

I. Dumaagiin Sodnom, Planner of Transition : Interview conducted on June 10, 2005

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1. This Is Where My Home Began

Yuki Konagaya (YK): We thank you for answering our invitation to meet with us. You have been Minister of Finance, leader of the Planning Commission, leader of the Council of Ministers, and a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party). You have offered great service for many years and have made a name for yourself in all that you have done. We are pleased, therefore, to have the opportunity to ask you some questions about what you have achieved for Mongolian society and its government and economy and look forward to a free and interesting discussion. Could you begin by talking about the years of your youth—where you were born, your parents, and your sisters and brothers?

Dumaagiin Sodnom (DS): Yes, and let me say that I am pleased to meet you and talk with you. I was born in Mongolia's Golden Gobi Dornogov *aimag* Bayanmönkh (now Orgon) *sum*, or district, in an area which was called "Argal uul." This mountain was to the north, with the Garam River ravine to the west. On the southern and eastern lower slopes was the so-called "Illin buts" area where, in 1933, I was born to my young mother and father.

My mother showed me the exact place where our *ger*, or tent, had been located and told me "that this is where our home began." I was thankful that

I had been born on a hillock with sparse vegetation and sandy soil where the wild leek and pleasant smelling Mongolian onion grew. I will never forget the support of my fellow countrymen and the simple and warm relationships I had with the local people who were always ready to help each other.

I do not know the precise date of my birth, since no such records were kept at that time. My mother, however, guessed and so the “birth certificate” stated that I was born July 14. One of my ancestors called Tsoovgoi was born in the western area of Mongolia in Khankhokh and served in the military for many years. When he married, he moved to this area. He had three daughters, Jargal, Okhin and Khand, and one son, Tseden, who was nick-named “hunch-back.” Jargal’s husband was called Gombo, and their daughters were named Tseveg and Sosor, and their son was named Gonchig. There were many children, and the only one who survives now lives in *Orgon sum*.

Jargal’s daughter Tseveg was first called Jamian, but later she took her husband’s name which was Samdan. Both of them took vows from a lama, and so were slandered and ultimately executed. Our grandmother, Tseveg, had borne nine children: Dandia, Dendev, and Maam were the three boys, and Dulmaa, Bor, Balamtsoo, Dulamsuren, Dolgorsuren, and Dulgher were the six daughters. I knew most of these relatives. Dandia had one child, Dendev eleven, Maam three, Dulmaa eight, Balamtsoo two, Dulamsuren five, and Duger seven. Our huge family, nicknamed “Ondor”—tall, lives on the east side of what is now *Orgon sum* in *Dornogov aimag* at Argal Mountain. Dendev and his sister Dulamsuren are there with their great, great grandchildren. Our father, Chojjamts, was born in 1905, and our mother Dumaa was born in 1902. Both were, thus, born in the twentieth century, and my father lived into the 1940s, and my mother lived until 1973. I am lucky to live into this new century. Perhaps my recollections of much of this past century will give a picture and a summary of Mongolian history. A Mongolian person has an average life expectancy—not too long, but nothing to be sneezed at either—and measures are being taken to prolong our lives in the future.

My mother was called Dumaa and my father Chojjamts, though many people called him “Argal Mountain Golden Choi,” and he was well known. After my parents married, they had these children: Doljinsuren, 1923- ; Bayakhar, 1925-1943; Jamsran, 1927-1994; Dondov, 1929-1985; Badarch, 1931-1999; Jamsran, 1930-1992; Sodnom, 1933- ; Tsagaan, 1936- .

My sister, Tsagaan, and I are still both living. My grandmother lived until 1971 and died at the age of ninety-two. My father died when I was young so, unfortunately, I could not learn his precise family history. He had an older sister, Regzedmaa, and his brothers were Dambiinam, Zundui, Dulamsuren, Dandinjav and Chimed. My brother Badarch wrote a memoir about our father

who came from Saikhandulaan *sum*, Dornogov *aimag*. His mother was called Tseren and her brother, Navaan, was a lama who studied at the lamasery of Bayanmonkh. Tseren's daughter, Regzedmaa, and young Chojjamts went to Saikhandulaan. Soon after, Tseren went north and married Chultem. Our grandfather, Dendeetzebeen was also a lama, and my brother wrote about him in his memoir.

My father was well known in Bayanmonkh *sum* as a quick-witted and sharp man. The most majestic mountain was called "Argal uul Altan Choi" ("Wild Sheep Golden Choi Mountain"), and many people talked about it. The government official Mr. Sonom Luvsan, was from Delgerekh *sum* in our *aimag*. My father knew Mr. S. Luvsan: "We played dominoes from time to time. He was a clever person to debate with." Our domestic and foreign situation was in a muddle in the 1930s, and our government tried to keep the country safe by protecting the borders, using espionage which could lead to our participation in a war. At that time, Japanese militarists had occupied China and Inner Mongolia where the army was stationed and posed a threat to the safety of our country. Mongolia, therefore, had to strive to preserve the safety of the Motherland.

My mother said: "There were many times when I did not know where your father was for several days. We could not talk about how things were going on the frontier, although I had a rough idea. We didn't talk about this." I supposed that my father was doing business, and he told us that when he went to Inner Mongolia to gather information that he was looking after the herds. In 1940, he went off for the last time, saying that he would be back shortly, and he told us children to take care of ourselves. However, he never came back.

The war was over in 1945, and many soldiers returned south. At that time many men who had gone missing came back, and my mother and I eagerly hoped for my father's return but gave up hope in the 1960s. Father's brother Zundui also disappeared in 1940, but he returned in 1945. In 1960, Zundui used to tell us tales about "the hobo," explaining how Chojjamts mentioned that he had to go on a mission to cross the frontier and that Zundui should do something important for my country. However, since Zundui could not immediately go himself, my father went in his stead. Later, however, Zundui was also mobilized to work on the border, and he was caught and badly tortured. He suffered and knew that things were not going well for him. He returned without any teeth. In 1959, our uncle Zundui said: "Your father went to Inner Mongolia on an assignment and was arrested and harshly tortured and sent to prison. He had been in charge of the horses of the Japanese military leaders." Then my father with two friends fled for several days and nights and,

exhausted, they slept in the feather grass where a local person saw them and reported them. My father took all the blame and was arrested, tortured, imprisoned, and shot. Zundui said that he was telling us all of this so that we could learn about and understand what happened to the older people. Even today, this isn't often spoken about. Zundui spoke out in 1980 when I was at the Ministry of the Interior and could check on all of the facts of the Choijamts affair. However, the answer came back: "Our archives have no material about your father," though recently there has been some interesting material that has been published.

1) There was a report prepared by the Commissar Bat Sanj in Dornogov *aimag* in issues 35 and 36 of Channel 81, published in 1998 in "Life in the Motherland" that stated: "About ten men from an independent country were at the border of a foreign country working as spies. The father of Dymaag Sodnom, who was leader of the Council of Ministers, came from the "Argal uul Altan Choi," and his name was Choijamts. He led a detail from the Motherland to work against the Japanese on the border. It was said in our historical accounts that the skies darkened over Mongolia as many people were wounded, shot, or killed.

2) In Dornogov *aimag*, Khatan Bulag *sum*, a man called Maantin Tserendorj summarized a news article from 1999, no.07-08, which stated: "This patriot not only had great courage, he was also a famous gunman, old Mongolian, and loyal spy for the Motherland. I will pass this on to his children. This man, 'Argal uul Altan Choi' or Choijamts must be considered a captivating and fine man from the Gobi area, Dornogov *aimag*, Gurvan *sum*. He was a well-built man from the Dumaatan settlement in Bayanmonkh *sum*, Dornogov *aimag*, and he married the kind hearted and well-built woman Dumaa. He was arrested when he was on a mission for the Motherland and used all his strength to flee arrest and get out of prison by the Mongolian border. It is written that when he was caught he said: 'I have the blue skies of my country and that is enough, and I will not die at the hands of the Japanese samurai.' So he killed himself with a knife through his heart. His son, Sodnom, was the leader of the Council of Ministers."

3) There is a "very secret" newspaper article from 1999 no.39, 40 in which R. Monkhtor gave our surname of Choijamts and pointed out that he deserved honor from the Motherland.

4) The newspaper also stressed how my father struggled for the Motherland. Thus, from all these articles, we can see that my father died for his country and was an outstanding citizen, and I am proud to talk about his legacy.

In 2000, I registered my Mongolian civil passport in the name of Dumaagiin Sodnom, in my father's family name Altan Choi.

I was at the Ministry of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency where the archives about my father's experiences on the military border areas are thought to be located, but they cannot be found. Nor could the Russian archives in Mongolia be found. So my search did not go well, but I shall persevere and find these archives, so people do not forget, and so mothers, fathers, sons and daughters and all relatives can know the past.

2. I Attend the Financial Technicum

YK: How old were you when you went to primary school?

DS: I passed my young years among really good Mongolian people. My older brothers Dondov and Badarch and little Jamsran were all adopted, so big Jamsran, Tsagaan, and I were the three who remained. We lived comfortably with our mother whom I called Umaa and were showered with care and attention.

I went to primary school in 1942 in a *ger* in the center of Bayanmonkh *sum*. My big brother Jamsran was studying in a military school in Ulaanbaatar, and I stayed home with my little sister Tsagaan and Umaa. This was during the time of the Soviet German war, and I knew that our best horses were being prepared by our people to help out in the Soviet Red Army's manoeuvres. All Mongolians were preparing warm clothing, valuable goods, money, and food for the Soviet army. The Mongolian people offered financial support for tanks and planes, and our Party and government directors and workers were organized for the front. Bayanmonkh *sum* center was near where several Russian soldiers went hunting antelope, which they loaded onto their car. I passed by these Russian soldiers who were off to the front, and they gave us antelope cutlets, which they cooked with onions and garlic, and they were delicious. We wanted to eat them again and again. That was the first time I saw a Russian person's face and ate Russian food.

In 1943, my oldest brother Bayakhar died of pneumonia when he was eighteen years old and when there were no qualified doctors. My mother mourned him and put us in school and worked as a stoker there. She never urged us to help her with the herds and kept us in school. We felt sorry for and worried about her as she became very thin and could barely manage. If my brother were alive today, he would be almost eighty.

In the summer, I rested from school and looked after my uncle Dende's herds. We also had to care for the several horses from my father, as well as assisting my grandmother Tseveg. I took care of a little camel that I came to love. Early in the morning, I prepared to pasture the camels, came back to the *ger* at noon to drink, and finally returned in the evening when the sun was setting to pen the animals. I was little but returned from the steppe on my

horse and dismounted. I would try to find a big stone or a bank to get up on my horse as that would help me put my feet in the stirrups. Now it isn't customary to herd with people your own age, and it is important to revive that practice. So, too, Mongolians today must do the good work of protecting the camels. The only places the two-humped camels are found are in Mongolia, China, and Kazakhstan.

The summer's rest ended, and in the fall school began. Mothers and fathers loaded their camels with fuel for the schools and filed along with their loads, which were put down in the *sum* centers. In the Gobi *aimags sum* centers, there was so much fuel stockpiled that there was no fear of running out. During the World War, faraway places were often depicted as disasters but even so the *aimag* club or Palace of Culture in our *sum* center had the artist Yunden, a film maker, whom I knew well. At that time, there were only silent films, and Mr. Yunden explained how he made such highly artistic silent films. He was a man of many talents and knew about all sorts of music. He sang odes or hymns of praise, read poetry, and said prayers. He was also a theater man, and the children followed him to the *sum* center, where they chased after him, laughing and having a good time. He led them into the building with its wooden floor, its ceiling of brightly colored cotton, and its "red corner" or "rec room." Sometimes an artist performed in a good play, and several people played the mandolin in a small concert.

My teacher Gunsennorov was an intelligent man and a good organizer who created a good atmosphere for teaching us children. Once in our *sum* "red corner" the opera "The Eternal Triangle" was performed in a most exaggerated fashion, much to the amusement of the audience. In fact, this opera was performed in "red corners" throughout the countryside. In our *sum*, people waited for the curtain on the stage to rise and shouted "Hurry up with the show!" "It's time to milk the cow!" Then the head of the "red corner" stuck his head out through the curtain to announce that the musicians had not yet arrived and that he only had a mandolin player, which did not please the spectators. However, they agreed to stay for the opera anyway, which turned out to be a great success. In the opera, the main character, Yunden, received an assignment from Balgan (ed. the bad guy) who waited as two timid men plucked a string instrument. Yunden then threw a punch, as one timid man stood in one corner and the other in a different corner. Yunden tried to whip one timid man with a kind of whip children used in the Gobi. At that moment, an old man in the audience stood up and shouted "You hit the wrong person! What happens next?" So Yunden whirled around and fell in the dust which swirled about everywhere. Everyone laughed and had a good time, so the opera was a big success. Our teacher had told us the story of the opera, and I

will always remember this very funny time.

I have wonderful memories of this peaceful life of my youth so full of good people. I studied the flute and knew all sorts of songs that I played on my flute, and I sang as well. In the fall of 1945 the *argal* (or manure used as fuel) for my school in the *sum* center was loaded on the camel. In the evening, when the camels were asleep, I wanted to play my flute, but I dropped it, and I never played again. If I hadn't dropped it, I might have become a good flute player. Who knows? Many years later, I did buy another flute, but I couldn't play a single note, let alone a song. I also liked to draw. Parents watch their children and should encourage, not begrudge, their talents.

My own daughters, Nadia and Tolia, both studied the piano and the accordion with a teacher. However, neither of them was very interested, nor were they good to listen to, so their music was abandoned. My oldest daughter's daughter, Natasha, played and appreciated music, but had little talent for singing. On the other hand, Tolia's oldest daughter announced that she wanted to learn to play, so we found a talented teacher with whom she studied the piano. She played nicely, and my wife, Vera, and I enjoyed listening to her practice. Some of our relatives were artistic people and played music, sang, drew, and perhaps had an influence on the family as a whole. In short, it is good to appreciate what is beautiful.

YK: Did you wish that your education had taken you in an artistic direction?

DS: You could say that. I finished primary school in Dornogov *aimag*, Bayanmonkh *sum* in 1946. My older brother Jamsram enrolled me in art school in Ulaanbataar. It was strange to go to the city. I had finished the local primary school together with a fellow called Baldandorj, and we went on to the *aimag* center. I then went on to school in Ulaanbataar, while Baldandorj wished to stay in the *aimag*. However, the *aimag* leader Tsagaan called us both in with our mothers to his office, and I was told that I would remain in the *aimag*, and that Baldandorj would go to school in Ulaanbataar where there was a place for him. We both burst into tears as our mothers sat there realizing that as luck would have it only one person could go. Then the man looked at us and said: "Why are you children weeping?" The reason was explained to the *aimag* leader who was a big man, and he said: "The children themselves have a voice!" So it was decided that I would go and study in Ulaanbaatar. And this great big man who we cried in front of was Choijamts, the first secretary from Dornogov *aimag* and a member of the MPRP. Later in the 1970s, Mr. Choijamts worked on the Central Control Committee of the CC/MPRP, but he did not remember this little tale. So I had to decide whether I would express my thanks to Mr. Choijamts for whatever small help he gave me, which I had never forgotten. This *aimag* leader had wanted me to exert

myself in the *aimag* school, but my dear childhood friend and blood brother, Baldandorj, stayed in Dornogov *aimag* and flourished as a champion herder. We both liked to talk about our lives as youngsters whenever we met. Baldandorj, who had many herds and was contented with his life, died in the 90s, and his wife, Galia, lives with her many lovely daughters in Orgon *sum*

In the fall of 1946, I sat in a car loaded with many people, and we stopped at a place called “Jangjin Choir” on the way to Ulaanbaatar. We had a good car and driver who drove fast and all went smoothly. We were brave as we crossed the wooden bridge over the Tuul River, and we were so dusty that we stopped to wash our face and hands. This was the first time that a person from the Gobi had seen all this precious, flowing water, and we were delighted. In Ulaanbaatar I met up with my brother Jamsran who took me around the city and tried to get me into the art academy. We couldn’t find the school, so I went to my mother’s brother, Maam, who said he went to school nearby and introduced me to the Financial Technicum.

I met with Tseren, the teacher at the Technicum, who said that I had to take a writing and math exam: “You are a young kid and are barely seventeen years old, so you need to study and should go right to the school that prepares people for the exams.” So I did what I was told, informed my mother, and went to work preparing for the exams. The director of the Financial Technicum was a man called Zul, and there were also many good teachers who had received meritorious teaching awards like Tseren, Tumen, Tagor, Dashaa, Dulmaa, and Dejidmaa. My teacher Zul had worked for many years as a Deputy Minister of Construction. Many of these people had good reputations.

I studied with B. Yavuukhulan and Ts. Gaitav, the first was a famous poet, and the other a writer. In the fifties and sixties, Ts. Gaitav was mobilized to write in support of the MPRP in its encouragement of literature. Now Ts. Gaitav is free and is engaged in good writing. Today a writer like B. Yavuukhulan is both a composer and a poet and is revered as “the great Eastern poet.” I was supposed to study with this great man and don’t think I understood what an honor that would have been. On December 17, 1981, the leader of the Mongolia Writers Union S. Udval had a meeting for writers and suggested that writers deal with social and economic issues. At that time, I worked for the leader of the State Planning Commission and knew quite a bit and spoke up freely and frankly in discussions concerning long term planning. When the meeting was over, twenty-two of the best writers in Mongolia autographed the book entitled “The Best of Mongolia’s Poetry.” And B. Yavuukhulan autographed my book. At our Financial Technicum, there was one class with the artists Mayasuren and Tsevelsuren who worked as musicians and playwrights.

I was 13 years old the first time I was in Ulaanbaatar. I'll never forget the huge meal I had with Maam, when I tasted potatoes which I didn't like at all.

3. I Went to Study in Irkutsk

I. Lkhagvasuren (IL): When did you finish the Financial Technicum?

DS: In 1950, I finished the Financial Technicum and was an acknowledged "bookkeeper and organizer of the budget." My whole life for four years was at the Financial Technicum, and it was a life of learning and studying among intelligent people with whom I lived in the dormitory at this, my first university. In 1942, I had been to primary school and then to the *aimag* school where I had begun learning the Cyrillic alphabet and was not taught the Mongolian script which, unfortunately, I can barely read or write. I finished in 1950, but I had started for the class in the summer of 1947 in Bayanmonkh *sum*. In the fall, Umaa and Tsagaan went to Ulaanbaatar so I could study without missing them when I went to school there. When Umaa left her simple *ger* in Bayanmonkh *sum* to live in Ulaanbaatar, she hoped to return but never did so. All my possessions were gone. I lost a record player, and I am sorry that a thick square lined volume, which was my father's photo album, also disappeared.

Once as we were basking in the sun on a lovely evening, a horseman galloped up from the southwest and told Umaa: "Papa is coming!" We were so happy to meet our father, and I'll never forget that he arrived with photos and a phonograph. My father wore a round patterned silk *deel* and sat with his arms akimbo and had some very valuable pictures with him. He also had three or four records of old songs which are also gone. I hope that somewhere in Bayanmonkh *sum* there are many 8x12 photographs hidden away somewhere safely.

After finishing the Financial Technicum, I worked at the Ministry of Finance, and my artistic abilities came in handy. With school over, we planned to receive the Minister of Finance Demchigiin Molomjamts and the cultured leader Dangaa who told me that I would meet and get to know D. Molomjamts. Dangaa said: "This youngster is a good artist, so we have hired him to be in charge of the bulletin board at the Ministry." So I had the good fortune to work at the Ministry of Finance. In fact, I was involved in the arts, including drawing and photography and music, especially singing, all my life, which made me very happy. Since I first crossed the golden threshold of the Ministry of Finance, half a century has passed. I first worked in the Control Department where a man called Mishig and I participated in monitoring out the sewing industry in Ulaanbaatar. It was the first time that I had participated in such work, which was rather boring, but I did it for four years.

Meanwhile hopes of studying in the USSR were always on my mind. I had finished three years of evening school at my high school no.2 and completed the tenth grade in 1953. Each week for six days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. I worked at the Ministry of Finance and from 6 in the evening until midnight I attended evening school. I wanted to sign up for the exam to go to the USSR, but first I had to speak with Ambassador D. Molomjamts in Russian, and I failed that test. After yet another year, I had passed the enrollment exam and in the fall of 1954, I set out for Irkutsk and the Finance and Economics University on the train together with some friends. I had gone with Umaa to Dundgov *aimag* and then by plane, our first plane ride, to the Zuunbayan oil industry where she was going to work with my brother Jamsran. I then travelled with several hundred excited young people for two nights to Irkutsk.

All of us students at the Finance and Economics University in Irkutsk were most comfortable in the dorm where we lived and studied. We had classes outside, studied the Russian language, and worked hard and became friends with Russian students. I enjoyed singing in Russian.

Twice, I voluntarily participated in an arts festival in Irkutsk and won a medal, which was most elegant and precious to me. I sang in Mongolian as well as two Russian songs, which were broadcast on the radio, so Umaa wrote that she heard them in Mongolia and when we met we talked all about this. I also posted news of my school friends, decorated our building for a festival, and participated in the volleyball games.

Many Mongols graduated from the Irkutsk Finance and Economics University, and Yu. Tsedenbal was the first who attended from 1934 to 1938. I followed many people who graduated from there including D. Molomjamts, Ts. Molom, and S. Byambajav.

4. I Became a Minister of Finance in Mongolia

YK: In what year were you appointed to the Mongolian Ministry of Finance?

DS: I finished school in August, 1958 and went to the Ministry of Finance where the Minister of Finance, Mr. Dugersuren, soon organized the department of Foreign Exchange, and I became its leader. At that time, Mongolia's national currency was not yet set like the other widely used currencies in the other socialist countries. We did not follow the same price schedule on the world market as did those with whom we had trade or economic relations. Their trade relations were based on the ruble, so we had to work out a method of conducting trade, so that we could be confident in clearing the ruble. There were mutual exchanges in some goods between the socialist countries, and the tariffs for foreign exchange had to be evaluated in all sorts of ways. Mongolia

tried to set up a sound relationship between the best price for products and the tariffs.

In the fall of 1958, for the first time Bucharest fixed the Romanian *leu* to the *tugrik* in mutual exchanges. We went to Romania and walked around asking about prices, and we stayed awake at night crunching the numbers. If I finally did go to sleep, I had to get up soon to put the accounts on paper. I worked for two years on the numbers, setting up the relationship between *yaluta* (foreign exchange) and the *tugrik* which remained stable throughout the socialist period.

At the same time, the work we were doing at the Ministry of Finance was improving, as was my life. I soon went to live in a big two-bedroom apartment in a building in the “Dochin Maingat” district in the center of Ulaanbataar. My wife Vera had finished school in July, 1958 and had taken her final exams, so we recorded our marriage and, with all our Russian and Mongolian friends, had a modest wedding feast, and in the evening amused ourselves before Vera went home to the town of Slavgorod near the Altai border, and I went to Ulaanbataar—the two of us in opposite directions. I worked at the Ministry of Finance and, a year later, Vera came to Ulaanbataar by train to work as head of a local planning department where she worked for thirty-two years until she retired.

I was the leader of the Foreign Exchange Department at the Ministry of Finance and worked there for five years when one day in April, 1963 Mr. Dugersuren summoned me, and I went to his office where he told me “together we will go somewhere.” Then the Minister from the Government Palace came and told us that we were going together to the Politburo. Mr. Dugersuren was to be moved to the Council of Ministers, and I was to replace him as Minister of Finance. I was both pleased and frightened by my new appointment and couldn’t quite conceive of all the responsibility this job entailed. Mr. Dugersuren then told me that I was well prepared for this position and that I certainly could do the work. He went on to point out that though I might lack experience I would get support from the good people in the Ministry and would soon gain experience! The Politburo of the MPRP met, and Mr. Dugersuren was appointed deputy leader of the Council of Ministers, and my appointment was announced. When Mr. Yu Tsedenbal saw me, he said: “I know this comrade—do you have any questions?” I sensed that I was being stared at by everyone and when Mr. Yu Tsedenbal told me to say a few words I replied that I was not up to doing the work of the Ministry and could not say anything. Mr. Yu Tsedenbal responded and said: “I understand that you are afraid that you cannot do this governmental work, but you certainly can and we will help you.” The motion was passed. Mr. Yu Tsedenbal never forgot

anyone he had met. Later, a meeting was to be held at the Ministry of Finance with me and Mr. Dugersuren where all the workers assembled to hear the announcement of my appointment. Mr. Dugersuren asked me who would conduct this meeting, but he was a clever man and I was only a thirty year old youth who had been appointed to the Ministry of Finance.

5. A Big Debt

YK: Did the OXY (The Russian Federation) let you know about issues relating to the payment of your debt? How did the debt originate?

DS: A plan and a social policy had to be drawn up for the economy which correlated the various branches and focused on issues that would be handled by a State Planning Commission.

The State Planning Commission was eager to work with the Central Committee of the MPRP, the Mongolian People's Great Khural, and the government in general. The workers placed great demands on a centrally planned economy which, however, was not the only reason for the debt. Thus, the State had to have strategies to deal with various situations.

In the early 1990s, the government was denied a role in working out sorely needed social and economic policies. Regulation was, by and large, abandoned for no apparent reason and with little understanding. Economic structures were basically destroyed, and hundreds of local economies appeared, but experienced financial experts had been dismissed and were thus of little help.

To give the country confidence, I knew things had to change and the government needed immediately to set up a central plan.

In December, 1969 Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal dismissed the first deputy leader of the State Planning Commission and appointed a more competent person to whom he entrusted the work of increasing the profitability of capital investment regarding, especially, technical assistance from foreigners. At that time in my life, I was deeply involved in economic work. The demands of Mongolia's economic development and successful productivity had to be supported in financial accounting. Ours was a socialist economy, and we wished to broaden our economic relations with the USSR and other socialist countries which could help us with loans, which could, however, lead to a growing debt.

Thus, we reached a series of loan agreements with the USSR. From 1971 to 1975 we were loaned about 450 million rubles, from 1976 to 1980 1.4 billion rubles, and from 1981 to 1985 3.2 billion rubles all to help us. In 1976 a 14 year period of 2% interest started, and we began to pay back the loan. After five years, the period for repayment of the interest on the loan was extended to forty years. This debt relief and capital could be used to build up Mongolia's

infrastructure, industry, and economy, which were the foundation for our society.

Thanks to this policy on foreign loans, there was great educational and economic progress, and many social issues were successfully resolved from 1970 to 1990. From 1960 to 1970, Mongolia experienced a 30% growth, from 1970 to 1980, 80% growth, and from 1980 to 1990, a 65% growth. The GDP was 2.7 % in 1970, 6.1% in 1980, and 5.1% in 1990. This kind of growth is now only a dream.

Industry developed successfully, and the agricultural output from 1970 to 1980 was at 14.8%. In 1990, it had reached 45%. Of course, agriculture is dependent on the vagaries of the climate and weather, but, thanks to certain measures taken in the herding economy, the level of output in the planted areas was good, and there was continuous growth for the export market. Between 1970 and 1990 industrial output grew from 7.2 to 8.7%.

From 1976 to 1990, Mongolia was loaned about ten billion rubles for infrastructure and for building industry, as well as for providing the necessary conditions and preparing a plan for economic and social development. It was clear that this loan affected government policy and for years the Soviet influence remained, and there was little need to turn to others for economic assistance. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, rather than the free market nations, were very important in the growth of our exports.

The Mongolian government was under the authority of the MPRP, and Yu. Tsendenbal was known to follow the USSR in foreign relations and economic policy. In the 1990s, the difficult issue arose of adapting the ruble to the world market. Our debt dominated our relations and had to be dealt with. The form of our mutual foreign trade was, at this time, connected to the prices on the world market, which had been fixed for many years and were hard to change. However, the prices that had been fixed between Mongolia and the USSR were different from the prices on the world market. In most cases, Russia set the standard price. So it was necessary to change the accounting system of the ruble and correlate it with the free *yaluta* or foreign exchange, but there was no ability to make this transfer and, at the same time, it was clear that our loan had to be recalculated. Some in Mongolia proposed that the loan should be lightened.

Some Mongolian intellectuals, as well as an economist with the Russian Federation, believed that the loan from Russia should be tied to the Russian military living in Mongolia whose local salaries were based on the relations between the states, as were the handling of any local damages, including pollution, which they engendered. In addition, during the time of Stalin's dictatorship, many Mongolian intellectuals were killed, and in the thirties, the

USSR demanded the execution of 10,000 innocent lamas and the destruction of a hundred lamaseries so that the lamaist culture was destroyed.

In many ways, there was mutual trust and respect between Mongolia and the USSR, as well as productive aspects of our relationship, including the development of joint industrial projects and an agreement to work out a way to cancel the loan. In short, our two countries generally worked together and did good deeds for each other.

6. Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal Is Dismissed

IL: In August, 1984, the Eighth All Khural of the MPRP met and the General Secretary of the MPRP, Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal, was relieved of his post. What were your thoughts on all of this?

DS: The Mongols, especially those working for the government, had thoughts and feelings of unity that related to the society as a whole, but competition and disharmony began to replace the common goals of the country. In 1924, our country had embarked on its road to development and along the way met some opposition. Thus, to prevent conflict and the strengthening of private interests, some people were persecuted in the hope of preventing harm to the State and Party. Private interests could determine appointments, and some people could act badly and engage in unfriendly relations that would be ruinous. In 1984, there were some reasons, not entirely clear to me, for changes in appointments. One can grow forgetful as one grows older and begins to decline, but Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal's friends agreed to keep silent and to say little, so he had the last word.

Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal sensed that he was weak, and though he mentioned he might need help, he ultimately came to rely especially on his wife, A. I. Filatova, while the government and the Party had to fulfill its responsibilities and lead the nation.

It was indisputable that the quality of Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal's work had changed as his wife and family particularly noted, so the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP continued to work with him, but no one dared to interfere with the influence exerted by his wife A. I. Filatova. Everyone remembered the beginning of his political life when he was so very active and had the reputation as the leader of the "MPRP and the Mongolian government and people!"

I was given the difficult task of looking over his writings which embarrassed him as they were all on little pieces of paper that he kept in his pocket. Some believed that these notes helped him remember what issues he had to settle. His wife was a fierce woman with a rude character who involved herself in issues of the government and the MPRP. Although many people

knew she was wrong they could not prevent her intrusion. Since many people did not like A. I. Filatova, if she took too strong a stand on issues she could tarnish the name of Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal.

However, it is clear that in spite of his wife and relatives, when Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal left office, his position was unquestioned, and he was revered as a god. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine how he and his wife, A. I. Filatova, would have dealt with the popular revolution in 1990. A. I. Filatova was determined to make sure that Yu. Tsedenbal kept his position as leader of the country and the Central Committee of the MPRP. At the same time, Mr. D. Maidar, first deputy of the Council of Ministers, met with his Russian counterpart clearly trying to remove all obstacles to his own advancement. Both D. Maidar and A. I. Filatova sought to remove members of the Politburo, including D. Molomjamts, and it was clear that they were involved in monetary transactions between the Mongols and the Soviets. At that time, I was the deputy leader of the Council of Ministers, and I worked on the State Planning Commission, which was studying social and economic conditions in Mongolia and drawing up a plan of development which took into account the interests of the Party and the government, so that people could know what these interests were.

In 1983, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP took up some economic issues relating to “Erdenet,” our joint industry with the Soviet Union. We pointed out that there were some practical mistakes in the “Erdenet” budget relating to both the subsidies and the joint profits. We believed that we were supporting the profits from “Erdenet’s” natural resources from our own State budget, and since we could not reach an agreement with the USSR, we decided that we would not support joint industries.

However, I believed that the joint “Erdenet” enterprise was very profitable and that not giving Mongolia a loan for our resources was not acceptable. In fact, ten years before the first “Erdenet” agreement was approved by the leaders, D. Maidar, on his own initiative, revised it and drew up what proved to be this bad deal.

We knew that the Soviet Non-Ferrous Metallurgical Ministry and the government mutual commission did not wish to receive and talk to our comrades, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR stated that this Mongolian economist had put forward baseless criticism. In fact, it seems that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR was aware that the chief of the Soviet State Planning Commission and later a government Prime Minister, V. Pavlov, had gone to Mongolia as an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary and had dealt honestly with the Mongolians on these basic issues. However, this part of the “Erdenet” enterprise ended, as

did the subsidies to Moscow. In late June, 1984 a protocol was signed about the sale of copper concentrate at “Erdenet” to the USSR, which raised the price to accord with the world market price. In 1991, it was decided that Russia owed us payment for using our natural resources and that there should be some compensation for our joint industries. D. Molomjamts and J. Batmünkh had met some years earlier with ambassador S. Pavlov and courageously presented such a proposal, which Tsendenbal supported.

We supported this protocol that had also been backed by Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal, but A. I. Filatova and D. Maidar raised several issues opposing it. So the economic benefits of working with the Soviet Union at Erdenet were downplayed by this “economic clique.” Those like D. Molomjamts, P. Jasrai, N. Mishigdorj, Dolgormaa, and the economist D. Sodnom were even said, by those surrounding Yu. Tsendenbal, to favor China over the Soviet Union.

Mr. D. Maidar wrote to a person called Balbar that “those who worked to negate Soviet profits should be removed from the Party and the government.” Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal knew about this “removal plan” in the spring of 1984, which included eliminating Mr. J. Batmünkh, the leader of the Council of Ministers, and many others from the Politburo Central Committee of the MPRP. Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal had received two such proposals and prepared to dismiss many cadres from the Central Committee of the MPRP. At the end of July, 1984, Tsendenbal went on a holiday to the USSR. Mr. Lamjav, who directed the department that dealt with the cadres, said that: “We need to have a good discussion about the many demands to remove, at the same time, so many economic administrators.” Although Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal agreed, he had gone on his holiday. I did not know about all of this at the time and only later heard about all of this from B. Lamjav. So, clearly, this directive caused a conflict that stretched from Mongolia to the USSR, and as it intensified, many government administrators who worked on economic issues were dismissed.

No one seemed to take responsibility for those appointments, and it was clear that Tsendenbal could not continue as leader and that A. I. Filatova and D. Maidar were out for their own private gain.

In August, 1984 I had a week’s holiday at Sochi and received a telegram saying it was urgent to return to Ulaanbaatar. From Moscow, I met Ambassador Gorbadam who had been briefed on the urgent issue of a meeting with the Central Committee of the MPRP to discuss removing Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal from his post. The exact reason wasn’t clear when I met the next day with the Central Committee as “the issue of relieving Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal from his post because of his poor health was to be talked about in the meeting!” At the time I was the deputy leader of the Council of Ministers and also worked as the leader of the State Planning Commission, as well as being a member of the

Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP and thus was privy to these important issues.

In August, 1984 the Central Committee of the MPRP and the All Khural relieved Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal of his post, and Mr. J. Batmünkh became the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the MPRP and the leader of the Mongolian People's Republic All Khural, although the Council of Ministers remained unchanged. Four months later, in December, 1984, I was appointed to the People's All Khural and remained the leader of the Council of Ministers and a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP.

Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal had a young son, Zorig, who wrote a book about his father when he was in the best of health as well as about a group of people who conspired against his father, and I was implicated. He discussed the problems concerning the Erdenet enterprise, which Mongolia tried to resolve, but the Soviet position was distorted and led to the ruin of many people. A. I. Filatova and D. Maidar did nothing to clarify the situation nor did Zorig know that in December I would be a member of the Politburo. Anyone reading this must get his facts straight and examine carefully those people under suspicion. Resentment and suspicion abound, and it is heinous to work for one's own selfish rewards. Rather people should work together with their friends, so there will be no trouble.

The Mongolian government was directed for many years by Mr. Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal who was relieved of his post in 1984 as his health deteriorated. His history must be valued, even though he made mistakes. Many Mongolians believed that for the past seventy years we had missed our chance to develop. On the other hand, since 1990, many people feel that we now have that opportunity. One has to understand the path of development in our society rather than simply grasping the quickest solutions in an effort to ease people's worries.

Since the 1921 Revolution, the Mongolian population has increased fourfold, our citizens' health and education have improved, our culture has revived, we have become independent and we were the 140th member to join the UN. Now our market economy and our democracy in the Mongolia of Chinggis Khan are known throughout the world, and no one can doubt our future development.

Yu. Tsedenbal directed the Mongolian State for more than forty years. However, even under Tsedenbal's leadership, Mongolia did not reach the level that people hoped for. Even though one person can have an important role in history, it would be too presumptuous to think that the destiny of an entire nation rests on his shoulders. But we all believed that, so we can't be too critical and say that all of us were wrong. It must also be said that the vast one

hundred year old socialist system outside of Mongolia was not always in accord with what was happening in our country.

In 1939, the Japanese militarists attacked us at Khalkhin Gol with their soldiers and weapons. Yu. Tsendenbal was a young man of thirty at the time and was responsible for the entire war preparations of our country and for coordinating with the Soviets all services required at the front.

The German fascists attacked the USSR in the Second World War and waged war against the Soviet people which encouraged the Mongolians, led by Tsendenbal, to organize and send support to the USSR. The Russians and the Mongolians stood firmly together, and Mongolia did everything it could to aid in the war effort. The Mongolians knew that their fate was linked to the fight against fascism and helped as best they could. Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal, above all others, aided the Soviet military.

The legendary Soviet leader, G. K. Zhukov, and many other famous commanders worked together with Yu. Tsendenbal in 1939, and they became good comrades. This friendship between Mr. Tsendenbal and many Soviet commanders continued for many years, as did the friendship between our two countries. We shared powerful weapons and had a relationship of mutual trust.

The Soviet government met with Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal several times about these weapons, and I had the opportunity to listen to these discussions. We had worked together in the battle of Khalkhin Gol and the Second World War and knew the patronymic names of many people who told stories of their meritorious service. Thus we value and respect the humane qualities of these people and do not forget our bonds of friendship. The military history states that Yu. Tsendenbal was respected by famous commanders as an intelligent and knowledgeable man and that both countries' strong militias fought at Khalkhin Gol.

An opinion poll organized by Yu. Tsendenbal collected data to confirm Mongolia's demand for independence. Then Mongolia became a member of the United Nations, which did confirm its independence.

In 1950, the population of Mongolia grew by 4 to 8%, and in the 50s, there was a net growth of 2.5 to 3% as the nation's health improved, which was reflected in parts of the work place. In 1950 Mongolia's population numbered 772,000 and by 1990, it had grown to 2.15 million people.

In 1940, only about 25% of adults were literate, and Yu. Tsendenbal set about offering children and youths eight years of school, and by the 1980s this goal had been reached. Internal and external high schools to train technicians and professionals for the basic occupations were established also by the 1980s.

Yu. Tsendenbal possessed an excellent knowledge of the Russian language and spoke very well, and he considered it very important for professionals to

have a command of the language. In fact, possessing a solid knowledge of the Russian language was an important factor in getting a good position. Yu. Tsedenbal did not mock uneducated people but rather encouraged them to learn, and he was respected for many years by the Party and the government.

In the 70s, the governments in the socialist countries were interested in Mongolia's resources and reached out. We needed to have an effective and economically strong plan when we applied for foreign loans to aid us in our development. In 1969, I left the Ministry of Finance and went to work as deputy leader for the State Planning Commission where the leader, Mr. Rentsenpeljay, told me that the daily work of the Commission was in my hands and that we had to draw up a long term plan of development. He reorganized this Commission.

We worked out a 10 to 15 year plan of development for Mongolian industry. All the socialist countries had to do economic research for the Five Year Plans and Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal supported and approved our plans.

From the mid-70s until 1990, these plans were discussed in the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP. The Soviet State Planning Committee (SOPS) had a senior director at the meeting who presented his ideas on Mongolia's future development plans through 2000, including the issues of research, technology, and education. Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal was an intelligent member at this meeting and set an example through his own work. Thanks to this effective plan, from 1976 to 1990, our country advanced in its economic and social spheres. During that period, the output of the "Erdenet" copper industry and our natural resources, including fuels and animal products, increased, which led to more exports. We still needed to find a way to produce our own seeds for planting potatoes and other vegetables and provide in each industrial district in the towns and in the countryside housing, a school, a kindergarten and medical facilities. The State Farms furnished all of these things or there might be a school and a modern medical facility in the *aimag* center. Although there might be access to foreign radio and television, communications generally needed improvement. However, all of this represented fifteen years of development.

I was informed in 1983 that the Soviets wished to develop the Khövsgöl phosphorous mine, and a high ranking Soviet bureaucrat wanted an official response from us. I planned to answer by telegram that we would agree to their proposal only if our country gained from it. When I showed my response to Tsedenbal, he said that my answer was good and, I am sure, edited my Russian copy, which is in the archives of the State Planning Commission.

Yu. Tsedenbal cannot be criticized and can only be praised for matters pertaining to Mongolia's future development. He was more cultured than most

other people, was careful in his speech, set an example for others, and was well respected.

In the 1970s, when I was presenting a report, I was tested by him without realizing it. We were developing a joint plan in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, on which Tsedenbal worked continuously with never a sick day or day off, nor a weekend or holiday. He called me in and pulled a book from his desk, which was the protocol for the meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance that he must have read and studied because there were many notes and words underlined in red or blue pencil. For half an hour, we discussed many issues raised by the protocol which he handed to me.

Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal had examined all the material very carefully as he went into the discussions, and he tried to catch me up on some of those issues that were outlined in the protocol!

7. What Were Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal's Mistakes?

DS: Yu. Tsedenbal directed the Mongolian government for more than forty years and made some mistakes. But nobody is perfect. His biggest mistake was his decision regarding the western border. The Mongolian People's Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics clarified their boundary line in 1957, although establishing it north of Uvs *aimag* led to a dispute. The Mongolian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Avarzed, was Mongolia's senior representative in boundary line negotiations and proposed keeping it to the north, which presented difficulties. Under the direction of the government, he held firm. General Tseden-ish, who had worked on the issues concerning the Mongolian border, was also involved in the discussions and he stated: "The two sides disagree, and we often cannot reach an agreement, and there is deadlock. We need to talk about our different opinions on this issue with the senior Soviet representative to see exactly what the Soviet position is," but Mr. Avarzed protested. V. Molotov was the special Soviet ambassador for these border negotiations, and he dealt directly with Yu. Tsedenbal, which led to the removal of Mr. Avarzed, and so the Soviets got their border line. Mr. Tseden-ish pointed out that he barely took part in these discussions.

I do not know all the different opinions of the decision to limit the border discussions, but some people knew how to handle such agreements as seen in the earlier agreement covering the Davst mountain area with its famous salt deposits. Maybe Mr. Avarzed was not flexible enough. However, we should not have been pushed into the agreement with V. Molotov.

I have an old friend in Uvs *aimag* Davs *sum* near the famed Davst Mountain who is a native Dörböd, and we chat about our home areas. My friend is growing older in his ancestors' birthplace where he raised his sheep.

This area was just behind the boundary with Russia, so he told me that he had to use his binoculars to see his homeland, which brought tears to his little eyes.

This debate over our border with Russia started more than forty years ago, but boundary line issues continue to this day. It is important for us to know about the history of the border and border control, and more leaders should be aware of the issue. And in 2002, with new technology, a more accurate picture of the border can be drawn.

But in 1961, I was the leader for our government in negotiations with our southern neighbor about the many thousands of kilometers of border between China and Mongolia. Within a short period, we made successful decisions regarding this problem in which Yu. Tsedenbal was involved.

In 1964, I participated for the first time in the Central Committee of the MPRP All Khural and encountered government life face to face. The Party and the Central Committee of the MPRP and the All Khural pointed out that Mongolia's development was too slow, and Yu. Tsedenbal and his policies were severely criticized. Power struggles ensued, and some believed, along with the Soviet leadership, that he should be removed from his post.

At the Central Committee of the MPRP All Khural, the majority of the Central Committee members supported Yu. Tsedenbal, and they were clearly seeking to ingratiate themselves to him. Those who opposed him were, however, in trouble, and many had to admit their errors and take the blame.

In 1964-1965, the Central Committee of the MPRP questioned and severely criticized Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambu, B. Sarmajav, and L. Tsend during the All Khural. Since I had no experience with that sort of thing, I was only an observer.

The current government and the parties make false accusations and promises in order to win elections, which is what happened in the 1960s. However, it seems an exaggeration to make heroes of those who opposed the Party in the 60s.

In those days, we had the one party system, but we now have a form of democracy and a market economy, and there are fewer arguments over every falsehood that arises in a discussion. Before it was a dirty game to tell the truth about the government, but nowadays there is an even dirtier game being played in which a friend, family member, or other innocent people are blamed, and this must stop.

For about seventy years in the twentieth century, the socialist and capitalist countries were divided into two polarized and competitive groups with different ideologies. This foreign competition led to a struggle for superiority, and this involved Mongolia in the Cold War because of her

dependence on the USSR. It would have been better to steer clear of this overbearing influence, but we were led by Yu. Tsedenbal who, however, should not be condemned for this policy.

At the time, Yu. Tsedenbal was an intelligent and effective leader for our small country as it became more committed to trade. We knew the USSR well, and we benefitted from our relationship. But the socialist system collapsed when the Cold War was over, and it would be wrong to evaluate the decades before 1990 by today's standards.

Now Mongolia has equal relations with its two largest neighbors and works with them to develop successful relations. In the early 60s, although the USSR and Mongolia were both socialist countries, our policies sometimes conflicted. We also had times when our relationship with China was poor. The Chinese had been publically opposed to our independence and even printed world maps that showed Mongolia as part of China.

Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal followed a consistent policy in governing Mongolia on its road to socialism until 1984. He supported central planning and believed that State property was preferable to private property which, to a very limited degree, was permitted as in the case of the herders. But this system was bad for the people since it prevented the raising of prices, and in a one party system of government people had to strictly follow the party policy. Now there are opposing viewpoints and positions. If Yu. Tsedenbal had been the leader in the second half of the 1980s, he would have had to deal with the changing relationship with the USSR and the new concept of labor since the socialist ideas were being challenged or defied.

We Mongols sometimes do things without a conscience. In 1984, the Central Committee of the MPRP All Khural's report concluded with praise for the meritorious service of Yu. Tsedenbal, but in 1989 the report wronged Yu Tsedenbal. We all gave our opinions and approved both reports, which led me to wonder what sort of man he was! Time changes everything, including our views. Only our consciousness remains the same, and we sometimes think only of ourselves and not of others.

Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal spent his final years far from his Motherland. He died in Moscow where he could not see the Mongolian sky, breathe its air, drink its water, and enjoy its fertile soil. Many Mongolians regarded this as pitiful. For years, he worked hard and was free to make decisions that were most beneficial to our country. It was right to dismiss him, but he still must be respected. This is the story as Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal went off to Moscow in August, 1984.

If Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal had been healthy and clear-thinking, he would not have been under the influence of his wife A. I. Filatova who easily settled

many issues for him. Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal, himself, gave a note to his wife, A. I. Filatova, saying: “It is right to appoint J. Batmünkh to office,” but she took over and destroyed the note. A. I. Filatova hid several notes which are now preserved in the MPRP archives.

Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal lived in a comfortable apartment in Moscow since his wife and children were subjects of the USSR. Both of his sons worked there, and in 1985 Tsendenbal had his private savings transferred to an account in Moscow. He did return to Mongolia, so it is not as if he left for good.

His wife and sons had never been Mongolian citizens as, by law, Mongolia did not permit dual citizenship, and this is still the case. Mr. Tsendenbal’s wife and children could visit on a diplomatic passport.

8. The Start of the Democratic Revolution

YK: The democracy movement began in Mongolia in 1990 when the young people in the democracy movement went on a hunger strike in Sükhbaatar Square and demanded the complete resignation of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP. Could you share your memories of that time with us?

DS: In 1989, there were dramatic changes in the other socialist countries and demands to change our government and the economic system as well. The Central Committee of the MPRP promoted discussions of change in the economic system, and there was turnover in the government. Mr. J. Batmünkh, the General Secretary of the Party, gave a speech, and I expressed my ideas about the economy and the market system in the All Khural.

The leader of the Mongolian Council of Ministers and The Central Committee of the MPRP summarized the ideas:

1. The changes in the economic system are too narrow in scope which slows us down in reaching our goals. We must talk about a more productive path to stimulating our economy.
2. We need to follow an approach that unites theory and practice to stimulate the economy. Two basic economic issues that must be decided: (a) the number of private enterprises (b) and how best to work out private economic development. We must work together to promote a new economic theory that will take into account interests of the individual.
3. Certain irregularities in property relations must be eliminated. Private property has many forms, and there is much competition for State property.
4. The apportionment of property must be connected to the workers’ own economic interests.
5. The State, the co-ops, and private parties all have their various forms of

property. The privatization movement exerts a change on society, so there must be laws and regulations. A clear and decisive decision on property is needed.

6. The interests of the small manufacturers in the co-ops must be heeded. The equipment needed in small enterprises belongs to the family. Workers should not be exploited so the holdings in the State treasury must be fairly apportioned.
7. Many people have to work on devising new laws relating to property and foreign investments.
8. A new economic policy or mechanism can be incendiary at first, and in our case, this new, seemingly radical economic approach combines parts of the centrally planned economy and the market economy.

We have to consider the planned economy beside the market economy. The market has to be kept in balance through the tax structure and control of a stock exchange, so the state can provide for its people. I was responsible for providing the legal regulations for these changes. The free market system demanded both producers and consumers, and a balance of prices for products in the market economy had to be decided upon. The high prices of goods led to an imbalance in the supply of goods, but this difficulty could be overcome. The State had to draw up a pricing system, which was very difficult in this new and slowly expanding market economy. I also had to learn about the science and technology behind the powerful workings of the market as well as information on the means of production in the market economy. The market economy had to be rationally developed in our country. The various reforms in property holdings had to be based on correct prices; wrong levels of pricing could lead to mistaken ratios, so a policy had to be developed that would not affect peoples' real incomes. It is both an interesting and difficult experiment to let the pricing system move more freely and reach its own balance. Some large factories could become monopolistic, but they could be broken up into smaller firms to enhance competition.

It is necessary for all workers to understand how the market works as it shapes how they live. The herder and the farmer agree to rent their basic property for a short period of time when they work in productive labor, which is credited against their savings accounts. But with the new economy, a highly sophisticated leasing contract is needed that has to be presented without delay and strictly followed.

All the entities of government investment have to be properly taxed under a unified tax law which has to be updated and followed. In addition, profits have to be divided carefully. A civil taxation system was voted on in 1990.

I debated all these issues and proposed with some friends that I issue an

economic plan that shifts directly to the market mechanism. However, I could not agree to a free pricing system without controls because it could lead to instability; the value of the *tugrik* would decline, and peoples' lives would be impacted. Producers could increase prices for their own profit, leading industries to bankruptcy and the country to a faltering economy. Therefore, the market could not be left without regulations and planning mechanisms. All these issues needed to be settled by the country, but there was no magic bullet. Clear and intelligent steps had to be taken to achieve harmony and decisive results.

I briefly spoke at the All Khural, and things began to move fast. In March, 1990 the Central Committee of the MPRP met. People had already decided whom to support and whom to disagree with, and it was said:

“We shall reach a conclusion,” “This is a special Khural” and “There must be an organized discussion of the issues.”

The government and the economic system were changing, but the outlines were not clear. Thus, the All Khural had quickly and successfully to agree on issues of the foreign debt. In the past seventy years, we had incurred serious debts from Soviet loans, and everyone was looking for a scapegoat. My childhood friend said that D. Sodnom was responsible for putting Mongolia in serious debt, and I was asked: “While you were on the Mongolian Central Planning Commission and the Council of Ministers, how much debt did you put the government in?” I worked on my response and replied: “I was the Deputy Leader of the State Planning Commission. Since 1984, I was the leader of the Council of Ministers. From 1970 to 1985, the Soviet Union loaned us 5 billion rubles and from 1985 to 1990 3.5 billion rubles. Thanks to these loans we experienced economic growth in the following ways:

1. The mining of coal increased from 3.2 to 8.2 million tons.
2. The electric stations increased their production from 266 to 890 megawatts.
3. “Erdenet” and “Mongolrosvetmet” joint industries were set up, and our exports expanded.
4. The milk farms that delivered milk to the cities became mechanized, and the amount of milk produced increased from 10 million to 42 million tons.
5. The storage capacity for handling seeds increased from 200,000 to 409,000 tons.
6. The irrigation system increased its coverage from 7,000 to 35,000 hectares.
7. Food production grew 1.7 to 2 times.
8. New factories made half a million tons of cement for industries.
9. The industry for building tent/*ger* walls increased its output 2.5 to 3

times, the production of bricks increased from 85 to 211 million items, and the manufacture of reinforced concrete grew from 71,000 to 215,000 cubic meters.

10. Carpet production also grew from 350 cubic meters to 2,430, and knitted items increased from 480 to 3,100 articles.
11. Industries are treating 100% of all animal hides.
12. Thanks to these loans almost all *aimag* centers have television.
13. Living space expanded from 880,000 to 4,400,000 square meters.
14. Seats for students in general, and technical schools increased in number from 194,000 to 292,000.
15. The number of medical beds increased from 14,300 to 23,400.

All Mongolians knew about this growth, and I certainly do not agree with the criticism that our livelihood has not improved because of these monies, which, in fact, are a small percentage of our budget.

There were mistakes in not using loans to their fullest potential, and it would have been better to complete our plans more rapidly. However, it doesn't hurt to mention that if we had not gotten the loan we would not have progressed in these past fifteen years and would be stuck back in the 60s. If you still need a scapegoat or people to blame for loans, I am one of those people. I worked tirelessly with great effort throughout the whole process of accounting for and getting the approval for these loans. But many believed that changes were not happening fast enough. People opposed the leadership of the government, and I realized that we could possibly lose control.

9. A Hard Time

DS: On March 4, 1990, we were in Japan and on March 7th, the hunger strikers occupied Sükhbaatar Square. The government and our whole country had never seen a peaceful struggle like this in which people put their own lives at risk, and the government and the Party were nervous. Our main task was to prevent the hunger strikers from dying.

Eight or nine young strikers had the power to block the monopolistic hold of the MPRP and put two demands before the People's All Khural. On March 8, a Sunday, I was at work, and the leader J. Batmünkh was home at "Ikh Tenger Valley," but he called, and we agreed to meet on March 13 with the Central Committee of the MPRP, and so he set to work on a speech.

The situation was serious, so I felt that I had to take action. I told J. Barmünkh that I would go and talk to the hunger strikers in Sükhbaatar Square, but I was told that it was not up to me to do so! I then told the leader of the Council of Ministers, D. Byambasüren (1942-), that the hunger strikers were going to meet with people in Sükhbaatar Square, so D. Byambasüren and

I decided to go and try to end the strike. For reasons of security and to let everyone know what was happening, we decided also to go on television. So we took the television equipment to the government palace, and for sixteen hours there was coverage. We invited the General Secretary of the People's Great Khural, Ts. Namsrai, in case there were questions.

I began to talk with the hunger strikers, including E. Bat-Uul and B. Baabar. I told them that their demands challenged the government and the economic system and that we had to respond in a responsible manner and let the people decide these issues for themselves. There was to be a meeting in four days with the Central Committee of the MPRP to discuss the limits of its power, and in twelve days the People's All Khural was to meet and do the same.

But the strikers then demanded that the entire Politburo and the Central Committee of the MPRP be relieved of their posts. An extraordinary meeting of the Party Central Committee was to be held to discuss this situation. Sodnom answered that all of this needed to be discussed at a higher government level and everything would be televised for the people. He added that they needed to call for an end to the hunger strike immediately, but he did not receive a clear answer.

The television covered what was happening at the Central Committee, and when I offered to summarize what went on in the meeting, I was told not to bother since everyone had seen it on television. There was some talk of adding security at Sükhbaatar Square and the government palace and closing off some streets, but it was up to J. Batmünkh to decide.

The next day, March 9, leader J. Batmünkh held a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPRP in his office, and each person was asked how to deal with the demand to dismiss all the members. Everyone agreed that it was the right thing to do to relieve all members of their posts and not to do so would lead to fighting, bloodshed, and loss of life. Although all believed that the hunger strike had to end somehow, it was pointed out that this was a smart and modern method of social change, which was based on ideological principles and to speak against it showed a lack of understanding.

Mr. J. Batmünkh finally asked for my opinion and I said: "The Politburo needs to be dismissed without hesitation, leaving the Party and the government with the burden of suitably guiding this transformation or the situation will be impossible!" I couldn't, however, speak too clearly about the next step. So on the afternoon of March 9, Mr. J. Batmünkh went on television to talk about the last several days and the extraordinary meeting of the Party Central Committee and the People's All Khural when the Politburo was thrown out. He also appealed on the evening television for an end to the hunger strike with

no loss of life, and as a result the hunger strikers went home and the intensity subsided.

Mr. J. Batmünkh sent a communique after nine at night that the hunger strike was over and things had quieted down as the Central Committee of the MPRP prepared for a meeting to discuss all that had happened on March 13. More than seventy members agreed that the members of the Politburo should be relieved of their posts and after a special meeting the Central Committee of the MPRP directed this change. The next week, the People's Great Khural met and decided that leader J. Batmünkh and D. Sodnom, leader of the Council of Ministers, should also be relieved.

We both had been freely appointed to serve in these positions, and some people were wrongly concerned that we wished to remain in these offices. I discussed my concerns at the meeting of the Council of Ministers, talked to my friends, and tried to stay calm.

Then the Central Committee of the MPRP met and appointed Gombojavín Ochirbat as its General Secretary, leader of the People's Great Khural, and leader of the Council of Ministers. Then Gombojavín Ochirbat asked whom I suggested to head the Council of Ministers, and I mentioned Sh. Gungaadorj. The previous day there had been a referendum favoring D. Byambasüren and Sh. Gungaadorj, and then we met and exchanged our views. I supported making Gungaadorj the head of the Council of Ministers because he was well acquainted with life in the countryside and the agricultural economy, and I thought that his comrades listened to him. However, he was less strong regarding other economic and financial issues. D. Byambasüren was knowledgeable about the economy and how the treasury worked, but he was not a good listener and didn't work well with others. So we decided to make him First Deputy of the Council of Ministers, and I told them that they had to work together and that I would support them and they agreed. Then G. Ochirbat said that the People's Democratic Khural would appoint Punsalmagiin Ochirbat its leader.

Gungaadorj agreed to work as leader of the Council of Ministers. He was then responsible for working with both the agricultural economy and all the ministries and special areas. He knew the technology and how to work with the *aimags* and towns and was regarded as someone who was easy to work with. He had worked for many years and so in 1990, at the age of 57, he retired and took a permanent leave.

10. "Those surrounding Tsedenbal"

DS: The latest opinion holds that people who served in administrative positions in the 30s and 40s imposed, at various times, their wills for "invented reasons,"

which led to executions. At the time, Mongolia's independence was in danger, and some demanded fighting against this. Suspicion was rampant, people spied on each other and tried to ingratiate themselves to others. Tragically, many thousands of innocent people were killed.

After 1921, many who worked in the Mongolian government were victims. In the forties and fifties there were few executions but many people were exiled. In 1990, the MPRP pursued a different course, and comrades took the initiative to examine and learn from the earlier and more destructive period.

In June, 1990 the Central Committee of the MPRP summoned an All Khural to discuss the issue of Yu. Tsedenbal. Two months earlier, a special commission had prepared a report for the Khural, stressing that Mongolia's leadership was autocratic and a carbon copy of the USSR.

Yu. Tsedenbal contributed to Mongolia's successful achievements, but he did not muster his intellectual resources wisely and did not favor or even protect the Mongolian language, history, culture, and way of life, preferring to follow the USSR. There were many mistakes, which involved decisions on border issues as well, and Yu. Tsedenbal did not respect personal rights. Under his leadership, people were investigated, pestered and worn down, and humanity and popular democracy were not embraced.

"Yu. Tsedenbal's circle" was shown to be composed of three groups:

1. Those closest to him and most influential included: S. Luvsan, N. Luvsanravdan, D. Maidar, T. Ragchaa, B. Dejid, B. Lamjav, and Ts. Namsrai.
2. The next group were just workers—not people looking to curry favor, and they included: J. Batmünkh, N. Jagvaral, D. Molomjamts, Ts. Dugersuren, B. Lkhamsuren, and M. Peljay.
3. Those who dared to express different ideas on some important issues: D. Sodnom.

The report pointed to six areas where Tsedenbal and his circle had erred:

1. Economic profits did not increase: we still have an outstanding debt, and it will be many years before our standard of living will be raised.
2. There was no possibility to think and speak freely, nor was there criticism of the collective leadership.
3. There were too few educated workers and professionals.
4. Yu. Tsedenbal did not pay enough attention to theory.
5. The wife of Yu. Tsedenbal, A. I. Filatova, was unstable and was involved in many of the internal affairs of the Party, State, and society, as well as getting mixed up with the cadres and those people with meritorious titles.

6. The group around Yu. Tsedenbal acquired too many titles.

The report evaluated everyone in Tsedenbal's circle, and I wrote the following:

"D. Sodnom was deputy to the Council of Ministers where for six years he worked on the economy, and he was the leader of the State Planning Commission for ten years. He was one of many people who decided on important issues. During this period, D. Sodnom took advantage of every opportunity to increase Mongolia's rate of growth through relations with other countries and modernizing the economic and social agenda. However, not enough work was done to implement his proposals. D. Sodnom went along with Yu. Tsedenbal in his official role, and so must share the responsibility for economic mistakes that have let the people down". Such was D. Sodnom's report.

All the Khural agreed that the report on "the circle of Yu. Tsedenbal" was correct. Then the Khural took up the second topic: "For many years, the party has directed the State economy and the government and has controlled the mind-set of the society. Because Tsedenbal has been the sole authority in our country, our system has not always benefitted the people. There was little confidence that in the 60s and 70s, D. Gombojav, S. Luvsan, D. Maidar, D. Molomjamts, and T. Ragchaa could have managed to eliminate all the inherited difficulties that grew out of the violation of Party principles and the law and which led to general misery. B. Dejid misused the Party cadres and flattered Yu. Tsedenbal, which resulted in the elimination of B. Lamjav and created much suffering. All these people, including J. Batmunkh, D. Sodnom, B. Altangerel, S. Luvsangombo, P. Damdin and G. Adia, should be publicly called to account or reprimanded for their mistakes."

In June, 1990, the Central Committee of the MPRP convened a meeting with the Party to work out measures to decide if, by article 8, that all the evidence had been given because in August the State Procurator was to begin an investigation to see if there was a criminal case. The case against D. Sodnom rested on these alleged crimes:

1. He approved Yu. Tsedenbal's transfer of money from Mongolia to Russia.
2. Some people were granted special pensions.
3. He approved some special compensation for Party leaders.

A special effort was made to prosecute him for the first two mistakes because in December, 1984, before D. Sodnom was appointed, the leaders of the Central Committee had approved the salaries for Party members. There were two criminal issues to deal with: Procurator Erdenbaatar believed that the issue of Tsedenbal's money transfer could be considered a criminal case, and so he questioned it. However, for more than forty years, Yu. Tsedenbal had been

accumulating a salary and had transferred about one million *tugriks* to Moscow where he lived with his family. The Council of Ministers had given permission to do so, and there was no reason to challenge this decision. It would have been illegal to deny him permission to privately transfer money because such a ruling would have violated his human rights, and he could have instigated legal proceedings. Procurator Erdenbaatar asked me if such a transfer of personal funds would impact our economy, and I explained that little would be lost. I do not believe that it is a crime to grant pensions. From 1985 to 1990, the Mongolian Council of Ministers granted, in toto, five people pensions of 1400 *tugriks* a month. The Council of Ministers, by law, is empowered to decide on pensions, and since the difference was all of 140 *tugriks*, there were no grounds for this accusation.

Because I was under investigation, people arrived with the police and a cameraman to evaluate my family's property, which was legal but a bit of a comedy or joke. A report was written in which Vera's earrings, ring, and necklace were put in a sealed chest, and we were asked where the rest of our valuables were. We had few valuables, and it was most humiliating to be judged by such ignorant people. We were lucky that we were not at home during all of this. We had been wronged, but we kept our heads and remained strong, even when the Procurator took my 20,000 *tugriks* in savings. We had no other savings, there was little money coming in, and we had no jobs. I was labeled as a person under investigation until August, 1992 when a decision was reached, and the investigation was over.

11. "The lost years"

IL: Do you have thoughts on Mongolia's development in the 1990s? For us younger people, the period when socialism was built were "the lost years." How do you see those years?

DS: In 1990, the Mongolian People's Great Khural elected a new Democratic Great Khural and the Small State Khural and began to work on legislation.

In 1992, the Small State Khural achieved quite a bit. The membership included young and old and all sorts of professionals who worked together to create a new, sophisticated draft of a law for Mongolia's democratic State, as well as changing the laws concerning the market economy. The members of this Small State Khural were not out for themselves but were working for the general welfare of the country, which led to its effectiveness.

The situation, however, was difficult. The centrally planned economy was unpopular, but it was not clear how to transfer to a market economy. The herds on the agricultural *negdels* had to be privatized, and there had to be some sort of division of the planting areas or the whole agricultural economy could

break down financially.

With no regulations on industry, there were difficulties leading to bankruptcies. Without regulations, people began to drive privatized cars, compete, and turn to black marketeering or thievery, which led to the deterioration of trade relations and the supply system.

“Mongolia is exhausted and lying on its belly but must get up and move ahead. The market will right itself” was the mistaken assumption that one often read in books, and some of those who directed the government followed this point of view. This group encouraged breaking away from the old socialist path and moving especially away from the USSR, which only served to “darken” Mongolian-Russian relations. Our economy and social life were in a chaotic state, and there was no way to relax and avoid worrying. It was not clear how much the economic system would change while trying to find a well-ordered policy. In my despair, I wrote letters to those I trusted, including President P. Ochirbat and D. Byambasüren.

In 1992, I was proud to be a member of the Mongolian Democratic Great Khural which approved the new Mongolian constitution. Between 1996 and 2000, the Mongolian government changed four times, and such instability did not foster peaceful times. There were quarrels and noisy riots. People competed for work, but jobs were carelessly done, and every opportunity to cheat and swindle was seized. There was no let-up, and people began to doubt the importance of democracy.

At the time, one did not have to be a professional to work as a leader in a Ministry or the government because those in charge of economic and social issues had no professional experience and denied the mistakes they made. The microbiologist Baabar/B. Batbayar, who was a member of the Democratic Party, was appointed Minister of Finance, a position which demanded experience in economics which I doubt he had. When I talked with Baabar he said: “It is essential that we succeed. Success is mandatory.” However, I did not understand anything he told me.

The Minister of the Economy, R. Amarjargal, was appointed quickly to keep things working, and I was asked to be his economic advisor. A person should have such a position if he has studied abroad, has a good education, and a solid knowledge of the economic laws and the conditions of the Mongolian market. The mastery of English, which I lacked, was also useful, but I was too old to be responsible for the demands of working any time of day or night. I was a member of the MPRP and did not always agree with my friends ideologically, and so I declined the offer. The Minister then said that my experience and advice were essential to him and that I could serve unofficially in an advisory capacity on Mongolian policy issues. There was no

reason to refuse the offer.

As a result, I talked with R. Amarjargal and agreed to be on his staff. I told him that I would be pleased to consult on issues and policies, but that I would only work on what I was told to do and would not be his “yes-man!” He accepted that and told me that he would notify the press of my unofficial appointment. I asked myself if my appointment was just for the press, but decided that perhaps the country could benefit if I advised the younger people.

One friend asked me if I was averse to advising the Minister and made a negative comment, but many in the MPRP told me that I had made the right decision and could guide the younger people who were under the jurisdiction of the Party but had not received proper supervision. They believed that my advice would be heeded.

The Minister, R. Amarjargal, and I had regular meetings to discuss our concerns, but I did not decide policy or reveal secrets. One policy which received scant attention from R. Amarjargal and which I think I helped him understand was the difficulty of the various groups in the Democratic Party to work out a united policy.

However, the plan was not given out in advance, and no one knew about it, so there was no possibility of drawing up a policy on such important issues as privatization, the budget, bank loans, pricing, social welfare, and foreign relations. There were many good questions, but there was no definite plan and no follow up. Thus, Minister R. Amarjargal and others had to focus on these important issues for which I gave written advice.

In 1992, Mongolia’s constitution made clear that “the herds were national resources which the state must protect!” How to implement this statute has not been made clear in the last ten years, which shows the lack of responsibility in carrying out the constitution. When I look back, I see that Mongolia’s economic situation is unique and wonder how we can control our national resources. The herds were protected in the constitution by the Mongolian government because:

1. There is an effective communal structure which, with government support, maintains the breed and stores the gene pool.
2. The government is responsible for the protection of the herds from serious infectious diseases.
3. The weather can cause difficulties so the government must elaborate a policy for protecting and improving the pastures.
4. The government has not yet developed a plan for managing the herds in the market economy.

These provisions are essential to a high yield economy. Much of the Mongolian population is involved in and very contented with the herding

economy for their livelihoods, so the Constitution must furnish the conditions for its survival. The government must foster the right environment to realize these policies.

In the 1990s, the weather conditions were relatively favorable, and little attention was paid to droughts and *zuds* until 1999-2000 when they ravaged the country, and the herds were diminished by millions of animals. The government took this as a severe warning and introduced protective measures and solutions:

1. In recent years, the herding business has exported meat which is in much demand.
 - a. The herders' incomes, which can lead to an improvement in their lives, are based on these exports.
 - b. The meat kombinats, or factories, and food industries supply jobs for many people.
 - c. The income from these exports improves our balance of trade.
 - d. In an effort to improve the quality of the herds, care must be taken not to trample down the grass, which could lead to a decrease in the animals.

As a result of these measures, the combined number of herds was around 26 to 28 million and about 70,000 tons of meat was exported. However, during a drought or a *zud*, many animals perish.

In 1990, there were 4.5 million goats and more than ten million sheep and camels. The herds of cows grew even though there was a total reduction in numbers. But it isn't clear if all had changed for the better.

2. It is especially important to prepare the herds and the herding economy for production and trade. Mongolian herding has to begin by focusing on the pastures and how greater productivity can improve people's lives. The government must also help make the export market profitable for the herders.
3. Too little attention was paid to the rural *negdels* and State Farms which were hurriedly abolished and proper work measures in the herding economy were abandoned for a new co-operative management system.

The herding economy is like a family with a manager. Five to six families join together into an association, and then five to six associations join into a *khoshoo*, many of which are connected in some way under a herding economy manager. Some *aimags* are looking at this experiment, and it is important to promote this *khoshoo* movement.

4. There must be a clause in the law which covers immunizations of the herds and medical treatment for such highly infectious diseases as mange and intestinal worms. All areas must be kept clean, and rules must be

observed.

5. Scientists and researchers must pay special attention to preserving the pastures and preventing them from being trampled down.

Whether Mongolia and the Mongolians can preserve the tradition of their herding economy, support their environment, and the freshness of nature and their quality of life for another one hundred years is the question that must be raised.

It is time to begin an evaluation of this issue and reach a solution. For many thousands of years, nature has kept plants and pastures pure and in a pristine condition, and we would be criminals to ignore this. If we destroy the pastures, the vegetation will change for the worse and the foundation of the Mongolian herding economy will be ruined.

We must discuss efforts to preserve the pasturelands, and the public must be made aware of these special demands.

There are too many animals and the capacity for supporting them has been reached in the communal or public pastures. In the nineties, eight to nine million young animals were reared and twenty-five to twenty-six million animals were required to support our domestic needs, especially in winter and the spring and into the summer when there was only meager pasturage. So, altogether, about thirty-four to thirty-five million animals and their young had to be provided for.

The herds in Mongolia are dispersed, and many artesian and hand-drilled wells have been set up in the pastures. During the last ten years or more, fewer markets have been exploited for the sale of the herds because there has been little organization of these thirty-three million animals. So there must be a change in the quality of care for both the animals and their environment.

At the end of the year, there were thirty-three million herds to winter, and in the spring and early summer forty-two to forty-three million animals needed to be pastured. In some places, the deep water wells are not in operation, and the pastures are too overloaded with animals.

Many of those who manage the herding economy see it as a way to enrich themselves, and these thieves flee to the nomadic border settlements and drive their herds away from the cities. In Tov, Selenge and Bulgan *aimags*, the grass in the pastures has been trodden down, and its nourishment value has dangerously declined. The herders in Tov and Selenge *aimags* have spoken about how very difficult it is to fatten up their herds in these pastures.

The State must follow the constitution and restore and protect the pasturage system for the herds while the herders must join the co-operatives and raise animals with a better quality meat for the export market.

6. The Mongolian government must make known the policies of the

economy and the market. Pastures and livestock are fundamental to our herding economy, but domesticated animals must also increase. Management of the pastures and the entire herding economy have been handed down through the generations for many centuries and that should be reason enough for the government.

YK: Yes. This has been a most interesting conversation. Thank you.

DS: Certainly.