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DZUNGAR: RELIGION AND DESIGNATION

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Abstract: *The origin of the term 'Dzungar' (also known as 'Jungar', 'Zhungar', 'Zünghar', 'Zungar') has already received general consideration, but it is still not clear which events contributed to the first use of the term, and what it could actually mean. Its etymology needs further study. The traditional version does not go beyond the definition of the Dzungars as the "left wing" of the military-administrative division of the Oirats, and claims that the term first appeared in the early 17th century. However, the main factors and reasons of its usage for the nation's self-designation and state formation require further clarification. In the present research the authors consider the religious factor of consolidation and self-identification of the Dzungars. The aim of the article is to determine the conditions, causes and time of the occurrence and sustaining of the name Dzungar. Our tasks include: 1) studying the influence of related events and processes, such as Oirat migration from Western Mongolia and the Northern part of future Dzungaria to the Siberian rivers; separation of the Elets; appearance of the Derbets and the rise of Choros clan; adoption of Buddhism and the role of Geluk lamas and Dzungar leaders in the actualization of the ethnic groups' names as Choros and Dzungars; 2) identification of the religious factor in the emergence of the Dzungars and its subsequent influence on Manchus' policy towards them; 3) definition of the mechanism of the Dzungars' self-identification and the etymology of the term.*

Keywords: Dzungars, Elets, Choros, etymology, left wing, migration, ethnonym, Geluk, Buddhism, Manchus.

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TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION: LEFT WING

The word *Dzungar* is usually translated from Mongolian as "left wing". Since the ancient times, the steppe nomads have been divided into the left and right wings. The situation was the same under Genghis Khan. After the fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, Dayan Khagan (c. 1480? – 1543) has changed the system of governance and leadership among the Eastern Mongols: he re-created the left (Chakhars, Khalkhas and Uriankhai) and right (Tumets, Harachins and Ordos) wings [Sneath, 2010, p. 395–396]. The Oirats (Four Oirats) were not included in those wings, so the Mongols were described as "six and four" (earlier – "forty and four" [Vladimirtsov, 2002, p. 429]).

Vladimirtsov noticed that the separation among the Oirats into the right and left wings "... had developed as an effort to imitate the Eastern Mongols" [Vladimirtsov, 2002, p. 443]. It is believed that it manifested in the early 15th century, when the Four Oirats were divided into two

“hands”: *Züün Gar* (eastern/left hand) and *Baruun Gar* (western/right hand) [Natsagdorj, Ochir, 2010, p. 524]. According to Elverskog, the Dzungars (as the left wing) had already existed at the time of Toghon and Esen in the first half of the 15th century. [Elverskog, 2003, p. 109]. These authors did not indicate the sources they used for their conclusions.

Crossley attributes the appearance of the term *Dzungar* (in the form of *jegün ghar*) to the middle of the first third of the 17th century, the times of Dayan Khagan, and explains its active use by the Oirats' desire to emphasize their Mongolian identity when faced with pressure from the Manchus [Crossley, 2006, p. 73–74]. Atwood's opinion is almost the same: Dzungars as a tribal name appeared early in the 17th century. The term itself, he believes, arose as a way to distinguish themselves from their relatives, the Derbets, since “the Zünghars were the Dörböds to the east [of other Oirats]” [Atwood, 2004, p. 621]. Taupier also believes that in the early 17th century The Greater Dorbod ulus existed, consisting of two polities headed by the Choros clan [Taupier, 2014, p. 94]. Atwood's opinion was criticized by Beckwith, but the latter did not come to a definite conclusion, paying more attention to the criticism of traditional interpretation of the word “Dzungar” [Beckwith, 2007, p. 41]. Earlier, Uspensky had written about the understanding of the Dzungars as the “left hand”: “... then (under Genghis Khan. – *B.K., A.L.*) and now, each clan or aimaq had its own Tszung-gar or left wing; in this case, we could find a lot of Zhungars, at least in administrative nomenclature” [Uspensky, 1880, p. 75–76]. Thus, the etymology of the term *Dzungar* as an administrative concept of a “left hand” has been questioned by scholars since the previous century.

ELET OIRATS: CHOROS AND DERBETS

The Elets, headed by the Choros clan, should be considered the ancestors of the Dzungars.

Ogeleds [Ögeled, Elets] were named by Sagan Setsen among the early Oirats along with Baatut [Bayatud], Khoit [Xoyid] and Kergud [Kergüd] peoples [Sayang, 1990, p. 47]. Inclusion of the greater part of the Elets in 1437–1438 into the Oirats under Toghon (d. 1439), who headed Choros clan, contributed to the formation of the Early Oirat confederation (1430s – the end of the 15th c.) [The Story of Kho Orluk, 2016, p. 25–26].

The question of the Choros' origin arose in various publications [Avlyayev, 2002, p. 174; Taupier, 2014, p. 19–23, 30–33]. The term “Choros” (čoro) denoted the elite of society. In the early Turkic state formations, it had been a title for the leaders, later it became an ethnonym. How did the Choros manage to take a leading position among the Oirats? Various Chinese sources give a definite answer. In the “Clan Tables” of “Xin Yuanshi” and in “Qing shi gao”, the Choros line is traced back to Bohan (孛罕) with the generic title Wuluodai (兀罗带氏). Another transliteration of 兀罗带 is 兀鲁特 “wolute”, which correlates with “Elute”, “Elet”. Bohan ruled the left tumen (左手万户) [New History of Yuan; Zhao, 1927]. The roots of these Oirats go back to the Choros and Elets clans.

The reign of the Choros in the second half of the 15th century came to an end with a socio-political crisis of the First Confederation, leading to the exodus of a significant part of the Elets “to the west” (to Mogulistan, then known as *Kyzylbashi*) and their subsequent extermination [Kitinov, 2017].

Some experts [Okada, 1987, p. 201; Atwood, 2004, p. 150] associate the origins of the Dzungars' leaders (as well as the Derbets' ones) with the Choros. The Derbet rulers were descendants of Esen's eldest son – Boro-Nakhal¹, while the Dzungarian rulers were descendants of Esen's younger son Esmet-Darkhan-noyon, or Ash-Timur [Bichurin, 1829, p. 262; Zhang, He, 1895, p. 137; Zhao, 1927; Gaban, 2003, p. 89].

¹ Also known as Ho-er-ku-tao-wen (火兒古倒溫) or Khor-Khudai [Serruys, 1977, p. 377–378].

According to the description of the outer lands in “Qing shi gao”, the Derbets and the Dzungars used to have the same generic name Choros², but the source does not indicate the time of their separation. Sanchirov believed that the Derbets and the Dzungars originated from the Elets in the first half of the 17th century [Sanchirov, 2016, p. 228]. Due to the aftermentioned exodus to Mogulistan, Zlatkin’s opinion seems closer to the reality: the Derbets have supposedly separated themselves from the Choros by the early second half of the 15th century [Zlatkin, 1983, p. 45]. In the second half of the 15th century, the Elets split into at least two parts based on the loyalty to the previously mentioned brothers, who did not get along with each other [Serruys, 1977, p. 378].

Ash-Timur (d. 1478) and his Oirat people lived in the Altai region, Boro-Nakhal’s Oirats settled near the Zavkhan River³ [Natsagdorj, Ochir, 2010, p. 524–525]. Uspensky indicates the Gang-gang River as their location⁴ [Uspensky, 1880, p. 99–100]. In general, they lived close to each other.

In the late 15th – early 16th century, the people of Boro-Nakhal began to be called *Derbets* (initially known as a political community). The word *Derbet* in its original form could mean “four in one”, carrying the meaning of uniting a certain group of Oirats into one community. Most likely, the Derbets included not only the Boro-Nakhal Elets, but also some other Oirats, in particular the Khoits [Zhao, 1927, Liezhuan 309]. An important testimony was found by Potanin, who had visited the Derbet nomads in Western Mongolia in 1879: the priest Chivalkov told him a legend: “... these people received the name Dorbot, because their ancestor had been in charge of four tribes” [Potanin, 1883, p. 20]. Avlyaev also attributed the meaning of the word “Derbet” to the numeral “dorben” (four) [Avlyaev, 2002, p. 317]. The opinion of Natsagdorj and Ochir, who identified the late 15th century Elets as “the One Oirat”, in general coincides with our idea: at this time “the Ööld have began to be called the One Oirat (*neg Oirat*)” [Natsagdorj, Ochir, 2010, p. 525]. We believe that they were supposed to be the Derbets (“four in one”, part of the Elets), headed by the Choros descendants of Boro-Nakhal.

HOW DO MIGRATIONS SPECIFY THE ORIGIN OF DZUNGARS?

Since Ash-Timur had retained his Taishi title, he and his descendants up to his great-grandson Ongotsi headed all the Oirats [*The Story of Kho Orluk*, 2016, p. 26; Bichurin, 1829, p. 260–261]. In 1541 the leadership among the Oirats passed down to the Khoshuts [Sukhbaatar, Bayarsaikhan, 2016, p. 114]. Due to the pressure of their neighbors, the Oirats (Derbets, Elets and others) moved to the Irtysh River area in the 1560s – 1580s. The study of migration patterns of the Ash-Timur Elets helps to clarify the conditions under which the Dzungars appeared.

The “Miller Portfolios” mention that Khara Khula⁵, the first ruler of the Dzungars had already “... roamed with his ulus people in the same countries what his descendants now own... but he was driven out of his homeland by the Mungalas and had his refuge in Siberia” before the early 17th century [*MIRMO*, 1956, p. 31]. These “countries” meant the Altai region [Zhang, He, 1895, p. 131]. In this case, Barthold’s conclusion appears to be correct: “The nomads of the Hong-taiji... were originally located near the Upper Irtysh, slightly above Lake Zaysan” [Barthold, 1898, p. 92].

² “Oirats (Elutes) in the ancient times were divided into 4 tribes: Khoshuts of the Borjigin clan; Dzungars and Derbets of the Choros clan; Torguts of an unknown clan” [Zhao, 1927, Liezhuan 309].

³ East of the Mongolian Altai.

⁴ Headwaters of the Yenisey River, north of the Zavkhan River.

⁵ The 6th generation of Ash-Timur [Bichurin, 1829, p. 260–262].

Khara Khula's Elets roamed around the Black Irtysh and the Mongolian Altai, where Ash-Timur had once settled [Zlatkin, 1983, p. 68]⁶. Tümed Altan Khan descended on these Elets around 1568. Years earlier, he had ousted the Oirats (Khoits and Torguts) from the west of Mongolia, causing them to go down along the Irtysh. Altan, for his part, had moved to north – according to the source, he crossed the Kökei Mountains⁷ and attacked the Elets and Baatut [Elverskog, 2003, p. 110, 114]. As a result, the Elets went northwards to the headwaters of the Yenisey River. Due to their contacts with the Mats (Motors), Tuvans and other peoples of the Yenisey headwaters, we managed to indicate the location of the Elets and therefore correlate them with the Dzungars.

According to the map⁸ compiled on the basis of the Ming Empire documents, by 1582 the Oirats (“wala” 瓦剌) have occupied a large territory northwest of Lake Zaysan and eastwards, up to western Mongolia [The Historical Atlas of China, 1996, p. 42–43]. The last hieroglyph (刺) is shown in the headwaters of the Yenisey. In the late 16th century, a domain headed by Sholoi-Ubashi Khungtaiji (“Altyn Khan”) was formed in Western Mongolia, south from that area. His main rivals were so-called “Black Kalmyks”⁹. The study of the documents shows that they usually were the Elets¹⁰.

Tomsk *voyevoda* V. Volynsky reported in 1609: “the Black Kolmaks are fighting against Altyn-Tsar” [MIRMO, 1959, p. 32]. Later, he states that the Kalmyks had previously roamed closely to the White Kalmyks, i.e. near Altai, and now “the Black Kolmaks have migrated far from them and are fighting with Altyn-Tsar and the Cossack Horde” [MIRMO, 1959, p. 33].

Presumably, the reason was the problem of *yasak* from the Motor people, claimed both by the Oirats and Altyn Khan. In 1610, the latter subdued the Motors [MIRMO, 1959, p. 30] who inhabited the banks of the Tuba and Abakan Rivers (tributaries of the Yenisey). This advance of Altyn Khan forced the Elets to leave in the northwestern direction, towards the White Kalmyks. In the *voyevoda's* report, the Black Kalmyks probably mean both the Elets (these Oirats were geographically close to the White Kalmyks) and the people of Altyn Khan [Miller, 1937, vol. 1, p. 425; MIRMO, 1959, p. 32–33].

BUDDHISM AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DZUNGARS

In 1616 Lama Tsagan Nomin Khan (alias Manjushri-khutukhtu (1588–1639)) visited the Oirats. He was invited by Torgut Taishi Mergen Temene [Gaban, 2003, p. 90; Tyumen, 2003, p. 139], who was roaming with the Elets near the lands of Altyn Khan, from where this lama came [Zlatkin, 1983, p. 101]. The Kalmyks “said that Altyn... and the Chinese state had the same faith and writing and language. And now they are leading the Kolmak people to their faith” [MIRMO, 1959, p. 53–54].

Lama had known the Oirats for a very long time [Terbish, 2008, p. 65]. The Oirat leaders have already revered lamas as early as the early 17th century, allowing the Khoshut leader Turu-Baihu to conclude a peace treaty between the Oirats and the eastern Mongols “through the mediation of lamas and especially of the Mongolian Khutuktu” in 1606 [Pallas, 1776, p. 39]. Later, Turu-Baihu received the title *Gushi Khan* [Sumba, 1972, p. 62].

⁶ “Qing Shi” says that the Elets roamed along the Ili River in the early 16th century [Zheng, 2003, p. 339].

⁷ The western part of the modern Uvs province in Mongolia.

⁸ The map for the article is placed on the colour plate.

⁹ Among the reasons why they were called “Black”: 1) they lived further to the east of other Kalmyks and therefore were less known; 2) they lived to the south and south-east of the Teleuts (“White Kalmyks”). For further versions refer to [Batiyanova, 2007].

¹⁰ For example, the Dzungarian ruler Galdan, after receiving the Khan's title, was also called “Black Kalmyks gegen Galdan kontaisha” by Russians [RGADA 2, I, 7].

Some unique information on the connection between the lama's visit and the appearance of the Dzungars is found in the "History of the Dörben-Oirats", a source dating back to the second half of the 18th century: "two Choros khungtaiji, the great and the small¹¹ – 10 khoshuns, [make up] one [division] of the Oirats. At the time when these 10 khoshuns formed the left wing (zuun gar), many Oirat grand and minor princes each agreed to give one of their sons to the big novices (bandi). They received ordination [to monastic orders] from Manjushri-khutugtu" [*History of the Dörben-Oirats*, 2016, p. 59–60]. So, the source points to 1616 as a year when part of the Oirats formed the left wing, calling themselves *Dzungars*. Probably, this circumstance caused the update of their old ethnonym *Choros*¹². The Chinese historiography also refers to this source and emphasizes the role of the Choros Elets and Derbets in the spread of Geluk Buddhism among the Oirats [*Brief History of the Oirat Mongols*, 1992, p. 59–60].

Thus, Khara Khula and Khotogochin took upon themselves the task of protecting the Geluk doctrine from enemies. In other words, the Oirats adopted not a "standard" religious tradition, but rather a particular militant form of Tibetan ritual Buddhism [Atwood, 2004, p. 294]. The adoption of the Geluk doctrine at the same time implied responsibility for its safety, and the Elets as its defenders were the most militant force of the Oirats. This decision corresponded to the situation in Tibet, where the Geluk was losing its positions: in 1612 and 1613, during the events known as the "war of mouse and bull years" (byi glang sde gzar), the Tsang ruler Karma Phuntsok Namgyal (r. 1611–1621) subdued Ü, the main region of Geluk. Tsagan Nomin Khan came to the Oirats by the order of the IVth Dalai Yönten Gyatso (1589–1617, Mongol by origin) [*Brief history of the Oirat Mongols*, 1992, p. 60; Jin, 2009, p. 383], who, like his predecessor, did a lot to strengthen the Geluk doctrine among the Mongols, including the Oirats [Sangs-rgyas, 1999, p. 225].

The name *Dzungars* has not become widespread immediately. The Elets, as "Kolmak people", were mentioned in Russian documents as early as 1618–1619 due to their appearance in the Baraba Steppe, in the interflow of Om and Ob Rivers: their leaders were Sengil-Taisha and Khara Khula's brother Devnikey-Taisha [*MIRMO*, 1959, p. 78]. Miller noted: "Taisha Khara-Khula was at that time the most notable among the Kalmyk princes... The location of Khara-Khula's headquarters was quite remote... that can be concluded from the fact that Jan Kucha's trip... (the envoy from Tobolsk authorities to Taisha. – B.K., A.L.) lasted six months" [Miller, 1937, vol. 2, p. 92].

So, Khara Khula's headquarters was located east or south-east of Tobolsk, probably further than the headquarters of other Kalmyk Taishis. During the period when the Geluk strengthened its positions among the Oirats, Khara Khula was revered as the strongest leader. The growth of Khara Khula's authority allowed his embassy to arrive in Moscow on January 10, 1620 [*MIRMO*, 1959, p. 92].

Over time, in Russian documents the Elets have been increasingly referred to as the Dzungars: since the spring of 1623, Kalmyks have been named *Jeungars*, from "*Yaungar/Eungar ulus*", of *Chungar* Taishi. They were identified as formerly subordinate to the Derbet rulers [*MIRMO*, 1959, p. 120, 124–125, 129]¹³. In 1616 Khotogochin and his people separated from Khara Khula and began roaming along the Irtysh, where he gradually subjugated the Kalmyk "small princes" [Pallas, 1776, p. 39].

¹¹ Khara Khula and his son Khotogochin, the future Batur-khungtaiji.

¹² In Russian documents, the word Choros (spelled as "Churas") appears only in the early 1630s [Miller, 1937, vol. 2, p. 102], which can be explained by the increasing struggle between the Derbet Dalai-Taishi and the Dzungar leaders Khara Khula and Khotogochin [Zlatkin, 1983, p. 112].

¹³ During the war between Altyn Khan and Khara Khula (1630), the envoys of Altyn arrived particularly to Dalai Taishi to ask him that he "... would not help the Yaungar Kalmak, would not give his people to help them" [Bogoyavlensky, 1939, p. 66–67].

RELIGION AND FATE OF THE OIRATS

In late 1634 or early 1635, Sonam Chopel¹⁴ (Sumba-Khambo mentioned lama Garu Lotsawa) arrived to the Oirats with a delegation of lamas, asking for help in Geluk's fight against the Karma Kagyu school [Sumba, 1972, p. 60–61; Dhondup, 1984, p. 18]. According to Tibetan sources, they arrived to “the Dsungar and Urluk Mongol tribes” [Dhondup, 1984, p. 18], “to the Dzungars”¹⁵ [Sum-pa, 1969, p. 15]. We believe that they arrived to Khotogochin, who was honored with the title of *Khungtaiji* and the name *Batur-Erdeni* on behalf of the Vth Dalai Lama [Pallas, 1776, p. 39]. The idea of the Dzungars as religion defenders turned out to be so prevalent that even the Khoshut Gushi Khan, who later lead the Oirat army to Kukunor, was called Dzungarian¹⁶ in the source [Sum-pa, 1969, p. 12]. The visit of Tibetans demonstrated the unifying power of religion: in the conditions of consolidation processes, religion could be a sign of independence, contributing to the emergence of the state [Khazanov, 1994, p. 16]. It is not surprising that later these events were perceived as proof of appearance of a special Dzungar appanage.

The “Urluk Mongols”¹⁷ meant the Torguts of Mergen Temene. In other words, the Tibetan ambassadors arrived to visit the same Oirats, whom Tsagan Nomun Khan had visited two decades earlier. In the autumn of 1636, the Oirat army led by Gushi Khan and Batur Khungtaiji moved to Kukunor. The Elets, as “Defenders of the Doctrine” (meaning Dzungars), rightfully occupied the left flank of the army in the battle with the Mongols of Tsogt Taiji [*The Story of Kho Orluk*, 2016, p. 27, 33–34].

After this campaign, the word *Dzungar* was finally fixed to denote the Elets and became associated with the Geluk doctrine. According to the “Crystal Mirror”, a Mongolian source of the first third of the 19th century, “the Dzungarian chiefs were indeed worshippers of the Yellow faith and claimed that they were alms-givers of the teachings of saint Bogdo-Tsonkhava [founder of the Yellow Hats]” [Jambadorji, 2005, p. 130]. Atwood mentions the Dzungar slogan: “We are the main alms-givers [i.e., lay patrons] of the Holy Tsong-kha-pa” [Atwood, 2004, p. 622]. The significance of the religious factor in the Dzungar designation was confirmed by a special event: the first Oirat tulku Galdan, the son of Batur Khungtaiji, the reincarnation of famous Ensa-tulku of the Geluk school, appeared among these people. Galdan received the title “Boshogtu Khan” from the Dalai Lama for his outstanding service to Geluk [*Wrapped in Excellent Silk*, 2012, vol. 3, p. 136]. Meanwhile, the significance of the name was crucial for these zealous Oirats¹⁸. Thus, the aforementioned processes and events indicate the pro-religious basis of the term *Dzungar*. The Choros Dzungars considered themselves “the left wing Defenders of the Doctrine” and appreciated this designation.

During the events of 1636–1637, the Oirats had a right wing (*Barungar*), consisting of Mergen Temene Torguts who were standing on the right flank. Their *Barungar* name was relevant only for the period of that war and not preserved – unlike the Dzungars, whose name marked their important role in the fate of religion, became a feature of identity and therefore turned out to be a long-term name. By that time, most Torguts have moved to the southern Russian regions, from where they developed special relations with Tibet.

Along with the term *Dzungar* (pro-religious polytonym), these Oirats retained the name of Elets (endoethnonym), which was more casual for their contemporaries. Thus, the Vth Dalai Lama

¹⁴ A confidant of the IVth Dalai Lama, who found his tulku Dalai Lama V in 1619.

¹⁵ “‘ga’ ru lo tsa ba jo ‘un gwar phyogs su mngag”.

¹⁶ “Ju ‘un gwar gyi gu shrir rgyal po”.

¹⁷ The main Torgut leader was Kho-Urluk.

¹⁸ Galdan's name repeated the name of the preferred Buddhist school – *dga’ldan* (Ganden, i.e. Galdan), which became known as *dge lugs* under the Vth Dalai Lama.

called Batur Khungtaiji *Oirat/Elet*¹⁹ rather than *Dzungarian* in his Autobiography [*Wrapped in Excellent Silk*, 2012, vol. 1, p. 154, 350]. The Elets called their state the Four Oirats [*Materials from "Qing True Records"*, 1987, p. 153]. On the 1739 map "Imperii Russii et Tatariae universae"²⁰ the Dzungars are designated as *Kalmaki Elevthi Singori Dsongari* (Kalmyks Elets-Dzungars), and the state itself – *Regn Cantaische Elevthor*, i.e. the power of the Elet Dzungar Khongtaiji. Other Oirats are identified as "Kalmaki Torgavti" (Kalmyks Torguts) and "Kalmaki Kokonor" (Kalmyks of Kukunor), i.e. they were not called "Elets".

DZUNGARS AND MANCHUS

According to one of the versions, the ethnonym "Manchus" came into existence in connection with the cult of Bodhisattva Manjushri (文殊 wénshū)²¹. The Manchus used Tibetan Buddhism as a means of self-identification and self-affirmation. The image of their ruler – Chakravartin, the incarnation of Manjushri, was reinforced by the union of "choi-yon", according to which they became patrons, defenders of the Doctrine [Grupper, 1984, p. 72–73].

The negative attitude of the Manchu court to the term *Dzungar* confirms our hypothesis about the religious connotations of this word: following the classical Chinese tradition, the Manchus rejected self-proclaimed names, especially if they were motivated by religion. So, around 1692 a famous Manchurian official Somgotu²² thanked the Russian authorities, saying that when "the Kalmyk-Oluts [Eletes] ... came to ask for soldiers, you, remembering the friendship that started between us ... did not give them any people" [*RGADA I*, 1, 30]. After the defeat of Galdan, the Emperor wrote to Dipa Sangye Gyatso: "You told my ambassadors about the Four Olets, portraying them as defenders of your faith and as your patrons. How do you expect me to stay calm while you are calling the Four Olets and asking them to help you?" [Jambadorji, 2005, p. 123].

The religious discourse of the "Dzungarian" name for the Elets was used by the Manchus for their own purposes. In the diplomatic correspondence between Beijing and St. Petersburg, Galdan Tseren Khungtaiji (1693? – 1745), as well as his father Tsewang Rabtan Khungtaiji (1663–1727), were named *Thomkars* in one document: "Thomkar Galdan Cheren, a father and a son, act badly from generation to generation, and interfere with all surrounding states". All Dzungars are designated by the same word: "... an army has been sent to fight the Thomkars..." [*AVPRI*, p. 140]. *Thomkar* is derived from the Tibetan words *thom pa* ("drugged" among a number of meanings), and *dkar wa* (white) – "thom dkar": "drugged by the white", "fallen into the white". It was usually understood as either heretics or Muslims (someone who became Muslim)²³. The accusation of the Dzungar leaders of "leaving" for Islam²⁴ that started with Galdan was a deliberately constructed mechanism of opposition to the pro-Buddhist "Dzungarian" idea, originated in 1616.

After the defeat of Dzungaria, the Manchus banned the term *Dzungar*, and "approved" the previously used one – the Elets. This was done not only in order to destroy any memory of the

¹⁹ "o rod pa thur hung tha'i ji". S. Ch. Das supposed that *Eloth* (Elet) is the same name as *Orod* (Oirat) [Das, 1984, p. 154].

²⁰ David Rumsey Map Collection, Stanford Libraries.

²¹ Other versions, including toponymic ones, are presented in Wang Junzhong's work [Wang, 1997, p. 95–96].

²² Somotu (Somgotu, 1636–1703) – a Manchu official who signed the 1689 Nerchinsk Agreement with Russia on behalf of the Kangxi Emperor.

²³ In Kalachakra Tantra texts, Tibetans call Muslims "la-lo" ("k'la klo" – those who are "overshadowed", from the Sanskrit "mleccha" (Tib. "mustegs pa")), but the usual definition of Muslims is "white caps" ("mgo dkar").

²⁴ Denby pointed out that Qianlong, having received information about the betrayal of Amursana, "ordered three Tatar generals, each of whom was subordinate to several myriads of troops, to move on the Muslims by separate roads" [Denby, 1891, p. 177]. Here, Qianlong meant the Dzungars under Muslims (Mohammedans).

defeated enemy, but also to assert the Manchus' patronage over the Geluk school. This idea was clearly traced back to the correspondence between Kangxi Emperor and Galdan: "In your letter [you] write that in [your] actions [you] are guided by the teachings of Tsongkhava... the Dalai Lama knows perfectly well that I defend the teaching of Tsongkhava... the Khalkha and the Oirats... say empty words about their adherence to the teaching of Tsongkhava and the principles of Dalai Lama, but secretly violate it..." [Martynov, 1987, p. 151–152].

The Manchu rulers of China did not have to solve the dilemma of whether to consider themselves Chakravartins "Turning the Wheel of Teaching", or the "Right Wing" of defenders, patrons of Buddhism. Instead, they preferred another idea, which supposed "the projection of themselves as the ultimate apotheosis of righteous rulers in the recurring cycles of history and myth" [Elverskog, 2008, p. 8]. Not only such a technique was traditional in Chinese political thought, but also coincided with the Buddhist ideas. In this case, the issue of political subordination was not emphasized, nor raised at all, but at the same time, it shows how the rulers of China imagined world order.

CONCLUSION

The term *Dzungar*, according to the traditional version, meant "left hand/ left wing" in the sense of military-administrative division of the Elet Oirats. It is believed that this term could have originated in the 15th – early 17th centuries. Having studied the reasons why a part of the Elets called themselves Dzungars, we came to the following conclusions. The appearance of the Dzungars is connected with the Elets' migrations that began in the late 15th century and with the rise of the Choros clan. The Elets of Ash-Timur lineage (the future Dzungars) were located separately from the Derbet group (first separated from the Elets), around the Altai, gradually moving to the east, to western Mongolia. But the pressure of Altyn Khan forced the Oirats to migrate northwest from the upper banks of the Yenisey River.

An early Dzungarian trace remained in Russian sources. The documents of 1607–1609 mention the embassies of "Black Kalmyks" to Tomsk, correlating with these Elets. In 1616, during the visit of Lama Tsagan Nomun Khan to the Oirats, the Choros leaders Khara Khula and Khotogochin adopted the name *Dzungars*, defining themselves and their people as the left, the fighting wing of Buddhism defenders. Since 1623, they have been mentioned in Russian sources under the names *Yeungars*, *Chungars*, *Zyungars* etc. Later, their role and connection with the Geluk became more known, determining their position in the Kokonor hostilities of 1636–1637. The Choros leaders, like their ancestor Esen Taishi, perceived Buddhism not just as a religion of their people, but as a consolidating ideology of their future state. In this case, the mechanism of self-identification of the Dzungars and Manchus was very similar, clarifying the nature of the confrontation between them. The consolidation of the Dzungars, backed by their pro-religious name (polytonim), created a precedent for the existence of two states in Central Asia – the Dzungar and the Manchu – who claimed to be patrons of the Buddhist Geluk doctrine and reunification of peoples. Thus, the word *Dzungar* appeared in 1616 and became entrenched in the first third of the 17th century as a pro-religious ethnonym for the remaining Elets, related to the role of these Oirats as *defenders* of Geluk teaching.

ABBREVIATIONS

AVPRI – Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire.

MIRMO – Materials on the History of Russian-Mongolian Relations.

RGADA – Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts.

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Иллюстрация к статье Б.У. Китинова, А.Г. Люлиной

Миграция ойратов в конце XVI - начале XVII вв. Migration of Oirats at the end of the 16th — beginning of the 17th centuries

