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**A Herder, a Trader,
and a Lawyer**

**Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren
Mary Rossabi
Morris Rossabi**

A Herder, a Trader, and a Lawyer

Three Twentieth-Century Mongolian Leaders

Interviews Conducted by

Yuki Konagaya and I. Lkhagvasuren

Translated by

Mary Rossabi

Edited and Introduced by

Morris Rossabi

**National Museum of Ethnology
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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 Tsendenbal, 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 Tsendenbals. 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. Tsendenbal 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 Tsendenbal than the ones reflected in the first volume. Jalan-Aajav's testimony is especially intriguing because Tsendenbal 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 Tsendenbal, 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.

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