

# THE ORAL HISTORY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY MONGOLIA



## Nadmid

### Basic information

Interviewee ID: 990160  
Name: Nadmid  
Parent's name: Jamsran  
Ovog: Holboo het  
Sex: f  
Year of Birth: 1936  
Ethnicity: Zahchin

### Additional Information

Education: none  
Notes on education:  
Work: [blank]  
Belief: Buddhist  
Born in: Manhan sum, Hovd aimag  
Lives in: Songinohairhan sum (or part of UB), Ulaanbaatar aimag  
Mother's profession: herder  
Father's profession: herder

### Themes for this interview are:

(Please click on a theme to see more interviews on that topic)  
**childhood; travel; democracy; environment; funerals;**

**Alternative keywords suggested by readers for this interview are:** (Please click on a keyword to see more interviews, if any, on that topic)

**hunger strike; democratization; social problems; horse relay; relay station; children's upbringing; city life; techniques and technology; democracy; nature and environment; funeral rituals;**

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### Translation:

*Sarantsetseg* -  
How are you?

*Nadmid* -  
Fine, how are you?

*Sarantsetseg* -  
Let's continue our interview.

*Nadmid* -  
Yes.

*Sarantsetseg* -  
Would you please recall your childhood? How did your childhood differ from that of other children? In what ways was the relationship between parents and children different compared to today?

*Nadmid* -  
I remember a lot of things of my childhood. I used to be afraid of cars and run away from them. Our autumn pasture was close to a road. When I was little and my parents were still both alive, they operated a horse relay service. We had a lot of horses, so we would supply officials with relay horses. There were cars going back and forth, sometimes one of those big black cars. Our father was doing the relay-service. I was little and when I went to fetch water sometimes I would encounter a car. I would hear the sound, it was a terribly fat black car going toward Botgony Havtsal. I was afraid of it, so I would run away and hide behind the bushes until it had passed. I was that wild, you know.

*Sarantsetseg* -  
You were very little then, right?

*Nadmid* -  
Very little. Ten...I was maybe eight or nine, or nine, ten, something like that. I remember that my father was operating the service and that those people were really fussy about the horses. Those officials were very, how to put it, they were very arrogant and they would scold us for giving them bad horses, bad mares. It was a relay service, but I don't know whether they charged by 100km or by 70 or 80 km. There were no cars, cars were rare then, so officials would travel like that. One person would take a horse and one would go as ulaach. He would accompany the other for many kilometers, then make him dismount and bring the horse back. They would bring back the relay horses. That's what I remember, that I was afraid of cars (laughs). I was afraid of that big black car that I saw once in a while and I would hide (laughs). I remember that, how strange. Today children aren't afraid of cars anymore, it looks like they are not afraid at all. They run in between lots of cars, run in front of them and come out behind them. Technology has developed a lot, there are many wonderful things now. Why should we talk bad about our country? Of course there are many insufficiencies, but also plenty of nice things. So I...

*Sarantsetseg* -  
How was the relationship between parents and children when you were a child and how is it today?

*Nadmid* -  
At that time, the relationship between parents and children was all about looking well after the livestock. Today children don't have livestock anymore, they have running water, heating, and the children in those readymade houses are very lazy and fussy. They don't know what shyness and embarrassment are anymore. They are very difficult and I think that they are not educated very well. I regret that very much. I always worry about what kind of people my grandchildren are going to become. The influence of the environment is very bad, there are lots of films and the children watch films and plays that don't match their age. I think this has a negative impact on them. They don't feel shyness or embarrassment anymore, some still respect and love the elders and their parents, but they have become few. I think that the custom of children showing concern and respect for the elders is becoming weaker. I am very upset about that. I would like my grandchildren to learn from my experiences, but those who listen and understand are few. You can see it. It looks like they are wondering what nonsense their old grandmother is talking about.

*Sarantsetseg* -  
Was your childhood different from that of other children of that time?

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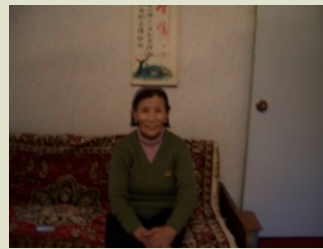
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*Nadmid -*

What difference shall I talk about? Life was very different, very difficult then. I used to walk barefoot...

*Sarantsetseg -*

Did your childhood differ from those who were children at that time too?

*Nadmid -*

How different could it have been? We were all the same. Children at that time were generally all shy, timid and modest. We were very modest, nice. We obeyed our parents and we were very educated. For example, we weren't allowed to take from the food offered to guests. Today children don't care. My mother taught me not to take anything in front of other people as a sign of respect and concern for them.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Parents sent their children to school in the sum center, while they remained in the countryside with the livestock. Some children lived with other families and some lived in the dormitories. I imagine that parents whose children stayed in the dormitory worried quite a lot?

*Nadmid -*

Well, of course they worried. My younger sister used to tell me that it was terribly difficult. She lived with a family when she went to school and those people's life was very difficult. Probably they had worries and difficulties. They should have given her enough food because they had many animals. But my sister said that they made her fetch the water and that they didn't give her enough to eat. She used to talk about these things, poor thing. She had a shabby sheepskin deel with drill on the outside and the skin on the inside. She had to carry water and collect dung for the household she lived in. At that time she was in 1st grade, 7, 8 or 9 years old. She spilt water over her hips carrying it and when she came home her hips were frozen. My mother said that they were far relatives of ours, but nevertheless they didn't give her enough food and they didn't have any blankets or mats but made her sleep under her sheepskin deel. Probably they somehow made a bedding with sheep- and goatskins. In the countryside we would sleep outside next to the flock of sheep. We used to put a goat- or sheepskin on the ground, cover ourselves with our deels and use something to put our heads on. We didn't mind it, that was how we adapted to the environment. It was really interesting. My little sister didn't talk about it very often but it was a terrifying story. She told us that she was always hungry and homesick, that it was terrible. And somehow she finished 4th grade, poor thing. The boy of that family mistreated her. In spring when it got warmer they would sleep outside and he used to pee on her head. The family had waited for a child for a long time and that's why they raised him the wrong way. They never forbade him anything, they never got angry with him and never scolded him. And that's how he peed on her head. He was a really bad and spoilt child. It was the parents' fault, you know. There are many strange things. As for our children, we didn't have to worry much about them. We gave them some food, but children in the dormitory had everything they needed. They used to fight with the cookies that they were given for their tea. They were round cookies. They said that they were fed up with them, that they couldn't eat them anymore, so they gathered them and used them to fight. They were spoilt, life was that good for some time. My children lived well in the dormitory, they were never hungry or thirsty. The only thing they missed were the homemade boortsog, aaruul and huruud. For the rest everything was fine.

*Sarantsetseg -*

When did you go to the city for the first time?

*Nadmid -*

I went to the city a long time ago. My sisters live in Bornuur and I think I went when I wanted to visit them. That was a long time ago, which year was it again? How old is the child that was born in the year of the rooster now? Thirty something, almost forty, let's count. Which year was it? I learned to count the years in the old uncultured way. I forgot. So thirty seven is a rooster...rooster, dog, pig, rat, ox, 37, 38, 39, 40, almost forty years, forty years have passed since then. I was pregnant and holding another child. That was who, Byamasüren, and the baby in my belly was Lhagvasüren. He was born in the year of the pig, rooster, dog, rooster, dog, pig... (thinks). I was pregnant with Lhagvasüren when Byamasüren was three. I was seven or eight months pregnant, but I was young so I didn't get tired. I went by car, not by plane. I went by car and I wanted to visit my sisters. Thinking about them I couldn't sleep at night and when I told my husband he said I should visit them. I wanted to visit my sisters in Bornuur, Daariimaa and Tsevelmaa. My husband was working in the sum center as personnel officer. He had been doing that for two, three years. He stayed. Our eldest, Pürevsüren, was in 6th grade then. He left before me, my husband's brother-in-law had taken him in his car. He went to the city right after school finished, and I followed him with one child in my arms and another in my belly. My main purpose was to visit my sisters. Also my elder brother lived there, Gonchigjav, who had divorced his wife and married another woman. He had two sons. I went to see them, and they lived in '5'. what was it again? Some yellow buildings that belonged to a factory, but I forgot the number of the building. My sister-in-law worked in the spinning department in the factory, my brother's wife. I stayed with them and my brother called my sisters. Today even children at the market and old people carry telephones. Anyways, he called my sisters and said that their elder sister had come from the countryside, that I was about to visit them with a little child, that he would send me off on a bus and that they should pick me up. My younger sister's name is Daariimaa, so my brother put me on a big bus, I had a child in my arms and a huge belly. And there was nobody to accompany me, because nobody had time (laughs). So I arrived in Bornuur. It was really far, it was maybe 100 or more than 100km from my brother's place to Bornuur. My brother had told my sister to meet me at the 72. I got off and my sister was standing there waiting for me. Her husband had an official car at his disposal, there was nobody who had a private car then, private cars were as rare as stars during daytime. He was an agricultural engineer, a technician, my sister's husband. The two of them came to meet me with that official car, they picked me up and then we went to Bornuur. In the evening I felt so sick, I was carsick, so they fetched some meat and prepared a har shöl for me. I was sick the whole night, it was strange. I felt exhausted and stayed with my sisters for a few days. My elder sister Tsevelmaa was working in a kindergarten and my younger sister was the manager of the public bath. Poor things, that's how they lived doing their work. The place was very beautiful, very beautiful. I went there in summer and everything was green in Bornuur, very beautiful. This is how I visited my sisters for a few days. Then we went to the city to organize a celebration for Byambasüren. We went there several times by plane for the children's weddings. In which year was Pürevsüren born? (thinks). I think he was only 19, 20 when Byambasüren got married. How did my husband and I go to his wedding? Yes, by plane. Actually no, my husband sent me by plane and he went with a group of people, livestock and meat. Enhtuya came, too, she had been making animal products since she was a child. So we went to our son's wedding with plenty of animals and food. We went to the ceremony in the Wedding Palace and then we went back. Well, it was nice. My mother-in-law used to say that in this place there are as many good as bad things and she was right. There are many good things and there are many bad things. There are theft, robberies, alcoholism, I think alcoholism is the worst, I detest it and I fear it. I hope that these children will drink only a little, I always tell my grandchildren not to drink.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Is there anything in the city that you particularly like?

*Nadmid -*

Of course there is. Thanks to my children, for some years I lived in a civilized building with heating in the city, for about ten years, it was really nice. Unfortunately due to air pollution I get tired and I lack air, but except for that everything is available and pleasant. But I wonder what will happen in the future to the children who grow up with everything already there, who haven't seen difficulties and hardships. I will be difficult for them when they encounter all sorts of things in life.

*Sarantsetseg -*

What do you think is the most difficult aspect of life in the city?

*Nadmid -*

The difficult things in the city are pollution, the quantity of rubbish and alcoholism. These things are really terrifying. Everything else is fine, nice. There are many nice things. The country is developing a lot. I can't remember which year it was, but once when we arrived by plane once in while you could see someone with a mobile phone. Today everybody has one, my children, my grandchildren, they even have two or three, it's like a toy. That's really wonderful. But sometimes it seems that they are using it in the wrong way and it is also really expensive. Some tell me to give them 'units' (laughs). At the very least it makes people lose money, because it is so expensive. That's what is behind the luxury.

*Sarantsetseg -*

What was the most wonderful new technology in the socialist period? Was it amazing to board the plane or listen to the radio?

*Nadmid -*

Well, of course it was. Since my husband was working, we got a radio quite early, when we were in the countryside. We got a radio thanks to my husband's work, it was a big square radio, you wouldn't know, now they don't exist anymore. It was square and big like a brick, terribly heavy, who knows what it was made of. It had two or three heavy square batteries, a yellow radio with batteries. I don't know where it came from, maybe it was Russian. Well, we had such a yellow radio. When we got the radio, we had three or four children, but I can't remember the year. I forgot, but I think it was in the 1960s. My life was nice, there weren't any disappointments. I had several children...my husband is very modest and quiet and always accepts criticisms. The two of us never fought or quarreled. When I look at young people

today and young married couples, they seem to be very abusive, to fight and to indulge in pleasures. That's what I think. They don't have much work to do, that's why they have time for such things. I didn't have time for these things. I had many children, ten children and I am proud that I brought them up with my own milk. My children work and live just like everybody else, not worse. One or two are prone to drinking and I fight with them. I say 'As long as I am still here I am not afraid of you! Stop drinking! Don't bother your wife and children! Don't scare your children! Live a quiet life. I have lived with your father for over forty years, have you ever seen us fight? What strange people you are, using bad language in front of your children.' I hope that they will have a peaceful life and love each other. It is very strange nowadays, people insult each other and they have become suspicious of each other.

*Sarantsetseg* -

How was your life at the time of the democratic movement? How has it influenced your life?

*Nadmid* -

Well, it had a positive impact. Maybe it started with privatization or maybe with democracy? Anyways, for some time, maybe for two years, consumer goods had become really scarce. It was terrible. The population in the city increased, there were long queues and people trampled over each other. It was shown on TV and people talked about it. Now (thinks) everything is plentiful and nice, there are things to be proud of, there is nothing we have to search for. The only thing that is lacking is money. There are no jobs and young people get often involved in crime because they are unemployed. It's also because parents don't control them very well, because of their attitude toward their children. In the olden times children were so nice. Because there was no outside influence and they lived in poverty, they were very modest and obedient. They always listened to their parents, they were very educated.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Has there been anything unpleasant in your life since the advent of democracy?

*Nadmid* -

I don't know. Maybe I don't comprehend. Well, everything is free nowadays. I see it from the positive side, you know.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Did democracy have a different impact depending on people's gender?

*Nadmid* -

I don't think so, but I might not have understood. I don't think so.

*Sarantsetseg* -

What were you doing during the time of the democratic movement? Were you at home?

*Nadmid* -

Yes, I was home. I think we lived in the sum centre then. My husband... I wonder what my husband was doing then...

*Sarantsetseg* -

Did anyone among your family members participate in the demonstrations of the democratic movement?

*Nadmid* -

The first one who participated was Baasansüren. He participated in the hunger strike, secretly without telling his parents. When it became ugly it was broadcast on TV and on the radio. We didn't have a TV set, but we had a radio, and that's how we discovered that our son had gone to Hovd to participate in the hunger strike. Three young people were lying there, one or two got sick and then they quit, so it was said. I don't remember well. Baasansüren was lying there, if you ask him he will tell you with whom he was there. It was the first hunger strike and our boy was there to struggle. After that he didn't manage to pick himself up again. He had been a very bright child, but he started to drink. Then he went to Korea and there he acted stupidly and came back. He took care of his father-in-law, who had adopted a daughter from one of his relatives, Tsevelmaa egch. They had only one adopted daughter and she became our daughter-in-law. Her name is Chimdee, our Baasansüren's wife. He came back from Korea and didn't leave again under the pretext of having to take care of his father-in-law. Also Chimdee has been in Korea for many years, she never complains about her health, that makes us very happy. Chimdee is very industrious and bright. She lived in Korea for many years and thanks to her we got a car. And the children...he has five children, our Baasansüren. One of them studies in Korea, at a really expensive school. I told them that it is not necessary, that they don't know their own limits, but now it's too late anyways. Another son has finished school and they want to sent him abroad. I hope that it works out, what else could I do.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Was it possible for ordinary people to go abroad or to communicate with foreigners during the socialist period?

*Nadmid* -

My husband was a good worker and he had contact with foreign tourists. They came from within the country and from abroad to learn from people's experiences here and because they were interested in the place. Sometimes there were foreigners. Because my husband was brigade leader he had contact with them. One foreigner, I can't remember where he came from, gave my husband a gift. On the one side there was a cute ax and on the other a hammer. Was he from Germany? Yes, he was from Germany and my husband made him ride horses and camels. I think that my husband was among the good workers of the brigade. Quite a lot of people went to abroad once as tourists. He has also been sent quite often to the city for various things and he was sent to a resort.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Has anybody in your family been abroad?

*Nadmid* -

Do you mean my children?

*Sarantsetseg* -

Your husband or your children.

*Nadmid* -

My husband went to Russia as a tourist, but there is no one in my family who studied there.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Were there any other foreigners besides Russians in Mongolia? How many foreigners besides Russians used to visit or reside in Mongolia?

*Nadmid* -

There were plenty of Chinese in Hovd, you know. There were plenty of them. Even our cooperative used to hire them as farmers, especially to plant vegetables, because they knew how to do it.

*Sarantsetseg* -

How did Mongolians interact with the foreigners?

*Nadmid* -

Well, I don't really know. What do you mean by that?

*Sarantsetseg* -

Were they friendly with each other?

*Nadmid* -

Relations were really harmonious and friendly, but then the Chinese became our ruin, they exaggerated. Friendly people were friendly, but China is a place with many million people. Some of them are good people and some of them are bad. I heard that many Chinese workers come here, that there are Chinese companies. I wonder whether this is a good thing or not.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Do you now whether during the socialist period there were any policies aiming at giving support to families.

*Nadmid* -

I don't know.

*Sarantsetseg* -

How has family life changed today? Are husbands and wives, families, different from how they were when you were young?

*Nadmid -*

I suppose there was support for families. Anyways, if everybody works things are fine. People who don't work and are lazy, their lives are not so good. If people live in harmony and do their work, any work, everybody can live well. If they do any job. No job is bad.

*Sarantsetseg -*

How has the environment changed in Hovd?

*Nadmid -*

It had changed terribly. I have visited my homeland for three years in a row, including last year, and the place has become terribly harsh. There used to be green grass, but now there is only black earth, you now. And the water...

*Sarantsetseg -*

Have the names of places, lakes and rivers changed?

*Nadmid -*

The names remained the same. But water is becoming scarce and the plants have died. On our summer pasture there used to be a beautiful spring called Hôh Degtiin Spring. Water used to flow, to gush up from the spring and there were always groups of two, three families settling nearby. There was also a shelter and families with sheep used to spend the summer there. However, when I visited the place last year, there was nobody there. I asked people and I was told that the spring has dried up and that families don't settle there anymore because it doesn't have any water anymore. But people there don't pay much attention to it. The water used to flow from the spring down a slope, where it branched and flowed into the river. There also used to be the water of the Shar Spring, and it isn't there anymore, it has all dried up. The environment has become very hostile. People observe it and according to what they say the environment and the vegetation have changed a lot. Nature has become very harsh.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Are there any gold mines?

*Nadmid -*

No, we have coal but we don't have gold. That is to say maybe there is but it still hasn't been discovered. Now they say that they can see through the ground and find it.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Has anything changed for the better?

*Nadmid -*

Whether anything has changed for the better? I don't know.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Are there any beautiful places, which have been put under protection and preserved?

*Nadmid -*

There doesn't seem to be anything positive, you know. There is a beautiful large river called Tôgrög, which flows southwards past the sum center. In the Ayur Bend, which was named after a person who must have been a very industrious and worthy person I think, Luvsan baatar used to grow vegetables...soy beans, fruit, small apples. I didn't go but that's what people say. Luvsan baatar had allegedly taken over that bend, there was plenty of water for him to water his plants and he protected the place with a net. Later it stopped raining and he used water from the river to water the plants. Previously our Manhan Sum did have neither an irrigation system nor electricity. Then they put lights there, it has become a really beautiful field. Next to it there is the beautiful Tôgrög River with crystal clear water. He mastered the bend and uses water from the river. There are beautiful trees and plants, he grows soy and vegetables. He is an incredibly industrious man, now he is over 80. Of course, as a Hero of Labour he is different from other people and he really shows his heroic nature.

*Sarantsetseg -*

How did industrialization take place in Mongolia? What factories operated in Mongolia when you went to the city? Is there anybody among your children who worked in a factory?

*Nadmid -*

My two youngest daughters used to work in a sewing factory, Enhtuya and Mönhtuya.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Did they go to a TMS or did they start to work in the factory right after having finished 10th grade?

*Nadmid -*

After 10th grade they were self-employed and lived here. But then they became unemployed, so they tried hard to find something else. An acquaintance got them a job there, so they took it and so they have been sewing.

*Sarantsetseg -*

How much did they earn? Was it enough to live?

*Nadmid -*

The wage was decent, it really was quite a bit. But maybe it seemed much just because they had been living in the countryside without any wage, you know.

*Sarantsetseg -*

So they got the job through an acquaintance?

*Nadmid -*

Yes, otherwise they wouldn't have found a job. If you don't know people you don't know a place.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Were they satisfied with working in a factory?

*Nadmid -*

Well, of course. But they didn't earn that much, because they were paid by what they had sewed.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Did they get a promotion while they were working at the factory?

*Nadmid -*

No, they didn't. They didn't work there for a long time. But later our daughter who lives now in the Czech Republic attended some tailoring course and for a while she was self-employed. Poor thing, she tried to sew. Then she decided to go to the Czech Republic and after two, three years of trying she managed to go. She is working in a big sewing factory there, too. When the global crisis came her wage was cut and they were saying that they would send away the Mongolians. I guess it is better now. She has been working for several years and she said that they have extended her visa. I hope that she will continue working for another few years, it's a place where she earns money.

*Sarantsetseg -*

When you worked in the sum center, what kind of public activities did you participate in addition to your job?

*Nadmid -*

When I worked in the sum center. Well, then...

*Sarantsetseg -*

Do you remember what kinds of activities were organized during the holidays?

*Nadmid -*

Well, we were sent to resorts.

*Sarantsetseg -*

Were there day-long workshops, lectures or seminars?

*Nadmid -*

I don't think that there were monthly day-long workshops. I supposed they organized them in the brigade centers once per quarter.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Were there many movies and plays at that time?

*Nadmid* -

Yes, there were. There...

*Sarantsetseg* -

Foreign or Mongolian ones?

*Nadmid* -

Mongolian.

*Sarantsetseg* -

What do you think was the best movie at that time?

*Nadmid* -

I have forgotten all that. But I haven't forgotten when famous people came to perform. There were singers who used to perform in big theaters in Ulaanbaatar. Tümememberel, she passed away a long time ago, poor thing. Then there was Tümememberel Urtnasan, she is still alive. She sang urtyн duu and received the title of 'Distinguished Singer' very early, when she was 25. Our Luvsan darga was a very active person and he made a lot of famous singers come to perform for our people, who were very happy about it. Let me think, then there was Chuluun, three or four people came. Chuluun was a man, I don't whether he is still alive or not. Tümememberel used to come, and Urtnasan. Yes, a few 'Distinguished Singers' came to perform. I will never forget that. Urtnasan was a very beautiful tall young girl with white skin. She sang so beautifully.

*Sarantsetseg* -

How much did such a performance cost?

*Nadmid* -

Oh, it wasn't so expensive. But probably they got some extra money in addition to their normal salaries.

*Sarantsetseg* -

All right. Mongolian people have burial customs in order to remember dead family members. In the past, for example, the body would be left in the open air. Would you please talk about this?

*Nadmid* -

It was really sad in the olden times. In my parents' days, the dead were just left behind. They wrapped them in white cloth and left them in the open. I don't know how they disappeared, but people say that they did. After I married, my mother-in-law...how many years later was it? Our Byambasüren had already been born, he was two years old. When my mother-in-law became old she got a liver disease and she died of it, poor thing. In the city... well, people are stupid and the doctors in the countryside they don't know very well. And people in the countryside they never go to see a doctor. They live like that and let their health conditions deteriorate, you know. My mother-in-law never thought about her health, either. At that time people thought only about their livestock. It was a difficult environment, in which people didn't think about health care. My mother-in-law had liver cancer and she died of it, poor thing. She came here to stay with her son Norov and she was already very weak. He had her examined in hospital and they said that there was nothing they could do. The cancer had progressed to the final stage and there was no cure. She spent the winter with us and in spring my husband's elder sister came with her husband to take her back. They came from the city by plane and they went back by plane, the tickets were rather cheap at that time, because money was worth a lot. It was probably two three hundred, so my brother-in-law and my husband brought her back. Poor mother. My in-laws had always been really nice to me and because she had been living with us all the time in the end they brought her back to us. At that time we lived in the sum center. When she was about to die her face looked terrible. She died ten days after she had come to us. What care can one give in ten days? She died and she was the first one, who was buried in a box, maybe as a sign of respect. North of our brigade center there was a burial place called 'Alag Tolgoi', or maybe it was 'Har Tolgoi'. That's how they brought her away. I was with Byambasüren, who is now twenty years old. I was told to take the child and to go to another family. I went to my elder brother, who was working as the brigade leader, while my husband was working as an accountant. I was told to take the child and to go there and thus I went to my brother's. My mother-in-law died within ten days. I remember how they put her in a box and carried her away. I think that since then people are buried in boxes. Many years have passed since then, almost forty years I think.

*Sarantsetseg* -

At that time, you already had a public cemetery, right?

*Nadmid* -

Yes, we had such a place. Some people even erected gravestones with the name and the date of birth, burying the deceased with great respect. They would put the deceased in a box, bring them to the cemetery and erect a wooden gravestone. My father-in-law, who was a year younger than my mother-in-law, died when he was 68. My mother-in-law died when she was 64, poor thing. So, 65, 66, 67, 68, my father-in-law died four, five years later, four years I guess, and he died at the age of 68. He also died when he was with us. He had a stroke. He had spent the winter with his son in the city and then he came back to ours. When he went to the city, he had lost his teeth, he was already sixty. He went to the city to get a denture. I heard that it is wrong to get false teeth if they are made carelessly. Somebody told me that if they don't fit they can have a negative impact on the nervous system. I remembered that and told father when he was about to leave for the city to get a denture. Well, he went and got them and it seems to have affected him. I don't know why I told him about it. It gave him a little hemorrhage, but he didn't tell anybody about it and hid it. His body became strange, it was a light stroke but he didn't collapse. People who didn't observe him carefully wouldn't have noticed. When he came back he had a tremor, he was in a strange condition. He stayed with us for a year, maybe a little bit less, and in March or April he went back. I guess it was March, it was still pretty cold. We lived in a building that belonged to the brigade and he went outside to go to the toilet. I was young and stupid. I didn't know about the difficulties old people face, so I didn't go with him. We had an adobe wall all around. When he went out he didn't see it and bumped into it. He fell and of course that was not good for him, so his condition deteriorated. When he came back in he said 'I am going to die'. He had grazes on his nose and here and he had lost his teeth. I was young and didn't know about old people's sufferings. He had had a light stroke and fallen on his back and of course that didn't do him any good. There were no doctors who could have examined him and treated (bariул) his head. My husband and me were busy with the livestock. We didn't have him examined by any doctor, and then his health deteriorated and he died of a stroke. He was also buried in a box, it had already become custom to bury people in boxes. After my parents-in-law, my aunt-in-law, my father-in-law's elder sister, passed away. She was eighty something. She also lived with us, Töröö knew her well. Once in a while she told me how much she suffered when she was young. I used to prepare her some tea and sit next to her. She was a little bit hard of hearing, poor thing, that's why I had to sit next to her when she wanted to talk to me. She didn't suffer much, there is a lot to the way in which we die. She didn't suffer and she didn't frighten us at all. She died when she was 83. She was a strange person, she had never had any children. She had big hands like a man and she had never given birth, like a barren animal. There are people who never have children. She didn't have children on her own, but one adopted daughter. She said that she married the wrong person. She died sitting when she was over eighty. She was my father-in-law's elder sister. We told somebody who had been a lama, and he explained that people who die sitting also have to be buried in a seated position. She was special, our Adia, how we used to call her. One morning when my husband was there, she became confused. She said something and sounded really strange. My husband got up, while I was still sleeping with the little child. He got up and sat next to her and I lit the fire. She had become confused, it seemed that her time had come. Then she improved a little, had her tea, she took it herself and ate and drank a little bit. The she said 'Help me to sit up.' We used to call her Adia. We wrapped her in something, put a back-rest behind her and made her sit. My own mother had come to stay with us then. My aunt-in-law she just sat there and without making any sound she took her last breath. Her face became white and she died. Some people make noises, but she didn't. My husband and my mother were there, and because we were many people it wasn't so frightening. All of a sudden her face became white and she left. My husband was next to her and he said 'Adia took her last breath.' There was an old lama, whom we called Ajaa. My mother went to see him. He lived quite far away from our place. He came to read the sutras, he had been a lama before, he was very old. We burnt some arts and that was it. She was buried in a box, too, in a place called Tsahiryгн Hódóó north of the sum center. So all our old people have been buried in boxes.

*Sarantsetseg* -

Was she buried in a seated position?

*Nadmid* -

No, how could we have buried her in that way? We hadn't asked anybody. Later somebody Sanjaa, who had been a lama, came and told us that she had been a very special person and that people who die sitting have to be buried in seated position, like in a refrigerator. They have to be put not in a flat thing, but into a standing kind of cradle. That's what this

old lama told us. This is how our three old people passed away.

*Sarantsetseg* -  
Are people today cremated?

*Nadmid* -  
Yes, that's what they say. Today the places where people are buried are close to the city, close to where people live. Dogs would dig up the ground and poor and lazy thieves would take the wooden boxes for firewood. People talk about terrible things like that. Thinking about all that, cremation seems to be rather easy, really.

*Sarantsetseg* -  
Thank you very much for this very interesting interviews. I wish you health and long life. Thank you very much.

*Nadmid* -  
May all your wishes become true.

*Sarantsetseg* -  
Let's finish the interview.

*Nadmid* -  
I wish that your work will be successful.

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