

## Part III: Conclusion

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journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Reports
volume	112
page range	127-129
year	2013-03-28
URL	<a href="http://doi.org/10.15021/00008888">http://doi.org/10.15021/00008888</a>

## 17. Conclusion

### Looking to the Future

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Much has been written about the vulnerability of Mongolian women. The authors of this book intended to highlight the success stories pertaining to some of these women. At “The Tenth International Congress of Mongolists”, August 9-13, 2011 Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the one of the authors presentation on Mongolian women’s development was well received by the audience, and Prof Enkhbayar. Byambanorov requested the full paper to be sent for the publication. Another presentation by the author, was made on “Women in Modern Mongolia,” during the International Seminar “Indo-Mongol Colloquium, some unexplored areas of Research” from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012 held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi India. There was a recommendation during the Seminar, that the interviews in present volume should be televised so that other women can be motivated to obtain their economic freedom.

Taking into consideration the fact of the scarcity of data and limited in-depth of research on Mongolian women especially during the socialist period, an oral history of these prominent women is very unique and informative. All of them have personally experienced both the periods, socialist Mongolia and now democratic Mongolia, which reflects both communist as well as modern era. Spoken in the context of Social, political, economic and business point of view, one could see the role Mongolian women have and are playing in every walk of life. In their efforts to reach to the current stage of their individual and collective development, the women in Mongolia had to go through many tribulations and hardships. It should be noted here that these hardships do not only apply to Mongolian women, but also to women in other countries who have experienced similar tribulation in getting their individual and collective human rights articulated, recognized, respected and exercised. Even now in many countries their roles are underestimated although in any society, women play an inescapable, indispensable vital and pivotal role.

In the political sphere, women parliamentarians in Mongolia succeeded in bringing the legal quota of women parliamentarians from 15 percent quota to 20 percent. This is a huge achievement. The new law and 20 percent quota in all administrative positions may significantly change the political and administrative and economic scene in Mongolia. Elections were held in Mongolia on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and the proportion of female candidates was above the 20 percent. In the local *aimag* (province) and *soum* (district) election more women ran and won their

electoral races. In some *aimags* 30 percent women won their electoral races and were elected. It is more than 20 percent overall in the country. This is an extremely positive result. Nevertheless, there is still a great need to educate the masses about the importance of the nomination of and election of the women especially in the political arena. Women themselves have to come forward to participate in decision-making. They can do this only by developing and applying their leadership skills. While the establishment of the quota system has proved to be a difficult process in increasing the number of women in higher administrative divisions, on the whole, it has, nevertheless, served as a powerful incentive at grass roots level. Recent election results show that Mongolian women are demonstrating greater interest in playing a positive and effective role in the political decision making of their country.

The newly elected nine women parliamentarians formed an unofficial caucus under the leadership of Erdenchimeg Luvsan. Caucus members at the first meeting on August 6, 2012, focused on issues like families, childcare, and corruption. They set out an agenda for the improvement of the maternity hospitals and asked the government to provide more budgets for health sector. In order to balance the dual demands of work and family, plentiful and affordable childcare is also on agenda. Equality and equity are essential for the growth and prosperity of any nation, and to utilize the talent and power of the other half of the nation, balance is a must. On the gender issues, the caucus has decided to press the government to increase the quota from 20 percent to minimum 30 percent for female executives and government –ministry jobs in coming years.

An important change in the government has been the first appointment of women to significant positions in the Cabinet. In recent election of 2012, again women were given the important portfolios (health, Nature and Environment) in the Cabinet. For the building of a truly sustainable democracy, these women have to work for a transparent and corruption free government within a framework of good governance best practices. They, also have to show that they can make noticeable impact on certain political, social and economic issues at the national level. They, will undoubtedly, face many challenges, but in order to get the highly educated younger women involved in decision-making at the community, government, and private sector and utilize their skill and knowledge in social and cultural domains in coming years, women MPs, NGOs and local networks need to raise awareness among urban and rural women about their rights and duties towards their country. At the same time it is the women by herself who has to give chance to the young women to take the ladder of success by avoiding the jealousy. The women on upper and traditional hierarchy have to create a road for the younger women without feeling insecure. Future generations should be provided information, skills, competencies and delegated appropriate authority and

commensurate resources on gender issues, family relations for effective and sustained participation in their communities and societies. Therefore, the *aimag* and *soum* committees should be delegated clear authority and resources to take the gender sensitive decisions to identify the projects to be funded and implemented. One thing is certain; their increased percentages in parliament, in the managerial positions in the economy, health, education, and their attempts to address their problems will gradually, but surely, bring them on an equal footing with their male counterparts in near future.

However, the present volume does not tell the whole story. There is still much to be learned. As Professor Morris Rossabi in his recent article on Mongolian economy mentioned, according to International Monetary Fund, in 2012 Mongolian GDP increased by 12.7 percent and in 2013 it will grow further to 15.7 percent, which puts Mongolia as the fifth rank on fastest growing economy in the world.<sup>1)</sup> Unfortunately this is not helping the general population. The wealth is concentrated in a few hands and the gap between the rich and the poor is widening day by day. Women, at grass roots level and women headed households are still facing increasing economic difficulties and social regression. In order to bring them on an equal footing with men, efforts has to be made to invite, encourage and enable them to play a major role when it comes to consultation and decision-making on distribution of the wealth arising from the extraction of natural resources located in Mongolia. They have to be mobilized and supported to show their fears and concern regarding the social, economic, environmental, and health impacts of mining and enabled along with their male counterparts to address the issues and consequences of climate change. The female gender has to, individually and collectively raise its own voices to assist to change the face of the country in a positive way. Unless and until women are given and are willing to exercise fairly and effectively, their full authority to build a new social structure, within democratic and free economic parameters, this anticipated and expected positive change in Mongolia is not possible.

## Note

1) <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138794/morris-rossabi/meteoritic-mongolia>