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Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren
Mary Rossabi
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Preface

Morris Rossabi

This work is the second volume of English translations of interviews conducted in 2001-2005 by Prof. Yuki Konagaya and Dr. I. Lkhagvasuren of prominent figures in twentieth-century Mongolia. These reminiscences are designed to supplement the conventional historical narrative of the world's second socialist country. Generally isolated from the Western world from 1921 to 1990, the years of socialist hegemony, Mongolia and its twentieth-century history have often appeared in a sketchy fashion. These interviews fill in, with individual and colorful detail, a few of the most important developments in the country's economic and political life. In this volume, the establishment of the *negdels*, or collectives, and the first trade networks with the Western world are, for example, described, and the interviews illuminate the processes that led to these development. Among the most interesting features are the differing views of Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal, the Head of State and the leader of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the only legal political party, from 1952 to 1984. As the reader will discover, the portraits of this all-powerful figure are remarkably diverse. From the testimonies of Baldandorjiin Nyambuu and Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav, the reader will discover at least two Tsedenbals. Additional research will be required to determine which, if any, of these characterizations are accurate.

Scholarly analyses and narratives, the testimonies of other figures, and the consideration of statistical data will be needed to supplement the observations of these leaders to gain a full understanding of the successes and failures of twentieth-century Mongolia. The interviews in this volume, as well as the ones in the previous book, provide vital primary sources for future studies.

We chose to translate the interviews and write about three of the remaining interviewees to complement the first volume. Because differing perceptions of Yu. Tsedenbal were one criterion for the volume, we selected the interviews of Yumjaagiin Ayush, his brother, and Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav, one of his closest associates, who offer more positive images of Tsedenbal than the ones reflected in the first volume. Jalan-Aajav's testimony is especially intriguing because Tsedenbal was, in large part, responsible for dismissing him from his government and Party positions and then having him exiled. Although Jalan-Aajav was harmed by Tsedenbal, his evaluation of the Head of State and leader of the socialist Party was fair and not colored by his being exiled.

Another criterion for selection was complementing the figures who

appeared in the first volume. Renchin Minjuur was, in part, chosen because he provides a link to Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuuz, a key individual in the first volume. Minjuur was influential in the development of the *negdels*, and Lookhuuz founded the State Farms. In his interview, Minjuur described the differences between these two forms of organization, and the establishment of these two units, one for herding and the other for farming, offer contrasting approaches to economic development in the country.

We are grateful to Buyana Bayasgalan who helped us to solve knotty problems in the translation from Mongolian to English, and we thank the students who read the first volume and urged us to produce this second book.

C O N T E N T S

Introduction

Morris Rossabi

Renchin Minjuur (1914-2007)

Unlike the other Mongolians whose interviews have been translated into English in the two volumes that the National Ethnology Museum of Japan has published, Renchin Minjuur did not have a similarly sophisticated education. The other five interviewees may have begun their formal educations somewhat later than in the West, but they all completed secondary schools and pursued university-level training. They studied abroad, primarily in the USSR, and knew foreign languages. Their educations in the USSR, Mongolia's most important patron after its socialist revolution in 1921, provided opportunities for leading positions in government, the economy, and the professions.[1)] Minjuur did not become literate until the age of twenty-one, obtained a minimal education in a military school, never went to college, and did not study in the USSR or anywhere outside of Mongolia. He did not have exposure to and knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and, in his interview, does not refer to the theoretical issues relating to this philosophy. Also unlike the other interviewees, he did not secure an important government position, nor was he elected to the Khural, or Parliament, as all except one other did.

Minjuur also derived from the humblest circumstances of any of the six interviewees. He endured great poverty as a child. He never knew his father, and his mother died when he was six years old. He was adopted by a poor relative and assumed the life of a herder as a child. It was a simple life with simple pleasures, but much was grim. He observes that the lack of agriculture meant no flour or grain and an unhealthy diet for the poor. Tea was expensive for the children who could drink only boiled water. Medical care was based on traditional Tibetan Buddhist treatments that did not always work. The poor did not have the funds to buy the silk or cotton clothing that the rich could afford. They led a monotonous and demanding life.

Minjuur repeatedly inveighs against the rich and the Buddhist lamas who had a better diet, a less harsh workday, and better clothing, which, for the lamas, consisted of beautiful yellow or red garments. He portrays the Buddhist monks as avaricious parasites who would not read proper services for the ailing or deceased poor because they would not be paid. He says they cared

only for the wealthy.[2] His descriptions of the disparities in lifestyle and diet between the wealthy and the poor, even in the decade following the 1921 socialist revolution, offer valuable data for historians and students of Mongolian culture. Socialism did not initially translate into significant improvements in the herders' lives.

As a compensation for this difficult life, Minjuur became extremely knowledgeable about herding. He learned about the different animals and their specific dietary needs. Because the country lacked veterinarians, he had to develop skills in caring for ailing or diseased animals.[3] Although he notes that herders did not know how to produce cashmere goats and did not comb goats and the did not gather yak hair, he depicts a generally idyllic portrait of the pastoral economy and lifestyle. Herders reputedly cooperated in tending the herds, and the theft of animals scarcely intruded. The government allotted winter quarters and devised migration patterns for herders. Precipitation was plentiful, and the current droughts that have occasionally plagued the country since the 1990s were rare. *Zuds* or harsh snowy and icy winters during which many animals perished were not as prevalent and did not devastate the herds. Minjuur asserts that the post-1990 dismemberment of the *negdels*, or collectives, that had been established in the socialist period had led to the vulnerability of the herding economy and the loss of many more animals at present. Alcoholism, another present-day problem was not as pervasive in his youth, although Minjuur acknowledges that, as a young man, he did enjoy spirits.

Minjuur might have remained a regular herder had he not recognized the importance of literacy, an insight that shaped the rest of his life and career. At the age of twenty-one, he joined the military, in large part to learn to read and write and to perform simple mathematical functions. Because much of the Mongolian rural population was illiterate as late as 1937, or sixteen years after the socialist revolution, he created more options for himself as he improved his writing and mathematical skills.

His first opportunities were in the postal relay system and in the Ministry of the Interior. The postal relay system had been a burdensome feature of corvée labor during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) when China ruled the Mongolians.[4] The Qing compelled Mongolian households to maintain and staff the postal stations, a great investment in labor and money. In the socialist period, the State often funded the postal stations, which served as vehicles to deliver mail twice a day seven days a week, mail that included newspapers and information about weather and climatic conditions, to the herders. Minjuur describes the drudgery and demands imposed on him as a rider, but he also expresses pride for his role in this important service. He appears less proud of

his decade-long service in the Ministry of the Interior, a secret police agency. He does not identify the tasks he undertook at the Ministry, and he also barely mentions his position as a cook for Marshal Choibalsan (1895-1952), the country's ruler and often referred to as Mongolia's Stalin until his death in 1952.[5] Too close an association with Choibalsan after the government's denunciations of the Marshal just a few years after his death would not have been an asset.[6]

Having climbed up the social ladder and having moved, via his military service, to Ulaan Baatar, Minjuur sought to marry, a process that bolstered his negative attitude towards the wealthy. He wanted to wed a woman of a higher social status, but her parents opposed the marriage for social and economic reasons, preventing the performance of the proper wedding festivities. Moreover, the young couple would have lived in penury had not his uncle provided them with a comfortable and suitable *ger* or Mongolian-style tent. His in-laws' social prejudices perhaps contributed to his perception that the rich had little compassion for the poor. He repeatedly lambastes the wealthy for their lack of social concern, and his confrontations with his in-laws no doubt colored his perceptions about the more prosperous Mongolians. It should be noted that he and his in-laws eventually reconciled, and they accepted him as a member of the family.

Minjuur reveals little about his attitudes toward politics and foreign relations. He acknowledges that the government executed innocent people during the height of the 1936 to 1939 purges. Yet he does not elaborate on this chaotic era that led to the deaths of at least twenty-five thousand lamas, officials, and soldiers.[7] Moreover, he blames Joseph Stalin for the concerted campaign against Buddhism and the destruction of Buddhist monasteries. He scarcely condemns the Mongolians, including Marshal Choibalsan, who instigated and carried out the purges. They appear to be absolved of major wrongdoing. Unlike Baldandorjiin Nyambuu, a member of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party [the socialist and only legal political party] who was relieved of his position and exiled from Ulaan Baatar in 1964, he generally praised the USSR and believed that it had made a significant contribution to Mongolia.[8] However, he barely refers to politics or ideology except in the most general terms. This is all understandable because he had scant involvement in politics and was not well trained in Marxist ideology. He was a practical man of affairs, and his principal objective was to help the poor. If a different ideology such as Marxism could be effective in reducing or eliminating poverty, then he would embrace it. He did join the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and became a leader in one of the Party cells, but he did not appear to emphasize its ideology in his work

life and scarcely had any relationships with such political leaders as Choibalsan and Tsedenbal who dominated the era during which he was active.

Nonetheless, his Party membership offered him the opportunity to become a leader in the collectivization movement that started in 1954. With Party and government approval, he returned to his native region in Mörön, the capital of Khövsgöl *aimag*, or province, one of the northernmost regions in Mongolia, and was appointed the leader of its *negdel* or collective. It is in this section of his interview that he becomes most animated and provides the greatest detail. This economic transformation in the countryside was clearly his proudest achievement.

He started his discussion of the *negdels* with an explanation of the speed with which collectives sprang up throughout Mongolia. Well aware that foreigners would attribute the origins of the collectives to government and Party pressure on the herders, he observed that the *negdel* movement was voluntary, a somewhat disingenuous claim. He said that herders were not compelled to join the *negdels*. Local officials and the *negdel* leaders merely tried to prove that collectives would be advantageous for poor and average herders. The rich would not initially profit, but even they would eventually be better off because of the superior health, educational, and cultural opportunities available in the *negdels*.[9] The wealthy would be limited in the number of animals they could own because the State would need to provide flocks to the poor. However, all herders in the *negdels* would also have some animals of their own that they could tend. Minjuur tried to confirm that herders, even the rich, were not forced into the *negdels* by describing the formal and intricate procedures in applying for admission. Herders would have truly been eager to join if they attempted to overcome the hurdles to admission. Minjuur asserts that no Party representative or government leader mandated that anyone, rich or poor, become a member. The Party and the government were separate from the *negdels*. However, there were disincentives for not joining. The State imposed heavy taxes on meat, wool, and milk marketed by private herders. It would literally pay to join the *negdels*.

The *negdels* would turn over animals, especially to the poor, but it demanded specific tasks in return. Herders needed to build *khashaas*, or enclosures for the protection of the animals in winter, and wells, and the cooperation of whole teams would facilitate and accelerate the construction of these structures. Each herder had to make provisions to feed and water the animals and to migrate in order to find sufficient plants and water for the herds.

Minjuur reveals that considerable opposition toward the *negdels* persisted even some years after their establishment. He tells us that the rich repeatedly

disparaged the new collectives, frequently co-opted the best lands and water supplies, turned over their worst animals to the *negdels*, and often hid, traded, or sold some of their herds rather than turn them over to the *negdels*. Yet he also acknowledges that the rich were not the only group that created problems for the *negdels*. Some herders concentrated on their privately-owned animals and paid little attention to the collective herds, leading to less food and water for these animals and, on occasion, to lack of detection of disease among the *negdels*' flocks. Many herders remained illiterate as of 1955, denying them access to books and articles that could inform them about more efficient techniques of animal husbandry. Conflicts among Party leaders, local officials, and *negdel* directors sometimes hampered *negdel* operations. The vast liquor consumption or virtual alcoholism of some herders also harmed efforts to create an effective and productive system.

Minjuur writes that his most important task was to persuade herders of the advantages of *negdels* and to have them join the collectives.[10] He told herders that they would receive a regular salary even if a disastrous winter led to the deaths of numerous animals. When they could no longer undertake the difficult chores of the herding lifestyle and retired, they would receive pensions and would not have to rely on family support. They would also receive protective clothing and would always be in groups, a great advantage in a society and landscape where isolation could be fatal. Because of the advantages of scale in collectives, *negdels* would produce more meat, milk, and other animal goods than any other organizational form. The same advantages would permit collectives to experiment with production of vegetables and potatoes, ensuring a better diet for its members. Perhaps as significant, the *negdels* would train and recruit veterinarians and herding specialists who would improve the quality of the herds.

Minjuur then proceeds to describe *negdel* innovations and his role in proposing and implementing them. For example, the *negdels* not only established schools but also built dormitories for children whose herder families needed periodically to move their herds to new quarters to find food and water for their animals. Children could not move from one location to another and still attend school. Thus Minjuur, as the *negdel* director, became responsible for the children's education and their needs, including food, fuel, books, and school supplies. He was determined to increase the rate of literacy among the herders, and the schools and dormitories were vital elements of his plan. To raise the revenues for this and other projects, he first conceived of and actually constructed a hotel and restaurant for traveling officials or economic or technical advisers. The hotel offered reasonably priced and well-tended accommodations, a well-received innovation, especially in areas where

such comforts were rare. Other of his money-making ventures included encouragement to carpenters and smiths to fashion bowls, chests, tent frames, and chairs, the last of which gained his *negdel* some renown. He sent men to Ulaan Baatar to scour the garbage for discarded metal, which could then be used to produce keys, knives, and other items. Encouraging the planting of potatoes and bread for sale, he overcame the resistance of many Mongolian consumers and eventually made substantial profits from these foods. Perhaps somewhat ruefully, he mentions his encouragement of *airagh*, or liquor made of fermented mare's milk, production. Later he admits that alcohol abuse was a terrible affliction for Mongolians and perhaps felt guilty for contributing to the problem.

Minjuur says that his forceful support for electrification and mechanization turned out to be beneficial for the *negdel*. He introduced tractors to promote agriculture, set up diesel and electric stations to provide light, and developed a corps of mechanics to ensure proper operation of this new machinery. Shortly thereafter, the dairy industry was mechanized, and later the *negdel* added chicken, pig, hare, and geese production.

In addition to increased production, Minjuur focused on welfare and cultural opportunities for *negdel* members. His *negdel* had its own clinic and the center of his district had a hospital, with ten doctors, a remarkable achievement in a country that had no Western medical facilities thirty years earlier. Also at the district center were maternity rest houses where mothers-to-be spent the last week or so before birth. Nurses, midwives, and doctors monitored them during that time, leading to a reduction in infant and maternal mortality, and trained personnel offered lessons on the care, feeding, and cleaning of babies.[11] When mothers returned to the *negdel*, they could send their children to crèches, nursery schools, and kindergartens and could then rejoin the work force. Minjuur invited Russian doctors to give lessons in sanitation, resulting in a significant advance in public health. To pursue the life cycle, the *negdels* organized wedding palaces for marriages and celebrations. Minjuur appears proudest of the construction of a Cultural Palace, which housed a library, a theater, and a museum with artifacts illustrating local history. To encourage an esprit de corps among members, he sponsored entertainments, especially dancing. He recognized that *negdel* members needed such recreational activities to balance the demands of the tough herding life.

His innovations and contributions led to considerable recognition, though an undercurrent of criticism about the *negdels* persisted. He won numerous awards and medals, and even Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal (1916-1991), the leader of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, and the government, praised him

as a Labor Hero. Minjuur was a problem solver. He valued effective policies and programs and was not bound by ideology, Marxist or otherwise. His and the *negdels*' successes generated calls for larger collectives in order to capitalize on the efficiencies of scale, and some collectives did indeed combine. Yet Minjuur reveals that he made mistakes as a *negdel* director but does not provide specifics.

The rosy picture that Minjuur paints was indeed challenged by Party and government reports and observations. In 1977, the Party newspaper decried the "irresponsible, undisciplined, careless, and deceitful" officials and herders in some areas and blamed the country-wide decline in the number of animals[12] on "lack of care." A few years later,Yu. Tsedenbal described an unfavorable situation in livestock production and castigated "irresponsible" herders and officials and improper work by Party, State, and collective bodies.[13] Others, on occasion, blamed shortfalls in the animal quotas prescribed by the State on lazy officials and herders.

Both *negdels* and the State farms were the subjects of such critiques. Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuuz, another pragmatist and problem solver who was the Director of the State Farms, and Minjuur, the leader of the Mörön *negdel,* praised the respective organizations they managed.[14] However, Minjuur mentions that the two agencies differed. *Negdel* members joined voluntarily, and rewards were based on their own labor and were shared by them. The State managed the State Farms, whose profits accrued to the government, but the *negdels* were free of State control. The *negdel* economy was centered on livestock, with some agriculture, while the State Farms principally produced wheat and vegetables. Substantial capital from the government permitted the State Farms to be more mechanized than the *negdels*.

When Minjuur turns to a discussion of the collapse of socialism in 1990, he is distressed by the resulting system. He witheringly criticizes the privatization that was supposed to lead to a market economy and democracy, which were often conflated. Again he blames what he terms the unscrupulous rich. He accuses them of stealing *negdel* property, including machines, cars, and animals after the dismemberment of the collectives. "Shock therapy" and immediate and rapid privatization dictated a lack of supervision and regulation to prevent such injustices. A few herders and officials profited enormously from the division of *negdel* property, but the majority did not gain and often remained in a precarious position in the countryside. Everyone was on his or her own, resulting, according to Minjuur, in disastrous consequences. Because former *negdel* enterprises were unable to obtain the credit they used to secure from the State, many folded. Lacking credit and means to transport their goods to market on their own, *negdel* milk factories declined or disappeared, and the

cities were compelled to depend upon imports of dairy products, in a country with an animal to human ratio of at least 10 to 1. The Mongolian State scarcely acted to prevent Chinese merchants from purchasing raw materials from herders, and Mongolian processing factories, which could not afford to compete with the Chinese, remained idle.[15)]

Minjuur lamented the impact of the rapid privatization on the *negdel's* vulnerable members. The social and economic benefits that accompanied the collectives had been reduced or eliminated, impinging in particular on the poor. The elderly could not count on pensions; the government's reduction of expenditures on education, dormitories, and school supplies and clothing, among other factors, increased the rate of school dropouts; and women, who often had the principal responsibility for family welfare, began to lose government benefits, including child allowances and free or low-cost crèches and kindergartens, which made for a harder life.

Particularly galling to him was the growth in corruption after 1990, with the collapse of socialism. Corruption existed under the socialist system, but penalties were so harsh that they served as deterrents. Displays of wealth would also arouse suspicions about graft, another limitation on corruption.[16)] Minjuur observes that a baker caught selling bread of less weight than stated would receive a prison sentence. He says that corruption among top officials, who can build expensive houses or receive elaborate gifts from foreigners, had become a serious problem after the introduction of a market economy after 1990.[17)] Considering what he perceives to be the after effects of the end of socialism, he concluded that "democracy has become a disaster."

Although Minjuur died in 2007, he saw some limited improvement in conditions. According to government statistics, the number of school dropouts has been reduced and the gross domestic product increased dramatically. However, the poverty rate has remained steady at 35 to 40% of the population, a statistic that must have alarmed Minjuur, a staunch advocate for the poor.

Minjuur's interview yields a portrait of a man whose life reflects the changes in twentieth-century Mongolia. Born into abject poverty, he became a herder, the typical employment of Mongolians up until recent times. An opportunity to become literate at the age of twenty-one altered his career. Like most of the leadership of twentieth-century socialist Mongolia, education proved to be the key to a change in his life. He was not an ideologue but simply believed that socialism offered a better life for Mongolians. Marxism scarcely intrudes in his interview. He joined the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party but had little training in ideology. Neither did he become involved in politics, as judged by his limited descriptions of the purges of the late 1930s and his laconic observations of Choibalsan, the dominant political

figure from the 1930s until his death in 1952, and Tsedenbal, the generally pro-Soviet head of the State and the Party from 1952 to 1984. Truly dedicated to forging a better life for the poor, he concentrated on moving toward a more productive economy and the enhancement of their lives through education and exposure to new social and cultural developments.

His appraisal of Mongolia's post-1990 embrace of the market economy and so-called democracy echoes the negative views of many Mongolians, including Paavangiin Damdin, among the founders of the first Ministry of Industry in the 1960s, and even Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuuz, the Director of the State Farms, who had been purged by the socialist government in 1964.[18] No doubt Minjuur and others idealized the socialist past. Nonetheless disconsolate about the breakup of the *negdels* to which he had devoted much of his life and the undermining of what he believed to be the selflessness and cooperative spirit of his era, he worried about the poor.[19] He lambasted the new political leadership whom he did not trust and who, he asserted, did not have the people's interests at heart. This was certainly not the way this ardent supporter of the socialist collectives wanted to leave this world, which he did in 2007.

Yumjaagiin Ayush (1926-)

Like Minjuur, Yumjaagiin Ayush was interested in results rather than ideology throughout his career. Unlike Minjuur, he did not appear to have a visceral empathy with the poor. Born in 1926, he would probably have remained a herder except for events outside his control. However, again because of these events beyond his control, his career could have been thwarted in socialist Mongolia. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, a group later discredited as Leftist Deviationists initiated an attempt, rapidly and with scant preparation, to collectivize the herds. Chaos ensued, and Ayush's mother's brother was one of the victims in this radical time. He was executed as a "class enemy" because he owned too many animals and was designated as a feudal oppressor. The radical control of government ended in 1932 when a more moderate group replaced the so-called Leftist Deviationists.[20] Yet Ayush's uncle had been purged and killed, possibility a stain on his entire family. Fortunately for Ayush and his relatives, they did not suffer as a result of a family member's execution. Still a child during the most heinous purges from 1936 to 1939, Ayush scarcely mentions this frightening period. The most significant event for him during this time was the opening of a school in his area in 1938-1939 when he was twelve years old. Attendance at the school led to literacy, which afforded him opportunities other than a herding career. As he observed, literacy would qualify him to have a supervisory position in the

countryside. For example, he noted that he could become a census taker because he was able to read and write.

If literacy expanded his opportunities in his own land, it was his brother's status in the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the government that altered his career. His brother Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal, who was ten years older than he, had been chosen to attend school as a nine-year old. As a thirteen-year old, having reached the limits of education in the town of Ulaangom in his native northwestern Mongolian *aimag*, or province, of Uvs, he earned the chance to study in Russia in Irkutsk and in Buryatia in Ulan Ude. At the age of twenty-two, he received a degree from the Finance and Economics Institute in Siberia. One of the few such trained Mongolians (especially after the purges of 1936 to 1939 had eliminated some well-educated leaders), he quickly reached the top of the hierarchy when he returned to Mongolia in 1939. He became Director of the Mongol Bank, then Deputy Minister of Finance, and subsequently Minister of Finance, all within a year. Ayush reports that his brother was entrusted with the task of supplying food for the soldiers in the 1939 Russo-Mongolian victory at the battle of Khalkhyn Gol (or Nomonhan, in Japanese) that prevented Japanese encroachment on Mongolia and persuaded the Japanese to focus more on expansion in China and Southeast Asia than on Northeast Asia. His successes led to his promotion to the position of General Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in 1940.

Ayush's career intersected with Tsedenbal's at that point. Ayush first truly met his brother when Tsedenbal, accompanied by Choibalsan, the Head of State, arrived at his birthplace. Shortly thereafter, Tsedenbal summoned Ayush to Ulaan Baatar where he lived in the Mongol Bank quarters. For a while, Ayush disappointed his renowned brother. Tensions around the world that would soon give rise to World War Two lent prestige to the military. Thus Ayush, probably at his brother's urging, sought admission to military school but was not accepted because he was too short. He also decided not to attend the Finance Technicum in Ulaan Baatar because it was too far from his residence at the Mongol Bank. He apparently was not as ambitious as his brother. Even with a car at his disposal, he concluded that the Finance Technicum was too distant for him to start his studies. His more relaxed attitude was revealed when he said that his brother worked very hard, read all the time, and often stayed up until 3 or 4 in the morning. Ayush was more of a free spirit and somewhat less conscientious than his brother.

Again, his brother seems to have interceded to give him another chance at a higher education. After World War Two, Tsedenbal had him sent to Moscow to study at the Commercial Technicum. Ayush passed the admissions test because of information from Soviet bloc friends about the specific contents

and questions. Once admitted, he performed adequately, learning about both socialism and the market economy. However, he complained about living conditions in Moscow, especially the lack of food and his meager stipend for expenses. His living conditions were no doubt difficult, but his brother, fearful of accusations of nepotism, could not act to help him. Eventually, he studied at the Institute of Foreign Trade and became knowledgeable about the intricacies of foreign trade, especially commerce with the Soviet bloc.

On his return to Mongolia, he was, surprisingly, assigned to the Co-operative Union, which had little to do with his education in the USSR, for ten years before a mysterious ailment gave him the chance to make use of his training. He contracted an unspecified sickness that led him to a five year residence in Hungary and three years in Czechoslovakia, seeking to improve his health by imbibing the mineral waters. Many in the Soviet bloc believed in the salubriousness of hot springs, which encouraged lengthy stays in such spas. Ayush tells us that he gradually recovered after eight years of recuperation. Such a prolonged residence abroad made him comfortable in negotiations with foreigners. He made a deal in Hungary to sell the distinctive and colorful Mongolian stamps.[21)] Perhaps as critical for Mongolia, he had the authority to trade with the capitalist countries, and he helped to export wool to the outside world. He also sold animal intestines to Switzerland to be used as sutures in surgery, and he traded for medical equipment from Finland. His main concern was that imports, especially fuel, would be delayed because of the long distances and poor transport from Russia and Europe. However, for the most part, goods arrived, and traders overcame the obstacles of rudimentary connections to foreign lands, though transport remained a problem. A revealing comment he makes is that the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party needed to provide clearance on any foreign trade negotiated by the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Its approval was essential, an indication of the Party's power in the country.

Ayush's interview also disclosed some personal touches. His education in Mongolian history was limited. For example, he asserted that a Mongolian built the great Taj Mahal, quite an exaggeration. The Mughals, descendants of Temür (or Tamerlane), constructed that tomb. His observations about Chinggis Khan and Batu, Chinggis' grandson and the founder of the Golden Horde in Russia, are not well-informed, and he himself observes that foreigners know more about them than he and most Mongolians do. Until 1990, negative Soviet views about Chinggis and his descendants dominated in Mongolia, and Mongolian children were hardly taught about their history. After the decline of Soviet influence in the 1990s, Chinggis was virtually deified amid growing Mongolian nationalism.[22)] As fascinating was Ayush's mention of the purges

that afflicted the Mongolian socialist era in the 1930s. He noted that the government accused his father-in-law of Leftist Deviationism and, in 1938, had him executed and his property confiscated. Ayush was twelve years old at the time, but his father-in-law's alleged criminal behavior did not stain his in-law's family or his own career after his marriage. Naturally he had a protector in his brother who eventually became Head of State. Yet anecdotal impressions regarding family members of purged individuals seem to affirm that they were not stigmatized, and a few had outstanding political or economic careers.[23)]

Ayush's revelations about his brother and his family were among the most valuable parts of his interviews. He portrayed Tsedenbal as extremely hard-working and dedicated to the Mongolian people. There was no mention of Tsedenbal's role in purging D. Tömör Ochir and L. Tsend, two important members of the Politburo, in 1962-1963, and T. Lookhuuz , former Director of the State Farms, and B. Nyambuu, former First Secretary of Ömnögov *aimag*, in 1964 from their high positions in the government and in the Party.[24)] Ayush was similarly silent about Tsedenbal's Russian wife Anastasia Ivanovna Filatova (1920-2001). He mentioned only that a Russian introduced Tsedenbal to his future wife, that she arrived in Ulaan Baatar in 1947, and that she occasionally invited him and his wife to showings of movies. Many in the Mongolian leadership vilified Filatova for allegedly persuading her husband to adopt pro-Russian policies that did not benefit or, in some cases, actually harmed Mongolia. Ayush's peremptory discussion of his sister-in-law in a section of his interview hardly provided insights about their relationship, and he did not weigh in on the controversy surrounding her influence on Tsedenbal.

Ayush then waded into the controversy about his brother's dismissal in 1984. Tsedenbal had traveled to the USSR in that year and was then hospitalized, with Soviet doctors announcing that he was quite ill. His associates in the Mongolian government and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party then stripped him of his positions. Years later Zorig Tsedenbaliin (1957-), Tsedenbal's son, wrote that a group of conspirators in the USSR and Mongolia had plotted to remove his father from office, offering the excuse that he was discombobulated.[25)] The USSR had been moving toward a rapprochement with China after a quarter of a century of hostility between the two countries, a policy that Tsedenbal appeared to oppose. Tsedenbal did not fit in with the reform movements sweeping across the Soviet bloc. Did the Soviet leaders, with the connivance of Tsedenbal's Mongolian opponents, concoct a plot to remove him from office?[26)] Ayush appeared reluctant to express his opinion. He mentioned that his brother had suffered from an unspecified liver disease and that hospitalization seemed proper. Yet a hospital employee administered an injection, after which Tsedenbal became

disoriented, which served as a justification for his dismissal from his offices. Did Ayush believe that the doctors deliberately debilitated his brother? He did not make a definitive judgment, but on another matter he lamented the disappearance of Tsedenbal's awards and medals, as well as his numerous books. Who purloined these mementoes and personal effects? Could government officials have been responsible? Again Ayush did not make a pronouncement or accusation.

Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav (1923-2007)

Like Minjuur and Ayush, Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav was born into a herding family in 1923, two years after the socialist revolution in Mongolia, and, like all six men whose interviews have been translated into English in these two volumes, education proved to be key for his career and success. Without access to education, he would probably have remained a herder, a lifestyle he actually cherished. Yet he made repeated and concentrated efforts to attend ever more prestigious schools and universities, a quest that offered new vistas and significant opportunities.

His description of his early life initially yields an idyllic countryside existence. His mother gave birth to him in a *ger* because no hospitals or modern medical facilities were available in his *aimag* in Zavkhan in northwestern Mongolia. His grandfather, an excellent herder with a substantial number of animals, ensured the family's prosperity. Jalan Aajav assured the reader that his region was not plagued by robbery, drunkenness, cheating, or bribery and stated that herders helped each other, somewhat of an idealized image and an obvious effort to contrast those times with the post-1990 society. His only complaints centered around the numerous lamaseries and monks, whom he considered to be exploitative. He also might have been distressed by the lack of schools in his area, but his mother was literate and taught him to read and write and to perform simple computations. By the early 1930s, he saw the first evidence of modern medicine with the appearance of a Russian doctor. This observation belied the statement of B. Nyambuu, an official labeled as part of an "anti-Party" group in 1964 and dismissed and exiled to Dornod *aimag*, that he could think of nothing that the USSR advisers had done for Mongolia.[27)] Nyambuu's assertion was hyperbolic. The other five men whose interviews have been translated into English repeatedly acknowledged the Soviet contributions to the State Farms, education, culture, and, in Jalan-Aajav's observation, medicine. Later Jalan-Aajav would also mention the negative Soviet influences in the forms of fear, repression, purges, and killings of innocents, but he also accentuated the positive.

Jalan-Aajav's idyllic life came to an end at the age of ten when his grandfather died. Without his grandfather's expertise and skilled handling of the herds, their animals died, and in one bad winter, most of the family's livestock did not survive. In this situation, herdsmen often turned to and received help from relatives, but his grandfather's wealthy brother did not assist Jalan-Aajav's mother and Jalan-Aajav himself and indeed frequently used them as laborers. Despite his description of the incessant drudgery of herding, his narrative still revealed a love of Nature, as well as his skill in tending animals. However, seeking to break away from his grandfather's brother's family, he began to work with wood and became a passable carpenter. He subsequently secured a position in the lime industry in Uliastai, where he remained for two years. Proud of his ability to make money, he took his first pay check and bought a *deel* and some sugar but gave most of his wages to his beloved mother, who continued to emphasize education and wanted him to enhance his skills and learning through additional schooling.

Her influence and Jalan-Aajav's eagerness to please her prompted him to take every opportunity to attend an astonishing array of institutes. First, he talked his way into permission to take the entrance examinations for the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party's school, an important institute for future leaders. Although he was a good student, he still cheated on the test and managed to pass. He studied at the school until 1942 when he became one of the first students at the newly-founded National Mongolian University. Later he spent seven years at the New Generation University, which would, in 1958, become the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party College. While at this university, he had a fateful encounter. Yu. Tsedenbal taught him in a course on Marxism, and Jalan-Aajav was impressed with his instructor's knowledge and dedication.

During his studies at the university, Jalan-Aajav also was given the responsibility of heading the Propaganda Brigade in his native *aimag* of Zavkhan. He gave lectures on the history of the Communist Party of the USSR, became a teacher, and scheduled concerts and films, and provided books to citizens. His lectures apparently did not touch upon contemporary issues. In his descriptions, he virtually ignored the 1936 to 1939 purges in Mongolia. He noted in his interview that "mistakes" were made and people were arrested and executed, but he seemed to brush aside these untoward and unpleasant events. Similarly, he said little about World War Two. Instead he observed that the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party was a strong advocate of education and culture and he focused more on his own achievements and advancement. As a by-product of his years in the Propaganda Brigade, he wrote up his lectures (known as the "Jalan-Aajav Lectures") in a pamphlet that

became widely used in schools and institutes throughout Mongolia on the history of the USSR.

Such studies and lectures must have helped him to gain the opportunity to study in the USSR, a vital stepping stone for important positions in Mongolia. Of the six men whose interviews have been translated into English and who had distinguished careers in Mongolia, five had studied in the Soviet Union. From 1951 to 1956, Jalan-Aajav studied law at the university in Irkutsk. He must have performed well because he gained admission to the prestigious Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow to pursue a doctorate, which he completed with honors.

On his return to Mongolia in the late 1950s, he had the cachet of an education in the USSR, ensuring an important position and rapid promotions. He became Chief of the Department of Law at the New Generation University and seemed slated for an academic career. His major undertaking was a study of an eighteenth-century Mongolian law code, and he also wrote on the history and development of law both in Mongolia and in the USSR. In his interview, he expressed deep satisfaction in his life of scholarship.

The paucity of highly educated individuals, especially those trained in the USSR, prompted the government to recruit and to detach him from his academic pursuits. In 1959, he was named the State Procurator to investigate crimes and to ensure proper implementation of the law. His duties included bringing cases against transgressors of the law. Even while he pursued this assignment, he taught at the National Mongolian University. He filled two demanding positions, but he also had time to marry and to have a daughter. Like his fellow interviewees, he was reticent to talk about his family except insofar as his career affected his wife and daughter. Thus we learn little about them. Jalan-Aajav's performance as State Procurator caught the attention of Yu. Tsedenbal, the Head of the government. Through Tsedenbal's intercession, he became more embroiled in politics. Tsedenbal chose him to be the leader of the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee to devise plans for legal education and a national law. He and Tsedenbal subsequently isolated themselves for about five weeks to produce a national law. Jalan-Aajav provided an astonishingly positive portrait of Tsedenbal during these five weeks. He asserted that Tsedenbal single-handedly wrote the national law plan, and he praised him for his intelligence and conscientiousness. This depiction of Tsedenbal diverged considerably from the descriptions of Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuuz and especially Baldandorjiin Nyambuu, the so-called anti-party group dismissed from office in 1964, just four years after Jalan-Aajav and Tsedenbal created the national law plans. Nyambuu, in particular, had portrayed Tsedenbal as not too intelligent, surrounded by sycophants, manipulated by his

Russian wife, and concerned more about the interests of the USSR than of Mongolia. Jalan-Aajav asserted that Tsedenbal was highly educated and cultured and had introduced such important policies as the Virgin Lands program.[28] He also disparaged the view that Tsedenbal favored Soviet rather than Mongolian interests.

The two men's mutual respect led Tsedenbal to entrust Jalan-Aajav with ever greater responsibilities. In 1964, Jalan-Aajav became Director of the News and Radio Bureau, with the specific duty of bringing television to Mongolia. He rapidly recognized that Mongolia did not have the skills to set up the infrastructure for television. Thus he recruited Russians to advise and to assist in constructing, in particular, a television tower. Within three years of his appointment, Mongolian television was on the air.

Having succeeded in his role as an operations manager, Jalan-Aajav now was selected for policy roles. In 1971, he became a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and Deputy Leader of the Khural, or Parliament, giving him positions both in the Party and in the government. At the same time, he was chosen as Director of Personnel for the Party and the State. In this part of his interview, he acknowledged that the Party dominated the government, which was common knowledge, but he offered additional confirmation. He served in these positions from 1971 to 1983, years that he described in somewhat apocryphal terms. He said that the government supported educational institutions, including not only the Mongolian National University but also the Academy of Sciences, the Agricultural School, and the Medical College, and patronized art, literature, and culture in general. Ordinary Mongolians, according to his testimony, had sufficient money to buy food and clothing and to enjoy cultural events. Jalan-Aajav acknowledged, however, that a few miscreants in the Party expropriated government property, swindled private citizens, and accepted bribes. Yet, according to his testimony, such criminality was relatively rare.

This idyllic reverie ended for him in 1983 when he was stripped of his positions. The events surrounding this incident were murky. In his interview, Jalan-Aajav said that in the late 1970s Tsedenbal was seriously ill and should have left office. Instead, in 1983 Tsedenbal met with him and told him to retire. Shortly thereafter, Bugayin Dejid, the Director of the Control Committee of the Party's Central Committee and Minister of Internal Security in the government whom Jalan-Aajav linked to Lavrenti Beria, the notorious head of the Soviet Union's NKVD (implying that Dejid was a spy),[29] falsely accused him of supporting the "anti-Party" group in 1964. Dejid appeared to be associated with Tsedenbal's wife Anastasia Ivanova Filatova. One of the charges leveled at Jalan-Aajav was that he attended a meeting in 1964 with B.

Nyambuu where a list of possible successors to Tsedenbal was discussed. This meeting was portrayed as tantamount to a secret plot against Tsedenbal. B. Nyambuu disputed this account and asserted that this meeting was a set-up to trap him. One of Tsedenbal's agents presented them with the list, and Jalan-Aajav responded that "it is impossible dismiss Secretary Yu. Tsedenbal and that the domestic situation would get serious if a man worse than Yu. Tsedenbal held state power." In 1983, Nyambuu was outraged by this attack and wrote to the Party Central Committee Board that "Jalan-Aajav has nothing to do with us."[30] Jalan-Aajav did not respond to the charges because he said that he did not wish to undermine Party unity. The Politburo and the government then exiled him and his wife, allowing him to take only 400 *tugriks*, to his native a*imag* of Zavkan. Most egregiously from his standpoint, his daughter, who had graduated first in her class in law school, was fired from her Professorship of Law at the National Mongolian University. She had nothing to do with his case and was merely punished as part of guilt by association.

Perhaps Jalan-Aajav's explanation for his downfall was likeliest. Tsedenbal's wife Anastasia Ivanova Filatova and he had had several confrontations. Jalan-Aajav had warned Filatova about Sononym Udval (1921-1991),[31] the most prominent woman writer in twentieth-century Mongolia, urging her to keep her distance from Udval.[32] The reasons for his opposition to Udval were not entirely clear. The plot thickened, however, with knowledge that Udval was the adopted daughter of J. Sambuu, the Chair of the Presidium of the Khural from 1952 until his death in 1972.[33] Probably a more significant rift between Jalan-Aajav and Filatova centered on the Children's Fund that she had championed and that had received government funding. Was Jalan-Aajav implying that the Fund was mismanaged or that corruption had infiltrated into the organization? Or did he disagree with the policies or programs that Filatova pursued?[34] His interview did not provide sufficient details to answer these questions. However, he believed that Filatova's hostility led to his exile. Because Tsedenbal was in poor health and was not taking care of himself, the Head of State was hardly involved in this affair. Jalan-Aajav told us that he had no further meetings with Tsedenbal after their discussion about retirement. Unlike Lookhuuz and Nyambuu, the so-called anti-Party group in 1964, Jalan-Aajav described almost nothing about his period of exile.

The Control Board of the Central Committee finally rehabilitated Jalan-Aajav in 1990 and dismissed all the charges that had been leveled against him. Unlike Lookhuuz, he played no further role in politics after his rehabilitation. Instead he returned to his original career of teaching law and was eventually named a "Mongol Lawyer of Honor" for his services to Mongolia.

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These three interviews, along with the earlier three that were translated into English[35] depict aspects of life in twentieth-century Mongolia from the pre-revolutionary society to the socialist era and to post-socialist times. To be sure, this microcosm represents the elite's perceptions, not those of the ordinary Mongolians. Each of the six reached a leadership position in the economy, the government, or the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. This work thus contains a somewhat skewed portrait, but the leaders' testimonies often provide insights about the rest of society.

The first and most natural insight concerns herding. All six of those interviewed derived from herder backgrounds—some having lived in great poverty and some in relatively better circumstances. In this particular volume, Minjuur offers more information than anyone else on herding, not particularly unexpected since he devoted most of his life to work in animal husbandry. The other five interviewees moved to towns or cities where they assumed administrative positions, with Lookhuuz as the only other one personally involved in the countryside. Nonetheless, all convey the remarkable expertise required in a herding economy and confirm the great Mongolist Owen Lattimore's contention that "pastoral steppe nomadism is…obviously a product of high specialization" and "in all probability it is also a later form of specialization than is agriculture. The relative lateness can be accounted for by the fact that it was first necessary to domesticate animals."[36] Pastoral nomadism is not, as some have suggested, a more primitive economic form than agriculture. The testimonies of these former herders offer convincing proof of the skills needed for animal husbandry.

Another pattern concerns education. The interviewees were born and lived in the countryside where there were no schools in the late 1930s, almost two decades after the socialist revolution. In one way or another—tutoring by a local literate individual, joining the military, moving to the city of Ulaan Baatar, or passing a test for admission to an institute such as a technicum, they each managed to attend school or university. Selection for study in the USSR offered the promise of leadership positions on return to Mongolia. Minjuur was the only one who did not spend time in the USSR, and he remained in the countryside for much of his life. The rest wound up working either in the capital or abroad and were entrusted with tasks of national responsibility.

Yu. Tsedenbal hovers above all these interviews. This is only natural as he was the Head of State and leader of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party for more than three decades. He loomed large in the lives of all six interviewees. Ayush owed his career to his brother Tsedenbal; Tsedenbal

appointed Lookhuuz to be the Director of the State Farms and then, after their falling out, had Lookhuuz and Nyambuu exiled; he repeatedly assisted Damdin in trying to develop cashmere and other industries; and he collaborated closely with Jalan-Aajav on a number of projects until the last few months of his positions as Head of State. Each of the interviewees had widely disparate perceptions of Tsedenbal. Lookhuuz and Nyambuu reviled him for his poor abilities, his lack of true involvement in government, his contribution to a lackluster economy, his close relations with the USSR, and his corrupting use of funds to reward acolytes and sycophants. Damdin and Jalan-Aajav lauded him as conscientious, hardworking, bright, and well educated. A comprehensive search of the Mongolian archives and additional interviews with Mongolians, Russians, and Chinese who dealt with Tsedenbal will be required to reconcile these differing images and to gain a clearer understanding of his role in twentieth-century Mongolia.[37)]

Notes

1) A few sources on the history of Mongolia since 1921 include Tsedendambyn Batbayar, *Modern Mongolia: A Concise History* (Ulaan Baatar: Mongolian Center for Scientific and Technological Information, 1996); Charles Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1968); Stephen Kotkin and Bruce Elleman, eds. *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999); and Robert Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series 37, pt. 1, 1964). The official socialist interpretation is in William Brown and Urgunge Onon, trans. *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).
2) His depictions of Buddhist monks echo the views of Jamsrangiin Sambuu, later the Chairman of the Presidium of the Great Khural or Parliament. See Mary Rossabi, trans. and Morris Rossabi, ed.., *Herdsman to Statesman: The Autobiography of Jamsrangiin Sambuu of Mongolia* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010), pp. 5, 64, and 87-88.
3) The tremendous knowledge required for herding can be perceived in the precise guidebook written by an outstanding twentieth-century herder. See Ts. Namkhainyambuu, *Bounty from the Sheep: Autobiography of a Herdsman* (trans. by Mary Rossabi and intro. by Morris Rossabi; Cambridge: White Horse Press, 2000), pp. 103-150.
4) M. Sanjdorj, *Manchu Chinese Colonial Rule in Northern Mongolia* (trans. by Urgunge Onon; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 2 and 50-51.
5) On him, see the sources cited in Note One.
6) On the displacement of Choilbalsan's body from Sükhbaatar (or the central) Square in Ulaan Baatar, an indication of his lower stature, see Grégory Delaplace, "Marshall Choibalsan's Second Funeral" in Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace,

and Roberte Hamanyon, eds., *Representing Power in Modern Inner Asia: Conventions, Alternatives, and Oppositions* (Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2010), pp. 97-116.

7) Shagdariin Sandag and Harry Kendall, *Poisoned Arrows: The Stalin-Choibalsan Mongolian Massacres, 1921-1941*(Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), p. 173 gives a figure of 100,000 but it is probably an inflated number.
8) In his interview with Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren, he says that: "The Russian 'specialist advisors' were dispatched to all sectors of the Mongolian economy. It is difficult to answer the question of what they did. I cannot answer the question because they did nothing." See Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees and Dissenters: Three Twentieth-Century Mongolian Leaders* (trans. by Mary Rossabi and edited and compiled by Morris Rossabi: Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2011), p. 205.
9) An American was allowed to spend time in *negdels* during their height and wrote a similarly positive report. See Daniel Rosenberg, "Political Leadership in a Mongolian Nomadic Pastoralist Collective." Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1977.
10) He probably knew of the earlier and precipitous plan to collectivize the herds in the period from 1928 to 1932. That effort failed miserably, and the government abandoned the collectivization. See Bawden, *Modern History*, pp. 303-320.
11) On the maternal rest homes, see Yukiko Kojima, "Women in Development: Mongolia," Photocopy (Manila: Asian Development Bank, May, 1995), pp. 5-6. However, the government's pro-natal policy from the 1960s until 1990 "caused women to have children at too early or too late an age…and to have inadequate spacing between births…The high fertility levels, which failed to take into account the health of individual women, led to high rates of maternal mortality." See Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 152.
12) Alan Sanders, "Mongolia 1977: Directive No. 14," *Asian Survey* 18 (1978), pp. 31-32.
13) William Heaton, "Mongolia in 1983: Mixed Signals," *Asian Survey* 24 (1984), p. 131.
14) On Lookhuuz, see Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, pp. 5-17 and 35-162.
15) I have presented my own interpretation of this privatization in my book *Modern Mongolia*. I stand by most of what I wrote there, with a few modifications based upon a few reviews of the book. However, I am heartened that Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the principal architect of "shock therapy," has had second thoughts about his prescriptions for Mongolia and the other socialist countries and has lamented the decline in government regulation, social welfare, education, and health and the rise in corruption that resulted from rapid privatization, minimalist government, and abandonment of State subsidies.
16) On this point, see Jon Quah. "National Anti-Corruption Plan for Mongolia. Ulaan Baatar: United Nations Development Programme, Mongolia, 1998 and David Sneath, "Reciprocity and Notions of Corruption in Contemporary Mongolia," *Mongolian Studies* 25 (2002), pp. 85-100.

17) In 2011, Transparency International ranked Mongolia 120th out of 183 countries, which indicated a high level of corruption. See cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/ (Accessed April 15, 2012).
18) See Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, pp. 275-276 and 157-160.
19) A number of older herders share Minjuur's nostalgia for the *negdels*. See Morten Axel Pedersen, *Not Quite Shamans: Spirit Worlds and Political Lives in Northern Mongolia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 50-51.
20) On these events, see Bawden, *Modern Mongolia*, pp. 301-327.
21) One observer noted that "Mongolia is one of those countries that, in the past, released an endless supply of stamps aimed at collectors. It brought in some income to the government during the socialist era…" "Mongolia Monday—Mongolian Postage Stamps, Part I: Clothes and Culture," foxstudio.wordpress.com/mongolia—Monday-mongol-postage-stamps. (Accessed April 5, 2012).
22) Nomin Lkhagvasuren, "Today's Genghis Khan: From Hero to Outcast to Hero Again" in William Fitzhugh, Morris Rossabi, and William Honeychurch, eds. *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, (2009), pp. 283-287.
23) See my Introduction in Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees* about Baldandorjiin Nyambuu, pp. 18-19.
24) On these events, see Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*.
25) Zorig returned to Mongolia and has been attempting to rehabilitate his father's image. He was a candidate for the Khural in 2000 but was not elected.
26) Sh. G. Nadirov, *Tsedenbal and the Events of August, 1984* (trans by Baasan Ragchaa; Mongolia Society Occasional Paper 25, 2005)
27) See Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, p. 205.
28) On the other hand, Lookhuuz claimed credit for the Virgin Lands program. See Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, pp. 119-124.
29) Beria was in charge of this secret police organization, which implemented the Soviet purges of 1936 to 1939 and played an important role in displacing so-called subversive nationalities during World War Two, among other horrors, from 1938 until his own execution in December of 1953.
30) For these two quotes from Nyambuu, see Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, p. 224.
31) Udval had been a member of the Central Committee of the Mongolian Trade Unions from 1956 to 1958, a member of the Khural from 1951 to 1986, a member of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party from 1966 to 1990, and Chair of the Mongolian Writers' Union. However, she was renowned, in particular, for her short stories and novels.
32) Leonid Shinkarev, *Tsedenbal i Filatova: Liubov, Vlast, Tragedia* [Tsedenbal and Filatova—Love, Power, and Tragedy] (Moscow: Sapronov, 2004), p. 150 and 385-386 on these events.
33) For Sambuu, see Rossabi and Rossabi, trans. and ed., *Herdsman to Statesman*.
34) See his *Tuulsan zamd Törsön Bodol* [The Road That Leads to Understanding]. Ulaan Baatar: Sodpress, 2004, p. 112.
35) See Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*.
36) Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962 pb.

ed.), p. 327.

37) For a preliminary sketch, see Sh. G. Nadirov, *Tsedenbal*.

Explanatory Note

[ ] are the translator's notes.

I. Renchin Minjuur (1914-2007)

Translated by Mary Rossabi
Interviewed in August of 2001

1. Life Before Socialism and the Co-operatives

1.1. The Area of My Birthplace and My Growing Up

I. Lkhagvasuren (hereafter, IL): We are meeting with the well honored Labor Hero Mr. R. Minjuur who has been deeply involved in the *negdel*[1] movement, which occupies an especially important position as our country moves into a new historical period. I will listen to you as you begin to talk about your recollections of your childhood and youth.

Renchin Minjuur (hereafter, RM): I was born in the ancient Sain Noyan Khan *aimag*[2], Dalai Chonkor Vangin banner, which is now Arkhangai *aimag*, Tariat *sum*, the Moron district or *bag*, and the Tooroigh area. The name Tooroigh is interesting because it is the name of a very rare tree, a few of which grew in my area. I was born in 1914, seven years before the People's Revolution. There was a private economy in Mongolia at the time of my birth, and princes and lamas held official positions dominating the monasteries and the state. Yes—there were quite a few youths who became lamas, and a few were even in charge of the herding economy. Such was our life and the state of our country. The Manchus did not build a school to educate the Mongols in modern scientific methods.[3] Only the Buddhist religion was studied and taught at the monasteries. If you endured a lot of hardship during your life and prayed and performed good deeds, you would be better in your next life. They were convinced of this. At the time I was born, society could be described as feudal, with a few people living affluent lives. Most people were poor and led the lives of slaves.

I was extremely poor, having been born to a single woman named Norjmaa who worked for the wealthy. I did not know my father, and a person without a father was called a bastard. I can't really determine what sort of a man my father was. My mother died from an illness when I was six years old, so I went to live with my mother's brother, Renchin, and I took his name.[4] That is why I am called Renchin Minjuur. This Renchin led a very poor life. He had no herds, and the family lived an uncomfortable life. At dawn, he went off, carrying his flintlock gun, to the steppe to hunt marmots and squirrels. Because of the wretched life this man led, after the death of my mother I too became a servant for the wealthy—such was the lot of the stray. I helped care for the chamois lambs and feed the herds, but I was not the only child with

this sort of life. Actually there were many like me in the countryside, but I was the only one in my specific area. It was especially difficult for me since I was so young when I became an orphan. Up to the age of twenty one, this was my life. There was no school to attend, and the lama at the lamasery had no interest in the education of stray children. The elder Renchin fed me, but his family barely eked out an existence.

Yuki Konagaya (hereafter, YK): Did you go hunting yourself?

RM: I went along with the elder but was frightened of the mountain streams and all the mountain foxes and wolves, yet I did shoot some animals. On the steppe, the Mongolian man manages herding his private herds, which are scattered about, and also takes care of the milking, the making of dairy products, the finding of water, and the treating of the wool and the hides. All this work offers experience and knowledge needed in such a life. Generally, we mastered such work so there was no question that further education was necessary. This was a sort of feudal system, in which only the children of the nobility could go to school, and most Mongolian children did not have such advantages. This was my situation. What did I learn in my youth? I learned how to fatten up the herds, where to go in the freezing winter, and how to prevent the elderly herds from suffering. This was what I knew. At that time when the herds and herders were ill, there was nothing to do but gather curative plants. For example, take the animal disease "mange". All sorts of interesting plants grew in wooded areas. Some of them you could boil up with salt to make salt-marsh and cure the diseased animal by drenching his skin with this potion. So this was done.

A person could study a book from a Tibetan doctor and drink the prescribed medicine, but it did not always cure those who were seriously ill. To save the sick person, then, an exorcism was performed, and a prayer was recited, which called for the pawning of property and herds. Thus the poor suffering person became even more impoverished. So the prayer was read, and the poor had to give up even more things.

IL: Did your family herd for the rich? Were you given animals to tend for yourself?

RM: No, there was no remuneration. At that time, the average local family had between 300 and 400 sheep and 20 to 30 horses. In the desert there were more camels and in the *khangai*[5] there were more horned cattle—perhaps 40 to 50 oxen. That size of the herds meant that a family was doing well. In such a way, we were enslaved in a family looking after the sheep and cattle. Women did the milking, and that is how food was made. Everyone in the family did such work. Generally, food and drink were free, and in winter two whole sheep and a goat were given as wages. A person who was poor had a miserable

home, drank tea for the midday meal, possessed few cattle, and wore poor clothing. In the summer rains, one wore very little. A slave had only a sheepskin for cover in the rain, and the cold of a raging storm when he sat at the bottom of a cliff. This is how the very poor lived.

YK: At that time, were crops grown in the meadows?

RM: No, though it seems strange now. At that time, the climate in Mongolia was very nice, but now there are droughts and *zuds*[6] and all things unknown. Since there was a good deal of rain, places were very green, so the herds ate well. We made the winter migration to good new quarters and entered the New Year in good condition. At the time, there were few people, families, and herds in the area, and few people were poor. There were, however, several private property owners, including the ecclesiastical and secular folk, who employed servants and under whose protection the poor became their servants for life. The diet of the average rich family I mentioned included spirits, *airagh*,[7] meat, and milk.

IL: Could you speak about going on the migrations or moving pastures and the methods of fattening up the herds?

RM: At the time there was plenty of fresh water to drink in the pastures and few people and animals. We lived life at our own pace, since both the people and their herds were free. Our winter quarters where the herds went to fatten up were near the places in which we spent the spring, summer, and autumn.[8] The summer was spent in a pleasant place, and in the winter we went to quarters where there was little snow. When the weather was most severe, the herds stayed close together and were not far away as they are today. Some people took their animals to a ravine and others moved farther away, so the animals were in good condition for the New Year. In those days, moving the pastures was not such a big deal, nor was there the problem of cutting the hay and shearing the wool.

1.2. The Chinese Trader

In our land, there were several Chinese traders but few trading companies. The Chinese trader bought our marmots, squirrels, foxes, wolves, mushrooms, etc. The herders had no cashmere because in the shearing process they didn't know, by and large, how to comb the goats or gather the hair that the yaks had shed. Much of the hair and wool from the herds had to be collected from the pastures. Some of it we made into felt that the Mongolian people used to cover their *gers*.[9] Felt was not made continuously but in a year a large amount of felt would be made for the *ger* covers, so no more was needed for several years. But ropes and tent cords were twisted from the wool or animal hair. In addition, cow or ox skins were treated. Now, however, instead of these

curried skins oilcloth, linoleum, or a carpet is laid down. Nevertheless, beautiful colored rope, bridles, halters, toggles, and saddle straps were made from the ox skins. At that time, leather straps were needed for packing loaded carts. And the so-called *khoom*, which was part of the headdresses of some Mongolian girls, was made from the hair and wool beaten into felt.

Since there was not a constant demand for the herds' hair and wool, remainders were left behind. The hair of the goats was not combed, so cashmere was disappearing, and there was no shed hair or hair at all from the oxen. The hair that kept growing on those animals was abandoned in the pastures. There was no demand for horse hair, and the horses' manes grew ever so long. Because we didn't touch their hair or wool, the herds grew healthy and fat and were often wild and more than fierce. Horses had to be broken in before being ridden and in case of falls were trained near home. Yaks and oxen were needed to carry the loads during the migration and were harnessed to carts.

Horses were seldom ridden in the wooded area or *khangai*, where it was very mountainous. And people actually went on foot in the mountains, and a horse was not used to herd the sheep. Once I turned twenty-one, I joined the military, learned to ride a horse, and began studying how to read and write. At that time, the Mongolian people were well behaved, polite, and patient. They did not drink spirits and wine, nor did they party a lot. "Danshig Naadam" (a sports festival performed in honor of the Jebtsumdambaa Khututkhu[10]) is still talked about today. For us so far away in the *khangai*, it is not always known that we country people rode gentle horses, played, and enjoyed ourselves in our own "Danshig Naadam." Then the time arrived for the major religious activities at the monasteries to honor Maidar (Maitreya).[11] People worshipped the Buddhist Maidar, assembled at the *ger* where the prayer was read, and received a blessing.

IL: What did the children and the adults eat and drink?

RM: The children ate yoghurt and drank the residue left after the distillation of *airagh*. A lot of time has passed since I was born, and I know that I am at least eighty or maybe even eighty-seven years old but I don't know. The residue from the distillation of the koumiss is *tsagaa*, or boiled yoghurt, which is sometimes called *aartz*, the residue from the whey. One drinks this boiled yoghurt which has been strained. A dried milk residue is also made from boiled milk. These dairy products are not sold in the marketplace but are made to be eaten with boiled meat. There was little flour or grain, and we had little to sell in the market. What we had, we ate and drank. The Chinese merchants did not generally have dairy food.

YK: Did the Chinese merchants come every day?

RM: There were a few Chinese merchants near the lamaseries, and there were 700 lamaseries in Mongolia. In all the ravines, there were lamaseries, and in my Mörön area, there were "The Bayanjargalan lamasery" and "The Dashland temple," both situated in the Mörön ravine. There was a Chinese merchant near there, and he was in the stone business, as the Mongolians called it. Old Renchin sold fox, wolf, and marmot skins to the stone trader who traded in return a bit of rice and flour. I don't know where the trader came from, but he went to the Bogd lamasery with his goods in a cart with five to ten oxen. He carried things and came and went, and one did not always know where. A rich family bought 10 *jin* of flour at one time, which would last for a year, while others bought very little—maybe 1 or 2 *jin*. We were very poor, so we bought no flour or grain. During the celebration of Maidar, a prayer was read in the home of rich families who ate food made from flour. During that time, a little food was served on the palm of one's hand, and it tasted so good. Lamas and adults ate both dairy products and meat from bowls. *Khailmag*, a dairy product made from cream, and cream were not eaten by the poor and the servants. The liquid residue in the *airagh* fermentation pot was a white liquid, and its name had the double meaning "to drink *airagh*" (curds or koumiss) and "to work as a servant." This residue, which was not considered real food, was given to the poor to drink, and such was the life of a poor worker. Nowadays, migrants or vagrants are called *Tsagaatch*. Let me add that this white residue was very strong, so whey and milk had to be mixed with it, but the so-called *Tsagaatch* thought such food and drink was standard.

When poor children went to look after the sheep, they collected the many mushrooms that grow in our country. A few of these mushrooms were cut up, and others were strung. At this time, sheep wool was spun into thread that was used by the women for sewing. We don't have this kind of thread nowadays. Camels' wool was also made into thread and used in the same way. After the cows were eaten, their sinews were made into thread for boots and for sewing fur on a *deel*.[12] We made the thread from these cow sinews ourselves, and we also dressed the sheepskins and the *deels* ourselves. We made the thread ourselves and tanned and curried the sheepskins ourselves and then made all our own clothes.

We wore sheepskin trousers and sheepskin *deels*. The wealthy wore cotton and silk *deels*, and the lamas wore yellow or red *deels*. Poor children had made sheepskin *deels*, with all the hair removed, which was called a gown of "hairless skin." They always wore a hairless skin *deel* and hairless skin trousers. Cured ox hide was called *khom,* which meant "dressed hide," and it was made into boots with the sole made of felt. The poor had neither cotton nor silk at the time, so we never wore clothes made from these fabrics,

and I never wore them until I was twenty-one. When it was warm, I didn't wear boots and went barefoot. In the winter I wore a fur *deel* and boots from dressed hide. Such was life.

YK: Did the Chinese stone merchant speak Mongolian?

RM: He was able to speak Mongolian like a Chinese. Maybe he spoke Inner Mongolian, but I don't know. He did business by speaking Mongolian. I think that he had two or three servants, as there were always two or three Chinese youths near him who were called *shushmai* (i.e., the Chinese in Mongolia), and they came to families to buy the pelts of wild animals and the mushrooms we had gathered. The stone trader took these things and traded them for *tanzuur* (a type of cake), black and red plums, and brown sugar. He gave us lumps of brown sugar that were small and came in a square bundle. These were traded along with Chinese tea and Chinese pipe tobacco. He also traded our mushrooms for a limited amount of ribbon thread that was swirled and painted and felt rather solid and silky. We traded mushrooms for other things too. It was good to have a skirt full of mushrooms, but the cakes we got just covered the palm of the hand. We always wore leather straps as belts, since it was rare to own a cotton belt and whatever I traded I put into an inside breast pocket.

1.3. The Methods of Herding

Why do the herds always pre-occupy us? When eating, drinking, putting on clothes—they are always on our minds as they provide us with everything. I am a professional herder. I know how to tan cowhide, how to make milk products, and how to watch the herds using all my strength. At that time, herding was very demanding. I drove the cattle that had to be put out to pasture, but where were these pastures? We had to answer that question. It is not right to drive cattle in the dark of the night under a sky with a thousand stars. I soothed the herds and tried to get them to lie down. So I started to count 1, 2, 3 stars and when I saw exactly 100 stars I let the cattle stand up, and then I could go home. If I arrived before counting 100 stars, I would be scolded. That was in winter when there were no watches. Morning came early, so we could go to the pastures with the herds when the sun came up, and we would take them in when we counted 100 stars. The sheep returned earlier at dusk. Both the cows and the horses came back later in the evening.

At that time, little well water was available. Each ravine in the *khangai* had some water, so I could water our small herds in our own area. Since there were few watering places, we didn't always know where to go. There had been water in our winter encampment but not in our summer area. Now, there is none. Nature has changed since I was a child, and in the last eighty years

things have been different. Since the structure of nature has changed, winter and summer seasons have also changed. The rainfall comes or doesn't come, and that changes what we eat and drink. That was my life when I was young.
IL: Did the rich families get a lot of milk from their sheep?
RM: A lot of milk from the sheep. At that time, people were greedy about getting milk from their animals. Cows were milked in the morning and twice in the evening and sometimes the sheep were milked three times a day—once before going to the pasture, and again in the afternoon and the evening though the lambs were permitted to feed then too. During the day, the sheep and the lambs were kept apart in the summer. After the evening milking, the suckling lambs were fenced in preparation for weaning. Tending these lambs was demanding, so we combined our sheep and lambs with our neighbors' animals and camped close to one another. The milking period was short—three months in the summer and the rest of the year there was no milking. There was, therefore, no surplus.
IL: How far did you herd the sheep each day?
RM: It wasn't too bad. Not too far—about ten kilometers in all directions. The winter, spring, and fall quarters were not too far away. We loaded the ox carts to accommodate us as we moved to the winter quarters. Generally, the winter quarters were within a circle of seven to ten or perhaps even twenty kilometers.
IL: Did you change your winter quarters, and did the winters differ from place to place?
RM: At that time the government administration assigned the winter, but not the spring, quarters. We were given the Tooroi winter quarters, and one did not argue with the government. Other families also adapted to spending the winter in the Tooroi, the Artzatinkh, and the so-called mid-mountain pass winter quarters, which were near each other. By law, I could not let my herds enjoy all three of these places. All three areas followed the older brother system and helped each other out.

Actually, those days were nice because there were few quarrels and little gossip, and the youth and adult children had great respect for their elders. They were well behaved and when an adult entered a house, the younger people stayed outside with the herds in the nearby *khashaa*.[13] Later they entered but there were no crowds—just the family. One had to sit by the stove, and where one sat was important. Now people sit among all the stuff on the bed. We always knelt. In Japan they also kneel. That is the way we sit.

At the time the elders gave things to the children. There were no china bowls, so we had to use wooden bowls. The merchants came by with tiny wooden bowls. Everything was made of wood, and we didn't have metal or ceramic spoons and forks. The spoons were made from willow wood, and the

bowls were not perfect, so it was best not to put too much in them. Each family scraped the residue of the boiling milk from the cooking pot, and it was then said: "Give me your hand, and I will put something in it. Forget the bowls."

Children did not taste spirits or *airagh*. Such food was revered. The children saw it, but did not drink it, and they did eat the meat from the head, shin, stomach, and offal of the sheep and the goats. They were also given the hard shin bones and the marrow bones. The shoulder blades, the pelvic bones, and the thigh bones were enjoyed by the adults. If the children ate these, they would be considered rude. In summer, almost no meat was eaten. Even the wealthy put out their herds in summer, did not eat meat, and ate mainly dairy food.

YK: Did people eat marmots?

RM: They did eat marmot meat, especially the poor who also ate squirrel, stag, and doe. Squirrels were very plentiful and were hunted a lot. The Chinese traders paid a lot for the squirrels and their hides. Children ate squirrel meat which tastes like tree sap and I don't know how they could eat it. Marmot meat has been eaten for ages, but the good meat was not given to the children who only got the head. The entrails were mixed with onions, and the children were only given a taste. Maybe we didn't get stomach aches because we ate so little.

The children were not given tea to drink but instead they drank boiled water mixed with a little milk to make "a cloudy mixture." When a man married, he received black tea from his wife, which she drank when she married. The rich drank this tea but unmarried women did not drink this black tea, nor did poor children. Movies have been made about the lives of the super rich, and recently a film was made about the children of the Chinese Emperor. I can see these children were spoiled and ignorant and had neither culture nor schooling.

I have no memories of droughts and fodder shortages during my childhood. There were no droughts. There was always rain in the summer, and in winter there was snow. Now from time to time, there was a lot of snow. That is how I recall it. Sometimes there were terrible downpours and floods. One family that was punished by the gods was washed away in a flood as it worried about its herds. Because of the great noise, lightning, and torrents of rain, these thunder storms have been called "hanging dragons," and they are mentioned a great deal in legends. There were also tornadoes with great winds.

It has long been a custom to worship at the *oboo*,[14] and there are a great many *oboos* in the country. On every hillock there are stone *oboos*, but in my area of the country there is only one—the *jinstiin oboo*. One worships at the

oboo once a year. Many lamas worshipped there and when we were little we would run races and wrestle there. Those children who won received prizes of a big cheese made from raw milk, as well as the skin from the boiled milk. In the autumn, one generally worshipped at one particular *oboo*.

Mountain water was greatly respected and so was spring water which we collected in a bucket, even if one had to go far. But one could not wash one's arms and legs in the water buckets for fear of enraging the "local deities." No one did this. However, one could wash in other vessels, but washing water had to be separated from the stream, and this water could not be mixed with milk. Buddhism existed alongside nature worship, and one always said such prayers to nature:

> "Bless the spirit of my country! Bless my rich *khangai*!
> Bless my whole world."

A sprinkled offering of milk and tea was offered with the prayer.

IL: Did the old people teach the younger people how to find the plants that their animals liked to eat?

RM: They talked about that a lot and from the elders we learned where to take the sheep, horses, and cows. The sheep and goats fattened up on the leaves and flowers, grass, wormwood, wild leek, and Mongolian onion, so one herded the sheep to places where these good plants were found. The cows and horses were not taken to the same areas as the sheep. The sheep did not like to lie down for a long time near the edge of the river. The cows and horses were herded to places far into the mountains where coarse grass grew. The sheep were pastured apart from the cows and horses. The children cried "Hey! We are going with the cows and sheep to the pastures!" as they walked along.

There was only hard work and no time to sit comfortably while herding. There was the mating of the cows, and when the calves arrived, the milking had to be arranged. The lambs and sheep needed care and after milking the sheep they had to be let out. The herds had to be kept erect to drink and could not lie down, so there was no time for me to sit. However, when you are young you become less tired. One can rest and sleep at night. I spread out the treated skin of a two year old calf to sleep on. Sheepskin or goat skin is soft. During the day, about fifty skins were put on the ground to sit on. At night the skins were turned inside out, so the hair was upwards, and one folded a *deel* on the top of this skin. There was no space to stretch out one's bent legs as one managed to squeeze into the folds. Since there was no other covering, sometimes one's feet stuck out and got cold even when the legs were bent. However, this helped in preventing pain in the knees and the feet.

Now when I sit down I always have something soft to rest my feet and knees on. I don't really know how to rest my painful feet. Perhaps by sitting

on a soft chair or nice divan or in a comfortable car? Why do feet hurt so fast? We curl up to sit and to sleep—yes we do—so we must have proper bedclothes and bedding.
IL: How was the calving period regulated at that time?
RM: The herders regulated it themselves. Our area was divided into 3 zones: desert, *khangai*, and steppe. The pastures were also divided according to the area. Life went on around the clock. The sun affected how the herds ate, made milk, and grew skins that were good for tanning. The sun also made everything happy including the herds which were put in the *khashaa* to sleep. Poor people had no animals, and even when I reached twenty-one, I had no herds. Even now I have none, but I understand the ways of herding, although I did not learn herding from taking care of my own herd. Even if a person does not have his own herds, if he is near them, he will not starve.
YK: How did you separate the flocks when you watched other peoples' herds? How were the animals apportioned?
RM: The children tended the sheep, while the cows and horses were tended by the rich people themselves. The very capable people rode horses, while the weaker folk were assigned to take care of the sheep. In this way, everyone participated in herding and in the everyday chores.
YK: Was the whole family involved in moving pastures with the sheep?
RM: The burden was shared, and the servants moved together with everyone else on the migration. There were ten families in a camp that relied on the encampment as its base. The members had to find places in the many *gers* that were brought to the *ger* camp. Four or five families with children made up one camp, which did not move at the height of mid summer and stayed in one place to milk the herds. Many family camps came together in their winter quarters. Making food and drink in the winter was sort of like playing a game, and many games were played by the older people, especially at night. Throughout their lives, good natured families got together to play. We children were curious and sat at the foot of the stove, while the adults played ankle bones, and we children played race horse.

Men took turns at night in the *ger* entertaining every one with interesting stories—one about a distinguished man. In the evening families returned to their *gers* and ate the meat and, in fact, almost all the food so there was little left over. Butter was made at this time, and the children hoped a lot would be prepared, so they could eat a lot. A blood pudding made from a mixture of small pieces of cut up meat was eaten with one family before moving on to another. This was my life story. At that time I was not involved in studying.
YK: Would you talk a little about the birthing of the herds in the spring?
RM: Most herds were born in the spring. Each area depended on nature and a

water supply. There was no official period for fattening the animals, and each decision was reached on its own terms. Some families birthed their animals close to each other, while others spaced them later, but all came in the spring. There was a later time that was warmer for the birthing of the animals. In the *khangai* each family had a *khashaa* for its winter quarters with an eaved roof and stalls. Families did not join their privately owned herds in one enclosure so each family built its own *khashaa*. However, in the morning, they would drive their animals side by side, and a few would join their herds together and take turns watching them. At dusk, the sheep went to their *khashaas* for the night. In the best of times, there were no thieves. In fact, there were few in the country. If a sheep wandered off from the flock, an announcement was made to this effect: "One of my sheep has gone!" "What is the information?" "Ooh, it left the *khashaa* and was grey colored with a white patch on its forehead." One family generally did not exploit another family's sheep. Another announcement could be made that the sheep was mating or it could be said: "Our cow mated, and there is a black two year old calf." "Was the calf missing?" might have been asked. Since there were no thieves and since this was not a person, maybe the animal missing was indeed mating! From that vantage point, honesty was the best policy.

IL: Is there a loss of life for the young animals if the birthing period is moved to the late spring?

RM: There certainly is loss, but the skins from the dead lambs were used to make lambskin *deels*. How many animals perished up until now? How many grew up? There is no number and no one has enquired about this. The deaths of the females were not recorded, although many of the young were lost. Little attention, however, was paid to those that did not grow up. It was pointless for each family to record those numbers. Sometimes, however, there was a number. Now, especially with the national archive, people have a reason for an annual count of their herds. It can be determined from the archives if the State should make up to those who suffered a loss of their animals.

In 1937-1938, many people were framed and executed. One can study the archives of the time to determine how many there were. So, too, must the number of animals have a place in the archives, but I don't remember the number of animals I had.

1.4. The Herding Business

IL: Do the herders sell animals among themselves?

RM: A herder does engage in trade, and business and herds are exchanged. At that time money was in use. Animals were cheap—on average, a sheep cost seven silver coins. A cow or large animal sold for twenty. That is very little

money. The rich people traded two types of horses: the ambler and the slow moving ambler. Their children liked to decorate and ride on the ambler, and the fast horses were promoted for racing. But there were no horse races at our local *naadam*.[15] There were questions later. My area was remote, and the monastery was as far away as the Tsaatan area.[16] There were no horse races on the ice there for fear of harming someone. And although the horses were fast, they did not race. Thus we only did business in amblers, sheep, cows, and horses. But just a little at that. "So, let's say I buy a male sheep (wether) from you!" was the given example. "For six or seven silver dollars," which today is equal to a hundred dollars. However, it is hard to do business now for one hundred silver dollars since in winter a lot of meat is needed. "So I will buy two or three sheep." This is what was said. Only later were the animals herded to the city to be traded.

YK: Did the stone trader buy any animals?

RM: Not to trade—only to eat.

YK: The Mongolian eats dairy products at certain times. Does each family in your area prepare the dairy products?

RM: We prepare a lot of dairy because we eat a lot, especially since we have no flour or grain. The clotted cream and food made from it are stored in vessels made from animal skins. The butter fat is made in a cowhide vessel called a *khongio*. Those vessels were so large that they equaled fifty or a hundred canisters. The dried cheese curd milk residue was first put in a treated sheep or goat skin bag called a *tolam* before being dried on a screen. Thus, we used both the *tolam* and the *khongio* in processing our dairy products.

1.5. Local Carpenters and Craftsmen

In the old days, the Mongolian smith and carpenter were both quite prosperous and well skilled. Metal coins were generally made by the smiths, and carpenters made the wooden chests and vessels including those for *airagh* and some fats. Wooden buckets were made from all sorts of natural woods. The smiths made the knives, scissors, locks, and latch and latch plates. The smiths did not live in the lamasery but traveled and lived with the herders. Our elder brother Renchin lived alone in a shed and worked as a smith. A man could also live as a carpenter, and our area was famous for carpenters. The great royal *stupa*[17] banner, as it was called, had the most celebrated craftsmen in the area. I don't know where the iron came from which was used for metal knives and locks. There were also silver smiths who made elegant ornamentation for the decorations for the caps of women's headdresses. Mongolia does not have silver, so perhaps it came from abroad. In one *sum*, there were three or four smiths and four or five carpenters. They all had talent which they could

pass on to their children.

At the time, a smith and a carpenter, who were gifted craftsmen, did not study or go to school but learned their trade on their own. A talented hunter was a student of the hunt and was respected. The Mongolian smiths made flintlock guns, but now there are no such huge guns.

YK: How did the life of the hunter or carpenter differ from that of the ordinary herder? Could one possibly distinguish the carpenter, hunter, or smith from the outside?

RM: Yes, because they were famous in their locality. A good carpenter, a good smith, and a good hunter were all famous. Now people have not heard of smith Banjil or carpenter Ishdagva or carpenter Adaii who built temples near other buildings. Our area was famous for its more than ten carpenters. Herders, even though they had many animals, did not have that notoriety. Instead of herders working for the wealthy, they could be carpenters and smiths. The rich paid the carpenters and smiths to herd, but they could always sell off some of their animals and reduce the herds. Each group had full rights to buy and trade, and one's own employment and trade were not connected. Business was not forbidden, and everything could be traded. Our country was poor because business had not been that successful. Mr. Ishdagva tells this story:

"A man said: 'Please make me a wooden bucket.' The carpenter replied: 'Sure, I will make you two buckets!' The carpenter would take several nights to make this bucket, of course, by hand. First, the wood had to be tempered and bent into shape until the bucket was made to use in tending the sheep. Then the carpenter had to slaughter the sheep for food, but he did not have his own herds. He had all sorts of work to do, and of course most of life is work. Few people can live only by hunting, carpentry, or doing metalwork. Only the lamas as a group could live like that. But they lived as parasites and did not make a living from herding. Instead, they sat in their monasteries and meditated without interruption and they were given the things they needed. They had a bag with all their clothes in it. That's all I have to say."

YK: When you were twenty-one, did you join the Mörön squadron?

RM: Yes, I did. A person does not go very far in life without learning. I had regarded the Zaya saint at the Tariatin monastery and the Shireet saint as examples. But when I went there, I did not find such learning. Who knows where it can be found?

1.6. The Book I Wrote

YK: Did your life change when you reached twenty-one?

RM: Yes—a person has by then set out on a path. I wrote a book in 1983 that was an autobiography called *Biography of a Life*. I was one of the few in my

family who could write. Many people had written things before me but I had written little. I had suggested many titles and had quite a few pictures.

IL: A brief glance at the table of contents shows the following:

An inscription from the heart
Life at first hand
Wool preparation
My family
With no definite outcome
Be generous in your giving
The call of the party is my goal
The reins guide the steed's direction
Bless the mainland
A place to sacrifice to the sky
The head of the herd has a grey blaze on its forehead
The fate of our children is first

RM: My life is encompassed in these chapters.

At twenty-one, I was called up to the military and found military service most interesting. I served in Dornod *aimag* in the fifth division at Bayantumen near Choibalsan city. Mongolia had a big military base there to prevent attacks from the Japanese-Chinese military. The service at Bayantumen was for three years.

When I was six years old, I had stood on the *arghal*[18] basket and said: "Mother—is there land even farther away from here?' And mother said: 'Of course there is a lot of land far away from here.'" I remember this conversation very well. When we used to go to our Tooroi winter quarters near the ravine, I could not imagine that there was any more land, and we went there on foot because there were no roads. Mongolia is called a strange country, and there have been lots of interesting articles about me recently, and it is interesting to read about oneself. Perhaps this information could be useful. There was something written about me when I was awarded "The Golden Soyombo," which obliged me to open my files so to speak. Three of us were herding heroes—I. D. Avarzed, T. Namjig, and I. We were heroes because of certain things that we had done and events that befell us. One can read about these events and learn from them. One title, for example, is "Rest is unfamiliar to me." However, after I reached twenty-one, I was able to rest a bit because I sat in an office, talked with people, did written work, and made decisions about combating the *zud* and the droughts and how people would migrate with their herds. In due course, people do get a chance to rest. Today people talk about being so tired and never resting. Even at twenty-one, my life was difficult and remained so. Now I am eighty-nine, and for more than sixty years

I have worked for this country. In fact, for sixty-six years, I was not sick and remained healthy because my life was full of jollity and enjoyment, joking and drinking with little loose living. We were working for this thing called socialism. For me, Minjuur, I didn't mind having very little, and I could not have imagined an elegant house or *khashaa* or *ger*. Actually, we fought for the development of the Mongolian motherland and hoped everyone would have a better life. The Party urged us "to be strong now," and we strove toward that goal. I was healthy, so had no illnesses and few worries. However, in Mongolia, venereal disease had spread to many places. When someone became ill with this disease, pressure was put on the blood supply for the chronically ill. In addition, all sorts of food and drink could cause illness, especially when one was run down. I have never been ill in this way. I have never smoked and do not know the ill effects of drinking. The poor have no money for all of this, and in time everyone will be equal.

There are a few poor people now, and most people do not live extravagantly. We have many children. There are two of us with nine children. Four families do not live well together, and making an enclosed home in the *ger* district is difficult. I divided up the four or five sheep that I killed. I only have a three room flat, and my pension, small as it is, does not cover my expenses. The poor who have many children suffer, but what is there to do? That is a painful thought. The Party and the government leadership must speak. My *negdel* had many people who now ride in cars. There was also a store, a restaurant, and people engaged in all sorts of trade. But we have no power—for the poor, it is always the same and is now as it always was. For many years, it was quite productive to talk about life in Mongolia but now, apparently, such talk has stopped, and the opportunity has been lost. Maybe later there will be more talk about this.

YK: It is now noon, and it was very good to talk with you this morning. I haven't heard such an interesting account. Although there are many adults to talk to, one can't be as specific and direct as I was with you. Thank you.

1.7. My Star Medal

RM: I received an invitation for my eightieth anniversary (birthday). I had a sparkling star medal pinned on me, but there were no photographers, an awkward situation.

YK: Can you explain how the star medal is awarded?

RM: The so-called star goes to the Labor Hero who is awarded "The Golden Soyombo," and after that there is "The Sükhbaatar Star" with Sükhbaatar's[19] picture on it. Then comes "The Meritorious Red Flag of Labor Star" and then the "Order of the Polar Star"—three stars. After that, there is a battle medal,

one of which is for the war of liberation in which I participated forty-five years ago. Then there is the "Honored Labor Medal" award with Mongolian script written on it. There are also anniversary medals for the twenty-fifth, thirtieth, fiftieth, seventieth, and eightieth anniversaries. There is also a medal for "The Educator who takes care of the Youth," and this is awarded to a labor leader who organizes the youth. In addition, there are all kinds of medals for the military star medals for Khalkhin Gol.[20] The big award of "Cultural Leader" went to a herder who had worked for twenty-one years on the *negdel* and with the youth. If one worked for ten years in the Ministry of Internal Affairs before the [Second World] War, one received a badge which read "Honored Chekist"[21] for the good work in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Another badge read "Senior Party Figure." Thus there were many star medals and special badges. There was also a celebration for the tenth anniversary of the success of the *negdel* movement. At the time there were generally three big anniversaries:

1. The tenth anniversary for the reclamation of the virgin lands
2. The tenth anniversary for the success of the *negdel* movement
3. The tenth anniversary of Mongolian industry

These three major movements resulted from the People's Revolution. There were only two labor heroes at the tenth anniversary celebrating the success of the *negdel* movement. In Övörkhangai *aimag*, Bogd *sum*, Ts. Maan, the camel herder, and I were those two labor heroes. I was the *negdel* leader, and he was the camel herder, and we both were awarded the titles of Labor Heroes.

2. The Formation of the Socialist Co-operatives

RM: Around noon, I will talk to you about my childhood and the area I lived in before joining the military. Approaching twenty-one, a person becomes a bit wiser, and I wondered how I was actually going to live. I needed support and was interested in learning to drive, but little attention was paid to me, so fulfilling my military service at twenty-one seemed attractive. In fact, that was a sensible plan, and I was called up for service in 1935 anyway. I was assigned to the local Bayantumen seventh division of the horse relay, even though I was a poor rider which, with great difficulty, I overcame and went to Dornod *aimag*, with more than forty local men, and on to Bayantumen, then through Ulaan Baatar to Ondorkhan and then to the Khangai area. This was the very first time I had left home and gone so far away, and there was so much to see.

2.1. Life in the Military

I was in Ulaan Baatar city for the first time, and I saw the Bogd

Monastery, and nothing else but a place without trees and mountains. I rode for more than ten days on this horse trip and sometimes I even went on foot without a horse. We were received by the leaders when we arrived and were given water and military clothes, so in that way more than one thousand men were turned into soldiers. The leaders lined up all these new soldiers, and I was among the three hundred healthy, agreeable, and active men who were selected to attend the military school for non-commissioned officers. Another three hundred men chose to go into military commanding. At the Kerülen market, chairs were placed in the bush, and the "book teacher" set up a metal board on which he would ask us to read them. I read 1 as an A, and out of our class of three hundred, only seven or eight knew how to write. At that time, 90% of the population could not write, including those going into the military. We were given five types of lessons or "the Five Mongolian notebooks." We learned about Mongolia and the scale of its territory and the number of its lakes and water sources. We learned the number of *aimags* and *sums* as well as the number of herds. There were lessons about the government, as well as riding lessons, shooting lessons, and lessons in military tactics. After three months of reading and writing Mongolian, I had become familiar with the script and was almost writing the letters—even the ancient Mongolian script. I received an education in the military and up to now that is my life. I learned a lot in the military including:

How to shoot a gun;
How to ride a horse well and jump over obstacles;
How to cut willow rods with a sword;
And how to saddle, water, wash, and rub a horse down.

I also learned how to dismantle and reassemble a gun, to run and shoot, sit and shoot, and other sorts of shooting. I always received excellent grades in the government courses, and I can recite them by heart. After six or seven months, I was a non-commissioned officer. Non-commissioned officers commanded thirty soldiers. Exercises and classes were set up for these thirty soldiers. I worked with all of them and directed their studies. Three years passed in this way, and I received a lot of praise. A good leader has a good reputation, and my platoon was good and hard working, and each member scored well on his tests of hygiene. There were, however, differences between those of us who entered the military poor and those who came from wealth. We enjoyed improved appearances and well being, while the children of the rich were sad because they had to eat and drink food that they did not like and wear strange clothes. At the same time, our elderly, beset with worries, found themselves in difficult situations.

The soldiers wore white cotton cloth shirts, dark green trousers, an over

jacket, and felt boots in winter and an overcoat and black boots in summer as well. In winter, a fur *deel* and a fur hat were worn. Having been poor, I had never seen such clothes, so I was pleased with them. A leader had to study hard to advance to an officer. There were some cultural aspects of our school, but looking back on those times, military life seemed difficult. This was in great part because there was no housing. We used cloth tents in the hot summer, and in the frigid winter we constructed mud huts to live in on the white steppes. We could do nothing else. The soldiers rested in the *sum* and the town districts. The water from the Kerülen River was bad, and soldiers who drank it became sick to their stomachs, and many even died. The newspaper stated that the strange enemy causing illness and even death was the drinking water. I am not sure, but it could be that forty men from our area went out and only thirty returned—ten died. Certainly life in the military was hard. The food could be bad, and the clothes were strange, so we had to be taught to accept them. Although all new things seem scary, I learned a lot having been through those times. Although the military made me stronger, nowadays I could not live like that.

At my own request, I was demobilized from the military. Since I had been promoted to the rank of platoon leader, I had to persuade the other leaders. Then I thought to myself "What am I thinking?" After my mother died, I was all alone like a poor orphan, and my Uncle Renchin looked after me. I wondered how he was and imagined that he was frail and growing old. In one winter, both my mother and my father died, and there was a good lama in my area. My mother was from the north and had not been interested in the lama's prayers. She died from a painful illness, and the lama could not give her herbal medicines to drink. Nor did he read the service for the sick. The lamas had no pity for the poor and seemed to care only for the rich. All of this was very much on my mind and, since I had been demobilized, I went to the Arkhangai *aimag* Party committee and registered as a Party member. That is how I became an adult. I was counted among the people who knew the script, and I became a Party member as a soldier, and I was highly valued. I thought I could do official work but went to work as a herder in the countryside. At the time, I had no wife or children. Then the *aimag* Party committee assigned me to work as a post carrier on the relay. I had worked hard all my life, and this difficult job was right for me.

2.2. Postal Representative

There are 49 *sums* in Arkhangai *aimag* and the 13th *sum* is in the Tariat area. At the time, Tosontsengel was the northernmost *sum* in Arkhangai, but now Tosontsengel *sum* is in Zavkhan *aimag*. Thus, the 13 *sums* are between

the two. The "representative" carried mail to these 13 *sums*, and on the relay he had 13 pack horses and 6 attendants who gave out the mail. For each *sum*, there was one pack horse. "The People's Right" magazine and "The Party Agitators' Handbook" were among the several newspapers and journals which were put in our horses' saddlebags, along with the official mail for the *sum*. Twice a month, I went on the relay for 15 days to the 13 *sums* and gave out the mail and then returned with the post from the *sums*. We rode at night, slept six hours, and galloped our horses, all of which was especially hard to do in winter. I did this for more than a year.

During that year, I was summoned by the *aimag* Party committee, which praised me as a fine man, and the leader ordered a promotion for me. Burd *sum* made me its Party cell leader. Burd *sum* was in Arkhangai *aimag*, and now is in Övörkhangai. So, in 1938, I became the Party cell leader in Burd *sum* in Övörkhangai, Ondor Ulaan in Arkhangai, and in my own birthplace, Mörön. Then after the 1945 war, I was called by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work officially in foreign espionage since I had participated in the emancipation of Inner Mongolia from Japan after the war. I was in that Ministry for eleven years. After 1955, I was called to manage the Party *negdel* movement in the countryside with the aim of winning people over. 130 people were selected, and I was a *negdel* leader for twenty-one years.

At the end of the seventies, the *negdels* were placed under "The Federal *Negdel* High Counsel," whose leader was G. Lodoikhuu from the Gov-Altai *aimag*. I thought he was a good leader, and he was highly praised. For seven years, we advised this Council and the *negdels* themselves on national measures, as well as answering their questions. In addition, we helped manage the economy that dealt with pigs, chickens, and hares. To that end, after six years of work, I had organized the "Tungalag Tamir" ("Bright Strength") co-operative. So this is how I have worked in my country for over sixty years.

IL: Were there all sorts of border incidents when you did your military service in Bayantumen?

RM: The military knew of border incidents which I don't actually know since I didn't serve on the frontier.

IL: Arkhangai *aimag* certainly has a different environment from Bayantumen. How does the herding life differ from the life of a soldier on the frontier?

RM: Herding is the same everywhere with only a few differences from locality to locality. In the desert, one follows the herds on a horse. On the steppe, there is freedom to pasture the herds at far distances, and there is not a lot of attention paid to the *khashaa* for the livestock who generally spend their nights in the pastures, and now and again go to the wells for water. In the desert, the herds can be tethered with a faded-looking line. In the *khangai*,

children leave their *gers* and follow the animals on foot through the valleys. In the desert, this does not happen. The desert herds do not usually flock together, though they may in the *khangai*. The herders and their families follow the Kerülen River basin, though there are not many families in the area. In Bayantumen there were both the infantry and the cavalry, and we crossed the border with our herds into Inner Mongolia. Everyone crossed the border into Inner Mongolia—that was how the poor made a living. But this was a problem for the border patrol but did not concern me because I served as an internal soldier.

2.3. My Family

YK: When were you married?
RM: I was a leader in 1938 and became a Party cell leader in Burd *sum* where I met a woman.
YK: How did you get to know your wife?
RM: Something happened during this rough period. Everyone who worked in this big outfit learned to write. And those adults who did not know how, maybe 20 or 30 people, met in the *sum* center where they had to study so it could be certified that they could write. The group was called "The Adult Class," and I got to know a girl in this group. I did not teach her, but I talked with her about the Motherland, the Party, the government, and private property. We did not talk about the *negdels*. She came from a well-off family, and she seemed suitable for me to marry although, at the time, her older brother was not keen on this. Who knows why a local person does not like a so-called orphan or wanderer. Her parents said: "Child, you are taking up with the Party cell leader, R. Minjuur, and there is talk that you are going to marry him!" Then they went on to say that I had work to do, so could not marry her.

The leader of our Party cell was a man called N. Chikhaajav, and he was also leader of the co-operative. He helped us by speaking to the girl's mother and father about our marriage, and he knew how to persuade them. So we got married in 1941, and we soon had a child. At the time, I did not have my own home, but lived in the large *ger* belonging to the *sum* administration. In the morning, I would get up, wash my face and hands, and go off to work. There was an old stoker who was paid by the *sum* administration, and he slept in our not very nice *ger* with a cupboard, one table, and one chair. The table and chair were used extensively for our tea, and we sat on the chair for work. It was in this *ger* that my wife and I lived. We kept a horse outside for trips to the districts.

At the time, I was in touch with my Uncle Renchin, and he had prepared a small *ger* and urged me to take it. So, I went on the relay and returned with

his *ger*. In addition, my uncle had loaded three ox carts to go to this side of White Lake and Mörön *sum* to the *aimag* center. So, in due course, I moved. People met at the craft co-operative in the Burd *aimag* center with twenty ox carts, and three were for our *ger*. We reached Burd in the morning, and so I had my first 4-all sectioned small *ger* where my wife and I lived. In that year she gave birth to a son, so there was a child in our family. After this older brother, mother, and father approved of our marriage, and one day came by with two chests of clothes. So that was my family.

YK: Had you prepared a wedding?

RM: I did have a wedding. Since my uncle was not there, I alone begged and prayed and prepared for the marriage. There was, however, no wedding feast since her family did not approve of our marriage. In our *sum*, a man named O. Galsantseren was in charge of raw materials, and my future wife and I often visited him. [Editor: we assume that Mr. Galantseren supported their marriage] That is how I got married. After three years, there were more children, and I was the Party cell leader in Ondor-Ulaan *sum* in Arkhangai. At the time, the Party cell leaders worked for a year, and then they were changed, but I worked for three years in one *sum*. In those three years as Party cell leader, I began to buy yak and goat wool, and the "wool is gold" movement developed. The manes and tails of horses could also be sold. It was hard work trying to sell this hair and wool as people were not familiar with such practices, and they protested. The only way we could collect this wool or hair was to get it when the herds miscarried, became emaciated, or died. Besides all of this, a rumor went around that the clerical and secular feudal folk were good -for -nothings. Then the government drew up a contract with Russia for wool and hair, but the herders had none. In addition, we found it especially hard to comb the wool of the yaks and the goats. The price of such wool was very low, and few people valued it. The wealthy people in the countryside ignored using the co-operatives to sell their cashmere wool because the State paid them so little—no *tugriks*, only 50, 60 or 70 *mung*,[22] which people were not keen on. So this "wool is gold" movement was a lot of work. But I went with the Party members off to comb the goats and shear the herds; in those days, the Party members worked hard. Members of the Party League brigades were sent off to fight the rich over their herds, and that is how the cashmere plan was fulfilled.

In 1942, I worked in Ondor-Ulaan *sum* in the Third State Building and was awarded the "Labor Medal of Honor," which made people call me "Star Minjuur" since people with star medals were very rare.

YK: Did you, as Party cell leader, work with the cashmere wool?

RM: Yes, I led the Party cell members in shearing the animals and thanks to

me the plan was fulfilled, and we were awarded the first prize. Thus, I wear my medal—many medals.
YK: Are there many star medal winners in your area?
RM: No—few.
IL: In the 1940s, the first conference of the good herders was held. Were you part of it?
RM: I must have participated.

2.4. Ulaan Baatar in the 1940s

YK: What happened to the "One Thousand Herder Movement?"
RM: That occurred after the democratic period, and the Minister of Finance, P. Tsagaan, took the initiative. In my day, one could be given the title of "Great National Herder," and the number of animals was irrelevant. In feudal times, the best herder was encouraged and rewarded with the title of "Iron Hearth." Our family believed the award of an iron brazier or hearth for looking after the herds made one servile. A rich man could take that prize. After 1945, the Ministry of the Interior stopped such awards.

At the time the Ministry of the Interior played a very important role in Mongolia, and most of its work was secret. That Ministry had good people, and I was awarded a star for my work with some other good people. At the time our family moved to Ulaan Baatar with three children, the city was considered a tough town. There were few buildings with flats, and there were almost no cars and buses, so one went all over on foot. There was no construction, and our *ger* compound was near what is now the hospital for infectious diseases. We did not have our own *ger*, so the Ministry of the Interior gave us a five walled *ger*. At the time, my wife worked on a sewing machine making uniforms for the military arms industry, and our life was very difficult.

During the war, life in Mongolia was very hard. Prices sky rocketed: one kilogram of meat cost seventy *tugriks*, and bran was used to make coarse flour that had to be strained through cheesecloth before being used for food. People ate meat from skinny, emaciated horses, and beef was very expensive. I had the title of Lieutenant. What difficult times those were, and the Mongolian people were exhausted. Horses had to be prepared for the front. People stocked up on money, fur *deels*, clothes, and all sorts of things to prepare the herders for the front. We saved our salaries and were very much afraid in those hard times. Nevertheless, people were brave, loyal, and honest in loving and protecting the Motherland. It was damaging for those who did not follow this path. Some people became counter-revolutionaries, and some didn't. The yellow and black feudal people and the lamas tried, as did some others, to put

down the government. At that time, many people were wrongly arrested or accused and are now considered victims. Such a person could have been a counter-revolutionary, so such differences had to be sorted out. Must a counter revolutionary be destroyed? I really cannot tell the difference—I don't know. The People's Government squashed the uprisings of the lamas and the feudal people.

In 1932 the lamas in the area of the Tariat lamasery rose up, and the local people came together and the rebellion was put down. At that time, the People's Government was very active, and our Party members and teachers worked as propagandists of the Revolution. Counter-revolutionaries were killed, and many people were ruined. The co-operative shop of the *sum* administration was burned and destroyed. At the same time, heaps of Russian goods like flour, tea, and tobacco were burned, and there was propaganda against using Russian stuffs. I wrote about all of this in my book. I was seventeen or eighteen when the counter-revolutionaries were put down. I had known them well as they had paid attention to us youngsters, and I knew they had suffered a great deal.

In the thirties, the Mongols co-operated in various enterprises and built communes. I did not understand that in 1932, the counter-revolutionaries were being hunted. At the same time, the State owned a good deal of property and organized monetary unions and collective farms or communes. The labor force, however, was not well developed. The State and the Party allocated funds for food, drink, merry-making, and play to try and "stop deviation." Mr. N. Jagvaral's own personal work was writing a one thousand year history in which he criticized private property and individualism, while supporting co-operative ventures with the workers living close together. These ideas carried over into conversations about the communes. Perhaps this collectivization, bunching together of workers and organizing the *negdels*, or co-operatives, might encourage people to turn away from non-cooperative living. Some communes, however, had little money or what they did have was wasted. We believed in the co-operatives but were afraid they might fail, so we thought that lightening the work load or introducing more scientific approaches might make them more successful.

2.5. Building the *Negdel* Movement

The *negdels* began in 1954 and were set up all over. If someone wished to start a *negdel*, the Ministry and Party said: "Yes, of course." One person became the leader for four or five families. One *negdel* was built near a ravine, and soon there were seven hundred and thirty *negdels*. I came from the Ministry of Interior to work in the countryside. I wondered why there were

so many *negdels*. Did they just sort of happen? The State, the *sum* administration, and the Party organized the *negdels* in the two hundred and fifty-five *sums*, and these *negdels* grew larger and expanded.

In 1955, we were summoned to go and work in the countryside. A new Party leader was appointed to organize and strengthen the *negdels*. I was an early leader in this organization process, but the government and the Party had to select the *negdel* leaders. In 1955, some Party leaders were called upon to be *negdel* leaders, but there were many conditions that had to be satisfied before being appointed to such a position.

In the countryside, the *gers* were set up in family groups and did not stand alone. Horses had to be equipped with saddles and bridles. Nine people left the Ministry of the Interior, and each of us was given a *ger* and a saddle and a bridle. We were given three months' wages. Those of us appointed to the *negdel* rode there by car, and we took a one year course at the Party school. We were taught in Kazakhstan for seven or eight months and had two months of practice with the Buryats.[23)] The State gave us a 1000 *tugrik* salary in the first year, but the *negdel* did not compensate us. The second year the salary was 800 *tugriks*, and the third year it was 600 *tugriks*. For the first three years, the State paid our salaries, which diminished over time. After the *negdel* became more self sufficient, it could pay our salaries. One had to distinguish oneself to be assured payment from the *negdel*, so the leaders began to compete for the Party's attention. Some people were rewarded for good work, and I was the only person awarded the "Red Flag Medal for Meritorious Work." So in that way I began to distinguish myself. I also began to think about returning to Mörön *sum* in Arkhangai.

That was my dream. At this time the rich were still rich, and the poor were still poor. I had thought about making the "wealthy people join the *negdel* and herd the animals for the *negdel*." When I was small, I herded for the wealthy, so that is what made me think this way.

"Go back to the country! Won't the rich be rich and the poor be poor?" That was the Party's thinking. The rich can be oppressive, so the *negdel* had to introduce herding in such a way that the poor could have a good influence, and life could be more comfortable and better for them.

I had this thought too. When my mother died, we had received neither help nor medicine from the wealthy, and when I joined the military no one wished me well or gave me assistance. Generally, rich people have little compassion. Now in Mongolia there are several rich people, so we need to think twice about this.

2.6. Leader of the Mörön *Negdel*

I went to my old locale and made 100% of the people join the *negdel*. *Negdel* members in the *khangai*, following the regulations, could keep fifty head of animals. This number later increased to seventy-five head. Those were the herds on the *negdel*. By 1969, I had built up within ten years a very successful *negdel* movement and was called a "Labor Hero." I was made the leader of the Mörön *negdel* for four years. Then the *negdels* grew larger and joined together. Mörön *sum* was small and united with Ikh Tamir, Taikhar, and Bugat into one *sum* and one *negdel*, of which I was the leader.

IL: Speak about how 100% of the people joined the *negdel* in Mörön *sum*. Was it decided that each member should collectivize his herds?

RM: The *negdel* herder was generally introduced to collectivization officially. The "Model Regulations for the People's Production on the *Negdels*" was drawn up to settle issues arising from the collectivization of the herds. Did the *negdel* members have to follow the regulations regarding the number of herds they kept for themselves? One had to take the initiative to settle these issues the *negdel* introduced. There were two difficult questions to consider. Does one enter the *negdel* on one's own initiative, and how does collective labor make people's lives better? If you demonstrate that collective life is better, people will join the *negdel* of their own accord or so the Party thought.

We planted crops, including potatoes, that supplied food for the herds. The *negdel* had a car that transported the *negdel* children and firewood to its dormitory school that was free. The *negdel* mothers took their children to the crèche and the kindergarten, which provided food and drink and where they could rest nearby. There was no disagreement about school for all of the *negdel* children, so all of them went to school. The herders on our *negdel* received a regular salary each month. Pensions as well as protective clothing were also given. Thus rich people were drawn to the *negdels* where they paid no taxes, though there were heavy taxes in the private economy in meat, wool, and milk. This could be considered additional oppression.

The State had to take measures to collectivize work that led to certain adjustments for the herds, but all this had to be done equally. Some good and bad things were done to different degrees. Some people took advantage to hide their animals or to suppress their numbers, so people had to expose them. The *negdels* held meetings to discuss these matters. A family was considered poor if its herds were less than fifty animals, and so the *negdel* gave them some of its animals. Many of the poor joined the collectives because they were given herds, and there were a lot of people to look after the animals:

"The *negdel* is giving you 250 sheep. Look after them well! Five of these sheep are yours to breed and to create many herds! A riding horse was also

given for herding in country areas. You need to build a *khashaa*, drill a well, and see that there is food for the animals."

Food had to be prepared for the herds, and a *khashaa* had to be built from the basic materials available. The herds that the *negdel* members owned together as well as each family's personal animals were put together collectively in the eaved *khashaa* for feeding, so that each herder did not have to cover all these costs. In this way, the poor people could have better lives.

IL: When the herds were collectivized, could those people with few herds live in the countryside or did they have to join the more settled populations in the towns?

RM: There were a lot of people like that, and quite a few settled in the towns. When the herds were collectivized, those families that did not herd on the *negdels* had to move to the towns. They went to the *aimag* centers and the *sum* centers or to Ulaan Baatar, Darkhan, or Erdenet. They worked in the huge industries in Darkhan and Erdenet and were dependent on their relatives or children.

IL: The *negdel* members kept an eye on the collectivized herds, but were they well looked after? Were they diminished?

RM: The *negdel* was the first to do something about the loss of livestock during collectivization when animals had to be sold in the market so people could eat. With greater demand for these animals the *negdel* lost even more animals.

IL: Can you tell us about your experience on the "Gerelt Zam" *nedgel* in "Ikh Tamir" *sum*, and how you got that *negdel* on its feet economically?

RM: The *negdel* was essential to production in the herding economy, so attention had to be directed toward feeding and watering the herds, sheltering them in the *khashaa*, and paying the herders' salaries. The *negdel* herds produced the milk for the dairy products that led to an income. Market regulations controlled the profit from these and other products that led to a strengthening of trade for the *negdel*. For example, our local laws and the forestry laws were very crude at the time, if they existed at all. Our *negdel* had a lot of trees, and there was a demand for wooden planks and poles as well as for *khujir*, or salt marsh and salt which were sold in Bayankhongor and Gov-Altai [*aimags*].

The private herds of the *negdel* members increased and had to be separated and counted. One family with two or three branches had the possibility of owning one hundred and fifty head of cattle dispersed throughout the family. Many disparaged the *negdel* herds or paid them scant attention. However, the large private herds, even though they were well fed, diminished for no apparent reason probably because as they grew bigger they had to be

collectivized in accordance with the regulations. Finally, in the *khangai*, fifty more animals were added to the overall count making seventy five head, which in the end turned out to be one hundred head as more were collectivized. All the members of the *Khural*[24] endorsed such regulations. Therefore, "Ikh Tamir" *sum*, "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* was collectivized, and I played a role in this collectivization. In the end, the "Ikh Tamir" *negdel* members organized these matters and made the arrangements.

2.7. The Worker in the Ministry of the Interior

Marshal Choibalsan summoned me to Ikh Tenger Valley for a job providing food for honored guests when they came from abroad or visited from home. The government set up a bureau with a laboratory to do research on food products in the economy. I ran the farm, located in Bogd uul in the Ikh Tenger Valley, which produced meat, wool, milk, and dairy products. The farm is still there.

There were no buildings around where school # 1 is today, only private *gers*, and ours was behind where the school is now. I did not go to Sükhbaatar Square in those days because it did not exist. Sükhbaatar Square[25] was a swamp and was just being built, so the area was covered in dirt. There was no place to go in the evenings. The government palace near the theater, the Foreign Ministry, and the building for the Ulaan Baatar city administration were built in 1945 after the war. At that time, there were many Japanese soldiers who had been captured. Japan was responsible for many things and had offered to pay a war debt. Thanks to this compensation, there was money for the materials for the new construction. I was in the city at that particular time, and there were work groups set up to protect these captured soldiers. I had a horse and with many branches of the military protected these soldiers. I was responsible for their well-being although they had their own hospital and supervisor outside their compound. Terrible things had happened to these captured soldiers, and many had become sick. At the time, there was one market for food and other goods in the area of the present day station. No flats had been built and later the railroad grew up there.

IL: Where did you go to buy what you needed to eat and drink?

RM: At the time, we went to the "Ondor Khoshoo" (The Tall Co-operative) which is now the Fine Arts Museum. That was our largest store, and there were also a lot of Chinese stores. There was a Chinese store on Ninth Street near the Lenin Museum in the Chinese neighborhood. There was also a large food store there. There was also the Chinese movie club "Shianz" and a number of adobe or plaster houses. There were many Chinese people in Mongolia. At that time, the Mongols did not plant crops or greens, so the

Chinese grew their own greens and sold or traded them.

All the offices had their own herds, and the private herds gave meat but no dairy products. In 1955, I went back to the countryside. The railroad now reached the area, and many Russian enterprises had been built. Recently, they have constructed many buildings. The Chinese build rather well and built a huge store with houses nearby. However, there were quarrels with the Chinese, and they were chased away amidst much suffering. However, things went well with the Russians who did a lot for us. But when democracy arose, they too were chased away. The worst thing I wish to comment on was the great amount of wealth and wasted money. When the Chinese and the Russians left, many things were destroyed. Now the whole world pays attention to Mongolia, and we have received a great deal of help. Buildings have been built as they were in the past, and Japan has helped us in many ways.

During the war of liberation, my wife and I abandoned Arkhangai, and I went on to Höhhot with my detachment which was very large and was called Sulenker. We assembled in Ulaantsav and Shilin Gol where there were only Japanese soldiers. Then the Russian and the Mongolian military came together to chase them from the area and free Inner Mongolia which united with China for the larger war. At that time things were very difficult for the Inner Mongolians because they had been oppressed by a foreign country and had been ravaged. The Manchus had dominated Inner Mongolia and then, in our time, the Japanese conquered the country. It had no power of its own—everything was Japanese. The situation for the herders was similar to ours, with each family owning about the same number of animals as we did. It was desirable to capture the country because of its great amount of meat. But the Japanese were cowardly, and the people were afraid. The Chinese were suspicious because of the Japanese spies. You could even be regarded as a Japanese spy from the Mongolian side. Because of this, the Japanese destroyed those spies found on the Russian side. There were many horrible things at that time, and people suffered greatly. Many disappeared, were caught, or were ruined. It was, however, easy to communicate, and the older people spoke up easily though it was different for the young.

Höhhot was poor, and the old Ulaan Baatar at the Bogd lamasery was strewn with trash. There were no buildings surrounding the capital at the time while in Inner Mongolia there were many lamas and many lamaseries, which the Chinese severely oppressed. In reality, the Chinese were very bad to the Buddhists, and today little has changed. I don't believe in Buddhism. It is false and fraudulent and not good.

3. The Rural Negdel Economy

3.1. The Collectivization of the Herds

IL:The people collectivized the *negdel* herds, and the *negdel* members became responsible for them. Could you elaborate on this collectivization in greater detail?

RM: In Mongolia private property had once predominated. Then co-operative production became strong, and the Mongolian government was eager for the herds to be more productive. But the State had to finance and develop schools, medical services, trade, and consumer goods that would increase the yield from the herds and in turn would provide the resources for this expansion, as well as promoting a scientific approach to animal husbandry and medical services for the herds themselves. There was also a demand to develop the new branch of the agricultural economy that dealt with plants and crops. Mongolians, however, did not generally plant crops and considered it very hard work. Though one or two may have undertaken a bit of planting, it was not in the interest of most people to do so. Planting relied on co-operative labor, but in a private economy people generally did not get together to raise crops. All Mongolians had to be involved in this sort of agriculture, and all Mongolians had to become literate. The ills from feudal society had to be erased. Young women had to bear children who could grow up healthy. How was all of this to be accomplished? Through government supported co-operative labor. This had to be a requirement of the Mongolian State.

There were many herds in the private economy, and so there were many hides and skins to sell. Butter was made from the milk which was also sold. Now there is no co-operative labor and there are very small yields from each family's 20, 10 or 5 liters of milk, which is not enough to take to the factory for butter. When there was the co-operative economy, one farm with 150 cows employed not less than 10 milkmen. And the milk from the cows went to the factory. The *sum* had over 1000 milking families, 150 livestock herds, and 10 milking farms. So, it was asked, what was the best way to make all this butter? Taking everything into consideration, collectivization or *negdelization* was imperative to stimulate Mongolia.

Mongolia should be among the great States of the world, so our Party organized the co-operatives and was very clear that collectivization was inevitable. Many people lived isolated lives which led to unhappiness because, for example, during the *zud* a family's herds could be lost. Thus people began to realize that it was best to live collectively and work together in the butter factory making butter, collecting wool, or trading co-operatively in cashmere. In addition, on a co-operative, the doctor for the herds could be consulted about impregnation and other biologically advanced methods of raising the

young animals which would lead to increased production of wool, cashmere, and meat.

In the private economy, 100 sheep bore 50 to 60 young. Working co-operatively, 90 lambs could be produced, and even 100 lambs from the best herders. The *negdel* members worked together feeding the herds and providing a *khashaa* with an eaved roof. Isn't the question tending 100 sheep with 40 to 50 young, or tending 200 sheep with 100 young? The *negdel* relies on building a co-operative economy in which chronic infections disappear and the herds can grow, increase, and produce. Chronic infectious diseases also needed to be wiped out among our people. All children attended school. Some finished in the eighth class and went on to the technicum (TMS) while others went and completed the tenth class, and then they would go on to university. People were starting to understand that the *negdels* were doing the right things, and there was much interest in this.

60 to 70 per cent of all citizens were poor even if they owned some property, while 30 per cent lived above that level. There were a few people who led wealthy lives but they could not fulfill the country's needs. The poor, who made up 70 per cent of the labor force, considered the herds their capital and carried out the policies of the country. For that reason people built the *negdels* and joined them, although about 5 to 10 per cent did not like them. About 60 to 70 per cent of the population liked the *negdels*, and people even won over the support of a few wealthy people. So the *negdels* prevailed, members joined, and regulations were drawn up.

3.2. Regulations on Joining the *Negdel*

One had to write a letter to the *negdel* announcing the wish to join and then one had to pay 25 *tugriks*. I wrote about my interest in voluntarily joining the *negdel* and about my life, my family, and my herds. When the leader of the *negdel* administration received my letter, he spoke up at the meeting attended by ten people on the *negdel* council who were already members of the *negdel*.

"So this guy is joining the *negdel*! He has 100 head of cattle, and there are 6 people in his family—mother, father, wife, and children. Why is he joining the *negdel*?" The leader of the *negdel*, which I would ultimately direct, introduced the *negdel* regulations: "You can keep 50 head of cattle, and 100 goes to the *negdel*. You must pay 25 *tugriks* voluntarily from your herding. You must give to the *negdel* not less than 10 of your milk cows, sheep, and goats and 20 of your horses and stallions. The *negdel* will provide you with a daily wage for your labors in herding. In addition, for each day of work, you will receive several grams of meat and milk as you become familiar

with the operations of the *negdel*." All the people present agreed.

At that time the *negdel* was called the "People's Production *Negdel*," and people were paid by the day in produce. The leader met with those joining the *negdel* and said that although one may have only a few animals, a record of their color and sex should be established that would cost 25 *tugriks*. Then a vote was taken, and the leaders made decisions about herding and enrolling members. Many people asked questions all at once, and those who came to the meeting had to be checked by name. Minutes were taken, and a resolution was passed and scrupulously recorded and stamped, which can now be seen in the archives. The voluntary application for joining the *negdel* is there as well, and it is often read. It states: "I voluntarily wish to join the People's Production 'Victory' *Negdel*.

3.3. *Negdel* Administration

At that time the *negdel* establishment consisted of an accountant, a leader, and a treasurer. Like today, there was neither a veterinarian nor an animal technician. Such professionals were rare in Mongolia. There was not even a Party representative, especially on the agricultural *negdels*. Education was not promoted. I, myself, did not finish school but went into the military for three years where I learned how to write as well as the four mathematical approaches up to one thousand. I was educated in the military before demobilization. One had to be literate and have a mastery of numbers and the Chinese abacus to be the accountant or the treasurer. The stoker and the cleaner were the two other official employees.

The *negdel* administration did its office work in a *ger*. There were no warehouses, and we, ourselves, did little things which did not mean we did nothing. Many on the *negdel* loved herding, and the poor people did most of it. But there were quarrels about herding. For example, once ten people enrolled in the *negdel* with 400 sheep and goats. A dispute broke out over who would do the herding, so they chased after their own animals and divided them up depending on their situation in life. The collectivized *negdel* herds were branded, and our brand was a crescent moon. Each *negdel* had its own brand. The sheep and goats were branded on the far side of their left ears with what was called a "medical notch." The cows were branded above the hoof, and the horses above the left hip. This brand was a sign to others of the division of the herds. The *negdel* leader was a man of reputation and people reported "he gave us 15 goats and 40 sheep that we hope will grow well and produce good wool!"

The *negdel* leader showed the good herders around the area. At that time the Party and the government promoted the local *negdels* and said the good

herders could live there and would be granted good areas. They were told that they could spend the winter and the spring there. When the organization began it was said that "You, Dorj, Bold, and Ochir are three families in one camp (or primary production unit) and Dorj is the boss." The camp boss had the very important job of dealing with the renovation of the winter and spring quarters, as well as handling the problems of both the young and the old and supervising all construction. One camp or primary production unit included three families with wives and children and about ten other family members with 500 sheep and six stallions. They were told where to build a *khashaa*. Ox carts would be used to help carry the wooden poles. At the time people cut down the trees on their own initiative since we had plenty of wood for building the *khashaa*. In addition, there were no problems digging a well. The ten family members watched the herds, and seven or eight of them built the *khashaa*, mowed the grass, and gathered the wool from the herds.

An abundance of milk was collected when the sheep and goats were milked. Gradually the *negdel* administration acquired what it needed. First it got a 40 liter capacity milk can for large orders, and one ox cart could carry four of these cans. The accountant brought the milk from the production units by ox cart to the *sum* center's 150 milk separating machines to be made into butter. There was a foreman at the factory, and the workers were honest. The butter was then sold to the State, and our *negdel* won a monetary prize for butter, wool, and cashmere. This is how we suddenly grew.

The private economy was becoming weak at the time, and the poor, who had the *negdel* support, did not like what the rich were doing. The wealthy then disliked what was going on and did not take their milk to the *negdel*, build their *khashaa*, or prepare food for the *negdel*. All of this led to the deterioration of the private economy on the *negdel*. In addition, the wealthy became arrogant and began to disparage the *negdel*, and there were rumors that they were trying to take the *negdel's* land and water. As a result, people began to speak badly of the *negdel*, and things were not good. Thus, as of old, some of the Mongol people turned to drink, which happens even now. Drunken people leaned on each other and said: "It does not matter who is rich—Don't you see how great our *negdel* is?"

The rich, like everyone else, had a tax officially added to their meat. Then the work in the milk factory became harder as more milk was produced. The production of meat also entailed a lot of work. Finally, the state tax was oppressive, as were the *negdel* regulations, so the rich had no way to manage and left the *negdel*. The *negdel* became more prominent in the area, and a school was established, which even the wealthy attended. Thus in spite of everything, the *negdel* flourished.

The *negdel* needed leaders for all these organizational tasks. However, some of the leaders drank spirits and wine and were not responsible for the work on the *negdel*. Each person was different. The herds would be neglected and reduced without honest labor, the quotas would not be met, and the milk factory would not function properly. Some leaders did not develop their *negdels* satisfactorily, while the poorer *negdels* were given state subsidies or loans that put them in debt. In some such cases the herds did not increase but were hidden, traded, or sold. The daily *negdel* wages were fixed, and members were paid from the *negdel's* income. Thus the *negdels* had to be good in every way.

3.4. Regulations Concerning the Appointment of the *Negdel* Leaders

When I served as a *negdel* leader in 1955, we received many awards and took no subsidies or loans from the state. At first, ten percent of Mörön *sum* consisted of *negdel* members. Even without a leader and few herds and little property, the *negdel* found ways to develop. Someone from the Party[26] administration came with me to the *negdel*, and I went to the *sum*. A Party member came along with us to the *aimag*.

There were about 130 people, and 14 went on to Arkhangai where there were more than twenty *negdels*. We were received by the Party committee, and the *aimag* leader was D. Adya, and the *aimag* Party leader was S. Dashdendev. This was the *aimag* committee bureau and included many people. We talked to each other at the meeting: "Which *negdel* does this man come from?" "This man Minjuur comes from 'Victory' *negdel* in Mörön soum!" was emphatically stated. "So he should be appointed the *negdel* leader of 'Victory' *negdel* in Mörön *sum*." So the *aimag* Party committee bureau passed a resolution, and a representative from the Party Committee followed me to my *negdel* in Mörön *sum*. We visited pitifully poor families who had become *negdel* members, but there was not one shabby *ger* with broken chattels, though we did see several mangy goats. The worst herds were, at this time, given to the *negdel*, and generally those on the *negdel* were given bad animals. There was also work in the *sum* administration outside the *negdel*. The leaders of the *sum* administration and the *sum* Party cell did their own work. They directed another private economy and looked at the long range development not connected to this one *negdel*. The *negdel*, on the other hand, paid little attention to these leaders. It was hard to be a *sum* leader because the Party cell leaders in the *sums* did official work and were affected by the private economy. Occasionally, on the *negdel*, the Party leader and the *sum* leader did not get along well. In such times, a meeting would be called. Once I attended a meeting because several local people were not happy. In fact,

there were many poor members of the *negdel* who intended to meet with the leader. The poor people who had improved their lot, however, were happy. The wealthy did not respect or support any of the leaders. Sometimes the leaders even spoke up for the wealthy. The meeting took place, and the representatives of the *aimag* Party committee spoke and asked questions:

"So this person Minjuur has the assignment. He has completed the Party School. He has gone to Buryat Russia where he did the practical work of studying their collectivization. Minjuur was not paid by the *negdel* but by the State, which gave him 1000 *tugriks* in the first year. It was thought that Minjuur improved your *negdel*, so you can elect him your *negdel* leader after everyone has spoken. How were new *negdel* members enrolled? How many people are you planning to enroll, and what does the *negdel* do about this? How do *negdel* members create an affluent life? Are they given herds? Are you serious about all of this? At the 'Victory' *negdel* there were ten poor people, and their ten odd camels were pretty mangy. There were more than 200 goats but no cows. There was, however, no land for those herds because all of those *negdel* members settled in one place before the rich chased them away. And the goats were chased too. So here are some examples regarding the questions."

3.5. The *Negdel* Leader

"*Negdel* Regulations" are the topic. There was a meeting to discuss all of this and to approve the regulations that were worked out in a well-balanced fashion. The *negdel* leader and the accountant attended the meeting where there was a lot of talk about the situation at the "Victory" *negdel*, and the accountant talked about confirming 7, 8, or 10 members. The regulations that included each person having 50 head of cattle were approved. There was discussion about whether there should be more cattle. The question arose about where the members should live. For example, there was a homeless woman named Jigjid at the Chogchin winter quarters and what should be done about her food and a *khashaa* for her 20 goats? Will money come from the state? We talked about developing the *negdel* for itself. The State did not give us a loan or subsidy but it gave the *negdel* leader a salary. Now I had my own *ger* and horse with a saddle and a salary from the State. I was a big man, and my nickname was "1000 man." Yu. Tsedenbal[27] was the leader of the State Commission when the *negdel* rules were finalized.

Many people had worked with the government bureau on these regulations which were modeled after those in the Arkhangai *aimag*, and our "Victory" *negdel* adjusted and changed some of the words. Thus the title was "Arkhangai *Aimag* Mörön *Sum* People's Production 'Victory Negdel Regulations.'" It was

said intentionally and with conviction that the People's Production *Negdel* was superior in its development than the private economy. The collective people's economy was generally regarded as superior. This would be more convincing if the rich in the private economy of the *negdel* did more work. The *nedgel* members should work harder than the rich people in the private economy. The wealthy knew that they should join a *negdel* but still said: "Oh, the collective economy is useless for us!" But most people considered joining the *negdel*, and requests were received continually. The leaders held several meetings to discuss these petitions and stressed that people had to join the *nedgel* voluntarily. In applying, the age and sex of the animals had to be stated. If a person wrote down five cows, he had to make clear how many were yellow, how many were calves in the second year, and how many were calves in the first year. In addition, the number of first and second year calves had to be specified. Although the regulations stated that everyone should be able to write, if there were people with little schooling, the primary school teachers could help with completing the written forms. Thus, if the *negdel* continued to work hard, its herds would grow. The State, therefore, had to be vigilant as it was eager for the *negdels* to increase. So I was watched from the top and, with a salary of 1000 *tugriks* a month, people were anxious to see what he would do with the "Victory" *negdel*. Such were the peculiarities in those days.

An example must be made of the superiority of the *negdel* over the private economy based on the constant increase of the herds, and the good herders need to look after the *negdel* flocks. The good herder had to be able to adjust to whatever happened, carefully construct the *khashaa*, and exploit what was needed in a specific area. Great attention was paid to breeding, especially to that of the male animals. In the past, the breeding process was disorganized, and there was a problem of how the *negdel* sheep would be impregnated by the ram. Other questions included how long could a horse and an ambler stallion be left without castration, which bull should be mated with which cow to produce the best young, which goat and billy goat should be mated and finally, how were the offspring faring after a year. Planning was necessary to address all these issues.

At the time there was no animal technician or veterinarian, and the *negdel* leader was the head of everything. He, himself, performed the duties of the technician, the veterinarian, and the agronomist. Since many Party members joined the *negdel*, a Party cell was organized with a Party cell leader who was very serious. We worked together, but the *sum* Party cell was separate.

3.6. The School Dormitory

I became famous for several reasons in only four or five years. We built a school dormitory in the *sum* where there were two hundred children in the primary school and most were poor. It was hard for these children to get to school since their families were so spread out. They would come by horse to school one day and return home in the evening. The next day, however, they would not come and so would skip the lesson, which made them unhappy. Thus our *negdel* wished to construct a dormitory building. At first, several *gers* served as the dormitory for the children, with rooms set up on wooden tent frames. The State gave us money for the children's food. There is a saying "live in a fool's paradise" meaning fools adjust! I knew that people had to be provided with food and drink, clothes, and shelter. Our young people were satisfied in doing good work and having enough to eat. But they also liked their light musical melodies and going to the dance hall, so they had to work. The school administrator pointed out that the children of 68 *negdel* members attended school and that I was responsible for their food, fuel, and fire as well as helping to look after their studies. So money had to be budgeted for the *negdel's* 68 children and the education department: "Minjuur, you are really doing what is right! You are setting up wooden beds in the tents and stoking the fires. You act as the caretaker, renovate the building, and open a canteen to feed 68 children with vegetables and potatoes." People, however, were not used to eating such things and thought of them as filthy. The children were given all sorts of things to eat including stomach and offal, potatoes, turnips, and carrots, which the cook also served the *negdel* members from the money given to the leader by the State. In all, the State gave 40,000 *tugriks*—30,000 for construction, with 10,000 left over. Such was this work and its accounts. One newspaper wrote that "Minjuur has fed and housed the children of the *negdel* members in the school dormitory, and the work has been aided by the State. I believe that this is the first time since the Council of Ministers passed the resolution that a dormitory school for children has been set up. You have taken the initiative for doing this, and now you are famous. The Council of Ministers has passed another resolution that all the *negdel* must have dormitory schools for the children where they can eat and drink without payment." But after some of the people got drunk they said in anger: "You did the wrong thing in building the dormitory and offering free food and drink to the children, and this could lead to your ruin! Poor green Minjuur—we will kill you!"

Strange. This life is very, very interesting. However, I was invited to a second meeting with the teachers, and I was greatly appreciated for my initiative and work. Many *negdel* leaders had good reputations, paid attention,

and worked hard to achieve good things for the country. Others focused on the distribution of money but did not keep it for themselves, as the wealthy do today. With money, one must do useful things for the country.

3.7. The *Negdel* Hotel

Secondly, a long time ago the representative of the *negdel aimag* Party committee came to stay with the Party cell leader, and the *aimag* leader came to stay with the *sum* leader while the Minister of Agriculture stayed in the *negdel* leader's *ger*. There was no hotel with a restaurant in the area. I received the *sum* representative and considered starting a hotel. In due course, if people had the money they could get a room and go to the restaurant. This hotel brought income to the *negdel* that lightened the burden on the State. There was money in the budget for both the hotel restaurant and the dormitory canteen. A guest who went to another hotel had to pay one *tugrik*, 50 *mung*, which was the market price at the time. For 5 nights, our price was 7 *tugriks*, 50 *mung*, with 3 meals a day. Thus, for forty or fifty *mung*, guests got a good meal and were pleased. It was hard to stay with a family, but at the hotel the food was prepared, and people went off to work comfortably. So the hotel was quite a sensation and the newspaper said that "People can go to Minjuur's *sum* hotel with a restaurant after work!"

3.8. The *Negdel* Gardens

I also decided to plant vegetables and began with potatoes that the State had introduced. Our area was high in the mountains, so things did not grow too well, but our Mörön *sum* center and a small valley were alongside the flowing Bayanjargalant River where I decided to grow these potatoes. Several bags of seeds were given to the *aimag* for the potatoes. Members found shovels, and there were little green areas to tread on and till. Members would call out: "Come here with that shovel! Plough this place and plant those potatoes!" The shovels were used for tilling and harrowing the land. The horse then made treads to finish preparing the field for planting. The area was almost a hectare. I had become somewhat of an agronomist and directed the planting myself. I carried a skirt or a spade full of potatoes and planted them one by one leaving, twenty centimeters of space between them. A water channel was dug for other green areas in the Jargalant valley. A small pool was also made from which pails of water were used to dampen the green area two or three times daily. At the time there was also a lot of rain so the weeds grew and spread and had to be pulled out. Our potatoes grew really well but they did not grow in Khangai or Tariat *sums*.

There was an all *aimag* Party meeting in the fall with much talk about

the *negdel's* potatoes. The leader of the Party Committee gave a report in which he mentioned that "Victory" *negdel* had gotten a high yield from its potatoes. The *negdel* members were allotted days to work in the fields, and their potatoes were given to the hotel guests and to the children in the school dormitories. At this meeting Dashdendev, the leader of the Khangai *negdel*, said that his potatoes were small while Minjuur's were as big as a clenched fist! What a funny thing to say.

There was much talk about these potatoes at the meeting, and the newspaper covered it all. The potatoes were fed to the school children, and guests who visited were fed potatoes, but there were no potatoes in Arkhangai *aimag*. The newspaper joked that "Minjuur is a big potato." In the fall the work days were allotted, and the potatoes were collected. At that time, at a big meeting the *negdel* evaluated work in "labor days" whereas now work is measured in money. One "labor day" provided 1.2 kilograms of meat, 2 kilograms of potatoes, and 4 kilograms, dairy, etc. People came to this big meeting by ox cart, so they could take their load of vegetables, potatoes, meat, and dairy products. Little money was used except at the co-operative where it was spent on flour, grain, and sugar. The *negdel* members were pleased with all of this, and the wealthy were deliberately given potatoes.

Our "Victory" *negdel* center was a place called "Ulaan Uzuur." People came there on horses and loaded up their saddle bags with potatoes. Lkhamsüren was a rich man who had 100 cows—the most in Mörön *sum*. So I deliberately gave him potatoes and told him that they were very tasty, had lots of vitamins, and were good for the health. "Oh-this is from the leader of course! Thank you" was said about all those potatoes in my saddle bags. But he had already thrown away many, many potatoes and had had his fill of them. Someone said emphatically: "Mr. Lkhamsüren, you are throwing out those potatoes from Ulaan Uzuur." I wrote down in my book that our potatoes were generally not eaten because people were suspicious and reported that they crackle with a bad taste or that they had no flavor. Even the cows did not eat them. I also spoke about the canteen in the children's dormitory and how those who came from the city and country to the *aimag* were fed. Some people who came from the city to the *aimag* did not like potatoes, but the papers found all of this news about potatoes most interesting, and this brought us fame.

3.9. The *Negdel* Handicraft Industry

There was the issue of the so-called socialist labor brigade.

G. Mandakh, the railroad Hero of Labor, was the first to take the initiative and organized the Mörön brigade. There was a lot to do: we made mud from bricks using water and lime from limestone. I had met a man named Bariul

who had lived at the Gandan Monastery but had become secular and had returned home. There was a brick making industry in the town, and the clergy from the Gandan held a service there which was led by a man named Ulambarin Divaanamsal. The *negdels* made their own lime, but we needed to find some money. We were employed making the lime and the bricks near the *negdel*, but we received no subsidies in doing all of this.

Our carpenters and smiths were the most talented in the country and successfully made bowls, chests, tent frames, small chairs, and other things all for the *negdel* members. However, they were poor.

At the time, there was a plan for "cultural intervention" (i.e., attempts to civilize) that created a lot of work making chairs for families who had none, so when someone entered the *ger*, there was no place to sit. The *negdel* members, therefore, were employed making these chairs that they could also enjoy. This was interesting news, and the paper wrote: "Families have chairs!" and there was praise for becoming civilized.

Although craftsmen were needed, there was no metal for them to work with, so I went to Ulaan Baatar and found all sorts of metal rubbish that I brought back home. The craftsmen were very happy with this metal and made all sorts of things, including knives especially fashioned for eating. There were neither knives nor locks at that time and again, the newspaper wrote about us saying that "the 'Victory' *negdel* has become a store." The craftsmen in our *negdel* gave each of us a knife, which made eating much easier. A purse with a lock was made for the *negdel* leader, which was very smart indeed! It was not at all crude and was embossed with an elegant silver pattern. These Mongolian craftsmen and smiths made fine things and worked with the local willow wood and brass that was used for keys. When the leader was given his purse, it was remarked that he could now lock his bag. Such a bag would have cost 30 to 40 *tugriks* at the store, but his cost only 20 to 30, which was still a lot of money since one sheep cost 20 to 30 *tugriks*. Amidst all this that was going on, the *negdel* herds were growing and producing a good yield.

Money was earned by people who made lime and bricks while the smiths and the carpenters made all sorts of things. With future technology, a car could even be made but for the present, there are only ox carts for work. The *negdels* had a rather original model cart that some people talk about. In socialist times, the wealthy on the *negdels* talked about becoming poor and were introduced to collective property by the People's Party. The truth is that before 1990 everybody on the *negdel* carried a heavy burden of responsibility for the government and the development of the State. I shall now talk further about this. The co-operatives have been called a mistake and collectivization should be condemned. With all this talk about democracy, I sometimes shout

like that too and think that I have nothing to hide about what I did. I was a pioneer but if I suddenly died, no one would talk about all of this. I don't know. So be it.

3.10. "Ikh Tamir" *Sum* "Gerelt Zam" *Negdel*

By 1959, the *negdel* movement was successful and henceforth, though there were fewer *negdels*, those that existed were larger. In fact, there were several large *negdels* and in one former *sum* there were 2 or 3. All the *sums* were streamlining their *negdels* into one *negdel*, and so our "Victory" *negdel* joined up with the Tariat *negdel*. The "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* in the Ikh Tamir *sum* in Arkhangai *aimag* as well as the Bugati "Bayan Zam" *negdel* and the Khanuin Taukharin "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* were all united into one *nedgel*. The Bugat *sum*, the Takhir *sum*, and the Ikh Tamir *sum* were united into one *sum*, and the three *negdels* were united into one *negdel*, which led to changes in the resulting *sum* and *negdel* as well as among the leaders. Our Mörön *sum* united with Tariat, and then the leader of the Ikh Tamir "Gerelt Zam" was made the leader. I ran this big *negdel* that had grown rich and enormous by1961 and M. Dash, a learned scholar and writer from the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party Institute of History, was there.

There is a picture of "Gerelt Zam" done by the first *negdel* member, a man called Sanduijav. This man mowed the hay with a sickle very well and was considered an important man.

IL: The first school was set up in 1919 in what is now Khan-Ondor *bag*.[28)]

RM: Yes, the primary school in Khan-Ondor *bag* was built in 1919.

IL: Does this picture look like "Gerelt Zam" when you worked there?

RM: Yes, it does.

IL: This then is your picture of the labor hero R.Minjuur.

RM: At the time, the picture was poor but at that time it was hard to print a picture on paper. This is not the case now.

IL: In 1970, a book came out. How did the State create a model for a large collective economy? Was there much talk about this? Look at the picture of Ikh Tamir *sum* center where the Tamir River flows alongside the Taikhar rocks.

RM: We went there before there was a smart and good man in charge of the *negdel* The *negdel* had many herds that had grown well and fulfilled the State's plan, and attention had also been paid to the many poor people. The *sum* had had a school for ten years, and there was a polyclinic in the center. There was a State co-op, and several community organizations in this large *sum* and the *negdel* had a fair amount of industry that made it very different from the "Victory" *negdel*, so I had to think about an organizational method.

The Mörön "Victory" *negdel* had one primary school, and I budgeted money for the school children to eat in the *negdel* canteen. The Tamir *negdel*, on the other hand, had 1000 children in its 10 year school and was involved in what is called joint production.

YK: Was this the so-called *Negdel* Joint Production organization?

RM: The so-called NDU gave the *negdel* herding pens, helped with major construction projects, and the planting of crops. Compared with Mörön's "Victory" *negdel*, there were many more intellectuals working here, including an animal specialist, an agronomist, and a veterinarian. What sort of responsibility would I have to assume? I had to make sure to fulfill the plan for the increase in the herds and introduce Minjuur's potatoes, which I had taken such care to grow. In fact, these potatoes and other vegetables had to flourish along with the herds. In addition, an electric station and a diesel station were needed to produce light and with all these professionals and intellectuals we could effectively accomplish what was necessary. Many of these professional people were very busy and liked this work, and we applied their expertise and knowledge precisely. The best workers on the *negdel* presented solutions to our problems.

There was a plan to increase the herds that meant greater profit for us, and I worked to sell more animals. If a teacher, a worker, or an intellectual or professional so requested, they would be given the extra animals, five to ten sheep for example, at lower prices. Each family prepared its own sheep to eat, and it was said that "this leader is really stuffing us with food!" Thus I guess I got along with people. In the spring, there were a lot of potatoes and green vegetables planted. Each *negdel* was responsible for the school hospital and dormitory. There were six school dormitories where 700 children stayed and were fed. We had to give all these children vegetables, meat, and dairy products. We needed machines to help us grow these vegetables, so tractors and car drivers were put to work. There was also an independent garage for work on the cars.

Bugat "Bayan tal *negdel*" and Khan-Ondor and Ikh Tamir "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* joined into one *negdel* in the middle of Taikhar stone near the center of Taikhar. The two champion *nedgels* "Ikh Tamir" and "Gerelt Zam" had already united to form the Ikh Tamir "Gerelt Zam" *negdel*. At first, things did not go so well, and there was a lot of talk of "yours and mine." After some argument, each side gave in a little bit, and they reconciled and set to work on building up the *negdel* brigade, the development of co-operative trade, the construction of the "Red Corner" (recreation room), and the development of art.

The brigade leader and the accounts clerk stayed in their office at night,

and a builder put big money down for a building. The Bugat "Bayan Tal" *negdel* stayed quite independent and went about increasing its herds. So I, an intelligent person, concentrated on the well being of everyone, which was good. Thus, having heard about the work, many teachers and professionals came to the *aimag* town while the school's students worked raising vegetables. There was work in the hayfields, helping with the herds' winter quarters, and preparing for the spring. The canteen at the dormitory school had good food for the children, and the herds produced a lot of milk for dairy products. The milk was transported in an overflowing cistern to the *sum* center. Families without milk were given milk, and families without food were given food. The dairy food was stored in a warehouse, so the children always had an adequate supply of cheese or boiled milk that was served in bowls.

The potatoes and vegetables were picked and given to the children, and the *negdel* leader saw that the potatoes were well prepared and that all the food had flavor. He also was concerned that the dormitory was warm, the bedclothes were clean, and the children were comfortable. All these problems concerned the *negdel* leader, and he had to take care of them himself. I had to find out what we were short of—for example, the head teacher did not have a table to put things on. One person who visited the school said: I have been to your school which has good food like your potatoes, but the turnips have no taste! I saw the dormitory beds, and the linen was dirty. People who work there think a lot about their money and when they will be paid. There must be food to eat everywhere and the leader must be aware of all of this.

What is each person responsible for? We had known, and so we sat down and talked about responsibilities, but empty talk was not useful, and if a leader scolded too much he got a bad name. At that time, both the *sum* leader and the *negdel* leader became quite powerful. The *negdel* and *sum* leaders used to talk to each other, but now the government and the leader converse. Such was my work situation.

3.11. The Quality of the Herds

A lot of work was done to improve the quality of the breed of the herds. Our *negdel* built up an economy based on fine sheep's wool and wool from goats. With cross breeding, cows could produce five to ten liters of milk a day. 100 of our cows were cross bred to produce 1000 cows. There were 6000 people and 150,000 to 160,000 animals with about 10,000 in private hands. The learned people busily studied the joint committee's scholarly research on improving the quality of the herds. People on the *negdel* improved the herds by separating some animals. One scholar divided his time among the two *negdels* and suggested separating a definite number of sheep and using the

rams with fine wool to impregnate them. The lambs produced in this way improved the herding industry and brought fame to "Ikh Tamir" *sum*. Another famous works project was providing shelters and food. In this way, if there was a major *zud* and conditions were arduous, there was enough food to feed the animals for five to ten days. Our animal *khashaa* at "Ikh Tamir" *sum* was seen as a national model and as the most important way of dealing with the herding economy.

YK: Did your *negdel* build such a *khashaa* for its animals? Did each family build its own *khashaa* for its herds?

RM: This work was done thanks to the *negdel* members. At the time, the *negdel* had a car and a tractor and some technology. Our task was to build a *khashaa* in the official place in the *negdel* center. Many *khashaas* were needed: three for the garage, two for the school, two for the clinic, and five for the *sum*. A *khashaa* was built in the official place that provided food and water and transportation for the *negdel*. The *negdel* brigades built the many good *khashaas* with the plentiful wood in our area.

IL: How was the place to build the *khashaa* chosen?

RM: The location was chosen after talking it over with the herdsmen in the herders' brigade. There were such questions as shouldn't the construction be where the herds are producing their young? Or where the hybridization farm was built? Or put them on the back slope or the ledge? After this exchange of opinions, the places were chosen and *khashaas* with eaves were built that were warm and comfortable. There were 5 brigades: the "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* and the "Golt" brigade, the "Bulag" brigade, the "Khan Ondor" brigade, the "Khokh Nur" brigade, and the "Olont" brigade. An electric power station united the five central brigades in to three. All the central brigades had electric stations and communication by wire, a recreation room, a warehouse, and a hotel, and people from the brigade worked in the office. In this way, each brigade created a nice little village, and demands could be communicated by wire. The central brigades also had a regular mail system, and the brigades received mail twice a day for seven days, and they received the newspapers. We also had tractors, cars, horses, and ox carts for the pastoral economy, and, without them, life would be difficult. Nevertheless, we made some mistakes.

3.12. The Health of the *Negdel* and the Issue of Medical Treatment

The doctor met with pregnant women once a week in the *sum* center. He kept a chart, and people were healthy. Many children were born, and a herder's family had, altogether, as many as 16 children and as few as 3 or 4. One herder could have as many as 8 to 10 children. The women herders usually gave birth every other year, and the doctor always took the women to the *sum*

center 7 or 8 days before the birth. A special *ger* was set up, and the canteen provided food and drink. After the doctor delivered the baby, there was a mandatory 7 to 8 day rest period in another *ger* where the mother was given lessons in how to look after a newborn, raise it, feed it, and keep it clean.
YK: Was there an assistant doctor in the city who could do these all of these things?
RM: No—the doctor of the *sum* did this teaching. There was one hospital among the *sums* with more than ten doctors, as well as a crèche and a kindergarten whose teachers could offer such lessons. The doctor could visit the *gers* by car and teach the mothers. The mid wife/obstetrician and the *sum* administration secretaries had to decide who would take the mother who held the baby in her arms back home. It was very important that the *sum* had set up both a crèche and a kindergarten.

All the children of the *sum* personnel attended the crèche or the kindergarten that the *negdel* provided with food and drink and where there were games and toys.

Much attention was paid to the young, and later in life their weddings were held in the *gers* or in the wedding palaces where the marriage certificates were issued and feasts were enjoyed. The *negdel* made special wedding *deels* that were given free of charge to the bride and groom.

3.13. The Dairy Industry

We constructed a building in the "Ikh Tanir" *sum* center for the dairy industry, and Mongolia's dairy industry was world famous. In a year, the Mongolian dairy industry produced 40 tons of butter from 120 tons of dairy products, which had to be differentiated into 12 dairy foods. There are several kinds of the so-called "shar toc" (yellow fat) or butter that is 100 % fat. These include yellow fat, white fat "ezgi" or the fat found in curds. There is a kind of curds, "aruul," that is sweet and is called "white curds" for which "Ikh Tamir" is famous. Also included in the 10 best known types of curds are the everyday curds, the wormlike curds, and the curds from naturally soured skim milk. The pot used for making the curds was also used to distill spirits from the material left over in the pot, and nothing was wasted in this distilling process. Another vessel, which can make 3 liters of good spirits is also used to make *airagh* or koumiss. A residue called "tsagaa" remains after the curds have been made which is strained and then mixed again with some milk to make more curds. We Mongolians have been herding and making these dairy products for over 2000 years. Our *negdel*, with support from the Party and the State, decided to develop the dairy products industry because Mongolians continually demand them.

YK: Where was such food sold?
RM: A big store had been built in the *sum* center, but people can pass right by "Ikh Tamir" and die without [seeing] dairy products.
IL: "Ikh Tamir" is certainly in the westernmost *aimag*.
RM: Yes—absolutely and it is on the main road. People with few herds carry out their duties in the *sum* center where there are a school, a crèche, and a kindergarten. Some people came to town to work at the store in the *aimag* center, which was easy work. There were also difficulties in the *negdel* food industry. One troublesome problem was that Mongols like their spirits and each day 10,000 liters of milk products were produced and 10,000 liters of milk were made into *airagh*. One room could hold 10 large drums or barrels to ferment 10,000 liters of milk—8 to 9 liters at a time—to make cheese from which spirits were the by-products. Making these spirits, which were very strong because of the low water content, was hard work for the Mongols. Altogether, 10 tons of Mongolian spirits were made. However, no real decision had been reached to make or sell spirits that were by-products from the manufacture of curds. Since it was a Mongolian custom to never throw away spirits, they were stored in an enormous vat. I proposed that instead of spilling out the drink that it could be made into an alcohol based cleaning solution.

The President of the Academy was Mr. B. Shirendev,[29] and I sent him a petition. He assembled all sorts of learned people who made spirits. The Mongolian dairy industry was built near the site of spirit production, which needed to raise the heat to ninety-four degrees for the best quality spirits. A spirit factory had to meet a standard, so a professional was invited to make blends that included "Milk Spirits," "Twice Distilled Spirits," and a drink supposedly distilled four times. The milk spirits were made at the same temperature as vodka and produced "arz" (twice distilled) and "khorz" (4 times distilled spirits) which were very popular. The spirits made at the state *negdel* factory were 10 % cheaper than other spirits. Vodka cost 15 *tugriks*, but ours was 25 percent cheaper, and a glass of spirits cost 17 *tugriks*, which was 8 *tugriks* cheaper. All in all, the State-produced vodka was popular, and our spirits quickly sold, so our income increased. In the end, then, the production of spirits was a side product of our dairy production, and there was talk whenever R. Minjuur's income from spirits rose.

At the beginning, we didn't establish such a goal for the production of spirits since they were produced from the manufacture of *aruul* or cheese. However, it was good to make these spirits, and I took the initiative or one might say "fools rush in." So I gave great thought to the organization of the workers—what they should eat and drink, what they should wear, and how to provide them with housing. Our young people also had to be provided with

food, drink, and a hall with light music in which they could rest and dance as they did most of their work in the morning.

3.14. The Electric Station

Our Youth League, it is said, demonstrates that "the young can move mountains and can also make water run uphill." Our *negdel* built "a cultural palace" for our young herders with a museum, a library, and a movie theater. There was light music throughout the complex and a teacher of electric music (stereo?). At the *sum* center, there were two diesel stations that were kept lighted. There was no other energy power in the *sum*, and the *negdel* lit itself. To pay for it, nine people worked at one station, with three people on duty keeping the diesel station alight for twenty-four hours.

The people who worked at the diesel station were given a salary in accordance with the regulations. It was essential to be economical with the electricity. Professionals carefully followed diagrams on the placement of the electric lines, and there was a question if the dairy industry would have a line. There was some guesswork, and sometimes the lines were put down rather arbitrarily. In another *sum* center, they caught fire which was very frightening. Each member of the "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* was given an individual salary, and there was no loan, no state subsidy, or debt. People from home and abroad admired how guests were treated. How good was this *negdel*? How good was the food? Were the members of the *negdel* attractive and decent? Our hotel was modeled on an elegant *ger*. A guest entered the hotel through the wooden door and went into a large beautiful *ger* that was decorated in the Mongolian national spiral pattern. The guests were treated well when they spent the night. So thanks to this man, a hero would be made.

3.15. Labor Hero as *Negdel* Leader

YK: Exactly when were you a Labor Hero?

RM: In 1969, I became a Labor Hero. At the time there was not much of a history of the *sum* and *negdel*, so our Ikh Tamir *sum*/ Gerelt Zam *negdel* wrote our story but not for the money. In addition, it must be said that a person who doesn't know his history cannot write it by guessing. A person must know the archival material of history and make use of every book he can in his writing. Very interesting things were written in this history of the Ikh Tamir *sum negdel*, which R. Minjuur, himself, undertook to write. Later, leader Tsedenbal spoke about this history of the *sum negdel* at a big meeting. So the history was conceived and finished, and many other things were initiated. The young people had a celebration at which they danced and galloped on horseback while looking after the sheep. There was dancing in the

hall to phonograph music that the young enjoyed enormously. In this way "our cultural leader" was created, and our youth were educated.

3.16. The Settlement Policy

RM: The policy of the government regarding the *negdels* changed as the socialist economy grew. The *negdels* constructed herders' settlements and a farm and set up a brigade. The good herders had to constantly settle in the spring, summer, and autumn pastures.

YK: Did the more settled herders have a problem with this life on the move? Was there a policy about building a cultural palace and a dairy processing plant for the herders?

RM: Recently, there have been studies and experiments in Inner Mongolia pertaining to this. However, our *negdel* had not been satisfied with the research on centralization, and there had been talk about some of these grievances. Nevertheless, as a result of the study, the quality of the pastures improved, and there was an increase in a better breed of animals. Through cross breeding some sheep, a finer type of wool was produced, and the sheep could be sheared and their wool compacted electronically. In addition, there was a trend toward mechanization and electrification on the milk farms, so the herds could be milked by machine. The plants and industries on the *negdel* were improved, and though we produced sufficient meat and wool we did not become complacent and continued to increase our output. We had the same production goals with our chickens, pigs, bees, hares, and geese, and so knew we were following the right policy. Some *negdels* built their winter quarters in the *sum* centers since there was an agreement to maintain a home even during the summer migration. So it was agreed to have the mechanization, electrification and the "red corner" (i.e., recreation room) in the *sum* center where families could be gathered together on one farm with 150 to 200 cows, a crèche for every 10 families, and a kindergarten for every 30 children. Although some farms had 40 children, the kindergarten and the crèche could jointly use a building. The children of the milkers could go to the kindergarten or to the crèche, and their families could pick them up at the end of the day. Several experiments were tried. For example, with a lot of work, a settlement was built at Ar Ereg farm, with its own crèche and kindergarten. Some *negdels* and farms tried to implement their own policies, but little by little they moved toward centralization, which sometimes reduced the settlements. We, however, moved away from these individual settlements. Each settlement had to create reserves of food and hoped to plant vegetables and produce mixed feed and food pellets for the animals. In so doing, the quality of food for the herds improved, as did the lives of the people in these settlements. A

major influence on the migration in the herding economy must also be mentioned, and this entailed paying attention to peoples' health and focusing, especially, on improving the care of mothers and children. In addition, more work had to be done to make newspapers, mail service, and radio and television more available. We had many things to do before we could catch up with the Russians, including providing every family with a transistor radio—essential in the lives of the herders—and each *negdel* leader with a YA3-469 car. Our "older brothers" (i.e., the Russians) were certainly a strong and cultured support of us Mongolians.

YK: Could the *negdel* remain the same in this sort of community? There was a time when the young were joined to their elders like a younger brother to his older brother, and people seemed to belong to one big family. So did the *negdel* settlement grow up alongside the community as it had in the past?

RM: The community was the basic settlement, and as it increased the herds were classified into groups that also increased. This form of community became more comfortable for everyone, and our older people, who could not go to the winter quarters or lived alone, were provided for. So *negdel* members and those who were able to work had to urge families to centralize, so the economy could thrive. In time, the elderly became accustomed to State assistance/pension, and the *negdel* herders received salaries but for a while, private property owners did not get a stipend. During pregnancy and at the time of a death in the family, money was presented to the herders, which was most helpful. After the *negdels* declined, however, everyone was on their own. Now we lack those socially protective measures, and we need to discuss returning to this system of co-operative united *negdels*.

4. My Life Changes

4.1. The Herders' Cultural Palace

After I. R. Minjuur became a *negdel* member, I was made a Labor Hero and followed the policy of doing something for the youth. D. Renchin worked in Ulaan Baatar when he was young and was the leader of ten workers. Dambin Renchin went with them to observe the buildings in the city. They visited the art institute and saw the artwork. At the time there was a "Herders' Palace of Culture" which was doing some work. "The Herders' Palace of Culture" was not just a technical term and during the revolutionary period contained a red corner (recreation room) and a club. We decided to call this "The Herders' Cultural Palace" for want of a better title. When it was built we distributed the information.

This cultural palace became D. Renchin's model, and he was responsible for building it. At that time, the "Star Movie Theater" was to be built, and we

met with the engineers who would build it. We studied the design and planned to construct this cultural palace that would have mass appeal. There were many talks about limiting the cost, and the plans were then given to the State Institute of Architecture where I knew many of the engineers. They studied this plan that included the plan for the "Star Movie Theater." They rejected our plan as unmanageable and urged us not to be discouraged and to come up with another plan which devoted special attention to some of the beams that we had made too long for proper drainage. If the buildings were badly made, there was the fear that they would collapse although each was considered to be quite well designed. The walls were to be made from blocks of material from Arkhangai *aimag*, and I spoke with ten other decisive people about the building. The State Institute of Architecture did not ask for a payment for their rather pricey plan, so we gave them some dairy products. Before we actually started building, we had to take into consideration environmental issues. Russia and Mongolia worked co-operatively in an industry in the Bayankhongor *aimag* center to create building materials. This industry provided and transported the surface panels for a large hospital that was being constructed in the center of Arkhangai. A Russian man called Sasha worked in this Bayankhongor industry, and I became friends with him. Through him, we had a crane place these surface panels. Engineers built the "Star Movie Theater" quite precisely although an accounting error concerning a broken beam unfortunately led to the death of three older men. We discussed the handling of these beams and decided that we had to set in place a strong steel foundation to cement the beams to the base. Thus the beams were made very strong so they would not break. Many people from the *sum* center who were unemployed worked on this building and 28 tons of all sorts of metal were used for the foundation. There were large plumbing industries in both Darkhan and Erdenet, and the director of the Darkhan city plumbing industry was a child of an Ikh Tamir man named Lkhagvasuren. This man offered us 17 to 18 tons of different grades of pipes for the metal foundation. 3 or 4 machines loaded up the metal, and the Russian and Mongolian directors gave us 2 loads and took no payment. As the building was going up, I gave them some fermented milk drinks that had served as a symbol of prosperity to the Mongolians. You should go and have a look over there.

We always carried cultural programs at the "Herders' Cultural Palace" and whenever possible there was art in the auditorium. Some artists who wished to take part in performances were organized by the *negdels*. The library had 4,000 to 5,000 volumes, and readings were held in the auditorium. Tibetan books were collected, by and large, from the lamas at Ikh Tamir who knew the Tibetan language and read many books themselves. The library also contained

the great Mongolian-Tibetan sutra book. The Palace also set up a good area museum that made Ikh Tamir's history famous. In addition, a newspaper for young people and industrial workers was established. At the entrance to this Palace, there was a mural of the Tamir River made from inlaid stones.

We had neglected to find chairs in all of our struggles to build this Cultural Palace. The Mongols do not make good chairs, and we do not have any of the best type of bentwood chairs. Then a Russian fellow whose name I do not remember came from the Cultural Embassy in the Buryat Soviet Socialist Republic to our *negdel*. He was very interested in our "Herders' Cultural Palace" and set about teaching many of our herders how to build chairs that would not collapse. He stayed about two days and left. When he returned, we gave him a gift of a horse head fiddle, a 4 stringed bowed instrument, a flute, a zither and a 3 stringed plucked instrument, all of which had been used and were quite old. The "Herders Cultural Palace" was devoted to collecting these musical instruments, as was the Russian for his own cultural palace in Buryatia. He asked me if we needed anything for our Palace and invited me to visit him. I told him we could use 250 chairs though, in fact, our auditorium had only 150 seats.

I had been invited to go to Ulaan Ude[30] with him, so I could learn about all of this. He told me that, as a gift, I could take back with me 300 chairs from Ulaan Ude's big wood and furniture factory, which I knew about. Thus I loaded the chairs onto the train on my return. Such was his contribution to our Palace. Those chairs, however, have now been replaced by those made in the Tocontsengel wood processing industry.

I finished the work on the Palace and handed it over to the *negdel*. Then a rumor circulated that the Palace Minjuur had built had collapsed. We had, however, discussed the construction of the foundation with Choijilsuren, the engineer, who said that it is quite rare that the foundation would break or crack and the building would fall down. The people you have talked with have, unfortunately, made up stories. This structure will not fall down—at least not so far— and we haven't even put in the floor! When we pour the cement, people will see how nice the Palace is and so will the newspapers.

R. Badnaa was a very good carpenter on our *negdel* and made the wooden doors and put in each window by himself. Most people could not do that alone. I helped him gather the materials, and he cut the wood outside finishing each window that remained in place throughout the whole year. These windows were especially necessary in winter and summer. The carpenter was very artistic, and his methods were amazing. We spoke at great length about the shape and pattern of the doors. At the time, many doors in Ulaan Baatar, like those at the Youth Hotel and the government palace, were

elegantly made with a slat. So I said we should have such a door with a copper cover on the outside. However, the carpenter did not quite understand this, so one Saturday I took him around Ulaan Baatar to study the doors. One old man we met had all the tools for making such a door, and we saw some model—one with a window in it. Today the young people know nothing about this and have never seen a door with a window.

When I saw this door with the window, I thought to myself that this fine and intelligent carpenter had made this strong and well crafted door with a window. Generally, Mongolian carpenters and smiths work only with their hands and put their minds to whatever they do. This carpenter called Natsag—the crafty one—made many doors each year along with the artist Badnaavanchin who fashioned the windows. Both men came from Ikh Tamir and were members of my *negdel*, and I made sure they received a good salary for this work. What a shame that the man who made the window for the Cultural Palace is now a poor old man. However, we provided him with good food and drink. We also asked him if he needed anything, and he told us that he wanted some particular grass to crumble into tea that grew in Bayankhongor *aimag*. If he drank that tea for a week, he would stay strong for a year! So I went to Bayankhongor *aimag* to get this grass for the old man. The Cultural Palace was finished, and the tenth leader, Renchin, awarded the Pole Star medals and the Honored Labor medals to a young girl, Mr. Badnaavanchin, and Mr. Natsag. The message from the Party and the government read: "Our *negdel* members have built a Palace of Culture for the herding people. This has been written in a certificate, and now they must be well rewarded." There were many cheers. "R. Minjuur must also be rewarded. The "Herders Cultural Palace" is done." Thank you.

IL: Recently, red brick buildings have been constructed in the city, but the plans are poor, and so is the style of the building.

RM: The newspapers have written about this. One building is awful and looks like a bird's nest. Yes.

4.2. The Work of Planting Vegetables

It is interesting to recall the years between 1940 and 1950 when vegetables were planted but were not eaten or used. The Party and government then decided to assign planting vegetables to the *negdels* and State Farms. So I began to plant potatoes on the "Victory" *negdel* in Mörön *sum*, as I have mentioned. Arkhangai was the first *aimag* to plant potatoes, and there was an abundant crop. However, no one was able to sell these potatoes, even when we sold them at 35 *mung* a kilogram. We, therefore, had to find some sort of storage cellar because without good storage facilities the potatoes could easily

rot. We also thought that perhaps we could give them away or even give them to the *negdel* members as their daily wages. However, the *negdel* folk were not accustomed to eating potatoes and didn't want them. These potatoes were a real nuisance!

Today, however, the Mongols plant potatoes and other vegetables that fetch a high price. The onions are Russian onions. I wonder why that is since they are not the best onions, and the wild Mongolian onion grows very well in the countryside and the *khangai*. The Mongols generally eat them and do not like the cultivated onions that have a bitter taste. They also do not like turnips and carrots. So we went back to planting potatoes. It takes a lot of work to produce them for eating, and we had the difficult task of explaining how to eat and enjoy them. Now there is a lot of talk about a green revolution, and each family grows potatoes in its *khashaa*. So now planting potatoes has become a part of our working lives, and people are doing well with these potatoes. In fact, everyone is now eating vegetables in both the town centers and the countryside where the herders eat this "green food" that is good for the health. When there is proper care and preservation, people can sell their vegetables since people now buy them. In the past, "grandfather" might fill his saddle bags with potatoes just to give them away, but now people are accustomed to eating vegetables, so raising them is a part of our lives. Isn't it? A Vegetable Grower talking to Yuki.

RM: This Japanese Professor is interviewing me, and I can only say that growing vegetables is normal, though that was not the case in the past.

4.3. Bread

YK: When did the Mongols begin to eat bread?

RM: We have only begun to eat bread recently. In the past the herder in the countryside did not eat bread. It was said that when flour rises and is puffed up in shape it has an unpleasant bitter taste. So it was quite a lot of work to become accustomed to eating bread. Still, a bread factory was built in Ulaan Baatar, and people in the city began to eat bread. There was a man when I was young who baked bread, and he put some of this horrible bread on a plate for his family. It was very bad, and people wondered how it could be given to his family. By 1960, however, eating bread became more popular and had spread to the countryside. Now we can't live without vegetables and bread. In fact, without two liters of these, life is very hard.

At first, there were disputes about the bread factory. At that time, the standard weight for bread was one kilogram, and government supervisors inspected the factory making sure that each loaf was not short, even 40 to 50 grams in weight. If even one loaf of bread was deficient, the factory was

heavily fined. Such were the regulations in the early days—now there are none.

Growing fruit became an issue much later. In the 1950s and 1960s, the apple was unknown in Mongolia. It takes a lot of work to raise apples, and now they come from abroad. Most of our tea comes from China, but the poor people, generally in the countryside, drink a natural plant drink. In fact, nature provides the cornflowers from which to make a tea.

4.4. Russian Tea

YK: When did people start drinking Russian tea?

RM: In the 1930s. In 1932, we encountered Russian tea and Russian tobacco and pipe tobacco. Until then, we had only smoked Chinese pipe tobacco. We could drink the Russian tea, but the Russian pipe tobacco was very nasty to smoke. The quality of Russian pipe tobacco is horrible, and it is said that it smells of horse dung. Those times were different. We country people had become accustomed to being treated with Tibetan medicine, and then a Russian and a European doctor arrived. Each *bag* was then given a course in sanitation from the doctors in the *sum* centers. At the time, people would not take Russian medicine, perhaps because the monks had persuaded the old people not to take it, saying it was bad for the body. So the Party and the government met with the Russian doctor to propagandize and present a better image of Russian medicine. At that time, venereal disease was a problem in Mongolia, and the ill were among the first to be treated with streptomycin which we called the "red immunization' because the venereal disease colored the urine red. People did not like it, but their chronic venereal disease got better. In the end, people began to praise this immunization program, and we young people in the military were inoculated against venereal disease. And we also drank the Russian tea, but now one can drink Chinese tea or "red tea," which is however poorly regarded. People can also smoke Chinese pipe tobacco that has a greasy, scorching smell and is very bad for the lungs.

YK: Was there rice?

RM: There was rice, but it was quite rare and was generally eaten only by the lamas. One family only ate about 2 kilograms of rice, so you can see it was very rare.

YK: And flour?

RM: Long ago, the Mongols did not have flour, it was very rare and came from the Chinese. In the 1950s, the Mongols grew wheat and then began to make flour. The Chinese produced "Beautiful Path" and "Light Path" flour. But most people did not use flour, and people didn't eat many foods made from it. In the religious services of exorcism and salvation, the lamas ate bowls of

meat and flour. Now everyone eats flour foods and enjoys them.

4.5. Dairy Food

(Still in the food market) There is yellow-whitish fat from which we get butter. If it is all white, the fat content is low. The Mongolian butter is deep yellow. For 2000 years a Mongolian has been able to eat butter from the milk of his own herds.

"This dried cheese is not called *aruul*; it is a cheese called *khoruud* that is made from soured skimmed milk. Another famous product is *orom* or clotted cream. In the 1950s and 1960s, a milking machine was introduced from abroad for making butter and sour cream, which we had not made before this. We made clotted cream, so *smetana* is a recent product.

There is also the residue from boiled and dried milk. There is also sweet or sugared *aruul* or cheese that is enjoyed by families in the country side. They say "*ezgi* and *aruul* in a leather bag and *orom* in a koumiss sack." People in Ulaan Baatar say the production of these products, which are sent abroad, make up what is called the "white revolution".

"It is hard to make clotted cream in the cooking pot because it is too warm. Yak milk from a chilly area is thick and results in good clotted cream. There is a type of national cooking pot for this clotted cream. *Buuz* (dumplings) are served at our national feasts and on ceremonial occasions when good food is served. When we were young, we didn't have any flour, so families did not eat *buuz*.

4.6. The Old City

The first four story building was being constructed in Ulaan Baatar when we were building our "Herders' Cultural Palace." The Party and government leaders held a ceremony for those who participated in laying the foundation. It was started in 1930 and since there were no construction groups at that time the lamas who had been arrested and imprisoned did most of the building. Some of these lamas were skilled, and others had been exiled. Those who were detained did the construction, and Dashtseveg was supported in his artistic and creative work. After the building was finished, several of these lamas were exonerated and avoided prison. Such is history. Lenin and Stalin are prominent in considering this issue. Recently many have been affected by this. Beyond these buildings were the palisades, and our *khashaa* and *ger* were on the near side of the building. Straight ahead were the *khashaas* of other families. This street was called "Water Street" because Chinese horse carts carried water along it. Now in Höhhot and Beijing a person can see such water carts. "To the market! To the market!" was the cry and a ride cost 30

mung. Today there is a market near the station, and many people take horse carts there. Such is the story of the building. Later more buildings were constructed, and though there was no new building nearby I knew that there soon might be.

4.7. Zaisan

It was a place away from the railroad and buildings and close to, but not on the side of, the market where the Naadam fair was held. At that time, all building materials were transported from Ulaan Ude, mostly when the weather was warm. The Russian ZIC5 car was also used for transport because there was no major transport base. Only recently were these bases built. The railroad would transport building materials in winter and summer.

Now we can go alongside the "Sacred Green Palace" which is in the area of the spa (waters) and is called the "People's Medical Institute." The number of *gers* for the old or the ill has increased over the years. A camp was built in the summer and "camp leaders" were appointed.

Nowadays the "Bogd Lamasery" in Ulaan Baatar is different and smaller. The Gandan Monastery is near the Janraisig and many other monasteries. There were families at the north side of the "Dambadarjagin" lamasery, and in the center of the city there were many green trees near the "Dashchoinlon" lamasery which was the model for many other lamaseries. The four lamaseries were the "Bogd Khuree," the "Dambadarjagin," the "Dashchoinlon" and the "Gandantegchinlin." On the east side, many families surrounded the Amgalan, which was the center of Chinese trade and their only place of business. The Lenin Museum was set up here on what was Chinese Ninth Street, while the Chinese were generally concentrated in another area near the "Bogd Lamasery" where they did not live in *gers* but in clay houses. Twenty-one years after the People's Revolution, the Russians built the "High Co-op" that has now become the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts. The present day Mongol Bank building was built quite early and was originally small until it was extended. The present day Ministry of Interior building was also built around that time, but today the building is a Teachers' College. Marshal Choibalsan lived in the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party/Central Committee building which is to the side. In the 1930s School Number One became the first four story building to be constructed. Later, the largest building was the Mongolian State University. There was a lot of building near the railroad, and there were several *gers* in a place called "Springing Water." At the time, a bridge had not yet been built over the Tuul River.

In fact, there were no bridges over the Tuul River which in those days was very large. Now it is very small. The source of the Tuul River is in the

Zaan Terelj range, so the river should flow with a great deal of water. Ulaan Baatar needs wood from the Zaan Terelj range, but there were few technical machines then, so the wood was gathered from the trees along the Tuul River, and then was loaded onto a raft for transport to Ulaan Baatar where it was sold from the back of horse carts and pushcarts. The Chinese also sold loads of coal from Nalaikh, even though not too many people burned coal. Generally the Chinese used a small amount of the coal themselves in a carpenter's and smith's workshop near "The Blacksmith's Bridge." Only wood was burned in the city, which had been collected from the trees along the banks of the Tuul River and transported by raft.

IL: I have heard that there was a military call-up when fighting broke out in the East. Where was the military camp for your group?

RM: There was the railroad cultural palace and the auto transport base called "Mongol-trans." In 1935 in Arkhangai, I was called up for the relay that crossed Shar Khoviin Pass and went down to Songinot corner. We spent the night at "Mongoltrans" and then departed for who knows where—I don't even remember. We took a horse from Nalaikh, but I don't really know much about this horse relay. The "Mongoltrans" used solia fuel which at one point started to smoke and make a terrific noise when the vehicle went here and there to some *aimag*. In 1945, which is quite a while ago, I had come to the Ministry of Interior and at that time it was the only building in that area. Now the Natural History Museum and a hospital are nearby.

4.8. The Relay

YK: Please talk about the relay.

RM: If you owned private herds, you would, once or twice a year, be excluded from the relay. There were 30 kilometers between the relay families, and each family prepared about 100 horses and served the relay for a month at a time. It was compulsory for each rider to serve the relay for a month as well. The relay was organized a long time ago, and those who rode it were issued travel documents by their *sum* or *aimag*. With this document, the rider was given the authority to ride and without it there was no authorization to participate in the relay. There were two types of travel documents: the "red document" and the "green document" and, in fact the first was red and the second green. The "red document" is what an ambassador or leader carries nowadays and is like a passport for a diplomat abroad. With this document, the relay carrier was never hindered and when he arrived at the camp someone else, who had been appointed, saddled up his horse. This rider with the "red document" had the rights of leaders and ambassadors, while those with the "green document" had the privileges of an ordinary worker. A four to five person *ger* was built for

the relay riders, which they put up themselves, and both categories of documented relay participants were fed and given meat. They spent the night on long narrow mattresses and covered themselves with their *deels*. People always wore the Mongolian *deel* on the relay, which in winter was made of fur. The documents the riders carried gave them free lodging, but they had to pay for these documents. Thus the riders needed a salary to cover their expenditures for ten relays and were paid three to eight *tugriks* for riding one horse. Including the preparation, one rode for thirty kilometers before dismounting.

Each *sum* divided up the responsibility for the relay. In Arkhanghai *aimag* Choloo *sum* and Ikh Tamir *sum* shared the responsibility for those traveling the relay. Each *sum* was in charge of certain responsibilities. For example, "in November Dorjinkh rode thirty days on the relay. He was assigned to bring twenty-one horses and two *gers*! In that time period, as it was written, the horses had to be driven and the *gers* loaded. Saddles and bridles were not given to the riders, so each relay rider had to provide his own. If the rider was delayed, he was fired. In 1949, however, the horse relay was replaced by a fast "courier service." The government or the Ministry of the Interior appointed someone who had the great responsibility of establishing the strict requirements for each *aimag* and *sum*. When someone demanded "get this document there in two weeks," a rider, wearing a special hat that made him recognizable, would have to ride day and night since it was announced that the message was en route. Horses were changed and saddled up, tea was placed in the middle of the saddle, and *aruul* and *ezgi* were put in the pockets. The rider avoided delay by not spending the night and followed instructions on where to go. Other relay riders went at their own leisurely pace.

We mail riders carried the "red documents" and were given a saddle and horse and were advised never to put the saddle on the ground. A person with a "red document" was authorized to eat one leg of meat. He had to boil this one leg—either a thigh or a forequarter which came from between the shoulder and the knee. He set out after eating and was inexhaustible. Such were the rules. The "Victory" *negdel* in Mörön *aimag* was on the mail route.

RM: Are you going to Gachuurt?

IL: Now it is evening. We will go tomorrow morning and come back at noon.

RM: Shall we visit a family in the countryside tomorrow?

IL: Sure.

RM: Gachuurt is 27 to 28 kilometers away, and one must go on a dirt road for 20 kilometers. The roundtrip is about 100 kilometers. The Gachuurt *sum* center is beyond a ravine. Our two younger brothers are there, and you can see

them distill koumiss and eat Mongolian dairy food. They will also slaughter a sheep, so we can eat the stomach. If we do go and see my two younger brothers, we can drink a lot of Mongol spirits and home brew. I can take this occasion to go with you to see my brothers and drink milk tea. They have two cows and two sheep and will prepare the meat. We can rest a bit and chat. See you tomorrow morning at 9. It isn't far but a bit of a nuisance without a car.

5. Gachuurt State Farm (One Day Later)

IL: Today we can start discussing the differences between the *negdel* and the State farm. Talk a bit about the creation of the State farm and the *negdel* and the mechanization of farming.

RM: In socialist times, the State farm and the *negdel* were both very large enterprises. I have already spoken about the *negdel*, and now we are going to a State farm. This Gachuurt State farm is very famous among the 18 or 19 national State farms.

Both the State farms and the *negdel* produce for the rural economy, but work on principles that are quite different from the private economy.

The *negdel* members are organized voluntarily and gain their wealth from their labors. The work on the State farm is organized directly from the State budget and emphasizes raising crops and herds. Along with many crops and plants, grain for flour is grown on the State farm, and the money earned goes to the State. The herding economy is also profitable, and the money from the abundant milk is collected by the State to pay out subsidies. The *negdel* works for the money itself, and the State does not watch over it. Thus the *negdels* are responsible for improving their lives themselves.

5.1. Mechanizing the Milk Farms

The State farms were mechanized farms while the rural *negdels* were, by and large, not mechanized farms. So now we will go and visit this important mechanized farm in Gachuurt. This farm has its own steam furnace and a mechanized building for cows where the cow and the calf in the first year spend the winter. This barn is heated, and the animal filth is cleaned with fresh water. The animals are fed well, the steam furnace works, and people are taught important ways to prepare the milk on the mechanized State farm. There were about 16 mechanized State farms around Ulaan Baatar city where the milk is processed.

Black and white cows spent the winter at the Gachuurt mechanized State farm. But with democracy came privatization so the herds were equally distributed to *negdel* herders. Things were very straightforward on the State farm, and if a person had the money, he could engage in private trade. Finally,

all the property on the State farms and *negdels* was dispersed, and now these State farms do not exist. Bayanzurkh is a district that is in a suburb of Ulaan Baatar with the administration in the Gachuurt district. Workers there are not under any jurisdiction, so all the economy is private. One person has a mechanized farm that he acquired with his own money, and though I do not know how he bought it, perhaps foreigners or the Chinese helped him. Let's say a person sells his cows, so there are no cows left since they have all been privatized. Then there are no more cows and no more equipment for the electric milking and feeding machines. Each item is now traded separately, and the building, itself, is left for scrap. Some places have been dismantled and the bricks sold. Still one must follow the democratic path, and such things had to be done. But all this privatization was done in the wrong way, and much of the property and wealth has been squandered. And today Ulaan Baatar city needs milk! In some areas, people use milking machines and transport their milk in cars, while those without cars use horse carts to transport their milk. One family, for example, had two milk cans while the farm once had several machines for the morning milking and a truck that could carry three tons of milk to the city to process in the huge milk processing plant. This was a good way to collect the milk, but privatization has had a bad effect because the democratic party privatized in the wrong way. If we had copied Inner Mongolia, our privatization experience would have been better, and the lease for Dorjid's farm would have stated that the cows were to be kept. Milking methods should be as they were. There are so many first year calves to raise and cows to look after. And now the State has introduced monetary measures into the contract so there can be personal gain. Unfortunately, the lease was not drawn up properly so everything has been sold.

Democracy has led to great wealth, and there are many rich Mongolians whose chests heave! The *negdels* distributed the government's mandates which included an appraisal of the collectivized herds in order to divide them. The herds were then driven off, and the *negdels* were ruined. There were no herds. At Ikh Tamir two people were given one *khashaa*, which they divided and then took a saw to the fences. So this is what the cow farm is like now. There has been democracy for ten years and these things have been done. The industrial economy, which was based on boots, skins, furs, and milk, was in the same situation as the *negdel* and the collective. The person who bought the milk farm then put it up for sale to anyone who would buy it, which was very unpleasant. Privatization has led to many mistakes that affected, especially, the Mongolian poor. The government has the slogan: "Let's end the government deficit and end poverty." If the government had been wiser, we would not be in this situation. There were 250 mechanized cow farms, and the cows came

from various parts of Kazakhstan. In Russia, people kept the farms that remained productive. We are youngsters in democracy. The leaders of the Great Khural were R. Gonchigdorj and Da. Ganbold and with E. Bat-Uul;[31] they were harbingers of our democracy. They were, however, immature and did some bad things. The herders demanded winter, spring, and summer pastures. Since the cows were not killed in the winter, they had to be fed and needed a steam heated building with a boiler.

The *negdel* was near the milk farm where the cows were scattered, but the *negdel* could not mechanize and generally milking was done by hand. We had many yaks, and the yaks and cows averaged three liters of milk a day. The milk had a lot of fat. Hybrid cows produced 15 to 20 liters a day—quite a lot of milk but with less fat. Ulaan Baatar was overflowing with milk, and one liter cost 50 *mung*. Now milk costs 600 *tugriks*. What a difference. There was no need for compulsory mechanization of the milk farms.

A foreigner prepares to speak:

RM: How can all this be better?

Foreigner: I don't know how to stimulate things here. I am just waiting.

RM: Are you and other people looking to privatize things?

Foreigner: There is the invisible problem of bankruptcy in this country.

RM: I have heard much talk that one must get a loan. It is essential to revive the poultry economy. It is hard to get credit today unless you know someone. Money is only given according to the whim of the dealer. Many *tugriks* have been given for chicken and eggs, and many people are working on this but they need support. Actually, there is a small building for chickens and eggs, and people who are unemployed can unite and work there. The State and the government financial organizations must grant loans, but it would be a mistake to give loans for everything. Do you get loans?

Foreigner: No—usually not.

RM: Are you following up on this?

Foreigner: It is useless to follow up on getting a loan. It is a waste of time.

RM: Not really. One must do that to get support for the chicken and egg enterprises we talked about.

Foreigner: At least we wouldn't eat eggs from Inner Mongolia.

RM: Indeed. We now import eggs from Höhhot. If people eat our eggs, then the business can be saved, and the eggs will gain in value—but no loan will be given.

5.2. The End of Mechanizing the Milk Farms

RM: We saw 250 milk farms in the spring. The cows were calving and were in good condition for the New Year. They intended to build spring quarters

with a large building and a *khashaa*. There was no steam and therefore no heat. At least the buildings were freshly built and would not be buried by the snow. There was a building where the cows could calve, and there were veterinarians as well. At the time of privatization, the farm broke up, and the spring quarters were abandoned. Quite a few famous people came both from outside and inside Mongolia. There was a guard, but the foreigners and the local people moved on their own into these buildings where the cows were, and each family took 10 and 20 cows, which had been the foundation of the mechanized state cow farm. Now all of this was privatized, and the families owned the cows. The large animals were no longer collectivized, and prestigious people came to do business. Now there is nothing inside the spring quarters built for the 250 cows, machines have been abandoned, and everything else has been robbed and taken. This mechanized farm was built with credit from the Russians to whom we are somewhat indebted. We will not repay this debt. Maybe V. Putin will forgive it or he might say "ugh" to us or get angry. Privatization makes demands, and some of its methods are wrong. Perhaps instead of privatizing, a type of lease could be arranged, so there could be profits as there were in times past. The economy worked well then.

5.3. The Possibilities of the *Negdel*

The summer pastures are beyond here. In socialist times, the State gave out grants so that everyone in the *negdels* could profit. In fact, the *negdels* made a profit. The State farms had State grants and earned a profit from the abundance of milk and crops. The grants were understood to be loans, so the money really had to be returned though there was no interest on these loans. The State farms had a budget of 10,000,000 *tugriks* for the spring, which was to be repaid without interest in the fall. The *negdels* also took out loans, but only a few were awarded stipends. All in all, the *negdels* were examples of profitability without government stipends. *Negdels* never received State stipends which encouraged their development without loans and prevented their indebtedness to the State. Such was the situation with the *negdels*.

IL: Was trade not forbidden?

RM: Generally there were impediments to even this limited trade. Free trade was difficult for the *negdels*. Nevertheless, one State *negdel* generally produced ten tons of meat. The members of the *negdels* made sure that they had a reserve supply of meat to pay for the labor days [the unit of pay for work in accounting]. The civil servant in the *sum* center knew it was not a good idea to trade in the local market, and since the meat could not be sold in stores, the *darga*, or leader, sold it in secret. Sometimes, it was difficult for the *negdels* to follow the State's tight schedule and fulfill the plans for meat,

milk, wool, and skins. If we did not work well to fulfill the plan, it was discontinued but with a penalty. According to the plan, the State gave money for certain things which were cheaper. Although the *negdel* economy could falter, some of the herds were pretty good. The meat reserves sold quite well and covered all the expenses. Our *negdel* did not function this way. One has to live wisely and not run up a bill. Get a loan.

There were neighboring families who worked on the farm, but in the more remote areas of the Gov-Altai, Uvs, Khovd and Zavkhan *aimags* many, many families moved with their herds, thereby abandoning the State farms which had been planted. Many of these families transported their *khashaas* and buildings in order to pursue a profit. Though many families lived near the Gachuurt State Farm, these families did not put down roots in the far pastures where there were no *khashaas*, and *gers* had to be set up.

5.4. The Degradation of Nature

So what do you see? You can hardly see those nearby trees that are teeming with long green insects called locusts. There are many locusts in Western Europe and, though I don't really know, perhaps they migrated here where they destroyed our pasturelands. These locusts are very dangerous. There are two dangers in Mongolia in the summer. If these insects return next year, the trees will not grow. These trees are very dry. These green insects were abundant long ago in unusual years.

IL: This year in Övörkhangai, a lot of poison was spread around to get rid of the field mice. We talk about living with all sorts of creatures, including the field mice. What do you think?

RM: Poison is one way to abolish the field mice, but it could also prevent plant growth. However, after the mice are destroyed, the plants do grow again. Thus, it is essential to get rid of the mice and spread poison, so the insects in the trees are also killed. In fact, the poison was spread by an airplane in the forested areas. Without doing this, the insects would devour the trees. The mice did not destroy the *khangai* pastures, which are in the steppe belt.

5.5. The Conditions of *Negdel* Trade and the Market

IL: The State *negdels* had to follow the norms set by the State and fulfill the State plan. In doing this, what was the role of each *negdel* member? What did the Ikh Tamir Gerelt Zam *negdel* do about this?

RM: The State herding economy produced meat, wool, milk, hides, and sheepskin. When the national industries were built, the hides and sheepskin industries were organized to make boots and clothes from these skins. Russian leather, grained or colored leather, or Moroccan leather were important

products from the herders. There were major issues about these raw materials that were fundamental in the development of our national industry. Those in the private economy did not pay proper attention to the quality of these raw materials, so the State did not wish to use them. It was difficult for a person to do this work for the entire year, so there were regulations supporting the centralized *negdels*, which would produce the raw materials from the herding economy for the State industries.

Thus the State presented a very exacting plan that supported the *negdel's* meat and milk production and was forceful but not oppressive. In fact, this plan was supportive of the private economy. The *sum* administration was responsible for these issues, and some parts of the *negdel* were exempt from this plan that was not officially imposed under oath. Thus the *negdel* took the initiative in following the plan while also maintaining its independence. This was very difficult to do, so it had to be carefully calculated. At first, the private economy was strong but following the plan was demanding. After a while, however, the *negdels* were united and properly followed the plan which specified the quotas for the herds. I don't exactly remember the numbers but I think that large livestock had to yield 7 to 10 kilograms of meat and small livestock had to yield 4 to 5 kilograms. It was calculated that one sheep produced one kilogram, 200 grams of wool, and a goat produced 200 grams of cashmere while a cow or a horse shed, on the average, 450 grams of hair. The herds were slaughtered to meet the internal demands of the plan that included meat for schools, kindergartens, and crèches. Hides and skins were also collected according to the plan. The plan also permitted selling some meat in the market, but if the plan was not fulfilled, there could be no private sales. The personal economy was limited in the market place, but some personal herds could be sold by each family, and some families were even given herds under the plan. These measures enhanced the lives of the *negdel* members.

Recently, we recalled the mistake that the plan made in squeezing the *negdel* members too forcibly. Even today we feel that the plan led to the high cost of firewood for schools, crèches, and kindergartens. Nowadays, the high demand for raw materials that once were provided by the *negdels* has driven up the cost of products. The plan started modestly and smoothly and increased the country's output, but now the private economy is under pressure to grow. I wrote a book entitled "Wool is Gold," but it was hard to force the production of one kilogram of sheep's wool for one *tugrik* and several *mung*—never mind the hides and skins. Cow hide was worth 20 to 30 *tugriks*, sheepskin cost several *tugriks*, and goatskin cost 7 to 8 *tugriks*. A cow with a live weight of 500 kilograms was worth 200 *tugriks*—a price that was unchangeable. The government would only buy high quality meat. The herders were part of

the "Co-operative Trade and Produce Unit," and every *sum* had these co-operative shops. It was hard to weigh and figure the fat content of each animal which had to be checked by a veterinarian for quality. The "Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit" was directed by the Ministry of Trade and Procurement.

The first buyer was a representative from the Ministry who arrived at the "Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit" on May 15th every year. The date was very significant because at that time the herds were very thin and had to be fattened up to make money for the State. If they were fatter, these *negdel* herds could be sold to Russia for a profit. When the animals were weighed on May 15, a sheep could weigh 30 kilograms and a cow could weigh not less than 120 kilograms. It was difficult for the State to set the right weight for the herds, many of which had become so thin during the winter. After the *negdels* paid the *dargas* their wages, they could grow rich, since 80-90% of the nation's herds came from the *negdels*. The State kept careful accounts of the 10-20% of the *negdels'* personal herds.

In 1921, after the People's Revolution, the "Consumers Co-op" was established that, in a democratic economy, provided people with grain and consumer goods while the herders provided the raw materials. This Co-op became the "Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit" and, as already mentioned, was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Trade and Procurement, which conducted trade. The animals were not collected in the settlements, and in each *aimag* there was a market for the *negdels*. The *negdels* depended on their leaders for direction and for enforcing the regulations, and the plan dictated the number of animals to be raised, how to fatten them up, and how to have a successful migration. Many animals were sold at the market and were eaten often accompanied by a lot of drinking. Sometimes, one got a better price selling the meat at the market than through the co-op.

The *negdel* might receive 70 *tugriks* for a sheep, while a person might get 100 *tugriks* selling on his own. A person who was not on the *negdel* might prefer dairy food rather than meat, even if it cost more money. *Negdel* members sold their produce for less, so there was a gap in their profits. It was generally difficult to get the *negdels'* products to the city markets, so the teachers and doctors who worked in the *aimag* center did business with us. In addition, there was trade among the *negdels* and among their leaders. When I was in the Gobi desert, I bought some camels—maybe about 100—and we constructed a building to house them in the *khangai*. We fattened up our herds which were slaughtered in the fall, and the meat was given to a school, a kindergarten, and a crèche and to the *negdel* members themselves. What meat remained was sold, and so our *negdel* stood on its own two feet and began to

prosper. The State bought things from the *negdels* for rather low prices, so production increased and the country developed. The *negdel* leaders still got pretty good prices for their goods, and, as I mentioned before, used these profits to construct the cultural palace and other buildings.

There were both good and bad aspects to the *negdels*. The State gave the *negdel* the same stipend if the market failed, but we often wondered if there would be assistance. The government did not always help, so we were responsible for ourselves, and we had to give the *negdel* members their monthly wages. I was praised and rewarded for developing the *sum's negdel*. In fact, the socialist era provided the wisest and best situations for work. At the time of the People's Revolution in 1921, backwardness, poverty, illiteracy, and illness were rampant in Mongolia. There were very few animals, and many were sick. After seventy years, this policy has led to what is now a literate, healthy, and larger population because of the improved health care for mothers and babies. Mothers have been supported, and many children have been born, and the population has increased. There is now a mechanized cow farm that provides bread for the settlement and milk for Ulaan Baatar. These are major steps.

5.6. The Democratic Revolution

The Democratic Revolution began in 1990 though it is called a democratic movement. The young do call it a revolution, and we call it a movement. We understand a revolution is made by the people. In the context of a world revolution, we have made some mistakes: (1) There was a serious plan for change, but it was forced upon the country thus contributing to upset and (2) the number of herds that were privatized was limited—100 in the Gobi and 75 in the *khangai*—which was fairly reasonable if somewhat restricted. (3) People had questions about the trade, which had been forbidden both inside and outside the country. We only had relations with the Soviet Union, and we could not travel to or trade with many other countries. However, mistakes are hard to prevent, and people have to lead their lives. The democratic revolution changed some of these things and made it acceptable for people to speak out.

Dr. Sodnom stated it this way: "The democratic revolution made mistakes, and we were stupid." At a short meeting, people spoke about this stupidity. D. Byambasuren said the government's biggest mistake was its methods of privatization of property. That was a major error that we can see with what was done to the spring and winter quarters at the mechanized Gachuurt State Farm, when the *negdel* herds were distributed to the herders. The many nice *khashaas*, good wells, and camel caravans were all privatized and scattered. The *khashaas* were divided up and sold. When two parties wished to privatize

a *khashaa*, the *sum* center had to step in before all the firewood was burned and the wooden buildings destroyed. These mistakes happened everywhere. He went on to say that democracy's surname could be disorder since rules were broken, and mistakes were made.

He continued to say that he needed to eat and drink and had the so-called freedom to enjoy a lot of spirits and wine since there were many bars and places of pleasure. In the central countryside, many distilleries had been built. There were many celebrations where stones were piled at all the *oboos* for worship as well as many *naadams* and games in winter and summer. All of these activities did not encourage the growth of industry since they took place in areas where there was no national industrial production. In addition, the herds and the herders on the *negdels* were abolished, and the mechanized State farms and food economy were destroyed. In addition, the Chinese benefited from all of this, and our efforts were wasted. As a result, many in our country became alcoholics and destroyed their lives. We faced a test during the winter of 1999-2000 when a small *zud* killed almost all the herds. During that winter four million animals died, which had happened only twice before in Mongolia. In 1956-7, the year of the monkey, there was a *zud* and at that time there were no *negdels*, and private ownership predominated. Four million animals also died during that winter. In 1999, four million animals died. These were the two major *zuds*. Although there were others, fewer animals died—about two million 800 thousand.

The *negdels* were growing stronger during my time. At the Ikh Tamir "Gerelt Zam" *negdel* the animals were fed with a mix of grass and bran, were kept warm in their *khashaa*, and had water from a well. When the herds were moved, a tractor helped families get grass and food in the grassy areas. Thus, the four million animals did not die. In a *zud* it was customary for many animals to die—800,000 in some *zuds* and 1,800,000 in others. Between 1956 and 1999 many animals did not die in 6 or 7 *zuds* so one may conclude that the collective economy was superior. We now have a State farm at Gachuurt, but in the ravine the private economy thrives. People have many animals on the State farm, but some died in last year's *zud.* In addition, the cattle had just been privatized so now there were no big cattle. We asked questions about this:

"Did someone come to your *sum* or *bag* when your cows died? Did a person from the state or *aimag* come?"

"No. We were abandoned with our privatized herds. There was no one to talk to."

One family moved near Zavkhan *aimag* with 500 sheep, 2 camels, 10 cattle, and 3 or 4 horses. Then in 1999 all these animals died in the *zud*—only

about twenty sheep and goats were left. This was because there was no government committee, administration, or town division to look into this. The *negdels* had a clear position on the herding economy, so when there was a *zud* many animals were saved. I know about the economy from about 80 years ago but not before. The shortcomings of the democratic movement in 1999-2000 were very frightening to watch, and the people's government made a mistake in destroying the 700 monasteries and lamaseries, which were historical monuments. The bosses—the MPRP and Kh. Choibalsan were not responsible for this destruction. It came from foreign pressure even though J.V. Stalin was far away. Also during this period, 2000 settlement villages were destroyed in the People's Revolution.

2000 villages were gone. Like these villages, the mechanized Gachuurt State Farm, as well as 255 *negdels*, more than 10 state farms and more than 10 food enterprises were destroyed. People were not pleased with all of this. However, several people have become rich because they own private property. R. Gonchigdorj and others have run the country for ten years, and they have become wealthy through robbery and sycophancy while neglecting to look after the poor. Another mistake. The Great Khural was selected in 2000, and a year later people expressed their dislike for the President. All of this has turned out badly, so now the Revolutionary Party has been elected. Corruption, however, is still rampant, and in my opinion democracy has been a disaster. However, R. Gonchigdorj remains the leader of the biggest party, the Social Democratic, which has only one seat in the Great Khural. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party put up 76 candidates, and 73 were elected. President N. Bagabandi was elected again, and R. Gonchigdorj, the head of the Democratic Party, was defeated. In both elections, N. Bagabandi received 70% of the vote, and Gonchigdorj received 20%. So now what is happening? Democracy is not changing, but independent individuals are being supported. It is important to establish friendly relations with foreign countries. The issue of individual wealth also needs to be discussed, as the rich are not sympathetic to the situation of the poor.

Now most of the revolutionary action has finished. The country has privatized living areas, and the herds and people ask poignantly and fearfully where we go from here. There are legal issues connected to all of this that have been discussed, and many additions and deletions to the law have been introduced in meetings, and the land question has been brought up again. The Democratic Party wants to privatize the land, but not all agree. The pioneer of the democracy movement, E. Bat-Uul, spoke on television recently:

"I have been abroad on a holiday, and I was busy when I came back. We prepared slogans and had a demonstration and realized that the government

was not going to usurp the law that was approved by the Great Khural. Such were the demonstrations of the democracy movement. The Mongolian government showed unity of purpose to the whole world, and we saw that things were going well. Japan, China, Korea, Russia, and America all agreed. I am happy that the government accepted our law and agreed to carry out our policy with few noisy quarrels. I must emphasize that the elderly and the people of Mongolia have nothing to worry about. When the Great Khural met, the weak points of the law were discussed, and the regulations were confirmed. Now, however, there are many quarrels and a lot of haggling, and things are pretty unpleasant. The Khural's members take bribes and are corrupt, and they drink and brawl inside the Khural building. This lack of discipline has spread and people are not happy. Things are not good now and everyone is silent."

So we must pay attention to these minor mistakes. Today, however, there was the alarming news that within the past year two watchmen in one company were killed when people robbed a pawnshop. Two people involved were given the death penalty, and two others were sentenced to prison for 15 to 20 years .Generally, however, the law is too weak on robbery and murder. On the other hand, the rich gobble up the *negdels'* communal property, and the government remains silent when their names are mentioned in spite of the popular demand for government action.

Finally, a man named D. Dorligjav, an embezzler par excellence, along with several others, was involved in the collapse of the bank. People talk about these men by name but not about the regulations. This Dorligjav was involved in embezzlement along with more than ten other people and, though they were punished, we should have gone after their property.

Every one knows that our President P. Ochirbat built winter quarters for himself that cost sixty million *tugriks*. In addition, the Koreans gave him two cars for his personal use and a government jeep. Finally, in many of the old young pioneer holiday camps, two or three story summer buildings have been constructed for private individuals, and the government should be able to confiscate these. P. Ochirbat stated on the radio: "It is true that I used sixty million *tugriks* for the building, and I will return the money." So, why should anyone talk about this? Don't talk, and protect his reputation. That is what all of this is about. However, people do not like this, and we keep on hoping that a four-year program will be worked out well. For example—there is a now a high school where children are fed for free and can complete their education.

In the past ten years, too little attention has been paid to enabling poor children in the countryside to attend school. It is frightening that during the last ten years, hundreds of children who should go to school do not know how to read and write. There are even good youths, 18 or 19 years old, who are

illiterate; young people between the ages of 10 and 20 do not know their letters; and many youngsters are illiterate when they join the military, which their leaders find distressing because these young recruits cannot master the new military techniques. In response to this situation, our Party and government have wisely set up a free school dormitory for school students. If the university is too demanding for some young people, they can attend the free technicums. However, there was an article in yesterday's newspaper about the children of a civil servant who studied free at a middle school, thereby taking the place of less privileged children. The Japanese helped repair, enlarge, and equip thirty school buildings and paid Japanese builders, engineers, and other professionals to furnish twenty schools in Ulaan Baatar. Some work was also done by the Indians and Chinese. We also need services for medical care including well equipped ambulances. Our government must also decide on many important global issues:

First: There are many territorial issues that must be decided. Mongolia has been divided into four zones or areas, so that people who live in the villages and in the countryside can be nearer to the markets for their consumer goods. For example, the Kharkhorin zone was established in the center of the *aimags* to be nearer to Ulaan Baatar for market access and for some work. A school, cultural institutions, a market, and trading facilities are concentrated here. So that was the decision to create these four zones.

Second: A very important issue in the lives of the Mongolian people is building the "Millennium Road." All the world supports this project, and everyone thinks it is the right thing to do. However, some in this democracy speak ill of this "Millennium Road" and of the government and Party support for this "Fantasy Road." But this is not a "Fantasy Road," and "Millenium Road" will prove it. There is a commitment to work on road repair and to restore the national industries, some of which are now even running. There were a ferrous metal factory and a sheepskin *deel* factory in Darkhan city, and both are now working again. The many herds in our country produce a lot of sheepskin, so a processing industry is very important to us. The first milk factory was a "kombinat" built at Erdenet Mountain, which did a great deal to help feed Mongolia. There had been a question of debt which was dropped—thank heaven.

5.7. The Plan for the *Negdel* Standard

IL: Could you speak about the kinds of plans presented to the *negdel* members and how the members hoped to fulfill them.

RM: Various measures were taken depending on the availability of water for the herds. For example, one milker was responsible for 15 cows while 10

milkers, who were family members, on the milk farm took care of 150 cows. The cowherd and workers caring for the first year calves were separate from the two people who were responsible for the cows and second year calves. The herds were well fed in the winter from the cut hay. The norm from one cow and one milker was on the average 550 liters of milk a year. One liter brought in 2.50 *tugriks* so in one year between 11 to 12 thousand *tugriks* was raised, which went to salaries for the *negdel* members. And with more milk, the salaries were higher. In addition, the cowherd and "calfherd" earned salaries for raising the young animals which was based on the number of cows.

On one *negdel* there were about fifteen farms, and three families had a herd of 500 sheep, which were subdivided by age and sex, with all the lambs placed together in a herd, and the 10 month old lambs, who had been weaned, were put together. The herders were given a salary depending on the number of animals, so a herder with 500 sheep received an annual salary of 10,000 *tugriks*. Various events could reduce or add to these wages. If, because of poor herding, many animals were killed and/or eaten by a wolf or a dog, the herders' salaries were reduced, whereas herders who fattened up their animals were given higher salaries. If the plan was not fulfilled, salaries were reduced, and wages were cut if the herds perished. Deductions were settled before salaries were paid. Money could also be earned from building the *negdel khashaa* and mowing the grass.

The *negdel* did not pay for those involved in the first democratic production enterprises because salaries were based on labor day units. A work unit was worth 100 grams of meat a day and 200 grams of dairy food and vegetables a day, which could be exchanged for manufactured goods. Several years after the *negdel* movement began, the name of the "People's Production *Negdel*" was changed to "Rural Economic *Negdel*" which, in the 1960s, calculated the output in labor-day units rather than in money. These were the two historic periods for the *negdels*.

IL: What sort of herds did you raise at your Ikh Tamir "Gerelt Zam" *negdel*?

RM: About 100 herds of horses, cows, sheep, and goats, with the organization of the herds based on the type of animal. There were 250 lambs in one herd, 500 female sheep in another, 100 horses in another, and 150 to 200 barren cows in still another. There were 100 families on the "Gerelt Zam" *negdel*.

IL: Were the herds always precisely organized?

RM: Yes—at first this was not the case. The private economy at the time allowed up to 100 sheep, and you had the sole authority to move pastures. Our interests were taken care of at that time. Everybody felt that they did not want to join up with other families and could watch those 100 sheep on the *negdel* themselves. Before the 1960s. people joined the *negdels* voluntarily. In the

1960s and 1970s, laws and regulations were drawn up which our "Ikh Tamir" refined.

Barren cows, which were calves in their third year without offspring, were generally not allowed near the milk farm. The males, on the other hand, were given to the co-op. Thus, it seems, the cows had the greatest effect on the herds. 250 to 300 cows formed a herd, which was watched over by two to three herders. About 20 people from two to four families took care of a herd. Since this number fluctuated, there were about 12 people in 3 families, though 20 people might be split into four families. So this was how the *negdel* was organized.

5.8. The *Negdel's* Economic Balance

For 2000 years Mongolia's herding economy was based on moving pastures. After the democratic revolution, private property was promoted although, in the 1930s, most activity took place on the collective farm, which was organized on a voluntary basis. However, the Party and the government believed that the herds and property of those who joined the *negdels* had to be redistributed or the collective would not grow and would be destroyed. People were attracted by this collective living in 1935-6 when the "People's Production *Negdels*" began to be organized. People came together and used many oxen and ox carts to build the "Jingiin *negdel*" and carry the skins and hides from their own private stocks to the co-op. The Jingiin *negdel* made an agreement with the co-op which entailed the transportation of the skins, hides, and furs by oxcarts to Altanbulag. Each cart carried a 200 kilogram load, and 80 carts handled 16,000 kilograms, Thus costs could be calculated from Jingiin *negdel* to Selenge Altanbulag. Bogd khüree, Altanbulag, and Tsagaan ereg were the three transmission points from which the raw materials from "Jingiin *negdel*" were sent on to the northern *aimags* of Arkhangai, Bulgan, Bayankhongor, as well as the central *aimag* of Bodg khüree, Selenge *aimag*, and Altanbulag. The skins and hides were exchanged for loads of grain.

Russian goods, cotton cloth, tea, and tobacco were ordered as part of an agreement by which the co-op could gain money. From 1927 to 1930 the Jingiin *negdel* was the official place for firewood.

IL: When did all this trade come to an end?

RM: During democratic times. From 2000-2001, there was very little trade.

IL: During the *negdel* period, trade was number one. Explain how it became number two!

RM: For trade to be first, there must be large State supported markets. I was a *negdel* leader, and a certain percentage of the herding economy was calculated by the Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit. Thus the director and the

negdel leader who were concerned with these demands had to get along and be friendly. We could talk things over and, when necessary, I offered help. For example—"I have 700 cowhides, each worth 12 *tugriks*, to give you." Then a discussion would begin, and finally the leader gave over 700 cowhides from the second and third year calves that had been treated and trimmed. There were controls that kept the quality of goods high. If the products were of poor quality, the prices were reduced. In addition, the *negdel* sold some goods to the leader of the Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit, and he begged a lot from the *negdel* leader who, in turn, also begged for a better price for his goods. The State and the Co-op organized this marketing process well, so we had no debts, and the money was always ready. When things were sold, they were paid for without an intermediary. The Mongols, from time immemorial, have followed the admirable custom of repaying their debts fairly quickly. For example, if I am in debt to Lkhagvasuren for 100 *tugriks*, I run and pay him quickly. Generally the Mongols repay their debts as soon as possible. In democratic times, I do not know if this is considered a good quality.

Our *negdel* was large with over 100,000 head of cattle. We were extremely disciplined, had no debt or payments due, and followed a strict routine. The *negdel* leader made sure that a veterinarian inspected the older animals in the herds in the fall, so they could be separated, and the rest of the herds could enter the New Year in good condition. The "remainder herd" was used for food and drink by the *negdel* leaders. Mr. L. Jagvaral, who was a member of the government bureaucracy, came to our *negdel* for two days to go fishing. A 20-30 word telegram had been sent to that effect. Jagvaral told me to give it to him, and he paid me for it. Today, however, people have millions of debts.

IL: Was commerce responsible for providing all the goods that were necessary in the lives of its members?

RM: Yes—from the school children's notebooks to the grain, tea, and tobacco. The leader was responsible if these things ran out, as well as for everything on the *negdel*. Now there is no Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit because one can buy tea and tobacco at the market—such is business today. Now the State has united the co-operatives and the *negdels,* which makes things difficult for Mongolian families. There is no place to buy sheep's wool. On the other hand, families now have a hard time selling their wool, which has often been left out in the rain and has become trash. So now one kilogram of sheep's wool is worth more than 100 *tugriks*, but there is no place to buy it. A few Chinese have come, but there no one is responsible for providing the wool for the Mongolian rug industry. In the old days, sheep's wool was regulated by a plan which had to be fulfilled. There were 160,000 sheep from

the 100,000 herds on our *negdel*. One sheep usually gave 1 kilogram 200 grams of wool. In those days, to meet the requirements of the plan, I even saved a bunch of wool in my pockets, so as not to waste it. "Wool was gold" and "Fulfill the plan for wool!" were the demands forced on the workers.

Now, no one is responsible for the wool which is just lying around. Those in business prepare orders for wool, skins, and hides and transport them by car to the city and return with grain, tea and tobacco. The *negdel* leader and the Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit have no relationship, and everything is done on one's own. In the past, the grain for the *negdel* was always ready, but now it is passed through a business man who sells one kilogram of grain for over 240 *tugriks* at the market. At Ikh Tamir, it now costs 340 *tugriks*.

In the old days, the Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit never changed its prices. Anyone who tried to raise prices was sent directly to prison. Each loaf of bread should weigh one kilogram, and the procurer checked to make sure it was not short 800 or even 200 grams. If so, the baker would be sent to prison. The law was very harsh, but now—how much does a loaf weigh? Almost 500 grams, but it doesn't really matter. And the price keeps rising; it now costs 250 to 300 *tugriks*. The National Co-operative and Procurement Unit could pass on consumer goods from the cheap raw materials from the herds. In so doing, the State might lose a little, but the loss could be made up. Now small companies in the capital cannot get these raw materials from the herders since the herders do not come to Ulaan Baatar to sell them. Thus the connection between the herders and the markets has been broken.

There are so few raw materials available that there is no work in the State factories to manufacture the products from these goods. Previously, the Co-operative Trade and Procurement Unit had sold the skin and hides following the standards as outlined in the plan. But now there are no standards, and everything is up to the businessman. Now the "Castle Market" sells sheep's wool for more than 5000 *tugriks*. In August, what is called the winter wool was sold from the skin of the sheep when the wool had grown back after the first shearing. This is very good wool indeed and can fetch 2000 *tugriks*. What remains, then, is a hairless hide, but the wool is very good and sells for 2000 tugriks. The Chinese traders, however, offer 5000 *tugriks*. This is the sort of trade we have instead of what existed under the Co-operative of Trade and Procurement.

5.9. Preparing Workers

RM: Many thanks. I don't know if what I have talked about is useful.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mongolia was a poor and weak country way behind many other nations of the world. By an order of I.V

Stalin, which we could not defy, the monasteries and the lamas were destroyed. With a great deal of work, the monasteries are now being restored for one million *tugriks* a year, which is good for both Mongolia and Asia. The Manchus made the Mongols into stupid animals, but the People's Revolution helped the Mongols advance and gain respect. For seventy years after the October Revolution, the Russians helped the Mongolians move forward and prosper. Mongolia became a member of the United Nations and known throughout the world, but democracy led to her decline. However, relations with China are friendly with fewer quarrels and more discussions, and the Chinese have built several buildings in our country. On the other hand, after seventy years of friendship, we have chased the Russians away. It is fair to say that our country is confused. We pity all those who are suffering in so many different ways. But things will be better because many countries are trying to help us. We are now rejuvenated, and the young are working.

For many years the People's Government has supported art, culture, various sports, and gymnastics. The *negdels* also promoted the key role culture, art, and sports played in the lives of its members. Like a flower that grows from the root and becomes green and then more beautiful, this cultural and athletic foundation is important in the lives of the people on the *negdels*. It will not, however, grow from poor roots. The Party, government, and the *negdels* all supported culture and art in the lives of the herders. The Party Great Khural, along with the *aimag* Party Committee, decided on the farm concerts and gymnastic competitions.

There were twenty negdels in Arkhangai. The Chuloot *sum negdel* was led by R. Dorjpalam who directed arts and culture in Arkhangai *aimag*. He asked the Party to meet with me, and he proposed the title of "Labor Hero" for arts and culture in the *negdels*. So we went to work and set up a "red corner" and organized a brigade, a settlement concert, and an anniversary festival, from which arose many famous singers and athletes. One such person is the fine singer Baldorj who sings in the cultural palace in Arkhangai *aimag*. He was a cultural leader-worker. Another good singer comes from our Bugat brigade. In addition our excellent middle school had its own building and was one of the best in the country. The *negdel* made sure it had supplies, and teachers worked hard at their lessons. S. Naimdorj, the school principal, was a painstaking, hard working man who was finally made a "Mongolian State Teacher of Merit." There were many such famous people on our *negdel* including four "State Great Herders."

D. Serdamba who was responsible for collecting semi-fine sheep's wool was one of them. He took care of hybrid sheep and their young, and his herds did not decrease. He separated the male lambs in the fall, and the third year

animals were delivered to the State. 500 male lambs were born in one year, each weighing 40 kilograms, and he delivered them to the State after May fifteenth. How did this man prevent his lambs from wasting away during the winter? The winter trees, which the snow had not hardened, were responsible. They remained soft with a lot of snow under them. Under the snow, the grass was green and easy to eat. Thus, this man's lambs retained their body fat that they had accumulated in the fall and generally did not become too thin. That is why most of the lambs weighed 40 kilograms, and D. Serdamba was awarded what amounted to more than one 100,000 *tugriks*. We welcomed D. Serdamba and gave him his prize. There were many other famous and good people who were excellent herders.

5.10. The Fast Horses of "Ikh Tamir"

Our *negdel* was famous for its race horses, and many were born at Ikh Tamir which is something to think about since there was only one race horse, and it was privately owned. The *negdel* only had plain old horses, and no members owned race horses. So it was said that the *negdel* should forget about raising race horses. A cowherd from the Bugat brigade on the farm of Ya. Lkhundevdavaagiin was a man called Kh. Chuluunpurev who lived rather poorly and was responsible for the standards of the horses, the cows, and the first year calves. Two or three horses were the norm for a cowherd, and Chuluunpurev took a third year horse which he came to love, and he talked about nothing but this horse which he was conditioning for racing. He won the race that was a first for a horse from "Gerelt Zam" *negdel*. We all praised him and his horse, and the next morning gave him the reward of a second year male horse. In his third year, this horse went on to win many first prizes—both in the *aimag* and in the *sum*. So Chuluunpurev won all these first prizes, and his horse was proclaimed the winning horse of "Gerelt Zam" *negdel*. This horse that he had trained was sold to a military post where it was tethered, and Chuluunpurev was sent to the military as well. Thanks to me, however, he had to serve only one year, not three. He wrote to us, from the military, and asked us only about the horse, not about his wife and children. He wanted to know if we were riding it and did the horse still belong to him. He returned from military service and worked well. People must join together in their work, but that doesn't always happen. Nevertheless it was said that our negdel finished first. If the owner of a horse conditions and encourages his steed, the horse can come in first. That's how our *negdel* produced a race horse.

There were many race horses, but the *negdel* and the leader did not do the training. The horses were generally trained for forty days away from home on the steppe. Many people became famous doing this training including two

students from my *negdel* high school who are now working for the government. Ch. Ganzorig was a minister in the Food Industry Ministry, and S. Khurelsukh was a leader in price measurement studies. Both had lived at Ikh Tamir for ten years. Several doctors also came from Ikh Tamir, including Kh. Tuyabayar, who had worked with the Germans, and the large intestines was his specialty. His father was the secretary of our *sum* Party cell, and his mother, N. Dolgor, was a mid-wife. So you can see that an excellent doctor trained in Germany came from Ikh Tamir.

The work was encouraging and, with this foundation, the youth worked well. The Herders' Cultural Palace was built to facilitate the arts and sports. At that time we did not have "electronic music" everywhere, but now we do. We had a gymnastics committee, and *negdel* competitions in which we competed successfully. My eldest son is from Burd *sum* and is now at Ikh Tamir and is our basketball sports master. He is now more than sixty years of age, which seems old to me. He also has a bad leg from playing basketball for so many years. One day I met with the teachers at Ikh Tamir who said: "Your old Grandpa is doing well! He is worse off than you are. He walks with the walker you gave him." This was the sports master. The team was considered famous, and it played abroad. In Beijing the team played badly and was repelled by the Chinese food and drink.

In addition, people threw things at the Mongolian team. Now that's my son—Old Grandpa.

5.11. My Children

YK: Could you talk about your children now?

RM: I have nine children, and the first child lives in Burd *sum*. One daughter and son live in Mörön *sum* where my daughter teaches at School 33 where I hear from many people that she is a good teacher. Recently her husband died, and she is suffering, and her life is very hard with many problems. Her husband had high blood pressure, and one sunny day he had a heart attack. I had nine children altogether, and now only three children live with me and six children are elsewhere. Besides the teacher, one child works in construction with Russia on SOT-3. The first child studied construction at the School of Technology in Ulaan Ude until his retirement. Another daughter is a kindergarten teacher. That is what the three daughters who live with me do. One son was born on the Mörön "Victory" *negdel* and lives in Hungary with his son. The next son is called Altangerel, and he is a very pugnacious man. If he comes across a fight, he joins right in. He lives with his wife and children in Dambadarjad district.

One grandchild is in the sixth class at a medical high school and is

thinking of becoming a doctor. He finished the Darkhan healing course in middle school and worked for five years with mothers and babies after completing a year at the medical high school. The next boy is a driver who can drive a YA3-469 car, and his firm plans to send him to work in Korea.

New rules and regulations about labor were drawn up. Our three daughters did not drink liquor but their husbands did. Interesting? When I was young, I drank a bit, so I am not innocent. It is not especially impressive that the young are scolded for drinking; a *negdel* leader would have been forced out for such behavior. I don't drink much, and drinking is not much discussed. People get drunk and sing and joke around. There is even a song about me, and I wonder if anyone in the Tamir country heard my song, which goes:

Passing the big stone
With a glassy-eyed look
Fat Minjuur
And his two green eyes.

I had a good time when I was a famous negdel leader. That's why there is this song. All my life I was clever and fended off quarrels and noisy disputes. I worried about the poor and had the sort of personality that helped me make friends and make people laugh. Now I am old and still in good health. It doesn't matter what I eat and drink, and I eat a lot of marmot meat. I remember things now and think about going back to the countryside.

5.12. The Future Milk Farm

RM: I am now talking to a Japanese scholar who is writing a book publicizing the Mongolian rural State farm. I have talked about my rural life, the Gachuurt State Farm, and the mechanized farm. Now it is time to talk about the democratic movement. (And here RM is talking to a neighbor) How are you going to spend the summer?

What is going to happen to this mechanized State farm? Might it develop into something strange later on? If so, I wonder what that will be?

Neighbor: In socialist times, it was a good mechanized farm and provided milk for people in Ulaan Bataar. But with democracy came privatization. The farm sold our herds, and the area was finished and is now uninhabited. The owner lives in the city. So much for the farm. There are no such large farms today nor is there a good farming economy. Everything on the farm has been sold except for the ten, or at most fifteen to twenty, cows the farmer has kept. Now the old people in this area do not have this sort of work. People carried away three to five milk cows and sold them in the city. Maybe in the future one half, or at least a small majority, of all the farm co-ops will be better. This had been the general tendency. Our Gachuurt State Farm was built forty years ago and

was famous for the work it did. This book is a monument that is written very clearly.

YK: Are you from Gachuurt?

Neighbor: I actually am not from Gachuurt—I am a naturalist and live on a nature preserve, and I work as a state inspector and nature preserver. We must preserve nature in our lives. L. Gurbazariin was known as "the spirit of the place." Gachuurt is a suburb of Bayanzurkh's twentieth district. I was in charge of a group in the twentieth district of "Shar Khooloi Kheseg." However, people need to find a way to make a living.

YK: Do you have electricity now?

Neighbor: I have a generator and have organized a project using energy from the sun to power a federal communication line.

YK: Has the mechanized farm been privatized for several years?

Neighbor: It was privatized in 1995.

YK: In 1995 P. Jasrai was the leader of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party that organized the work of the government. How did people start taking things?

Neighbor: The leader was a man with four mechanized farms.

RM: Yes—it has happened that way. Your farm is now lost, and who has gained?

Neighbor: Yes, it is lost. The leadership organized the move to privatization which it thought was correct. However, a fair division and a just privatization done without errors did not happen. The situation was serious, and smart States should see the mistakes privatization can bring. There were wrong things done. The elderly were given nothing, and the best breed of animals was not given to them. So, each person was out for himself. There were few practical people involved in this privatization who had learned from life experience, like herding, and not from a book. I didn't participate in this privatization. I came in 1995 but didn't know how delicate privatization could be.

RM: How did you bring your business to life?

Neighbor: It is hard to do this. In fact, there are some things you cannot undo. The best facilities must be built again, and it is hard to find the money to construct a new building. The question is— can any one do this? It is hard to start all this up again.

RM: We will go and visit the farmer. One young person has organized a small chicken enterprise and is using an old building.

Neighbor: Little by little the buildings in the center have been privatized.

RM: Couldn't those who have the courage use a building with support and money from the State? Wouldn't this be a way for young people and those

with no work to now work for the country and support their families?
Neighbor: There are many things going on now having to do with work. The Chinese have invested in a joint chicken and egg enterprise and meat production enterprise. However, the chickens could die, which could destroy the margin of profit which would lead to an even worse situation. Many of our youth are at that point.
RM: Can you improve the farm yourself?
Neighbor: Someone could fix up the hay meadow and use the great number of containers stored there. However, there are difficulties with haymaking, and time is running out. Although the costs are high and the spending adds up, without doing this people have no work. There are few schools right here, and there is a small building for a lower school. Although there is an assistant doctor, there is no place for him. Families take care of families. There are four buildings, and there are eight families there. The cost of a building should be looked into and sometimes it is possible to take it over. There are many people in Gachuurt. The children are often undisciplined at home and land up in prison. Although we talked with the authorities about preventing this behavior, there was little change. The well used to provide work by giving water for cooking and for the herds but no more.

So it is up to the initiative of the young who could do fine hand carving on apartment buildings or making chairs needed in the countryside. Those in charge are aware that there is no support for such work for young people.
RM: It has been good to have this conversation—many thanks. And by the way, what is your name?
Neighbor: My name is Bazarsad. I have never met you before but I have heard of you.

Notes

1) A type of herder and agricultural co-operative that the Mongolian government initiated in the 1950s.
2) A province.
3) The Manchu Qing dynasty gained control over Eastern Mongolia in 1691 and Western Mongolia in 1697 and ruled until its collapse in 1911.
4) On the influence of his life as an orphan. Renchin Minjuur, *Töörogh zaya* (Ulaan Baatar: n.p.), n.d., pp. 36-38.
5) A mountainous and forested steppe region.
6) Harsh winters, often with considerable snow and frequently an ice covering over the land, preventing the animals from reaching the life-saving plants.
7) Fermented mare's milk.
8) On his attitude toward the land, see Minjuur, *Töörogh*, pp. 39-42 and 172-178.
9) A Mongolian-style tent.

10) The traditional leader of Mongolian Buddhism, also known, in Mongolian, as the Bogdo Gegen.
11) The Buddha of the Future.
12) A long robe, made of fur-lined sheepskin, with a sash.
13) A fenced-in enclosure for animals.
14) A pile of stones and other objects; they play an important role in shamanism.
15) A festival held in July that emphasizes archery, horse racing, and wrestling, among other activities.
16) Reindeer herders, numbering about 200 to 400 people who live in the northern Mongolian *aimag* of Khövsgöl.
17) A reliquary for deceased Buddhist monks.
18) Animal dung used to build fires for warmth in the *ger*.
19) Often referred to as the Lenin of Mongolia, Damdin Sükhbaatar (1893-1923) was one of the leaders of the Mongolian revolution that founded a socialist government in 1921. The central square in Ulaan Baatar is named in his honor, and his statue is also found in the Square.
20) A 1939 battle in which a combined Soviet and Mongolian force defeated the Japanese, preventing then from further encroachment on the Asian mainland.
21) Refers to the Cheka, the first secret police organization in the U.S.S.R. A Chekist, in common parlance, would refer to an individual who worked for or co-operated with a secret police force organization.
22) Monetary units, with 100 *mung* in a *tugrik*.
23) A group of Mongolians who lived in the U.S.S.R.
24) Legislative body or Parliament.
25) The present center of the city, with the Khural building, the Opera and Ballet Theater, and other prominent buildings.
26) Minjuur here is referring to the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the only legal political party in that time.
27) Yumjagiin Tsedenbal (1916-1991) was Head of the Council of Ministers in the government and the First Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party from 1952 to 1984, the most important positions in the State.
28) An administrative subunit within the *sum*.
29) See Temujin Onon, *Through the Ocean Waves: The Autobiography of Bazaryn Shirendev* (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1997) for Shirendev's life and career.
30) The capital of the Buryat Soviet Socialist Republic.
31) Da. Ganbold (1957-) was appointed First Deputy Premier in October of 1990, after the first multi-party election in Mongolian history; R. Gonchigdorj (1954-) was elected Speaker of the Khural in 1996; E. Bat-Uul (1954-) was elected to the Khural in 1996.

II. Yumjaagiin Ayush (1926-)

Translated by Mary Rossabi
Interviewed in July of 2004

1. My Birthplace

YK: I am very pleased to meet you. At this time, would you mind talking, for example, about your early years? How old are you? Where were you born? Could you tell us about your mother and father, older and younger siblings?

Yumjaagiin Ayush (hereafter, YuA): Yes, of course. I was born in 1926 in what is now Uvs *aimag*, Davst *sum*. We were at our winter quarters when I was born. I was one of the twins my mother bore but after the first day my twin died. My mother gave birth twelve times, and I was the eleventh child.

In the spring, we came down from the small mountains to the springtime pastures to plant crops and then went on to the summer pastures. Sometimes we spent the spring on the edge of Uvs Lake. Our summer dacha[1)] and pastures are in the mountains because the summer is so hot and the low lying areas are full of flies. That is why we spend the summer in the mountains. Our summer pastures are up near the Khandgaitin River and are nice and fresh and full of good green grass.

Many rivers have their source in the Ikh Tagnin Mountains and the Khandgaitin River and the Tarkhan River flow through the area of my *sum*.

There is a lot of rock salt in our local mountain area. In fact, much of a mountain was made of salt and was, indeed a fine "Salt Mountain." In 1966, the Mongolian and Soviet governments signed a border agreement which, for a while, placed Salt Mountain in Soviet territory. One side was ours and the other belonged to Russia. Our side had previously contained a similar amount of salt. We used to take an axe and make a four sided shaped crack and thereby got all the salt we needed for a year. And the salt was of a very high quality.

YK: What crops did you plant?

YuA: Barley is the name of the plant. It is a red barley that each family planted in a large area along with other things. The planting took place in the spring, and in the summer each family took turns for twenty days digging channels to provide fresh water to the area.

At the time, each family had a stone mill that was formed from two stones which were layered on top of each other so that the upper sides turned. Grain was placed between these stones and ground into flour, which was good. Besides these crops, our family lived on our herds. Our families needed more

plants but our neighboring *sum*, Salig *sum*, lived by growing plants.
YK: How many animals did you have?
YuA: We had about 100 sheep and goats, 4-5 cows, and 3-4 oxen. In a method called "loose loading," oxen carried the loads of furniture from the *gers* of families in our area so that the horses were free to drive the other animals. Each family had a few oxen and one or two ran freely. A family with many children had a poor existence, while a family with oxen was wealthy. Both rich and poor families planted crops in the spring and harvested them in the fall. We all voluntarily helped each other in the work of slaughtering the sheep and the goats and were traditionally treated to a good meal. In our area, the grain was harvested in bunches after the threshing and was collected and dried in a special place. Then this threshed grain was put in piles for the winter. A great wind could scatter the grain that then had to be shoveled up into heaps and stored. When the crops withered and rotted the area was cleared.

The western side of our area was inhabited by the Uriangkhai [most of whom lived in Tuva] who spoke the Dorvod language well. When they came to our area, they planted grain and refrained from drinking milk spirits though they made it. But their life among us was not especially distinctive. They made *aruul*, but had fewer animals than we did.

Our *sum* was part of the administrative division of the Dorvod Great Khan *aimag* and the Zorig Khan banner. My father spoke about this. Today, the Dorvod people dwell in the Khyatka area of the Selenge *aimag*, though I do not know much about this. But the Dorvod Great Khan settled on the far side of Uvs lake, possibly because it was a good place for crops. Perhaps the Dorvod thought things might get better for them. I don't know how many times the Dorvod moved—maybe they had moved south more than 100 years ago.

Mother was one of three siblings and was the oldest sister. Then came her brother Chimedtseren, and the youngest was her sister Devay. My mother and her siblings moved near where we live. We have a large family with Chimedtseren adopting his oldest sister's oldest son.

At the end of the 1920s, people had amassed property and were comfortably off. Then my mother's brother, Chimedtseren, was arrested because he had many animals, as did many others. He was imprisoned in "Ulaangom Prison" where he was shot. All his herds were sold, and eventually his wife died. Thus, the boy that Chimedtseren had adopted came back to us, and several years later he was called up for military service. After his discharge, he lived in Ulaan Baatar and died recently.

My father was one of three children. He had an elder sister and one brother, and they lived a herding life. In our area, families had a lot of

children, some of whom were adopted by relatives. If a family had few children, it would try to adopt some even if the parents were not the blood relatives.

I, myself, did not know my older brother Tsedenbal since I was born at the time of "Ulaangom" when Tsedenbal had finished the second class in primary school in Khovd. When he finished the fourth class, like many children in our *aimag*, he went to school in Ulaan Baatar. Some children actually went directly to a Russian school. From there, Tsedenbal went to Ulaan Ude and then to Irkutsk to continue his schooling where one could attend the medical technicum or the financial institute. Ten years passed, and I had never received a letter from him or news of him. My mother told me what I knew about my brother.

My father died at the end of the 1930s. He visited a neighbor in the adjacent Sagil *sum* and when he returned he felt ill and two days later he died from what I now think is appendicitis.

2. Meeting my Older Brother

YK: When did you yourself go to school?

YuA: I was about 12 or 13 when a temporary school opened in our *sum* center and many children attended. I studied the Mongolian script for two summers and the four categories of mathematics for two summers. People needed to know how to write and handle numbers when taking the census of the herds. I worked as a census taker of the herds.

At this time my older brother, Tsedenbal, sent news to us for the first time. We said: "When is our older brother coming home?" He had finished his high school in Irkutsk and was appointed director of the Financial Technicum in Ulaan Baatar and spent about a half year there. I think it was in 1939, but I really do not know if my brother had sent us some money. But he did send a message saying that he would be home soon.

Father died at this time, but Tsedenbal did not return home because the war was beginning. In 1939, just before the Mongol Japanese war[2)] began, my brother was appointed leader of the Mongol Bank. When the war began, my brother was responsible to the wartime government behind the lines and worked providing food and clothing for the military.

At the time, the Soviet Union's sitting ambassador to Mongolia was V. Ivanov. My brother and other men worked together behind the lines in Sükhbaatar, Khentii, and Dornod *aimags*. My brother obtained food for the military from those *aimags* while weapons and military techniques were provided from the Soviet Union. In all likelihood, soldiers came to Mongolia. My brother did not work there very long, maybe just a year.

Then the battle was over, and only later did I find out all about this. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party had its Great Khural and its Central Committee selected my brother as Party Secretary.

YK: What year was that?

YuA: It was 1940. After being appointed to direct the Mongolian Bank, he was selected Deputy Minister of Finance. Then after working in the countryside he was appointed full Minister of Finance.

In 1940, my brother came home and the leaders of the Central Committee elected him Party Secretary. The evening he returned I was watching the sheep near our home when an elegant black car arrived. I did not know who was in it and almost ran home. The sheep had been grazing faraway, and I was tired from watching them so I fell asleep. Then my brother stepped out of the car, and I met him for the first time. I was 14 years old when I met my brother in Ulaan Baatar, and I had had no news of him for 10 years before he came home. During his time away, he studied in the Soviet Union and returned to work in Ulaan Baatar. There were no letters as communication by mail was difficult. Only the horse relay worked. Did the relay reach Ulaan Baatar? At that time we did not know.

It was the first time we had seen a suit which we called "Russian clothing." At the time, Marshal Choibalsan had gone to work in the western *aimags* and came home with my brother, accompanied by many other men. Ten cars parked in front of our home, and he spent two or three nights using it as his headquarters. I had been watching the sheep and on returning home found a decorated tent and many cars. People said that Marshal Choibalsan and the Soviet ambassador had arrived. The sheep came out early in the morning, and a group of people assembled and made decisions about the Tenth Great Khural.

They prepared a nice framed picture of my brother that he gave to my mother saying "the secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party is a man of merit, and I am giving you a picture of him." Then with our *aimag* leader they came into our *ger*. In the morning, Kh. Choibalsan left with many of the men.

YK: Was that the first time that you met your brother?

YuA: No—I met him when I was a child, but I had not spoken to him. I was a child who watched the sheep, so what could I say to him. However, at that time, my mother and brother talked a lot. I don't know who talked first. It was mentioned that I was studying in school. My mother started talking, and then one morning my brother said that he was going to Khovd *aimag*, and he would drive us.

We spent a night in Uvs *aimag* before going on to Khovd. In due course,

we joined some people to meet with Marshal Choibalsan. Then we all slowly went in the direction of Ulaan Baatar, stopping to talk about the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party's Tenth Khural to local people who were on their horses. We then traveled for two weeks to Ulaan Baatar arriving before Naadam.

At the time my brother and his wife were not married. He lived alone on the second floor of the Mongol Bank, and I lived with him. He spent a lot of time in the countryside, traveling with a commissar who carried a gun and three other men including the driver. Once they were gone for twenty days and sometimes even a month, while I remained at home alone.

I went to the summer Naadam in Ulaan Baatar and lived alone until the fall, buying my own food and water with money from my brother. I used some of this money to go to a restaurant for fried meat dumplings. 10 dumplings cost one *tugrik*—a good price. Now one dumpling costs 130-140 *tugriks*. In fact, I couldn't manage to eat all those ten dumplings, ate only 3, and took the rest home to eat in the morning or evening.

I got tired of being alone when my brother was in the countryside, so I went to the first floor of the Mongol Bank where many people worked. I became acquainted with the young women and men, so went there every day. I got to know them very well, and they wrote me many notes. Since I didn't work, I had a lot of free time to help the busy people transport letters and paperwork to many places. I volunteered to carry these papers here and there, so time passed quickly and I did not get bored.

3. I have become a City Man

YK: When did you first come to Ulaan Baatar? What did you think of it? Did you like it?

YuA: Oh, I don't know. In coming from the countryside I didn't really know much about the city, and there were so many people here.

In 1941, the year of the Soviet-German war, I came to Ulaan Baatar. I lived with my brother who said to me one day: "I work at the Technicum and can enroll you there!" I had nothing to say. Soon after that he went to the countryside. Then one day, my brother's driver came and said to me: "We are going to the Technicum" so I rode in the car to my brother's school, The Financial Technicum was quite a distance from the Mongol Bank which made it difficult for the director to give the classes. We had to wait a while, but the director did not show up, so we went home. On the way, we passed the State Theatre so I said to the driver: "I can't go to school since it is too far from where I live. I don't know where the State Theater and the Mongol Bank are located since I am a country boy and can't find my way around all these

buildings." Several days passed.

My brother had three drivers at the time, and one day one driver arrived and said: "I am taking you now. We are both going to the Institute!" So I went in the car with him, and we took a long time getting to a building on the top of a mountain where people saluted each other. We had arrived at a military institute where the four forms of math and the Mongolian script were taught. I was given two tests, and I took a long time for each one. I began to meet with the teachers there, and there were many of them. Someone announced that I was finished, so I headed for the door, but another person called out that it was not time to leave: "Stand by the wall." So I stood by the wall with a red tape across it and was measured. I was measured but did not meet the height requirement, so the teacher said: "Forget it." So I was rejected at the military school. Then my brother asked the driver what schools were near the bank and instructed him to enroll me in one of them. The Mongol Bank today is where it always was near what is called the Big Department Store. In front of it is a sign which says "The Trade Technicum" so I stopped the driver and said we should go and see it. Thus, we both went into the building and found the testing room where the test would be given on August 25th.

Lessons began September 1st. The driver told me that the school was part of the Federation of Co-ops which looked out for all the trade and commerce in Mongolia. We returned the next day, and the driver asked which class we should go to. Many commercial classes were mentioned. In the countryside, people used an abacus to reckon accounts and to take the census of the animals. Thus it was essential to know how to use an abacus. I was called on to work on the census of the herds, and the bookkeeper who kept the accounts in our *sum* was always clicking away on the abacus. At the time, I had studied using the abacus for accounts, which was the method I knew. Our teachers laughed when I said "let's begin by striking the abacus!" Thus began my life at school.

All the other children, except me, had finished ten years of school, but I had only been to school in our area for two summers. For that reason, I was placed in a preparatory class for a year to prepare me for the next four years of school. In the spring of 1944, I finished the Federation of Co-ops School and went to work as an account inspector and held that position for three years.

4. Moscow

YuA: In the fall of 1946, the Federation of Co-ops sent 3 people to Moscow to study at the Trade Institute, and I was one of them. In Moscow, we stayed at the Mongolian Embassy for several nights, and then I went on to study at

the Moscow Trade Institute. There was, however, a question about those people who had not mastered ten years of education being in the regular class. The school was near the central building of the Soviet Trade Federation. We went there with people from the Mongolian Embassy and met an advisor at the school who asked me to wait a while. In fact, I waited several days and was informed that I would be admitted to another preparatory program at the Commercial Technicum which was more than twenty kilometers away.

I went there with a man from my area who was an economist and who only wished to take a class on raw materials, but there was no such class offered at the school, so this man went to Irkutsk to study raw materials. Another person was a financial specialist who wanted to take only finance classes and finally the school accommodated him, and everything settled down. We studied in our various classes, but the man in the financial course fell ill and returned home, leaving me alone in Moscow. I was, at the time, devoted to studying at the Commercial Technicum, which was near to where I lived, and I did so for about half the year. I also spent a lot of time at the Mongolian Embassy, and one day the secretary told me that I should quickly get my books and clothes from the Embassy and not go to the Technicum. He went on to say that I should live at the Embassy, which was like one big family. But where was that family at the Embassy? Who knows—maybe it had returned to Mongolia. Nevertheless, I stayed in the building by myself for a year until the fall of the following year.

After a year, and autumn began in August, the secretary informed me that we would both go to the Trade Institute. I was given a note about enrolling in the Institute, so I followed him, and we both went to school where I showed the note to the teacher who said that I had to wait a while and that an answer would come soon. A few days later, the secretary at the Embassy told me that the Institute's entrance exam would be given, and children from all the friendly countries would come to the school, and that I had to take the exam with them. Therefore I had to prepare for this exam when I had not even finished the 8th class. Children who had come to study at the Institute in Moscow came to the Embassy, and I had become friendly with two of them who had finished the 10th class and had learned to calculate.

So, a review session was organized for those children aiming to pass the entrance exam for the Trade Institute, and I attended it with the secretary from the Embassy. Students had to pass the exam before attending the Institute. I knew from youngsters in the Soviet Bloc what was on the exam, so in due course I succeeded.

Later all students were given an exam on the history of the Soviet Union. When the day of the test arrived, the teacher asked me certain questions that I

answered and then the teacher asked me; “Do you have private herds?” I answered that I had my own herds and so did my mother and father. Then the teacher exclaimed: “Who do you think you are? You are part of the private economy.” I thought to myself: “Doesn’t the Institute take into account the private economy?” One who is part of the private economy is called a “yedinochnik” or peasant small holder or maverick. When the teacher asked again “Who do you think you are?” I said nothing.

There was one girl among us taking the test who gently spoke up saying “I am a Marxist.” We all listened and then I said loudly: “I am a Marxist.” The teacher then said “Molodetz! (good fellow!) and graded my exam. I wondered what all of this had to do with a peasant small holder or maverick, but who knows. I imagine I must have been asked the question: “By what ideology are you being educated?” At the time, teachers from the Russian Empire taught in the schools. They really knew about trade and taught that England was the best model to explain the issues of world trade. Many countries were interested in establishing a market price for goods. It was said: “the price of the production of goods was connected to this. So was the price of products from the rural economy. The English pound sterling was almost the only guarantee of a currency that was even more solid than gold.” We gave a report for our teacher on England and the price of gold.

Soon after the war was over, we went to Moscow to study, and life became very serious. Each student from the Institute was given the norm of 500 grams of bread from a food store, which was not a lot.

At that time in the Soviet Union, there were few foodstuffs, and not everyone had a food card that determined how much food each person received. There were four of us Mongols studying at the school. Two of them studied before the war and returned home when the war began and came back to school after the war was over. Products from the herds and raw materials to be exported were taken to the White transfer base and from there freight cars took all of this to Moscow. We students kept our butter in the window to eat with our 500 grams of bread—which, indeed, was very little. Still without this food we could not live, and life with the food card was better than without it.

We students were also given help from the Embassy, and each student received about 500 rubles. At that time, there were altogether about thirty people studying in Moscow. The Mongols studied at the Foreign Language Institute in Moscow University, named after Lomonosov, as well as at the Institute of Foreign Trade. I studied at the Institute of Foreign Trade where I took lessons oriented to foreign trade. The Trade Institute, which was near to the Institute of Foreign Trade, focused on issues of domestic trade, but there were few differences between the schools, and the lessons were very similar.

Attention was paid to such questions as "how does one get money and how is money used?" We could learn from the era of the Russian monarchy, and even though some of these lessons were very old they followed one theory of market relations. However, such lessons reflected a lack of knowledge about the lives of people, and it is important to consider these lives and how they related to the market rate and capitalism. Our Russian teachers knew about socialism and capitalism.

IL: Now, more than ever, after the socialist revolution isn't it responsible to teach about the issues of the market economy from earliest times?

YuA: No, not necessarily. New objectives or goals must now be taught, so that both systems can be understood. Our teachers all speak good English, and we must be taught to speak English as well.

5. The Co-operative Union

YuA: I worked for the Co-operative Union for the ten years after I finished school and did not work in foreign affairs. All the questions about internal Mongolian trade were raised here. In 1960, however, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and its Central Committee raised the issue of foreign trade at the all-Khural, and the decision was made to establish an independent Ministry of Foreign Trade since our Co-operative Union had only been responsible for domestic trade. Deputy Minister L. Ganjuurjav was appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Trade to handle exports, and I started at the Ministry of Foreign Trade when Mr. Ganjuurjav hired me to be responsible for imports.

I was appointed to work at Khatgal transshipment base where our animal traffic passed to the Soviet Union. However, after working there for several weeks, I returned to Ulaan Baatar with a liver ailment and improved after seeing gastroenterologists. One doctor told me that I should take the waters at Karlov Var springs for three years in succession. At the time, we had a sitting ambassador in Hungary who advised the trade ministry and when he returned to Mongolia, I was appointed the advisor. And so I lived in Budapest for five years. I also spent three years in Czechoslovakia and rested at Karlov Var with its famous springs. Once I spent two weeks there and recovered completely from my liver ailment, and I have not had a recurrence of the disease.

IL: So these springs offered you a good treatment.

YuA: Indeed. A very good treatment. The doctors who saw me there insisted that I drink the waters every day. So each day I did. It was very interesting there with more than thirteen types of gushing springs.

IL: How do these waters taste?

YuA: There is generally no taste, although occasionally one does taste a little

bitter. I went to the springs morning, noon, and night.
IL: Was the Ministry of Foreign Trade so organized in 1960 that the Co-operative Union was responsible for both internal and external trade?
YuA: Yes. In 1960 the Co-operative Union had complete authority over the transshipment bases, and I was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. At the time, White Lake and Khatgal were the largest transshipment bases and were used to send animals to the Soviet Union. In Dornod *aimag*, there was a central goods base from which the Co-operative Union was in charge of trade inside Mongolia. The Co-operative Union was abolished when the Ministry of Foreign Trade took over and became responsible for all issues of trade and economic preparation.
IL: At that time, who was responsible for different sorts of foreign trade?
YuA: Our Ministry of Foreign Trade was under the jurisdiction of the leader of the trade department, Navaan-Yunden who had recently graduated from a German university and spoke German very well. I handled places for imports in the Ministry. There was also a good youngster, whose name I cannot recall, who was a specialist in the wool from our herds at our "Mongol Export" corporation. So there were three of us engaged in business with the western capitalist countries at that time.

Sandoz was a big Swiss company with many large industries near the German border. It processed skins and hides that were important to the chemical industry because chemicals were essential in the processing of skins in enterprises all over the world. Three of us went to this company, met the director, and drew up an agreement to procure the necessary chemicals to process our skins and hides. Thus, for the first time through this agreement, we bought 200 tons of chemicals. And the Mongolian State skin and hide industry has up until now continued to buy its chemicals from this firm and another Swiss firm. Our Ministry of Foreign Trade does business with more than thirty countries worldwide. At that time, we did have foreign trade relations with the capitalist countries.

We exported cashmere and sheep's wool to the capitalist countries where our cashmere was prized because the western countries liked to mix it with chemically synthetic materials in their own knitting mills to produce a new type of thread. My work in Hungary entailed combining this synthetic material with the sheep's wool to make good thread that was used to produce men's suits. This material could be sold to western countries for foreign currency.
IL: Now there is no place to sell sheep's wool so the herder has almost abandoned it, although the Chinese traders will buy it for a very low price.
YuA: Actually, the export of sheep's wool was organized through the Industrial Trade Ministry, and there were many companies in Mongolia involved in

selling sheep's wool. After 1990, our herds were privatized and maybe that is why selling them is now more difficult.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade controlled three imports and one export, and they were all united into one large industrial *negdel* called "The Mongolian Export *Negdel*" that handled good products for export. "The Skin, Hides, and Wool *Negdel*" was very large and "The Mongolian Technical Import *Negdel*" was extremely powerful since it was responsible for the technical necessities and equipment needed in Mongolia. The issue of the need for imported goods was framed by the "Material Impex" (import-export) as it was called. This *negdel* was responsible for the importation of fuel. However, by the 1990s, these industrial trade *negdels* did very little.

I was working as the trade representative in Hungary, and once I organized a reception at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Trade and had a moment to talk with a specialist whose words I heeded carefully. He asked:

> "Have you eaten your fill of those numerous foreign plans?"
>
> "Yes—I do wish this would all work out, but there doesn't seem that there is much hope for our products" I said to him. He answered:
>
> "I know someone to introduce you to. This person, Mr. Stoin, is expert in intestinal products, and he will be interested in the issues you raise. He actually comes from Switzerland."

I answered: "I have to meet that person. Is he coming to Budapest?"He told me: "He comes here twice a month." So ended our talk. I phoned the man and was told that he would come to a hotel atop the Geles Mountain and was told to go and meet him.

Our ministry in Hungary was located near Geles Mountain and the hotel. Since I knew he would come from Switzerland near our embassy, one afternoon at tea time I went to his hotel with a German translator. So we talked over lunch, and he said that he was very interested in going to Mongolia with its many intestinal products. So we had a meeting at the Ministry where Mr. Ganjuurjav handled the issues of foreign trade. He hoped that this expert could come to Mongolia soon, with the Ministry covering his expenses. He wanted to know immediately, so I contacted the Swiss Mr. Stoin who said he could go to Mongolia any time. Thus I quickly organized his trip from Budapest and Moscow to Ulaan Baatar where I showed him the meat Kombinat. He had advice for our specialists, and a productive meeting was held on how to sort out the intestinal products. This man continued to visit Mongolia, and we co-operated with him from 1964 to 2000. Thus we began to export many intestinal goods.

The first time we supplied 50,000 intestinal items, which grew to 300,000 items. Western countries used these intestinal products for sutures in surgery,

which is why they bought only sheep's guts. The guts of goats were not suitable for medical needs. By 2000, we had exported many, many of these sheep's guts to Western Europe for hard currency and medicine from West Germany.

6. Foreign Trade is My Specialty

IL: At that time was it difficult to trade with capitalist nations because of different ideologies?

YuA: Our ideology did cause difficulties that I did not fully understand. But in the 1960s, we did begin to trade with the capitalist countries.

YK: What were the trade relations like between Hungary and Mongolia?

YuA: I was the Mongolian trade representative to Hungary for five years. Hungary sold stamps for foreign currency, and we sold our stamps to the Hungarians, and we were paid 30% in hard currency.

I had the idea of settling these accounts again when I went to Hungary, but there seemed to be a great loss in government trade. Sometimes the Hungarians did not pay the 30% hard currency completely, so we decided to sell these stamps ourselves to make a greater profit. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and our embassy agreed to this plan. I listened to the Hungarian side since there are always two sides of an issue. There was a discussion between our deputy minister and our ambassador and the Hungarians which dragged on for three days before an agreement was reached.

This agreement stated that the Hungarians would sell all the Mongolian stamps they could handle. The remaining stamps were returned to us, and we quickly carried them to Mongolia and sold them ourselves.

Mongolian stamps are very nice with good themes and designs. Famous people living in over twenty countries abroad collect Mongolian stamps.

There will soon be an event at which an American businessman will announce a plan to produce a golden stamp. We invited the deputy director of his company to come to Mongolia, and he did come and talk about his project to the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, which is how we came to know the Americans involved. We needed him to come to get the answers to our questions so we did not follow the rules, and I, as the Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Trade, invited him directly. This man was interested in various types of stamps with the specific theme of such wild animals as the tiger, snow leopard, stag, wild sheep, and mountain goat. We showed him our stamps with this theme.

He said that "we will produce golden stamps! We will use twenty ounces of gold and wealthy Americans will buy these stamps. You can also buy a few of them. We will take orders and give you the money!" The man then ordered

thirty stamps that we made and gave to him, but we had a good laugh because we had not confirmed the agreement with him, and the issue had to be handled by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the deputy leader of the Soviets for the Socialist Council of Mutual Economic Assistance in Moscow.[3)] Thus, the agreement with this man was never confirmed.

IL: At that time, did regulations state that the Ministry of Foreign Trade had to act with the approval of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party?

YuA: Yes, of course. We had to know in advance about payments, and we had to meet many demands and requirements concerning any agreement, some of which I did not even know. The man did not know all of the issues that I had to deal with concerning the golden stamp.

Mr. Maidar, the deputy minister to the Soviet Embassy, heard the news although he had not gone to the meeting in Moscow. At the time, he was involved in environmental issues concerning wild animals, so I went to meet him and told him about the golden stamp. Then our Ministry of Foreign Trade had to draw up its accounts regarding the stamp that were then reviewed by D. Maidar who said that he could not decide this issue and said that we had to speak to Yu. Tsedenbal. So all the paper work was collected and shown to Tsedenbal, while I waited outside my older brother's office. Then the first secretary's phone rang, and we were told that Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal had invited us in. So we went to my older brother's office where we showed him all the paper work and he asked: "What is this all about? I read in the press that you wish to make golden stamps to sell in America. How much profit will you earn?" I told him that the Ministry of Foreign Trade thought well of our calculations, and he asked where were the Americans and if they planned to come to Mongolia. I told him that they had already come to Ulaan Baatar, but that no one wished to confirm the agreement and that all the people involved in the project were in Moscow. Tsedenbal said that the Americans should be well received and that the agreement should be confirmed which I was happy to hear.

YK: Did you often talk with your brother on issues of foreign trade?

YuA: Not generally. My older brother worked alone and followed the regulations that did not permit receiving me in his office.

This trade in golden stamps was very advantageous, and the American company that we dealt with could be a model for us although at the moment there are some conflicts. Mongolian stamps are actually profitable, and now we are trading in these stamps.

7. I am Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Trade

YK: Did all the issues dealing with trade with foreign countries pass through you at that time?

YuA: Yes, because our industries and places of work could not be organized or used by foreigners. Therefore everything having to do with issues of foreign trade passed through me, including work practices, equipment, goods and demands, for materials from abroad, as well as the orders for the goods that we, ourselves, made here. Another ministry handled the issues of domestic trade.

YK: Where did you work after you were the trade representative in Hungary?

YuA: I worked in Hungary for five years until my term ended. I then returned to Mongolia and was appointed trade counselor to Moscow where I worked for seven years and served as the Mongolian Foreign Trade Deputy Minister. I dealt with the trade in golden stamps that I had learned a lot about while working in Hungary. There was a famous Hungarian professor with whom I worked on these stamps, and I heard him lecture on the subject at the embassy. At that time, our ambassador to Hungary was Mr. Byamba Renchin and his daughter worked there as well. She spoke Hungarian very well and translated the Professor's lecture so all could read it.

IL: How many years have the Mongolians made stamps?

YuA: For a long time. Didn't the manufacture of stamps begin in the time of the Bogd Khan? Yes—making stamps began a long time ago. After the 1921 People's Revolution Prime Minister D. Tserendorj made Mongolian stamps. A stamp was created then from a photograph of the head and shoulders of Kh. Choibalsan. There was a good deal of interest in each stamp and collectors asked "what is being said in the Mongolian mail?" Some wondered what was meant by writing the word "money" on the stamps. Am I talking nonsense?

YK: No. You speak about all of this in an interesting way.

YuA: The work of the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Trade was very difficult. I had to clock in and out all the people who worked there, and it was my responsibility if a person was late to work.

There was also the problem of dealing with the gossip among the embassy workers, and their disputes and quarrels had to be settled. Women were the hardest to deal with, but the Minister could not get involved in all the problems inside the embassy.

At the time, it was urgent to reach decisions on questions involving imports. Sometimes, goods which were ordered did not arrive on time, and this was most serious when the delay pertained to imports of fuel. A chart was kept noting when the domestic user was in danger of running out of fuel. If this happened all transport would stop, and the country would lose its profits

from foreign trade. Money demanded by the Ministry of Finance from the Ministry of Foreign Trade was then used to deal with any problems of foreign trade. Private companies dealt directly with foreigners.

There was a meeting in Bulgaria for the Mongolian Deputy Minister from the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Representatives from personnel from the Central Committee Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party confirmed this. Our representative was appointed the leader, and so I went to the meeting. The Deputy Ministers of Foreign Trade came from five countries—Bulgaria, East Germany, Yugoslavia, Mongolia, and Poland. The meeting was organized by the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the sponsors of the trade prize "Mercury." I was working for the Ministry of Foreign Trade when it became an issue to trade with the western capitalist countries, including England, France, West Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, and Sweden.

IL: How would you describe trade with Finland and Sweden?

YuA: Our medical equipment was bought from the Finns. Our famous doctor, the Professor of Heart Surgery D. Shagdarsuren, bought all his medical equipment from Finland, and I was in Moscow when the Finnish trade representative was there.

Once I met with our trade representative S. Gongor and the representative from West Germany who wished to sell high quality paper. An agreement was drawn with the company manager who was an old man whose name I cannot remember. After arranging this agreement, we went to a restaurant for dinner, and S. Gongor asked what everyone liked to drink. He put out three cups of spirits, and the old man opted for the strongest that was the cup of whiskey. I drank a cup of red wine, and then was compelled to drink the other spirits as well. As we talked, we asked what was so great about us Mongols and he answered: "You are the future Chinggis Khan and Batu Khan[4)] who were the most famous people in the world." However, we believed that all of us were born and all of us would die without ever reaching the peak of fame. I remember this person very well.

People in Europe know a lot about Chinggis and his grandson Batu, but we do not know as much. Even though I had been a student at the Technicum, I had heard little about them. Mother and father and some of their friends had learned about Chinggis Khan from people they knew. One reads in the history books that Chinggis Khan used great force and violence in creating the Mongol world state, that his military moved south to India, and that Batu Khan governed all of Eastern Europe. Amazing! I went to organize a meeting in Delhi when I was the deputy Minister of Foreign Trade. As a youth, our ambassador had worked in Delhi and spoke Hindi well, so he was the

translator at the meeting where I spoke English. Now I have almost forgotten my English, which is easy to forget if not spoken very often.

After the meeting, we went to see the famous Taj Majal which is a mausoleum as well as a temple and one of the seven wonders of the world. It is registered by UNESCO as a world heritage site. The Taj Mahal is covered with red and green marble, and the artistry and intelligence of the builders have created a monument wondrous to behold.

I had heard of the Taj Mahal and had read about its history from which I learned that a Mongolian was connected to it. The temple was built by a Khan of Mongolian origin whose wife died after giving birth to thirteen children. The story goes that the Khan loved her so much that he had this monument built for her to be interred in.

We have nothing like this today even though we created and were the masters of the world state and set up powerful governments over a vast area and in many countries. People back home, however, longed for lives of luxury, and how could any country manage all of this? One scholar has written: "Chinggis Khan built up the Great Mongolian State as a leader in world trade and furthered the development of culture!" In this great Mongolian State, many religions co-existed peacefully within a huge area with no fixed borders. One administration took care of many people who were free to travel and engage in trade and commercial activity. In fact, we changed the historical development of the world. We, however, did not know much about our past. What do we think about all of this? I don't know. We know very little about our history.

IL: Was the "Gobi" Kombinat set up to export cashmere?[5)]

YuA: We exported to the Soviet Union and Switzerland and sometimes to West Germany. At the time, "The Mongol Export" *negdel* sold cashmere abroad and Mr. D. Gombojav from the Ministry of Foreign Trade worked to increase commerce with foreign countries. This Minister was a specialist in commerce and could answer all sorts of questions. Since some of our people had foreign appointments we were acquainted with the regulations. Finally, our Minister was a member of the CC/MPRP and had worked for many years with issues of foreign trade.

8. Our Family

YK: Please tell me now about your personal life. When were you married?

YuA: In 1940, I followed my older brother Tsedenbal to Ulaan Baatar, and I lived on the second floor of the Mongol Bank. My older brother often went to the countryside, and I was left to live alone so I spent time with the family of Mr. Olziitin Badrakh who had shared a water source with my family in our

home area. In 1930, Mr. O. Badrakh was the secretary of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, but was dismissed as a "Leftist deviationist." Mr. O. Badrakh lived in an irregularly patterned tent and was like an older brother. He also rode in an elegant car when visiting us herders in the countryside, which was the first time I saw a car. Usually, all of us children had to go to town to see a car. Once I went to watch the sheep with a friend and in the morning saw something soft and white that we understood was edible. There was also something that was a polished green and looked nice and was good to eat. When I tasted the white stuff, however, I exclaimed that "it had no salt and maybe that is why it tastes so bad." Nevertheless, I ate a bit of the white stuff but don't remember if I gave it to anyone else or threw it away. Come to think of it, I was eating some bread which was then unknown in our area! In 1938, Mr. O. Badrakh "was forbidden to serve on the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party" because of his mistakes as a "Leftist deviationist."

When I was living with my brother on the second floor of the Mongol Bank, Mr. O. Badrakh came over sometimes with his young daughter. He was sometimes joined by Mr. D. Yelee and his daughter, who came from our Uvs *aimag*, Naranbulag *sum*, and who was the leader of Mongolian labor on the Central Committee. In 1938, the government slandered and framed him, and he was executed. Mr. S. Shijay, who came from my area and had served as Secretary of the Central Committee, was also killed in 1938.

The wives of O. Badrakh and D. Yelee were great friends, so Mrs. D. Yelee came over with her daughter. I had finished the Technicum when Mrs. O. Badrakh came to visit to talk about her daughter attending the Soviet Upper School which was controlled by the State Planning Committee. Mrs. O. Badrakh told me to "keep running the Lenin Club with its dances. Lots of people meet there, and you must go and sit with this nice girl." So I did just that and found my wife. We married, and now we have three daughters and one son.

In 1938, Mr. O. Badrakh and D. Yelee were executed, and their wives suffered greatly. At the time, all the property of those executed was confiscated, causing those who lost their belongings to become homeless. Once there was an opportunity to speak to Mr. Choibalsan since I knew him well, and he gave these women a *ger* to live in which was set up on the far side of what is now the Teacher's College. So the two families lived in this *ger*.

I attended the Technicum in Ulaan Baatar and during the summer vacationed in my home area. I returned when school began in the fall when the Mongol *deel* was worn. But for children studying at the Technicum, the Director gave us our *deels* in a bag of things that had been confiscated and

stored in a warehouse. In the spring, I put these clothes in a bag when I returned home by car. In 1950, my wife and her mother came to Ulaan Baatar and lived with a woman whose husband had died.

YK: What was life like for your mother when she came to Ulaan Baatar?

YuA: Mother lived in my brother's apartment behind a Mongol *ger*. My brother was married at the time and lived in a very large building with a *khashaa* with surveillance everywhere and official protection. There was a small gate on the north side of the *khashaa*, and on the south side there was a big gate with many soldiers. In addition, permission was required to talk on the phone. Our mother said that the building had no air and was stuffy and that the wooden floors were noisy!

Our brother read many books and worked constantly rarely going to bed before 3 or 4 in the morning and then arising early. He wrote all sorts of things in Russian and acted as the translator for the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. He would read something himself, and then he would translate it into Mongolian. I am not familiar with the intricacies the commissars discussed with him.

Now and again he would call his wife who would say: "Let's go to the movies!" We only asked him for one thing—to borrow his car to take the children to the doctor, and he let us use it. We were asked if my brother had a lot of money, but I did not know.

My brother's wife did not work because my brother had a livable salary. When I was asked questions, I answered that "from time to time older brother loans me the car for going to the doctor." Was I believed? Who knows? I learned much later that brother's wife was the director of a children's fund. My brother's Russian wife worked and was paid a salary. In 1974, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Partry, L.I. Brezhnev, visited Mongolia and came to the wedding palace in Ulaan Baatar to offer funds to build kindergartens.

9. Older Brother's Wife A. I. Filatova

YK: When did you meet your brother's wife, A. I. Filatova?

YuA: I was in the Soviet Union when I met her. At the time, my brother planned to be there for five years. He had been in Moscow for about five months, and I went to the Metropol Hotel to meet him.

One evening a commissar phoned my brother and said: "Tonight we will have dinner with another family." Then a Russian man named I.V. Vazhnov came on the phone, and we went off to dine with this Russian family who lived near the hotel. A Russian woman sat with him and across the table sat two younger Russian women. I went in search of an empty chair while the

commissar became acquainted with my brother. I shook hands with everyone but did not catch their names. While people talked, I went outside with my brother. Then we all sat down for dinner along with three Russian young ladies who were sisters, one of whom would be my brother's wife. The three women were joined by Mr. I.V. Vazhnov and his friend, a Colonel, whom he knew from working in the Kremlin where he was an advisor to the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and where he had met Stalin. It was I.V. Vazhnov who arranged the marriage between my brother and Filatova, but my brother did not speak to us about it, and I only heard the news later. When the dinner was over, I returned directly to my school building, having met my brother's future wife for the first time before she came to Ulaan Baatar in 1947.

YK: Did you visit your brother at home?

YuA: We did visit him, and sometimes his wife would call us to go to the movies—most of them Russian—some on agriculture or medicine. Our home in which we lived for a long time is now located on the south side of the Officers' Palace, which now houses the Co-operative Building. We moved to the center of the city when I began to work at the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Our brother has two children: the oldest is Vladislav, and the youngest is Zorig who nearly died at birth but managed to survive. Ts. Zorig was a youngster when we met him in Moscow and is now back in Ulaan Baatar. Vladislav died in 1999.

YK: Now A. Buyantogs (Ayush's youngest daughter) will you speak a bit?

A Buyantogs: I stayed in Ulaan Baatar with my grandparents while my father worked in Hungary. I also spent time with my father's older brother, and since there were no children in the family and we were like their children, they taught us many things.

In 1984, we all moved in with my father's brother's family but I didn't stay very long. In 1986 - 1989, I went to study as an aspirant in Moscow and was glad to see them later on.

IL: I read a book by Tsedenbal's son, Zorig, entitled "The Last Seven Years" in which he emphatically stated that there was a conspiracy to remove his father from his post. He further wrote that he was on a holiday with his parents in July, 1984 in the Soviet Union where his family had vacationed for many years. He said that when they left Mongolia, his father was healthy and displayed no ill symptoms. Then, however, the Secret Police [or KGB] made a house arrest, and the Kremlin doctors averred that his father was not well and had to stop working because he had to be treated right away. However, no clear diagnosis was offered. While they were all in Moscow, the Eighth All Khural and the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party were meeting, and his father was relieved of his post. This was all

written in so many words. How do you respond?
YuA: I have been listening to all of this and point out that I met with my brother before the Khural, but we didn't talk about much though I did, now and again, ask him how things were going. My brother was a very silent individual. Some people like to talk a lot, but my brother was not like that. He was generally not a talkative man but would answer questions asked of him. He seldom initiated a conversation and did not talk about the government, the nation, or his work in the government. We didn't pay much attention to all the talk from high ranking people. Tsedenbal loved to read, and once he began a book he had to finish it.

My sister-in-law called us just after Tsedenbal died. At the time, I was the trade representative from the Ministry of Foreign Trade in Bulgaria. When I had gone to see my brother in Moscow, he had liver disease and was in rather poor condition. The course of his illness was set, and I stayed with him for several days during his hospital treatment.

At 11 in the morning, he received an injection. I do not know the name of the medication, but I do know it was not suitable. He did not look well and forgot things, though generally my brother had a good memory. He had become old, was very weak, and remained in bed. Before Tsedenbal was sick, he read 74 Soviet publications and took notes in red and green pencil. I had heard the commissars say that this was how he memorized the contents of the journals. In addition, he had collected a good library from all his visitors, which should have been shared.
YK: Where is the library now?
YuA: It doesn't exist anymore. Who knows if some of the books are in the Central State Library. I really do not know what happened to all his belongings and where they were dispersed after he was relieved from his post. I don't even know who was responsible for organizing all of this. It is a pity that the leaders of the Mongolian government acted so irresponsibly in getting rid of all those things. My brother kept daily records, awards, maps, and kitchen equipment that the State Procurator knew about.

And where are his many star medals and government awards? I don't know. Where are the souvenirs and things that the Mongolian people gave him? Who knows. And where are the many guns that foreigners gave him when they met him even though my brother did not hunt? The Ministry of the Interior now has my brother's guns, and perhaps they will be given to a museum, but this was not discussed at the All Khural meeting of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in 1984.

Many generals from the Russian military were private acquaintances of my brother and kept in touch with him by telephone from Moscow. He held

the title of lieutenant general from the 1939 War of Khalkhin Gol.[6)]

IL: Could you talk about losses in foreign trade when you worked at the Ministry?

YuA: There were losses and the cost of foreign goods was reduced. We also produced our own goods rather than relying solely on other producers. Because there was a reduction in prices, there was a diminution of foreign trade because these products yielded a higher profit on the world market. There were major differences between blouses made from cashmere and from wool. The Soviet Union was the major buyer for all the raw materials from our herds, while our industries were devoted to manufacturing the finished product.

The pricing department at the Ministry of Foreign Trade was very renowned and had the opportunity to purchase goods based on the fluctuations of prices on the world market. Mongolia bought all its consumer goods from the Soviet Union and directly paid money for them. Certainly its government was our central trading partner.

The Soviet market also created a demand from our own workers, promoted the building industry, and gained great wealth. Live herds, however, could be an economic loss. The Soviet Union was very strict in its demands concerning these animals that were sent via the Khatgal transfer station, and all of them were inspected for contagion. Even if an animal was not ill, it would not be sold if one animal in the herd was a bit sick. We had a veterinarian who worked at the Ministry of Agriculture, so the Soviet professionals knew about the health of our herds and settled other issues before accepting them.

I went several times to the Khatgal transfer station to work out any problems, and D. Ganjurav, S. Tsagaandorj, and B. Tserendendev were all good workers at our Ministry of Foreign Trade who knew Russian well and were experienced, intelligent people with fine minds. They all were central Khalkh people from Övörkhangai and Arkhangai.

A national committee set the prices for products on the internal market, and at that time the prices held steady and did not change for many years. New products, however, were priced according to the most recent prices. Thus, trading with the socialist countries was easy because the prices did not generally increase. Trading with the capitalist countries was more difficult because there had to be agreement on the prices of goods.

Transport to foreign countries was a serious problem because there were no waterways in Mongolia. There were rail lines through Siberia, and even an airplane for sending goods to Europe, but the route from Mongolia was very long. In addition, Mongolia had to pay for the transport of goods to the Soviet Union. There was limited air freight through Moscow for light products.

YK: We must now bring our conversation to a close. Do you wish to add anything to what we have talked about in this brief period?
YuA: Well, I have told you about my work, and you have heard many things. I can't add much.
YK: So, many thanks for this interesting conversation.

Notes

1) Russian for country house.
2) In the summer of 1939, Soviet and Mongolian troops joined together to defeat a Japanese army seeking to encroach on Mongolian lands. On the ensuing battle, see Alvin Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2 vols., 1985).
3) The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) was the trade association supported by the Soviet bloc. Mongolia joined the organization in June of 1962.
4) Batu Khan was the real founder of the Golden Horde, the Mongolian Khanate in Russia. On him, see Charles Halperin, *Russia and the Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History: Golden Horde* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985). For the latest work on Mongol influence on Russia, see Donald Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
5) On the Gobi Kombinat and the development of the cashmere industry in Mongolia, see the Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren interviews, Mary Rossabi's translation, and Morris Rossabi's edited and compiled book *Socialist Devotees and Dissenters: Three Twentieth-Century Mongolian Leaders* (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2011), pp. 276-283.
6) See footnote 2.

III. Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav (1923-2007)

Translated by Mary Rossabi
Interviewed in June of 2005

1. The Place where I was Born

YK: Today we have the great pleasure to meet with you, Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav. For many years, you have performed a number of State functions, including serving as the Deputy Leader [equivalent to Vice President] of the People's Great Khural, the General Secretary, and as a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. A new era has arisen in Mongolia, and it is now time to write about your country's history.

Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav (hereafter, SJA): Yes. So we must talk.

YK: Today, would you begin by talking about your early years and youth? Where and when were you born? Could you also speak about your father and mother and older brother and sisters?

SJA: Certainly. I shall tell you about what I remember from my youth. I was born in Khantai mountain *aimag* in the Otgon Khairan mountain *khoshuu*,[1] which is now Zavkhan *aimag* Aldarkhaan *sum*. This area is located in what is now called the Kheremtiin Valley on the border of Bogd gol. At that time, there was no hospital in the area, and all children were born at home. Births were not recorded as they are today. Such was the situation of my birth. Zavkhan *aimag* is 1150 kilometers to the west of Ulaan Baatar and is situated near rivers, desert land and the *khangai*. In 1990, there were 18 *aimags* in all of Mongolia. In 1992, the Government increased that number to 21 *aimags*. Before the People's Revolution, there were only four *aimags*, five ecclesiastical estates and more than seventy *khoshuu*. Since 1921, the Mongolian governmental administration has made many changes, and it is still changing in ways that are not always clear.

The Aldarkhaan *sum* where I was born has the second highest mountain, Otgontenger, in the sacred mountain range of Bogd Ochirvaan. It is more than 4,300 meters above sea level, and that is the reason it has snow on the summit both winter and summer. It is one of the sacred mountains that we Mongols worship and consider a good omen. Each year, people from all over Mongolia come to worship and make offerings at Otgontenger, which is covered with lovely scented juniper and has two beautiful lakes at its base, the Blue Lake and the White Lake. In addition, the mountain's mineral water is famous and is enjoyed by people in all the western *aimags*. This water is good for the

health and is used to treat labor pains. We did not know when we were children that an old inscription that had been translated into English pointed out that this water was good for the eyes and the limbs.

What led to people's great love for their native pastures? The writer, D. Natsagdorj,[2] sang his country's praises and in his wonderful poem entitled "My Native Land" lauds the Mongolian countryside. The beautiful mother country and our fine language and culture have been passed down from our ancestors. I was born in this fine country that greets us Mongolians every day, and I am a proud and thankful man.

My mother's father, my grandfather, was named Suren, and he was a lama of the rank of *taiji*. A *taiji* was a person of high birth in the Golden Horde of Chinggis Khan. These ancient *taijis* were not serfs. Suren's daughter, Dashtsevet, was my mother. I was the eldest of four children born to my mother. I was under the protection of both my grandmother and grandfather in the countryside while I was growing up and until I reached the age of 15. My grandfather had more than 100 horses, 20-30 cows, and 200 to 300 sheep, which was the average amount of property for a family. We spent summers in the *khangai*, and in the winter we moved to the desert covering about 300 kilometers on the road.

YK: Where and when did you go to primary school?

SJA: I did not attend lower and middle school. At that time, children in Mongolia learned how to take care of the five main types of animals. We led happy and fortunate lives, and I don't think we suffered or missed anything. There were some people who were poorly off, and though a family might beg, there were no tramps or homeless people. We didn't even know about such situations. A family was contented with many animals, and though others had only a few herds, they were not looked down on. In fact, I nurtured close relationships with them and, as was the case long ago when neighbors were nearby, we helped each other out. I think it is very important that people help each other in society as well as in the state and the government. In my area as a child, I did not often hear about robbery, cheating, drunkenness, brawling, or other criminal activity that impeded a healthy existence. My siblings and I were treated in a friendly and loving manner, and we enjoyed peaceful lives.

At that time, there were a great many lamaseries. As far as I know, there were 700 lamaseries and monasteries and over 100,000 lamas and clergy. In my Zavkhan *aimag,* there were five or six great lamas, all of whom had ranks and titles and who were reincarnates in Mongolian Buddhism. One of the great Mongolian lamas—Danzan Ravjaa—lived in the Gobi, was named the "Gobi high lama" and was famous everywhere. He was an historian, author, poet, and playwright.[3]

At that time, we did not mow the hayfields, and when there was a great deal of snow, there were few places to move to. We had to find places where there was less snow so the herds could find grass to eat. Today, specialists know from studying the atmosphere when a blizzard is coming so the herders can be informed and can organize their migrations safely.

My old grandfather, Suren *taiji*, was famous in our area as a good herder. He was by nature a wise man with a good character and was a support and help to his neighbors. Many people liked and respected this virtuous old man. Everyday my grandfather went with the herds and knew where to pasture the animals of local families and how to fatten them. He knew that it was useless to let the herds graze in a watered pasture. He also had a wide knowledge of the changing weather and knew about lost animals, local pastures, and the condition of the water and the air. People gathered around him to exchange ideas about all of this. I followed my grandfather around in order to study his skillful herding methods, which would be of interest to people of any age.

At that time, there were few people in our area who could read or write. My grandfather's daughter, my mother, was taught the Mongolian script, and so she could read and write and had also had mastered the four mathematical methods. In 1922, the Khantaishir mountain *aimag* was organized, and my mother worked in the *aimag* administration as a scribe or copyist. My mother taught her children the Mongolian script and the four mathematical methods: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Thus I learned the Mongolian script and mathematics from my mother which later inspired me to pursue a path of further learning.

At the time, our area Aldarkhan *sum*, Yaruugiin River, Chigestein river basin organized its first primary school, and the teacher D. Chimed was a much respected young woman. Our area was famous for its people who wore black pointed leather boots, short hair without a pigtail, and a circular sloping hat which was very eye-catching and made one look very smart! Teacher D. Chimed also encouraged adults to study at a time when culture and basic education were highly valued.

Near our primary school was a well-known, new small white building called Lodon where a doctor examined people and initiated scientific medical treatment. There were around a hundred lamas and members of the clergy, and they had a large building and many thousand animals. They were responsible for the abundance of their lamasery property, and the many sick people connected to this Yaruugiin lamasery went to the doctor in a room in the Lodon white building. This doctor was renowned as a neurologist, a research doctor, and a professor.

IL: When you were young, there was no high school for you to attend and

many young people from the countryside went to Ulaan Baatar to study at the Technicum. What was the city like for you when you first arrived?
SJA: When I was about ten years old, my grandfather died, and our lives with mother changed a great deal. My grandfather had many herds at the time and was comfortably off, well respected, and with a good family. However, these herds died off in the *zud*, and our life became worse, and it was hard for mother to catch up. Life without herds was very difficult for Mongolians.

My mother became the head of our household at this time, and our family always moved together with Sharav's family. Sharav *taiji* was grandfather's younger brother who had many herds, a lot of property, and a nicely furnished ger. Sharav *taiji* and his wife, Nanjil, were both careful and worked hard in their *ger* and on the land. They were good and responsible upper class people. Sharav *taiji* and his wife Namjil had a large amount of property and had grown rich though their own serious hard work, but they did not want to help those less prudent than they were.

As our herds decreased, our life became more difficult, but we managed to deal with our changing situation. I settled down with Sharav *taiji* and watched his horse herds in winter and summer. In five or six years, our horses had grown fast and were famous as amblers in the *sum* and the *aimag*. I worked hard and watched the sheep, sheared the wool, made felt, and carried water and firewood.

It was hard for the young people, with all this work, to study, but we somehow found the opportunity. Here and there the felt on our *ger* had become torn so the rains could come in, and we could see the sun and the moon. However, even with the number of herds we possessed, we still could not re-cover the *ger* with new felt. Sharav *taiji* and his wife Namjil both were aware of our situation but did not help us. It was said "with few herds of sheep, how can you make felt?" and I would never forget that. I thought, at that time, that "I was getting big pretty fast and would build Mother a nice *ger*!" "The son is responsible for pleasing the mother" was the thought that occupied me at that moment.

We went with Sharav *taiji* to the spring pastures along the Borkhin River to a place called Donion hollow and for the winter we moved up the Khangai and summered on the far side of Chigestein River. In the fall, all the families moved to the desert for the fall and the winter. In the fall as the winter approached, my mother talked to my brother and me about the coming migration: "This year all three of us will spend the winter in the *aimag* center! I want you both to study and go to school and learn! Thus we will not go on the migration with Sharav *taiji*! What do you both think of this plan?"

We were very happy hearing that we would not move with Sharav *taiji*!

When my brother Purenjav heard these words, he jumped up and kissed my mother: "This is good news! I will go to school—yes?" I also knew that would happen so that night there was much gaiety, and we knew that the correct decision about our future had been made.

The wife of Sharav *taiji*, Namjil, had an exacting quality about her which led to some harsh words which made me annoyed and interfered with my studying that was so essential for my future. We had been herders for many years and had done all sorts of difficult work for the wages of five *tugriks*[4] and a two year old colt.

Then my brother and I went to the Zavkhan *aimag* center in Uliastai city for a year of middle school, a very difficult time for us, and so we did not continue our studies. In fact, I never completed my general education.

Let me tell you a bit about my area of Khokh *khoshuu*, which was very wooded, with nice rivers and many willow trees. People in our area lived in wooded houses with a wooden framework. They made whatever belongings they needed, and people from the less wooded areas of Khovd, Bayankhongor, Uvs and the Gov-Altai came to trade with us. Since our mother's life was so hard, we had been advised to move to Khokh *khoshuu* and make and sell wooden articles, which we did. Mother taught us to make good wooden baskets of different sizes, tent rafters, wall sections, and wooden tent rings. We were good at this work, and people came from far away to buy our things. Since there was no paper money at that time, we were paid in dairy products. So for two years I worked as a carpenter.

In those days, Ulaan Baatar and all the *aimag* centers were not large, but even so small industries, or kombinats, were starting to operate. At White Springs in Töv *aimag*, Erdene *sum*, there was a lime industry where someone from my area had been recruited to work. We went with mother to Uliastai, and we were recruited to work in the lime industry as well. Then mother and my stepfather went on to Ulaan Baatar. Our lives were difficult with mother so far away, but it was prudent to remain there. However, I thought of mother all the time after she had left.

We became acquainted with other family members in our area including elder N. Chimedregzen, who was a teacher in Zavkhan *aimag*. Once, on meeting him, I asked about going to school in Ulaan Baatar, and he soon invited us to his home. I hurried over and he told me: "In Ulaan Baatar you can go to the "Medical Technicum" so tomorrow you must ask the *aimag* administration to pay your traveling expenses for the school in Ulaan Baatar." Elder N. Chimedregzen from Zavkhan *aimag* wanted us to get an allotment/ stipend to attend the Medical Technicum.

So, I went to Ulaan Baatar. The only means of transportation at the time

was the mail car. Unlike today there were no planes so we all took the mail car that took 18 days to reach Ulaan Baatar. Our mother became exhausted after waiting in Ulaan Baatar for so many days until we arrived. But when we were reunited with our mother, all of us were very happy.

YK: What were your activities? Did you go to the Medical Technicum to become a doctor?

SJA: I was there in 1937, and several days later mother came with us to the Medical Technicum which was near to what is now the Health Ministry. The *aimag* administrator in Zavkhan *aimag* had given us a letter that I took when I went to meet the head teacher who told me that I had to enroll in the dormitory and had to prepare myself with a change of clothing and washing items. I agreed and went outside to meet my mother to whom I said:

"I am not going to that school! Let's go and work together in the lime industry at White Springs. You now work there all alone and with no salary!"

Mother was silent and did not speak, and I understood her reluctance. Then we talked for a long time, and I won. At the time, I was fifteen years old and could cope with things, but my mother was frightened and said that, by law, minors were not permitted to work in a state industry. Later this made sense to me. After several days, however, we went to White Springs in Erdene *sum* and met S. Dagvadorj, the director of the lime industry. I submitted an application that he read, and he responded:

"You can't work as a minor. Minors are not allowed to work! Why do you think you can go to work here on the steep sides of a mountain? I can't be responsible for you." But then Mr. Sanpil, my step father, spoke up and said; "Our Jalan-Aajav can indeed do this work. He was a good herder in the countryside and can do carpentry as well." The leader of this industry listened attentively to these words of praise.

"Well, alright but on one condition: this minor needs more help than other workers. You will work a six hour day, while others work an eight hour day, and I will decide now on your work brigade." Thus my desire to be a worker in the lime industry was fulfilled.

2. Worker in the Lime Industry

YK: You began in your mother country's lime industry. Could you talk about this from the point of view of a lawyer?

SJA: The lime industry in White Springs provided the city of Ulaan Baatar with lime for building materials and thus was a huge industry. S. Dagvadorj was my work brigade leader and was responsible for the planning. Many Kazakh workers and I, along with the leader T. Amir, formed the work brigade. T. Amir was an Uzbek man who spoke Mongolian very well, and one

day he came to work with some tools including a spade, hoe, large hammer, a very sharp chisel, and a white stick of dynamite in a large can. I worked with a young Mongolian named Jamba, and we were the only Mongolians in the brigade.

We loaded the lime into a Russian car, the "Ural Zis-5," which made a kind of "parpar" noise. This car was later captured by the Japanese in the Battle of the Khalkh River. Who knows how the car landed up at this factory. At the time, Ulaan Baatar was entering a period of construction, and I began working on the limestone for the lime industry. This involved rolling wet limestone about one meter in diameter and making a hole in it 70-80 centimeters deep. We put the tip of a dynamite stick in the bottom of the hole and then lit the other end of the stick with a match which resulted in a flaming explosion. We fled this explosion as soon as the match was struck and ran as far away as possible. Our brigade leader, Mr. T Amir, knew how to do this work and so this placed heavy demands on him. I quickly learned how to do this, and Jamba and I were soon known for "our good work".

When I was no longer a minor, the leader said that I would work more than six hours a day, so I soon became accustomed to doing good work in an eight hour day. Sometimes I even worked a ten hour day because this work with dynamite could continue into the night, and there was no one to control my work hours. I received my first salary which was very high and made me very happy. Beyond my basic pay, I got a bonus and so received 800 *tugriks* altogether. I then ran at full speed to the store and was measured for a blue silk *deel* and a grey green *deel*, and I also purchased a can of Russian sugar. The remaining money I gave to my mother. We lived fairly close to our workplace and the store where many German goods were also sold.

My mother was very happy that day and she made good *buuz* for us. Again and again, it was said that "as the man grows, the felt is stretched!" (Or, "From rags to riches!") Being paid 800 *tugriks* was a lot of money: one good horse cost 20 *tugriks* and one sheep 6 *tugriks*. "It was also necessary for a man to make his mother happy." I had understood this from my grandfather since I was a little boy. I had learned a lot from him including "Do not commit crimes!" "Be virtuous. Always help people! Never speak badly!"

An important feature of a Mongolian person's psychology is that children care for their fathers and especially their mothers as they themselves were cared for. This expectation made my mother happy. There are songs and poems about this strong maternal bond, and the kindness of both your mother and father is unique and can never be entirely repaid. Whenever it rains, there is a little bit of water called "dew" on the grass and with difficulty, this precious dew can be collected in a bowl. By analogy, the virtues of parents

and grandparents can be compared to this dew water.

I worked for about two years at the lime factory in White Springs where the leader of our industry was Mr. S. Dagvadorj who did not treat us badly. Although I could read and write in Mongolian, unfortunately I could not manage the four mathematical methods very well. In 1939, the administration of the White Springs lime industry decided I should go and study at the Financial Technicum in Ulaan Baatar. There were no universities at that time in Mongolia but there were several good technicums. So for the second time I set off to Ulaan Baatar to attend the Financial Technicum. I had an older relative, S. Dodgor, who had a *ger* near what is now the Bogd Khan Palace Museum where my mother and I stayed for a few days.[5)] I did not want to delay in preparing for the Financial Technicum.

S. Dodgor's ger was on the far side of Nalaikh[6)] near the railroad, and in summer the river was most enjoyable, especially at *Naadam*. Nearby there was a big square with a variety of trades and where, during *Naadam*, many people gathered. Near the southern edge of the Tuul River, one could see the green felt roofs of some white buildings. I worked there in the evenings and could hear songs from a parade. Every one wore similar green *deels*, pointed hats, and leather boots all which were very eye-catching costumes! I worked there for several evenings and found it all very interesting. One day I met Dodgor as he was coming from his *ger* and asked him: "What are those white buildings with the green covers?" S. Dodgor answered that they comprised the Party School where the leaders were prepared and that it was a very good school! I said to myself that I would stop by there tomorrow and wondered how I could go to that school myself. Then S. Dodgor and I went to see my mother and asked her what she thought of my attending this Party School and how could I get in. My mother listened but told me she did not know and how could I think of such a thing since only leaders were prepared there and people like us could not attend. She went on to tell me to ask Mr. S. Dodgor about all of this.

So I spoke with the elder S. Dodgor again and told him I wished to meet the powerful leader, D. Dorjpalam, of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, and fill out an application for the school. Was the school organized by the Central Committee of The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party? Where should I go to find out about all of this? I really did not know. Since this was the first time that I had heard about this famous school, I asked S. Dodgor how I could get in, and he gave me good advice.

3. I enter the State Party School

I decided to fill out an application for the school, and the next day I

followed my mother to the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party building, which is in exactly the same place as it is now. The building, however, was smaller and not like today's big white palace. The person on duty looked at us and jokingly asked if we were there for a child. I told him "No, Old Fellow. I have a meeting with the leader S. Dorjpalam of the Central Committee. Can I meet with him? Will you let us in?" Once inside, I was very scared, but the fellow did not answer me for a while and then said: "Have you ever met and talked with him?" I told him I had not but that it was very important that I talk with him. Then he gave us a long look. I did not know what to think when he told me where to stand while I waited. He then told me I could not be admitted and should go away. However, then he spoke on the phone and, having waited a long time, he told me that I should go to the first floor. And he wrote the room number on a scrap of paper. I saw a dark skinned man sitting there who asked me what business I had come for. I told him that I was applying to come to the school and gave him my application, which he turned round and studied. As I recall now, it was neither well written nor properly done. Then the man asked me if I had written the application and if I knew the Mongolian script. When I answered that I did, he told me to draw some lines on about a third of the form as nicely and neatly as I could. He gave me several sheets of paper, a pencil, and a ruler and then went off to a meeting. So I made the lines as neatly and nicely as I could. I worked to carefully finish the lines before he came back. He looked at the paper and said it was well done. He told me to take the writing I had done to the director of the Party School, L. Sereeger, so he could see what I had written. On the paper was written "Let this young man take the exam! D. Dorjpalam."

I had hoped for success and was happy to go to that building, but I was concerned that my mother, who had waited outside for me a long time, must be exhausted. 1937-1938 was a sad time in Mongolia because many people, for no reason at all, were arrested and executed. These government persecutions had gained ground, and my mother was afraid that I could be arrested. Nevertheless, my mother and I returned from the school building safely. That evening S. Dodgor came to chat with us and was happy to learn of my success. At that time, ordinary people did not usually enter the Central Committee building. Does one usually take his application to the school of the Central Committee? And just imagine how all this worked out. What beginner's luck! The Mongolians have a saying: "Living in a Fool's Paradise". Exactly so. S. Dodgor was unfamiliar with this building and praised me saying "you were very brave!"

The next day I was accompanied by my mother to the State Party School

where I met with the director, L. Sereeger, who read what I had written in the morning and gave me a note to take to the other director, D. Dorjpalam, with his permission for me to take the exam. "The exam begins tomorrow so don't delay." I asked the teacher what was on the exam even though I knew. He answered that the Mongolian script and the methods of calculation as well as questions on the government were on the exam and went on to ask me if I was well prepared. When we left, I told S. Dodgor that I knew nothing about the government and asked him what questions would be asked. S. Dodgor responded: "I don't know—maybe the situation during World War II or questions about the international situation as it related to Mongolia." Then he said: "You must read this good book," referring to a grey hard covered volume entitled "I. V. Stalin: Report of the 18th Meeting of the USSR." I certainly could not read the whole book in one evening and wondered if there would be questions from this book on my exam. Yes? No? Who knows. Perhaps the best thing to do was to memorize a number of sentences.

So the day of the test arrived and I did poorly on the math. I could do the addition and subtraction but was not as strong on the multiplication and division. I took the exam with an older person and cheated a bit as we were very cramped in writing the test. For the questions about the government, S. Dodgor had also given me another book, "How to Feed 500 Million in World War II from Shanghai to Gibraltar!" I memorized some sentences from this book as well several from the "The Rules and Regulations of the Mongolian Youth League" which I sort of knew anyway. The teacher came to the exam room and asked me some questions. What could I say? I knew only a little bit of what he was talking about. Then he asked me some more questions and he said, at one point, "very good! very good!" but I was so scared that I was sweating and my knees were shaking. I had to calm myself for this exam as I was so eager to be accepted at the Government Party School. At that time, the school had two basic law classes. As for its history, the first Party School was set up in 1924 with about 60 students, 19 to 30 of whom were supervised by the director, Ts. Dambadorj, from the Central Committee. The school first opened at "Bogd Khan Fenced Palace" and B. Tserendorj, the Mongolian Prime Minister, and P. Genden, the leader of the State Small Khural, participated.[7)] The first director of the school was the leader and member of the Central Committee, N. Khayankhayarvaa, and the teachers were B. Tserendorj, S. Danzan, J. Tseven, R. Elbegdorj, and G. Dorjpalam. All of these people were famous in what were called the new times in Mongolia. In 1940, the school had existed for sixteen years and had graduated seventeen classes with 1309 people altogether. The directors did a great deal of work and more than one hundred professional economists and bookkeepers were trained.

The school had its eightieth anniversary this year, and its new name is the Leadership Development Academy. I completed two years of disciplined study with good results at that school, and while I was there a major movement developed in this country which was called "wool is gold." In times past, the wool from the sheep had not really been valued, and the task of collecting wool took so much work that it was often discarded. Along with many people who had studied in the Technicum, I was officially called to work in the factory in Ulaan Baatar since I had had practice in combing with a special metal comb and shearing the sheep and separating the wool. In June, we went to the countryside for a "farewell ceremony" at the government trade *khashaa*.[8] Marshal Choibalsan, and the General Secretary of the Central Commitee Yu. Tsedenbal attended. Each person was given a metal comb, and everyone in the country was asked to help in developing this important work.

I was appointed to go to Bayan-Uul *sum* in Zavkhan *aimag* (ed.: now a *sum* in the Gobi-Altai *aimag*) I rode a relay horse and was accompanied by school children as I visited almost every family in the *sum* to teach it how to shear the sheep and to comb the wool with a metal comb. In this way the plan to develop the raw materials from the state's herds got started. When I returned to Ulaan Baatar in August, I saw that our school was being abolished and a new university, the New Generation University, was being organized so, before the deadline, I had to reapply for admission.

At the time, schools had begun to follow certain rules concerning enrollment and students had to talk to the General Secretary of the Central Committee about the qualifying test. The General Secretary needed to ask several questions and appraise each student carefully before the Central Committee made its admission decision. This was a new type of institution and especially during its early years the curriculum was planned by the secretaries of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party *aimag* committees, the *aimag* leaders and their deputies, and other general directors. A strong, disciplined and intellectual course of studies would encourage the enrollment of future student leaders. I had done no previous work for the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party or the State although I did well at the Government Party School. I also did well on the entrance exam so I could enroll at the New Generation University where the directors were leading members of the Central Committee and included the General Secretary, the Prime Minister Kh. Choibalsan and Mr. Ch. Surenjav who had worked as his deputy for many years. At this time, our country supported all local education, particularly emphasizing the preparation of workers and professionals. I enrolled in the New Generation University in 1941 and in a special program at the Mongolian National University in 1942. The General Secretary of the Central Committee

took the initiative in setting up both of these institutions.

Yu. Tsedenbal taught lessons on the general scientific theory of economics at the New Generation University. In his lesson we learned about Karl Marx's famous work "Das Kapital" which Yu Tsedenbal had read in Russian since it had not yet been translated into Mongolian. The German genius Karl Marx in his formulation of socialist and capitalist economics examined and analyzed the character of social and industrial relations, and Tsedenbal explained wonderfully well Marx's theoretical conclusions. He wrote the word "Kapital" on the board with chalk and explained the political and economic terminology of his scientific theory. Yu. Tsedenbal was the first Mongolian to give such a lecture on the famous works of Karl Marx. He was one of our first intellectuals who was educated in the science of economics, and no one could talk like him. He had a vast knowledge and could explain things in clear language that people could understand. I went to the countryside with him many times and in many places and met many people who had talked with him who confirmed this.

Bazaryn Shirendev taught lessons in general history, was a member and General Secretary of the Politburo of the Central Committee and served as the Minister of Education and was elected the first President of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.[9] D. Ayurzana and Sh. Luvsanvandan were also academics and distinguished teachers, as were D.Tsedenjav and S. Jamiandagva. Sh. Luvsanvandan was a really great teacher, a wise man, and a true intellectual who taught himself many languages. He was a man of outstanding merit and a scholar of the Mongolian language who wrote *The Mongolian Dictionary*, which I use to this day.

Our D. Ayurzana, also a teacher, produced semi-fine wool from the "Orkhon" breed of sheep for which he received a government prize. These Mongol sheep were experimentally bred for their semi-fine wool and were among a number of new breeds which this learned man helped develop. I attended the 10 year school in Uliastai for only a year, having learned my letters and the four mathematical methods from my mother.

I started to study at the New Generation University but at the time did not think about future work. But my mother kept saying: "My son will be an educated man because he studies well!" From 1930 to 1940, children from families whose herds had not fared well came from the countryside to school in Ulaan Baatar. At that time, many children from wealthy families had no wish to attend school and study. The poor suffered most severely from various hardships. The high class people felt superior while those who were not rich had to work harder and make a real effort to study.

With some other students at the New Generation University, I directed the

Propaganda Brigades which worked in every *aimag* in Mongolia. Through this organization, fiddlers, films, and art books were sent to the countryside. In addition, it sponsored discussions of the situation in Mongolia and various other countries. The work of the Propaganda Brigade was greeted with much gratitude.

I, myself, directed the Propaganda Brigade in Zavkhan *aimag* where we met with all the leaders at the Cultural Palace in the *aimag* center and where I gave several lectures on the situation of the country. From the questions people asked, it was clear that they were very interested in what I said. In fact, after my lecture was over, the leader of Zavkhan *aimag*, the leader of the MPRP *aimag* committee, and others enthusiastically congratulated me. I told people how important it was to study, and I enjoyed working as a teacher.

4. I become a Teacher in the School

SJA: In 1943, the first 43 students from Ulaan Baatar and the surrounding countryside were graduated from our school. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party appointed them to work in social organizations. S. Damdin, from the first class, became the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League, Ts. Dashdendev worked on local economic issues, T. Dambiiniam became the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, B. Banzragch, J. Choijamtz, and S. Baljir became the first secretaries of Mongolian Party Revolutionary Party committees in the country *aimags*, and S. Samdan, the Procurator of Ulaan Baatar city.

The school made the administrative decision to keep me on as a teacher. I was not sure if the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and government had enough experience to evaluate future teachers so my school administration required that its teachers had completed their own education and were able to teach. I was relied on to instruct students in the History of the Soviet Communist Party. First, I had to print out material in the Mongolian language but there was little that had been published. Therefore, in 1944, the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party asked the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the USSR to enlist E. Yaroslavskii, from the Soviet Academy of Social Sciences, to devote himself to preparing a collection of lectures on the History of the USSR for my school. Although I did not know much Russian, using a dictionary, I worked day and night to get the general meaning so I could teach my students what I had learned.

At that time, the Central Committee gave me a very serious work assignment. D. Tömör-Ochir from the Central Committee published a pamphlet of philosophical themes, and it was up to me to prepare lectures on the historical themes in Soviet and Bolshevik history.[10)] At the time, D. Tömör-

Ochir was a department head at my school. Later, he was selected to work as secretary of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party.

I also had to read in Russian, day and night, Lenin's works including: "What Is To Be Done?" "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward," "Materialism and Empiriocriticism," "State and Revolution," and "Leftwing Communism: An Infantile Disorder." These were the most famous works of V.I. Lenin and the foundation for the study of Marxism-Leninism.

As a result, I prepared more than sixty lectures on the themes from the history of the USSR, and more than twenty of these were published as pamphlets which many people read and are referred to as the S. Jalaan-Aajav lectures. For many years, teachers and students used my pamphlets as reference books or textbooks. I was most encouraged when many thanked me for them, even though the translations were not perfect.

5. The Study of Law

SJA: After seven years, I finished at the New Generation University. From 1951 to 1956 I attended university in Irkutsk in the USSR where I studied law, with a minor specialty in the history of law. My thesis was on the theme of diplomatic work in "The 1926 Court Innovations in Mongolia." My thesis advisor was the scholar N.F. Farberov who had written many well-known books in the USSR. I later successfully defended my thesis for him. He had told me: "I work on legal issues at the government scientific institute, and I will direct your scholarly work and help you get a higher degree." I was very happy and went on to the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow to study for my doctorate. I did not get an internship from the aspirant committee and did all my scholarly work in my free time writing on "The Standards of Popular Law from 1921-1924." I completed my degree with honors at the Soviet Academy of Sciences thanks to my teacher N.F. Farberov, whom I shall never forget.

I expressed my gratitude to the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party for its assistance in helping me complete the course at the Soviet university. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party built up the socialist system in our country, as well as the power of the State by supporting the people's economy and an increased investment in culture. In the socialist countries, thousands of students studied, without tuition, at home universities or in the USSR and then entered all sorts of professions. The development in the Mongolian State of kindergartens was of inestimable value.
IL: Did you work in the legal profession after you finished school in Irkutsk? What did you do? Where did you begin to work?

JSA: When I finished the university I was appointed chief department head at the New Generation University. My first lesson was on "The basic principles of the government of the Mongolian People's Republic." The intellectual work was most exciting, and I began to do some research work on the history and development of Mongolian law. I focused on "The Khalkh Code" (1790-edition), which was the ancient written monument of Mongolian justice, and my great achievement was the publication, in 1958, of the results of my first research.

This "Khalkh Code" was the most outstanding achievement in the development of Mongolian law. It was promulgated in 1709 by the Khalkh Tüshiyetü Khan and the nobility, government, religious leaders, and scholars in the area bordering the Bulgan and Selenge *aimags* on the edge of the Eviin River.[11] Over time, it was revised and changed more than twenty times. "The Khalkh Code," "The Western Lamasery Khalkh Code," and "The Great Lamasery Khalkh Code" are all manuscripts that are stored in the Central Mongolian Library.[12] I wrote an extensive introduction and grouped "The Khalkh Code" into fourteen sections, which were then divided into three hundred and one parts, some with written commentary. I pondered extensively this famous "Khalkh Code" with its many laws and studied and carefully analyzed its numerous cases. I also participated in many learned meetings discussing the themes of the Khalkh Code.

I divided the history of the famous "Red Cheek" into two sections—one for criminal law and the other for civil law. The ancient Mongolian script was replaced by the Cyrillic script, for which I wrote an extensive introduction.[13] The "Red Cheek" was the basic "Khalkh Code" of laws, court rules, judgments, etc. Collections of similar judicial patterns and judgments are necessary for court practices. In the old days, the "Red Cheek" was studied by Mongolian ministers to aid them in their decisions regarding the innocent, the honest, and the clever and to decide whether a law was broken and what sentences and punishments to levy.

Apart from this, I published research on renowned topics including "The Sechen Khan of Khalkh," "The Government Program," "The Ten Good Deeds or Meritorious Actions" and "The Ten Virtuous Historical Scriptures."[14] It is important to study "The Ten Good Deeds" to learn about the development of government and law, as Mongolian law is imbued with serious ideas. Perhaps you have heard of the "Great Jasagh" of Chinggis Khan, which embodied the peak of Mongolian legal thought.[15] The law was, at that time, very strict and was carefully observed. I don't know of any other country that had such a set of laws at the time. So in this way we led the world and not just in riding horses and wielding the sword. History cannot be simplified.

I studied intellectual legal theory which was part of the tradition of

Mongolian law and which increasingly supported the law itself. I prepared some chapters in the book published by specialists at the Mongolian National University entitled "State Legal Theory." In addition, I published articles on my research concerning history, the law, and government.

From 1959 to 1984 I moved about in my work but still was available for my students. I became the Mongolian State General Procurator, the Leader of the Committee of Mongolian Ministers on Soviet Law and Legal Counsel, and served as the Committee Leader for State Information, Radio and Television. In addition, I worked for a few days at the Mongolian National University where I lectured on the themes of "Mongolian Governmental Law" and "Jurisprudence."

I was a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and served in the high office of Secretary. I also continued to lecture from time to time at the Mongolian National University and was especially proud that in 1943, where I had begun teaching at the age of 21 or 22, I was considered a very good teacher. Henceforth, for thirty years I engaged in the noble profession of teaching many, many students at the Mongolian National University and the Academy for Leadership Development. Many of my students went on to hold positions in the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the Mongolian government, the legal system, and various aspects of the nation's cultural life, education, and economy. I am also most grateful to have been awarded the title of "Respected Professor." While working as a teacher and doing research, I once met with D. Tömör-Ochir, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party. He asked me all sorts of ideological and cultural questions and told me that I would be supportive of his ideas and opinions on the Central Committee, but I refused his offer to work with him which, in fact, was made to me many times. One day, however, as I was teaching a lesson and was about to write with chalk on the blackboard, S. Dorjbat, the school's director, entered the room and told me that I had been summoned by the General Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, Yu. Tsedenbal, who urgently wished to talk to me. The students dispersed as I hurried to the office of the Central Committee where Yu. Tsedenbal and D. Tömör-Ochir were sitting. Yu. Tsedenbal invited me to sit down in an empty seat and stated that Comrade (Editor: D. Tömör-Ochir) wished to be a department leader in the Central Committee, and I was to be appointed the lawyer to prudently handle important cases. D. Tömör-Ochir wished me to work for him, and I was to do so. Although I had previously refused to work with D. Tömör-Ochir, I now had to say "yes!"

Thus I was appointed the leader of the Department of Ideology and

Culture and became used to this new job. D. Tömör-Ochir was the leader, and I went with him to work at the New Generation University—work that I knew well. In 1958, this New Generation University was reorganized and changed into a Party College.

6. Chief Mongolian State Procurator

SJA: Yu. Tsedenbal called me when I was working for the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and asked to talk with me about my work situation. I went directly to his office where he was sitting with D. Tömör-Ochir, and he said: "I want to speak to you about a hard saddle to ride!" I was taken aback, but I realized that he was giving me a special assignment, so I asked him what he meant. He answered: "I want to appoint you to the very important job of Mongolian General Procurator! This position involves dealing with those serious issues and sophisticated legal regulations that result in a successful implementation of the law. I am appointing you the General Procurator to handle these demands and know that you will work well!" D. Tömör-Ochir later told me that there was a fierce battle going on against distorting the law and that it was essential, at every stage, to observe the legal processes carefully and resolutely. He went on to say that he supported Yu. Tsedenbal's appointment and although I was not very eager to undertake this new position, I accepted. In addition, as a member of the Party, I did not have much choice and knew that those of us who were educated were appointed to such jobs.

I then met Mr. D. Choijamts, the General Procurator at the time, in his office where we discussed his work. When we had finished talking, Mr. D. Choijamts got up from his chair and took a seal from out of his desk. He explained that it was different from all others because it was reserved for the General Procurator. I had, therefore, received the blessing for my new government position, and he put the seal back for safekeeping.

I was really anxious about serving in this important post of General Procurator and was frightened inside. I worried that this work could be slow-moving and although I was, by profession, a lawyer, I had not had a great deal of experience for such a major position However, I went to the General Procurator's office with all its appurtenances, met the workers and heard their impressions, asked questions about the work and wrote down all that was said.

At that time, there were about sixty workers in the office of General Procurator in the four departments of general inspection, detective investigation, legal investigation and special investigation. It was the job of the highest supervisory power or person to implement Mongolian law in all areas. The State and particularly the General Procurator had the authority to transmit and

implement the law at every level which was to be based on correct thinking and doctrinal work. Thus the Procurator General had to assess if the law was upheld in these areas:

1. A non-threatening approach should be taken to prevent the fear and threat of a criminal attack.
2. The law had to provide for everyone, ensure freedom, and prevent violence.
3. The Mongolian people live a communal life, but their property rights must still be guaranteed.
4. The population's right to life and health must be preserved against any infringements.

There are three themes in a society, two of which are stated here, which the General Procurator needed to protect. They are: personal freedom and the inviolable right to State property. However, the socialist system has its own deficiencies and limitations, not to mention distortions, and in this way the work of our procurator is very influential.

The Procurator carries out the law of Mongolia and guarantees its fulfillment in the following ways:

1. The law of Mongolia must be carried out strictly so the Procurator must see that the law provides everyone with equal rights and that the law is equally applied.
2. A judge must supervise the investigation of the law and when a crime is committed. The party involved must be punished so the innocent and those not involved are protected.
3. The government must organize all legal actions: decisions, orders, rules and instructions. There must be persistent and thorough adherence to the principles and foundations of Mongolian law. The Procurator General must see that the Council of Ministers, the ambassadors, and the local leaders follow, endorse, and enforce the law as well as clarifying or eliminating any conflicts and disagreements.

Finally, it must be said that the law is involved broadly in many spheres of life and does not just apply to the prevention of criminal activity.

7. Leader of the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee

YK: For how many years did you know Yu. Tsedenbal?

SJA: I studied at the Party Central School from 1939 to 1941, and I went to the New Generation University from 1941 to 1943 where Yu. Tsedenbal taught general economic theory. After 1943, we finished our studies, and Yu. Tsedenbal worked as the leader of the State Examination Commission. Yu. Tsedenbal always watched and listened attentively to the students, his exams were error free and beautifully written and they were all evaluated with written

comments. During the noon break in the state exams we played ball with the students, and I have a photo of this. So this is how I knew Yu. Tsedenbal.

He directed all sorts of work for more than forty years. In 1960, my health was poor, and I wished to be relieved of my position of General Procurator, and Yu. Tsedenbal, who was the General Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, released me from this work and appointed me the leader of the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee, which, with the Mongolian Judicial Committee, had the basic function of transmitting and implementing demands from the government. During that time, the State Supreme Court transferred the organization of legal matters from the Council of Ministers to the Judicial Ministry. The Council of Ministers' Legal Committee was the highest agency of State power which had the responsibility for the difficult work of preparing the most important bills.

In 1960, I proposed a new State plan for legal education, and there was a lot of discussion that this important work should be presented to the People's Great Khural for ratification. Yu. Tsedenbal, who was the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, was in charge of organizing a state commission, and by law it had to draw up a plan, and our Legal Committee was given this assignment. It was the role of the State Commission to certify the state law plan. I was the lawyer from the Legal Committee given the task of evaluating the nation's past as objectively as possible as well as giving a clear analysis of the future of the country from the legal point of view. Yu. Tsedenbal, who was the leader of the State Legal Commission, was given a copy of this new State law which, we made clear, had to be studied in the context of the socialist system. The law, therefore, had to conclude with the historical triumph of the highly developed relationship between our national industry and socialism. Mongolian civil law, with the support of the State, provides freedom, preserves peoples' lives, raises the cultural level of the country, and strengthens the nation's sense of well-being. Socialism was the technical and material foundation of the Mongolian State while the government handled its major issues.

The Council of Ministers' Legal Committee worked on the new State law that was reviewed by the Law Committee and on which Yu. Tsedenbal also worked and made the final decisions. At the time, Yu. Tsedenbal called for "a national law that would show responsible work." As leader of the Law Committee, he stated that he had to do even better work and that he benefited from working near me. In addition, he reported that he had to be relieved of State business for one month to work in the summer pastures in Bayangol and that all of us scholars had to accompany him to complete this work of legal theory. This body of laws would apply to the socialist countries and would be

far removed from those capitalist nations, America, England, Germany, and Japan. So leader Yu. Tsedenbal and I took off to the summer pastures of Bayangol where we spent 38 days of all-nighters working on the new version of the national law plan. Discussions were held with people who would vote on the final version.

We studied the legal works of many countries as we prepared the national law plan which took us many days and nights and was drawn up in Russian. I presented the relevant material, and scribes divided up the written work to check for errors. Each section was gone over, and there were difficult technical issues regarding bookkeeping. Yu. Tsedenbal, who was a professional lawyer, and I exchanged our views on some of the issues of legal theory.

As a youth, Yu. Tsedenbal studied economics at the Economics University in Irkutsk. He was also interested in the law and was well trained in legal studies. After finishing at the university, he went to Moscow where he enjoyed perusing the book stalls and collected many law books as he prepared to attend the Moscow Law School. In 1940, Marshal Kh. Choibalsan was in Moscow, and J. Sambuu was our ambassador when Yu Tsedenbal was summoned from Ulaan Baatar.[16)]

Yu. Tsedenbal had a fine command of the articles and documents and his abilities were known by those who worked with him. He had great endurance and would write day and night and almost single-handedly wrote the national law plan with its socialist influence, which was discussed at the People's Great Khural.

From 1960, our country was served for more than thirty years by this state law which strengthened our national safety, promoted the economy and culture, and raised the standard of living. The theory behind this law was studied by experienced and educated professionals. By 1960, the new law was discussed. The People's Great Khural had confirmed it, and it was publicized. I was very grateful for the contributions from the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee.

After the law's confirmation, the major work of revision began. The procedures connected to criminal, civil, labor, and family law urgently needed revision. People who were experienced, highly qualified, and skillful with documents were needed for this important work so it was decided that Tsend, Khorkhoi, Amarkhuu and Jambaldorj were the best lawyers to work on this Law Committee. They had to study the bills and regulations and present them to the People's Great Khural, which would confirm them so they could be followed for many years. The Council of Ministers' Legal Committee covered the period from 1921 to 1960 in a major work that affirmed government law and legal acts (laws, decisions, instructions) and systematized the publication

of their difficulties. This difficult work involved legal acts relating to the socio-economic, cultural, educational, and scientific branches of the government. The agricultural and industrial economy, culture, education, preventative health measures, trade, transportation, communications, and the sciences were under the government's administration, and thus laws pertaining to them all had to be systematized and published.

Although this collection of legal acts was most sophisticated, all of the parts had to be correct so that they could be publicized, strictly followed, and implemented. The committee worked hard day and night and finished in a short time. Our legal committee managed to organize this important work that was then sent off to the People's Great Khural and the government, so each legal act could be checked and permission could be granted to publish this legal work.

One day, leader Yu. Tsedenbal had summoned me to work on the Legal Committee although I had not expected another meeting. He told me that he wanted to appoint me the deputy leader of the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee and that there was talk of my being made Deputy Director of the Council of Ministers.

When the Mongolian government was first organized, all the work followed strict regulation and the appointments concerned only the law and the legal sphere. But now things are different, and without the permission from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, no legal plan can be introduced to the Great Khural and the government. Those on the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee were all good, hard working professionals whom I wish to celebrate.

YK: Now can you talk about your personal life. When did you marry? How many children are in your family?

SJA: I have a wife and a child. I want to tell you that I am my mother's child. My mother came with me when I attended school in Ulaan Baatar and she advised me to keep two things in mind: (1) You will go to school in Ulaan Baatar and (2) You must study hard. Later she told me not to marry until I could provide for a wife and children although she certainly wanted me to marry, have children, and be the devoted head of household. I have tried to fulfill her wishes.

While I was studying I became acquainted with Jigmed whose surname was Inchinkhorloonam. We had studied history together at the Mongolian National University and the New Generation University. I became a teacher there, and she became a professional journalist. My wife's father served food to the high lamas at the Gandan Monastery and her mother, Norjmaa, was a seamstress for the Bogd Jebstundamba Khututku who was the Bogd Khan of

Buddhism and the leader of the Mongolian government.[17)]

My wife and I and our daughter, Khandsuren, who studied and taught at the Mongolian National University Law School were, for no reason, later dismissed from our positions and sent to teach in the countryside. Nevertheless, Khandsuren's eldest son, Jargalsaikhan, completed his course in biology at the Mongol National University and, in fact, both children finished their education. I am also pleased that Khandsuren's daughter, Tegszaya, was the first in her class at the Mongolian National University Law School. So I am a happy grandfather and am delighted to have grandchildren, great grandchildren, and even a great, great grand child named Chungun. The music of children warms up a home, soothes one's worries, and fills a person full of laughter, happiness and joy. This is how life is lived.

8. Organizing Mongolian Television

IL: It is said that you were the person who organized Mongolian TV and laid its foundation stone. Could you elaborate on this?

SJA: I worked as the leader of the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee for more than four years with such good friends and excellent professionals as S. Tsend and T. Khorkhoi. They were both well educated and had a good deal of experience and foresight. One day Yu. Tsedenbal summoned me to his office and said: "I want to talk to you about an appointment that will require you to work in all sorts of places. Radio, news, newspapers, and journals must now be better organized. Discipline and order is very good! Thus, I am now appointing you to this job as a lawyer." I told him that I was not a professional journalist and could not do work of this sort and tried to run out the door. However, he did not accept my refusal and on April 11, 1964 at the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, he pointed out the need for a manager of the news and the radio. Any candidate had to be a member of the Party, but there was little said about this new position and how fast it would be filled. Then I was appointed to the job as the Director of News and Radio since I was deemed to be an effective and cultured person. It was proposed that there should be a separate division for our nation's best journalists, government scholars, and commentators and that the State should organize translation classes in Russian, Chinese, German, and French taught by those who knew the languages very well. My responsibilities would include implementing the general principles and rules of the job, heightening discipline, and observing all else that was necessary for the best work.

There is a Mongolian saying "brass becomes yellow when it is together with gold" or another translation is "friendship with a good person is

moonlight." Many people at my new job were professionals who had studied and knew a great deal about publishing the news and thus were full of ideas. Over the years, they had overcome many difficulties on the job, and I felt that I could work with them in organizing the enormous undertaking of setting up Mongolian television.

I had a lot of support and thus realized it wasn't so hard to devote my efforts to this task. It was essential in modern Mongolia to expand the news services through television in the first half of 1960. Thus talks began at the division of News and Radio Affairs in the Communications Ministry. There were many governmental measures that demanded discussion and resolution, but there was little agreement on the costs of such a venture. Both the Planning Commission and the Treasury wanted fewer expenses in setting up television, and so there were problems. I had, therefore, to settle the issues of the budget and the concerns related to capital with Yu. Tsedenbal. But once the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party met, an agreement was reached, but I wasn't really listened to and had little chance to meet with Yu. Tsedenbal myself. Thus things were difficult. Then I finally had my chance to present a proposal to the Politburo and Yu. Tsedenbal, and they listened attentively and asked me all sorts of questions. Yu. Tsedenbal asked what steps would be included in organizing this television and went on to ask me how I would organize the implementation of the television. He wondered if I knew how television worked in Ulaan Ude[18] and pointed out that we could learn from it.

Organizing Mongolian television took quite a long time and, though I encountered many difficulties, it was finally decided that Russian engineers could rather quickly build a high quality television tower. The hardest problem was training government professionals to work as TV engineers, technical workers, TV broadcasters and journalists, directors, producers, and cameramen. Thus we turned for help to the Soviet Radio and TV committee, and I went to Moscow to meet E.G. Laptin from the State TV Committee. I got to know him and told him what we needed. and we decided that we would work together on this project.

On September 27, 1967 Mongolia State TV began broadcasting this new modern cultural medium into Mongolian homes where our first programs were warmly received by satisfied viewers. Thus the foundation of Mongolian TV was established, and the first broadcasts demonstrated our ability to mobilize intelligently and effectively.

In the future the quality of our TV productions and our broadcasts will become even stronger and will attract young people who can be trained to master the professions of journalist, producer, director, cameraman, and technical engineer. But first these young people must finish school before they

become professionals who will strengthen Mongolian TV and enhance the quality of its broadcasting.

9. The Government

SJA: From November, 1971 to June, 1983 I was a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, was the Secretary, and worked as the deputy leader of the Mongolian People's Great Khural. I also worked as Director of Personnel for the Party and the State and was responsible during this period for issues relating to party work, construction work, law, supervision, government and general organization; and finally issues relating to Ulaan Baatar.

These are the issues which were under the supervision of the Politburo and the Central Committee because the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party was connected to the decisions of the government which related to social, economic and cultural, and foreign policy issues. All questions had to be discussed by them. People in the Party and the higher levels of the government administration followed the principles of collective responsibility in their work. I will briefly describe some of my work but the story of the Party is too long to tell, so I will only give a summary. There were Party committees in the eighteen *aimags* as well as in Ulaan Baatar, Darkhan, and Erdenet.[19] In addition, the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League, the Young Pioneers, the Mongolian Industrial League, and the Mongolian Women's Organization were under its general jurisdiction. The Party directed the organization of these various groups and there was an instructor, endorsed by the Party, in charge of organization and bookkeeping in each *aimag*.

The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party's Great Khural, the Central Committee's All Khural, and the Government Bureau made a decision that the Party had to strengthen its level of guidance and check all of its instructions on Party work. I was then the director of the department and worked with G. Adiya and Ts. Balkhaahav, who was later promoted to be Secretary of the Central Committee. The Party created a reserve of educated people and set up a system in which each Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party Secretary in every local administration in each city and *aimag* had to report back to the Party about his or her responsibility for daily issues. Some of these highly educated, ethical, and professional people were ministers or special local leaders appointed to work and direct an *aimag* city.

Party work in our department was organized on different levels with increasing responsibility, especially for those who were educated. Those on the first level organized a conference in the capital city of Ulaan Baatar, as well as local conferences at all levels to give the Party a boost and encourage

increased responsibility. All branches of the Party, the government, and the economy had to be supported so that people's lives would improve through cultural advances. Such was the talk at that time, and it went on endlessly.

I recall that in the early days of the Party that its cells at all levels were under the supervision of highly professional, educated, experienced, and ethical people. For example, in each *aimag* city or town almost all of the secretaries of the Party committee had gone to the Party school or institute and some had completed work at the Academy of Sciences and were professionals. If the Party followed this course and was so well prepared, the offices would be improved.

During these years in Mongolia, the Party and the State advanced education, culture, science, and health maintenance. All children of school age were sent to school, and they were supported in their education both at home and abroad, so that they could be well-educated and have all sorts of professional careers in the governmental and cultural spheres. Literacy and the elimination of all sorts of contagious diseases were the goals of the state and the Party.

For the first time, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences organized many research meetings to help develop Mongolia's academic prowess, which was becoming more important in our country. As education became increasingly valued, schools had to be set up in all *aimag* centers and *sums* for thousands of girls and boys. In addition, branches of the Mongolian National University, Teachers' Institutes, an Agricultural School, and a Medical College all had to be established to train professionals in a variety of fields, and they would bring pride to Mongolia. Mongolia's art, literature, and spiritual heritage also had to play a major role in the country and, in fact, the Party was successful in nurturing the development of culture in the lives of the Mongolian people. As a result, people experienced fewer hardships as they had more money for food, clothing, and other material possessions. Life was more comfortable, people were less afraid, and they had a better mental outlook.

I, myself, worked in the Party's Central Committee and in the Party and strengthened the role of the leader over 70,000 members. Mongolia's independence was strengthened, there was greater national safety, and peoples' lives improved thanks to the Politburo's implementation of clear economic and cultural goals. The role of the Politburo was to carry out its own policies and those of the government also regarding life in the countryside where clear decisions had to be made and goals had to be met. I was involved from 1940 to1980 in all of these activities, although the Politburo did not fulfill all its plans. The Politburo was composed of seven members, two deputy members –nine people altogether. For more than twenty years, Yu. Tsedenbal, J.

Batmünkh, D. Molomjamts, D. Maidar, T. Ragchaa, S. Luvsanravdan, B. Altangerel, S. Gombojav, B. Dejid and S. Jalan-Aajav worked on it at various times. Actually, all the work of the Party, the Mongolian government, and the nation was concentrated in the Politburo.

The Party's reputation was linked to the way it raised important issues. The national law states: "The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party directs the social order and creates its organization." It was accepted that the Party's legal basis as a political party and State power was confirmed by national law. Thus we were part of the world socialist system and acted on the same principles as other socialist countries. The composition of the Politburo of the Party's Central Committee included the secretaries of the Politburo, the President of the People's Great Khural, the President of the Council of Ministers and its two deputy leaders. Therefore the Politburo of the Central Committee, the Party, and Great Khural followed the laws of the Party. Although the policies of the Politburo and the Central Committee were quite clear, stupid talk and quarrels arose concerning such government issues as free time at work while the weightier issues like the State budget were discussed directly by the Party.

Each member of the Politburo had a specialty. D. Molomjamts focused on the central economy, N. Jagvaral dealt with the agricultural economy, and S. Gombojav concentrated on internal and external trade and foreign relations. I was in charge of legal issues and problems of government administration. The Politburo was responsible for the policies and work of the Party so that the Party's reputation would be strengthened. I know how interesting this work was because I served as Secretary on the Central Committee for over ten years, and as member of the Central Committee for twenty years.

I can attest that the Party has not cheated the people of Mongolia but rather has protected their interests so that they love and respect it. Nevertheless, there were criminal acts of exploitation of government property, bribe taking, and swindling that raised ethical issues and created conflict among members of the Politburo.

Although I myself made some mistakes and was deficient in some of my work for the Party, I deny doing any misdeeds and always tried to reach the goals set for me. The Party did, in fact, make mistakes and was biased in its handling of some problems, including the errors made in dealing with L. Tsend and D. Tömör-Ochir in the so-called "anti-party group." This story from years gone by serves as an example. From time to time, the personnel of the Politburo were changed to better serve the young people of Mongolia. D. Tömör-Ochir had been a member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee and was most knowledgeable about education and those policies

that were out of date. He was, however, criticized by Damba, Surenjav, Samdan, Balgan and Lamchin, although most of the members of the Central Committee supported him. Thus the composition of the Politburo changed, but Yu. Tsedenbal said little. The case of D. Tömör-Ochir demonstrated that few people could offer honest criticism when the Politburo had such power. D. Tömör-Ochir generally supported Yu. Tsedenbal but also made the mistake of offering honest criticism, and he suffered for doing so. Tsedenbal said that he was a bit extreme about Tömör-Ochir who had worked hard but was too temperamental.

The MPRP made mistakes especially when Yu. Tsedenbal was the absolute leader of the MPRP. When I study the history, I can find the real story. These "mistakes" were essentially crimes that led to the abuse and suffering of at least one thousand people. The new law and ethical principles were often at odds with these actions but we cannot place blame.[20)]

10. My Words about Yu. Tsedenbal

YK: Could you talk a little about your years working with Yu. Tsedenbal, the General Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party?

SJA: I will speak briefly about the time I worked with the General Secretary on the Central Committee. He didn't always have the right answers which was evident at the Eighth Meeting of the Central Committee in August, 1984.[21)] It is, however, important to tell his life story that included more than forty years in the Party and in the Mongolian government, as well as serving as the leader of the country. He accomplished a great deal, and it is impossible to recount all his distinguished service. I became acquainted with him in 1942 when I was a student at the New Generation University where he taught general economic theory to prepare us for the state exam. After 1958, he had the great responsibility of the leader of the government, and from 1972 to1984 I worked with him in the Party as well as the government. I am, therefore, qualified to speak about his character. I can attest that Mongolia flourished under Yu. Tsedenbal and remained independent and protective of her own interests. Because of his efforts, he earned a good reputation as our leader.

Yu. Tsedenbal was highly educated, cultured, and knowledgeable in many areas. He was an energetic worker, strong, industrious, honest and experienced in the government. He began to organize all the branches of our country's economy. He successfully and energetically supported raising cultural standards. He also offered new economic initiatives in industry and construction as well as the development of the Virgin Lands movement that opened areas for the cultivation of crops, although the Mongols were not accustomed to eating grains.[22)]

Yu. Tsedenbal was truly revolutionary in preparing a work force of strong and educated professionals. He took responsibility for All Party programs and the National Law and carefully wrote reports at each meeting of the Party Great Khural and the All Khural.

Yu. Tsedenbal strengthened both Mongolia's independence and national security. Some people said that "he was interested in Russia and took Russia's side and worked to help that country." But such talk is baseless and lacks proof. Yu. Tsedenbal was a true leader of the people who went out to the countryside and knew the life of the herder. He helped people in their distress, received their complaints and petitions, and dealt efficiently with them. Because he was humane and compassionate, he helped people find homes, a livelihood or financial aid, and education, as well as finding relatives to care for the children of the imprisoned.

They say that Yu. Tsedenbal was under the delusion that both L.Tsend and D. Tömör-Ochir were in "the anti-Party group" and were guilty of deviationism against both the Party and the Mongolian government. They were, therefore, dismissed and banished to the countryside. Yu. Tsedenbal, the General Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, was married for many years to Anastasia Ivanovna Filatova who was, herself, involved in some areas that led to wrong decisions and trouble with the cadres. She, however, did not suffer from her mistakes.

Yu. Tsedenbal was confused by all the gossip, slander, and trouble-making which resulted from a few good-for-nothings being out for themselves. Consequently, a "bad odor" arose among the Party and government personnel who became suspicious and could not accept that such a situation existed in Mongolia. Yu. Tsedenbal, at the end of 1970, was in increasingly poor health, was getting older, and was less effective in his work. He had drained all his reserves after working ceaselessly day and night, had not enjoyed a vacation for many years, and needed to end his service to the Party and the Mongolian government.

Yu. Tsedenbal who had been under "house arrest" in Moscow was in a very difficult situation and died deeply depressed and sad, alone in his room.[23] His wife, children, and relatives buried him in Mongolia.

Even if his death had been peaceful, he still would have been the scapegoat for the powerful. Such vilification was entirely baseless and could not be justified in any way. I worked for the government and was in the MPRP at the time and saw that people did not show him the proper respect and sympathy.

Although he was awarded the military title of Marshal, was a hero of the Mongolian state and became a hero of Mongolian Labor, all these honors were

withdrawn by the MPRP which went after him with impunity. In addition, his apartment and all his belongings vanished while he was living in Moscow, and no one was held legally responsible. It is undeniable that Yu. Tsedenbal made mistakes, and the slate cannot be wiped clean. History is history. People he knew who were members of the Party and the Politburo made false accusations but no one was condemned or legally charged. Finally, in the 1970s, when Yu. Tsedenbal was old, in ill health, and unable to work effectively, no one tried to lessen his responsibilities or remove him as the General Secretary of the Central Committee. So here you have my personal thoughts on the merits and weaknesses of Yu. Tsedenbal.

11. Victimization

IL: How were you connected to the so-called "anti-party group?" Was there, in fact, such a group?

SJA: I had good relations with Yu. Tsedenbal, and we respected each other's ideas and criticisms. The leader of the People's Great Khural was Jamsrangiin Sambuu. By nature, he was very intelligent and was a genuinely fine Mongolian man. After Sambuu's death, Yu. Tsedenbal served as the leader of the Council of Ministers, and he spoke about appointing me to take that position but, even though I was under great pressure, I refused his offer because I believed that such a leader had to be a professional and experienced economist. Yu. Tsedenbal and I discussed many issues and thus we spoke every two or three days and sometimes for three or four hours at night. Nevertheless, Yu. Tsedenbal regarded me as the dregs of society because I was hesitant about speaking or offering proposals at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee.

In the summer of 1983 when I was 60, I received an invitation from the USSR for an official visit as a representative of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. My visit was well organized and when I returned to Ulaan Baatar, I went directly to meet with Yu. Tsedenbal who asked me where I had gone. I thought that a strange question and answered that I had been invited to visit the USSR and that all of this had been announced in the newspaper, "Unen ("Truth")." When I asserted that he certainly read that paper, he did not answer and there was silence. Things had not gone well between us and, as he went to his office, I wondered what this was all about. I knew that there would be some decisions at the Central Committee All Khural connected to our meeting, but Yu. Tsedenbal did not call me to his office so I went to see him. He was cool and aloof and did not ask me to sit down and said that we needed to talk about my pension, which the Politburo would then discuss. I told him I was working for the government as a lawyer

and still had research to do. Thus I wanted to know why I was being retired and said that I wished to bring this up at the All Khural. Yu. Tsedenbal cautioned me against doing this, saying: "You will see that we will take care of you. Your speech should express your gratitude." I thought to myself that I had a lot to say, but I also realized that there was no need to ruin the solidarity of the Party. I really only wished to continue my research at the Academy of Sciences.

I did not meet with Yu. Tsedenbal for several days and when I did pass by his office I was not let in even when I begged to enter. Thus, for several months I was silent. Then in December, the Control Committee of the Central Committee called me in, and Bugayin Dejid, the leader, said: "In 1964, you were the leader of the anti-party group and dismissed certain issues that I wished to be presented to members of the Central Committee at the All Khural. Although I felt you defamed me in doing this, I restrained myself but wondered how you could be connected to "the anti-Party' group" He went on to quote what he thought was a timely epigram that implied I should have complied with his request to present his program. In December, 1964 the Sixth All Khural of the Central Committee met, and T. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu and B. Surmaajav presented their criticisms stating that "our country is in debt and must move forward on its own! However, Yu. Tsedenbal is protecting Russian interests and our intellectuals are discriminated against!" These men were dubbed "the anti-Party group" and were exiled for many years. It took thirty years to exonerate them. I was not associated with them. Then the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party came after me to collect my Party membership card. Two months later, the leader from Tsagdaagiin met with me and told me that it had been decided that I would be living in Aldarkhan *sum*, Zavkhan *aimag* and should go there as rapidly as possible. So I collected all my belongings and loaded the police van for Zavkhan *aimag*. Two days later, a policeman flew out to see that we were officially there and took us to the Zavkhan *aimag* center where a police major met us and escorted us to Aldarkhan *sum*. At that time, my daughter J. Jandsuren was a teacher at the Mongolian National University, but she was dismissed from her job. It was not necessary to dismiss us, slander us, purge us from the MPRP and banish us to the countryside.

Yu. Tsedenbal's wife, Anastasia Ivanovna Filatova, and Bugayin Dejid, the leader of the Control Committee, were responsible for our exile to the countryside. Yu. Tsedenbal's wife was the director of a Children's Fund and we disagreed over certain issues and our increasingly strained relations eventually came to a head. A.I. Filatova made so many demands on me that I finally made it clear that I would not do as she wished. Since I did good work

and was respected, many people stressed that all the criticism of me had no foundation. A.I Filatova continued to attack my work and tried to trap me shouting: "Up to now the secretary of the Central Committee hasn't seen all that you have been doing. But now, B. Dejid knows everything!" In 1984, A. I. Filatova was in Moscow, and I had the responsibility for the work she was involved in. When she returned to Ulaan Baatar, she made it clear that I was to go to prison, and she longed to have her wish fulfilled.

Thus A.I. Filatova and I had very tense relations, and this hostile situation was very favorable for B. Dejid. B. Dejid was the Minister of the Interior and Yu. Tsedenbal had also appointed him to the Control Committee of the Party. I did not support him. "It was said B. Dejid was surely a spy, and there was one spy on the Poltiburo of the Central Committee who was indebted to Beria." L. Beria was I.V. Stalin's Director of the KGB and was a terrible man who destroyed and executed many innocent people. B. Dejid was appointed leader of the Central Committee's Control Committee and was on the Politburo of the Central Committee. I tried, in vain, to speak with him and Yu. Tsedenbal but understood why he did not treat me well. A.I. Filatova and B. Dejid had a common goal and conspired to fire me.

Thus I was relieved of my position as a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee, as Secretary and President of the People's Great Khural, as an advisor to Yu. Tsedenbal, and as a member of the Party. Yu. Tsedenbal went along with the decisions of the Politburo and the All Khural. The Control Committee made the final decision, and I was exiled to the countryside.

On July 31, 1990, the Central Committee deemed that the charges against me were invalid, and I was given a certificate of rehabilitation. I returned to Ulaan Baatar from exile but with no work. I was very poor and was on the street all day but I took each day at a time. I was a well-known lawyer, a doctor, and a professor. The first referee of the Mongolian National Law was the leader J. Sovd, and I was pleased with the work of his legal committee. So I, Sanpilin Jalaan-Aajav, having passed through some difficult times, began to live my life again. I worked for many years as a teacher, and I was recognized as a "Mongolian Lawyer of Merit" which was a high honor and for which I express my deep gratitude.

YK: All right. I have been so pleased to have this very good conversation with you.

Notes

1) A Banner, an administrative unit organized by the Qing dynasty of China that controlled Mongolia from 1691 to 1911.
2) In May of 1926, thirty Mongolian students went to Germany for university

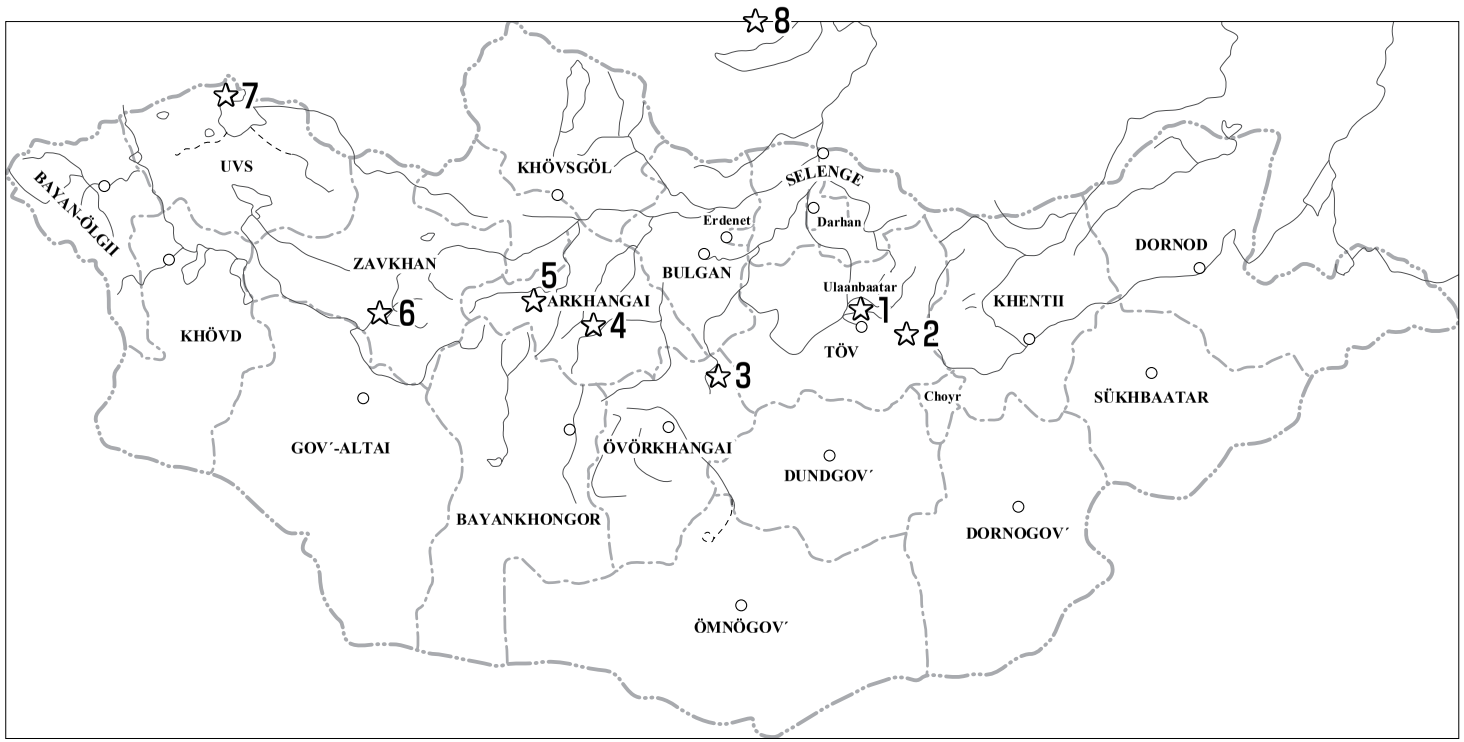
education. See Serge Wolff, "Mongolian Educational Venture in Western Europe (1926-1929)," *The Mongolia Society Bulletin* 9:2 (Fall, 1970), pp. 40-100 on this mission. Dashdorjiin Natsagdorj (1906-1937), one of these students, started his studies in journalism in Berlin and then in Leipzig. Returning to Mongolia in 1929, he wrote his renowned poem "My Native Land," a brilliant paean to Mongolia's natural beauty, along with short stories, a libretto for an opera, and translations of some of the Russian poets, including Alexander Pushkin. For a Soviet assessment of his works, see Ludmilla Gerasimovich, *History of Modern Mongolian Literature* (*1921-1964*) (trans. by John Krueger, et al., Bloomington: The Mongolia Society, 1970), pp. 79-100. A few of his writings appeared to be critiques of the radical leaders who came to power in 1928. The government thus detained him for six months. Meanwhile he had broken with his Mongolian wife and married a Russian and had a child with her. The authorities sent him and his child back to Russia, a terrible blow for Natsagdorj who fell into a depression and turned to liquor to drown his sorrows. He died at the age of thirty-one right as the purges against lamas, military men, and officials began. On his later life, see Shagdariin Sandag and Harry Kendall, *Poisoned Arrows: The Stalin-Choibalsan Mongolian Massacres, 1921-1941* (Westview: Boulder, 2000), pp. 145-147.

3) For a journalistic account of the career of Danzan Ravjaa (1803-1856), see Michael Kohn, *Lama of the Gobi* (Hong Kong: Blacksmith Books, 2010).
4) The principal monetary unit in Mongolia then and now.
5) For brief descriptions of this palace that has been turned into a museum, see Jane Blunden, *Mongolia: The Bradt Travel Guide* (Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 2004), pp. 236-238 and Claire Sermier, *Mongolia: Empire of the Steppes* (Hong Kong: Airphoto International, 2002), pp. 138-139.
6) An important coal producing center.
7) B. Tserendorj (d. 1928) was the first Premier of the Mongolian People's Republic from 1923 until his death in 1928. P. Genden (1892 or 1895-1937) was the Prime Minister of Mongolia in the 1930s but was purged from his position in 1936 and then executed in 1937 in the USSR. On these two figures, see Charles Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), pp. 235-236, 336-342, and 354-357. In 1996, Genden's daughter turned his house in Ulaan Baatar into a Memorial Museum for Victims of Political Repression. See Sermier, *Mongolia*, p. 144 and Blunden, *Mongolia*, p. 240.
8) In this case, not an enclosure for animals, but simply a building.
9) See Temujin Onon, trans. *Through the Ocean Waves: The Autobiography of Bazaryn Shirendev* (Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1997).
10) On Tömör-Ochir, see Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees and Dissenters: Three Twentieth-Century Mongolian Leaders* (trans. by Mary Rossabi; Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2011), pp. 11-13, 98-117, and 199-204 and J. Boldbaatar, "The Eight-hundredth Anniversary of Chinggis Khan: The Revival and Suppression of Mongolian National Consciousness" in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce Elleman, eds., *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 238, 241, and 244.
11) The Tüshiyetü Khan was one of the four important Khans during the era of Qing

dynasty rule. For more on the Khanates, see Bawden, pp. 70-80. On the squabbles among these Khans and the ramifications, see Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 148-149.

12) On this code, see Valentin Riasanovsky, *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 111-126.
13) In the 1940s, the Cyrillic alphabet replaced the ancient Mongolian script that was based on the Uyghur script. The Cyrillic alphabet is the commonly used script in contemporary Mongolia.
14) The Sechen Khan was another of the important Khans in the Qing era.
15) David Morgan. "The 'Great Yasa' of Chingiz Khan and Mongol Law in the Ilkhanate," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49 (1986), pp. 169-170 believes the Jasagh derives from an oral tradition while Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's Ĵasaγ," *East Asian History* 6 (1993), pp. 102-104 states that it was actually written.
16) On Sambuu, see Mary and Morris Rossabi, trans. and ed., *Herdsman to Statesman: The Autobiography of Jamsrangiin Sambuu of Mongolia* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).
17) For Ulaan Baatar's monastery, Sermier, *Mongolia*, pp. 235-236 and Blunden, *Mongolia,* pp. 134-137.
18) Capital of Buryatia.
19) Ulaan Baatar, Darkhan, and Erdenet were the most populous cities in the country.
20) For other views of Tsedenbal, see sections throughout Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees.*
21) Jalan-Aajav is referring here to the Politburo's stripping of Tsedenbal's positions and his "detention" in the USSR.
22) Tsogt-Ochiirin Lookhuuz is most often given credit for helping to introduce the Virgin Lands movement to Mongolia. See Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, pp. 84-88.
23) Tsedenbal died in 1991.

Map of Mongolia



1. Ulaanbaatar
2. Erdene
3. Burd
4. Ihtamir
5. Tariat
6. Aldarhaan
7. Davst
8. Erhuu (Irkutsk)

Photographs

Renchin Minjuur

Photo 1 Mr. Minjuur, as an agent of the Ministry of the Interior, with friends from the countryside, Ulaanbaatar, 1952

Photo 2 Mr. Minjuur, as a student, with fellow students, Moscow, 1956

Photo 3 Mr.Minjuur at a dairy plant set up in Ikh Tamir Soum, Arkhangai Aimag. Ikh Tamir Soum, 1970

Photo 4 Mr. Minjuur with students at “Gerelt Zam” *negdel* Ikh Tamir Soum, 1972

Photo 5 The Heroes of Labour from the agricultural *negdels*. Ulaanbaatar, 1972

Photo 6 Mr. Minjuur at a celebration of the Mongolian White Month, Ulaanbaatar, 2007

Yumjaagiin Ayush

Photo 1 Front row from right: Ayush's sister Yu. Javzan, his mother A. Zaya, and his brother Yu. Tsend; Back row from right: Ayush's sister-in-law A. I. Filatova and his brother Yu. Tsedenbal, Ulaanbaatar, 1940

Photo 2 Ayush's brother Yu. Tsedenbal and his sister-in-law A. I. Filatova with their sons Vladislav and Zorig, Ulaanbaatar, 1958

Photo 3 Yu. Tsedenbal greeting the Russian cosmonaut Yuri. Gagarin, Moscow, 1961

Photo 4 Yu. Tsedenbal, Ulaanbaatar, 1983

Photo 5 From the right: Ayush's brother Yu. Tsend and his daughter Buyantugs, Tsedenbal, and Ayush, Moscow, 1986

Photo 6 Anastasia, daughter of Ayush's nephew Ts. Zorig, Ulaanbaatar, 2005

Sanpiliin Jalan-Aajav

Photo 1 Jalan-Aajav (right) as a student at Irkutsk State University, with a friend, 1953

Photo 2 Front row from the left: Jalan-Aajav's mother Dashzeveg and his wife Ichinkhorloo; Back row from left: Jalan-Aajav's brothers S. Ochirbat and S. Jamsranjan, and Jalan Aajav, Ulaanbaatar, 1948

Photo 3 Jalan-Aajav's wife Ichinkhorloo and his daughter Handsuren, Ulaanbaatar, 1951

Photo 4 Visit of L. I. Brezhnev and delegation of Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 1974

Photo 5 Yu. Tsedenbal, Fidel Castro, and Jalan-Aajav, Havana, 1975

Photo 6 From right: Jalan-Aajav, Yu. Tsedenbal, and J. Batmunkh as Delegation of Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the Government of the People's Republic of Mongolia, Moscow, 1977

Photo 7 Prior to meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, Ulaanbaatar, 2000

Photo 8 Jalan-Aajav, his granddaughter B. Khulan, and his son J. Batbaatar, Ulaanbaatar, 2007

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