recently) also spoken at Delyun, a locality not far from Urulga (*Urul'ga*), the old administrative centre of the «Equestrian Tungus».

It has already been pointed out by the present author (1991.12–13) that the internal division of Khamnigan Mongol reveals a certain areal parallelism with that of Khamnigan Evenki. As the two main varieties of Khamnigan Evenki are, with reference to their documentation by CASTRÉN (1856), historically known as the dialects of Urulga and Mankovo (*Man'kovo*), we may conveniently use the same terms for the two main varieties of Khamnigan Mongol. Not forgetting that it is a question of mere labels, we may, therefore, identify the «Khalkha-type» of Khamnigan Mongol as the Mankovo dialect (to be abbreviated below as M) and the «Buryat-type» of Khamnigan Mongol as the Urulga dialect (abbreviated as U).

A comparative evaluation of the grammatical features and lexical resources of Khamnigan Mongol would be an insurmountably complicated task for the moment. As the present author has remarked (1990.71–72, 90–92), Khamnigan Mongol appears to share a number of important grammatical and lexical peculiarities with Buryat, rather than Khalkha, making it a good working hypothesis for the future that Khamnigan Mongol and Buryat might actually derive from a single branch of Mongolic. However, since in many of the cases involved it is difficult to distinguish between archaisms and innovations (including borrowings), these aspects of the problem must remain waiting for a more comprehensive understanding of Mongolic comparative morphology and lexicology.

In view of the difficulties connected with the comparison of grammatical and lexical similarities and dissimilarities, the genetic position of Khamnigan Mongol will be determined below in terms of diachronic phonology only. This is a relatively convenient approach,

for the number of phonological correspondences between related languages is always very limited, and it is normally easy to determine, whether a given phonological peculiarity represents an archaism or an innovation. Also, as far as the Mongolic languages are concerned, most of the reconstructional problems that might otherwise arise are solved by the fact that the phonology of the common protolanguage is concretely documented in the Middle Mongolian sources.

In the following discussion it will be considered sufficient to compare the two main dialects of Khamnigan Mongol (M and U) with the three neighbouring Mongolic languages: Dagur (abbreviated as D), Khalkha (abbreviated as X), and (Eastern) Buryat (abbreviated as B). The presentation is organized according to phonological innovations. For each numbered innovation, the idioms participating in it, as well as those remaining outside of it, are listed (by the mentioned abbreviations), after which follows a more detailed commentary with the focus on the situation in Khamnigan Mongol. Each point is illustrated by a concrete example from Khamnigan Mongol, while the amount of material data cited from the better known Mongolic languages is kept to a minimum.

The innovations to be examined are divided into four basic groups. The first group comprises the innovations present in both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol (MU), as well as in one or more other Mongolic idioms. The second group comprises the innovations only present in a single dialect of Khamnigan Mongol (either M or U), as well as in one or more other Mongolic idioms. The third group comprises the innovations absent in both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol but present in more than one other Mongolic language. The fourth group, finally, comprises the innovations present in a single Mongolic language other than Khamnigan Mongol.

MUDBX, MUBX, MUD

1. *-x- > MUDBX -Ø-, as in *bexelei 'gloves' > MU *beelei*. This is the only phonological innovation common to all the modern Mongolic languages, including all the idioms considered in the present analysis. From the technical point of view it would, therefore, be possible to reconstruct *-Ø- instead of *-x- (traditionally referred to as the so-called disappearing «*g*»). However, an internal reconstruction of Proto-Mongolic would suggest that the intervocalic *-x- = *-Ø- represents the same phoneme as the word-initial *x- (traditionally written as «*h*»), as examined separately below (№ 5). The intervocalic segment was still reflected by the hiatus (') in Middle Mongolian, and it was apparently fully lost only immediately before the dissolution of the protolanguage. A concrete segmental trace of it is present in the cases exhibiting an

irregular alternation between *-x- and *-g-, as in M(U)X *deel* vs. (M)UB *degel* 'dress'. In such cases, Khamnigan Mongol typically stands between Buryat and Khalkha.

2.   *e-*ü > MUDBX *ö–*ü, as in *temür 'iron' > *tömür > (M)U *tvmvr*. This specific instance of regressive vowel assimilation conctitutes another innovation common to all the idioms considered here, although a subsequent innovation (№ 13) has affected the status of the segment *ö. There is, however, a systematic exception in Dagur, where *e is preserved in the composition of the «diphthong» *eu* < *e(x)ü (№ 8 sub № 14). Another case of preservation may be observed in D *edee* 'now' < *edüxe. In other words, there is evidence that the assimilation of *e–*ü into *ö–*ü in Dagur took place only, if neither of the two vowels belonged to a contracted sequence formed by the loss of *-x- (№ 1). A similar chronology can possibly be assumed for the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, while evidence from the other idioms concerned remains inconclusive.

3.   *o–*a > MUDBX *o–o*, as in *kota/n 'town' > MU *koto/n*. This is the basic rule of labial harmony in back-vocalic words. Although shared by all the idioms relevant to the present discussion, it is not quite clear, whether labial harmony in Mongolic really originated as a primary innovation in a single genetic branch. It is well known that the phenomenon has parallels in Tungusic, suggesting that it may have reached Khamnigan Mongol as a secondary areal innovation. The phonological effect of labial harmony is also questionable because of its neutralizing effect, a circumstance which is further complicated by other neutralizing developments affecting the single vowels of non-initial syllables especially in Khalkha (№№ 20–22) and Dagur (№ 29). Even in Khamnigan Mongol, the scope of labial harmony is subject to certain restrictions. For instance, it seems that the phenomenon is not active in the combination *oo–a*, as in *toxona 'smoke-hole frame' > U *toona*. On the other hand, the presence of labial harmony in the combination *o–oo*, as in instr. *kota-xar > U *kotoor*, is phonologically rather unambiguous. Therefore, in spite of the problems of synchronic interpretation, there seems to be no serious reason to doubt that labial harmony does represent a concrete phonological innovation in some form or another characterizing both Khamnigan Mongol and all the neighbouring Mongolic languages.

4.   *-n vs. *-ng > MUDBX *-n = -ng*. This development, involving the «archiphonemization» of the final nasals *-n and *-ng, is just one aspect of a complex series of processes affecting the mutual relationships of the nasal consonants. Some other aspects of the nasals will be discussed below under separate points (№№ 18–19), but many details remain unclear in the absence of reliable synchronic data. A common

feature of most of the the idioms considered here is that the contrast between *-n and *-ng is synchronically preserved at the lexical level, being only positionally neutralized under certain conditions. These conditions, as well as the phonetic realization of the archiphonemic segment, vary from idiom to idiom and from context to context. For instance, as has been noted by RASSADIN (1982.107–110), many dialects of both Khalkha and Buryat preserve heterorganic clusters of the type *-ng-d- as distinct from *-n-d-, while Khamnigan Mongol (at least the Urulga dialect) shows a neutralization, as in *ang 'wild game' : dat. *ang-du > X angd(e) vs. U andu. Khamnigan Mongol follows here the pattern known from Dagur, though it is difficult to establish any instances of concrete innovations shared only by Khamnigan Mongol and Dagur with regard to the nasals.

5. *x- > D x- vs. MU(D)BX Ø-, as in *xarba/n 'ten' > D xarebe/n vs. MU arba/n. Dagur is the only Mongolic language in the northeast which preserves the initial *x- («h») segmentally intact. In this respect, both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol, like both Khalkha and Buryat, belong to the more common type of Mongolic idioms showing a loss of the segment. Since the phoneme *x has also been lost intervocalically (№ 1), it would technically be possible to assume a single process of segment deletion. The situation in Dagur could then be explained by assuming a special contextual restriction in the application of this process. However, for the present purpose it is more illustrative to list the two contexts of the loss of *x in terms of separate innovations. Moreover, the fate of the initial *x- in Khamnigan Mongol is itself a somewhat controversial issue, since RINCHEN (1968.81–83), and after him DOERFER (1985.70), quote examples suggesting that the segment may actually have been preserved in some Khamnigan Mongol sub-dialects on the Mongolian side. This would not be too surprising, as many forms of Khamnigan Evenki also possess a segment analogous to the Mongolic *x-. It is also known that some of the diaspora dialects of Dagur have secondarily lost the initial *x-, suggesting that a similar secondary loss could also have taken place only recently in Khamnigan Mongol. Unfortunately, the examples presented by RINCHEN are poorly documented, and it cannot be ruled out that some sort of mis-understanding is involved. For the moment, it seems safer to count Khamnigan Mongol among those Mongolic languages in which the initial *x- has been primarily lost.

6. *ixa > BX yaa vs. MUD ie, as in *takixa/n 'hen' > X taxyaa/n vs. MU takie/n. There is no doubt that the representation in Khamnigan Mongol and Dagur here reflects the intimate areal connection of these two languages with Evenki. Thus, the Mongolic sequence *ia < *ixa (also reconstructable as *iya) seems to have been

simply reinterpreted in terms of the Evenki vowel system, to yield the harmonically neutral «diphthong» *ie*, well known from Evenki. Although Buryat and Khalkha also show a restructuring, apparently to be understood as a kind of palatal breaking (№ 15) of the original sequence, they clearly remain outside of the sphere of Evenki influence on this point. Of course, it is again difficult to determine, whether the innovation shared by Khamnigan Mongol and Dagur took place only once in a single genetic branch of Mongolic. There remains the possibility of a secondary areal convergence.

7.   *VyV > MUBX *VyV* vs. MUD *Vi*, as in *koyar 'two' > MU *koyor* or *koir*. The innovatory development in this case involves the «diphthongization» of sequences containing an intervocalic palatal glide. While this innovation is observed regularly in Dagur, its status in Khamnigan Mongol is problematic, for both dialects of this language show what seems to be a more or less free alternation between «diphthongized» and «non-diphthongized» sequences. In view of the general archaicness of Khamnigan Mongol, it might seem natural to assume that the «non-diphthongized» representation is primary, while the «diphthongized» sequences would be due to a recent secondary innovation, perhaps areally connected with Dagur. However, there are indications that the innovation of «diphthongization» may actually once have been the rule in Khamnigan Mongol, while the «non-diphthongized» sequences used by the modern speakers are possibly due to morphophonological generalizations, as well as areal interference with Buryat and Khalkha. The problem remains to be analyzed in more detail in the future, but, in any case, the «diphthongization» development provides another potential example of a concrete innovation shared by Khamnigan Mongol and Dagur.

MDBX, MBX, UDB, UD, UB

8.   *a(x)u > D *au* vs. U *oo* vs. MBX *uu*, as in *axula/n 'mountain' > D *aule/n* vs. U *oola/n* vs. M *uula/n*. While it is well known that Dagur preserves the sequence *a(x)u as an archaic «diphthong» of the type *au*, it has not been generally recognized that the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol also retains a concrete trace of a similar «diphthong». Thus, the result of the contraction in the case of *a(x)u > *oo* in the Urulga dialect reflects the mid-way between the two original vowel qualities. By contrast, the original sequence *u(x)u has resulted in *uu*, as in *uxu-ku 'to drink' > U *uuku*. The Mankovo dialect, like both Khalkha and Buryat, shows the more radical innovation of merging *a(x)u with *u(x)u, to yield a uniform *uu*. It may be noted that Dagur also has the double vowel *oo* as the regular reflex of *a(x)u in non-initial syllables, as in *kalaxun 'hot' > D *xaloon* vs. U *kaloon* vs. M

kaluun. Unfortunately, due to the paradigmatic merger of *u and *o in Dagur (№ 26), it is impossible to determine, whether the development in these cases has been *au > *oo* (implying an innovation shared with the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol), or *au > *uu > *oo* (with the intermediate stage shared with Khalkha and Buryat).

9. *uxa > U *oo* vs. MDBX *aa*, as in *ab- 'to take' : ger. prf. *ab-u-xad > U *abood* vs. M *abaad*. In preserving a consistent reflex of the original difference between the sequences *uxa > *oo* and *axa > *aa* in non-initial syllables, the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol seems to stand alone among all modern Mongolic idioms. However, it is possible that this archaic feature was originally characteristic of the Mankovo dialect, as well, for DAMDINOV (1968.85), apparently referring to the Mankovo dialect, expressly mentions that «rare» examples of the type *abood* occur among his materials. DAMDINOV falsely identifies these examples as cases of «emphatic» speech, although in reality they are connected with an ordinary phonological development. The situation reflected by most data from the Mankovo dialect, as well as by all the other languages under consideration here, is probably due to a kind of reverse effect of labial harmony (№ 3). Thus, at the same time as combinations of the type *o–*aa were transformed into the modern *o–oo*, combinations of the type *a–*oo also underwent a harmonic levelling, yielding *a–aa*. In other words, we are actually dealing with two consecutive innovations:

9. *uxa > MUDBX *oo = U *oo*. This innovation preserves its full synchronic relevance only in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol. However, the other idioms considered here also show *oo* in a special group of cases involving the neutral vowel *i in the initial syllable, as in *jiruxa 'ambler' > U *jiroo* vs. X *jyoroo*. Although the synchronic vowel combination *o–oo* in such cases also appears to follow labial harmony, this is actually due to the effect of palatal breaking (№ 15). A different type of early irregularity is apparently connected with the word *daluxa/n > *doluxa/n 'seven' > MUDBX *doloo/n*. It may be recalled in this context that the development *uxa > *oo* may also have been valid for the initial syllable in examples of the type *tuxa/n resp. *toxa/n 'number' > MUDBX *too/n*. As no distinction between *uxa and *oxa can be established for Proto-Mongolic, the reconstruction of these sequences remains a matter of interpretation.

10. *oo > U *oo* vs. MDBX *aa*. This innovation, absent only in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, is positionally restricted to non-initial syllables following a syllable with either one of the vowels *a or *u. In the position following a syllable with the vowel *o, the development is prevented (or the original situation restored) by labial harmony. It is illustrative to compare examples of the types *tosu/n 'oil' : instr.

*tosu-xar > U *toxoor* vs. X *tosoor* and *usu/n 'water' : instr. *usu-xar > U *uxoor* vs. X *usaar*. Although the synchronic combination *o–oo* in the first example (with the vowel *o in the first syllable) is superficially identical in the two idioms concerned, it is actually connected with two separate phenomena: the development *uxa > *oo* in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, as well as the additional effect of labial harmony in Khalkha. This is clearly shown by the second example (with the vowel *u in the first syllable).

11. *-s(C-) > MX -s(C-) vs. U(D)B -d(C-), as in *bos-ku 'to rise' > M *bosku* vs. U *bodku*. This merger of the sibilant *s with the stop *d in all syllable-final positions is perhaps the most fundamental of three important phonological innovations (№№ 11–13) which link the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol with Buryat, while the Mankovo dialect, like Khalkha, preserves the non-innovatory state. Although no documentable parallel development is known from Evenki, the innovation may still have been triggered by the phonotactic pressure of Evenki. Syllable-final fricatives were originally not permitted in Tungusic, and even Modern Khamnigan Evenki, as described by the present author (1991.45–46), shows a syllable-final *s* in very recent loanwords only. It is tempting to assume that the innovation once also concerned Dagur, where all syllable-final obstruents have been later merged into *r* (№ 28). There is, however, a minor difference between Dagur and Buryat, in that the latter language exceptionally preserves the sibilant character of the syllable-final segment in the special position preceding a syllable containing the palatal vowel *i. In this respect, the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol adheres to Buryat, as in *axuski 'lungs' > U *ooski* vs. D *aurki*.

12. *sV > MDX sV vs. UB xV, as in *sakal 'beard' > M *sakal* vs. U *xakal*, or *casu/n 'snow' > M *casu/n* vs. U *caxu/n*. The second link between Buryat and the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, this innovation also forms another facet of the diachrony of the sibilant *s. Thus, a prevocalic *s has normally been «pharyngealized» into *x*, being only preserved before the palatal vowel *i, as in *sidü/n 'tooth' > MU *sidv/n*. This «pharyngealization» development is rather mysterious from the areal point of view, for it cannot be readily attributed to Evenki influence. In any case, although some Evenki dialects do show an analogous development, this is not typical of Khamnigan Evenki, which preserves the original Tungusic prevocalic *s intact. Phonetically, of course, the segment produced by the «pharyngealization» is identical with the Tungusic *x (as well as, apparently, with the original Mongolic *x), a circumstance which must have been of some relevance to the diachronic course of events. It is probably diagnostic that Dagur (which preserves the Mongolic *x-) has not

participated in the «pharyngealization» of *s, although it generally tends to share with Buryat and Khamnigan Mongol any innovations connected with Evenki influence.

13. *ö > MX ∅ («ŏ») vs. UB v («ŭ») = D u, as in *xöndür 'high' > M ∅ndvr vs. U vndvr. The innovation in this case involves the neutralization of the paradigmatic opposition between the single vowels *ö and *ü, yielding the uniform high vowel v. The development is again easily attributable to Tungusic influence, for Evenki (due to an analogous but much earlier merger of two vowels) lacks any segment of the type ∅ in its paradigm. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Dagur among the idioms participating in this innovation. A special link between Dagur and the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol is suggested by a number of words originally containing the combination *ö–*e. By a front-vocalic analogy to labial harmony (№ 3), this combination must initially have yielded *ö–*ö, which after the elimination of the phoneme *ö got the shape U v–v resp. D u–u, as in *köke 'blue' > U kvkv = D kuku. It is interesting to note that such shapes, as well as some other instances pointing to the development *ö > v, are occasionally also cited from the Mankovo dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, suggesting that the «preservation» of *ö in this idiom may, at least to some extent, be connected with the secondary influence of Khalkha. From the genetic point of view, the reflexes of *ö must apparently be valued as taxonomically less significant than those of *s (№№ 11–12). It may be recalled that the merger of *ö and *ü extends to the Tsongol type of (Northern) Khalkha dialects, while many (Western) Buryat dialects retain *ö as a distinct segment. Moreover, almost all varieties of both Khalkha and Buryat possess the distinct double vowel ∅∅, as examined separately below (№ 14).

14. *öö > MBX ∅∅ vs. U(D) ee. This innovation must have originated in response to the paradigmatic asymmetry which arose, when the double vowel *öö still continued to exist, although the single vowel *ö had been eliminated (№ 13). However, as the single vowel *ö was merged with *ü, the elimination of the double vowel *öö took place by merging it with *ee. In its simple form, this development is unambiguously attested only in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, while the Mankovo dialect, like Khalkha and Buryat, seems to preserve *öö. It is true, the paradigmatic elimination of *öö in favour of ee is also characteristic of Dagur, but the actual mechanism of the development here seems to be labial breaking (№ 26), leaving it a matter of interpretation, whether Dagur and the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol may be said to share an innovation on this point. In most other respects, the history of *öö is analogous to that of *oo. Thus, the innovations (№№ 8–10) affecting the development of the back-vocalic

sequences *a(x)u resp. *uxa may also be considered responsible for the fate of the front-vocalic counterparts *e(x)ü resp. *üxe:

8. *e(x)ü > D *eu* vs. U *öö* vs. MBX *vv*, as in *sexül 'tail' > D *seuli* vs. U *xeel* vs. M *svvl*. The Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, like Dagur, keeps examples of this type distinct from those containing the original sequence *ü(x)ü, as in *küxün 'man' > U *kvvn*. On the other hand, due to the development *öö > *ee* in the Urulga dialect, the distinction between *e(x)ü and *e(x)e has been lost, as in U *kvbee/n* < *köbexü/n 'son' & *köbexe/n 'edge'. As has been implied above (№ 2), it cannot be ruled out that the development *e(x)ü > *vv* in the other idioms concerned actually took place through the assimilated intermediate stage *ö(x)ü.

9. *üxe > MUDBX *öö > MBX *øø* vs. U(D) *ee*, as in *cilüxe/n 'free time' > M *ciløø/n* vs. U *cilee/n*. The same correspondence may be considered to be valid for the initial syllable, as well, although it is impossible to make a reconstructional distinction between the sequences *üxe resp. *öxe. In any case, the resulting *öö yields *ee* in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, as in *küxesü/n resp. *köxesü/n 'foam' > M *køøsv/n* vs. U *keesv/n*.

10. *öö > U *ee* = MDBX *ee*, as in *xüsü/n 'hair' : instr. *xüsü-xer > *üsöör > U *vxeer* vs. X *vseer*. This situation is valid for the position following either one of the vowels *e or *ü of the initial syllable. Although the synchronic vowel combination *v–ee* in such cases is superficially uniform, a comparison with the diachrony of *oo shows that two different processes are actually involved: the general paradigmatic merger of *öö with *ee in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, and the reverse application of labial harmony in all the other idioms. It is normally assumed that most idioms of the (Eastern) Buryat type, which merge *ö with *ü but preserve *öö as distinct from *ee, still possess the synchronic combination *v–øø* in cases originally containing *ö in the initial syllable. Similar shapes are occasionally cited from the Mankovo dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, as in *dörüxe/n 'stirrup' > X *døgøø/n* vs. MB *dvrøø/n* vs. U *dvree/n*. The ultimate explanation of such data, at least as far as the Mankovo dialect is concerned, lies in the phonetic similarity of the two vowels *e* (*ee*) and *ø* (*øø*). As in many other languages of the Manchurian linguistic area, the segment *e > *e* in both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol has assumed the quality of a central to back rounded vowel (often transcribed as «*ȯ*»), extremely close to the quality of *ö > *ø* in idioms of the Khalkha type. The whole situation is connected with the series of qualitative transitions which has been termed vowel rotation. Due to this very phenomenon, the development *öö > *ee* in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol did not necessarily involve any phonetic change at all, for it seems that the

earlier vowel *öö was simply interpreted as *ee* < *ee, as the latter had gradually acquired a quality sufficiently similar to that of *öö. What is essential here, is, of course, that the distinction between *öö and *ee was neutralized, leaving *ee* (as the presumably less marked type of vowel) representing any phonetic qualities previously associated with either *öö or *ee. A misunderstanding of the difference between the phonetic and phonemic levels of representation seems to have caused some confusion on this point in the past, and there is reason to ask, whether the development *öö > *ee* in Mongolic is really restricted to the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol (as well as Dagur). The present author has suggested earlier (1988.355–356) that the development may also be valid for some speakers of Modern Old Bargut, but in this case the possibility of an immediate areal connection with the Urulga type of Khamnigan Mongol cannot be ruled out. More importantly, DAMDINOV (1968) presents many examples of the «labialization» of *e (*ee) into ø (øø) in the Mankovo dialect. In the light of the evidence presented above, it must be a question of a mere quasi-innovation, to be viewed as another aspect of the neutralization between *e (*ee) and *ö (*öö):

14. *e (*ee) > M «ø» («øø») = U(D)BX *e* (*ee*), as in *emexel 'saddle' > M «ømøøl» = UBX *emeel*, or *ire- 'to come' : prt. *ire-xe > M «irøø» = U *iree*. Although the Mankovo dialect allegedly preserves the paradigmatic distinction between *ö (*öö) and *e (*ee), such examples actually suggest that a neutralization may have taken place, the result being a vowel phonetically reminiscent of the quality of ø (øø), as known from Buryat and other Mongolic idioms. From the phonological point of view, the vowel must, however, be recognized as *e* (*ee*). The situation may, of course, be dialectologically more complicated, with some subdialects preserving the original qualitative distinction. As a background factor for both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol, bilingualism in Evenki may have played a role, for it is likely that bilingual individuals would tend to unify the vowel paradigms of their two languages in favour of the less diversified (Evenki) system.

DBX, DX, BX

15. *i–*V > MU *i–V* vs. DBX *yV–V*, as in *sira 'yellow' > MU *sira* vs. X *syara > *syar*. This is the innovation of palatal breaking, shared to a varying extent by all Mongolic idioms of the Dagur, Buryat, and Khalkha types. As the present author has pointed out elsewhere (1989.182–187), it is necessary to make a clear distinction between breaking proper and an earlier (apparently sporadic) phenomenon which may be termed the prebreaking assimilation. Importantly, neither of the two dialects of Khamnigan Mongol reveals any unambiguous traces of

breaking proper, and even the prebreaking assimilation is often absent in items which do show the phenomenon, for instance, in Khalkha, as in *mika/n 'meat' > U *mika/n* vs. X *max/en*. The only potential example of breaking in Khamnigan Mongol seems to be offered by a word lacking an initial consonant, but even this case may involve the prebreaking assimilation after an original initial palatal glide: *(y)iro 'omen' > U *yoro* = X *yor*. In another item containing the same vocalism *i–*o, the Urulga dialect (as spoken by the emigrant population in Manchuria today) would also suggest the prebreaking assimilation, while the original shape of the word has been recorded from the Mankovo dialect: *cino 'wolf' > M *cino* vs. U *cono* vs. X *cyon*. A somewhat special situation is encountered in the cases involving breaking parallelly with vowel contraction due to the loss of *-x- (№ 1). In such cases, breaking proper is only rarely observed in Khalkha, as in *kixag 'couch grass' > U *kieg* vs. X *xyaag* (after the consonant *k), while the normal representation would point to the prebreaking assimilation, as in *nixa-ku 'to glue' > U *nieku* vs. X *naax*, or *nixu-ku 'to hide' > U *niuku* vs. X *nuux*. The sole innovation relevant to Khamnigan Mongol in these cases is the development *ixa > ie (№ 6).

16. *k > MUB *k* vs. D(B)X *x*, as in *kara 'black' > D *xare* = X *xar* vs. U *kara*. A phonetic tendency to spirantize *k, especially in the position preceding a back vowel, may well have been active very early in some forms of Mongolic, and, according to Damdinov (1968.82), «affricatized» pronunciations of the type «*kx*» are also common in the Mankovo dialect of Khamnigan Mongol. From the phonological point of view, however, the tendency became relevant only after it had led to a restructuring of concrete paradigmatic oppositions. This has unambiguously happened in Dagur, where *x- < *k- has merged with the original Mongolic *x- < *x- (№ 5). It is more difficult to determine, whether a phonological change has taken place in Khalkha, but it may be argued that the introduction of a new stop phoneme of the type *k* in recent loanwords has finally given the segment *x < *k a distinct phonological status. The innovation *k > *x* may, consequently, be counted as common to Dagur and Khalkha, though the contextual circumstances in the two languages are not fully identical: in Khalkha, the innovation is valid for all prevocalic positions, while in Dagur it is mainly observed in the word-initial position followed by a back vowel. As far as Buryat is concerned, it is reasonable to assume that this language remains basically untouched by the innovation in question. Because of the development *s > *x* (№ 12) in Buryat, the paradigmatic niche that could have been occupied by the new segment was not vacant, preventing the phonologization of the development *k > *x*. It is

true, the standard formulation goes that the segment representing the earlier *s is pronounced «laryngeally» («*h»), while *k is supposed to yield a dorsal (palatal resp. velar) spirant. A phonetic distinction of this kind can actually be documented from many Buryat dialects, but this does not rule out the likelihood that the phonological distinction is synchronically still at the level of $k < $ *k vs. $x < $ *s. Not surprisingly, it is well known that some (Western) Buryat dialects (under varying contextual conditions) do even phonetically show a clear stop pronunciation of *k > k. It is a different matter, then, that some other (Eastern) Buryat dialects, notably those of the Bargut group, may actually be characterized by a complete neutralization of the opposition between *k and *s, in which case the resulting segment may well be identified with x. Vacillation between laryngeal and dorsal realizations of x (of any origin) has been reported by many observers from both Khalkha and Buryat, as summarized by RASSADIN (1982.78–80), and it is fully possible that the neutralization of *k and *s occurs here and there in Buryat subdialects and idiolects. For this reason, the innovation *k > x may be recognized as peripherally valid for Buryat.

17. *e(x)i > MUD *ei* vs. (D)BX *ii*, as in *te(x)ime 'such' > MU *teime* vs. B *tiime* = X *tiim*. This development has merged the sequence *e(x)i (also reconstructable as *eyi) with *i(x)i (*iyi). The innovation is unambiguously absent in both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol, but its status in the other languages concerned is somewhat less clear. Although a neutralization is observed in the «canonical» forms of both Buryat and Khalkha, these languages are also known to have dialects which apparently preserve *ei* as distinct from *ii*. A similar situation is encountered in Dagur, which, although in its «canonical» form preserving the distinction, does occasionally show a neutralization at the level of subdialects or idiolects. In spite of this somewhat confused general picture, it seems motivated to count the innovation as primarily relevant to Khalkha and Buryat, while its impact on Dagur may be viewed as marginal.

18. *VngV > MU *VngV* vs. (D)BX *VnggV*, as in *ang 'wild game' : instr. *ang-a-xar > U *angaar* vs. X *anggaar*. In Proto-Mongolic, the velar nasal *ng can be reconstructed in the intervocalic position only as the final segment of nominal stems followed by a suffix-initial vowel. As the prepausal distinction between *-ng and *-n was neutralized (№ 4), the intervocalic occurrences of *ng also tended to be eliminated. In Khalkha and Buryat this happened by adding the homorganic stop *g, to yield the nasal+stop cluster -*ng-g-*. The only language which fully preserves the original situation is Khamnigan Mongol, though data showing a preserved *-ng- have also been recorded by the present author (1988.363–364) from speakers of the areally adjacent forms of

Modern Old Bargut. As far as Dagur is concerned, no original examples of *-ng- seem to be known, and there are indications that the stem-final distinction between *ng and *n may have been lost by a morphophonological generalization in all positions. On the other hand, there are data suggesting that the development *-ng- > -ng-g- may once have affected Dagur. This would probably be the best explanation of, for instance, D *manggile* 'forehead' < *mangila < *manglai (the item also involves an irregular metathesis). If this is so, Dagur may be counted among the innovatory languages on this point.

19. *ngl > *ngn > MUD (*)ngn vs. BX gn, as in *ang-la-ku 'to hunt' > MU *angnaku* vs. X *agnex*. As was noted above (№ 4), the «archiphonemization» of the final nasals *-ng and *-n has in certain idioms also affected other positions. In Khamnigan Mongol and Dagur, a word-internal *ng followed by an obstruent has merged with *n, as in *ungsi-ku 'to read' > U *unsiku*. By contrast, an *ng followed by a sonorant in the cluster *ngl > ngn has been preserved by both dialects of Khamnigan Mongol, while Khalkha and Buryat have denasalized the segment into g. The situation in Dagur is somewhat ambiguous, but the synchronic data supplied by TSUMAGARI (1985.228–230) would suggest that Dagur in this respect represents the non-innovatory type of idioms. It must, however, be assumed that the Dagur innovation of vowel addition (№ 29) has affected the cluster *ngn, inserting a vowel between the two components: *ang-la- > *ang-na- > D *angene-*. Thus, although the original intervocalic occurrences of *ng have been lost (№ 18), a new contrast between -ng- and -n- may have arisen in Dagur. Unfortunately, the available material contains contradictions, and even the above example is given by TODAYEVA (1986.121) in a shape suggesting a development like *ang-la- > *ang-a-la- > D *anggele-*. It cannot be ruled out that a shape like *ang(e)ne-* is due to borrowing from idioms of the Khalkha type.

20. *V–*u resp. *V–*ü > MU V–u resp. V–v = D V–u vs. B(X) V–a resp. V–e, as in *tabu/n 'five' > MU *tabu/n* vs. B *taba/n*. This innovation, which eliminated the role of height as a distinctive feature of the single vowels *u resp. *ü in non-initial syllables, must have been the first in a series of reductive vowel developments (№№ 20–23). The development clearly opposes Buryat to the non-innovatory idioms represented by Khamnigan Mongol. Khalkha most probably once had a synchronic situation similar to Buryat, but it has later undergone a tendency towards an even more radical reduction of all vowels in non-initial syllables. By a curious exception, archaic shapes reminiscent of Khamnigan Mongol have been reported from the Sartul type of (Northern) Khalkha dialects, a circumstance perhaps to be explained by assuming a Khamnigan Mongol substrate in Sartul. An especially

complicated picture is again presented by Dagur. Contradictory data, such as *nasu/n 'age' > D *nasu* or *nase*, suggest dialectal differences, but the situation may also have been confused by secondary combinatory developments. Thus, it is not clear, whether the segment *u* of the non-initial syllable in items of the type *xüsü/n 'hair' > D *xusu* really represents the original rounded vowel or only the result of a secondary progressive assimilation. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the synchronic paradigm, the non-initial syllables in Dagur possess a subsystem of three single vowels: *e* vs. *i* vs. *u*. In this system, *u* stands for the original rounded vowels *u and *ü, which means that Dagur may be considered to have remained outside of the systematic reduction of these segments.

21. *V–*a > MUB *V–a* vs. D(B)X *V–e*, as in *manan/g 'fog' > U *manan* vs. DX *manen*. The point here is that the single vowels *a resp. *e and their harmonic counterparts *o resp. *ö (№ 3), all of which in Khalkha may also have represented original *u resp. *ü (№ 20), are in both Khalkha and Dagur pronounced as qualitatively uniform indistinct segments. These phonetic segments have often been interpreted as manifestations of a special reduced vowel phoneme of the type «ə», as postulated for Khalkha by POPPE (1970.39), but phonologically the vowel may be identified with *e*, as was already suggested for Dagur by MARTIN (1961.16). As the present author has pointed out (1989.181), qualitative vowel reduction in Mongolic is a phenomenon interrelated with breaking (№№ 15 & 27), for the distinctions lost due to reduction in a non-initial (typically second) syllable were transferred by breaking into the preceding (first) syllable, provided that there was a vowel that could undergo breaking. Since breaking is unknown in Khamnigan Mongol, there is also no phonologically relevant vowel reduction, and all vowel phonemes can contrast after an *i > *i* of the initial syllable. The situation in Buryat is problematic, for, in spite of the normal presence of palatal breaking in this language, there are examples of a contrast between the single vowels *a* vs. *e* after an exceptionally preserved *i* of the initial syllable, as in B *kilbar* 'light' < *kilbar vs. B *nimgen* 'thin' < *nimgen, as discussed by RASSADIN (1982.23–26). It is not clear, to what extent such examples are typical of all local forms of Buryat. There may well exist dialects structurally more closely reminiscent of Khalkha.

22. *-V > MUDB *-V* vs. (D)X *-Ø*, as in *tere 'that' > MUB *tere* vs. X *ter*. The elision of final vowels may be considered regular in the «canonical» form of Modern Khalkha, as well as, apparently, in some forms of Dagur. However, even as far as Khalkha is concerned, the development seems to be very recent, and it is by far not universally present in the dialects. It is well known that, for instance, POPPE (1951,

1970) always preferred to describe a dialect with most of the original final vowels segmentally intact. Nevertheless, the elision is a fact in many forms of Modern Khalkha, as may be easily tested and demonstrated by pairs such as X *tal* 'steppe' < *tala vs. X *gal* 'fire'< *gal. The elision itself forms, either directly or indirectly, the basis of many other paradigmatic and syntagmatic cases of restructuring: the origination of new final contrasts such as *-ng* < *-n vs. *-n* < *-nV, as in X *saing* 'good' < *saxin vs. X prs. *bain* 'is' < *baxi-na(-), and the insertion of an inetymological vowel segment into some of the new final clusters, as in *terge > *terg > X *tereg*.

23. *-i > MUDB *i* vs. (D)X -*y*, as in *koni/n : *koni 'sheep' > MU *koni* vs. X(D) *xony*. After the two basic innovations of qualitative reduction (№№ 20–21), idioms of the Khalkha type had only two distinctive single vowels in the non-initial syllables: *e* vs. *i*. As the vowel *e* in final position was subsequently further reduced down to zero (№ 22), the system required a corresponding elision of *i*. The original distinction between *e* vs. *i* was, however, not lost, for a trace of the deleted *i* was preserved in the phonetic palatalization of the preceding consonant. This palatalization may probably be phonologically understood in terms of a palatal glide following the main consonant: in other words, the original vowel *i has lost its syllabicity. A similar development must be assumed to have taken place in those forms of Dagur which, like Khalkha, show a full elision of the final *e. Moreover, such forms of Dagur must also be assumed to be characterized by a corresponding loss of syllabicity in the case of a final *u, as in *bugu 'deer' > U *bugu* vs. D *bogu* resp. *bogw*. The various alternatives for the synchronic analysis of Dagur have been discussed by TSUMAGARI (1985.232–233).

24. *-V- > MUD -*V*- vs. (D)BX -Ø-, as in *narasu/n 'pine' > U *nara-xu/n* vs. B *narxa/n* = X *nars/en*. The complete elision of a final vowel (№№ 22–23) is a feature alien to both Khamnigan Mongol and Buryat, as well as, apparently, to many forms of Dagur. However, vowel elision in Khalkha is also attested word-internally, and in this position the innovation is shared by Buryat, but not by Khamnigan Mongol. The phonotactic rules of elision in the «canonical» form of Standard (Eastern) Buryat are fairly complicated, but they seem to be simpler in most concrete dialects, as is implied by RASSADIN (1982. 26–28). In the most simple case, the vowel of the middle syllable of a trisyllabic word is lost, if the resulting consonant cluster will have no more than two components, though certain clusters of three consonants are possibly also allowed. In any case, many of the concrete instances in which the word-internal elision takes place, are common to Buryat and Khalkha. This circumstance suggests that vowel elision, in general,

may have originated as a word-internal phenomenon, spreading only later (in Khalkha) to the word-final position. For this reason, the two contexts are here treated under two separate points.

25. *VxV–*i > MUD(B) *VV–i* vs. BX *Vi–i* or *Vi–e*, as in *toxori- -ku 'to circle' > U *tooriku* vs. X *toirix* or *toirex*. The innovation in this case has the effect of a kind of metaphonic metathesis between a long vowel of the initial syllable and the palatal vowel *i of the fol- lowing syllable. The phenomenon is unambiguously characteristic of Khalkha, but most dialects of Buryat (both Eastern and Western) agree with it on this point. There may, however, exist archaic Buryat dialects lacking the development, as is suggested by the fact that the modern literary language allows an alternation between the types B *tooriko* and *toiroko*. Khamnigan Mongol and Dagur remain completely untouched by the innovation.

D, B, X

26. *u > MUBX *u* vs. D *o*, as in *guci/n 'thirty' > MU *guci/n* vs. D *goci/n*. Due to this development, Dagur has lost the opposition between the original vowels *u and *o in a very similar way as the opposition between the vowels *ü and *ö has been neutralized into UB *v* = D *u* (№ 13). As a result, Dagur has only five distinct qualities in its vowel paradigm (*u o a e i*), while Khamnigan Mongol has six in the Urulga dialect (*v u o a e i*) against, as it seems, seven in the Mankovo dialect (*v u ø o a e i*). Incidentally, there are indications that the opposition between *u and *o has in certain positions also been neutralized in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol. Thus, some modern speakers of this dialect lack the opposition concerned in the combinations *u–u* vs. *o–u*, as in *usu/n 'water' > U *uxu/n* or *oxu/n* vs. *tosu/n 'oil' > U *toxu/n*. Even more commonly, the opposition seems to be absent in the combinations *u–oo* vs. *o–oo*, as in *sur- 'to learn' : prt. *sur-u-xa > U *xuroo* or *xoroo* vs. *oro- 'to enter' : prt. *oro-xa > U *oroo*. As the present author has noted pre- viously (1990.25–26), the neutralization of *o and *u in the latter combination should probably be recognized as a regular diachronic process, for the development *u > *o* seems to be invariably present in in the word U *boroo* 'calf' < *buroo < *biraxu. It is not impossible that the cases synchronically exhibiting the «preserved» combination *u–oo* are all due to secondary morphological analogy. However, it is difficult to show any direct connection between the full paradigmatic merger of *u and *o in Dagur, on the one hand, and the positionally restricted instances of neutralization in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, on the other. Therefore, the development *u > *o* is here treated as an exclusively Dagur innovation.

27. *u–*V > MUBX *u–V* vs. D *wV–e*, as in *gurba/n 'three' > MU *gurba/n* vs. D *gwarebe/n*. This is the labial counterpart of palatal breaking (№ 15). While both types of breaking are equally alien to Khamnigan Mongol, it is significant that labial breaking is also absent in both Buryat and Khalkha, although these languages have been affected by palatal breaking. The fact that POPPE (1955.33) reports a phenomenon reminiscent of labial breaking from Kharchin has probably no relevance in this context, for it seems to be a question of a completely allophonic tendency affecting the pronunciation of *u*. Labial breaking may, consequently, safely be counted as another exclusively Dagur innovation. The phenomenon itself, as summarized by the present author elsewhere (1989.188–189), is complicated by the merger of *u and *o (№ 26), as well as by the overall rotation of the Dagur vowel system. In principle, the segment resulting from the merger of *ü and *ö (№ 13) has also formed a potential target of labial breaking, but the situation has been obscured by various counteracting positional restrictions and special developments. However, it may be recalled that the paradigmatic loss of the double vowel *öö (№ 14) may, as far as Dagur is concerned, be explained in terms of labial breaking, as is easy to see from examples of the type *öxer-e-xe/n 'oneself' > D *weeree*. Another specific development connected with labial breaking is the complete deletion of the labial element of the «broken» vowel in the position following a labial consonant:

27. D *bw resp. *mw > *b* resp. *m*, as in *buka 'bull' > U *buka* vs. D *bwaka > *bake*. As this development may be viewed as a contextually specified subtype of labial breaking, it will not be counted as a separate point here, although diachronically it may well represent a separate innovation. A sporadic example of possible relevance in this context is *büse/n 'belt' > MX *bvs/en* vs. MD *bese* = UB *bexe/n*, in which the «broken» shape of Dagur extends to Buryat and Khamnigan Mongol. It should not be forgotten, however, that the combination *ü–*e in Dagur has normally developed into *u–u* or *u–e*, without breaking.

28. *-C(C-) > MUBX -C(C-) vs. D *-r(C-) > -rV(C-), as in pl. *keüke-d 'children' > U *keeged* vs. D *keuker > *kekure*, or *nabci 'leaf' > U *nabci* vs. D *narci > *lareci (larici)*. This is the peculiar Dagur type of «rhotacism», as summarized most recently by TODAYEVA (1986.33–35). The phenomenon has merged all original syllable-final obstruents with the vibrant *r. As was already mentioned, it cannot be ruled out that the merger started with the development *s > *d (№ 11), after which the obstruents *b and *g may also first have converged into *d. The whole phenomenon of «rhotacism» makes the impression that syllable-final obstruents have primarily undergone a kind of «archi-

phonemization», structurally reminiscent of the «archiphonemization» of final nasals (№ 4). It may be noted here that the «archiphonemic» syllable-final nasal in Dagur probably represents not only original *n and *ng, but also *m, as in D *kenjie* 'measure' < *kemjixe/n. Interestingly, Khamnigan Mongol shows a similar neutralization between *n and *m in the tense suffix *-nVm > *-nVn*, as in *ge-* 'to say' : prs. *ge-nem > U *genen*. In this particular case, however, it may be a question of paradigmatic morphophonological analogy.

29. *-C(C-) > MUBX -C(C-) vs. D -CV(C-). After the completion of the «archiphonemic» mergers (№№ 4 & 11 & 28), there seem to have been only three consonants that could occur syllable-finally in Dagur: the nasal *n, as well as the liquids *r and *l (the mutual relationship of the liquids was further complicated by dissimilatory developments). With the original phonotactic patterns so radically reduced, it is not surprising that the syllable structure of Dagur subsequently underwent an even more profound restructuring, in that the remaining syllable-final consonants were reinterpreted as «syllabic», i.e. rhythmically equal to whole syllables. According to the formulation of MARTIN (1961.18–19), Modern Dagur still has a «syllabic» nasal phoneme. In the case of the liquids, however, a concrete vowel segment has been added. The added vowel is normally identical with *e > *e*, as in *naxur* 'lake' > U *noor* vs. D *naure*, or *jüg* 'direction' > U *jvg* vs. D *jur* > *jure*, but, under conditions not yet fully understood, it can also be *i > *i*, as in *gal* 'fire' > U *gal* vs. D *gali*, or *bös* 'material' > U *bvd* vs. D *buri*. Whatever the quality of the added vowel, the phenomenon of vowel addition as a whole left Dagur with syllables of only two types: those ending in a vowel, and those consisting of the «syllabic» nasal. Any subsequent loanwords, including borrowings from other Mongolic languages, have been phonotactically adapted by adding a vowel whenever necessary. Unfortunately, it is not clear, to what extent this situation may have been secondarily confused in some forms of Dagur by the Khalkha type of vowel elision (№ 22), which would have introduced a completely new paradigm of consonant clusters and final consonants. A full understanding of the areal and chronological relationships of vowel addition and vowel elision in Mongolic remains a topic for detailed dialectological studies. The present author has tentatively suggested (1988.356) that some forms of Modern Old Bargut are perhaps characterized by a recent process of vowel addition very similar to that observed in Dagur. However, a direct areal connection with Dagur appears in this case rather unlikely.

30. *VbV > MUBX VbV vs. D Vu, as in *kabur* 'spring(time)' > U *kabur* vs. D *xaure*. The Dagur innovation may in this case be understood as the fusion of an intervocalic *b with the following vowel into a

single rounded vowel segment, which then forms a «diphthong» with the preceding vowel. The development may be viewed as a structural parallel to the «diphthongization» of sequences containing an intervocalic palatal glide (№ 7): it is well known that the Mongolic *b, especially in the intervocalic position, is spirantized to the extent that it becomes phonetically reminiscent of a labial glide. The «diphthongs» resulting from the fusion of *b are identical with those deriving from sequences of the type *V(x)u (№ 8). It is important to note, however, that the orignal quality of the vowel following *b plays no role, as is evident from homophonized sets like D *xeure* 'nest' & 'bossom' & 'horn', cf. U *eer* < *xexür 'nest' vs. U *vbvr* < *xebür 'bossom' vs. U *eber* < *xeber 'horn'.

31. *-k- > MUBX (*)-k- (> X -x-) vs. D -g-, as in *nökür 'friend' > U *nvkvr* vs. D *nugure*. The fate of *-k- in the intervocalic position in Dagur represents just one aspect of an intricate complex of synchronic and diachronic problems, which ultimately pertain to the mutual relationships of four separate Dagur phonemes: -k- vs. -x- vs. -g- vs. -b- (and also -Ø-). The available sources contain considerable contradictions, some of which are likely to reflect actual dialectal differences, while others may as well be due to errors in the process of description. Generally, there is reason to assume, together with TODAYEVA (1986. 31–33), that the regular reflex of *-k- in the «canonical» form of Dagur is -g-. The opposition between *-k- and *-g- has, consequently, been neutralized, as can also be seen from subminimal pairs such as D *mogu* 'snake' < *mogo vs. D *nogu* 'dog' < *noko. However, in the synchronic system of Modern Dagur, -g- does still contrast with -k-, which in many cases seems to derive from an original *-k-. The reasons underlying the dual behaviour of *-k- remain to be explained in the future. Contextual factors can hardly be relevant here, for there are examples showing that -k- and -g- can both occur as reflexes of *-k- under essentially identical circumstances, as in *xeki 'head' > D *xeki* vs. *xike 'big' > D *xige* > *sige*. Whatever the explanation may turn out to be, the representation of *-k- as -g- in Dagur must be due to a concrete diachronic development, sufficiently well documented to be considered as a feature of taxonomic relevance.

32. *i > MUDX *i* vs. B *e*, as in *bicig 'writing' > U *bicig* vs. B *besig* (conventionally rendered as «besheg»). This specifically Buryat innovation has merged *i with *e in the initial syllable of words containing the combinations *i–*i or *i–*e. Although chronologically and structurally distinct from the innovation of palatal breaking (№ 15), the development forms a kind of parallel to the latter, and under certain conditions a trace of the original quality of *i can be preserved in the form of *y*, as in *ire-kü 'to come' > U *irekv* vs. B *yereke*, or *sine

'new' > U *sine* vs. B *syene*. From the point of view of the relationship between Buryat and Khalkha it is interesting to note that the development *i > e, like the development *ö > v (№ 13), extends to the Tsongol (but not the Sartul) type of transitional dialects. By virtually all other innovations, however, Tsongol (like Sartul) belongs to the context of (Northern) Khalkha and should definitely be counted as a dialect of the latter language.

33. *c resp. *j > MUDX *c* resp. *j* vs. B *s* resp. *z*, as in *cagaxan 'white' > U *cagaan* vs. B *sagaan*, *jaxu/n 'hundred' > U *joo/n* vs. B *zuu/n*. After the «pharyngealization» of *s (№ 12) in Buryat, it was only natural that the paradigmatic niche of *s was taken over by the spirantized reflex of the original strong affricate *c. The two developments may be considered to have reached a fully phonologized status with the merger of *c and *s in the position preceding an original *i, where no «pharyngealization» of *s took place, as in *sibaxu/n 'bird' > B *syubuu/n* vs. *cilaxu/n 'stone' > B *syuluu/n*, cf. U *siboo/n* resp. *ciloo/n*. The spirantization of the weak affricate *j, on the other hand, had no similar paradigmatic presuppositions, since there was no original segment of the type (*)z. It is not surprising, therefore, that only the development *c > s is unambiguously valid for all true Buryat dialects, while the development *j > z can be dialectally absent, as is the case in the dialects of the Bargut group. Interestingly, there is no sign of the development *c > s in the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol, although this idiom shares with Buryat the development *s > x. The preservation of the affricates in the Urulga dialect has obviously been favoured by the fact that both *s and *c remain intact in the Mankovo dialect. A synchronic opposition of the type *c* vs. *s* is also present in Khamnigan Evenki.

34. *gi > MUDX *gi* vs. B *yi > yV*, as in *gilagar 'bright' > M *gilagar* vs. B *yalagar*. Although complicated by considerable contextual and dialectal variation, this innovation, involving a positionally determined palatalization of *g into *y*, may be counted as one of the specific characteristics of Buryat in its «canonical» form. There are several other developments, all of them summarized by RASSADIN (1982.98–107), which may also be understood in terms of a tendency to palatalize the stop segment in the sequences *gi and *ki. Because of their areally restricted basis, these developments, though important in the context of Buryat dialectology, lack immediate relevance for any wider taxonomic purposes.

35. *V–*V–*i > MUDB *V–V–i* vs. X *V–i–V*, as in *ulari-l 'season' > U *ularil* vs. X *uliral > ulyrel*. This development, which is confined to the principal dialects of Khalkha, may be understood as the metathetical transfer of an *i of the third syllable into the second

syllable. The mechanism is essentially the same as that involved in the metathetical diphthongization of a long vowel of the initial syllable in Khalkha and Buryat (№ 25), but, in view of the distributional difference, the two developments are probably to be counted as separate innovations. Both developments are basically alien to Khamnigan Mongol, but a few lexical items show, in the speech of some present-day Manchurian Khamnigan informants, a facultative alternation between *V–V–i* and *V–i–i*, as in *araki/n* 'liquor' > U *araki/n* or *ariki/n* vs. X *arika/n* > *arix/en* (conventionally rendered as «arxi» resp. «arxin»). It would most likely seem to be a question of recent secondary influence of some Khalkha type of dialects on Manchurian Khamnigan Mongol, but it could perhaps also be that shapes of the type U *ariki/n* reflect an older stage of interaction within Mongolic, for similar shapes are also attested in Written Mongolian. The Khamnigan Mongol items could then be taken as evidence showing that the diachronic development *V–*V–*i > *V–i–V* in Khalkha actually once had the intermediate stage *V–*i–*i. The further fate of the last *i in these cases could then be connected with the general tendency of depalatalization in Khalkha (№ 36).

36. *i > MUDB *i* (*y*) vs. X *e* (Ø), as in *beri* 'daughter-in-law' > UDB *beri* vs. X *bere* > *ber*, or *ünixe/n* 'cow' > U *vnie/n* = D *unie* = B *vnyee/n* vs. X *vnee/n*. In these cases, the distinct quality of the vowel *i in a non-initial syllable has been lost without a trace in Khalkha. The development is observed in words with an original palatal vocalism, and we may, therefore, understand it as a kind of loss of «extra palatalness». As a result, Modern Khalkha preserves an *i of a non-initial syllable only in words with an original velar vocalism, as in *mori/n* 'horse' > X *mori/n* (= *mory* : *morin*), or *kanixa-ku* 'to cough' > X *xanyaax*. An occasional merger of *i with *e > *e* in front-vocalic words is also observed in Buryat, as in *ciki/n* 'ear' > U *ciki/n* vs. B *syeke/n* («shexen») vs. X *cix/en*. It seems, however, that these cases have no immediate connection with the Khalkha type of systematic depalatalization. More likely, the Buryat examples are to be explained as complications of the specifically Buryat development *i > *e* in the initial syllable (№ 32). In this context, it must be mentioned that Buryat also shows various other irregularities concerning the representation of *i in non-initial syllables. Most importantly, there seems to be no clear rule as to when a non-initial *i is preserved as a syllabic vowel segment, as in *beri-gen* 'wife of elder brother' > U *berigen* = B *berigen* vs. X *bergen*, and when it is reduced into the asyllabic glide segment *y*, as in *küri-gen* 'son-in-law' > U *kvrigen* vs. B. *kvrygen* vs. X *xvrgen*. The development *i > *y* in Buryat could, in principal, be explained in terms of the word-internal vowel

elision (№ 24), but the problem is that some of the postconsonantal occurrences of the palatal glide *y* are seemingly inetymological, as in *is-ke-kü 'to leaven' > U *idkekv* vs. B *idyxexe*. It is to be hoped that a better understanding of Buryat synchronic phonology, as well as of the areal and chronological factors that may be involved, will ultimately provide a satisfactory explanation of the situation.

We have thus surveyed altogether 36 phonological innovations in five different idioms (MUDBX). The survey is meant to be as complete as possible for the two types of Khamnigan Mongol examined (MU), but it is far from exhaustive for any comprehensive treatment of the internal dialectology of the other three idioms concerned (DBX). For the present purpose, it has been considered sufficient to characterize, in the first place, the «canonical» forms of Dagur, Khalkha, and (Eastern) Buryat, while many of the actual dialects of these languages show additional innovations of their own.

In order to prepare a maximally unambiguous basis for the taxonomic analysis, the distributional patterns of the 36 innovations are listed once more below (Table 1) with the focus on the «canonical» forms of the idioms concerned.

Table 1.   Distribution of innovations

Innovatory	№№	Σ	Archaic
MUDBX	1–4, 9	5	
MUBX	5	1	D
MDBX	10	1	U
MUD	6–7	2	BX
MBX	8	1	UD
UDB	11, 13	2	MX
DBX	15, 18	2	MU
UB	12	1	MDX
UD	14	1	MBX
DX	16, 21	2	MUB
BX	17, 19–20, 24–25	5	MUD
D	26–31	6	MUBX
B	32–34	3	MUDX
X	22–23, 35–36	4	MUDB

In the above list, each idiom is treated as an internally uniform entity characterized by an exactly specifiable number of innovations. The following discussion will be devoted to the genetic classification of the idioms thus defined. It goes without saying that the consideration of

dialectal variation within each idiom, as well as the recognition of alternative technical solutions to certain problems of interpretation, would make the genetic boundaries appear somewhat less clear-cut. However, it seems that the introduction of such complications into the analysis would in no substantial way alter the picture that will emerge concerning the taxonomic position of Khamnigan Mongol.

A glance at the distribution of the innovations immediately reveals several interesting circumstances. Most importantly, it becomes evident that Khamnigan Mongol, unlike any of the other languages examined, shows no innovations of its own. Thus, any innovations attested in either one of the two forms of Khamnigan Mongol are also peculiar to one or more additional idioms. This is just one indication of the situation well known before: Khamnigan Mongol is an exceptionally conservative type of Mongolic. To get a better understanding of this conservativeness, we may count the overall number of innovations present in each of the five idioms (Table 2).

Table 2.   Total number of innovations

	№№	Σ
M	1–10	10
U	1–7, 9, 11–14	12
D	1–4, 6–7, 9–11, 13–16, 18, 21, 26–31	21
B	1–5, 8–13, 15, 17–20, 24–25, 32–34	21
X	1–5, 8–10, 15–25, 35–36	21

The result of the count is that the number of innovations in either form of Khamnigan Mongol is roughly speaking one half of the corresponding number in any of the other idioms concerned. The Urulga dialect (with 12 innovations) is only slightly more innovatory than the Mankovo dialect (with 10 innovations), while Dagur, Buryat, and Khalkha, are all on equally innovatory lines (with 21 innovations each). As the number of innovations for each idiom defines its diachronic distance from both Proto-Mongolic and Middle Mongolian, Khamnigan Mongol may well be characterized as a relict from a time when the differences between the present-day Mongolic languages were still incipient. This conclusion appears even more true, if we note that a considerable portion of all the innovations present in Khamnigan Mongol (5 out of 10 resp. 12) is actually common to all the five idioms examined (MUDBX). Although important in the context of Mongolic diachronic phonology, in general, these innovations are irrelevant to the specific problems concerning the relationship of Khamnigan Mongol with Dagur, Buryat, and Khalkha.

An even more accurate picture of the taxonomic relationships between the five idioms examined is obtained by counting the innovations shared by each pair of two idioms (Table 3). In accordance with the established principles of comparative analysis, such a count may be expected to yield information on the branches of the diachronic «family tree» underlying the modern idioms.

Table 3.					Number of shared innovations
	M	U	D	B	X
M	–	8	8	8	8
U	8	–	10	9	6
D	8	10	–	10	10
B	8	9	10	–	15
X	8	6	10	15	–

This count reveals some rather unexpected results. Thus, it appears that the two types of Khamnigan Mongol have not more in common than either of them has with the rest of the idioms examined. This is particularly clearly visible from the fact that the Mankovo dialect of Khamnigan Mongol shares exactly the same number of common features (8 innovations) with the Urulga dialect (MU) as it does with Dagur (MD), Buryat (MB), and Khalkha (MX). In fact, most of the binary relationships involved in the survey are characterized by a roughly equal number of common features (6 to 10 shared innovations). The only exception is formed by the relationship between Buryat and Khalkha (BX), which (with 15 shared innovations) may be regarded as very intimate, indeed.

A logical conclusion is that neither type of Khamnigan Mongol can possibly constitute a dialect of any other Mongolic language. To claim the opposite would be tantamount to adopting a framework in which all the present-day Mongolic idioms would have to be counted as dialects of a single language. Such a framework, on the other hand, would hardly favour any further development of Mongolic comparative studies. In fact, most Mongolists today will agree that even Buryat and Khalkha, in spite of their close mutual relationship, are two independent languages. If this is so, Khamnigan Mongol must definitely also be recognized as an independent language.

The above discussion still leaves open the question concerning the mutual relationship between the two types of Khamnigan Mongol. In view of the small number of shared innovations between them, it can be asked, whether, indeed, they can at all be regarded as dialects of a

single language. Obviously, by the same reasoning as was applied to demonstrate that Khamnigan Mongol is a separate language, the two main varieties of Khamnigan Mongol could also be defined as two separate languages. An argument against such a conclusion can be found by counting the number of innovations separating each pair of two idioms (Table 4), i.e. the number of innovations attested in only one idiom of any given pair.

Table 4.   Number of separating innovations

	M	U	D	B	X
M	–	6	15	15	15
U	6	–	13	15	21
D	15	13	–	22	22
B	15	15	22	–	12
X	15	21	22	12	–

Unlike the shared innovations, which characterize the degree of closeness between the idioms examined, the separating innovations may be considered to define the mutual distances between them. It is interesting to note that from this point of view, also, Buryat and Khalkha (B vs. X) stand in a particularly intimate relationship with each other (12 separating innovations). By contrast, the distance of both Buryat and Khalkha to Dagur (B resp. X vs. D) is considerably greater (22 separating innovations). Against this background, the distance between the two varieties of Khamnigan Mongol (M vs. U) appears very short (6 separating innovations). It is, of course, a matter of definition, where the distinction between language and dialect is drawn in any framework, but if we recognize Buryat and Khalkha as two closely related languages, the relationship between the two varieties of Khamnigan Mongol may well be defined as a dialectal one.

We may now finally examine, to what extent the apriori definition of the Urulga dialect of Khamnigan Mongol as «Buryat-type», and of the Mankovo dialect as «Khalkha-type», can be justified by factual data. As far as the Mankovo dialect is concerned, there is clearly no direct support for such a formulation, for, as was already implied above, the affinity of this dialect with Khalkha is of an exactly same degree as its affinity with Buryat and Dagur (in all cases 8 shared and 15 separating innovations). On the other hand, the Urulga dialect does show some more asymmetry in its taxonomic position, in that its affinity with Buryat is, indeed, somewhat stronger (9 shared and 15 separating innovations) than with Khalkha (6 shared and 21 separating innovations).

However, this situation should not obscure the fact that there is an even stronger affinity between the Urulga dialect and Dagur (10 shared and only 13 separating innovations).

There is, thus, unexpectedly little basis for viewing the two dialects of Khamnigan Mongol as a bridge between Buryat and Khalkha. In this respect, the position of Khamnigan Mongol is very different from the actually existing transitional dialects, which can taxonomically be attributed to either Buryat or Khalkha. For instance, Tsongol and Sartul, often mistakenly identified with Buryat, may, by the weight of most criteria, be recognized as dialects of (Northern) Khalkha. The two varieties of Khamnigan Mongol, on the other hand, are in a dialectal relationship with each other only.

In conclusion, let us summarize the principal results of the present paper:
• Khamnigan Mongol must be recognized as a taxonomically independent Mongolic language which is not in a particularly close relationship with any other Mongolic language.
• Khamnigan Mongol occurs in two main varieties whose mutual relationship as dialects of a single language is determined by the absence of any significant number of separating innovations.

These results were obtained by investigating the phonological innovations present in Khamnigan Mongol and the neighbouring Mongolic languages. The incorporation of morphological and lexical parametres into the analysis would, without doubt, diversify the picture. However, the basic conclusions concerning the position of Khamnigan Mongol will probably always remain the same.

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