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CHAPTER 2. THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM

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CHAPTER 2. THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM

The main activities of any nation are closely linked to the traditional economic-cultural type. In an ethnographic science, under the term of economic-cultural type understands “certain complex features of the economy and culture, which develop historically in different peoples living in similar levels of socio-economic development as well as in similar natural and geographical conditions” (Levin and Cheboksarov 1955: 7).

Prior to considering to the issue of basic economic activities, we want to briefly outline upon the specifics of natural conditions of the Mongolian *Altai*. Nomadic *Altai Uriankhains* located in an area Mongol *Altai*, at the north-western part of it.

Researchers note that the Mongolian *Altai* began in the west of Mongolia at the mountains Tavan Bogd, where it connects with the Russian *Altai* and the Ridge Saikhem. Hence, the main ridge is directed to the southeast. Mongolian *Altai* and its sequel - Gobi-*Altai* - stretch to the southeast for more than fifteen hundred miles. The highest point of Mongolian *Altai* is also the highest point of Mongolia. This peak in the mountains Hyiten at Tavan-Bogd is 4,653 m above sea level. The broad inter-mountain valleys mostly focused towards the northwestern direction. These valleys were generally served in the last as lake basins, later successively undergone to flooding, breakage, and partial drying.

In particular, a major waterway of the *Altai* - p. Khovd tributaries - is formed by several of these valleys, which are interspersed along the river to the narrow gorges of breakout. *Altai* mountain region in general is dominated by mountain steppes. They are most fully developed on the slopes of Mongolian *Altai*. The territory, covered by forests is negligible, which indicates the dryness of mountain slopes facing the pool of River Khovd. Forest occurs only in the basin of River Irtysh. The area is dominated by high-and medium-mountain terrain, with large amplitudes of heights. The plains are found mostly in broad intermountain basins, and in some parts of the valleys, in the alpine zone, where the development of surface alignment, as well as at the foot of the mountains, where the sloping plains serve as a transition to the adjacent geographical areas. The tract lay in River Khovd represents a broad valley, at the lowest parts of which making the bends, flowing deep river. Another example of such a broad valley can serve as a river valley. Souk, left tributary of River Khovd. Its width varies from 4–7 km. Rivers and lakes in the Mongolian *Altai*, almost all belong to the basin drainage

to basins of the Central Asia. The largest of the rivers flow into lakes and small, on emerging from the mountains to the plains, fade in alluvial soils, spending its reserves to filtration and evaporation. The main pastures for livestock are in the broad intermountain valleys and basins. Here the vegetation is distributed unevenly, and some places have a semi-arid nature of the rare grass, vegetation in other places is somewhat richer, especially in river valleys. Steppe areas are relatively high rise in the mountains: thus, on the southern slopes of the Munch-Khairkhan, Suta-Khairkhan and other mountains they reach a height of almost 2000 meters above sea level. On the north, more humid slopes of steppe areas are usually located below. Rivers and streams provide livestock watering. Early autumn frost somewhat contributes pastoralism as it canning livestock herbage. Relatively small amount of snowfall is beneficial for grazing over much of pasture lands, especially on mountain slopes, where wind blows the snow. However, in some bad years, snowfall was much greater than that caused in the past to huge losses of livestock (Murzaev 1952: 291–321) In the mountains, home to various wild animals including foxes, wolves, leopards, quail, squirrels and other animals and birds, on the wooded slopes encountered deer, etc. which arranged for hunting. Under these climatic and landscape conditions historically functioned most rational in all respects, economic-cultural type of nomadic pastoralists. By the beginning of XX century, economic activities of *Altaic Uriankhains* wore of complex nature, combining assigning and producing forms of economy, making it a viable and relatively stable. Here I want to consider as a form of appropriating economy-gathering and hunting, and the shape of the generating sector-nomadic animal husbandry and agriculture.

Basic Forms of the Economic Activities

Forms of the Appropriating Sector of the Economy

Gathering (*tuuverleh azhil*) in the past for the Mongols, including for the *Altai Uriankhains* was of great importance and according to some researchers, it was quite diverse in its kinds of species. Objects of gathering for *Altai Uriankhains* were edible wild fruits, berries, nuts, seeds, cereals and other grasses, roots and tubers, stems, shoots, leaves, buds, flowers, soft pith of trees and others. The gathering products served as the reliable sources of food therefore, this activity has played an important role in the life of Mongols, including the *Altai Uriankhains*. Thus, in the Secret History of Mongols says that the mother of Temuchjin, i.e., Genghis Khan, who later created the Mongol Empire and conquered half of the world feed their children with the roots of various plants, it is “grain by grain with cherry and apple - wildings gather day and night for her children fostered” (Sokrovennoe skazanie 1941, §74). The researchers point out

that picking of bulbs of wild onion and roots of white potatoes and other plants were very common economic activities in the Turkic-Mongol peoples of the southern Siberia, with whom the *Altai Uriankhains* have had the deep historical and cultural ties. The *Altai Uriankhain* have collected mainly the following plants: viviparous knotweed is often not quite right is called buckwheat - *miher* (*Polygonum viviparum*), peony roots - *Ulaan Tums* (*Paeonia anomala*), tubers of white potato - Tsagaan tums (*Erythronium dens canis*), wild onion - *Zerleg Songino* (*Lilium martagon*), as well as various kinds of wild onions and garlic, etc. S.I. Weinstein wrote that the majority of the peoples of the Sayan-*Altai*, including Tuva, extracted onion shed and the roots of other plants using a special diggers of plant roots - *ozuk* with a complex design that may have appeared under their influence of diggers as in type of hoes which the farmers applied in the Central Asia (Weinstein 1972: 227). To our knowledge, the *Altai Uriankhains* had no special tools for digging up the roots of the plants. They used a simple wooden stick, pointed at the end, and in most cases - the usual household scissors and knives that were manufactured by local blacksmiths. Pine cones are knocked down, hitting the trunk of a cedar by a wooden mallet - *muna*. It only says that the economic importance of gathering in the *Altai Uriankhains* was not as significant as, for example, the peoples of the Sayan-*Altai*. Autumn pastures of the *Altai Uriankhains* usually located on the foothills of mountains (or relatively close to them), which allowed nearby camps to look for places where you can easily find edible plants. Occasionally, some plants make preparation in the spring before flowering. Very popular was picking hillbilly viviparous (buckwheat) - *miher*. Regarding of how to collect it and how to make meal out of it reported by G.N. Potanin: *miher* “removed from holes of mice in August, the first it has to long boiled to seethe trichoid thin roots, which seated in the main root, and then washed seven times in cold water and rub to reduce hairiness and then boiled in milk. ... to meat soup it serves delicious seasoning and presents as of sour vegetables” (Potanin 1881: 8). It is known that among the majority of the people in whose gathering is a form of farming, the harvesting of edible plants was considered as the women’s work. In this regard, the *Altai Uriankhain* is no exception. However, process of harvesting for some species of plants it was attended by all able-bodied family members, and in the gathering of pine nuts participated only men, and sometimes participated in it teens of boys.

Each family would make preparation for the winter some supply of food from the gathering, so every year the family wandered precisely the places where are usually found a lot of growing edible plants. Unearthed the roots of plants, leaves, twigs and stems were put in small leather bags (*tulman uut*). Some of them are then dried. The volume of gathering products in most of times reached upto several kilograms.

Hunting (*an agnuur*) - one of the most ancient economic activities for the *Altai Uriankhains*. As one type of the appropriating economy, the hunting was a way of getting food which provided the relatively stable food within the population. Hunting wore either regular or seasonal character, its organization had of very flexible and diverse forms. Hunting products (meat of large hoofed animals, harvested from early spring to late autumn) had significantly supported the daily diet during the winter. The skins of large horned animals were well treated and were used to prepare clothing, shoes, belts, and some other items of household utility. They went for hunting both by individuals as well as teams. Lands that strictly assigned for hunting were not available. They were hunted mostly on horseback. To hunt by on feet almost did not occur. In winter, they enjoyed skiing - *tsan*. We used two types of skiing: hemmed with fur and without fur. On hunting they usually went in normal clothes. The exceptions were with hats. For the targeted hunting, such as marmots, wolves and foxes, hunters have hats, sewn from the skins of those animals, taken from his head, indicating that the preservation of their ancient magical imitation of action of these animals. In the late XIX - early XX century flintlock rifle with bipod-*Tsahiur Buu*- was one of the principal instruments for hunting of wild animals. Cartridge gun - *Galt Buu* - at that time was almost not used. It can be assumed that the flintlock with bipod appeared in *Altai Uriankhains* about in the XVII century. It consisted of the following components: a trunk-*gol tomor*, sight-*Ovoo*, *Hara*, hammer-*Gokh*, ramrod-*sumbe*, leg-*shiyur*, glasses for gunpowder-*hundaga* etc. In addition, there were auxiliary units: *hot*, *tseneg*. They consisted of a spoon-*halbaga* for measurements of gunpowder; bullet-*horgolzh* (there were three different types of bullets which were the same in the form, but in size, big and small), powder-*dar*, flint-*tsahiur*, cleaner-*sumbe*, and grunder of powder-*darny nuhuur* etc. All these items were stored in a hunting-leather bag *havtaga*. During the hunt, the hunters would hang it on a special belt that was made from rawhide and had an iron buckle-clasp. Powder-*bantsaan dar* hunters sometimes produced themselves. To do this they used the nitrate-*hadny shuu*, previously collected in the rocks. But more often gunpowder was purchased from Chinese merchants. Quantity depended on what species of the beast going to hunt. *Altai Uriankhains* would cast themselves bullets - *horgolzh*. For this purpose, there was a special form-mold - *khev*- made of stone-*bargilt*. When hunting with a shotgun the special emphasis placed on the correct choice of bullets, it should have corresponded to the size of the beast, and the amount of gunpowder, too, had to be relevant. However, not all hunters have flintlocks. So sometimes a few of hunters have used one or two gunshot gun (*Shav niyluulekh*) at all. Hunters voluntarily united, not only on the basis of kinship and preferred to go on the hunt for a period of 15 -20 days. One group could consist of 4-6 people. In this form of hunting, they

would choose one experienced hunter as head of hunters-*ahlagch* who oversaw all operations during hunting. With the advent of flintlock gun, bow and arrow hunting was no longer used. However, crossbows-*saal* preserved. Not everyone could use the crossbow, they usually were the most experienced hunters as professionals, not devoid of passion and skill. No weapon kept in the house and it was kept only at the hunting park in the mountains. Crossbow consisted of arch-*num*, stringer-*hovch*, arrow-*sum*, the tip-*zev*, the lodge-*suur*, hammer-*onis*, loop-*hets*, and entourage thread-*zel*. At the front of the wooden box strengthen the arch. Bow stringer, which was convoluted from leather belts, was installed on a wooden hammer with a hair loop-platoon. By the loop was tied a long, series thread of horsehair, partition off road beast, hitting it, he would launch his arrow. Hunters did twisted thread a length of about 20–30 meters and they had several of these convoluted threads of different colors. Crossbows were done in a variety of sizes and the length of a wooden box ranged from 50 to 80 cm. The basic material from which made the arch of the crossbow were willow and larch. At both ends of the crossbow did notches - *herchlees* to secure the bowstring, which is produced from the skin of a wild goat. Arrows to the bow were fixed with patchy iron points of various shapes, often with rhomboidal ones. In the application of crossbows it was considered very important to pinpoint the height of the installation to an arrow so that fired arrows would mortally wound the beast. Mounting of the height for the crossbows, hunters had to determine in accordance with species of animals. The use of crossbows was in a sense dangerous to hunters themselves. Hunter accidentally might offend someone else's bow, and that thus might have received a fatal wound. When the hunter decided to put somewhere in the crossbow, he was obliged to warn the other hunters about it. In Mongolian law provides very stiff penalties if the hunter did not warn other hunters of his crossbow. The Mongolia - Oirat laws of 1640 said as so: "... if a person dies from crossbow, the (statement) has not been announced, it (the master crossbow) shall be fined with the five nines, if (the victim), recovered, then have to take five (cattle)" (Golstunsky 1880: 51) for a penalty in cattle was considered one of the harshest penalties in Mongolian society. In addition, *Altai Uriankhains* during the hunting had used a variety of traps (*zanga*, *khaj*, *garanga*, *basvag*) and loops (*duuguur*, *duujin urhi*, *suulga*) and others. For the hunting for the certain types of animals, there were used a number of different methods for their catches. All animals can be hunted with a shotgun. There was also widespread hunting with dogs. According to specialists, in Mongolia there was a popular breed of dog that came from Tibet. This dog was a big physique, she barked loudly, had a brown or black color. These hunting dogs were fed with the special food that was placed in a wooden bowl-*iduur*. They were kept on a chain-*ginzh* during the daytime, and they were released during the nights. Each family had either two or

three dogs, one of them was a hunting dog. Good dogs are valued very highly, because they were good not only for hunting but also to protect livestock from predators. Dogs are not trained specifically, but sometimes taught their team to run or stop.

Forms of the Generating Sector of the Economy

Pastoral nomadism. Currently, scientists identified several local versions of nomadic pastoralism, where their ranges of areals are extremely broad. Suffice it to mention only the most basic types of it: The Central Asian, the Middle Asian, the Near-Asian, Arabo-African, and the South African, and etc. Each type of pastoral nomadism has its own specific features. For the Central - and Middle Asian nomads, for example, it was characterized by the predominance of livestock of sheeps, goats and horses, as well as the spread of felt yurts as a primary kind of residence (Levin and Cheboksarov 1955: 7). To this type, at one time, has been included the numerous Turkic and Mongolic nomads from ancient and medieval periods.

On the degree of mobility, scientists isolated nomadic, semi-nomadic and semi-settled economy. They relate to nomadic groups consisting of 1-2 families who moved during the year with cattle on seasonal pastures, changing the camp at least 4-6 times a year, without stopping at one place more than 1-2 months. Permanent homes for the winter, these groups did not have. Semi-nomads were able to spend the adverse winter-spring period of 3-4 months to live in the permanent winter dwellings. Rest of the time they roam on pastures and live in yurts. The semi-settled farmers were included those who change their places 2-3 times per year and actually led most of the time sedentary. These were usually herdsmen with cattle. They have permanent dwellings and outbuildings.

Altaic Uriankhains were experienced breeders. From animals main economic role played by the horse, as nomadic pastoralism was unthinkable without these animals and they have long been adapted by man for riding and transporting cargo.

Herd of horses, as a rule, were approximately equal to the number of cattle. Horse for *Uriankhains* meant as all, for from her endurance and strength often depended the success in the military campaigns of Mongols, in which *Altai Uriankhains* were the most active participants. In addition, for many centuries the horse was used for carrying mail and passengers in the famous Mongol postal service-*urtoo*. In the late XIX - early XX century, *Altai Uriankhain* also carried a large postal service - *Altayn Arvan Gurvan Khariul Urtoo*.

According to Mongolian researcher M. Timurzhava, there was an independent Mongolian horse breed (Timurzhav 1989: 247). Horse - *aduu* was very much appreciated and enjoyed the great love among *Altai Uriankhains*. Much attention

paid to determining a good riding horse and its traits related to body type, color, muscular form, shape and color of teeth, strength, tendon, etc of the horses. Our informants gave the following characterization for the good horse: it should have a sharp eye aimed into the distance, his head should be small, and ears, on the contrary, large, erect, the torso should be narrow, and chest - muscular, distance between left and right feet - wide, tendon legs - thick and extend away from the bones, hooves - strong, and the arrow must lie deep (Lkhagvasuren 1987: 241). The horse tolerated the year-round maintenance to graze in the open. In the cold season it was left right in the pasture unattended. During the summer, the horse had kept on a pasture next to the yurt. It made no sense to get far barnish of them, because at the time, horses provided milk, which went on to produce a fermented mare's milk - *chigee*. Unlike the other species of livestock horses grazed in a pasture at night. It has been long in the *Altai* been practiced the domestication of Equine herds. One herd consisted of individual stocks, which included about of 13-16 mares.

The general name for a newborn foal was *unaga*-(male foal is called *er unaga*, and female foal - *Em unaga*), two-year colt named - as *daaga* (male - *er daaga*, female - *em daaga*) three-year - *shulden* (male as *er shulden*, and female - as *shulden baydas*), the fourth year male named - as *hyazaalan uree* and female - *hyazaalan baydas*. At this age, it took place castration of *hyazaalan uree*.

Common name for a mare was - *guu*. In the fifth year castrated male named *soeolon uree*. Common name for a male producer stallion - *azarga*. After five years was considered as an adult horse - *er mori*.

Altai Uriankhain, like the other nomadic peoples, used the teeth patterns for determining the age of horses. The most common colors for the horses were the bay - *heer*, red-zeerd, piebald-*saaral*, raven - *buural*, redhead - *Sharga*, a white-*tsagaan* and nightingale - *haliun* etc. For breeding purposes prefer to keep the stallions - *azarga* of bay and black suit. Light - gray or white color *tsagaan* considered as being as prestigious. Such a horse is sent to the guest as for the honor, and the bride carried the horse during his wedding.

Horses were caught in two ways: with lasso-*argamj* or a long pole - *uurga*. According to informants, *Altai Uriankhain* knew three ways of tangling horses. The first way was the binding of the two front and one hind leg with special shackles - *chudur*. This method is considered the most reliable, since it did not allow the horse to go far. The next way would the binding of one front and one rear leg with the special unit - *uruul*. The third way - linking the front legs with special put-*tushaa*. At night, the horses were tied to a rope, whose ends were tied to small wooden stakes-*gadas*. The rope could be made of a hair or leather, specially prepared for this purpose. About the yurt there was always possible to see a horse grazing on the moored near the yurt.

Altai Uriankhains, like other Mongolians, started teaching children from very early ages, around three-four years, to ride a horse. From the age of five both boys and girls could easily participate in the races. On an early learning to ride horses regarding Mongolian children also wrote a monk - a Franciscan ambassador of Pope Innocent IV Plano Carpini, who visited the Mongols in the 1245–1246. He wrote that the boys, the Mongols, when they were “... two or three years old, immediately begin to ride and drive horses and jumping on them” (Plano Carpini 1957: 36).

When children rode on horseback, they used child saddle - *huhdiyn emeel*, but they often went without any saddle, especially at the races. During the races they replaced the saddle with cushion made of felt - *tohosh*. Adults only rode with the saddle on - *emeel*. There are male and female saddles, which differed in size and shape.

The *Altai Uriankhain* used for riding only adult male horses and only in very rare cases – the stallions. Mares for riding almost never used. Horses for rides, too, is not used. During the summer, almost every day, changed horses, releasing the used horse back to the herd. During the winter the horse changed much less, since the herds were on the distant pastures.

They would seat on a horse just from the left side - *zuv tal*, like the other nomads of Eurasia. Sitting on from the right side - *buru tal* was not accepted. Very often the horses accustomed to riding with two years of age - *daaga*. This case is usually involved for the adolescent boys. In general, the horses accustomed to riding from three or four years. The first time, when man starts riding the horse, that would start throwing from side to side, but the horse would gradually acquire the balance. For acquiring of complete controllability of the horse it would need a few of days.

Milking of mares began in late May and lasted until mid-October. Milking would conduct with so-called method of suckling-*ivelgeh*. Regarding how mares got milked by Mongols, wrote a monk of Minorits William Rubruck, who served in 1253–1254 as the Ambassador of French King Louis IX in Mongolian Empire. On this occasion, he writes: “... From two stakes driven into the ground, they (the Mongols – *Ilkhagvasuren*), would pull a long rope and to the rope they would tie ... *daagas* whose mother-mares wanted to milk. Then the uterus of the mares are near their calves and they would give milk at ease” (Rubruck 1957: 96). This method of milking of mares survived among Mongols up to the present day. The mares are milked on the left side with both hands as follows: right hand would hold a wooden bucket, and another hand would go from the back as if grasping the left hind leg of the mare. Milking was carried out every two hours. For once, it would milk of approximately 300–400 grams of milk. Mare’s milk was collected in one bucket and then would do from milked mare’s milk koumis -

chigee.

Mating of the mares occurred in August, and delivery of calves would begin in April or May next year. Young mares only in the age of three were admitted to mating. One stallion in the herd served 13–16 mares. When time of delivery of mares gets closer, drove a herd of horses grazing at the far get closer to the yurt.

Birth of new calves usually occurs during the day in the pasture and especially do not need help from man. Foal after birth immediately rose to his feet and began to suck milk, and a few of minutes later he could walk with the herd. It was believed that the foal born in standing position was considered as symbol of good horse in the future, and the foal, as soon as appeared, would fell to the ground.

Castration of horses began in Mid-April. It took place when horses reached 3–4 years of age. Not everyone was able to practice the traditional method of castration. The procedure was as follows. First, a horse tied to his feet, and then forced to fell him on his back and squeezed the scrotum with a special wooden vise-*savslaga*. The skin would be notched with a special knife - *zasuuryn hutga* and squeezed testicles. When the testicles removed, it was immediately plunged into a wooden bucket with cow's milk. Scrotal incision gently closed and burned with hot iron ironing - *iluur*. The removed testes then cooked and eaten. The special tools, knife and wooden vise used in the castration, carefully kept separate and they were not used them in everyday life.

Grooming of manes of the horses started in mid-April. The first time the foal's mane sheared in two years of age. It did not cut the manes of horses and horses devoted on "owners" of the terrain-*setertei mori*. There was no tradition to cut the tails of horses among the *Altai Uriankhains*. Sometimes, hair on the body was cut in young horses.

In addition to horses they have bred a large number of cattle and small livestock. Of particular preference was given to the breeding of sheep – the animals most adapted to cold climate, i.e., winter pastures where livestock would subsist on grazing. Keeping of cattle on grazing usually would lead to a gradual overgrazing and it would cause the need of movement to new places, so historically, that priority for the traditional economic structure among the *Altai Uriankhains* belonged to such types of domesticated animals that were capable of long-range transitions.

The abundance of sheep and goats among the Central Asian nomads and their year-round grazing struck European travelers even in the period of Middle Ages. In the late XIX - early XX century, a significant predominance of small ruminants was noted by Academician I.M. Maisky (Mayskiy 1921: 120–123). According to the census of population and livestock in 1918, the average number of cattle falling per capita and per household for Khovd Province, which included seven

khoshuns Altai Uriankhains, and it presented the following picture:
Khovd Province:

Table 1 Types of Animals

	per farm	per capita
Horses	8.8 (heads)	2.1 (heads)
Camels	2.2	0.5
Cattle	7.7	1.7
Sheep and goats	61.0	14.6
Total livestock	79.7	18.9

The table shows that the number of sheep and goats clearly outnumbered the other types of livestock. Below follow a brief description regarding issues of the traditional methods of breeding.

Sheep - *khoni*, who were bred by the *Altai Uriankhain* present as breed of sheep for meat and fat production of the general mongolian type. This breed of sheep has a number of positive and negative characteristics. On the positive side, it might be named its exceptional adaptability to the local harsh climatic conditions, extreme durability and simplicity to the feed. On the negative side, it might name its short and medium-sized physique. *Altai* alpine conditions led to some features of breeding sheep and goats. They were herded in flocks - *khonin sureg*. Each family had one flock, but often several families joined together and created one large flock. The largest flock consisted of no more than 700–800 sheep and goats. Outside of this norm was usually did not going out, since an excessively large number of cattle contributed to the rapid impoverishment of knockout and pastures.

During the warm season sheep and goats grazed away from the yurt, and in cold weather near it (Simukov 2007: 443). Most of times adults would herd the flock, and they did it either on horseback or the oxen. However, during the warmer months to this lesson allowed teenage boys. Such a pattern could be observed in neighboring Tuvanians (Weinstein 1972: 23).

Short staves - *shilbuur* were used for herd management using. Also often resorted to traditional exclamations - cha, cha, or goog, goog, who taught the sheep and goats to obey the command of the shepherd. In the evening, the cattle always drove closer to the yurt. In contrast to the steppe Mongolians, the *Altai Uriankhain* in the summer did not let sheep and goats go inside of fences - *khashaa*, but they had a winter corral. The corrals were poured with sheep manure-*buuts* which helped to conserve the heat. When the grass was provided under a thick cover of snow during the winter, sheep and goats would hoof the snow cover to clean to get to the grass.

Mating of sheep and goats was carried out in mid-August. To avoid litter fall, which could not survive, the summer all the sheep – producers, *huts* and a goat producer – *uhna* wore a small felt or leather apron-*khug*, which prevents any accidental mating. According to Mongolian researcher M. Timurzhav, this method of mating barriers has been known to Mongolian nomads for a very long time (Timurzhav 1989: 126).

Lambing of sheep and goats would take place in March or April. It usually happens at night when the herd was in the winter-spring corral. In most cases, lambs and kids do not need help on part of nomads, and gradually rose to their feet. If the young are born weak, that was kept in a yurt. If due to lack of food and water in ewes, as result, there was no milk, while the young would need to fed by hand from the teat-*ugj*.

If lambing had during the day time, when the herd was on pasture, the young were separated from the ewes and placed in a leather bag – *tuliyn uut*. Castration of lambs and kids was performed in 3 to 4 months of age. Castrate them could only by men who have special skills. Castration (*hunguluh*) procedure is a bloody, young cut the testicles. On this day, it was not allowed in the pasture. Severed testicles cooked and eaten; they were usually cooked in boiling water.

Sheep shearing arranged twice a year, the first – *urtyн noos* did in June, the second – *ahar noos* – in August. The first time the sheep being sheared completely, so it would get a lot of hair – about a kilogram, while the second cut gave significantly less wool, because the fall the sheep had no time to properly grow.

First haircut made mandatory, and the second just to get more wool. Sheep was sheared with shears – *khaich*, which were made by local blacksmiths. Some households, where there was little sheep, would do wool gathering, which failed during the molt in the spring. Felt was produced from the wool for the yurt.

From the goats nomads got high-quality cashmere. Winter clothes for children were made from the cashmere. Nicknames for sheep and goats usually reflected the color of hair, body shape, horns, ears, especially nature. For example, the black-eyed sheep – *khar nuden khoni* – short-eared goat – *khuv yamaa*, yellow-eyed sheep – *shar nuden khoni*, yellowish headed goat – *shar halzan yamaa* etc. Nickname commonly used to distinguish between sheep and goats in a flock.

Altai Uriankhain had a very developed system of names of cattle by age and sex, so characteristic of the Mongolian nomads. Name of sheep by age and sex was as follows: newborn lamb-called *hurga* (male lamb – *er hurga*; female lamb – *em hurga*) for the second year of the birth-called *tulug* (male – *er tulug*, and a female – *em tulug*), the third – *gunan khoni* (male-guna *khoni*, and female-zusag *khoni*), the fourth-*donzh khoni*. Starting with five year male – producer named – *huts*, castrated male – *er khoni* and female – *em khoni*.

Very often, the newborn lambs were given to children. Each child had their own sheep in the overall flock. Newborn goat kid named – *ishig*, during the second year–*shudlen ishig*, in the third year–*hyazaalan yamaa*, and the fourth year – *yamaa*. Male producer named - *ukhna*, castrated male – *er yamaa* and female – *em yamaa*.

Cattle, which were bred by the *Altai Uriankhains*, belonged to Oirat genus of General Mongolian breed type, which was widespread in the Central Asia. According to experts, this type of cattle characterized by broad, short head with a concave forehead and a narrow mouth, short wide body on short legs. Cattle of these types were characterized by low productivity and low live body weight. He was well adapted to grazing in the open air, but they endured the winter conditions of the *Altai* Mountain much worse than other types of Mongolian livestock. Roughage and water shortages in the highlands caused them severe consequences.

Unlike horses and camels, cattle in the pasture were only in the daytime, at night it returned to near of the yurt. Cattle used pasture of medium-range, at any time of year, it was a bit away from the grazing sheep and goats and a little closer to grazing horses. For this animal needed a pasture with high grass, but pastures with low grass, which was good for sheep and goats, were unsuitable for them.

The *Altai Uriankhains* were also developed yak and camel breedings. Economic value of yaks and cattle in the life of the *Altai Uriankhains* was very high. Yaks and cattle they bred for their meat and milk as well as for their needs of transportation.

Yak, which was bred among the Uriankhains in large numbers, was very large and powerful animal as compared with those of cattle. A distinctive feature of the yak was its disproportionate development of the anterior and posterior parts of the body. According to experts, a strong constitution and good coverage by hair gave yaks the ability to easily endure the harsh climatic conditions of the Mongolian *Altai* Mountains. They usually graze on pastures that were not available for the other species of livestock, i.e., high in the mountains.

Yaks were not needed any special feeding and they were very easy to forage from under the snow, even during heavy snowfall – *zud*. There were no special facilities for them constructed during the winter. Sometimes next to the shelter of sheep and goats would have built a stone carrol and around it there were places for yaks' stay and rest. For the young calf, some shelter was built in the spring – *tugaliin khashaa*. During the milking of yaks, calves had to graze separate from their mothers, nearby the yurt. Sometimes for them it was needed to use a special nasal device - *borkh* and *shorkh* that they could not suck the milk of ewes. Usually a yak herd management created – *sarlagiyn sureg*. Herd size was

different, but does not exceed more than of 40–60 heads. This was the optimum amount, making rational use of rangelands. Excessively large herds quickly knocked down pastures.

Title yak, depending on age changes as well as a small cattle and horses. General name for a newborn calf was, *tugal* (female named *em tugal*, and male – *er tugal*). One year later, the calves were called common name – *byaruu* (*er byaruu* – the name of the male, *em byaruu* – the name of a female). Calves in 3 years, also has a common name – *shudlen uher* (male named - *er shudlen uher* and female – *em shudlen uher*). In the fourth year of a yak male named – *khyzaalan guna* and female – *khyzaalan gunj*. At this age, males usually go through castration, intact male producer named – *khyzaalan bukh* or just – *bukh*. This is the common name for a bull. At this age, it can still happen litter, and if the female yak had a calf appeared, it was called – *gunjin unee*. General name for female-yak was – *unee*. After the fifth year of castrated male ox called – *shar*, and a female – *buduun unee*.

The *Altaic Uriankhains* determine the age of yaks by the pattern of teeth. The color selection was not conducted, but the predominant color was black – *khar*, followed by brown – *khuren* and gray – *saaral khukh*. Extremely rare white color – *tsagaan*. The nickname was given mainly to suit the animal, but it was very often reflected in addition to color, and shape of horns, and the nature of a yak, etc. For example, red yak with curved horns; female – red unee with curved horns – *daliu evertai ulaan unee*, hornless white yak-*muhar tsagaan sarlag*, big horned white unee – *selem evert tsagaan unee*, and etc.

The *Altaic Uriankhains* milked a yak with use of suckling method (*ivelgekh*) twice a day – in the morning and evening. Milking looked like as follows: first, released a calf off the leash and let him suckle on the udder. Then weaned calf and began to milk a yak. The procedure was repeated 2–3 times per milking; female-yak gave 2–3.5 liters of milk per milking. Milked them with the right hand, two hands, holding in his right hand a wooden bucket-*suulga*. Yak milk was the foundation of all dairy products, *tsagaan idee*. The fat content is much more than those of milk cows and it is very highly valued by nomads. After milking yaks and they went grazing for greater distance and calves released from the leash so they can too go to the near pasture, along with the herd. In the dusk a flock drove back to the maturation and calves tied to a rope for the next morning's milking. Mating of yaks would conduct approximately the same time as for the other livestock, in mid-August. Pregnancy lasted 7–8 months, and calving begins in April and May. To mating the first time allowed a three-year bull. It is very easy hybridized with a cow. A cross between a yak and a cow named – *khainag*. It is highly regarded in the household of a nomad. The *Altaic Uriankhains* widely used yaks for the transportation purposes. With frequent migrations from place to

place among them, yaks were the main carriers of burden. Yak haircut did in April. Wool and hides were extensively used by *Altai Uriankhains*.

Camels had occupied an insignificant place in the economic life of the *Altai Uriankhains*. They are primarily used as transport animals. As scholars noted that two-humped camels were domesticated in the Central Asia since very ancient times, it was plenty of hair on the torso with hair stiff and short, and on the neck and the front and hind legs – hair thick and long.

According to scientists, camels live up to 40 years. Like other animals, they are well tolerated in the year-round content to graze in the open. Camels grazed on the most distant pastures without supervision, but at times it was necessary to determine their whereabouts. Compared with other animals in the pasture the camels moved pretty quickly, in the same places they usually do not stay long. They are often raised in the mountains, but reaching to them is sometimes difficult, so they are planted in places where the mountains were not very high. Camels eat plants growing in dry places. In the cold season, preparation is done for them to find seasoning near the yurt. Sometimes nomads do a warm bed for their stay and rest using the dung of small ruminants - *utug*.

Femal camel is called as *ingen temee*, and castrated camel – *atan temee*, and male camel-producer – *buur*. Mating of camels began the second half of March, and the calving takes place from February to April. Male producers admitted to mating with 3–4 years of age. One male producer usually fertilizes females of 10–15. Camels are castrated in the spring at age three. The castration of camels were made with use of so-called “bloody way”: they laid him on his back, legs were tied in pairs and with a sharp knife, notched the scrotum and testicles were squeezed. The herd left with only producer.

Female camels gave offspring every two years since their lactation period lasted from 14 to 16 months.

Pregnant females were followed closely, especially, female camels with the first delivery requiring a particular need of assistance. Just born camels were very weak and susceptible to cold. Sometimes, during the first few days after the delivery calves are put inside of a yurt. Camels were milked 2–3 times per day with application of suckling method milking– *ivelgek*. Milking mainly done by women. Camels gave a very rich milk. Skin of the camel is sometimes used for commercial purposes. Camel-skins that the *Altaic Uriankhain* used for stitching of the wall bars of the yurt, as treated in the traditional way, and made from her the various household ropes. Haircut camels started from the second year of life – in the month of May. They were sheared only once per year and twice per year in rare cases. Wool camels were very much appreciated. The *Altaic Uriankhain* rode on camels, but mostly used them under the packs. They were almost never used in harness. Camel began to accustom to over 2 ½ years. During the training a

special attention was paid to the tender handling, the otherwise, the camel would become shrill and petulant. Starting from 5 to 6 years of age, a full workload would give to the camels. According to experts, adult camel could lift an average 180–200 kg of cargo. Carriage of goods by camel would require from the people a maximum of concentration. The *Altai Uriankhains* used camels to transport the bagged household goods during the migrations. In addition, the *Altai Uriankhain* participated in the caravan cargo from Urga to Khovd. One caravan consisted of about 40–50 camels, under the supervision of a caravan person fell 8–10 camels.

Caravans were gone usually without any road trails right in the right direction at a speed of about 30–45 miles a day. On the way, the camels were satisfied with pasture, fed them only in cases where the road met the water. In winter, they suited the snow as a water source. The caravan left the road in 14–15 hours after dinner and went until midnight and sometimes until dawn. Then they would stop for the night; they would unburden the camels, they had a place for seasoning, and slept until morning on a leash, in the morning, they released to pasture. In wind-sheltered locations, where there was a sufficient food, in 3–5 days on the road were held a rest. *Altai Uriankhain* also went on camels. When rode on camels, they have used a special camel saddle, which, by design differed from the horse's saddle.

Altai Uriankhain had the erecting facilities and pens for sheep and goats which were mainly made of wood, rarely of stone.

The constructions of the *Altai Uriankhains* had kept the original features of the structures that do not occur in the eastern Mongolia. The harvested hay was used only for feeding of the calves. From mid-August the grass was cut with a knife or just pulled with the hands. Then let them to dry a little bit they were poured into long braids, hung on trees or on the platforms, where it was stored until it was required.

Because of the natural and geographical conditions of the Mongolian *Altai* carts were not popular among the *Altai Uriankhains*. The main means of transportation was the baggage transportation. Under the pack used yak-cattle. For the transportation of the single-family, the average size required was about 4–5 yak-cattle. When transporting the yak – oxen are not tied to each other, but simply drove them in a pile that is characteristic of migrations in the highlands of Mongolia. Packsaddle-*yangirtsag*, which was similar to the horse saddle-*emeel*, consisted of prairie-deciduous *buureg* and two-cushions *of havtas* which strap together. By the technology transportation and accessories required for the packing the *Altai Uriankhain* were not different from their neighbors, which might be explained by the similarity of geographical conditions and the nature of their economies. Tools, which were used by the *Altai Uriankhains* were very few. The most important ones were as follow: different kinds of lassoes from the belt

(*tsalam, argamj*), stick with a loop (*uurga*), the fetters, the hair rope, riding and pack saddles (*emeel, yangirtsag*), knife and axe. Here we refer to such tools, which had the direct connection with the conduct of pastoral farming. In the economy as a whole, of course, there were the other tools.

According to polls of informants, the *Altai Uriankhain* formed a joint seasonal group for pasturing of animals – *otor*. These seasonal groups – *otor* were established in the late autumn or the early winter. Several households (usually 4 to 8) had chosen from among its 4–6 people and gave them their herds of animals. Those with these herds were sent to places where were available good pastures for the animals and spent the winter there, and when spring returned back and they returned their herds to their masters. The *otor* was of great importance for the safe wintering of cattle. In addition, they were combined with each other, forming a group of individual families – *khot Ail* or *khoton*. The main purpose of such a group of individual families was a joint grazing and management of some labor-intensive chores (i.e., working with production, distant migrations, shearing sheep and goats, etc.).

Agriculture. Apart from the nomadic herding, the *Altai Uriankhains* were also engaged in manual farming (*gar tarialan*), which was their subsidiary occupation. Agriculture gave them a permanent and reliable source of nutrition and thus created favorable conditions to maintain family well-being.

Agriculture combines the most archaic features and techniques in the treatment of land through irrigation, based on a simple technique. The researchers note that the same farming were engaged in many Turkic-Mongol peoples of the Southern Siberia and the Central Asia by the end of the XIX century and beginning of XX century.

Regarding agriculture in Mongolia, the academician I.M. Maisky wrote: “... Mongolian agriculture catches the rare spots among the Chinese on the highway Kyakha-Urga and larger spaces of the Selenga and Khovd Province” (Maysky1921: 228). The seven *khoshuns* of the *Altai Uriankhains* were unevenly engaged in agriculture. Their arable land located mainly in river valleys of Bulgan, Buyant, Hovd and Sagsay. The proximity to the river was a necessary condition for the development of agriculture.

Acquisition of land for arable land was not a big difficulty for the *Altai Uriankhains*. Maisky wrote that Khovd Province “... *khoshun* that a certain part of its territory under cultivation, and everyone is free to occupy within it liked him a lot. Who the first plowed field, he is entitled to it” (Maysky 1921: 229) According to surveys of our informants all who wish to do so, chose as fit the plot, determined its size, and then put a notice to the local administration. Typically, those who wanted to engage in agriculture selected area where before someone plowed or were someone’s arable land. According to the stories of informants, the



PHOTO 2 Hand-operating grinders *gar teerem*

right of land use is sometimes inherited, i.e., if someone plowed a certain area, and passed by inheritance to the descendants. Disputes over the right to own one way or another piece of land amongst the *Altai Uriankhains* almost never occurred. Earth has always been enough, it was enough for everyone.

Arable land is most often located near the spring and fall camps, but sometimes they could stand far away from the migrations – a few tens of kilometers away. In such cases, taking care of it went only to men, while women stayed in a yurt, where they continued to run the household and caring for animals. When it was time to migrations from spring to summer pastures, it was made the first stop at the plowed fields for a few days to plow the field, make the planting and do the watering. Plot size was small, in rare cases, exceeding a half hectare. During the harvest season usually coincides with the migrations of annuals to the autumn park.

The technical level of cultivation was very simple. The soil was treated with a primitive plow-*anjis*. It was almost unique for the plowing implements of the *Altai Uriankhains*. Somewhat similar to it was used by the southern *Altains*; note of it we find in the L.P. Potapov. He believed that a plow *anjis* - an ancient prototype plow, equipped with an iron tip (Potapov, 1958: 220). To plow it in the ground, it was necessary to use oxen draft power, and sometimes horses. During a guided plow plowing – *anjis* and the other drove a bullock. When tillage plow was able to move the soil, and if that was soft, then flip it. S.I. Vainshtein, like a primitive type *anzhis* plowing implements that was used, Tuvonian compared with plow with skid, which was used in the third millennium BC (Weinstein 1972: 168).

After plowing, the harrowing made with a special harrow - *khargany iluur*. The *Altai Uriankhains* had their own method of manufacturing of harrows from

elm: cut at the base of the trunk branches fastened at the edges of the four poles. Length made that harrows were little more than one meter, the width of about 1.5–2.3 meters. They were used too with draft power animals, usually oxen. The sowing was performed manually. First, the seeds were placed in a special wooden bowl – *tarian duu*, then the bowl was hung on the neck. Sometimes the seeds were placed either in a leather bag - *tulman uut*, either directly on the floor of the national coat. Our informants claimed that the seeds were scattered in such a way that the plot with a size equivalent of a palm of human hand would fell from 4 to 5 seeds. One hectare planted from 80 to 100 kg of seeds (Shubin 1953: 113).

Mainstream culture that cultivated by the *Altai Uriankhains* were barley – *Arwai*, which might have a number of forms, among which prevailed gymnosperms, a small amount of cultivated millet – *khokh taria*. Just sown wheat – *ulaan buudai*, and most prevalent were the varieties of soft wheat. According to the stories of informants, crops of wheat appeared only at the end of the XIX century and before this type of grass here was unknown. The predominance of barley, apparently, can be explained by the fact that it was more resistant than the other grasses to the harsh climatic conditions of the Mongolian *Altai*.



PHOTO 3 *Andzhis and seree* for plowing the land

Agriculture of the *Altai Uriankhains* was based on artificial irrigation – *usalgaat tarialan*. Irrigation was of natural flow. During the nomadic life, due to a complex mountain-steppe terrain, well-maintained irrigation system (*usalgaany suvag*) was a very difficult task. The main source of water supply were the mountain streams, which are often changed their beds. From these rivers of arable land was the main trunk-*bukh*. The head portion located at a considerable distance upstream from the arable land. On the bank of a river with steep drainage channel

was dug, which had a considerable extent. The main channel in the early spring would be cleaned and prepared for the irrigation works. For this purpose, tillage man traveled there who owned the site. The work was overseen by the most experienced person.

The length of the main channel – *bukh* in some places reached about 6–7 km and width – half a meter. From it came the irrigation ditch - the sum width of about 40–60 cm, from the channels at right angles to set aside the irrigation ditch-wide *arig* 15–20 cm. Before sowing is usually done one watering. Duration of wetlands depended on soil conditions. After germination the vegetative watering was carried out five times. For irrigation of land were divided up into sectors – *tag* of about one square meter.

Sectors were divided by the earthen mounds – *hutrum*. In each sector was assigned an irrigation canal – *arik*. To pour the first section, a gap was made by a spade on the mound, which divided the sector. When the sector was flooded with water to overflowing, covered mound and made a gap in the mound of the next sector. So, the entire site was watered by sectors. After sowing, irrigation of the area produced 2 or 4 times. The first watering – *gijig us* – was made 3 days following the sowing. Second – *dund us* - 21 days after the first watering. Third – *suul us* – in as many days as the second time. For the rainy years, the third and fourth watering nearly not made. L.P. Potapov, wrote that “... Tuvinians would sow grains usually nearby Autumn or Winter pastures and keep watching them to determine the growth of grasses on the leaves first, then on the ripeness of grain. As soon as the shoots emerged on two leaves, believed to irrigate crops, and more have followed to see whether yellowed shoots from lack of moisture” (Potapov, 1969: 98). The same pattern can be seen amongst the *Altai Uriankhains*. They occasionally came to the place of summer to the place of crops and would watch and observe the growth of crops, watering of the fields they did when they saw that fit.

Arable *Altai Uriankhains* hardly fertilized, in rare cases, the soil was added with the dung of sheep and goats. To do this, before plowing the earth, small ruminants were collected on the site, where they defecated. This served as a fertilizer for arable land. In addition, nomadic lifestyle made it impossible to properly care for arable land, so they were filled with weeds. Very often seeds were spent with cattle. In order to protect crops from birds such as sparrows and cranes, which would often bring the considerable damage to crop it was created the artificial scarecrow - *manukhai*.

The harvest time coincided with the migrations from summer to autumn parking, which began around mid-August. Very often the time of harvest were determined by the number of summer rains. If the summer was rainy, then the cleaning began about 3–3.5 months after sowing. Readiness for harvest of grain

was defined in very simple way: the grains break down with teeth. The harvesting would begin when the grains become quite hard. All able-bodied family members attended the cleaning. Males served as the main laborers in manual farming and participation of women and children were minimal. The crop was removed as follows: The beam heads seized with one hand and cut either with a knife or a sickle at a height of approximately 15–25 cm. The cut off beams stacked in small piles – *buuj*. One pile – *buuj* consisted of 4–6 beams.

As such, they were left to dry. After a day or two – three, when they ripen and dried out, they were collected and taken away to the place of threshing. According to the stories of our informants, it was possible to observe the harvest instead of pulling by hands batch with roots. In very rare cases, the sickle was used – *har khaduur* of Russian type, which was manufactured by local blacksmiths.

Altai Uriankhains used hoofs of oxen or horses for making small particles of the harvest. To this end, there was a special structure – *tsang*. It was constructed in very simple way: in the center of a flat area of about 100 square meters, set a post – *kiisen* with height of 2 meters and with a diameter of 20 cm. Around it, it was sprinkled the ground and poured the harvest. Threshing of grain by the hooves of animals looked like as follows: first, tied a leather cord – *argamj* to the necks of several oxen, and sometimes horses and tied them to a pole – *kiisen*. They were linked so that you can drive around the circle. Usually tied to a post from 3 to 9 bulls, after which they were forced to walk around the pillar. They were chased as follow: A teen aged 13–15 years of age rode on the oxen which was the most extreme outside position from the post. He was holding a whip, forcing the oxen to walk around the pillar with the regular strides. Sometimes, instead of a teenager oxen was chased an adult man.

Under the hooves of the oxen, the grains got freed of straws. It was very exhausting work that required a lot of time. As reported by informants to thresh the harvest of one site it was required from 5 to 7 days. It must say that productivity depended on the number of oxen on *tsang*. If there were a lot, threshing was fast, but if small, the work was going on a snail's pace. We can therefore say that the possibility of farming was determined not only by the presence of suitable sites for arable land but also by the presence or absence of draft power for plowing and threshing grain.

Liberated from corn stubble was removed with pitchforks – *seree*. At the end of operations at the site had left only threshing grain. From it made a pile on one side *tsang*. Then they began to clean the grains of waste, hog, tossing them on a small wooden shovel-*khurz* to winnow the wind. Waste used to feed emaciated cattle in the spring. Best of the grains was left for the next sowing. One part of the crop consumed themselves.

Grains were stored in a special bag-*tulam uut* made of the goat skins. Most of the grain stored in a special pit-*zoor* until next spring, and quite a small part - in a yurt. The pit, in which stored grain, excavated near the arable land, it had a narrow entrance. The underground pit expanded in diameter. Under the dry climate, the grain could be stored for a long time and retain all flavor. The grain was taken from the store for parts as needed. The depth of the pit was about one meter. Its walls and floor were wiped out. A pit dug at the spot where there were clay and heavy soil. Filled it with grain in bags to overflowing, and then there were carefully covered with dry grass or straw, and carefully camouflaged and the ground leading to the pit was not visible to outsiders and left it until next spring.

The *Altai Uriankhains* had a hand mill, through which the flour made from grain – guril. It consisted of two stone disks of equal size: the thickness of was about 10–15 cm, diameter – 35 cm. They were placed on each other. On the inner sides of the two stones makes radial grooves to produce exit the flour. On the upper stone, near its center was located a funnel for grain. The grain was puring onto it. At the outer edge of the upper stone had several depressions in which to insert the end of the stick-handle for spinning. To obtain flour, the top stone was rotated with a wooden handle and the bottom remained stationary. The researchers note that such hand-mill used by many peoples of the Central Asia. According to informants, the same arable land could be under plowing and sowing for three or four years, and then the land was left under the pair. After five or six years, when it is completely overgrown with grass, her back was plowed for sowing.

Feature of the farming among *Altaic Uriankhains* was that they were engaged in it, while keeping the nomadic way of life. Among researchers there is a perception that the nomads crossing to agriculture as a result of impoverishment and loss of livestock. This situation is not very much supported by the reality. Property status of the family among *Altai Uriankhains* was not dependent on agriculture. According to our surveys, there were many instances when the family lost cattle, but refused to engage in agriculture.

For those families with small amount of domesticated animals had been very difficult to improve their welfare only at the expense of tillage. In general, the economy of *Altai Uriankhains* has been typically focused on meeting of their needs for food and the other essentials. The economy wore mainly a complex character: a multilateral use of domestic animals (receiving meat, milk, butter, wool, and leather) in conjunction with farming, and a quite in small extent – from hunting and gathering.

Material Culture: Food, Shelter, and Clothing

The basic economic structure – nomadic herding – left a deep imprint on the entire material culture of *Altai Uriankhains*. Type of their dwellings, utensils,

vehicles, clothes and food were determined by the necessity of frequent migrations over long distance. Like the rest of the population of Mongolia, they have adapted to specific natural geography and climate of the region and created their own unique and inimitable material culture.

Food: Ways of Storage and Cooking. The economic and cultural styles of different societies define the nature and composition of the basic food items and how they are being received. In a life of modern peoples eating habit remains much stronger than other forms of material culture. At the same time, the food there is a lot of adoptions, originally converted by every nation. With regard to the specifics of traditional food of Altai Uriankhains, it increasingly bears not so much as ethnic as regional characteristics in nature, although it has been perceived as a symbol of ethnicity.



PHOTO 4 Air-drying of sour milk cheese *khuruut*

At the same time, everyday foods of this ethnic group indicates that the directions of their economic activities. It has a lot of commons with the foods of the other pastoral peoples, and similarity with foods of neighboring nations, particularly with those of Mongols, so obvious that it does not make no sense to hold some sort of distinction between them. The basic food of *Altai Uriankhains* are a variety of dairy products (*tsagaan idee*) and meat of livestock (*ulaan idee*).

The ratio between the number of consumed meat and dairy products depended on the season of the financial year, which depended on the climatic conditions of the Central Asia. The latter is divided into winter (November – April), and summer (May – October). During the winter season, the consumption is primarily consists of meat of livestock, as well as various kinds of flour food and agriculture products. The summer diet the first significance is given to dairy products, and the second – to flour products. However, during this season the meat is not excluded.

Altai Uriankhains, like other nomadic Mongolians, divide the cattle into two groups: the sheep and horses they treat animals with the hot breath (*haluun hoshuutay mal*); camels, goats, cattle, cows, yaks, to animals with a cold breath (*huiten hoshuutay mal*). It should be noted that the official Lamaism did not forbid the eating of meat of livestock, but *Altai Uriankhains* being lamaists, professing no harm to living beings, an extremely cautious of the slaughtering. For example, the slaughter of livestock for food they have always done for rigorously designed rules that strictly adhered to. In any case there were not subjected to killing of so-called “blessed animals”, i.e., animals devoted to owners, in particular, to the great *Altai*. During the spring, and summer, they have almost never killed big cattle that gave then the opportunity to accumulate fat as the energy source. If there was a need to score an animal for the purpose such as religious, family and public holidays, then no young cattle but were slaughtered only those ones, which were, for whatever reasons, not suitable for household needs.

Turning to meat as the food item that *Altai Uriankhains* obtained from hunting of wild animals, there should first be mentioned meat *tarbagan* – groundhog. It was highly prized. Prepared as follows: removing skin from *tarbagan*, its carcass was divided into small pieces (front and rear legs, back, spintail, ribs, neck, etc.), assorted innards separately. Small parts cooked. They consumed the venison, wild boar, and squirrels, etc.

Dairy products were the second largest in their significance after meat food among *Altai Uriankhains*. These foods were quite popular among them as already established the medicine of the twentieth century that they are “extremely rich in structural proteins, enzymes, antibodies, hormones and calcium” (Dobrovolskaya 2005: 283).

Milk of cows, goats as well as of yaks all were popular. The traditional method and time of milking differed depending on the types of livestock. Sheep and goats were milked from June to early August. Sheep milk is considered the highest of its quality and taste. Boiled goat milk is sometimes fed infants if mother had little of her milk. Milking of cows and yaks would take place from April to mid October. Cows are milked from the right side, sitting on her lap with a wooden bucket. This was the so-called milking via the suckling method (*ivelgeh*). Its essence is that you first allow the calf to suck some milk. When a cow begins to make enough milk, the calf would take away from the nipple and began to milk the cow. This procedure was repeated 2–3 times. For one milking cow gave 3–5 liters of milk. Yaks gave significantly less milk, but yak milk is superior to cow milk in sense that yak milk has higher caloric and nutritional value.

Mares are milked solely for the purpose to make with her milk so called –

chigee – the fermented mare’s milk. Mares are milked from mid June to mid - October. The number of milkings per day reached 5 to 6. It was also the suckling method of milking. For one-time of milking, mare would give somewhere around 200 grams of milk. Sometimes *Altai Uriankhains* drink mare’s milk in its raw form with curative intent.

Camel milk the *Uriankhains* have used for a variety of purposes. Its nutritional value is no way inferior to milk of cattle. Milking of camels began in June and lasted until mid-November. In summer and autumn, when the animals gave the largest amounts of milk, *Altai Uriankhains* do stocks of dairy products for the winter and spring. There were a variety of traditional ways of cooking the dairy products.

Plant food has occupied a large place in the diet among *Altai Uriankhains* both in summer and winter. In winter, when sharply declining milk consumption with the cessation of milking, increased the value of food made from barley flour-*arvai*, millet-*taria*, and wheat-*ulaan buudai*.

Traditional food system of the *Altai Uriankhains* was supplemented with very small amount of food gathering, which has practiced not always and not among all groups.

Because the food system which they have built is based on strict biochemical balance of meat and dairy products, and it is quite viable, provides a high caloric and balanced intake as to in relation to the three main elements of biosynthesis: protein, fat, and carbohydrates.

In general, traditional cuisine of the *Altai Uriankhains* retained in the basis for centuries evolving food system, based on a combination of livestock and agriculture. Being the most stable elements of material culture, their food is in some sense has ethno-determinatory significance and, thus, directly related to the ethnic identity of the people.

Residence: Space Within and Around. The most important function of any shelter is to provide a person a protection from the harmful effects on the part of environment. Folk housing of any geographical area, whether in the Arctic Circle or in the tropics, the mountains or the steppes, adapted to the conditions of nature and climate (Voronina 1982: 48). Real Estate and its closely related economic and household buildings are one of the main elements of material culture. They are created by people in the process of collective labor, the transformation of the natural and geographical environment and actively adapt to it (Types of Traditional Rural Dwellings 1979: 5).

The main housing of the *Altai Uriankhains* served Mongolian felt yurt-*ger*. The same yurt with only minor differences in its external form and internal furniture have served as the main dwelling for all Turkic-Mongol peoples of southern Siberia, Buryat, Tuva, *Altai*, and Kalmyk who settled in Russia.

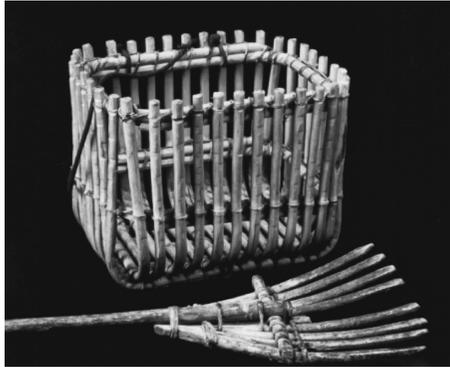


PHOTO 5 *Arag and savar for argal*

The felted yurt was simple to manufacture, portable, and ready-made, adapted to the conditions of nomadic life. The yurt was convenient as a round shape made it possible to use all the space. This house and its quality factor felt covering well-kept sharp changes of climatic conditions in the hot summer months it was cool, but in winter it protected people from the cold winds, frost and rainfall.

By the end of the XIX century – the beginning of XX century there were three main varieties of Mongolian yurt – Khalkh, Oirat and Southern Mongolian that slightly differed in shape and the materials from which they were made.



PHOTO 6 *Mongolian yurt- ger*

The main differences were only in the size and names of parts of the yurt. *Altai Uriankhains* mostly lived in a yurt of Oirat type, which in its size far exceeded Khalkh and Southern Mongolian yurts. In addition, their gers had significant differences as compared to gers of Turkish speaking neighbors, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. Regarding this subject, M.V. Singers wrote: "... dwelling of

Mongols consists of a felt tent (*ger*), which differs from Kyrgyz ones mainly by the form of its upper half. In Kyrgyz yurt, it is spherical, and the Mongolian-conical, which obviously depends on the shape of a wooden core, tight with felt cover. Frames that supports the dome of Kyrgyz yurt, are convex, while that for Mongolian *gers*, are straight. ... The Mongolian *yurt* has a wooden hinged door, which is drawn to face to the south. ... Outdoor decorations, like Kyrgyz yurts, felt in the middle part is often covered with colorful pattern, but for Mongolian dwelling does not have such a decoration” (Pevtsov 1951: 110).

The yurt of *Altai Uriankhains* consisted of a sliding wall lattice-*terem*, made of willow sticks placed crosswise on top of each other and fixed at the intersection of rawhide thongs made of camel hair. This design allows easy push and put the links of the lattice. When assembling the yurt wall lattice joined among themselves, spurred on height and shape, connected by hair ropes – *teremny boolt*. A place where docked such lattices, called “wolf’s mouth” – *chohnyn am*. But gratings were another place which was called “a dog’s mouth” – *nohoinii am*.

They cannot be docked at this point. A wall lattice had 10 to 15 heads. Sizes and capacity were determined by the number of walls of the yurt arrays installed in a circle and forth between them. According to the *Altai Uriankhains* on one wall lattice is good for one person with bed and property. The most common of these sizes were 4-walled yurt.

Unlike the Khalkh and Southern Mongolian *yurts*, the 4-wall yurt had no internal supports, i.e., *bagana*, and all of its construction were held with belt, which are tied up around the walls of the lattice and fixed to the sides of door. Relaxation or rupture of these belts has meant that the walls of the lattice remained without support and design of the yurt was falling apart. However, these belts to retain the load are only 4–5 walled grids, but no more. Therefore, for a yurt, with more than 5 wall lattices, it would be sure to do support backups, carrying the weight of the top cover and attach to the sustainability of a yurt.

The entrance to the tent was carried out through the front door. Earlier, door frame was made of wood and curtain of their first skins of wild beasts, and later, curtain was made of felt. In this case, details of doors, lintel, cloth and a threshold made of wood rounded on the basis of the rounded shape of the yurt. There was the traditional method of making the felt doors – they are sure to embroider with traditional ornament. Then the wooden doors came into being. The height of the wooden doors was equal to that of wall lattices. The door has always oriented to the south.

The yurt of *Altaic Uriankhains*, have the willow staves – *uni*, linked lattice walls with the top wooden circle-hole – *garats*. One end of the stave was sharpened, the other was equipped with a loop, through which they would hang

on the ends of the wall lattice. The wooden framework of *ger* is covered with felt blankets – *deever*. The superior felt cover of the tent consisted of two parts: the front and back. The upper part of the cover is also clothed on outer circle of the upper wooden circle of yurt, the lower part clothed the repeated form of wall lattices, blocking their heads. During winter, usually 3–4 layers of felt are used, and during summer number of felt layers reduced to a single one. Lateral wall felt consisted of several pieces. Normal size of *ger* had from 6 to 9 pieces of lateral wall felts. They repeated the form of wall trellises and fastened to each other by knots. Felt covering which clothes the top wooden circle-hole of the yurt (*urh*) designed to protect against weather and regulation of light and temperature inside the yurt. In addition, a yurt *Altaic Uriankhains* used for its stability and a lot of hair ropes of knots – *oosor*, *goshlon* etc. The yurt was also with the pressure belts attached to stakes driven into the ground.

Such clamping belts were especially comfortable in summer-autumn period, when the Mongolian *Altai* has had frequent strong storms and winds. Insolation, aeration and lighting within the tent are carried out through the upper smoke hole.

Assembling of the yurt is done in the following sequence: set the frame, covering the wooden construction with felt, placement of furniture and utensils. First, proceed to the installation and stretching of wall lattices. Moreover, the lattice wall is installed in a specific order from the door to the left, i.e., to the west, as the door facing south; first it starts at the door on the right set lattice, and then the north-west link, and finally they would link to the eastern part of the door. Installing wooden frame doors, walls covered with lattice inside the upper and lower belts, the ends of which are attached to the rings, specially fastened to the lintel of the door. Then willow poles are installed, connecting the lattice wall to the upper timber circle – a hole. To do this first into a hole in the top wood circle the upper end of the willow staves are inserted with the support of a man from the bottom, and the other end of willow staves is attached to the head of wall lattices. Initially, it should insert four willow stave poles with four sides, and then using the tightening of internal wall climbing and rope – *chagtag* attached to the upper smoke hole, achieved the correct form of the yurt, and then inserted the remaining poles. This completes the assembly of the wooden skeleton of the yurt.

The wooden skeleton of the yurt was covered as follows. On top of the wooden part of the roof stretched white cloth – *dotuur burees*, lower and upper ends of the ribbons which were attached to the wall to the upper grille and the wooden circle, then placing the upper feltsread. Side walls of the lattice are also closed with felt veils – *tuurga* and covered the outer upper and outer lower belts of hairy ropes-*gaduur goshlon*. In addition, each tent had felt tire-*urh* for the upper range of the smoke tube. It was a piece of felt hexagonal shape, to each his

corner sewn long rope from horsehair, five of which are stretched to the wall and ceiling coverings and felt tied to the outer side belts. Rope is sewn into the front corner, which is used for closure or opening of the top cover holes. Disassemble of the yurt is done as in the reverse order.

The internal layout of the yurt for *Altai Uriankhains* is divided into the following functional parts: if staying in a yurt, facing to south, i.e., to the entrance, the division looks like this: male (right side of the entrance), female (left side of the entrance), honorable (front or opposite to the entrance), non-honorables (front part), etc. The division of the yurt on such sectors was due to traditional notions about the organization of housing space and etiquette norms prescribed for family members. As rule, they tend to be strictly adhered to.

The left side of the entrance, which was considered part of the female, there were household utensils and dining room furniture, possessions for women mistress. There was a small stool with a box – *ukheg* just in few steps the entrance in which the owner kept her sewing accessories. Behind it was put wooden bed for the owners of the yurt. The most northern front side *khoimor* a place over the fireplace was considered the most sacred and honorable place in the yurt. Here was located the altar with a small box-*burhan shiree* on which the gold, silver and copper statues of Buddhist sculptures of gods and Bodhisatvas, or their images in the drawings, applications, must necessarily present the sacrificial cups – *takhilyn tsugts*, lamps, *zul* – candles and other attributes of the traditional Lamaist religion and a variety of family – genesis conservatives called as *sakhius*.

Altar was the indispensable attribute of the yurt among *Altai Uriankhains*. According to the description G.E.Grumm-Grzhimailo, who has studied the life of the Tuvians, Tuvian altar in the tent, had a strong resemblance to the altar of the *Altai Uriankhains* (Grumm-Grzhimailo 1926: 39). The researchers correctly note that the appearance of the altar in the tent of the Turkic-Mongol peoples of Southern Siberia is associated with the spread of Buddhism in those regions.

Near to the altar there were two or three handmade chest – *avdar* that store particularly valuable items (Darbakova 1968: 37) At the same area stood a low table-*shiree* and small-sized chest-*shurguulga*. Furnishing the front and other parts of the yurt was a serious concern of its owners, because with this place, as with the rest of the *Altai Uriankhains* has been associated with a number of important family, household, and religious prescriptions, prohibitions, regulations, etc.

In the center of the yurt was located a traditional stove without chimney-*tulga*. It consisted of three stones. The whole family life flowed around this hearth-*golomt*, which was considered the sacred and semantic center of the home, and determines all of his organization. The hearth was considered one of the most sacred places in the tent: it was considered that the “boss” of fire (*galyn burhan*) lived in the fire, which was the keeper of the prosperity and happiness of the

family. The *Altai Uriankhains* have many taboos associated with the domestic hearth: it is impossible to pour water on the fire, throw garbage onto the fire and other household vermin, step over it or sit near it with outstretched legs, and etc. It was considered a terrible sin to spit into the fireplace. It was believed that it could cause the extinction of race. The preservation and continuation of the genus of the *Altai Uriankhains* was the most sacred thing in their lives.

Above the fireplace was the upper range of the smoke tent. In addition to that, it served as a natural source of the fan and fluorescent lighting, and it also served as a determinant of time: on that as a ray of sunshine, hitting through it, moved on the walls of grating, one could accurately determine the time of day. These were the sort of sunny hours of the nomads. D. Maidar specifically studied the Mongolian yurt, wrote that the functional areas of its internal planning coincided with a specific animal from a 12-year cycle lunisolar calendar nomads (Maidar, Darisuren 1976: 17–18). For example, lama, from whom the *Altai Uriankhains* seek advice before the wedding, indicated by year of birth of groom at what time should start a wedding convoy to the place where a new set of the yurt to newlyweds. It could be, for example, the hour of white sheep or the hour of white horse, and etc. According to the ingress of solar beam at the appropriate place in the yurt could easily determine the time to begin a successful journey.

The upper range of the smoke was considered as the hearth and the altar, one of the sacred parts of the yurt. *Altaic Uriankhains* believed that through him to them in the house comes happiness through him by members of the family relationship with the gods, inhabitants of heaven, who look on them from above, and thereby affect the welfare of the family as a whole. On the right side of the yurt, a little further away from the entrance on the wall hung a leather wineskin lattices (*huhuur*) for fermented milk, or koumis, here arranged supplies for riding.

The western part belonged to the guests, and the north-western part – the owner and children. Hunting equipment stored on the male side, near to the site of the owner.

Floor in yurts is blanketed with the two types of coatings: felt sheeting (*shirdeg*) and skins of domestic animals, particularly, those of cattle and horses (*adsaga*). In the front part, the most honorable part, always has felt lay litter, which is produced by the traditional method of wool with the mandatory patterned embroideries. The remaining part of the floor is covered with several skins, more often being not dressed. These felt sheetings were used by many nomadic peoples of southern Siberia, which once again confirms the presence of ethnogonical, historical, and cultural ties between the *Altai Uriankhains* with those peoples.

In addition to yurts, *Altai Uriankhains* also enjoyed with similar to tent housing constructions – *hatguur, degle*. It was of two kinds. The first represents

only part of the dome tent without lattice-walls. During the fieldwork, I have heard many times from older informants that in the days of their youth it was taken to put such housing for married couples. In their view, this was done in order to emphasize the modesty of a young family, not courting to it of evil spirits (Lkhagvasuren 1987: 58). The second type of dwellings differed in that there was no smoke hole, and the ceiling poles just links in a bundle. W. Erdniev wrote that in the tent of Kalmykia, in the ethnic composition of which included a lot of *Uriankhain* genera, “the number of people living in a tent with an area of 18–22 square meters on average, could be up to 8 – 12 people” (Erdniev, Maksimov, 2007: 273).

While any yurt stands on a seasonal parking lot, it is formed a definite economic space around it, which contained the following items: tethering post (*morin uyaa*), winter paddocks for sheep and goats (*saravch*), summer and autumn fence for calves (*tugalyn zel*), a place to dry manure (*argalyn hashaa*), and a place for waste, etc. Location and distance of objects from the yurt depended on their place and importance in the economy.

In addition to being as permanent residents in the yurt, it also has served for all sorts of religious ceremonies, for hosting receptions of guests, in the early spring time, it is rescued newborn calves, lambs and kids from the cold.

Except yurt, our informants did not remember regarding the other kinds of dwellings which were used by the *Altai Uriankhains* in the late XIX and the early XX century. This is confirmed by G.N. Potanin: conical huts, and hexagonal huts, which are found in the *Altai* region among our telengits, Altaic and chernev tatars, are not found in the north-western Mongolia, south of Tann-Oi (Potanin 1881: 108).

Cloths: Winter and Summer, Men and Women, Festive and Humdrum. Clothes for centuries united people of one ethnic community, as opposed to others. As with any phenomenon of material culture, such a confrontation played a significant role in preserving and strengthening the ethnic identity (Porshnev1974: 4). The clothing has also pointed to the ethnic, gender, age identity, and social status of man (Hagen-Torn 1933: 122).

Clothes are the wonderful example of how people in addition to domestic use of this part of the material culture creates its own image through a unique combination of materials, cut and decorate. These elements of culture can tell a lot about the origins of the nation and its identity (Tishkov, 2003: 86).

Traditional clothing primarily reflects the aesthetic ideals of the people who are added depending on the specific natural and geographical, climatic conditions, and historical reasons.

The clothing of the *Altai Uriankhains* has quite clearly traced its similarity to the clothing of neighboring peoples, which certainly indicates the presence of her



PHOTO 7 Headdress with coral ornaments *shurtei toortsog* for unmarried girls



PHOTO 8 Headdress with silvery ornaments *chikhtei toortsog* for women

regional backgrounds of both historical and ethnographic, and natural-economic region. Thus, the national costume of the *Altai Uriankhains* is the result of a combination of traditional and regional forms. In this case, their national dress serves not only as a sign system or symbol of self-identity of people, but as an indicator of the degree of adaptation of the *Altai Uriankhains* to a specific ethnic, historical and cultural environment. Long staying, side by side, along with other nations, of course, had a significant impact on their clothes.

However, despite the presence of alien ethnic influences, the traditional costume of the *Altai Uriankhains* still was and remains the external expressions of their ethnic identity, and ethnic persistent identifier to help distinguish “us” from “them”, tribesmen from strangers, relatives of aliens.

System of patterns of the *Uriankhain* traditional clothing is very simple, economical, expedient, differs by the reasonableness and lack of spare parts. The first materials of the clothes were made by *Altai Uriankhains* were skin (*ars*) and wool from domestic animals and those of the wild animals caught by them during the hunt. These materials have processed in the traditional way (Ethnography of Mongolia 1996: 296).



PHOTO 9 Men's Winter Shoes *maaga gos*

For the production of winter clothing most often used the different types of sheepskins. Sheepskins have served the main lining material for all kinds of winter clothing. It is usually stained by natural dyes with the use of smoke – *utakh*. For a warmer time of year used suede (*eleg*)—a thin, very finely crafted leather. Winter outerwear, like the Mongols, often covered with cotton or silk cloth from China. Summer clothing was sewed from the conventional cotton. A silk cloth and velvet were used for the manufacture of festive clothing, which is also used to be to trim with a complex embroidery or applique.

Sewing is used mainly the wool or tendon threads. Woolen yarn made from sheep and camel wool. There are also traditional methods of twisting threads. Before you make such a thread, wool, first moistened in cold water and then dried. Of dried wool with a spindle (*eeruul*) twisted threads – *utas*. In thickness, they could be different. All kinds of upper and lower clothing sewed with thin threads of wool. Thick thread made of camel hair is usually sewn soles of shoes and stockings of felt, felt part of the yurt, felt mats, etc. Tendon threads are sewn mostly shoes and some items of ranching equipment.

Our field studies have shown that sewing of the garments has mainly done by women and adolescent girls. They make manufacturing and repairing all types of clothing by hand. Sewing among the *Altai Uriankhains* equated to a special kind of art. Of women dressmakers have required variety of knowledge, experience and ability, she had to be an artist and embroiderer, be able to glue and quilt, make ornaments and strictly maintain the exact color.

The workplace of every woman has had supplies such as needles (*zuu*), homemade tendon and woolen yarn, leather thimble (*huruuvch*), scissors (*khaiche*) and iron (*ihuur*). They are usually kept in a special bag—*uilnii uut*. Sometimes a needle and thread were kept in a felt bed mattress – *gudus*. For application to the skin line of designs, women often used a stick, one end of which was burned.

The *Altai Uriankhains* have different types of stitches for sewing different materials (leather, felt, fabric, etc.). Each of them applied accordingly to one or another material. During the fieldwork, we found they had several types of stitches. So, a seam-made basting *shidekh*, fur garments are sewn by seams – *khuburdekh*, sewing clothing from fabrics—*khavakh*, products made of fabric and fur were sewn by seams—*khuberdekh*. Virtually every woman has learned and used all types of stitches, among them there were frequent a number of skilled workers who has had no release from the customers. They have requested to do the custom sewing to the representatives of Lamaist clergy.

Traditional men's and women's clothing (*devel*) consisted of upper (*urd khormoi*) and the lower floors (*dotood khormoi*), back (*ar tal*), front (*urd tal*), board (*enger*), sleeve (*khantsui*), cuff (*nudarga*) and collar (*zakh*).

Clothes were made as follows: first woman – mistress take measurements

with the man bore her to the material, and then do the cutting. Take measurements, measuring by hand. When sewing of the children's clothes, pre-measures have taken carefully.

Altaic Uriankhains dressed strictly according to the seasons. In winter, men generally wore sheepskin coat-*uch*. There were several types of fur coats. The first was made of bare sheepskins (*ustey uch*), the second was also made of sheepskin, but the top was covered with cloth (*gadartay devel*), and the third was made of clipped (*segsuurge*) or clipped (*azargan*) sheepskins.

Manufacturer of the sheepskin coats for women began with measurements, and then traced on the skin of the boundary edge and cut them with scissors or a knife.

It should be noted that the traditional clothing of the *Altai Uriankhains* is the outward form of expression not only of their ethnic consciousness, but also the material embodiment of their archaic ideas about the world.