

### III. Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav (1923-2007)

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### III. Sanpilin Jalan-Aajav (1923-2007)

Translated by Mary Rossabi  
Interviewed in June of 2005

#### 1. The Place where I was Born

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

many young people from the countryside went to Ulaan Baatar to study at the Technicum. What was the city like for you when you first arrived?

SJA: When I was about ten years old, my grandfather died, and our lives with mother changed a great deal. My grandfather had many herds at the time and was comfortably off, well respected, and with a good family. However, these herds died off in the *zud*, and our life became worse, and it was hard for mother to catch up. Life without herds was very difficult for Mongolians.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. Worker in the Lime Industry**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



and grandparents can be compared to this dew water.

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

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

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

### **3. I enter the State Party School**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

took the initiative in setting up both of these institutions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **4. I become a Teacher in the School**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **5. The Study of Law**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## **6. Chief Mongolian State Procurator**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **7. Leader of the Council of Ministers' Legal Committee**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Buddhism and the leader of the Mongolian government.<sup>17)</sup>

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

## **8. Organizing Mongolian Television**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## **9. The Government**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I, myself, worked in the Party's Central Committee and in the Party and strengthened the role of the leader over 70,000 members. Mongolia's independence was strengthened, there was greater national safety, and peoples' lives improved thanks to the Politburo's implementation of clear economic and cultural goals. The role of the Politburo was to carry out its own policies and those of the government also regarding life in the countryside where clear decisions had to be made and goals had to be met. I was involved from 1940 to 1980 in all of these activities, although the Politburo did not fulfill all its plans. The Politburo was composed of seven members, two deputy members—nine people altogether. For more than twenty years, Yu. Tsendenbal, J.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **10. My Words about Yu. Tsendenbal**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yu. Tsendenbal who had been under "house arrest" in Moscow was in a very difficult situation and died deeply depressed and sad, alone in his room.<sup>23)</sup> His wife, children, and relatives buried him in Mongolia.

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

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

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

## 11. Victimization

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Notes

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



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

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

- dynasty rule. For more on the Khanates, see Bawden, pp. 70-80. On the squabbles among these Khans and the ramifications, see Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 148-149.
- 12) On this code, see Valentin Riasanovsky, *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 111-126.
  - 13) In the 1940s, the Cyrillic alphabet replaced the ancient Mongolian script that was based on the Uyghur script. The Cyrillic alphabet is the commonly used script in contemporary Mongolia.
  - 14) The Sechen Khan was another of the important Khans in the Qing era.
  - 15) David Morgan. "The 'Great Yasa' of Chingiz Khan and Mongol Law in the Ilkhanate," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49 (1986), pp. 169-170 believes the Jasagh derives from an oral tradition while Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's Ĵasaγ," *East Asian History* 6 (1993), pp. 102-104 states that it was actually written.
  - 16) On Sambuu, see Mary and Morris Rossabi, trans. and ed., *Herdsmen to Statesman: The Autobiography of Jamsrangiin Sambuu of Mongolia* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).
  - 17) For Ulaan Baatar's monastery, Sermier, *Mongolia*, pp. 235-236 and Blunden, *Mongolia*, pp. 134-137.
  - 18) Capital of Buryatia.
  - 19) Ulaan Baatar, Darkhan, and Erdenet were the most populous cities in the country.
  - 20) For other views of Tsedenbal, see sections throughout Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*.
  - 21) Jalan-Aajav is referring here to the Politburo's stripping of Tsedenbal's positions and his "detention" in the USSR.
  - 22) Tsogt-Ochiirin Lookhuuz is most often given credit for helping to introduce the Virgin Lands movement to Mongolia. See Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren, *Socialist Devotees*, pp. 84-88.
  - 23) Tsedenbal died in 1991.