The study of twentieth and early twenty-first-century Mongolia on the one hand, and Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang on the other, necessitates the use of a multitude of oral and written sources in a variety of different languages; thus the first major obstacle for a scholar and an educated audience is the extraordinary diversity of the essential languages. No single person can master such a wide array of languages and scripts. A collaborative effort, which is not always optimal for scholars, would be one way of overcoming this difficulty.

More likely, however, scholars will choose individual topics based upon their knowledge of specific languages. A specialist who studies these various works would then be capable of devising an accurate appraisal.

Morris Rossabi

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN the source materials available for Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang, are readily observable in the possibility and accessibility of data from interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews. In one project, which continues to be translated into English, Professors Yuki Konagaya of the National University of Mongolia, set forth initially to conduct interviews.

No independent unregulated interviews of a wide swath of inhabitants have been permitted...

measures of education, health, and society, which are then gathered together into an annual publication. Much of the information is also online. The Chinese Statistical Bureaus in Xizang and Inner Mongolia and the Xizang Production and Construction Group issue similar data on the economy, population, and social conditions. Individual cities in these regions, such as Urumqi and Turfan, also have statistical bureaus that publish statistics on the economic and social conditions in their domains. All of these data is online and can readily be accessed. Thus, independent economists can also assess the credibility of these statistics.7

The early twentieth-century history of Mongolia, Xizang, and Inner Mongolia reveals the greatest differences in government and public transparency. Mongolia has opened up many archival sources concerning the socialist period from 1921 to 1990, and numerous public discussions by former government and Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP) officials have been published. The opening up of Buryat and Russian Federation archives has complemented the Mongolian government’s policy of transparency. Dr. Irena Moroncza has used these archives in her book written in a recent book on twentieth-century Mongolia and has also consulted the Russian State Military Archives.8

The availability of both the Mongolian and Russian Federation archives, the accessibility of primary documents such as collections of the speeches of the dominant government and MPRP leader Kh. Choibalsan and his successor Yu. Tuulendel, as well as official correspondence concerning the Comintern’s activities in Mongolia, will all contribute to research on the understanding of twentieth-century Mongolia. Japanese archives are also accessible, offering valuable glimpses of Japanese efforts in the 1930s to encroach upon Mongolia, culminating in the 1939 battle of Nomonhan (Khalkhyn Gol), with General G. Zhukov of Russia, and J. Lkhagvasuren of Mongolia, trouncing the enemy.

A number of researchers have consulted these archives to provide insights into Japanese policy and actions from the late nineteenth century through World War II 9

Archives in Inner Mongolia also offer significant insights into Japanese activities in the pre-WWII period. However, as shown by the case of an American researcher trying to access these archives to conduct research for her doctoral dissertation on Japan’s involvement in Inner Mongolia in the 1930s,10 considerable obstacles are presented when seeking to consult the archival resources. A stiff bureaucracy impeded her at every turn, demanding almost overwhelming paperwork to gain permission to use the archives. The slightest error in filling out the forms resulted in delays; the doors to the archives were frequently opened late; she was denied certain essential materials that she knew about but had no current political significance; and costs for microfilms or copies were exorbitant.11 Admittance to government archives of the post-1949 period is also difficult, if not impossible. Archives in Xinjiang are even more restrictive. The tensions between its inhabitants and the Chinese government and the ensuing violence over the past sixty years have no doubt prompted concern about the Uyghurs and other minorities in this allegedly autonomous region, which has translated into lack of government transparency and extends to the period before 1949.12 Foreign scholars have, on occasion, been allowed to conduct research in Beijing on pre-1949 Xinjiang, but have generally been excluded from local and regional archives. Specialists have been limited to analyses of speeches of government leaders, to the official newspaper Renmin Ribao, and to local journals.

In contrast, Western libraries in Mongolia, and those in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang, are not so sticting. The State Library in Mongolia is accessible but, brefit of sufficient State funding, does not operate efficiently. It has also suffered damage from insect infestation and flooding. I have seen quite a number of waterlogged texts, which are almost unreadable.

Hopesful

It would be useful to end with one positive note concerning information collection and accessibility in Xinjiang. In 1996, I traveled with curators from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art in preparation for their joint exhibition When Silk Was Gold, When Silk Was Gold.13 We were permitted access to the exhibits and to the storage areas in the Xizang Museum in Urumqi and to the Turfan Museum in Xinjiang. In addition, a number of curators have been shown objects and have been allowed loans of objects from the relatively new Inner Mongolia Museum in Hohhot.

However, in all of these cases, the foreigners had considerable guans (or connections), which worked in their favor. One can only hope that the Chinese national and local governments in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia also start allowing access. Art is not as volatile as history and politics.

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4 Among others, see O. Braun. 2006. Mongolia Nomadic Pastificio in Pursuit of the Market, Rosman and Littlefield.
8 See, for example, the recent compendium of such statistics: Guo Rongqing, et al. 2014. Multicultural China: A Statistical Yearbook (2014), Berlin: Springer.
12 For the difficultes she encountered, see her account on dissertationreview.org, China, April 8, 2013 (accessed July 1, 2014).

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