THE LITERARY DIGEST
JULY 25, 1936: p. 14

JAPAN'S MONGOLIA

New Puppet Emperor North of Civil War-Split China

LITERARY DIGEST MAP

The trail from Kalgan to Ulan Bator Hoto, "Russia's back door," is now guarded for Japan by another Prince Teh Wang, of Inner Mongolia

While Canton and Nanking were bombarding each other with menaces last week, Chiang Kai-shek threatening to march southward and Kwantung and Kwangsi leaders threatening to secede from China within ten days, Japan was busy setting up another "Pu Yi" in Inner Mongolia, to the north.

Burly, skull-capped and top-knotted Prince Teh Wang, thirty-five-year-old ruler of the Sunnet Tribes and leader for years of the Young Mongols, tired of a precarious absolute freedom and sought, under pressure, autonomy under Manchukuo, which means under the egis of Nippon.

At Kalgan, hide, fur and cattle center, 2,800 feet up on the southern fringe of the Mongolian plateau, he was conferring with Japanese "advisers," driving the best bargain he could for his seminomadic followers.

No Ties to Bind Them—Before 1911 Inner Mongolia was a part of China under the Manchus; and during the stronger days of the Chinese Republic it maintained a wavering loyalty. But thirty millions of peasants driven from China by floods, famines, and a plague of war-lords poured into what was Manchuria, overflowed also into Inner Mongolia.

The Mongols were herdsmen. The Chinese were farmers.

And farmers and herdsmen do not mix

Mongolian loyalty to China shrank like the wild ass's skin as their grazing acreage was bitten into deeper and deeper by Chinese plows. Two years ago China, because she had to, acknowledged the independence of Inner Mongolia, even participating in the elaborate chanting and beating of temple gongs with which "autonomy" or "independence" (depending on whether one talked with a Chinese or a Mongol) was proclaimed.

Japan was already wooing the Mongol princes, of whom Teh Wang was the leader, offering (1) to provide modern arms, (2) to halt Chinese immigration, and (3) to secure the land for herdsmen.

Teh Wang and his princes rebuffed the Japanese at the time; but rebuffed them gently.

Mongolia's Hand Forced—Japanese generals made their decision for them. First they occupied Manchuria, delighted, as strictly military men, with the barrier made by the Great Khingan Mountains against infiltration or attack from Soviet Russia and Soviet Outer Mongolia.

The barrier faded out at the southern end of the mountains and left what army

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men dread, an open flank, with a 1,200 mile caravan route straight from Peiping, through Inner Mongolia, to Ulan Bator, and on to Soviet Russia. The generals had to find something to serve as a continuation of the mountains; they found Teh Wang.

To advice that the new Manchu Emperor Kang Teh (formerly Pu Yi) of Manchukuo was the direct heir of the Manchus who had given him and his fellow princes their titles, and therefore the natural heir to Mongol loyalty, Prince Teh was deaf. The offer of arms and the security of grazing rights were more appealing. Persuasion in the shape of Japanese battalions ended the argument. From the Chinese view-point Prince Teh "lost his freedom."

Strategically, Inner Mongolia is of immense importance to the Japanese. The very name of Kalgan means "gate." Motor-cars, with luck, can make the 1,160 mile journey along the caravan trail to Ulan Bator in from four to six days; and during any Russo-Japanese war of the near future it would be the shortest line between the back doors of the two armies

Mongols Against Mongols—Outer Mongolia, under Soviet influence, has already prepared defenses across the route and has created a no man's land, empty of all population, between itself and Inner Mongolia, guarding it with mounted patrols.

A hundred thousand camels plod along the trail across the Gobi Desert to gratify the well-nigh insatiable thirst of Russians, Red or White, for Chinese tea, and to bring back hides and furs to be treated in the 2,000 skin "dressing" establishments of Kalgan before transport to the outer world. Three hundred thousand bullocks and 1,200,000 camels transport the interior commerce of the country. From Kalgan transport through Peiping to Tientsin and the sea is by rail.

While Prince Teh's position, as a Japanese puppet ruler, can scarcely be less comfortable than it was before, Japan has a grip on the bottle-neck controlling a vast, ill-defined hinterland of North China; and has as well a buffer State between her own influence and that of the Soviets.

Will this be enough? Woodrow Wilson used to say of military men:

"If you give them all they want they will fortify the moon to defend the earth against attacks from Mars."

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