Mongolian livestock-breeders move from place to place throughout the four seasons in search for new pastures, which for centuries served as the source of their way of life. The pastureland is subdivided into seasonal camps. Certain regulations are followed depending upon whether it is the beginning, middle, or end of the season.

Livestock-breeders have a tradition to move from one pasture to another on a clear and cloudless day. The date to decamp is set by observing the sky and weather. When moving a short distance, breeders prefer to decamp early in the morning and arrive at the new place when the sun rises. Prior to moving to a new place, the head of the family decides where to encamp by consulting with the men and elders of neighbouring families. All the necessary harnesses for conveyance, utilities, and accessories for the ger have been previously prepared for the decampment. On the eve of decampment all the furniture and ger items are dismantled and the food and products are packed together in accordance to how they will be conveyed. In the morning of the decampment, the wife of the family gets up early to prepare a morning tea and breakfast for the family, milks the cows, and offers a libation with milk or tea to the earth and sky by saying “Oлээ ээ огсон нутаг” (A land that has blessed us). Afterwards everybody has their breakfast.

Mongolians are accustomed to dismantle and assemble the ger starting from right to left in a clockwise direction. For this reason the family begins to dismantle their ger starting with the girth on the right side of the door, followed by the felt cover and the rooftop, the felt-covered walls, the spokes, and lattice walls. The felt covering the crown of the ger is taken off in the direction of the new place for encampment, but the crown itself is not moved until all other furniture is loaded onto the conveyance. The crown is loaded last. During the loading it is forbidden to let any animal go over the site of the ger, due to the Mongols’ belief that “ачаа хазайна,” that the load might come into sloping position.

The hearth of the ger or stone trivet (three stones propping up the kettle) are taken out in the direction of the new place as well. The stone at the front of the trivet is dislocated, but the other two stones can remain. This custom opens an avenue to the new camp site. After the loading of the camels or oxen is completed, the old sites of the ger and corral are cleaned. Ashes and rubbish are taken away. The nomads are dressed smartly.

Before moving the camel- or ox-drawn caravan, the wife dresses smartly. The husband saddles her horse or camel to ride. She takes the lead camel and steers him along the eastern side of the ger site. When the caravan moves, the head of the family, who is also dressed smartly, stands on the site where the ger stood. Then he rides after the caravan. The herd of horses or cattle is driven before the caravan. The head of the family goes behind the caravan. His duty is to watch the balance of the load and to rebalance it if it comes into a sloping position. Flocks are driven behind the caravan.
The senior and junior people drive the flocks.

It is a tradition for every family that is encountered along the way to the new ger site to greet the moving family, offering them food and drinks. There is a belief that if old tea is offered to the moving family, they would not stay long enough at the new place. Therefore, fresh tea is offered. If the lady or wife of the family offering tea is busy, she sends her children to greet the moving family in order to offer tea and food. When someone comes with an offering of tea and food, the moving family stops for a moment. It is a custom that the tea is offered in order starting from the eldest person in the family, to the lady leading the loaded camels next, and so on. After the offering of tea and food, the family moves on to their new place. The people that met them on the way wish them a safe journey. If any tea is left, it is sprinkled in the direction of the moving family with the wish for them to have a safe journey and good luck. It is a tradition as well, that people meet on the way to greet the moving family from right to left starting with the eldest. Generally, it is regarded as showing respect, when meeting a caravan, to take one leg off of one’s stirrup-iron and greet the family from right to left, starting with the eldest.

When the new place gets closer, the head of the family arrives at the place first to get prepared. When the loads come, the head of the family sets the saddle of his wife at the left side of the new site of the ger. He will later put it at the bottom of their berth after assembling the ger. Traditionally, this is regarded as respectful to women. Prior to assembling the ger at the new site, it is a custom to set the hearth by putting the three stones first as a trivet. It is forbidden to assemble a ger on an old site. Generally, the three stones of the trivet are highly respected among the Mongols as the hearth of that family. Therefore, if the family moves to another place far away, one of the three stones is taken with them. If the moving family encounters the cairn-stone, they offer it pebbles and say a benediction, such as, “More blessings for us, more stones for you.”

To erect a new ger, it is also a custom to start from right to left in a clockwise direction by circling the lattice walls and covering it with felt. The ger is erected on a flat surface with the centre of the door and crown set upright or slightly sloping to the right. The front of the door and crown should always be directed in a straight line to the top of a nearby mountain. It is forbidden to direct the front of the ger to the base of a mountain or the mouth of valley. According to the characteristics of some places, as in the Gobi desert or mountainous regions, people use ox-carts and camel-carts to move from one place to another. Moving by modern vehicles is seen nowadays, but the customary practices are still kept the same.
There is a specific ritual that is done in a tuneful utterance when a new mother rejects its newborn or when a newborn becomes orphaned. This ritual is believed to encourage the mother to allow the newborn to nurse. Our ancestors have long paid attention to animal behavior, character, and the sounds they produce. In this ritual, we Mongolians make a sound that imitates a sheep’s or goat’s bleating. We call ewes by uttering toig and call goats by uttering zuu zuu. When we round up flocks of sheep we utter guurgyi guurgyi, which is a call that separates lambs and kids from their mothers as they enter into their holding pens. We utter khooolboi before tying up ewes and nanny goats. We utter toor, toor which imitates the sounds of camels. When a female camel rejects its young, we utter khoos, which is a call to the camel to accept its young and which is sung in a slow tuneful melody. When a mare rejects its young, we utter guurui, guurui. When a cow rejects its young, we utter ööv in a tuneful melody. In the case of a yak, we utter khoor or sugai.

Some mother-animals reject their young by refusing to allow them to suckle, a situation that threatens young animals with death. It is, therefore, critical for animal breeders to deal with those mother-animals. They do this by trying to change the animal’s attitude, and a common way of doing this is by reciting a poem in a soothing voice to a tune that is terse, rhythmic, and melodious.

In the case of a mother camel or mare, this is a very painstaking job. Someone specialized in this field is invited to sing a song or play music to them. In addition, a herder can daub salt on the foals’ coat and let its mother lick it. They also daub salt on the tail or smear mother’s milk on the lamb. These tricks can have positive effects. Soaking the lamb’s coat in these ways can revive the smells of birth.

The lyrics of the songs the herders sing are devoted to persuading the mother animals to allow the young animals to suckle.

For instance, there is a poetic recitation which is sung as:

Swan white ewe
Why do you reject your lamb?
The scent of your milk is
On the tail of your lamb
Khos khos khos
The mild season has come
The mountains shall be verdant
Your udder shall be caked
What did you think of it?
Toig toig toig

Such poetic recitations are sung and accompanied by refrains of toig, toig, toig, khos, khos, khos. Those words can be recited many times in a melodious tune.

There are many variations to these tricks, which aim to cause a mother-animal to accept their young. The origins of these words are likely very ancient. For instance, in order to cause a cow or camel to accept its calf, the newborn is hitched near to its mothers. Singers with a tenor voice are invited to sing Mongolian long songs, to sing poetic recitations in a tuneful voice, and to play a lyrical melody on the horse-headed fiddle or on a flute.

There is tune that is played on an Oirad fiddle which is very popular among the Dörvöd and Bayad ethnicities. This tune is used for causing a mare-camel to accept its newborn if she at first rejects it. When a mare-camel rejects its baby, the mother and newborn are both hitched together. The epic singer or minstrel is invited to recite the epic “Orphaned white baby of the white mare-camel.”
CUSTOM TO CASTRATE YOUNG ANIMALS

Young animals are castrated at the beginning of summer. This is a traditional method to maintain the balance of male and female domestic animals. The methods to castrate animals differ depending upon the flock or herd. The general ceremony of castration is the same. For instance, in order to castrate flocks, a felt rug or piece of quilted felt is stretched out at the western part of a ger. There is a support piece of the ger that is placed at the right of felt rug facing to the north. On the western side of the man doing the castration, a small sack of millet and a pail of water blended with a bit of milk are also placed. An arrow is set lengthwise on the top of pail. Beside them juniper needles are burnt in an incense-burner.

A herder calls out, “Bring the swan-white faced lamb!” A person brings the lamb. If this lamb is selected to become a ram, its forehead is anointed with clotted cream and a plate of dairy products is placed under its chin. This ram is sanctified with smoke from the incense-burner three times. Placing the incense-burner under its muzzle, the castrator chants a benediction:

May you be a
Good pedigreed ram
Producing many offspring;
May your flock be many,
Grazing on the mountain grass
Watering on an ocean of water;
May you be a chubby swan-white ram
The vanguard of ten thousand sheep.

And he releases this ram.

Castrating other lambs, the castrator chants for each lamb:

Be lighter than a feather
Cure quicker than the speeding arrow
Khurai khurai khurai
Dur dur suukhai

Scattering grain onto the lamb symbolizes an increase in the animal population, and waving it with an arrow symbolizes a fast recovery. The words ‘khurai, khurai, khurai’ express the purification of fire, and the words ‘dur dur’ express the spells of a mantra. The words of the benediction chanted during the castration are a kind of charm or spell.
Mongolians have a long standing tradition of manually processing the wool and hair of the five kinds of animals for use in their daily life. At the end of spring and the beginning of summer, the animals have grown fat on the fresh green grass and start to shed their coat. The manes of horses are cut; the coat of cattle is combed; the beard of camels is clipped; the wool of sheep is sheared; and the down of goats is carded. The hair from these animals is processed continually throughout the summer and autumn. There is a tradition to process these in cooperation with relatives and people in the vicinity. They gather and work at each other’s homes in alternation.

The processing of sheep wool is very specific. There are two types of shearing sheep in Mongolia. The summer shearing is called fleece (urtiin noos) and autumn shearing is called fleece-wool (akhar).

In the summer, the first shearing of wool can be undertaken without the differences of age and sex of the sheep. But in autumn, the shearing the wool of the ewe sheep cannot be taken in order to keep these animals safer in winter. This is traditional.

Preparations for the shearing are done at the end of spring. The sheep shearing day is announced to the people in the vicinity. Relatives or neighbours in the vicinity come with shears and strips to bind the legs of the sheep to assist in the shearing. If the chosen day is rainy or stormy, they clip only a piece of wool. After this, they can shear their sheep the next time the opportunity presents itself. Before the arrival of assistants, the head of the family starts shearing sheep. When one of the neighbors arrives to assist, he says:

- May the shears be sharp
- May the fleece be fluffy
or
- May the shears be sharp
- May the sheared sheep
- Be tens or hundreds of thousands
- May the dust from these sheep
- Rise up to the sky

As a response, the head of family gratefully replies:

- May you be as prosperous as you wish
- Thanks with pleasure,
- Commensurate with your desire

The custom of preparing fleece-wool in the autumn is the same as with the first shearing.
The sayings of those who beat fleece with swipples, or special sticks, are similar to those that accompany the shearing of sheep. Before the chosen day to beat the fleece, its lanolin and moisture are dried by stretching it out. The host family prepares swipples for everybody who is going to participate, as well as the mattress and buff for making rings to beat fleece. The host family treats those who come to assist in beating fleece with tea and other foods. Mostly women each take two swipples and sit in a circle around the fleece and look at each other’s face. Men place an amount of fleece on the ring depending on the size of ring and stretch it. The head of family or eldest man in the group clad in hat holds a cup of milk or bowl of fermented mare’s milk, looks to the south, and chants a benediction:

Putting a ring
As big as a world
Piling up fleece
As big as a mountain;
The fleece of the lambs
Is as thick as a finger
The fleece of the tegs (young sheep that have not yet been shorn)
Is as thick as a span;
Be rainless
And windless;
May the fleece be beaten with our swipples
Separating the good and the bad
And preparing it as we wish

The man finishes his benediction and sprinkles milk from his cup over the wool as a blessing. He then sets the cup of milk or bowl of fermented mare’s milk aside and begins to beat the fleece and others follow his example. If others come while the fleece is being beaten, they say:

Be windless
Be fast without a whirl of dust
May the fleece be like silk thread
And as strong as sinew

Or

May your woolens
Be like mountains
May your ring
Be like a world

In response to these words, which symbolize a successful production of felt, we say:

This place is graced with your virtue
And your gracious benediction
Commensurate with your desire
May you be as prosperous as you wish

The beating of the fleece can continue depending upon the amount of fleece and the endurance of the people gathered. When the beating is completed, the host family treats those who assisted with fermented mare’s milk and dairy products. Then another household can beat its fleece with the assistance of neighbour households. Traditionally they alternate in these ways. The origin of this custom is very old.
CUSTOM OF MAKING FELT

After those at one household complete the beating of the fleece, the families move to a space with well grown grass and plenty of water to prepare for the making of the felt. Felt making is usually practiced at the end of summer and the beginning of the first month of autumn. Each family announces the day to make the felt to their neighbours, relatives and friends in their vicinity. The families in turn manage their work and prepare to assist in the making of felt. If needed, the other families bring animals to assist in rolling the wool (usually stallions are used for felt making, but in the Gobi region camels are used and in northern regions oxen are used as well).

The family who is going to make felt can prepare fermented mare’s milk and other dairy products, and butcher a sheep for those who are going to help. This butchering is called ‘shigus’. The family lays out sample-felt on which the beaten woolens are lain down. This sample must be clean and good felt which was made in the previous year. If it is not clean or if it is worn-out felt, the family will bring the sample from the respected family.

In the morning of the chosen day those are to make felt gather from various directions. They are treated with dairy products. Then they start laying out the woolens on the sample felt. Men, girls and boys bring woolens near and go to fetch water. The lady of the household, the eldest or most honourable lady starts laying out new woolens as an example and then other women follow in turn. It demands great care to adjust the thickness and thinness of the wool. If the head of the family has no experience, he can invite an expert in making felt. The expert can direct all kinds of felt making. The first layer of lain woolens is evenly sprinkled with water. The second layer is put on the first. This layer is evenly sprinkled with water. The final layer (zulkhai) should be from a fleece-wool or lamb’s-wool. After the third layer, men wind a wooden pole with irises and other grass as insu-
lation between the pole and woolens. The layers of wool are wrapped around the pole. This roll of wool is then covered with soaked hide and tightly bound together with rope. As the rope is tightened the herders say “numbai tumbai” (both are closed). Water is then poured over the entire roll. Those gathered say a benediction words:

May the swan-white felt be without any cracks
Or chinks here and there;
May the felt be whiter than fresh snow
And harder than bone;
And smoother than the surface of ice
And more valuable than silver;
May the felt be without holes
And durable without wear;
May the felt be as white as a conch shell

These recitations inspire those who participated to make the good felt.

Two men attach parallel ropes to the two rings of horn through which the two ends of the wooden pole pass. Each end of the rope is tied with a firm knot and then placed under the stirrups of each man on horse-back. Before their pulling the roll they say:

May the felt for public consumption be of a good quality
May the human body be in good health
May the felt be stronger than bone
And whiter than fresh snow

They drop milk or fermented mare’s milk on the roller. They then start pulling the roller slowly, gradually speeding up the pulling. If possible, they reach a gallop. Mostly young men ride the horses drawing the roller. As the first roller is pulled, the second is prepared for pulling. Several felts can be made in a day. If the distance of pulling the roller reaches 15-20 kilometers we stop drawing, unbind the roller and drop milk on the roller and on the polls of the two horses and on their croups as a blessing. The first felt is an expression of common efforts. On this occasion we traditionally say a benediction. Before reciting the benediction, a tankard of tea and plate of dairy products are brought and then the first felt is blessed with milk. It says:

The fleece of tegs
Is lain with span-thick wool

The fleece of lambs
Are lain with finger-thick hair
Let’s bless this felt

And

White fleece with lanolin of a hundred thousand sheep
Are lain and spliced
Every layer of woolens
Are sprinkled with hundreds of streams
And rolled adroitly
And bound promptly
And drawn with the force of geldings
And rolled again and again
May this be a durable thing
As it is called felt

In such a manner, labour is eulogized poetically. After reciting the benediction, men only can stretch new felt when moistened. The new felt is folded. We jerk the folded felt on which a boy or girl sits. It is called esgii jishikh and its quality is tested. After completing felt-making, there is a small feast (the feast of mutton or the feast of dairy products). The felt makers are hosted by the family who made the felt.

Every attendant can receive his or her own share from the products. These products are distributed among the attendants. The two men who drew the roller can take confections and dairy products. The expert of felt making can take one from new felts which he likes if the family has made many felts. If the family made few new felts, he may take the previous year’s felt or a sheep as a reward. This is called zakh ögök (to give a reward). If the family borrows the sample felt, it is given back with a piece of mutton, plate of dairy product, or piece of confection.

After a few days, after the felt becomes dry, the new felt is cut into shapes that can be used as roof-covers, wall-covers, crown-covers, door-covers and as felt rugs. They are laced and stitched. This is called as ger covering.

The women who are adept at sewing can bring scissors, needles, thimbles and camel wool threads, and help with sewing the felt, but this can only be done on an auspicious day. After the completion of the work, the host family treats everyone who participated with dairy products and gives them felt for stockings, cushions, sweat-cloths, or mattresses as a gift. Mongolians process the wool and hair of animals in this manner and make felt and various felt articles.
CUSTOMS RELATED TO HUNTING

Mongolia is a country that consists of the wide-open steppe lands, forests, rivers, mountains and deserts, and each has its own types of animal species. Therefore, from ancient times Mongolians have traditionally created many ways and forms of hunting. According to the wild animal types it is divided into bird hunting, hunting and fishing. Hunting is very common in Mongolia.

Mongolians hunt for stronger and bigger herding animals in hunting teams, but for smaller animals such as sable, marmot and squirrel hunt alone. Hunting for smaller animals has its own distinctive names, as does fishing, bird hunting and marmot-hunting.

There are special customs and manners used during hunting. For instance, the appointed date for hunting is kept secret. It is only shared among partners through the giving or exchanging of horse manure as an agreement and arrangement of the hunting date. The partners should be friendly having no arguments with each other and should not say anything bad about the animals they mean to hunt. If there are no animals around, this should not be said out loud. Instead it is said, “There are few animals around,” “Maybe some around,” or “Animals haven’t come around a while.” If the hunt is taking place in the Khalkh or central Mongolian region, some animals are given substitute names, such as önöök (that squinted) for the wolf, tüdger (stumpy) for the wild boar, "flat horned" for an elk, "hat" for a fox, and turag (matured) for a deer.

During the team hunting, the hunters gather to worship spirits and to give offerings to them for the hunt. Those hunting alone, in contrast, offer pieces of food or dairy products to the mountains and rivers of the area asking for their blessings. When Buddha’s teachings flourished in Mongolia, the words related to the practice of hunting changed to religious meanings. On the eve of the hunt, the hunters of the Uriankhai ethnic groups in western Mongolia invite an epic minstrel to perform Altain magtaal or “Ode to the Altai.” Some experienced hunters take the epic minstrel with them to the hunting grounds. If having no quarry, the minstrel performs in the midst of the hunt or when the hunters return from the hunt. This is due to the belief that if Altain magtaal is performed and the animals and plants of the Altai are praised, the spirits of that mountains and rivers are pleased and offer the quarries for the hunt. It is for this reason that the quarries of the hunt are called Khangain khishig or “the bounty of the Earth” among Mongolians.

There is a tradition that during the night camp of the hunt among the Buriats, interesting tales are told for the spirits of the taiga. In some cases the special storyteller goes with the hunters. Usually only experienced hunters and elders tell the tales. After telling the stories, older hunter...
pieces a piece from the fat of a sheep’s tail at the end of his
gun and other hunters put the pieces of fat in their wooden
cups. Afterwards, everybody says ‘khurai, khurai, khurai’ for
the bounty from the hunt. The Darkhad hunters believe that
going out for the hunt at dawn will bring plenty of quarries.
In the morning the hunter worships the hearth and house
spirit and sanctifies the gun with burning incense. After hav-
ing eaten enough, the hunter saddles his horse and loads the
second horse. The hunter starts from the north side of the
ger, then goes around the ger three times in a clockwise di-
rection, and then goes in the direction of the hunting. At the
first stop, the hunter gives a benediction:

Dear precious land
Dear heavenly sky
Dear rich earth
Let the quarries be plenty as we go in
Let the saddle-bags be full as we come back
Let me be not be dismembered as I fall
Let me be with no overflow as I drink
Let me have plenty of quarries

As he says this, the hunter sprinkles tea three times in
four directions. After having tea and extinguishing the fire,
the hunters circumambulate the fire-bed three times and
ride on.

If they come across a beast other than the one they in-
tended to hunt, it is avoided. In some cases, beasts encoun-
tered are considered to be bad luck for the hunt. For in-
stance, if a hunter encounters a wolf, it is considered to be
a good omen. If a hunter encounters a fox, it is considered a
bad omen. So it is necessary to kill the fox. If a hunter cannot
kill the encountered fox, some hunters return from hunting.
If a hunter finds a trail of the wolverine, he spits on it. If a
hunter encounters the wolverine directly, he must to kill it.
So he says, “The aimed gun never misses, devilish wolverine
is not able to piss,” and shoots it. This is a custom.

It is an honour for the Mongolian hunter to hunt for red
stag, bear, or elk. In that case there is a ceremony among Mon-
golian hunters. There is a kind of link between the red stag,
bear, and elk with shamanist totems. There are two words
Börte-chino (miniver wolf) and Qua-maral (fair-doe) in the
Secret History of the Mongols. The scholars have come to
the conclusion that they are totems. Therefore, Mongolians
avoid killing deer without purpose. Some tales call the per-
son who kills a deer as a sinful killer. Two tales, Ulir tsagaan
ovqön (Hackneyed white old man) and Khorin dörvön salaa
evertei ukhaa dönön buya (Twenty-four antlered stags) de-
scribe hunters who killed a deer as feeling sorrow for killing
such a beautiful animal and making her fawns into orphans.
These tales attest to the fact that Mongolians worshipped
der from ancient times and aspired to preserve them.

If it is unavoidable to kill a deer, we perform a special cer-
emony. The deer usually dies placing its chin to the ground
and raising its antler upright. If the hunted deer dies plac-
ing its antler to the ground, it is a bad omen for the hunter.
The head of the quarry is cut off before flaying its hide and
placed on a white sheet without its antler touching the earth.
The antler is carried by one person when the hunter returns

home and places it on the roof of his ger. All the hunters are
treated with tea.

There are special words to say when we kill a bear. The
meaning of these words is neither to look down at this beast
nor shoot it as enjoyment. These words mean to convey that
“It was because of necessity that we shot you.” For instance,
as soon as the bear is shot, the hunter should run up to the
quarry and say, “Oh my, I shot you without intention. The
swerved bullet shot you. Please excuse me!” When we flay its
skin, we say, “The coldness comes, my body is chilled. Warm
me up.” There are certain substitutions for real intention in
some spells.

It is taboo to hit a rock with the stomach of the quar-
ry. When we cook game, if its water decreases, we do not
add any water to it. At first we drop a bit of soup into the
water that will be added. Hunters do not cut off a piece of
meat from the quarry in the saddle-bag. It is taboo to cut off
saddle-bags and to take game. There is no tradition to dis-
tribute raw meat of a hunter’s quarry. There is a view that
if you break a tradition, the hunter’s next hunting trip can
fail. It seems like superstition, but this is intended to save the
bounty of nature and to live economically.

At the end of the hunt as a team, a special practice for di-
viding the meat is carried out among the hunters. Individual
hunters can give a share of the meat to their neighbours. If
during the hunt an animal is killed, the head and its skin are
given to the shooter, as a way of acknowledging the shooter’s
skill.
Herders have also long supplemented their foodstuffs with agriculture as well as hunting. According to archaeological findings, historical documents, and notes of ancient foreign travelers, it is proven that in Mongolia farming dates back to the Stone and Bronze Ages. Our tribal states continued and developed these traditions.

Taria (grain), budaa (rice), arvai (barley), guril (flour), talkh (bread), anjis (plough) and үr (seed) are Mongolian words and terms of agricultural crops. Mongolians consume flour and make various confections. These show the ancient origin of agricultural farming in Mongolia.

The methods and techniques of cultivating the soil, producing crops are unique in the way of suitability with the nomadic lifestyle. For producing crops, the ground should not have been cultivated beforehand. The soil is fertilized by manure. The field is irrigated. The cultivable area is usually plowed by the oxen with a plow made from cedar. The seeds are scattered by hand. The harvest is then reaped with sickles. Grain is threshed by the trampling of horses and cattle. Then the grain is sifted through the sieve made of goat or sheep hide and is pounded into a fine powder using a hand or leg mortar.
Mongolians usually grow grain, barley, wheat and millet. The harvested grain is made into flour by grinding through a wind mill or stone mill which is driven by horse or ox. In some folk tales it is said that it is “better to eat the cow than eat your seed,” meaning that if you run out of grain seed, it would be harder to survive than running out of animals. It is a fact that for some poorer folks, agricultural farming was a main necessity than animal husbandry for their life.

The farmer leads his oxen which draws a wooden plough; plough-silt is handled by the plough-jogger who says loudly hashuul (enclose), which is a spell meant to adjust labour arrangements. It also is a request to heaven and earth to provide humanity with rain and bumper crops.

In connection with it, a special rite is carried out for cultivating a field, implanting seeds, and harvesting with the accompaniment of a benediction. The benediction stimulates animal and agricultural farmers to further efforts with the magic power of amazing words in the period of implanting seeds. The benediction is called Bayan sakhliin yerööl (the benediction of the rich awn), due to the expression of having an abundant harvest. The following benediction is made to ask for a bumper harvest this year and a more abundant harvest next year:

Grow so as to reach the blue ox’s neck
Grow as high as the red ox’s back
Grow until everybody is amazed
Grow until everybody is puzzled
Grow until a rider dismounts and look at you in surprise
Grow until a person can sit and look at you in surprise
Grow in the way that bamboo grows
Let new shoots of grain mash up like a mote of dust
Let’s make thousands of sheaves this year
May they grow more than this year in the future
May they glorify their farmer’s name
By growing bumper crops

This benediction symbolizes the wish for bumper crops and for great abundance. It employs an interesting simile when calling for it to grow to reach “the blue ox’s neck.” This reflects the herder’s way of measurement.

The man leads the five yoked oxen to trample a layer of scattered grain in order to thresh them. These oxen are positioned in several rows. Each man can lead these oxen and boys drive them. At this moment to thresh grain we say:

Spiky grain
Turn into sheaves
Everybody is busy on the threshing-floor
Even though the morning star is in its zenith
Gii khiig, gii khiig
This is called a song of trampling

At the end of the harvest, there is a ceremony which is arranged with the flour of barley, a plate of dairy products, and tankards of tea, milk-vodka and fermented mare’s milk. This is a labour feast celebrating the end of the harvest. The offerings are made to surrounding mountains and rivers. The children are gratified with sweets. Then somebody recites the benediction:

Five kinds of seeds
Are gathered abundantly
On the threshing-floor like valley
Round like full moon
Smooth like a mirror
They are threshed
For future consumption
And graced by all
And anointed with the best of dairy products

This benediction speaks about bumper crops which are celebrated by all and the threshing-floor is anointed with grace. The agricultural implements are also appreciated:

The spade, which worked hard,
Is anointed with confections the size of a wheel;
The plough, which worked hard,
Is anointed with confection of the size of a cup

Another benediction symbolizes a future bumper-harvest:

Every year makes us happy
Every year give us bumper-harvest
Everybody wishes to harvest
More and more crops

At present, there are certain advancements in harvesting that utilize modern technologies, but there are certain types of the national agricultural customs that are still being used.