THE ORAL HISTORY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY MONGOLIA



Ichinhoroloo

Basic information

Interviewee ID: 990102 Name: Ichinhoroloo Parent's name: Shoovdor Ovog: Dalai gün Sex: f Year of Birth: 1956 Ethnicity: Halh

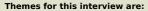
Additional Information

Education: higher Notes on education: Belief: Buddha

Born in: Bayan-Öndör sum, Övörhangai aimag

Lives in: Arvaiheer sum (or part of UB), Övörhangai aimag Mother's profession: herder

Father's profession: herder



(Please click on a theme to see more interviews on that topic) education / cultural production; work; democracy; privatization; new technologies;

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

medical profession; privatization; cultural campaigns; education; socialism; climate;

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Translation:

Ganbold

Will you please introduce yourself? Begin from where and when you were born.

I was born in 1956 in the third bag of Bayan-Öndör Sum in Övörhangai Aimag. Shoovdoryn Ichinhorloo grew up in a herder's family. My mother had six children. I finished school after the 8th grade in 1972. Then I married and had four herder's family. My mother had six children. I finished school after the 8th grade in 1972. Then I married and had four children. I have two daughters and three sons and by now nine grandchildren. As for my education, after having married and given birth to five children, I graduated from the medical secondary school in 1988 and I worked as an assistant doctor for hygiene at the Research Station for Hygiene and Infectious Diseases of Övörhangai Aimag for eighteen years. The Hygiene Station was divided into several branches, such as a health center within the public health department and so on. In the process of dividing the branches, there was a group of seven assistant doctors working for the medical center, among which an infectious disease researcher, a hygienist, and a group responsible for sodium. I worked in that group for six, seven years, as an assistant doctor for infectious disease. During that time, the name of our organization changed quite a few times and when in the end it became the Public Health Department I worked as an assistant doctor for bygiene. From 2002 to 2007 I worked as an assistant doctor in charge of vaccingtings. I was resonable for recrusting for hygiene. From 2002 to 2007, I worked as an assistant doctor in charge of vaccinations. I was resonsible for vaccinating the children aged 0 to 16 in eighteen sums in Övörhangai Aimag. In all sums, we work under the supervision of the National Research Center for Infectious Diseases in Ulaanbaatar. Each sum has a medical doctor and I was responsible for them. Put simply, I was a treasurer. On the other hand, I had to register the results, I was responsible for many things. Since I had had five children, I retired in 2007. We were seven people in our family, we had five children, and now four of them have their own families. Now we live with one son and a grandchild, so there are four of us.

Ganbold -

Where did you receive your primary education?

In Bayan-Öndör Sum. I finished school in Bayan-Öndör Sum after the 8th grade, then I married and had four children. And after that I entered medical school, graduated and worked.

Ganbold

When did you enter medical school?

Ichinhoroloo - I entered the hygiene class of the medical secondary school in 1985. It was a three-year course, and I graduated in 1988.

Ganbold -

With what specialization did you graduate?

I specialized in hygiene, that means I studied food hygiene, environment hygiene, children's hygiene and infectious diseases

Ganbold

When you compare the times when you were young and went to school with today, what are the differences and peculiarities?

Ichinhoroloo

I think there is a qualitative difference if you compare the two. When I graduated from secondary school, very few people specialized in hygiene at the medical secondary school, but they rather graduated as assistant obstetricians. I entered medical school after I had married. In this sense I think there was a qualitative difference.

By qualitative difference do you mean that it was better when you went to school or that it is better today?

It was better before, students were responsible. Today those who want to study study, and those who aren't able they just attend the classes and somehow they graduate. But I think that with regards to medical school, those who graduated at my time and those who graduate today are generally equal.

Ganbold



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At that time did you pay school fees?

No, we didn't have to pay for our education, we had scholarships. Ordinary students got 180 Tögrög, good students got 200 Tögrög and the best got 220. That was a lot of money, you know.

How did you get this money? Monthly or guarterly?

Ichinhoroloo

We got it monthly. Then four students would pool their money, each contributing 20 Tögrög, and with those 80 Tögrög we would buy food for a month.

Ganbold -

Was that enough?

Ichinhoroloo -

Yes, it was enough

Ganbold -

What did you do with the rest of the money?

Ichinhoroloo -

I don't know well what those who finished school after the 10th grade did with their money. For my part, I bought clothes for my children, whom I had left behind in order to study. That's interesting, isn't it?

Ganbold -

Yes, that is interesting.

Ichinhoroloo

During the holidays I would go home with a suitcase full of children's clothes. In Ulaanbaatar there was everything. If we didn't have oil for making boov, I would take five to ten kilograms of oil home. Not like today's students who want everything. I spent only 20 Tögrög for food.

Ganbold

How about the money for the bus?

Ichinhoroloo -

I don't remember how much we paid for the bus.

Ganbold -

Did they take money?

Ichinhoroloo

Yes, they did. I think it was 20 or 50 Möngö. We had to show our student ID.

Ganbold -

Did you travel for free?

Ichinhoroloo

Yes, we did. That was between 1985 and 1988. Thinking about it today, it seems not true.

Ganbold -

When you went to school, how much was the minimum salary?

Cleaners and other maintenance providers were paid 180 Tögrög, and the highest salary was that of the doctors who were paid between 400 and 420 Tögrög

If you excelled in your studies you got more money than the workers, right?

Ichinhoroloo

Ichinoroloo - Yes, if you excelled in your studies. I had lived in an ordinary way and left behind my husband and my children in order to study, so I was caught between two different ideas about life. When I was studying with those young children, I didn't really understand very well. You know, I already had four children and I was almost thirty. But I did understand rather well when the students read the texts out loud and explained it to me, or when I read in silence. In our class, we had students from the city who had just finished 8th, 10th grade and who were very light-minded. I had very many responsibilities, I was the head of the dormitory council, head of the students' council, head of the trade union and class representative. So I had to shoulder big burdens in addition to the classes. I really was in the middle of a lot of difficulties. The first year was love difficult but in the course of the next two three wears I got used to it and then it was already time to graduate. Then very difficult, but in the course of the next two, three years I got used to it and then it was already time to graduate. Then I thought 'I did manage to graduate from medical school. Who knows how life will be after graduation? Maybe I will have a good salary? Maybe I can do it.'

Did you get additional money for your active participation in social work?

No, we didn't get any additional money for active participation in social work, but we were living for free in the dormitory. The dormitory council included the head of the council and four to five other members.

Ganbold -

Which dormitory did you live in?

In the dormitory of the medical school, south of the bridge with the lions. Today it has become the training institute for medical doctors. As a member of the dormitory council I lived there for free for three years.

How easy was it to find a job after graduation?

Ichinhoroloo -

Those young students were told were told where to go, but since I had been working in the medical field already before I went to school I explained my situation and where I had been working. So they said 'We can't employ you here. Go to the countryside and work in a factory'. And said proudly that I couldn't do that because I had been working in the field already for eleven years, so they gave me a temporary position as a food hygienist at the hygiene of hygiene. I did that for a year, and then a became a children's hygienist.

Ganbold -

What employment opportunities did university graduates have at that time?

They were quite good, you know. Today people graduate from wonderful schools, but they can't find work. Back then those who had graduated from school could always find some kind of employment. At my time, there was a position for a hygienist and researcher for infectious diseases in the province center, and that's how I found employment. Even though I had been told that there was no work for me, my superiors knew me from when I had been working there before, so they gave me a temporary job. Today people spend a lot of money in order to study for three or four years, but then they don't find work and start trading, which they could have done also without learning a profession. Rather than doing nothing they trade. There are people who work in their profession, but the majority can't find work even though they graduated from such good schools. There are no jobs in their profession, no vacancies. It's a very common problem.

Could you please talk about your parents?

Ichinhoroloo -

My parents used to live in Bayan-Öndör Sum. My mother had six children. The relatives from my father's side have all passed away, there is only one elderly person left. My husband's name is Badarchyn Garamochir. We met when we were in secondary school. He finished after the eighth grade and went to a vocational school for construction technology, where he specialized in building and welding. After graduating, he worked at the Provincial Office for Building and Construction. It was a rather big organization with many workers, but after 1990 with the advent of the market economy it went bankrupt. Many people started their careers there. After my husband had worked there, he had a break for more than a year and then he started working for a brokerage firm. But that went bankrupt, too, so rather than doing nothing he went to work as a petrol pump attendant for Petrovis. He has been working there since 2001.

Ganhold .

Have any of your relatives or members of your family been affected by the repression?

Ichinhoroloo

Yes, there was one person from my husband's side. My husband's grandfather.

Do you know well about it? When and how was he repressed?

Ichinhoroloo -

I don't know well. I have been asking my father-in-law, but he didn't give me any detailed explanations. He was affected by the repression, but I can't say when or how.

Ganbold -

Where did you start your career?

Ichinhoroloo

After I had finished 8th grade in Bayan-Öndör I met my husband. I didn't have any professional qualification, and my future husband went to study at the vocational school for construction technology in Bayanhongor. My father's relative lived here, he was a driver of the '15'. Then they told me to work here. Most people of my generation didn't study but went to work in the countryside, you know. It was very strange. Because they didn't go to school, they were ignorant and not very clean. I went to the province center with the goal of working there. I stayed with my father's relatives, but I couldn't find work because I didn't have a profession. So for some time I was unemployed. At that time, in the place where there is now the 'Chin Mend Hospital', there used to the cafeteria no.1 of the party committee, like today's restaurants. After a while this uncle of mine, who probably had a lot of connections, said 'I will get you a job at the cafeteria'. I said that I could do it. I had come here in order to work, and thinking that I would work as a waitress I said I could do it. At that time there was a senior cook called Badamhand. She is still there and people know her. That was in 1974, '75. In 1975, where today there is the 'Chin Mend Hospital' there used to be the party committee and on the first floor there was the cafeteria no.1 of the province center. At that time it was the best cafeteria. So I started to work there floor there was the cafeteria no.1 of the province center. At that time it was the best cafeteria. So I started to work there as a waitress. It's a job for very fast people. I had just come from the countryside and didn't have any experience in living in a settled place, so I was a bit clumsy. I worked there for more than a year. I think I was seventeen or eighteen. The important people would come and eat there. One day, while I was serving them, one of them shouted 'Hey you, come here!'. I came up to him and he said 'Loook at this!' I saw a hair in his plate and took it with my fingers. As a result he called me ignorant and dirty and told me to call the cook. So I approached her and said 'Badamhand Aunt, they are calling you'. He said to her 'Your place is dirty and your waitress isn't suited to work here. When I told her, she took the hair with her hands. That's impossible'. Our cook said 'I am sorry, we have taken a new person' and so on. Then the cook reproached me 'You can't do that. You should have apologised and changed the plate. Why did you have to stick your fingers into the food?' I felt a little discouraged and said 'Badamhand Aunt, it is so difficult for me. It seems that everyone wants to scold me. I thought I was doing allright, but they always say 'Come on! Hurry Up!', and I think I really can't do this job. I want to quit.' But she said 'What are you talking about? Of course you will work. Go to work!' I worked for almost a year, but it still seemed difficult to me, so one day I didn't show up. When I was asked what had happened, I said 'Nothing', and in this way I quit my job. At that time I earned 200 Togrög, that was a lot of money, you know.

Ganbold -

How much was your first salary?

At that time the minimum salary, that is the salary of the cleaners, was 180 Tögrög. My salary was a little bit higher because I was a 'waitress'. The cleaners got 180 Tögrög, the waitresses 200 and the cooks more than 300.

What did you do with your first salary?

Ichinhoroloo -

My first salary....it's very strange, now that I am talking about it I seem to have forgotten. At that time I thought that I couldn't settle with 200 Tögrög. What did I do with my first salary? The two of us began our life very strangely. My husband was an orphan. While I was working, my husband graduated from the vocational school and came here. We had an empty flat in the 36th building. There was only one white iron bed, one trunk, a mirror and several suitcases. With my first salary I bought 4 meters of pink drill and four meters of green twill. The green twill was very beautiful. At home with my parents I had never made a deel, but I decided to make a deel for my husband with the green twill and one for myself with the pink drill. I asked somebody to teach me and I did it. At that time, people always used twill to make deels. My mother asked my whether I could make one by myself, whether someone else had made it for me or whether I had made it myself. She said that the deel wasn't bad, but that the pleats were a little bit so-so. So I had made those deels myself and we wore them. With my second salary, I remember that I bought a white bed and a bed cover for 180 Tögrög.

At that time were consumer goods as plentiful as they are today?

No, there weren't very many. It was in the 1970s, you know. In 1973, our daughter moved out before she married. There wasn't the same choice as today. People who were a bit better off used to wear deels made of pink twill.

Ganbold

How available were these things, even though there was no choice?

Those things were available. And for those who could afford it, there was Russian twill and drill.

Ganbold -

Please tell me in detail about your childhood.

My mother had six children, and because I was the eldest of the daughters I did a lot of work. My parents had many animals of the cooperative, so we couldn't sleep in in the morning. When milking in the morning, we set up two stoves inside the ger and stoves outside, and we would prepare the milk on three to four stoves. The children always used to help, and because I was the eldest I played an important role. At that time, we didn't have readymade firewood, but we would collect dung from faraway places. We collected the dung in baskets which we carried on our backs. At that time it seemed that the days were longer, and it was very hot when we went to collect dung. Today there is no need to collect dung in order to make aruul and eezgij, you know. Because my parents herded the animals of the cooperative, they had to fulfill a certain milk and dairy produce quota. We used to milk several units of sheep twice a day, each with 30 to 40 sheep.

Ganbold -In the morning and in the evening?

Ichinhoroloo

We milked them around 11 in the morning, and in the afternoon at about 4 pm.

For how long did you milk them? I mean in summer from which month to which month?

At that time the summers came early. By the 15th of May we were already preparing the meat. And we were also preparing dairy products. Maybe it was from the 15th of May to the 15th of July. I guess we milked for two months. After that we would let the sheep free and milk the goats.

Ganbold

How much do you know about the collectivization movement? How did they advertise it?

Ichinhoroloo -

I don't know much about it.

Ganbold

What was the impact, what were the dangers and duties of the collectivization movement? Taking your parents as an

I don't know much about it, but now it seems to me that the cooperative was a kind of insurance company. But I don't know well what my parents did.

Ganbold -

How much money a month did they get from the cooperative?

Their wage was based on the quantity of wool and cashmere which they delivered. There was a quota for wool, cashmere, aruul and eezgij, and I think that if they fulfilled the quota their wage was calculated according to the current rate.

What happened if they didn't fulfill the quota?

Ichinhoroloo

It was calculated just in the same way.

Ganbold -

You mean the wage?

Ichinhoroloo -

Ganbold -

Were there an administrative and a responsibility system?

Ichinhoroloo -

No, there weren't.

Ganbold

How much do you know about the cultural campaigns?

What does cultural campaign mean?

Ganbold -

The cultural campaigns were carried out from 1949 to the 1960s.

Oh. I don't know much about it. But I've heard what people said about it. But I don't know much myself.

Ganbold -

What do you think about democracy?

Ichinhoroloo -

About democracy..

Ganbold -

Have you participated in the democratic movements? What what kind of work were you doing then?

Ichinhoroloo

I didn't participate in the democratic movement. When did the democratic movement begin?

Ganbold

I think in 1990, 1989...

Ichinhoroloo -

All those movements emerged as a result of democracy, right?

Where did you work then?

Ichinhoroloo - In 1989, 1990, I worked at the Hygiene Station. Its name was changed into Public Health Department and I continued to work there

In what ways do you think did society change as a result of the democratic movement?

Ichinhoroloo

I don't think it had a bad influence. I think that with the democratic movement people's consciousness and attitude changed. People of my generation and older always talk about the Party.

Ganbold -

Where there changes in your life as a result of the democratic movement?

I didn't suffer any loss as a result of the democratic movement. My life didn't become better nor did it become worse. Probably it was good for the people, but I don't know much about it.

Do you have any keepsakes, objects which you bought or inherited?

Ichinhoroloo

No, I don't. My husband is his mother's fourth child. They all had the same mother but different fathers. My husband's father died in 1990. The only thing he inherited from his father was a rather good-quality snuff-bottle made of chalcedony. We don't have anything else that we inherited. There are some religious objects from our ancestors, but I don't think they are objects. As for objects, there is just the chalcedony snuff-bottle. But then it was very strange, when nobody was at home, a burglar broke in and stole it.

Ganbold -

That means you don't have it anymore?

No, we don't. It was stolen and we couldn't find it. My husband was very upset about it.

Ganhold -

What do you think is the difference between family relations in the socialist period and family relations today?

It seems that during the socialist period people were very reasonable and well grounded. Today people are not so well grounded, maybe they are less hopeful. They have a nice life, and nothing is lacking, and all of a sudden they divorce. Before people would stick together, as they would say today, whether things were good or bad, they somehow managed to live in harmony.

Ganbold -

What is the reason for that? Is it influenced by the society or by the mentality?

Ichinhoroloo

I think that it is the mentality, and second, the money. That's how I understand it. I think that people could get along if they thought 'Even if there is no food, we can share tea and bread and it will be alright'.

Ganbold -

Did the socialist state coordinate the family relations through certain policies?

Ichinhoroloo -

No, it didn't. That's an individual's problem, you know.

Ganbold -

Was it prohibited for family members to work in the same organization, in the same position?

Ichinhoroloo

From the socialist period until today, it has always been forbidden for family members to work in the same place especially in positions related to finance. Now in most private organizations, the wife works as an accountant and the husband is the bursar and the director. Before, it was forbidden have the positions of the bursar and the accountant occupied by members of the same family.

Ganbold -

When you compare the nature and the environment at the time of your childhood with today, how did it change? What is better and what has become worse?

Ichinhoroloo

Oh, nowadays the summers are not as they used to be. When I was young, in May everything was green and we would wear heeled shoes and parade with them. But today, we still wear winter clothes in May, you know? We hardly ever take off our winter clothes before the 1st of June. And on the 25th of August it feels cold like in autumn.

In the socialist time where did you get national and international news from?

Ichinhoroloo At that time we had lectures and we would listen to broadcasts. Lectures on Thursday and broadcasts on Tuesday, we would get all the information early in the morning and in the evening.

Ganbold -

Who gave you that information?

Ichinhoroloo -

The ones who were responsible for this were the unions of the different organizations and the trade union. Individuals subscribed to magazines and newspapers. I worked for some time in a kindergarten, and on Tuesdays I had to be there very early in order to receive the children whose parents went to listen to the broadcasts and thus brought their children very early. Nowadays we don't have such things anymore.

Ganbold

How would you compare people's productivity in the socialist period with today?

Ichinhoroloo

There is a great difference. In the socialist period, the labor productivity was very high. There was a sense of responsibility. Every month we were evaluated on a scale. Nowadays there is no such thing anymore.

Ganbold -

Before you had plans. Where there incentives, such as awards, for people to fulfill the planned target?

Ichinhoroloo -

Not every month, but at the end of the year it was always announced who had received what kind of incentive for fulfilling the plan. A normal worker had a big folder with weekly, monthly and yearly plans.

Who made those plans? Were they approved and handed down from the upper instances?

Ichinhoroloo

Individuals made them themselves. People would say 'I will do this and that', and then they would draft a quarterly plan. And that plan was divided into months. Today, people who work just get their salaries, they do their daily work and that's it. At that time, the paper work was a big burden and our hours of work were registered carefully.

Ganbold

What if you were late?

Ichinhoroloo

At that time, there was a 'bell' for those who were late. On it there were written the name and a warning.

Ganbold -

Were there any measures taken?

Ichinhoroloo -

I don't remember any kind of measures.

Ganbold

What did they do if you didn't fulfill the plan?

If you didn't fulfill the plan, the organization dealt with the issues. Some reduced the salary. In order to fulfill the plan of the nursery, we needed to have 30 to 35 children. When we had only 25 children, we would be told that we are just sitting around doing nothing. So if the number of children wasn't sufficient, we would go through the districts asking the families to give their children to the nursery. Now they just sit there and say 'You can give your child to the nursery or not, do as you like'. In a way that seems nice.

Ganbold -

Is there anything unique in your life, anything that is different from other people's lives?

Oh, no, there is no such thing. I'm just normal, I don't have anything more or less than other people.

Ganbold - Please talk about the privatization.

Ichinhoroloo -

I don't know about it and I didn't participate in it.

What was your understanding of privatization when it happened? When it was first announced?

Ichinhorolog -

We didn't get anything from it, because we were neither herders nor workers. If we had been herders we would have received a good share. As workers, too.

Ganbold

You said your parents were members of a cooperative. Did they get anything when the cooperatives were privatized?

My father had died by that time. My mother and my brothers and sisters received livestock.

Ganbold -

Was the number of animals based on the number with which a family had originally contributed when they joined the cooperative or was it based on the number of family members? Did they take into account the number of years one had

Ichinhoroloo

I guess it was based on the number of family members. My mother got one hundred heads of livestock, because she was alone. But my siblings got more because they have children. So I guess it was based on the number of family members.

That means that if in one family two people were working for the cooperative and in another family only one member, but both families had the same number of people they would get the same number of animals, right?

Probably. They probably got the same number of animals. Families with many children got many animals. That's why I think that privatization was based on the number of family members.

Ganbold -

How did you get introduced to new techniques and technologies, such as TV, radio, cars, motorcycles and so on?

Ichinhoroloo -How should I answer this question?

Ganhold -

Like you watched TV in this and that year and so on.

Oh, I don't remember that. The first ones who had a TV was the Russian military unit that was stationed in our Ih-Uul. We bought the first TV set from there, and that's when I first watched TV, but I don't remember which year.

What was people's reaction to television? Were they surprised or astonished?

Ichinhoroloo Of course they were astonished. At that time very few families had TV sets, and in the evenings all the children in our neighborhood would be gathered together on the two sides of our ger. One of our friends had an acquaintance in the military and he bought a TV set for us.

Ganbold

Was that TV set something to be proud of? Did you feel you were better than others?

We ourselves were never proud of it. But other people were talking about us, saying that we had a TV set. At that time this friend of ours had bought us a refrigerator for 800 Tögrög. At that time 800 Tögrög was a lot of money.

It's the salary of two to three months, right?

Ichinhoroloo

Yes. That refrigerator still works. A family with a TV set and a refrigerator wasn't considered to be of low standing.

If people had money were they able to purchase a TV set or a refrigerator or did they have to have connections like you in order to get them?

Ichinhoroloo

They weren't for sale, so I guess you needed acquaintances.

When you were a child how often did they screen films in the 'red corner'?

Ichinhoroloo -

They were only screened in the 'red corner'

Ganbold -

What was your first movie?

Ichinhoroloo -

Oh, I'm not sure what it was.

What kind of movies did they show mostly? Mongolian or Russian ones?

They showed Mongolian movies. Those were the movies of the 1960-70s. In the 'red corner' they switched on the generator, and we didn't have to pay anything. We just went in and watched the movie. Everyone who wanted could go and watch.

Ganbold -

What were Mongolia's foreign relations like in the socialist period?

I think there were very few. We never heard about anyone going to Korea etc. like today, you know. Only sometimes people talked about Moscow.

What is special about your profession in comparison with other professions?

The peculiarity of my profession of hygienist is that not everybody chooses it. I would describe it in terms of seeing through smell and taste. An ordinary physician might recognize things by seeing them, but not everyone would know things by smelling and tasting them, I think.

Ganbold -

Who influenced your choice of profession?

My younger sister Tserendulam's ah used to be an assistant doctor for treatment and therapy. In our family there is nobody in the medical field. Then this ah of ours died and I went to Ulaanbaatar for his funeral. That's when I thought that I would like to become a doctor, not one with a university degree, just one with secondary vocational training. After having given birth to my four children, I made up my mind and I took the exam, and they assigned me to hygiene. In the beginning I wanted to do treatment and therapy, but my exam scores were too low.

Ganbold

Thank you.

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