

# THE TRADITIONAL STYLE OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF MONGOLIA



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# INTRODUCTION (1)

There are nine scripts:

- ✦ Kitan script - invented in 920 - 925
- ✦ Mongolian script (Uighur Mongolian script) - the official script in Mongolia from IX, X centuries up to 1946
- ✦ Square script - invented in 1262
- ✦ Clear (Tod) script - invented in 1648
- ✦ Soyombo script - invented in 1686
- ✦ Horizontal square script

## INTRODUCTION (2)



- ✧ Wagindara's script - invented in 1905
- ✧ Latin script - there was an attempt to use Latin alphabet in 1930-1933
- ✧ Cyrillic script - the official script since 1946

## INTRODUCTION (3)



Mongolian script has constantly been used:

- ❖ Chinggis Khan was using the Mongolian script in his State Affairs
- ❖ the 800th anniversary of the State script will be celebrated in 2004
- ❖ the National Script Day will be celebrated every year starting from next year

## INTRODUCTION (4)



- ❖ Mongolian script is written and read vertically in columns (lines)
- ❖ Lines ordered from left to right
- ❖ It is cursive script
  
- ◆ the Mongolian character code set was reported during the first stage of the CICC Multi-lingual Information Technology Project.
- ◆ The Mongolian character code set has been accepted by ISO.

# THE TRADITIONAL STYLE of ANCIENT MONGOLIAN DOCUMENTS (1)



The Mongolians had a traditional style of writing official documents and had been using it for many hundred years

- ❖ rules of writing diplomatic official letters
- ❖ common layout of the text in documents
- ❖ rules of raising some lines
- ❖ spacing lines
- ❖ positioning the date
- ❖ sealing the documents

## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (2)



The oldest document, the original copy is kept :

- ❖ a letter from Mongolian *Il Khan Argun* to French King *Philip Le Bel*.
  - ◆ written in 1289
  - ◆ one of the five most famous sources, which are known as *Letters of Il Khans*
  - ◆ contains 34 lines
  - ◆ the content is about a campaign against Egypt jointly with the French King

Figure 1. A diplomatic letter written in 1289



## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (3)

The raised lines are begun with the following words and phrases:

↪ Eternal sky

✦ Khan

✦ Argun

✦ Il Khan

↪ Praying to the Heaven

↪ by the protection of the Everlasting Heaven

↪ the Power of the Heaven

↪ genius of the Khan

## Figure 2. A stone inscription dated 1225

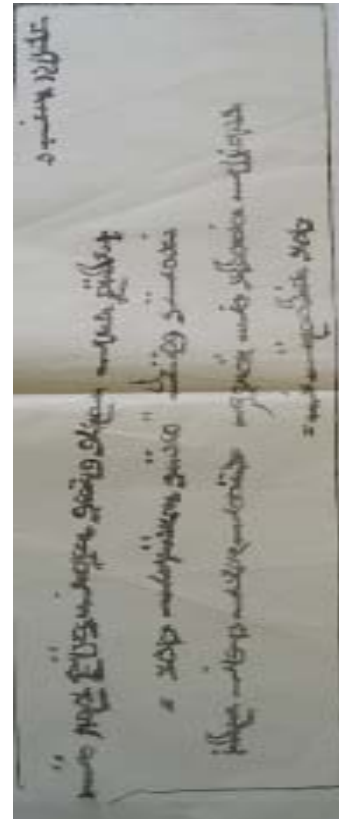
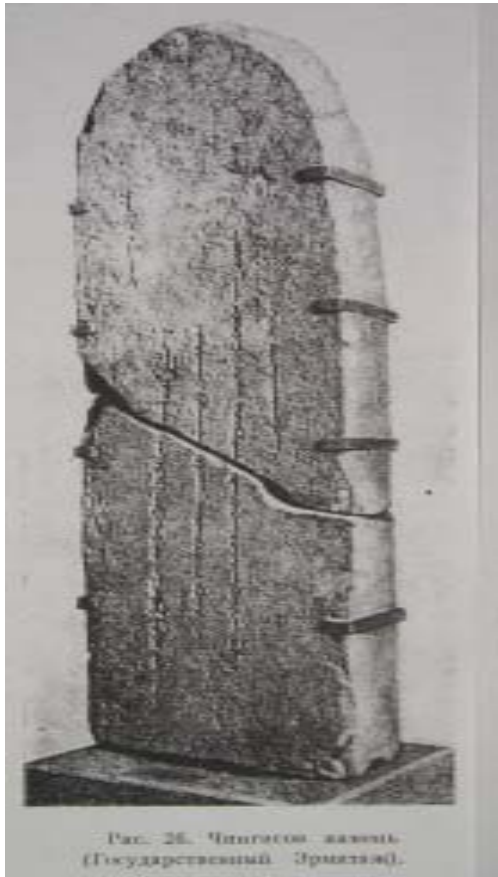
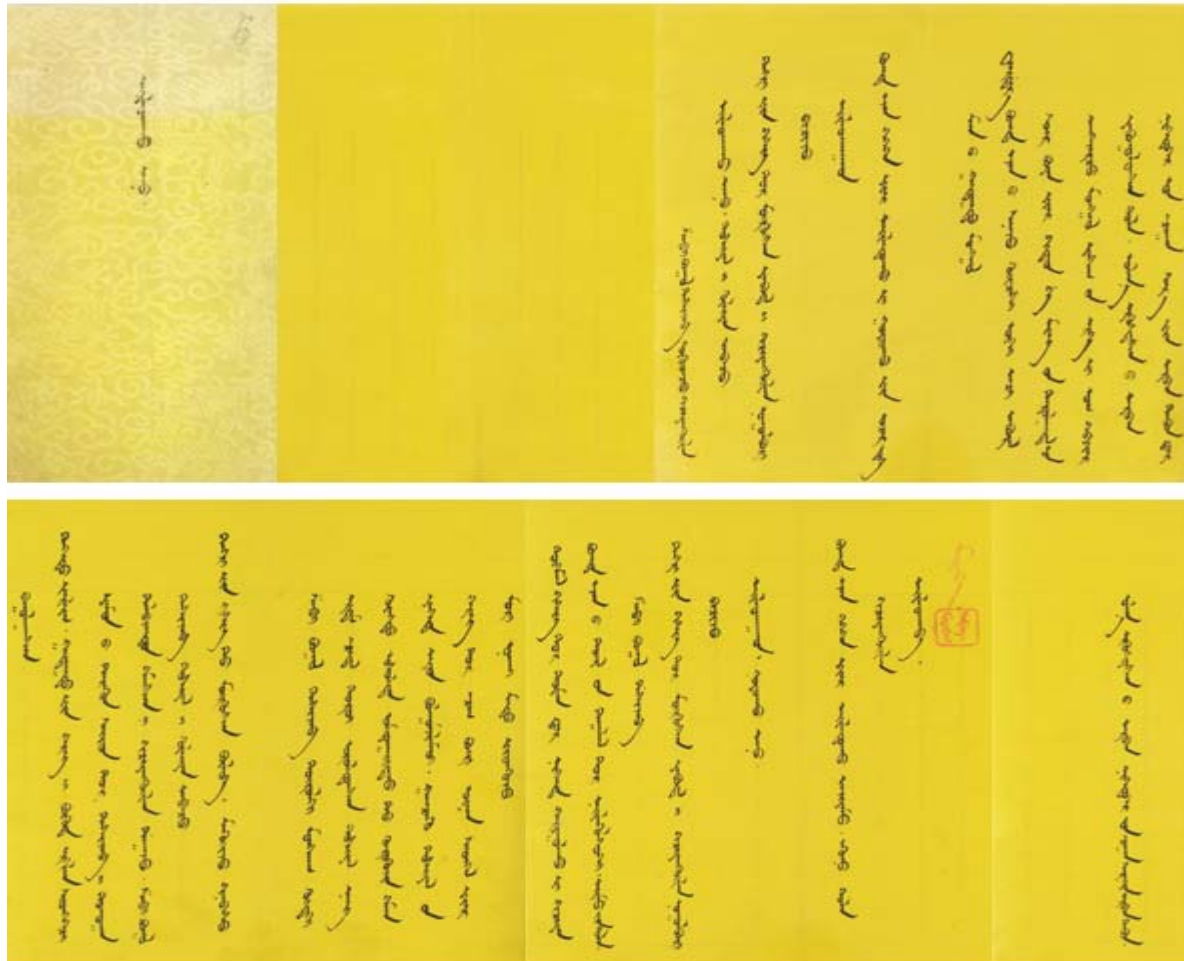


Figure 3. A letter written in 1921



## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (4)



⇒ *“Your faithful pupil and slave Dashjav respectfully kneeling down on the ground”* was written at a lower position than the baseline.

✿ The raised lines began with :


- ◆ The Heaven’s grace
- ◆ Saint Majesty Boddo
- ◆ Vajratara Saint Majesty Bogdo
- ◆ the order of the Nobility
- ◆ The Universal grace

## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (4)



In general, an official document had three parts:

 an introduction

 main meaning of the document

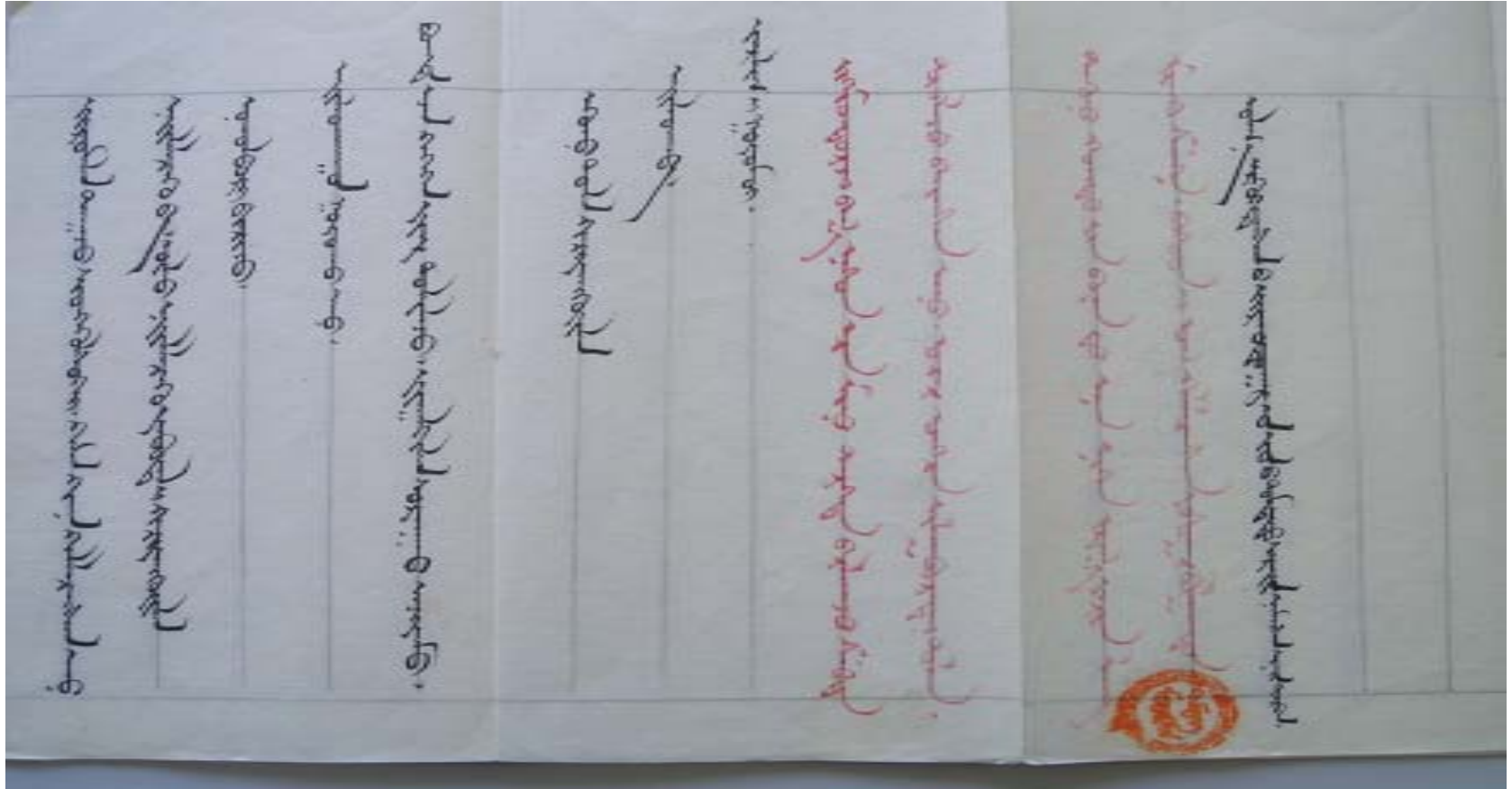
 colophon

## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (5)



- ❖ The receiver sealed the document at its end with so called *hand's mark*
- ❖ the receiver wanted to give additional comments or orders then these were written at the end of the document

Figure 4. The Khan's comments made for a letter



## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (6)



The author wrote a document

↪ without any insertions

✿ the last word of the document in special manner

Figure 5. The beginning and end of a document written in 1305



## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (7)



Mongolians used to write on

- ◆ paper
- ◆ cloth
- ◆ wood
- ◆ metal
- ◆ stone
- ◆ birch-bark

using

- ◆ ink, bamboo pen, brush
- ◆ since 18th century had been using writing brush

## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (8)



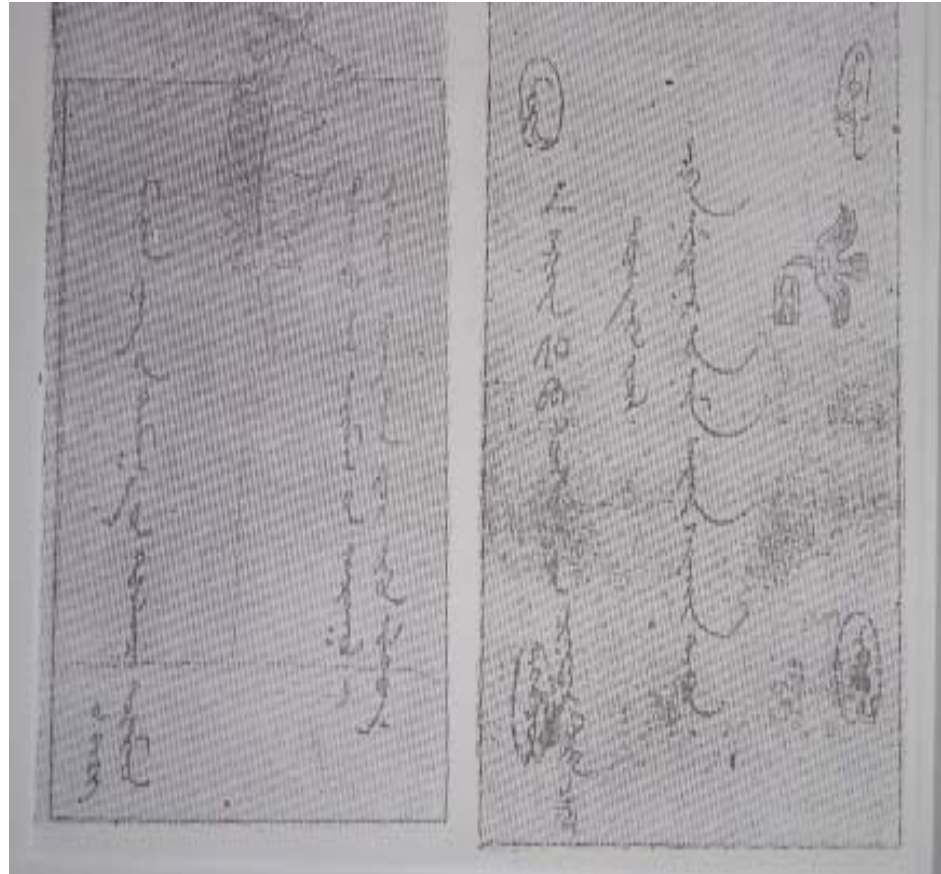
- ◆ Ordinary official documents - on a red lined paper with black ink
- ◆ in the case of celebration and ceremony - with red ink
- ◆ in the case of sorrow - on a blue lined paper with blue ink

## THE TRADITIONAL STYLE (8)

Certain rules had been used for transmission:

- ✚ documents were sent in an envelope
- ✚ some kind of signs had been used to show urgent documents
  - ◆ a feather
  - ◆ a bird holding in its mouth a letter
  - ◆ footprints of horse hoofs in four corners
  - ◆ “fly, fly” or “send by horsemen very urgently”

Figure 6. Marks for urgent documents



## CONCLUSION



- Mongolians started to use the Mongolian script approximately one thousand years ago and it became the official script of the Great Mongolia during the period of Chinggis Khan (in 1204).
- ✿ A style of writing official documents had already been established until the beginning of the 13th century. Since that time this style was being developed and became the traditional style of official documents.
- ✿ This traditional style has been changed since 1921. The new style has to be studied.