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Ⅲ. Paavangiin Damdin : Former Secretary of the CC/MPRP and Mongolia’s Minister of Industry

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1. The Road to Ulaan Baatar

P. Damdin (PD): I read your interesting article this spring, which was entitled "My Thoughts About the Future of Mongolia," and that is how I first knew about you. When I met with you and I. Lkhagvasüren, I reread your piece, which was very well written. It was also a frank article, which is good. I also read an article by Ayako Kumuragi titled "Wasted Intelligence," which was also well written. Some of our people did not like it at all and were insulted by it. I, however, personally support it, and it is certainly correct. The truth is generally written, and we miss speaking honestly. Is she your student?

Yuki Konogaya (YuK): No. Isn't her writing a little tough?

PD: I am a person with a tough and fierce side. If you meet Ayako, please let her know I read her article, and it was fine. Our people complain about Ayako's writing, but there should be no complaints about her. In fact, I think that a great many Mongolians like me support Ayako.

YuK: At this time, I would like to talk about the themes of the socialist times in Mongolia. At that time, there were many industries and factories which offer interesting stories. Could we talk about the work you did in setting up these factories?

PD: I. Lkhagvasüren (IL) has written many questions.

YuK: You do not have to answer these questions precisely and can expand on them and tell us about your life story.

PD: Where shall I begin this life story? I'll speak about the first period, but much time is needed for such extensive talk. If I condense this story, it will take only a few minutes.

YuK: Today you can talk until six o'clock — is that enough time?

PD: Yes. Good.

YuK: So, where were you born? Speak a little about your youth, about your father and mother, about your school years, when did you come to Ulaan Baatar, how many years you studied in Russia, and what it was like returning to your work.

PD: I was born about one thousand kilometers from Ulaan Baatar in Uvs *aimag*, Öndörkhangai *sum*, with which you are acquainted. This place is quite far away. In olden times, the camel caravans went there to pray to the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu. It took two months on the steppe to get there so they would go in the spring and return in the fall. In time we preferred to go by car, so one took the central Ulaangom mail van, and it cost a lot of money to be on the road for any period of time. My father and mother reached Ulaan Baatar by going on horseback or camelback as far as Uliastai center in Zavkhan *aimag*. My father and mother accompanied me on this first trip to Ulaan Baatar.

IL: Was your first time in Ulaan Baatar when you went to school there?
PD: No, I was seventeen and not in school. I was a herder. My father did not have that many animals — about an average number — one hundred sheep, ten cows, more than twenty horses, and five or six baggage camels. My father was a metal smith with a good reputation who worked in silver, iron, copper, and brass. He made to order buttons for the *deels*, earrings, locks, catch plates, and the silver equipment for saddles and bridles. Even though we had few animals, my life was not bad.
YuK: How many siblings do you have?
PD: I have three all together — one older brother and a younger sister. My older brother was in the military and at the time service lasted three to four years. It was customary for Mongolian fathers and mothers to visit their sons in the military. My oldest brother was in the military and had been promoted and worked for the Ministry of Defense.

So, in 1946, my father and mother went to visit him when the festival celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the People's Revolution was on, and it was then that I saw the capital city of Ulaan Baatar. We were away almost four months. We had reached Zavkhan *aimag* by camel, and then we took the mail van. My first car ride, and there were few cars then. It was very difficult and frightening, and it took a full seven days. Many people went to the city, and we had to wait a long time [to get a car] in the Zavkhan center.
YuK: What kind of car was it?
PD: A Russian car called a ZIC-5. These don't exist now. They are museum pieces. I went with both father and mother and my younger brother and a Chinese man named Zaiyat, who was also seeing his son in the military and came along with us. There were only two Chinese people in my area, and my father, the smith, mingled with all the people and had many friends and I also worked with them on the small equipment. Along with him came another old Chinese who wanted to see Ulaan Baatar and said: "You must show us around Ulaan Baatar!" So besides us and the Chinese Zaiyat was the other old Chinese man. The mail van might have been comfortable for one person but with so many people it was far from that. We left Zavkhan all in that one car and even now, I can't forget that ride.

We went to a place called "Tsaagan Olomt." Do you know this place? It is the central transport area between Uvs, Khovd, Gov-Altai and Zavkhan *aimags*. Here there was a somewhat roomier car for us. And though we asked for a car that would hold six or seven people, we had eight people from my area in the car which made it very hard for such a long ride, which took ten or so days to Ulaan Baatar, There were frequent stops and breakdowns in a bad car, where the drivers always had their own way. The system was a bad

one. At the time, our driver was an enormous man who liked to leave his passengers in places or *aimag* centers, so he could stop and visit his neighbors, drink spirits and vanish. That accounts for the ten days it took us to get to Ulaan Baatar.

However, going to Ulaan Baatar was also very interesting. I saw buildings for the first time. I was seventeen years old. We wanted to meet my older brother, but we dawdled around since we didn't know his address. Another car came from the countryside and left people off. Most families were met when they were dropped off, but we were not met and wandered all around since there was no communication about our arrival. So, when the car dropped us off, my father hired a horse cart for us to sit in and to carry our load, which was rather strange. I remember it all clearly. I passed School #1, with Marshal Choibalsan's office alongside it. There were a lot of policemen around, and a policeman stopped us with our heavily loaded cart and the seven people on it. The policeman said: "You can't go on! Get out!" So we all got out. We asked the policeman where the Ministry of Defense was located and were told that we were near the Ministry of Agriculture. We went on to the office of the Ministry of Defense where one now sees a statue of two soldiers holding guns and a sculpture of a herder and a farmer. Father went inside. Soon my older brother ran out to meet my father and my mother, and he kissed us and my younger sister. At the time, my older brother did not have his own *ger* but stayed with a family. For a year, he stayed in an older woman's small *ger* with four lattice wall sections, and there were ten of us. Such was my first trip to Ulaan Baatar.

Why wasn't I going to school? Here is the story. At the time, the school in our area held lessons in the summer, and many demands were made during this time. There was no school in the winter, so I helped father and mother. The first primary school in our *sum* had been organized, and there were lessons in the summer. The *sum* administration followed the herders as they moved, and the office of the *sum* and Party leaders' offices were located in five or six *gers* and the school was in two of them. I only attended that first school for two weeks and I think I had been a selfish child . During the summer, I ate meat, flour, and sweets but I did not like milk and white food. When I first entered school, my father took a big bag of candy to the school's Principal. Ten kilograms were given to the teacher, and my father told him that I could not live without sweets and that he should give me two candies every day. So the teacher gave me two sweets each day from the assortment.

At that time, the lessons were in a *ger* that had neither a table nor a chair. There was a mattress on the floor and one covered oneself with one's *deel* to sleep. In the morning, the mattress was tied up to make a table to sit at. One

kept a book or notebook on top of one's knee. At the time, there was neither paper nor pencil. Planed wood was covered with grease and ashes were applied. Horse dung was then put on top of the ashes and tamped down to create a smooth writing surface for a sharp bamboo pen. Wasn't this the Japanese way? The writing on this board could be erased and written on again for a lesson. So this was our notebook, which we put on our knees for the lesson. In the lessons, the script letters and numbers were taught. Even though it was hard for me, I studied like this for two weeks, but I missed my father and mother and their food and drink. The school food was tasteless, and I really missed the food at home, so I galloped to my *ger*, which wasn't far. Even though I knew this area well, I was only seven or eight and afraid I would get lost. Fortunately, my father and brother came to visit and meet with the teacher to find out how I was doing. However, when I saw my father, I cried and said that I wanted to go home with him. He told me I couldn't, that I had to manage, and that I was to continue studying. He also told me that only the teacher could give me freedom. In the *sum* father was a well known leader and respected man, but finally he went against the teacher:
"Ah, Teacher! My son misses home and his mother. Give him a few days off."
The teacher answered that I hadn't finished my lessons and that if I went away, new children would be way ahead, and I could not catch up. I held on to my father and cried. Father continued: "His mother also misses him and needs a short visit with him!" And I myself said to the teacher: "Teacher! I will be gone for only fourteen days!"

In due course, I continued my studies for a while but as school seemed continually more useless, I didn't return. My brother was in school, and this was the time of World War II. A new script was being taught, but my father and mother had learned the old Mongolian script from grandfather Sereeter, who was a herder and could write. Every five or six year old was taught this script. In Mongolia, there are *aimags* and *sums*, and the *sums* are divided into *bags*. At the time, there were sixteen *sums* in my *aimag* and eleven *bags* in my *sum*, and mine was the tenth *bag*. In my *bag*, I learned the new script from the *bag* leader, and then I went to study this script with a *sum* group. During my first summer holiday I was taught the numbers. My older brother studied at the *aimag* middle school so perhaps knowledge of this new script could, in fact, enable a person to get to Ulaan Baatar.

At seventeen, my writing was mediocre, and I had become a smoker. I had two types of pipes. One had an elegant mouthpiece, and I stuck it in the shaft of my boot. The other pipe was quite ugly, and I took it with me when I was herding in the countryside. Mother sewed me a tobacco pouch on her machine. I was certainly the handsomest young man in the countryside, and I

accompanied my father to the Jongju, which is a celebration for a child's first haircut. A new *ger* is set up for the festivities. Father was a famous man in the *sum*, and he was invited by many people. Because he could not go to all of these events, I went in his place. At this celebration, children came for their first haircuts and relatives came from near and far. A white sheep or a horse with a white patch on his forehead was blessed, and a *khadagh*[1)] was given in greeting. I did my best to represent father, and the children said "Mr. Paavan's son has come." Father was close to the relatives, and he used to bless the colts or two year old horses and the large livestock. So here I was in the city, a rough country boy, without education.

We passed through Zavkhan and went to Uliastai where, for the first time, I saw electricity. In the evening, we had stopped with a family who turned on a glass sphere, thereby putting on a light, and it also seemed as if there was sound. At the time, there was no switch to turn on electric lights, and in this family there was only a round black thing. Then you could hear the sound of a person speaking. It was a radio. My *aimag* center was certainly far behind in its development. It had no printing press, no radios, no electricity, and no telephones. From time to time a newspaper appeared. In the countryside, we thought that the whole world was west to Turuum and east to the eastern Khangai. Every year or so a car went by. The *aimag* leader and the *aimag* Party leader both had cars, but trucks were very rare. When we saw car tracks, we followed them at a gallop for who knows how long. Car tracks on the steppes did not disappear, and so I galloped after them for several days.

The so-called "Ideology Brigade" presented its propaganda every year in the countryside with nice artwork, movies, and music. When the "Ideology Brigade" came from Ulaan Baatar for its annual visit, we went to see its films or attend its concerts. There were many people in this "Ideology Brigade," including two singers and a film mechanic. Exhibitions of propaganda were set up which lasted three to four nights, from spring until fall, before the troupe moved on to another *sum*. Our Party and our government then tried to organize such things. So, for the first time I went to a movie in which Tseveen Shorot acted. His daughter is now alive. He was the first actor in Mongolia to play in a film. There was no sound in this film. but there were subtitles and now and again one can see it. It cost fifty *mung* to see this movie but only twenty *mung* in the countryside where one saw it outside on the steppes where a screen had been set up. The adults with tickets sat in front of the screen, and the children who had no money for tickets stood behind the screen and saw everything backwards with the front of each character reversed on the screen. Some of the local children watched the show atop horses and whatever movie was shown, we saw it all. That was life in the countryside, though some of

these people went on to Ulaan Baatar. It was in the Ministry of Agriculture that I first landed up in front of the military leader's *khashaa*. And what a big *khashaa* it was with its many *gers*.

2. First Morning in Ulaan Baatar

YuK: At that time, did the Chinese workers transport people in horse carts?
PD: Yes- both the Chinese and the Mongolians but mainly the Chinese. There were generally two or three buses then in Ulaan Baatar, and I rode on a bus for the first time. Horse carts did, however, predominate, and there were all kinds: load carrying horse carts, passenger horse carts, and simple and elegant ones which the well-off sat in, and they cost three *tugriks*, more than the more moderate price of one *tugrik*. Thus each type of cart had its own price. The children would sometimes run and sit on the back since they had no money. The horses were often exhausted. By the time we left the horse cart, it was evening and we had finally met up with the other family members. In the morning, I saw a two story building for the first time, and it was really strange to see such a tall structure. Now one sees many!

We came from the countryside and went to meet relatives and friends from my area to go to the Black Market. There were two big markets — a merchandise market and a food market. The old "big store" used to be where the museum is now. The western and eastern sides of the Selb River are referred to as the right and left sides, and the Zanabazar Art Museum and the market are on the west side. This is also the area of "The Yellow Store," which is in the Chinese region. The area around Ninth Street and the wide stone square has strange, strange streets though I do not know them well. Going south, the circus is now near the food market, and that was most interesting to me as a child. And how did children from the countryside manage? They followed after their fathers and mothers. Oh, my goodness what a lot of people in Ulaan Baatar, and here I was a seventeen-year old young fellow from the countryside of marriageable age. A person is a good-for-nothing and unreliable, if he gets lost while going out in the city so I held onto my mother's skirt, so I couldn't get lost. I stopped and had a smoke using the pipe mouthpiece from the shaft of my boot. Then I returned to mother and held onto her skirt. Really, a boy from the countryside must have looked odd. It is strange to lose one's bearings, and one is unreliable if one gets lost. At the time, there were many people in Ulaan Baatar — maybe one hundred thousand — so it was very easy to lose my bearings among so many people.

Right after coming to Ulaan Baatar I had a thought that wouldn't leave me. We visited our relatives who had prepared steamed and fried dumplings, but vegetables were considered dangerous. They had a strange and bad smell

and really stank. Though families ate potatoes, carrots, cabbage, and turnips, they were considered bad and smelly, and when I ate these things I began to retch. We had strong people in our family, so father and mother ate these things, but I couldn't. Even later I was not able to eat vegetables since they always seemed bad and strange. Once, the relatives came over. One of them said that they were eating what is called an apple. I and my sister looked and tried it. I was the first to bite into it, and it tasted sickly sweet. I gave it back to my sister who said there was no way she would eat it and threw it away. I realized later that we actually had bought a tomato, but we stayed away from it anyway.

At that time in Ulaan Baatar there was a tall building which caught the eye. It was High School Number One, alongside Marshal Choibalsan's building. Now the primary and middle schools are located near the government building, which is near the Ulaan Baatar Hotel. The University is still in the same place but the new government palace was not there then. Everyone in the country called the well-known theater the "Green Dome" but it burned down in the 1940s.

YuK: Did you go to the theater? How was it?

PD: I certainly went. People say the theater was elegant, and many from the countryside came to see it. I went to see a play at the theater several times with father and mother. It was hard for children to see a production because there were strict regulations, and children were not admitted to plays which included the topics of love, combat, or great violence. The ordinary people were introduced to plays of quality, and with father and mother I attended such plays. What is the project for the Green Dome called? Who started the Green Dome? Not a Russian, maybe a German Western European artist. After I arrived, I began to understand that Ulaan Baatar was a good place. The next day we went to look at the high building.

There was a child in the family my brother lived with who was about my age. One day we went to see the railroad. I didn't know what this railroad was but at the time it ran between Nalaikh and Ulaan Baatar. I sat on a bridge over the Selb River where there is now another bridge. The railroad used to go above the hotel we are sitting at now, which must have been along the route to the Nalaikh central electric station, where coal is transported. I asked the boy if he could see the railroad near where he lived. And he said he could, so we went together to the two narrow gauge junctions. He then said to me: "Here it is!" "On no, is this the railroad?" I asked. And he answered it was not the railroad. All of this was confusing as I imagined that the iron road was the wide road of iron on which cars and wagons would go, but there were, in reality, only two narrow gauges. Such was the first railroad that I saw.

3. The Festival for the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the People's Revolution

The festival celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the People's Revolution came soon on July 11, 1946. I saw Marshal Choibalsan for the first time at these festivities which lasted five to seven days whereas the Naadam festivities lasted only two or three days, though right after the Revolution the celebration lasted for ten days. I went to all the wonderful things during these festivities. In the city, there was a cultured woman who was a relative of mine. She was wearing her holiday clothes, which included a blouse and clothes with buttons. The twenty-fifth anniversary celebration was certainly elegant, and it was the first time that I saw people wearing European clothes. Father went to the Kombinat and bought a pair of tall, black Russian style boots, which was the first time that I wore clothes like this, and this stayed in my mind.

My boots were not very pretty, so in the morning I dyed them black and wiped them until they sparkled. In the evening, it was difficult to remove these boots, which were factory made, since they fit the Mongolian foot badly because the boot shaft was too thin. At the time, people came in from the countryside who suffered terribly from fleas. In the olden days, I am sure that there were fleas in Japan, and now there are none. Fleas are dangerous and are especially harmful in the countryside where they leap about and bite. My leg was so badly bitten that I scratched it, and it became ulcerated. When I wore the fine narrow shafted boots and tried to take them off in the evening, they stuck to me. I saw the twenty-fifth anniversary events like this.

Then I saw Marshal Choibalsan for the first time. Many people were wearing star pins, which could be seen from afar but not up close. The country people greatly respected Marshal Choibalsan whom they regarded as the Bogd from pre-revolutionary times who returned at the time of the Revolution. The celebration was fun for many people, and it was good to know about all the cars and technological things which appeared.

A seventeen-year old child was considered a grown man, and I ran around a lot. Mother and father both did not wander about but stayed in one place, so I was seen as the one who stepped out. They told me not to get lost, and I answered that I never got lost.

I had been in the city for two months and had bought a suit and was quite a dandy. I wore Mongolian boots in the city. Then I left mother and father because they were slower. I remember the parade, but I forget everything else. I couldn't find mother and father. The sun was setting. If I had been in the countryside, I could easily have found my father and mother. So I was lost and didn't know what to do. I decided to look for the Ministry of Defense building. A camp had been set up there, and there was a *ger* for the people who worked

in the Ministry who were attending the five to six day festival. The people who worked in the Ministry and their families were given free food. I spent the night there and used my brains since I could not find father and mother. I asked a person where the Ministry of Defense building was and went there and told a soldier that I was lost and asked him if he knew how to find my brother. For three days I didn't meet up with my mother or father, and that is how I witnessed the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary.

One needed written permission or a ticket to see the celebration in the city, which is not necessary now. Permissions such as "It is true that Pavaan Anand is with his wife and two children" were written and stamped with a seal. With such permission, one received silk, not for producing a *deel,* but for writing campaign slogans In addition, one received pipe tobacco and black tea from an office in Ulaan Baatar. People queued up all day for a ticket, so that in the evening they could go to the store and obtain the silk, black tea, and tobacco. One could not find these three important items in the countryside because it was the time of World War II. The USSR, though our ally, had stopped providing us with flour, rice, tea, and tobacco. The situation with the Germans was serious and difficult. There was, at that time, no tea in the countryside, so tree barks were gathered and dried for tea. Even in Japan an herb replaced tea. One of the popular methods to make tobacco was to dry the green plant called "mouse ears." For those in the countryside, tea and tobacco were considered essential. Then the festivities were over. One day father said a man had dropped his ticket for tea and tobacco but perhaps he did not need those things!

At that time, the area in front of the airport had been set up for the festivities. Later, handsome trade buildings were put up. My father heard that many tickets were lost. Then the festivities ended, and the two of us went to gather up all the tickets that had been lost. We took a bus and a horse cart and searched the grounds, digging up some dirt but found no lost tickets. When I was Minister some years later my home was seven or eight kilometers from that area in a place called "Nukht," where I lived for thirty years. After work, I would take the children and walk around the area, and I recalled how my father and I had come to look for tickets to obtain tea and tobacco. I also told my children how fortunate I was to have a car and be a Minister, so they could ride comfortably in my car. I told them how we searched for tickets all day, but we found none and how goods had been so scarce.

At that time, white bread was rare or non-existent, and there was really only black bread. The first time I saw and ate white bread was when the leaders came to Store Number Eighteen where I had a relative. I myself got a round loaf of white bread which was quite a bit tastier than black bread. It was

rare indeed.
IL: What things were sold at this store?
PD: Food and drink were occasionally available but there were many Russian things, sugar and all that you might need. This was a special store that required tickets. The tea was expensive, but there was plenty at a big store called a co-operative. When the festivities were over, we returned to the countryside. It was around August. My father, mother, and younger sister prepared to return to their area. I had seen the celebration and had met with my older brother, so I was in high spirits.

4. Preparation Class for the Technicum

My uncle Gombosüren played a role in my fate. One day he said: "Now this boy has reached seventeen years, and his writing is poor, and he has had no education in primary and secondary schools. What will happen to him in the future? What school will admit him?" Then he asked if it was true that my sister had gone to school and by seventeen would have finished middle school — the age I was then. All I could do was to enlist in the military, but I felt like staying on in Ulaan Baatar in a nice lighted building with a movie theater, though I could not get over the fact that I would be separated from my mother and father. So, after much thinking, I decided that if a school accepted me I would stay. So I spoke with father and mother. "Leave me behind! I will remain here and manage to get myself to school." So, father, mother, and my younger sister left, and I stayed.

So my uncle looked into a school, but we could not find one for me to attend even after much searching. There was a first class in the primary school, but a youth of seventeen could not go there, and I was almost of marriageable age. So the primary school was out. Nor could I go to the middle school since I hadn't finished primary school so the only school I could attend was the Technicum which, at the time, offered a middling education. Some people had decided to go to the Technicum, which one entered after completing middle school. I, however, got in through the "back door" since there was no other way for me. It was essential to know people to get in through that "back door" so one day my uncle met with an acquaintance from our area who worked at the Medical Technicum. My uncle said: "My nephew intends to remain here but can't get into a school!" The man answered: "Your nephew must be introduced to this school!"

One day my uncle arrived and was very happy and said: ""Yes, you will go to school." I asked which one and was told the Medical Technicum. I contradicted him and said "I am not going there! One doctor in our *sum* finished the Medical Technicum, and he couldn't do the work. Always there

were ulcers, syphilis, suffering, death, bereavement and now this "red injection" or strange vaccination." There was nothing he did not deal with.

I had little interest in doing the work of a doctor but to be honest Dr. Ochirbat from our area was a doctor who did noble work. I later learned that he was even respected as a living Buddha in our region. Before the Revolution, our population was more than six hundred thousand people, and now it is two million four hundred thousand. Once a big Soviet brigade came to us and everyone — father, mother, brother, and sister were stripped bare and examined from head to toe. Everyone was given this "red injection" or vaccination — (against leprosy). Infectious diseases are a danger to a society, and leprosy has, by and large, been abolished in Mongolia. You no longer see a Mongolian person without a nose. I know that because in my area there were not, when I was young, many people without a nose. Indeed there were many sick Mongolians and because of leprosy we were in danger of extinction. But, our Party has struggled against illness, and the State has sponsored for two or three years medical brigades to go around the country. Thus, the population of Mongolia has increased. But let's go back to what we were talking about. I told my uncle that I would not go to medical school and that I would rather go home to where father and mother were and return to herding. He told me that he would find me a different school.

Then my brother was mobilized to Ulaan Baatar, and wood was needed to build rafts for the Tuul River. I was asked if I knew about rafts, which were built by connecting pieces of wood. When launched, one person was in front, another in the middle, and a third on the oars. In some places the Tuul River had split. In Ulaan Baatar, my older brother and a young leader were mobilized for a month to work for the Ministry of Defense on this wooden equipment. The raft was slotted together and prepared to go up the flowing Tuul River, which tossed it around, necessitating annual repairs.

One day my brother said that he would go on the raft but I was not trained for this. I also had no home of my own to go to, so things were pretty hard, and I wondered what I would do.

Tsedev was my older brother's leader, and he still lives in Ulaan Baatar, where I greet him on Tsaagan Saar. This Mr. Tsedev is leader of his department. I did not know him well so my brother accompanied me to the Ministry of Defense, where I went to meet him. My older brother said to him that he himself had been called up. He introduced me and asked if he could think of admitting me to his school. My brother then left after he spoke with Mr. Tsedev.

At the time, the so-called Technicum was a school that offered a general education for seven years. It was then the end of August, and schools were

about to start. I spent most of the day with Mr. Tsedev but didn't go inside the Ministry, as we talked outside. Mr. Tsedev had been admitted to the Party Financial College. After the war the military leaders were all men of reputation, but going to this school was difficult. However, one day Mr. Tsedev took me to this Financial Technicum. We met the academic director, a Buryat man, who was called Tagar. It was the first time that I had ever met a Buryat.[2)] They are difficult, and I cannot understand their language. Rural people are hard to understand with their accents. Mr. Tagar was an old man, and he asked me something that I did not understand, so Mr Tsedev asked him what he was saying, and the Buryat took offense replying "Don't you understand people who speak Mongolian? " Mr. Tsedev replied: "This boy is a country boy. His parents have returned to the countryside, and his brother has left to work on the raft for a month. I have been entrusted with entering him in a school. There are many children without an education everywhere. Even if the primary school has not been completed, he still has a wish to go to school even though he is rather old." Teacher Tagar replied that I had to pass an exam to see if I was prepared to enter a class.

I was surprised now with the preparation for the Technicum. There was a high school "prep class" which had been organized for the Technicum [most prep classes were for university]; countryside boys needed "prep classes" even for the Technicum. I was told to take the "prep class" for the exam, and if I passed I would be admitted, and if I did not pass, I would not be admitted. I was supposed to take the exam the day after tomorrow so on the morning of that day I went to the school. I was tested in math and language — the latter test was by dictation. The teacher spoke, and I wrote. When I was in the countryside I had become familiar with the letters along with a group of other students in the *sum* and had been poorly taught language for several months. Nevertheless, my writing was fine, but my math results were quite different. Though I could do problems like 25 and 30 =55 and 50 minus 20 = 30, I could not multiply 7 by 7 or divide 15 by 3. Multiplication and division spun around in my head. Having done poorly in math, I needed to do well in dictation. Of course I couldn't sort out fractions — I didn't know them at all. The test people were coming the next day. The office wrote the name of the children who qualified, and we would see who had passed the day after tomorrow. I went very early to the school and was happy and hopeful. It wasn't possible to meet with the teacher. At nine o'clock the teacher appeared and put the names of those who had passed the exam on the board. My name was not there, and it was clear that I had not passed, so I left.

However poorly educated, I was sixteen or seventeen and was a herder, had worked in the family, had smoked, and had drunk spirits. Father had been

the master of our house, and I would be the next master, and I asked myself what was I going to do since I had failed the test. The leader of the examination commission was the teacher Tseren. I went to the examiner's room, and he told me of my failure. As a teacher, he spoke to me about the exam so I learned how I had done when he said:
"Ah, my boy. You passed the dictation but you did not pass the numbers, though you did know a little bit about addition and subtraction. However, you knew nothing about multiplication and division, and you cannot do fractions at all." I had failed the "prep classes" for the Technicum. Because father, mother, older brother, and other friendly people were not there, I had to rely on my own intelligence. I went to the teacher and said "Teacher! I have come from faraway Uvs *aimag*. Now winter is coming. My older brother is mobilized on the raft project, and father and mother have returned home. Thus, I am my own family. I have no money and nothing to eat, so I am in a difficult situation. Tell me that the school will admit me, even though I do not know its reputation. Talk to me Teacher Tseren."
He answered: "My son! I will talk about you to the person in charge, but I do not decide alone. I will talk with your exam teacher. Contact me tomorrow!"
So I had to wait until the next day which came slowly but finally arrived. Several teachers assembled since there were many involved in this decision, including Teacher Tseren, Teacher Dejidmaa, Teacher Dylam and teacher Dasha, and I was told: "You look like a clever fellow. If you try, you can learn but you have no basic educational preparation. So, you will prepare for half a year starting in January until school starts in September. If, my boy, in this half year you do badly, you will be disqualified. If you don't study well until September, then you will return home. Ulaan Baatar is very difficult. Think about this. Do you want to return home now or do you want to go to school?"
I did not have advice at that time. I answered: "You will see. I will study and finish in one half a year." And I thought to myself: "That's that. I can do it. I'll give it a try."

I studied and finished the half year highly regulated time period with no help. I wanted to be in a dormitory but was not accepted, and so was placed with a family on a trial basis. Outside students had to pay more than one hundred *tugriks* a month, but if I passed the exam, I could get money. If I failed, I would be out. Teacher Tseren was a history teacher and was tough.

So I went to school on the first day and was given one notebook for the arithmetic, language, folk literature, geography, and nature lessons. There were five to six hours of lessons, which I had to write in just this one notebook. Teacher Tseren noticed this and said that I should write each lesson in a separate notebook.

I told him that I didn't have all these notebooks, and he told me to go and buy them. At the time, a notebook and a pencil were rare in Ulaan Baatar, while in the countryside there were none. There were many wooden boards to write on, but I ran to the market and found several notebooks.

My older brother came when his period of mobilization was finished. He was pleased that I was going to school, and we made up a family and shared a home. He wasn't married at that time and continued to live with the same family. Then we shared a *ger*, which was recompensed by the military.

So I went to school and then to our *ger* to prepare food and drink. Four or five people were there. Mongolians are interesting. Let's say that I am friendly with Lkhagvasüren, so I go to stay with him. I eat there, but I do not pay him. I would bring meat and drink, so we could eat. With the four or five countrymen and me and my brother, we were five or six people. I was basically their stoker and lit the firewood, prepared the food, and tidied up. When I finished this work, I did my lessons but I had no proper chair or table — only a lousy one.

So how was my life? At the time, the pay from the military was good. My brother had the rank of lieutenant and was an officer, and the norm for military leaders was one kilogram of meat per day, which came to about thirty kilograms of meat a month. In addition, there were five hundred grams of flour and vegetables, which were added to the meat dishes. Generally there was no salt and pepper, but there was shoe polish. I queued up for these things at the military store for the ten people who lived on these rations.

Winter in Ulaan Baatar was very difficult and not unlike winter in the countryside, where a double layer of felt was put on the *ger*. Our *ger* was a very good one, but had only a single covering, and there was a gap in the door through which the snow drifts could come in. A double cover was very good, as was a warmed floor, which could be found in some *gers* in Ulaan Baatar. My *ger* had only an iron, not a brick, stove and with damp firewood it was difficult to use. My clothes were poor, and since I had come to the capital in summer, I had no winter clothes, and it was cold. My lungs were bad and became inflamed. I wore only a simple short white cotton outer jacket and long pants. Since I was short, the pants hung down. At the time, suit trousers were worn outside leather boots. I was very small, and the winter was very cold. In the evening I prepared food and drink for everyone, who went to sleep between around nine and ten. Then I had to do my lessons until eleven or twelve before I could go to sleep.

I did very well in that half year in all my lessons, so I went for special study for four years to the School of Finance where I was class leader, head of the student council, and leader of the union cell. The basic course was for

three years, but I studied for a year to prepare and started school in 1946 and finished in 1950. My teachers were very young men, and I really had the best educators. Sixty or seventy years later all my teachers were honored. Teacher Tagar, Teacher Tseren, Teacher Dylam and Teacher Dejidma were all given "the Mongolian Teacher of Merit" award. We children from the countryside who studied with these teachers had what seemed like a life of study. There were only twenty in my graduating class, since most of the children had dropped out. The teachers looked out for me at school and though generally only fifteen-year old students were accepted in the class, I was accepted at seventeen since I had subtracted two years from my age. This bothered one teacher to whom I said: "Teacher! Register me as fourteen!" Since I was small, I could pass for fifteen, so the teacher registered me.

At school, our teachers were learned and generally cultured. After a year and a half of study, we had an exam and a term exam. Three months made up a term and then we had a rest. During the break, there was a period of quarantine in Ulaan Baatar, since there was illness, and our teachers didn't let us go out. I realized the teachers had locked us in, so we could not roam the streets and had to stay inside. There were two daily showings of the movie of the day, but we couldn't run around like modern day kids. We had enough food and drink for the sixteen-day holiday. When I was an upper classman, I realized that our teachers had made up the story about the sickness and the quarantine. They had helped us to live through difficult times.

In 1994, we had my seventieth-school anniversary, and all the alumni gathered in the hall. I talked about my remembrances: "I could tell you a million things about how I was a person from the countryside, about how I finished school and went to study in Russia, how the Party and the government directed my work, which did not go well, and about how the educators at the school for the people work so hard! I had studied and finished at this very school having come to Ulaan Baatar from the countryside."

PD: If you have a question, ask me. I write down for you what I want to say, and you can read it. You are a learned scholar who studies Mongolia and Mongolian life. Thus, you must not be embarrassed to ask me questions. I am happy to be invited to talk with you.

YuK: I am having an interesting conversation with you.

PD: Do my comments correspond to your interests? I did not know Lkhagvasüren before. How did you find my house? I wondered why such a learned man came to meet with me.[3)] I was certainly happy to meet with you earlier and thank you for the opportunity. You are helpful to Mongolia and have helped us in the past and will do so in the future because you are not embarrassed to ask questions. I can happily think of things to talk about. Some

of my ideas are right, some are wrong, and some are mistaken. That's a different matter. There is nothing to worry about in asking questions. What shall we talk about now?

5. The Central Committee of the MPRP

YuK: What did you do after school?
PD: I went to Russia before I went to work.
YuK: Could you tell us about this?
PD: I studied how to do budgetary accounts and finished that specialty. After completing school, I went to the Central Committee of the MPRP where my life was very interesting since I began to work for the State and for the CC/MPRP on the pension system. From there, I went to the finance department of the CC/MPRP. My school, the Finance Technicum, which was later called the Finance Economic Technicum, had been under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance, where I also worked and became an investigator for the "Financial Inspection Office." Do you understand? At the time, our work consisted of giving financial tests to the Industrial Kombinat, so I worked for a month on the income test. Then, one day, my Ministry summoned me.
YuK: Where was your Ministry?
PD: Now the Ministry of Finance had a building where the State Bank, which is now the "Golomt" Bank, was. I was summoned and went to the Ministry. "Go to the CC/MPRP. You are being called," was said. I had been a member since 1949, when I was in school, but a person is very frightened when he is called before the Party Central Committee. I thought of what I had done wrong as I went to meet S. Nanzad, the leader of the financial department of the CC/MPRP. He was a man of good character, and we had a short talk. He looked like an old man but, in fact, he was probably a young man, maybe forty years old. He said to me: "We want you here. Would you like to work here?" If a Party member from the Financial/Treasury department for the CC/MPRP asks me to work with him, of course I agree. So the Party Financial department made me "the bookkeeper," which is the lowest official appointment. People like me who had finished school would have liked to come in as accountants, but this was easier said than done. When people asked me what I was doing, I was embarrassed to say that I was only a bookkeeper, and so I answered that I was in the finance office. It is the lowliest work, and it is said to be hard work. This leader was a clever man. When young people finished school, there was still a life of study, and there was a different department head on the staff who was the accountant. So, for half a year from July 1950 to January 1951, I was a bookkeeper, and then I was promoted to be an accountant, not before the head gave me a test and on which everything

depended. In this way, I worked as a bookkeeper and then an accountant from July 1950 to September 1952.

Perhaps a Japanese person has trouble understanding all of this. As an accountant, I worked on an abacus. Is the abacus still used in Japan? It is in China.

YuK: There are but the Chinese and Japanese abacuses are different.

PD: Our abacuses are Chinese or Russian. The adding machine had only just been introduced, and it was called the Jerjinsk because it was manufactured in the Soviet Jerjinsk factory. The machine is now going to a museum. To calculate 2x25 on this machine, one had to multiply 2 and 5 separately after the number had been pulled through an iron cable. I developed a blister on each finger because it was so difficult to pull this iron cable, and I pulled all day long. The machine had been placed in a large area and could not fit in a smaller space. Here is another interesting story, which is connected to personal psychology. During the day, I sat and used the adding machine to calculate what salaries were per day. My friend was Sandag, and we both worked for the Central Committee because we were both made inspectors for the financial section of the Central Committee. We also sat together to use this adding machine, since people did not calculate by abacus. People said rather meanly that we shouldn't work on that adding machine and that the machine went "shaarr, shaarr!" Someone also said: "I do not believe the results from this adding machine. If there is a mistake in the accounts, you can go to prison! So you must check in the evening on the abacus what you did during the day on the adding machine." Using the abacus to check and correct one's work is most reassuring. That is a feature of human psychology because one does not have much confidence in this machine. These machines require a large area for those who use them for their calculations. Four youths who had graduated from the Mongolian State University came to do this type of work for the Central Committee. The office was very small, and I came to know them, and they were most convincing when they said to me: "A young man cannot go without an education, and going to university is most necessary!" Most office workers for the Central Committee are people with an education. Since I held a low appointment, they urged me to go to university.

Without finishing high school, people cannot enter a university, so once again difficulties arose. I had been provided with seven years of classes of education from the Technicum, but the requirement was completion of ten years. At the time, there were many people who were in transition and were lost in the educational system. Thus a school was established in Ulaan Baatar "as an evening middle school for young workers," which would enable them to complete classes eight, nine, and ten in three years. Thus one worked during

the day and attended school in the evening. The quality of this school was mediocre, and the teachers did not show up for many lessons because they also worked during the day. Many came from the countryside and did not go back. Because the teachers often did not appear to teach the classes, certification was hard to obtain. Nevertheless, I finished after two and a half years and was certified and began to think about applying to study in a school in the Soviet Union. I considered continuing with a specialty in economics.

6. Study in the USSR

Have you heard? "A State Planning Commission" had been organized, and it was asking for written applications for a leader. I was quite well-known as a bookkeeper for the CC/MPRP and later as an accountant. There was, thank goodness, no senior person for the position of accountant, and more important was the fact that a junior person was acceptable in the position. The salary was four hundred and forty *tugriks*. I wrote a letter of request to study in the USSR on behalf of the CC/MPRP, but I was not accepted. The next year, 1952, I tried again. At that time, two people from the Planning Commission had spent a year in the Soviet Union, and in 1952 four people went. Of the four, two had to come from a high school graduating class, but even though students had completed the tenth class, it did not mean that they were automatically accepted. The other two people came from the working world, and the competition for those places was based on an exam. I had finished the tenth class pretty well, but the people who were taking this exam had been to university. I went to take the exam anyway. I had finished the tenth class in evening school where the quality had been poor. The history exam was obligatory and through my own reading I knew some history. Calculus was the next exam, and I had no idea about calculus, even though I had graduated from the tenth class in evening school. D. Ishtseren had been our teacher, and he later went on to become Minister of Education. Playfully, I told him that he had ruined people! Mr. Ishtseren had marked the tenth class exam and had been tough on me, so I put it out of my mind.

Recently I ran across a friend named O. Sanzaijav who had gone to college in Leningrad and had taken the first course. He sat beside me during the exam, and I recognized him by sight saying to him: "Sanzaijav, old man! You are going to take this exam, and I can copy from you!" Sanzaijav got Part A, and I got Part B. "When you finish your part, you can write my Part A! The teacher knows where I sit." I went on. Sanzaijav had been to college and knew how to think well. I deliberately included errors, so it was not known that I had copied from him. In the end, we both received mediocre grades. The third exam was Russian language, and I knew no Russian. I wrote down

whatever the teacher said aloud for this dictation. A friend came and loudly said that the title of the exercise was "My Mother Country," which in Russian was "Moia Rodina." If a person knew the language, the dictation was easy, but I missed twenty nine of the thirty words since I wrote down whatever sounds I heard and made many mistakes. The Minister Ts. Dugersüren who had been on the exam committee had recently died, so Mr. O. Tsedendamba, a director of a department of the CC, was made leader of the exam committee. Apart from Mr. Dugersüren, who had been a member of the committee and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Justice, there was one other person, so there were three in all. All became Ministers later, and I jokingly told them that they ruined the destiny of the country. All of us from work were summoned one by one by them to a particular room, and Mr. B.Renchinpeljee came to the exam with us. Ya. Demchig, a deputy head of the Planning Commission, was competing, so there were three of us. Mr. Renchinpeljee, a very good man, was sent, in part, by the leader Yu. Tsedenbal so that he could get an education before he was too old. The Deputy Leader of the Planning Commission did not have a college education, but Yu. Tsedenbal treated him very attentively and assigned him the task of passing the exam. Demchig's father, Magsar, was a very big man and a teacher of free style wrestling, who also was the leader of the financial department of the Ministry of Internal Security. He had the rank of colonel, spoke Russian well, and worked with the Russians.

From the four people who would be selected to go to Russia, two from the schools were good and would be sent to the USSR with Tsedenbal's approval. I did not qualify. Then the Commission met. "Look at this. You were wrong on twenty nine out of thirty words. How will you study in a Soviet college when you don't speak Russian?" was said to disqualify me. In 1980, this dictation of mine was put in the archives, and I saw it.

At the end of August, most of the students left which was a little sad. "Anyway," I thought" I am a bookkeeper!" The woman A. Dulmaa was the Deputy Minister of the Planning Commission who had worked on it and the CC/MPRP for many years. One day she called me, and I wondered why since the issue of the school had been decided. From the many applications that I had turned into her I had come to know her. "Yesterday, the Party secretaries and leaders had a meeting and the names of two people were approved by the Planning Commission. Demchig was disqualified but you, young man, must go and see those in charge. The leaders argued over who should go abroad and said that "Demchig isn't going because the kiosks on the streets of Moscow sell spirits. Thus he is excluded!" The leaders did not send people who drank, so he stayed behind. In September the first month of lessons began. Secretary Damba had died, but he had been the person who decided the issues of the

cadres, and he had accepted only the "big shots," not the little people. Then S. Sosorbaram became the leader in charge of the Central Committee, and he is still alive today. I had hoped that I could talk to Mr. T. Luvsandendev in the administration, but in the meantime I talked with Mr. Nanzad, a very good man, and asked him to please send me to the Soviet Union. He answered that he would talk with the leaders, but August was over. In the last year, another leader of the Central Committee died. His name was A. Galsan. At the time, we were doing lowly office work for nine hours without a break, leaving at five in the morning and stopping at five in the evening to eat. We returned to the office again at eight and worked until eleven o'clock at night. We sometimes cheated on this eleven o'clock hour even though that was our arduous schedule. I had started work when I really was only a child and had gone to work in what is today the Palace building, which was in operation in 1950. The Eldev-Ochirin movie theater was opened in Sükhbaatar Square and, being young, I went to see all the good movies and eye the girls when I was there. In the evening when we were supposed to be working, I checked in at eight p.m. and at nine or ten I left for the film. I tricked the boss by putting my coat on a hanger in the cloak room, switched on the light, and then left for the movies, so if someone saw my overcoat and the light on, they would presume I was inside working. The film was shown from ten until eleven thirty, and I really should not have snuck out of work. One evening the leader Galsan came down the stairs and said to me: "Hey, hey! I forgot to tell you that today the leaders met and your issues were addressed and you have been approved!" I was very happy, of course, to be studying in a Soviet school, though it was late to start school in the USSR.

7. Life in Moscow

YuK: So you went to Moscow?

PD: I went to Moscow to the Moscow Economic University, which is now called "Moscow Government Economic Institute." The school had been independent for sixty years, but it later joined the Plekhanov National Economic Academy. I went there, and it was very nice. The teachers and academics gave talks, but we did not understand any of them, since we did not know Russian. During the lectures, I wrote letters to mother and father, and I have these now in a notebook. I wrote a kind of Morse code with a dot to mark when the teacher's mouth moved to say the words. These were my dots but were they Morse code? In fact, these dots had meaning. For example, one had to write down "khuvsgol" or "revolution" as well as the words for country and government. The dot gave an estimation of these words, and all of this has been recorded in my notebooks, which I showed to my children.

After a half a year, the exams began. This was not like middle school where we had to go to all the classes. At exam time, I knew I was no genius, and I was depressed, lacked enthusiasm, and thought about home and my father and mother a great deal. The atmosphere in Moscow was bad, and I scarcely saw the sun as darkness descended at three o'clock in the afternoon. Now and again, if the sun did come out, I was sure my father would appear. I said to myself that since I suffered so in this foreign country and was learning nothing, that I would return home. I said to Mr. Renchinpeljee that I should stop wasting the country's money and should go home. He answered: "How could you?" and I told him that I found the studies too difficult. The leader of our Planning Commission was a man called D. Maidar, and he came to Moscow. I begged Mr. Renchinpeljee to take me to him and explain my situation, and he agreed.

IL: Was he the famous Mr. D. Maidar from the national bureau?

PD: Yes. Mr. Maidar was the deputy leader to the Council of Ministers and the real leader of the State Planning Commission. Mr. Renchinpeljee had worked with him. Mr. Maidar had just awakened when I went to speak with him, so the three of us had tea together. The two older leaders talked a great deal for about an hour until Mr. Renchinpeljee said to the leader that it was time to talk about me and my desire to return home, even though there was little money to send me back to my old position as bookkeeper. The leader Maidar scolded: "You have not had your exam, and it is only a half a year and already you are badly discouraged. Try now to buckle down and work hard on your studies because, my friend, you are not going home."

That's what happened — there was no way out. My school aspirant, Mr. Tsend, was also studying there. He had been very well respected at school and could teach the students Russian because he knew the language well. Whenever there had been an argument between teachers and students, Tsend had solved it. So I spoke with Mr. Tsend and told him that I needed a Russian class because I couldn't manage the work. In addition, I did not understand calculus at all.

At that time, the Chinese students attended the school I went to, and they had come prepared while Mr. Renchinpeljee and I had not. And he was thirty-eight years old and still going to school. I asked Mr. Tsend if I was to spend another year studying, and he replied that I was a young man and had only been in Moscow a year and that my language would improve. Mr. Renchinpeljee, however, was a different matter. He offered to go with me to the head teacher at my school, Professor Cherpanov, whom he knew well. The director of the school received us right away as Mr. Tsend was well known at the school. The two of them chatted in Russian, but I couldn't understand what they were

saying, even though they spoke slowly. During the Stalinist times, there were writings on issues in economic science which were debated in the USSR, and in all likelihood that is what they were talking about because I heard the word "Stalin" mentioned about twice. I was little involved in the conversation, and when the discussion was over, and they got up to say "good-bye" Mr. Tsend said to the director that he had forgotten one thing, which was to talk about me! He said to the director that I was a young Mongolian who had come to take the first year course, but that I did not know Russian, and that my education had generally been below average. Mr. Tsend went on to ask if I could, therefore, join the prep-class for the Chinese students. The director said: "No problem! I will give that order tomorrow for him to join the class!" Thus I studied with fourteen Chinese and one Korean, so there was a total of sixteen students in the prep-class. The Chinese took three courses: Russian language, economic geography, and the popular economic history of the USSR. My mind was opened, and I studied the Russian language with great persistence. Mr. Tsend advised that I should just keep reading the Russian books, even if I didn't understand them, and that if I rushed to memorize lots of words I would soon become bored reading the great Russian writers. I decided to start with "Anna Karenina" which, by and large, I did not understand. My reading was like following the sheep — one word, two words, three words. Mongolians classify their sheep well, and each herder knew which was his. Native Mongolians have the gift of always finding their sheep, even if they are lost like needles in a haystack. Though the master divides his one thousand sheep, he can still gather them together. In this way, Mr. Tsend advised me to read books.

I went to the prep classes freely, and there were not many lessons. I always read with a dictionary, and all day I sat with a piece of paper so I did come to know the words automatically. In the metros and on the trams, I read books with my dictionary at my side. Any one watching must have thought what a smart way to learn the Russian language. I would read one book two or three times, so I could really get to know the words. That's the way it was and with a little bit of guess work I finished the special year-long prep class in Russian language. Since the basic course was for five years, I spent six years in Moscow.

My own story is very interesting. I was very grateful to the people like Mr. Tsend who had helped me get into the prep class because without it I would have gone straight home. It was the seventieth anniversary of the Finance School in 1995, and I participated in this anniversary. I worked for many years as a Minister managing work in the country. But, I wasn't the good one — my teachers were! The teachers, with whom we had studied when

we were young, were recognized at the anniversary. I was seventeen at the Finance School and my friend Banzragch was twenty three — the same age as the teacher. When that teacher reprimanded us for our rough characters, this same fellow Banzragch defended us and said: "You must not rebuke children! They come from the countryside and are used to playing! They know nothing!" The teacher was angry and told us both to go, but Banzragch replied, without moving, that he could not go because he had come to study! He went on that "for the sake of Mongolia, people had to study, and the teacher had to pay attention to the children." I reminded the teacher of this at the anniversary. So I completed my second school and when I left I went to work for the Planning Commission as a professional.

8. The Mongolian Ministry of Industry

YuK: For how many years were you in the USSR?

PD: I was there from 1952 to 1958. In 1959, I became head of a department at the Planning Commission, and in 1960 I was appointed to the Ministry of Industry, which was responsible for the industry of the entire country, including mining, electricity, coal, fuel, light, and all the food industries. I was Minister there from 1960 to 1968.

YuK: How old were you in 1960 when you were Minister?

PD: Twenty-nine years old. And I was Minister for three years, and the Ministry expanded to include many new industries. Heavy industry was separate from the Ministry of Light and Food Industry of which I was Minister from 1968 to 1979. From 1979 until March 1990 I was secretary of the CC/MPRP. For thirty-four years, my life was linked with the development of industry: two years on the Planning Commission, two years in the Treasury Department of the CC/MPRP, and basically thirty years in industry. So I was connected to what was both good and bad in our national industry.

YuK: At the time, Mongolian industry was developing vigorously and so it seems that it grew together with you.

PD: This was a good opportunity for me since in the thirty years after 1960 Mongolia developed a primary industrial economy. The Party and the government took measures which achieved results, and I happened to be the leading minister at the time.

YuK: When were you married?

PD: In 1961, after I was Minister, I was married. My mother and brother were in the countryside, and neither of us had yet married. I had gone to live and to study in an apartment building. I had always lived in a *ger* before the Planning Commission building existed. Now there are five schools alongside that building. The leader of the department looked out for me. There were two-

room apartments in the building, and I was given one of them by the Planning Commission. At the time, my brother was the leader of the Töv *aimag* Party Committee, and my mother and sister lived with him. I asked my mother to come and stay with me, and then my brother came and took her home. It was difficult to be a Minister in my twenties — I had a big job and therefore had not married. There was a lot of work, and as I had never worked in a factory, I had to learn everything about such work. In addition, my Ministry was very large, and we sat from morning until night. People felt sorry for me because I worked so hard at the Ministry, but I was respected by both the Party and the government. To continue earning this respect, I had to fulfill many assignments and demands and had to keep studying all the things related to this work. As an unmarried man, I ate home in those evenings when my mother was there. Sometimes, I could scrounge from a family or go to a cafeteria, though it was not considered proper to do that. The government canteen was only open during the day, and in the evening it was difficult for a Minister to go to a restaurant. At the time, the "Altai" was the only restaurant. As I have said, it was not very pleasant for a Minister to continually go to a canteen or a restaurant, and it was better to stay at work, returning home at one or two in the morning.

I was a new Minister in the Ministry, so I did not know everyone very well. There were four Deputy Ministers who were my father's age, so I did not tell them to work late. But if I stayed late, they stayed and sat with me, as did the ten managers who ranked below the deputies. One of them said to me that a child without a wife comes to us as a Minister, we cannot go home early and have no time to stay with our families.

YuK: Was your father in the countryside?

PD: My father died when I was in school, and my mother came to the city and died recently in 1986.

9. The Industrial Kombinat

YuK: What type of factory was built first?

PD: The industrial kombinat. By and large, there was no industry in Mongolia so we started at zero, though there had been a small ring and earring enterprise, a small printing industry and a small scale mining industry in Nalaikh, but there were few in other places. At the time, the electric power station in Ulaan Baatar could only produce sixty kbt and now our herders work from sixty kbt, which is equal to one motor and that is what the Japanese trade with us now. The first electric station appeared in 1924 and at that time the industrial kombinat was organized.

YuK: When was it built?

PD: The building began in 1928-1929 and work on it continued twenty-four hours a day until it was finished in March of 1934. So finally our national industrial economy began to take off. In the kombinat there were four industries: felt, leather boots, woolen cloth and fur. There was also the electric power station. In 1934 a fifteen hundred kbt power station replaced the sixty kbt power station, and an airport was planned for the region.

At the time, there was a plain in Ulaan Baatar, and a Kombinat was built there before I became Minister. In 1971, a deputy from the Russian Trust came with a photo album of the Kombinat. Finally, then, this Kombinat from the 1930s was put into place in a ceremony at which people were honored to lay the foundation. A lama lifted the first spade, and the military was there along with all sorts of popular participation. So for the first time it seemed that industry in Ulaan Baatar had assumed a position of importance.

I could speak for many days about the development of the Mongolian industrial economy. How much should I tell you? How interested are you?

YuK: Very interested.

PD: Well, in 1934, the industrial kombinat went into operation. Then the war came and there were few further developments during the war, though a small meat kombinat was organized. During the war, brigades were organized throughout the countryside to collect milk and cream. For the first time in 1940 families made butter, both by hand and by machine, from the milk and cream; butter is now called "maslo." In 1946, fifty-five hundred tons of butter, were made but since few Mongolians ate bread at the time, little butter was needed, so five thousand of these tons of this butter was exported.

Now the places where the butter was made have disappeared. All of this has now gone, and even the herds have seen better days. The cows do not even appear to be milked. Is that why the butter we have here comes from plants in Germany, Denmark, or Russia? People should be aware of this. Butter used to cost only twelve *tugriks* a kilogram.

10. The Development of the Ministry of Industry after the War

The war was over, and in 1948 for the first time in five years our nation approved plans to move forward on its development. I was the Minister during this period of central planning and was a lucky man as I was an economist, and not an industrial engineer. I had no experience at the time, but we set up an industrial department. It has been said recently that our ministers now are young and democratic, which is good for us! Then, I was the youngest minister at twenty nine and had to devote myself to whatever would carry out the trust of the people in the Party. So the correct thing to do was to develop the industrial economy in precise stages over a period of time.

In 1966, at the Fifteenth Party Great Khural, the aims of the rural economy were discussed. At that time, the main goals of our industrial economy were advanced and that economy was developing with vigor. The Mongolian People's Army began to exploit the country's mineral and raw material resources while at the Party's Great Khural the five- year directives were confirmed, and plans were made to carry them out.

I used figures in speaking about our industrial development. In 1940, the output of our national economy in 1986 figures was one hundred and sixteen million *tugriks*. By 1989, our output had reached nine billion and one hundred and eighty-one million *tugriks*. This is how all of this happened. The industrial economy's growth was correctly indicated by its output, so the growth increased one hundred per cent or seventy-nine fold between 1940 and 1960. There was great economic growth in 1960 with the industrial output at seven hundred and fifteen million *tugriks* and in 1989 at ten billion *tugriks*. I was Minister at the time when the industrial economy went up by twenty per cent while in 1989 it had gone up by almost fifty per cent — or forty-eight per cent, to be precise. It was important to meet the demands for the national revenue. In the 1960s when I was Minister, the industrial economy accounted for nine point six per cent, and in 1989 it was thirty-four point one percent of the revenues. This was very important. In the 1960s there were five hundred and forty million *tugriks* of capital investment, and in 1989 there were sixteen billion and five million *tugriks* of capital investment. The YAAA (National Economy) introduced all of this capital investment at fifty per cent into the industrial branch of the economy. It was also clear that the industrial economy had to develop along with the MAA (Ministry of Animal Husbandry) but such animal products as meat and skins were criticized because of poor processing methods. For example, old skins covered with sores were processed and used for the soles of boots. Leather *deels* and trousers could be made from the five million sheep skins, and boots could be manufactured from goat skins. In this way, wool, skin, and hides could be used. In addition, Mongolian wool had almost never been washed, but we changed that and began to wash the wool and process it, which was essential in making felt for *gers* and boots as well as woolen cloth for carpets. Cashmere was also processed. There were fifty thousand people working in the industrial economy. In 1989, this number was more than doubled to one hundred and twenty thousand people. However, the debt was growing and needed to be watched.

The economists had two numbers to watch. In the 1960s, one hundred and six million kbt of electric energy was produced, and while I was Minister there had been only one power station and now there are many. In the 1960s, there were three power stations and six hundred thousand tons of coal were

produced, and in the 1990s seven million one hundred thousand tons were produced. In the past, no copper concentrate was produced but in the years of the 1970s, three hundred thousand tons of copper concentrate were produced. Molybdenum spar concentrate was also mined, and more than four hundred and forty thousand tons of cement were made.

However, the MAA (Ministry of Animal Husbandry) could not process sheep's wool well. We studied how to make the best carpets from Mongolian wool cloth and set up a carpet industry. In the 1960s, carpets were made by hand and then a minister from the Party set up a co-operative industry for making rugs by hand. One hundred wide square meter carpets were made each year! Then, two million square meter carpets were made. The old way of making wool cloth was abandoned, since we had established an industrial method for processing wool. Thus, in the 1990s, one million meters of woolen cloth was made whereas in the past the old knitwear industries had never made that much. In 1960, there were one hundred and thirty seven thousand knitwear items made and in the 1990s, four million four hundred thousand knitwear items were made. This was certainly growth.

Nowadays, we always wear foreign coats from Korea or Germany. The Mongolian *deel* is not good for city wear but is very good for nomadic but not urban people. In the city it is so warm which makes it hard to sit in a fur-lined *deel*. We made coats too. In the 1960s, sixteen hundred coats were made, and in the 1990s sixty-four thousand coats were made. Mongolians wear suits. In the 1960s, thirty-two thousand suits were made, and in the 1990s one hundred and forty-thousand suits were made. Now this is over. In the 1960s, two hundred and ninety-thousand meters of felt were made for *gers* and in the 1990s seven hundred thousand meters were produced, along with four million eight hundred thousand pairs of boots. Now the factory building is rented out to a bar.

YuK: May I borrow the page of figures to which you refer?

PD: I didn't write so clearly but maybe they will be helpful.

YuK: Alright.

PD: Such was our growth. I can tell you about the industries' intentions and about the numbers. In addition, the goal of saving time was also important to the development of the Mongolian industrial economy.

YuK: Would you show me using the map and figures?

PD: All right.

11. Heavy Industry and the Development of Electric Power

YuK: How was industry organized when you became the First Minister?

PD: Many had been set up including the hides and skins, the wool and the

food industries. Shall I go on?
YuK: First, did some Russians and Czechs help set up these industries?
PD: Yes, and I will begin to talk about heavy industry. There was one electric station in Ulaan Baatar, and it had to provide electricity and power from water, which would produce the steam to warm the city. Ulaan Baatar could not manage with only one power station, and when I was Minister, the newspaper and radio notified the public in which sections of the city the *gers* would have power and which would have it cut off. Being a young Minister, I had to uphold my reputation, so the meeting of the Party's Central Committee was important to me. When the Great Khural was convened, the hall was dark, and I was the Minister responsible. I'll talk about one instance when this occurred. The leading Chinese representative was Zhou Enlai, and a big reception was held for him. My wife and I arrived carrying with us our first child, but because the infant was a new born, my wife was unable to go in. Yu. Tsedenbal was the main leader. The ministers assembled and Zhou Enlai and Yu. Tsedenbal spoke. I was being received at the reception, but I was paying little attention because I was thinking about what to do about the lights. When the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs started to speak, the hall went dark. Though this does not happen now, it often happened in the past.

Though in 1990, the electricity was not cut off, families did not know how to make warm winter windows and by the 1990s, the north facing buildings were cold. People in our building said: "We don't need to stuff the window frames in your Ministry, but in some Ministries some people freeze to death. When will there be sufficient electricity?" In Ulaan Baatar, the USSR built stations # 1, #3, and #4. The Chinese helped build station #2. In Darkhan and Erdenet, the USSR helped build the electric stations, and the Mongolians put in the first high kilowatt line.

The mining department of the Nalaikh mine was not far from Ulaan Baatar, and the USSR built a forty-five kilometer extension to the mine as well as helping in coal mining near the Shar River. The Department of Heavy Industry, therefore, was aided predominantly by the USSR and, within a short period of time, mining and fuel for energy became serious enterprises in Mongolia.
YuK: When were electric stations #1 and #2 built?
PD: #1 was built in 1934 and was the first industrial kombinat. It had 1500 kbt of power. The Chinese built the second station over several years starting in 1960. That station could have the Mongolian voltage of twenty four. It was not a large station. The third station was built over several years in the 1970s and the fourth in the 1980s. As the industrial economy developed, it became very important that this industrial economy quickly provide the necessary energy

for the lives of the Mongolian people. Another issue which was, in fact, decided successfully was the exploitation of the copper deposits at Erdenet where the industry was started.
YuK: The industry for the enrichment of mining at Erdenet had not yet started even though I went to Erdenet city.
PD: You must come and see this industry. We have worked successfully in the mining department for many years. Each Mongolian *aimag* had a coal mine, and if there were no mines and no coal, the situation would be different. In each *aimag*, coal had to be extracted from the coal deposits. Before the 1990s, power cuts were unknown. In each *aimag* there was a diesel powered electric station. I am sure you have been to the countryside where now, with the help of the Japanese, *sum* power stations have been updated. The government had to answer serious questions about availability of light. How could one read a book in the evening? By lamp light? I would read by the light of any lamp. Do you use a particular type of lamp? Nowadays, the young people sit and compute under lighted lamps, and there is an electric power station in each *sum*, which with the *aimags*, provide what is needed.
YuK: Were you involved in this electrification work in the countryside?
PD: Yes, we did the work, and as the Minister of the industrial economy I did the work. For the first time, Mongolia had a high tension cable. Later I became General Secretary responsible to the CC/MPRP and was closely linked to the Mongolian industrial economy, and I was responsible for such issues. We did not fuss over chairs and tables (i. e. meetings) as we do now. People's lives were summed up by the work they did. State power means more chairs at the table.

It was three years before I met with and came to know another Minister. The Ministry was in one big room with furniture from Japan or Singapore, and the Minister walked around the room speaking on the hand phone he had taken out of his pocket, which had been made in Japan, Germany, or Korea. I told this Minister that he was very good, the office was big, and the furniture was foreign, and the phone Western. The work, however, was nothing! These people ride in elegant cars and sit in elegant rooms. Aren't they embarrassed in front of the people? We were used to riding around in a lousy car and if that was a fault, then we couldn't ride in a car. Nor did we sit in a nice office with nice furniture. In fact, we rode in a Russian car, not in another foreign car, even though we knew that the "Mercedes Benz" and the "Toyota" were good cars. People saw these sumptuous goods, but did not try to get them for themselves, which is now done. One public leader hurried around in a Toyota, but people should not live so extravagantly. I told the Minister that he should be embarrassed to ride around in his splendid car and sit in his elegant office.

But he paid no notice of what anyone said and replied only "Nonsense!" But I had spoken the truth.
YuK: Yes, you had.

12. The Textile Industry

PD: So that is the information on heavy industry. How about the light industrial economy? Work with wool and skins or hides generally predominate in the labor force, and the aim is to produce a good product and process wool into felt. In the 1960s, three hundred thousand leather coats for export were produced annually. And now? We were even more successful in supplying three million five hundred thousand to four million boots, which were so necessary for our people. Now this boot industry has come to an end, and we get our boots from the Czechs whose country has now become a boot country. In the past, they used to buy boots from us.
YuK: When you became Minister, did these industries exist?
PD: No. There were generally only kombinats but none in the heavy industries. (1)We processed sheep skins and turned them into leather. (2)We processed goatskins into kidskin leather. A leather factory processed four hundred thousand cow hides into leather or calf skins in a year. There were also industries to wash wool and to use it in weaving or knitting.
YuK: Where were they built? Are they in the same place?
PD: Oh, of course not! I will tell you where. A skin processing mixed industry was set up in Ulaan Baatar for cowhide, sheep, and goat skin. Altogether nearly twenty such industries were built in Ulaan Baatar.
YuK: Where were they built in Ulaan Baatar?
PD: Where there was an industrial kombinat and where long ago boots were made. Now, like in Japan, China, and Korea, these kombinat have been turned into bars. Our Minister of Trade is a young man called Ch. Ganzorig. I know him and frequently invited him. He is a good young man, and I said to him that our television interview was really for publicity. When I was young, everything was devoted to these organizations, but now you have to be taught all about this. The Minister answered: "That's so!" At this time we are not building industries. Recently, I have been ill so I could not talk much on the television. The industrial buildings are now leased, and there is work for such light industries as the carpet industry. We had built three carpet factories. Think about this. In the 1960s, when I was Minister, I had made a one thousand square meter rectangular carpet. We set up carpet factories in Ulaan Baatar, Choibalsan, and Erdenet, so there were three places with carpet factories. A wool washing factory was built. How was wool processed in the old days? Wool and fur took a year to prepare. Really. Some wool required no

washing and just had to be cleared of the excrement in a cold washing process before it was sent to the USSR. There was not, however, a cold washing factory, though we later did establish four such factories and in Ulaan Baatar there is an up-date wool washing industry with new ones in Choibalsan and Bayan Olgii. In a year, Mongolia prepared twenty thousand tons of wool, which were washed and used for internal consumption to make carpets. The rest was exported There was a second factory set up for knitted or woven goods, which the Russians called "trikotage." There were also small sewing factories in the *aimags* where there were also sewing industries, but not all of them still exist.

YuK: So there are none?

PD: There are bars everywhere. In the past, boots, *deels*, coats, and suits had been made but those made in Mongolia tended to be looked down on by those in Ulaan Baatar. However, for the country such manufacture was very necessary. In fact, the so-called "white soled boot" was made in this country. Children don't know about this today, but for some people this is a very good boot. Nowadays, our young people go around in solid rubber boots from England, America, and Germany, and when they are in their twenties they have the problem of kidney disease. When I was young, there were no illnesses caused by the weather. Now people wear things and don't realize that they are unreliable in damp places. The Chinese black shoes are another type of footwear. The trouble with the solid Western rubber boot is that it is very cold and dangerous for the body. The young today must admire foreign shoes because they run around in shoes called "Keds." If a person wears these shoes on reaching forty or fifty, the kidneys and the liver will have been affected. This all must be checked.

We made four million boots and the so-called "white soled boot" was completely processed from cowhide. It was soft and suitable for riding horses and also kept the legs warm. It had, however, one shortcoming — it stretched when it got wet, so city dwellers did not like it. So it was worn more often in places in Mongolia that are extremely dry and very rocky. The compressed rubber soled boot is not easy to wear on hills and is best worn on smoother ground.

An American tourist said this year that "I have looked for these boots all over the world and have found them in Mongolia!" Thus she bought many pairs. Boots were made in the old days, and people now have a serious problem in finding them. For the past seventy or eighty years, our exports have mainly been in skins or hides and wool.

YuK: Again, mostly to Russia?

PD: Skins or hides went not only to Russia, but also to the European Socialist

countries like Czechoslovakia, Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. As for wool, we made one million one hundred thousand meters of cloth for domestic use in *deels*. Our woolen *deels* are warm, and the rain cannot penetrate them. We made enough woolen cloth for domestic consumption. Fine woolen cloth is also needed, and we have fine wool producing sheep. We processed twenty thousand tons of heavy wool, which was washed and made into carpets for internal consumption. We also exported two million square meters of carpet. And where did it go? To Japan.

13. The Food Industry

How about the food industry? An article has been written which shows how the Mongolians processed raw materials into a final product. One must consider the herds not only as a source of meat but also as a source of profit. The herds produce meat, skins or hides, hair, wool, and milk. The Germans helped build a large meat factory in Ulaan Baatar, the Bulgarians helped set one up in Choibalsan, and the Hungarians built one in Darkhan. There are small meat kombinats in several *aimags*. There were many old animals which were slaughtered and processed and for the first time a tinned meat factory was established. Tinned meat was made then as it is made now. In a year, twenty million boxes of tinned meat were sent to Europe.

Our tinned meat was called something quite different and was written about in your article. There is good reason because our meat is really like wild animal meat and is very good for the health. You have been all over Europe, and there the meat is like rubber with no flavor, even though it is nice looking, clean, and fresh. Our herds have meat with a lot of taste. The Chair of the Great Khural, J. Sambuu, was interested in talking with foreign ambassadors. Chairman Sambuu was a very smart and nice old man to whom the foreign ambassadors had to present their credentials. Mr. J. Sambuu was a herding specialist who wrote several books on the topic. He spoke favorably about the meat of the herds, and an ambassador met with him and said: “Mr. Chairman! Clarify why the meat from the Mongolian herds is so much better than that from Europe?” Mr. J. Sambuu answered that when the Europeans were given Mongolian meat they liked it because it was quite different.

You wrote about Inner Mongolia where there is a difficult situation with both people and animals settling down in a specific area. You wrote that the herds there can go to the pastures and then return to the *khashaa* to places where their food is ready. We stopped the trading of raw animal products by three big meat kombinats involved in foreign trade, so we could manage to make the tinned meat. Because of obstacles, I had to stop the talks about exporting horsemeat to Japan. Twenty years later, horsemeat began to be

exported to Japan. There are interesting things to say about this but a person can do little without thinking, and without initiative, work is not completed. I knew this good Japanese man, Mr. Hayashi, who is now dead, and I proposed to do business with him in horsemeat: "We have many horses, and you can publicize this in Japan. I will prepare the horses, and the meat factory will be operating!" Our meat kombinat works seasonally, and now it is really running for seven of twelve months. Because the herds need to be driven, the factory works only seasonally. In winter, the herds do not move and don't get to Ulaan Baatar. Only the horses reached the kombinat, so the factory slaughtered them and could work all year around. The Japanese representative was informed of this, and I went to Japan myself to introduce our food products and become acquainted with the Japanese regulations. There were high standards in Japan, and special attention was given to the freshness of the meat. Thus I asked Mr. Hayashi to make sure that when the horse meat was sent out it should immediately be boxed with strips of fat and then placed in plastic bags. The two of us talked for quite a while about such things.

After this conversation, I had, as Minister, to prepare twelve hundred good young three or four year old horses from Töv *aimag*. The meat of older horses was tough, while the younger horses had softer meat. The introduction of foodstuffs into Japan was strictly controlled so the Ministry of Agriculture checked very thoroughly. Mr. Hayashi came in both the spring and in the fall. This is how things seemed in 1977 when Mr. Hayashi said:

"In the fall, I went with the specialist to the Ministry of Agriculture who oversaw all the conditions related to the slaughter, and we were given permission to study the slaughtering process."

Mr. Hayashi came again in the fall, when I received him, and he was followed around by two people from the Ministry of Agriculture. Our meat kombinat in Ulaan Baatar was very good and had the capacity in one year to butcher one million two hundred thousand small livestock and one hundred and twenty thousand cows. Sometimes, however, the advanced German technology in the factory failed because clots of blood messed it up. Generally, a meat factory was a hard outfit to run, even though we kept it as clean as possible. The Deputy Japanese Minister from the embassy came with others to see the factory for a week and feasted on its products. When I asked the Minister how the food was, he replied it was very good and that he had a fine impression of the whole situation. Man for man people from Japan, Russia, and Mongolia are all alike and though Mr. Hayashi had a good impression he said: "I am speaking the truth, and I don't quite know how to say this, but I am not going to buy your meat because I do not like your slaughtering methods. The cows are knocked out, and the sheep are put on their backs and

killed by slicing through their stomachs. Can Japan buy from such a country that kills animals so cruelly? On the other hand, your meat factory is just like ours and has the best European equipment." I answered that "Here we do not have obstacles for our meat buyers. Your friend can go and see the horses. Two hundred make up a herd, and six herds are comprised of twelve hundred, which you can see. These horses are really young and fat, and the industry is in good shape, and has no problems. You can understand what is happening when you see them slaughtering the sheep. So what was going on?"
Mr. Hayashi answered: "Can I give a bit of advice? To which I answered "Yes, yes!" He went on: "Use English to write on your meat packages 'Ulaan Baatar Kombinat' and 'Made for Japan." An English label means a lot, and make it an elegant one. If you do, your meat will sell in Japan." But we knew that sticking such a label on the meat in no way improved the meat inside the package. Since I did not know English, this advice was a little awkward for me to accept, and I even thought such a label might look worse. So Mr. Hayashi and I said good-bye.

Anyway, at that time, my Ministry did not make foreign trade agreements, which were set up by the Ministry of Foreign Trade. So, Mr. Hayashi stayed on, and eventually an agreement was drawn up to which I gave some thought. One day he came by with a rather unpleasant look on his face, which I believed did not bode well, and said that he was leaving the day after tomorrow and that there was no need to contact the Ministry of Foreign Trade since the price for the meat was too high. He said that one ton of horse meat cost fourteen hundred American dollars, which was too expensive. He went on to say that he had met with the ministers at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and had a hard time with them, even though the meat of twelve hundred horses was a lot of meat — more than one hundred tons. The meat of Mongolian horses was publicized in Japan, and the Americans wanted the horse innards. So there was lots of endless discussion. Certainly the Mongolian horse meat was a delicacy which was good for the health and especially good for high blood pressure and the hardening of the arteries. Rich people eat horsemeat, but ordinary people cannot afford it. Mr. Hayashi went on to say that our Ministry of Foreign Trade was not very good and needed to think about finding a way to make a profit, no matter what the Japanese, most Mongolians, the Russians and Germans did. The Ministry needed to consider revenue, and that he was offered fourteen hundred American dollars for a ton of meat. So then he told me that he went to Ulaan Ude where our horses are slaughtered, and he met with some Russians there who showed him a contract, which was an improper thing to do because it revealed company secrets. However, the Russian price was nine hundred and fifty dollars a ton, so he knew that our

price of fourteen hundred dollars was too high. Those of us at the Ministry of Food and Light Industry paid close attention to these comments, since we were doing business with Japan for the first time. It was said that the Japanese wanted to purchase the horse and large livestock meat for eleven hundred dollars a ton. But we did not reach an agreement even though Mr. Hayashi had sent us boxes, washing soap, and plastic bags to Nakhodka harbor where they had been waiting for some time. I realized then how bad the situation was, and I quarreled with the Ministry of Foreign Trade over this issue. That is why I read with interest that last year the Bagakhangai meat kombinat began to send horsemeat to Japan. However, times were different, and I didn't think badly about all of this. The difficulties in the meat industry twenty years ago have tempered and that's what happened.

As for the grain industry, we collected about eight hundred thousand tons of rice and over two hundred thousand tons of flour, and the surplus was exported. Now, however, Mongolia is flooded with Chinese flour — right? It had been decided to set up flour mills in Ulaan Baatar, Selenge, Khövsgöl, Bulgan, Ulaangom, Kharkhorin, Khentii and Dornod *aimags*..

YuK: Is there a flour factory in Ulaan Baatar now?

PD: It is working and is not yet too old though the main flour factory is outside Ulaan Baatar, and Kazakhstan produces the wheat. Why is all this necessary? We buy eight hundred tons of wheat, and we need to amass eight hundred tons to provide for our needs and to export.

YuK: When I was in Ulaan Baatar twenty years ago all of this was exported.

PD: Issues about flour had to be determined and sugar, necessary for confectionary, was another serious issue in Mongolia at the time. When visiting a family, it was customary to bring a little dish of sugar. In the past, sugar had been imported but now we make sugar here in Mongolia, and there are two confectionary kombinats in Ulaan Baatar. The old one was expanded, and there was a new kombinat set up at Tolkhoit and another in Darkhan. In this way, the sugar problem was settled.

The Mongolians generally did not eat much bread and then the bread factories # 1, 2, and 3 were set up in Ulaan Baatar and the production of bread became a big industry. In Ulaan Baatar there were two bread production areas — one in the industrial region and the other in the Tolkhoit region, where there was a link with the electric station. Much of the food industry including the meat kombinat, the flour mills, the sweet baked goods industry along with the skin and hide and wool kombinats and some other factories were centered in the Tolkhoit region. Though some biscuits came from abroad, we made many ourselves. Now, however, when you go to the market, there are only foreign biscuits.

YuK: Are there no Mongolian biscuit producers?
PD: Very few. We Mongolians need *deels*, shoes, and clothes, as well as food and drink. To satisfy us, we import sugar from abroad but we do make some of our own spirits, beverages, beer, and soft drinks. However, Ulaan Baatar is also full of foreign liquor. My Ministry in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s met the people's demands for goods, and we also exported things. What a shame that in the last ten years all that we built up has been destroyed.

14. The Errors in the Deterioration of Privatization

PD: I have thought and spoken about this one thing before which is that recently our industries have stopped because of "Mr. Smarty Pants." Do you know about "Mr. Smarty Pants?" Mongolia is full of people who know it all. Are you familiar with such people? They are well known here, and the whole society is talking about them. History is greatly distorted. Do you know history? People who do not know history distort it. They have given mistaken explanations in matters related to the herding economy, especially regarding the standstill in the food industry.

They say that our industries are backward, and we can't meet the demands of the market, partially because the Soviets, Czechs, and Germans built our industry. Thus we were left behind technologically and so we sort of have given up. But I don't accept that explanation because our industries are as up-to-date as any industries. Just think, since the eighteenth century, England has built industries on a grand scale. The nineteenth century was a time of industrial building in America and Japan when structures were set up and renovated, and technology was changed. "Mr. Smarty Pants" does not offer an explanation for all of this.

Actually, "Mr. Smarty Pants" is like everyone else who has two feet and wears shoes. Just because someone is a "Mr. Smarty Pants" does not mean that he has four feet and four eyes. We can make shoes to fit his feet! "Mr. Smarty Pants" has a mistaken understanding of people here and abroad, which is not good.

Is our Industry backward? It is. Is that bad? Certainly, but that is where it is at. Should it be like that? Within these ten years what was bad should have been improved but things have not changed. Let me give one example: four million boots were made, and the Mongolians wore these boots in good health. Now, however, there are not four million boots. If the boots were going to be improved, this might have been good news. But today that very boot factory is manufacturing shirts that the United States has ordered from China and there is now no boot industry here. There really isn't.

Privatization is happening here. There used to be a nice, big six-story

building for the boot industry, with up-to-date equipment. Now some of this technology is obsolete and improvement is necessary. The "clever" nations were mistaken about privatization. I am not so clever but I would have privatized differently. People in industries which were privatized were good people but the one cheat was the national bank, which extorted a great deal of money. Suppose, Mr. I. Lkhagvasüren, the owner of a bank, loaned two billion *tugriks* to a factory owner, who took the money and rented the factory to the Chinese. The factory then was privatized, the bank doubled its money, and the State was left with the problem. This should not be permitted to happen. The quality of the boots from the boot industry which produces four million boots should be better. We have a population of two and one half million people so even more good boots should be produced. Such could be the requirements for privatization. Does your article point out the conditions of the light industries and the herders? I would consider privatizing the skin and hide and the hair and wool industries, but they all need money and careful consideration must be given to see if they are well enough developed for privatization. Your article needs to discuss the connection between the herders and the market.

There were more than two hundred and fifty nine *negdels* in our agricultural co-operative organization, though most of them have been abolished. The herds were given to serious herders whereas in the past the *negdels* used to buy the wool, skins, hides, and cashmere from the herders in return for enough tea, cotton cloth, and food stuffs to satisfy them. There was no reason to disrupt the balance between the herders and the market. What has been gained now? To be a trader and ride around in a jeep with more than ten gears, with a red and yellow cigarette holder between your teeth and two or three little knives in your pocket. If such a man sells cashmere, what does the herder get? He needs flour, rice, sugar, clothes, and cotton cloth. I understand the ways of big government though I do not approve of them. Yes or No? Am I saying something wrong? If so, please excuse me. I am sorry that the people's shares in these industries have been taken. It has led to ruin and is shameful. There are no real reasons to explain all of this, and these failures need to be addressed.

We Mongols follow the good custom of father and mother remaining in the home so that the family is never broken up, and the house itself is not destroyed. Repairs are made, and when something is not working it is fixed. The yellow felt is replaced by new white felt, which can be changed both inside and outside. Then mother and father exchange the poor chests for good ones and together they tend the hearth so the fire will grow stronger. Now, however, everything has been destroyed, but we are told that everything will get better. The Mongolian custom is to inherit the hearth, but now the concept

of nomadic civilization is a topic of scientific discussion. In fact, nomadic life is not backward and skill is needed to live it. Such a life should not be destroyed or abandoned but should be made better. We have studied many books on the different life that is led in England and America. For the past ten years in Mongolia, we have destroyed the factories, and we must now revive industry.

15. The Plan for Reviving National Industry

YuK: How does one go about reviving industry?

PD: Quite decisive measures are necessary but we are not prepared now. Mongolians do not produce planes, tractors, or cars but process skins and hides and wool, and we certainly have many of these things. In my opinion, exports of wool and skins and hides should be stopped. If people realize that they will die if these things are snuck across the border, the hides and wool will stay here, and we will see things turn around because the industries will have the raw materials to work with. However, now the Chinese traders buy Mongolian wool, so raw materials are in short supply and industries come to a halt. I don't understand why all this has happened. There must be discussions about reviving industry.

There must be a direction in our program of guidance for the cashmere and skin and hides processing industries as well as for some sort of plan for planting because without a program nothing will happen. My wife and I have no plan, but everyone else has a plan. They find a direction where none exists. Interesting words are no excuse or explanation — not that I don't think of such words. But the system isn't working. Our big leaders talk continuously, and there is no discipline or responsibility, yet they constantly make excuses for failures. Privatization has been carried out in the wrong way, imposing its errors on the established system so that recently, private property has taken over, and people are confused. In addition, "management" uses big words, which the herders do not understand. The very word "management" itself is used to make excuses for its mistakes. However, the herders do not comprehend these foreign words, and in this way the Mongolians are manipulated. This situation is very dangerous, so we try to stand up to all of this.

For seventy years, the MPRP took the people of Mongolia on the wrong path, and they went astray. But we Mongolians can work for the betterment of the country, even though working people are bound to make mistakes at work, and it is alright to have shortcomings. I read an article some guy wrote stating that there must be order at all times, and now we have no order. There is order within a true and just democracy while within a dictatorship there is order without democracy. On the other hand, democracy without order is anarchism.

Now we must develop a national industry for the five to six million sheep and goat skins, the annual four to five hundred cow hides, and the three thousand tons of cashmere, and the twenty thousand tons of wool. We also need to plant one million hectares. Raw materials must be amassed, and industry needs engineers and technical workers who now end up at the kiosks. I also speak about the one hundred thousand workers who are now on the streets. The quick witted ones are street vendors, and we could use their expertise.

The issue is how do we change our workers? Every herder and worker must have a change in psychology. The herder now has no voice in setting his wages. Yesterday he was his own boss and was always in the saddle galloping along in the healthy air. Then suddenly he was put to work in a noisy, strange, and smelly place, and it was hard for him. We don't have a herder class and now in this new era the children of the herders can choose what they wish to do. There used to be a system to prepare the workers, and some studied in the socialist countries to become engineers and technicians. Professionals and masters were prepared there. More than thirty of our technical specialists set up a two-year school.

Children who have entered the eighth grade and have finished high school have two more years training as specialists before they become professionals. This was the type of education in the 1970s and 1980s, but now everyone can be found in the bar at the Technological School. There are middle technological or professional schools in some of the *aimags*, and our light industrial branch has two technical professional schools — the Light Industry School of Technology and the School of Food Technology. Students who attend the former are prepared in the specialty areas of weaving and textiles, book making, and tanning, and as all sorts of fitters. Those who attend the School of Food Technology are trained as bakers, pastry makers, and confectioners. Foreign professional schools also prepared our specialists, and thus many people studied in these technical schools.

In the 1970s and the 1980s, some people worked without a specialty and educational requirements. Some of the industrial workers learned their trade by simply following experienced workers and accompanying them for one or two months on the job. In this way, a worker class of one hundred thousand people was created with the children following in their parents' footsteps. Now, however, the children are unemployed and on the streets. A little money is necessary to revive industry, and a deadline must be set to replace or repair the broken down buildings. Leave the bar stools at our country's borders and start making machine tools. That is the issue, but money is needed for all of this.
Do I worry about those youngsters who need to be put right to work? This is a very difficult issue. There are many good young workers but those ten year

olds who were once on the streets have turned twenty now and they have become uneducated people without a profession. Who are they really? The most dangerous are the murderers and thieves, but there are also good young people, even if they are not professionals. The industries must be revived, and the professionals trained, though this will take fifteen years. When there were no buildings, we built them, and we determined who would stay here and who would go abroad. Some people could decide to apprentice themselves to senior workers or foreign professionals. When I was first a Minister, there were twenty thousand workers, and by the end of the 1980s there were more than one hundred thousand professional workers who were highly productive and able to deal with machine technology. They were well prepared.

Within the last decade, these good young people have been completely ruined. However, ten to twenty years is not enough time to fix these spoiled youths. Nowadays, mothers and fathers of ten year olds throw their children out onto the streets where they take up a transient life. When they grow up, they wonder who looked after them and since no one did, they take their revenge. One must consider the influence of such a childhood on these adults who live into their sixties or seventies. I am upset because this mistaken path is still followed by young people, and it would take many years of work to turn these poorly educated and undisciplined youths around. Thus, this is a very difficult problem.

In 1990, the population was literate, and everyone could read and write. Now, the number of illiterates is increasing all over. Youths who enter the military kill themselves and each other with guns. These eighteen year old children go into the military from a ten year life of transience and are illiterate and uneducated, so when they are given guns they shoot someone. The issue is not if this is alright because there is the larger and more difficult problem of undertaking the reconstruction of Mongolia, which will require enormous effort. It is not a question of carrying out a program that is already set up but of creating a new program. Our system then needs to hone and adjust itself to this new program. But today there is little discussion and emphasis given to all of this.

Upwards of sixty to seventy people built the “Gobi” factory and industry. After it opened, two or three professionals were invited from Japan. They were not just anybody but specialists who came to teach and work with us for three months before returning home. Now people just talk and make plans, which are not implemented. Everything except bars has plans. In the future there will even be meetings about kiosks. All we will need to do is to ask how to open a bar. Each day in Ulaan Baatar “The Chinggis” hotel and “The Ikh Tenger” host meetings and conferences. My Mongolians have a proverb which I am

sure you have heard: "The more conferences with a lot of work, the clearer the sign of worsening times. The more meat pies you make, the more spoiled meat you have."

In other words, when you have too much meat, it spoils and is made into pies. These words were greatly appreciated. Although today there may be some ten meetings, the issues must be thought over beforehand. There is an article which raises the issue of our proper connection with Inner Mongolia.

Today I want to thank you. The real aid is not the giving of money. The important subject for the country would be discussions based on Mongolian needs. We are all part of the Asian continent and need to help each other unselfishly and share our academic achievements. Noriko Sato has written an article which points out that Japanese aid did not reach the people in the countryside and is even disappearing in Ulaan Baatar. So it is necessary to think over how to use this help intelligently, and how to deal with those people who are invited from abroad because we need their assistance. However, the one bad aspect of foreign aid is that the advice given by these foreigners is based on their own standards. My other "Mr. Smarty Pants" is a good example of this. He offers advice which is not suited to the way we live and calls all sorts of meetings and conferences.

16. The "Gobi" Cashmere Industry

IL: You were responsible for commissioning and putting into operation the "Gobi" kombinat. Can you talk about the history of this factory's establishment?

PD: I think that I can talk on this subject, and I will talk about the issues involved in the wool and food industries. In the 1960s and 1970s, I could not decide one question, which was how to process cashmere and camel's wool. We had almost eight hundred thousand head of camels, though now we have only two hundred thousand head. In the old days, we were not able to process camel's wool, but in the mid-1960s I prepared thirteen tons of cashmere. The order came to our Ministry, and we did the best we could. The plans, however, could not be completely realized because the best methods of processing the cashmere and the camel's wool had not yet been found.

I was a member of our country's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. You know this. Now our "Mr. Smarty Pants" pointed out in a criticism that "it is not good how the Mongolian members waste money!" But I didn't think that way. We were the ninth member to join the Council and after us Vietnam was the tenth. Members from both the heavy and light industrial ministries of the Soviet countries met annually, and there were good discussions about various economic problems. I talked with some ministers, who wanted to buy our cashmere to sell in England and Switzerland, about methods of processing

cashmere. I said to them: "How is your cashmere processed?" They answered that they had only one plant and knew nothing about it. Then I came to know a woman minister from Bulgaria who advised me to visit Italy, Switzerland, Japan, and England.

At the time, it was difficult to get away. Now one can have a holiday, and if one likes one can visit many places. Now people talk about visiting Japan for a week to go to the bars. I was eager to go to Japan so I did a lot of work to that end, but it was difficult at the time. Now it is very easy. Just say that people went to the Soviet Union. No one could simply decide to go to a rich foreign country on your own. Permission and foreign currency were both needed. I don't know if all the money for foreign aid is spent on official trips. I recently met with some important leaders, and I told them to cut back on those foreign trips. I was told that when traveling abroad, one should observe decorum when asking questions. One must maintain discipline when talking with one minister one day and the day after to another since they are not equal. Such decorum was most necessary though at this time Mongolia was closed, and we went nowhere. When one did travel, however, one had to talk carefully with people. It was important to draw up an agreement for my industry, but with nothing in one's pockets, how could I talk about industry? Yes? Was it only important because I was immersed in all of this? I thought about all of these things.

For many years, I was a member of the Great Khural and of the Central Committee of the MPRP. I was a member of the CC six times and was elected as a deputy to the Great Khural eight times. At the time there was a meeting of people from both the communist countries and the capitalist countries, and I was a representative at this meeting of the Parliaments from these countries. Even now, these meetings are held. So then I went to the CC and talked with the leaders in charge and said that since I was a member of the CC, why couldn't I go to the meetings in a rich capitalist or communist country. When I was asked which country I wished to attend a meeting in, I answered "Italy." In 1972 the Italian Communist Party had its thirteenth Great Khural. In 1970, I had started to study intensely the question of cashmere and so asked the secretary of the CC, Mr. D. Molomjamts, to send me to Italy, and he replied that I would be sent as the representative to the Italian Communist Party's Great Khural, but I would not be representing the Party. I asked him if I could since I had been selected as a member of the Party CC for many years. Finally, the leaderYu. Tsedenbal appointed me the Party representative to Italy. Many people did not get this chance, but a friend who was a minister had put in a good word for me. At the time, the leader of the Italian Communist Party was Luigi Longo, and the main Secretary leader was a man called Berlinguer.

I met with them and relayed their greetings to Yu. Tsedenbal. I met Luigi Longo, who was a man of great renown, and I was happy that I had come to this meeting and had achieved my goal of seeing the industry. When I first met with Secretary Berlinguer, I asked him if he could help me with my request. He was an older man who had handled governmental but not industrial issues. I said: "I would like to see your cashmere industry which I know has developed well." He responded: "Please do not mention your desire to visit our factory because people might think that the communists have come to spy on us. So say nothing. I understand that you are from the ministry so after this meeting stay on a little, and I will arrange a visit for you." So, I sat and waited. The company I was to see was called "Rest Italy" and was owned by a communist who traded with the communist countries. Soon thereafter, the owner was told that a Mongolian representative from the Ministry of Light and Food Industries named P. Damdin had come to a meeting and remained behind to see the factory. I am sure they all must have known I had no money since the company paid my expenses for my stay in Italy. The meeting lasted for five days, and I spent two days at their very large factory where I learned about its method of processing cashmere, in which the strands of hair were carefully separated as you could generally observe in all textile factories. Nevertheless, this particular factory left a deep impression on me.

On returning to Mongolia, there was a lot to follow up on. In 1974, with the aid of the United Nations, the construction of a trial cashmere and camel's wool factory was started, which had one machine for separating the strands of hair and another for weaving. Our friends were most supportive. The United Nations would only help if our factory was called an experimental laboratory, so we had a so-called experimental lab. Fifty tons of cashmere were processed annually, and so we thought we were doing quite well. By 1977, we were doing even better. I was a member of the Great Khural and wished to attend an international Parliamentary meeting in Australia, so I asked why I could not go to this meeting. To get there, I would have to go through Japan, so I demanded permission for this trip. I wanted to show my wife Japan, but in 1977 it was hard to arrange such a thing. Nevertheless, I went to leader Yu. Tsedenbal and told him that I intended to go to see Japan's cashmere industry, which was of great importance to us since we could not process cashmere that well. I also told him that I wanted to take my wife. Yu. Tsedenbal was a very humane leader and told me that, of course, my wife should go. I made it clear to him that I would pay for my wife out of my own pocket and that only my expenses would be charged to the government.

Actually, I was the first Minister to go to Japan with his wife. She came with me to the embassy in Tokyo and then on to Australia for seven days.

There were one hundred and sixty million sheep in Australia and only one meat kombinat, which I visited. We had fourteen million sheep in Mongolia. I told Japan's sitting ambassador that I only wanted to see the cashmere factories, so I went on to Osaka where there were three or four. Thus, I saw cashmere processed in both Japan and Italy.

Now my third goal was to visit England to observe British methods. At that time, doctors and teachers went on cultural exchanges and conferences to England. I dealt with our Ministry of Foreign Relations to set up a cultural conference and go to England, but I was told: "Don't you understand? Haven't the rules been made clear about industrial specialists going to cultural conferences? The answer is no!" I made clear that I was the Minister of Light and Food Industries and that I was making a request to visit industry, not the theatre. After waiting to see if I could go, I was finally sent and took with me one of the workers from the Ministry of Culture. I visited a one hundred and thirty year old English cashmere company called "Dawson." So I had seen cashmere industries in Italy, Japan and England.

At this very time, our government had entered into discussions with the government of Japan about receiving our seventeen million American dollars in reparations. I thought that with such money we could build an industry! But every ministry had such a plan in mind. No one had ever heard of anything like that. Presenting a bid was standard procedure, but no one was knowledgeable enough to award the money to a particular party. I was trying to build up an industry and had seen how money was used experimentally in industry. I also wondered if I could get some financial backing from Japan. So I took two suitcases full of samples from the experimental lab along with two men, one of whom was Yondonjamts, now the Director of the "Gobi" factory, and we went to all the industries. At that time, Yondonjamts worked in the Ministry. I went with the two men and the two suitcases to call on members of the State Political Bureau, and we proposed building the industry with some of the seventeen million dollars from the reparations.

YuK: Had it been decided what kind of factory would be built with this money?

PD: It had not been decided although there were several proposals. There was a plan from the Construction Ministry for cement and glass factories and a project from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, which I didn't know much about. The Ministry of Agriculture had a very interesting project in which each herding family should be given enough silk for two or three *deels*, and *sum* and *negdel* leaders should be given tires for their YA3-469 motorcycles since tires were very scarce. The products from the Soviet tire industry were poorly made, so there was a two to three year plan to manufacture spare tires. Strange

as this proposal seemed, the plan to produce the YA3-469 motorcycle tires was close to being realized. Two or three silk *deels* per family was, however, quite a lot. At the time, there were more than two hundred thousand herding families. All the proposals were useful. I knew some of the leaders supported some of the manageable plans and some said reluctantly; "If your raw cashmere earns foreign currency, there is no need to make a finished product!" Finally I talked with leader Yu. Tsedenbal and told him about our product, which he strongly supported and said that he would speak to the national political bureau about a decision and that I should be prepared. A week later, I was summoned to a short meeting with the Politburo.

It was said there: "There are questions from these ten or so projects which must be decided quickly or no answer can be given to the Japanese. You are acquainted with P. Damdin and his future plan to build a factory for camel wool and goat cashmere. The camels and goats produce wool and cashmere every year. Now, make a quick decision on this factory!" No one said anything to the leader, so it was decided. Though I had been worried that our plan would fail, we were supported. I was overjoyed because the factory would be built and within three years it was. No factories were built within this time period, and it generally took five to six years to set up a factory. In 1979, I became the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP and supported this issue strongly. The builders organized well in spite of the heavy demands on them, and the factory was finished within a short period. Then good relations with Japan and specialists developed. In the 1970s, we could hardly talk to the Japanese, much less do business with them. Now we can meet with the Japanese people. Three years ago I visited Japan, and I talked with those at the embassy about how hard it had been in the past and how the friendship between Japan and Mongolia had grown, especially regarding matters of business and trade. Such is the story of the "Gobi" kombinat.

In the first year, this Kombinat processed twelve hundred tons of cashmere and two hundred tons of wool. All of this has grown, and the Kombinat is twenty years old. Later on today, I have an interview for the film.

And here is a story to tell. The engineers at the "Gobi" kombinat studied in Japan and in the 1930s our specialists were trained in Germany. However, they were considered "counter-revolutionaries" and were arrested and sent to prison. Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, they were not prepared in the capitalist countries. I figured out how to handle this problem and spoke with the Japanese ambassador Akiyama.

YuK: During that time I was in Ulaan Baatar.

PD: Really? I spoke to Mr. Akiyama and said: "Now the industry has begun to be built, but it is difficult for the engineers trying to master their profession

and build an industry. We need to better prepare our engineers! Please help us because we have no money. Our engineers constructed this industry without considering expenses!" Mr. Akiyama and I knew each other quite well, and he asked me: "How many people have to be trained?" Since I had done the accounts, I thought twenty-four people had to be trained. Akiyama said: "It will be impossible for the Japanese government to pay for that many people." I urged him to please try to talk with his government. Since I went to Tokyo a lot, I talked with one of the ministers who confessed that this plan would probably not work because of the high cost of sending twenty-four people to college for five years. Thus I was asked to reduce the number, and I did by suggesting sending only twelve people. Akiyama told me that though he understood how much I wanted to train specialists, the Financial Ministry would never grant those funds. So, finally two people went to Japan to be trained, and they were paid for by the Japanese. Gankhuyag and Jigjid, who worked at the Ministry of Foreign Trade, went to Japan to study and how they were sent there is an interesting story. We wanted to send two second-year students — one from the Polytechnic Institute (now the Mongolian University of Science and Technology) and the other from the Mongolian State University. So the Japanese Embassy and I chose two people. The word got around that people were being sent to study in Japan, so my Minister friends would call and ask me to send their children or their brothers. I told them, however, that I would send no one from Ulaan Baatar, and I told my personnel director to select a person whose parents were herders or who was a herder himself. Those chosen came from Arkhangai and Dorngov. The children of a teacher or a pediatrician or a minister would have followed in their parents' professions or would have become engineers. Thirty-two people took the test, and four of them were sent on to the Japanese embassy for another test, which both Gankhuyag and Jigjid passed. However, a problem arose because the regulations prohibited people from studying in a capitalist country unless permission had been granted by the CC/MPRP, which first approved the program and then selected the participants. Since I had never received the necessary permission regarding the number of students sent to Japan, I could have had trouble enabling those two selected to go. The CC/MPRP demanded to know who had given the permission for these students to study in Japan, since without it no passports could be issued. And didn't the lessons begin in Japan in April? This gave the selected two students only three or four months to prepare themselves in the language before leaving for Japan in three months. When my Deputy Minister raised the issue, he was told that the CC did not grant permission for young people to study in capitalist countries and that he had better appeal to Yu. Tsedenbal himself if he wanted permission.

Tsedenbal was a good man and a good leader. I told him that we had started to build up the cashmere industry, which would go into operation within three years and that an engineer had been working on the whole plan for at least five years. I also said that I needed his support from the Politburo and that just because somebody held a grudge students would not be allowed to go abroad, and several years would be lost. I did not want to lose two years, and I wanted to send the students. The issue of these two young people was introduced to the CC/MPRP, which had to make a decision. The leader Tsedenbal heard all of this and answered: "The CC/MPRP is not giving permission and how can you on your own initiative decide on this issue of studying in a capitalist country? Don't you know the regulations?" I told him that I knew the regulations, and he told me that I had to follow them. I then said to him:" Ah-leader! If I had followed the rules, no permission would have been given. I have talked to the people in Japan about the costs of such study, and we will have no expenses. We have selected the students, and they must be sent, so please give us permission to do so. I will take the consequences for what I have done." Then I gave him a proposal which stated that "P. Damdin, the Minister of the Light and Food Industry, is taking the initiative to speak about the CC/MPRP's denial of permission for students to study in a capitalist country. I take full responsibility for not following the rules, and you can admonish me. Please, however, grant permission to send these two young people to study in Japan." If this proposal had not been presented to the CC/MPRP, there would have been further delay. Tsedenbal made a decision the next morning and ignored the first part of my letter and signed the second part, with some comments for me. So for the first time, the issue of the students studying in Japan was resolved. "Mr. Smarty Pants" said that "the moment he got elected that he would send students abroad," and by 1978 this was how people did go abroad. Now, many people study in Japan, which was difficult at first. I talked to the two youths at my Ministry and told then what an honor it was to study in Japan and that if they did well other young people would follow. If they got into trouble, however, it would be difficult for others to study in Japan.

There is an interesting story about working with the Japanese people in Mongolia whom I had come to know from visiting the factory site. There was no office and a nearby building had been demolished, so the administrative leader sat in a wagon. At the time, Yondonjamts was the leader of the kombinat, and he generally worked well with the Japanese. They followed a blueprint, which they went over with me. There was a big sign posted with the four principles guiding the Mongolian and Japanese workers, which read: (1) use tools carefully and do not lose them (2) wear work clothes (3) do not be

late and (4) do good work in the assigned job. These points were needed because Mongolians were often late, were careless with the tools or broke the equipment, were late to work or slept on the job. I told the leader that such instructions were good for our workers. However, the person I mentioned this to seemed a bit concerned and told me to read them again. Then I noticed that the orders were in both Mongolian and Japanese. But I answered that it was understood that a Japanese person did not lag behind in his work, nor was he going to abandon his equipment, nor wear poor clothes or sleep on the job. These were really our deficiencies. There was lots of laughter. Here is one of my stories. In the 1970s, a person went to the kombinat building where there was a deadline to complete the construction of a service area, which the foreigners were helping to build. Specialists from Germany, the Czech Republic, and Russia came to live, eat, and drink there. I was the Deputy Minister then, and I said that "the specialists from Japan were good workers, but took advantage of the Ministry for their accommodations!" The Ministry of Public Economics, the Ministry of Finance, and the Planning Commission were important places to contact since they offered the Japanese specialists accommodations and food. Since this was the first time Japanese professionals had come to do work in Mongolia, housing and transporting them became difficult issues. In addition, the Ministry's permission was needed for their visas, and they had to be taken from place to place.

O. Nyamaa was in charge of consumer affairs and wished to introduce these problems to a meeting at the Council of Ministers where I asked how the Japanese specialists who would be coming to work on the industrial building would be accommodated and taken care of. Mr. J. Batmunkh was the leader of the Council of Ministers and replied that there was no place willing to take care of them. Finally our Ministry was given permission to take care of these foreign specialists. If we were not responsible, who would be? So, they came, and every day demanded baths, food, and drink. They even asked to have their bed linen changed daily.

Since we were responsible, they asked us to find them apartments, but where could I find a building for eighty people? But it was my responsibility, as the Minister told me, to find them housing though in reality seventy or eighty people were not here all at once and at one time there were only about five. A special building was set up for the ten people working on construction of a forty-eight unit building going up alongside our Ministry, which was under the administrative authority of the city. I had spoken about taking measures for a large number of people. Two directives came out of this meeting: (1) I would transfer the housing of the forty-eight families to the Ministry of Light and Food Industries. (2) The work of the "Gobi" kombinat

should be completed and service for the Japanese specialists should be taken care of by the Ministry of Light and Food Industries. I gave these directives to the government, and the apartment building came under my authority.

This building had four entrances, and each room had new furniture and a sufficiently large refrigerator paid for by my Ministry. Two of these entrances admitted workers from the Ministry, and the other two were for the Japanese. When the kombinat was built, they would leave, and Ministry workers would replace them. So, not more than several meters beyond the Ministry, there was good housing. In this way, the Ministry workers could help the Japanese carry out their professional work.

Do you have any questions?

YuK: Tomorrow, can we go to the factory which you built when you were a Minister?

PD: It is difficult for me to walk outside, but Lkhagvasüren can show you.

IL: Fine, but which industries should I show?

PD: We will see the skin and hide industry, the boot industry, the leather goods industry, the sheepskin leather industry, the center for skin and hide research, the skin and hide repair or renovation factory, the knitting industry, the spinning industry, the wool washing factory, and the raw cotton industry, all of which make up the light industries.

Those that make up the food industries which we will see include the "Ogooj" Company, the bread and confection industry, the meat kombinat, the flour industry, and the sweets and cake industry.

There is no one left in these factories from when I was in the Ministry, and only new young people work there. We don't know the issues now, and the young people know almost nothing about where and how these industries were built, though they do know about the bars. I will get along well with the new Minister in the Ministry of Trade and will show him how over several years these industries were built. Now things are very bad. We were involved in these factories in good times. Now everything is regrettable and rather colorless and goes along anemically. In the old days, we Mongolians had many visitors to our industries, and now a worker crosses the street to avoid the one or two damaged buildings that are for rent. The Chinese, for the most part, are the renters.

I hope that I have been able to answer your questions.

YuK: You have, and many thanks for these good accounts.

Notes

1) A *Khadag* is a ceremonial scarf. For its uses, see Sechin Jagchid and Paul Hyer,

Mongolia's Culture and Society (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), pp. 85-86 and 132.

2) Buryats had their own republic of Buryatia within the USSR east of Lake Baikal. A minority lived within Mongolia.
3) On the door of his house was a note that a Japanese researcher wanted to meet him, and Damdin says:, "If I did not meet you, Lkhagvasüren would come again and again until I met you.