

A herder's life spent in the heart of the same winter/spring camp, 38 years have passed in Tsagaan Ouss. Gantumur tells us about his life behind a modest but playful smile. Their life. Their observations, experiences, deductions, the evolution of their traditional way of life. It focuses on the disappearance of pastures, visual and progressive. Especially since 1995, a time of democratization and governmental glorification of herders, by « giving medals to the one who has the highest number of animals », which is deplored. Since this key period they have detected the absence of rain, increasing drought inevitably leading to the loss of dozens of endemic plants.

Land degradation is a direct threat to their survival. Gantumur is fully aware that "livestock and humans destroy the environment". He knows that each herder has his share of responsibility. Each household should have a maximum of 500 heads. Their livestock oscillates between 400 and 600, increasing in April during the birthing season, it decreases in October. His ideal « should be stabilized at 400 heads ». This spring the drought strikes. Stronger impact. Another natural disaster which is the result of a « black winter », without snow. The wind is also blowing over this desert. As the rain waits patiently. Horses are too weak, we don't ride them anymore. Livestock food insecurity is expected. Food supply is running low. The fodder "hand-cut last fall" is exhausted, a few bags of dietary supplements remain, "will they be enough?" A new dzud threatens, the situation might become critical. "Dzud is coming because nature gets angry with us, we all have to reduce our herd," Gantumur said, conjuring up some kind of revenge. Herder's job is not easy. It requires courage, to be constantly active and in good health. According to Gantumur and Tumendemberel, his wife, they note "a loss of motivation by new generations for this profession". They regret the devaluation of raw materials, such as milk and meat, "almost free today". Cashmere is the "only way to get rich", says Tumendemberel.

Facing an uncertain future, they are an example. They bravely and conscientiously continue on their way. In this complex society, an ultimate paradox closed this interview : "Spring is the most difficult season, but it is also the one that fills us with immense joy and great accomplishment: birth of the animals."

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