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**Josef Kowalewski and Minjul Hutugtu (1789–1839)****Abstract**

Minjul Hutugtu Jambal (1789–1839) for a long time occupied in Beijing a position of the Deputy Chief Administrative Lama. He frequently visited the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission and established good personal contacts with a famous scholar Josef Kowalewski who stayed in Beijing from November 1830 to June 1831. These contacts were mutually beneficial: Kowalewski was studying Mongolian language and collecting Mongolian books, while Minjul Hutugtu was interested in getting new information about the world. Minjul Hutugtu used the European derived information about the countries of the world which he learnt from Kowalewski (“O-shib,” as he was called in Tibetan) in his book “The Detailed Description of the World” (*Dzangling rgyas bshad*). “O-shib” is also mentioned as the author of a recipe in his big medical treatise. The partially published diaries of Kowalewski, now kept in the city of Kazan in Russia, contain much personal information about Minjul Hutugtu, his interests and actions.

In 1828 Josef Kowalewski, together with another young scholar, Alexandre Popov (1808–1865), was dispatched by the Imperial Kazan University to Eastern Siberia with the task to learn both written and spoken Mongolian. They were given four years to accomplish their study and were allotted money for book acquisitions.

In 1830 the term of stay in Beijing of the tenth Russian Ecclesiastical mission expired, and it had to be replaced by a new, eleventh, mission. The official procedure of changing the missions required almost a year: members of the new mission went to Beijing escorted by a small Russian military unit, which then escorted the members of the previous mission back to Russia. At those days the capital of the Middle Kingdom was not an easy place for the Europeans to visit, and the Russian government used the

unique opportunity of possessing a permanent representation there to collect all sorts of information about its neighbour. That is why, together with clerics (of whom many became outstanding scholars), these missions included natural scientists, physicians, orientalists, botanists and others.

Kowalewski wanted to use this unique opportunity to visit Beijing. From 1828 he began sending letters to proper authorities with the request to allow him to join the mission. This was not an easy thing to do since the Chinese authorities did not want Russian missions to be joined by many people. Finally, it was decided that Kowalewski would accompany the mission in the capacity of its secretary. The new mission arrived in Beijing via Urga (modern Ulan Bator) on 18 November, and the previous mission departed on 6 June 1831. Altogether, Kowalewski stayed in Beijing for about seven months.<sup>1</sup>

He described some of his activities during this period in a diary entitled in Polish “Dziennik zatrudnień” [“Diary of Works”]. At present this diary is kept in the city of Kazan at the National Archives. It was partially published recently.<sup>2</sup>

During his stay in Beijing, Kowalewski studied intensively Mongolian and Tibetan, and purchased a big collection of books in Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchu and Chinese languages, at the present time kept in the St. Petersburg University Library.<sup>3</sup> His task was facilitated by good personal relations which he had established with Minjul Nomonhan (or Minjul Hutugtu)<sup>4</sup> who at that time occupied in Beijing a position of a Deputy Chief Administrative Lama (Mong. *ded tamay-a bariγsan jasaγ terigiin blam-a*).

Minjul Nomonhan (his full name and title were sMin-grol chos-kyi rgyal-po 'Jamdpal chos-kyi bstan-'dzin 'phrin-las; 1789–1839) belonged to a “dynasty” of incarnated lamas from Amdo/ Kuku-nor area (modern Qinghai Province of China).<sup>5</sup> The founder of this dynasty was a lama of Mongol descent, Ngag-dbang 'phrin-las lhun-grub, who lived in

<sup>1</sup> Shamov, G.F. *Professor O.M. Kowalewski*. Kazan, 1983, pp. 45–59; Skachkov, P.Ye. *Ocherki istorii russkogo kitayevedeniya*. Moscow, 1977, pp. 360, 423.

<sup>2</sup> *Rossiya–Mongolia–Kitai: Dnevnik mongoloveda O.M. Kowalewskiego 1830–1831 gg.* Podgotovka k izdaniyu, predisloviye, glossariy, kommentariy i ukazateli, Valeev, R.M., Kulganek, I.V., Kazan-St. Petersburg, 2005–2006. This publication mainly contains Kowalewski's observations during his journeys to and from Beijing via Mongolia.

<sup>3</sup> For their list and the present state of being see: Uspensky, V.L. “Kollektsiya O.M. Kowalewskiego v sobranii vostochnykh rukopisei i ksilografv biblioteki Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta.” In: *Mongoloved O.M. Kowalewski: Biografiya i nasledie (1801–1878)*, Kazan 2004, pp. 231–250.

<sup>4</sup> Hutugtu (Mong. *qutuytu* < Tib. *'phags-pa*) is the title granted to incarnated lamas of the highest rank.

<sup>5</sup> The date of his death is given in most publications as “1838,” the Earth-dog (*sa khyi*) year of the Tibetan calendar. See Vostrikov, A.I. *Tibetskaya istoricheskaya literatura*. Moscow, 1962, p. 330. However, the date “1839” is given by the Russian scholar V.P. Vassiliev who himself came to Beijing in 1841 and translated a portion of Minjul Hutugtu's “Geography” into Russian: Vassiliev, V. *Geografiya Tibeta: perevod iz tibetskogo sochineniya Minzhul Hutukty*. St. Petersburg, 1895, p. II. The fact that Vassiliev's date is the correct one is confirmed by the biography of a contemporary Inner Mongolian incarnated lama ICang-lung arya pandita Blobzang bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan (1770–1845): *rJe btsun dpal ldan bla ma dam pa lcang lung arya pandita rin po che ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog nor bu'i do shal zhes bya ba'i smad cha*, f. 154b:6. It gives “the first day of the twelfth month” as the precise date of Minjul Hutugtu's decease which corresponds to 15 January 1839.

the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He came to sMin-grol-gling monastery in Central Tibet and later became the abbot of sGo-mang grwa-tshang in 'Bras-dpung monastery. The Fifth Dalai Lama gave him the title of Nomonhan (< Mong. nom-un qan – “King of Dharma”). Having returned to Amdo, he became known as sMin-grol Nomonhan or bTsan-po Nomonhan. His second honourable title originates from the fact that for some time he stayed in Tibet at dGa'-ldan dam-chos-gling monastery, also known as bTsan-po-dgon.<sup>6</sup> His successive incarnations occupied important positions in the hierarchy of the Beijing Lamaist Centre throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Minjul Hutugtu established good relations with the members of the Russian mission and was said to have even learnt the Russian alphabet. When Kowalewski arrived in Beijing, he personally gave him several lessons of the Mongolian and Tibetan languages, and attached to him as a teacher his secretary. As Kowalewski himself wrote from Beijing to Kazan University, “at present, for learning Mongolian and elementary Tibetan I have a very good teacher, a Mongolian lama Baldan.”<sup>7</sup>

Minjul Hutugtu helped Kowalewski in collecting Mongolian books. It is said that he provided the scholar with a copy of a Mongolian history of the Yuan dynasty. However, what kind of work it was remains unclear today.<sup>8</sup> Minjul Nomonhan used the information about the countries of the world which he learnt from Kowalewski (“O-shib,” as he was called in Tibetan) in his book “The Detailed Description of the World” (*'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*). The use of European sources was an extraordinary thing in Tibetan literature. There exists a story that once the emperor mocked at the lama's ignorance of the world around, and Minjul Hutugtu decided to demonstrate his geographical scope by writing such a work.<sup>9</sup>

Also, Minjul Hutugtu compiled an extensive medical treatise in Tibetan language entitled “The Precept named the ‘Source of Treasures,’ Being a Collection of the Most Important Things Found in All Medical Treatises” (*gSo rig bstan bcos mtha' dag gi snying po rnams phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa man ngag rin chen 'byung gnas*). This book numbering 363 folios was printed from wood-blocks in Beijing.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Sagaster, K. (tr.). *Subud Erike “Ein Rosenkranz aus Perlen”: Die Biographie des 1. Pekinger lCañ skya Khutukhtu Ng dbaṅ blo bzai c'os ldan, verfaßt von Ng dbaṅ c'os ldan alias Šes rab dar rgyas*. Wiebaden 1967 (Asiatische Forschungen; 20), p. 186, n. 426.

<sup>7</sup> Shamov, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> Shamov, op. cit., pp. 56–57. This seems to be a copy of the famous historical work *Erdeni-yin tobči* by Saṅg Sečen. It belonged to Kowalewski and is now kept at the Manuscript Department of the Kazan University. Its call number is 1756, 294 folios in Russian binding with numerous notes by Kowalewski.

<sup>9</sup> This story was narrated by Vassiliev V., *loc. cit.* However, judging from Kowalewski's diaries, geography was in fact a personal hobby of Minjul Hutugtu. For the English translation of this work see Wylie, T.V. (tr.). *The Geography of Tibet According to the 'Dzam-gling-rgyas-bshad*. Rome 1962 (Serie Orientale Roma; 25). A bibliographical survey of this work is found in Martin, D. *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works*. London 1997, pp.154–155, No. 367.

<sup>10</sup> This text was published in 2007 in Beijing by the Minzu chubanshe publishing house under the auspices of the “China International Tibetan Medicine Cultural Protection and Promotion Association” (Arura Series; 053). The quoted passage is found on p. 512 of this edition.

A following passage is found on f. 321<sup>3-4</sup>: */pus mo dpung mig sogs//chu ser rtas dkar  
rlung sogs kyil//rkyen gyis rgyun par na ba la//nya klad khus rdzes<sup>11</sup> mang ga bur//chang  
dang sbyar la yang yang byug//nges par phan pa nyams myong gnad//dgams pa 'di ni  
kā li pa'i//lha rje o shib bya ba las//a ham na dus kho bos zhus//*

“If because of [disorders of] yellow liquid, white channel, wind, or for another [reason], there are constant aches in the knee, the shoulder joint, or other [joints of the body], rub them repeatedly with kneaded fish brain and camphor dissolved in alcohol. It has been proven by trial that it is truly helpful! When I myself was sick I asked this precept from physician Josef Kowalewski (?kā li pa'i).”

It is obvious from this passage that Minjul Hutugtu himself suffered from rheumatism or arthritis. Kowalewski advised him to prepare and to use opodeldoc (*Linimentum saponato-camphoratum*), a liniment popular in Europe. This liniment is used as anodyne application in sprains, bruises, rheumatic pains, pleurisy. It was first described by the famous Swiss physician Paracelsus (1493–1541) who gave a name to it. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a standard recipe of opodeldoc contained: medical soap (*Sapon medicati*) – 40 parts; camphor (*Camphora*) – 10 parts; alcohol (*Spiritus vini*) – 420 parts.<sup>12</sup> Instead of medical soap, it is recommended in the recipe given by Kowalewski to add fish brain. Most probably, this was not his personal invention.

At that time Josef Wojciechowski (1793–1850) was the official doctor of the Russian mission and he is known to have given a considerable medical support to the local Chinese population. It is quite possible to suggest that he was the “O-shib” who gave Minjul Hutugtu this prescription, especially that the identification of the Tibetan *kā li pa'i* with “Kowalewski” is very tentative.

In his diaries Kowalewski mentioned Minjul Hutugtu several times. This cleric comes as very energetic, curious and communicative person. For example, he attended the Easter service at the Russian compound accompanied by other high-ranking lamas.<sup>13</sup> His nephew named Han E was born in Qinghai but later married a Manchu woman and resided in Beijing. From Wojciechowski he learnt Russian, European geography and other things. Kowalewski was told by him that his uncle was reading the New Testament in Manchu.<sup>14</sup> Kowalewski presented to Baldan, his teacher of Mongolian language a following farewell gift: five arsheens<sup>15</sup> of red woollen cloth, a pair of pistols, a pair of razor blades. The copyist of the texts was presented with a spyglass and a razor blade. A few days later Kowalewski visited Minjul Hutugtu himself because the latter was supposed to leave before long for Dolon Nor in Inner Mongolia, his summer residence. Later Kowalewski wrote in his diary: “We were received in a very friendly fashion and were served a substantial meal. The Hutugtu was mostly

<sup>11</sup> The mentioned 2007 edition of this text gives *brdzis* “kneaded” as correct reading.

<sup>12</sup> This information is taken from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian *Encyclopaedic Dictionary* by Brockhaus and Efron Publishers, St. Petersburg 1897, vol. 43, pp. 31–32; available elsewhere.

<sup>13</sup> *Dziennik zatrudnień*, f. 15a.

<sup>14</sup> *Rossiya—Mongolia—Kitai*, pp. 50–51.

<sup>15</sup> 1 arsheen = 0.71 metre.

inquiring about geography, his favourite subject. He reproved me for presenting Baldan too generous award for his teaching me the Mongolian language. This is a common local usage. However, most probably the things presented by me passed into the Hutugtu's hands, since he often asked me about the pistols and other things."<sup>16</sup>

A few days later Baldan brought to Kowalewski the following presents: two boxes of tea from Minjul Hutugtu and a piece of silk from Baldan himself. He told Kowalewski that Minjul Hutugtu had to perform for the Emperor a three-day service which was scheduled to take place at the summer palace in Haidian, a suburb of Beijing. "When the Huangdi [= Emperor] is entering the temple the Gegen<sup>17</sup> must meet him and follow him on his way inside the temple. There the Huangdi will bow three times to the images of Buddha and sit on a specially prepared seat. Then the Gegen will also sit on his chair. When the service is over the Gegen follows the Huangdi on his way out of the temple...The Gegen will be accompanied on his way to Dolon Nor by fifty lamas, and forty camels have been assigned to carry the load..."<sup>18</sup>

Later, when describing his return journey from Beijing to Russia through Mongolia, Kowalewski narrated a funny story about Minjul Hutugtu's interest in foreign technology. When Hutugtu's procession heading for Dolon Nor was passing near the camp of the Russian mission, he expressed a wish to Cossack officers to have a ride in a Russian two-wheeled cart. His Mongol worshippers were much astonished to see the Hutugtu riding with the Russian Cossacks. However, he appreciated the high quality of the cart and invited the Russian officers to stay overnight at his camp. When they refused he presented to the Cossacks two sheep and various snacks. Later pious Mongol worshippers requested to sell to them the skins of these sheep as sacred relics. "Through this event our Cossacks won the Mongols' considerable respect."<sup>19</sup> A week later the Russian mission received a letter from Minjul Hutugtu with an insistent request to send him a Russian cart from the border town of Kiakhta.<sup>20</sup>

Since Minjul Hutugtu was a frequent guest at the Russian Mission in Beijing, a Russian painter painted his watercolour portrait. It is kept now at the National Library of Russia (the former Public Library).<sup>21</sup>

Soon after his return to Kazan, in 1833 Kowalewski became the head of a newly established Chair of Mongol studies – the first one in Europe. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Minjul Hutugtu also contributed to the success of Kowalewski's mission to the East, and the contacts between the European scholar and the high-ranking learned lama were mutually beneficial.

<sup>16</sup> Op. cit., ff. 17b, 22a.

<sup>17</sup> Mong. *gegegen*, term of reference and addresses for incarnate lamas; a synonym of "Hutugtu".

<sup>18</sup> Op. cit., f. 22b.

<sup>19</sup> Op. cit., f. 71b; *Rossiya—Mongolia—Kitai*, p. 59.

<sup>20</sup> *Rossiya—Mongolia—Kitai*, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Yakhontov, K.S. *Kitaiskiye rukopisi i ksilografy Publchnoi Biblioteki*. St. Petersburg, 1993, pp. 187–188, No. 6.



Minjul Hutugtu