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## BOOKS ON MONGOLIA

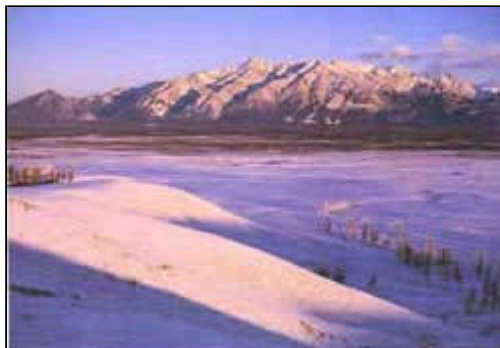
## ABOUT US

## LIFE'S LIKE THAT!

## Why I Love Mutton

By Rioko Imaoka, Ph.D. Fellow, Osaka University and a regular member of the Japanese Gobi expedition:

"In 1992 I went to the Bogd soum of the Bayan Hongor province, where our expedition stayed. I wanted to see by own eyes how nomadic herders live in winter. The road is not short one, almost 600 km. On the way I gulped several time from the bottle of vodka I was offered regularly. Though it is often enough for me to have a jug of beer to feel drowsy, this time I had no choice because of severe cold.



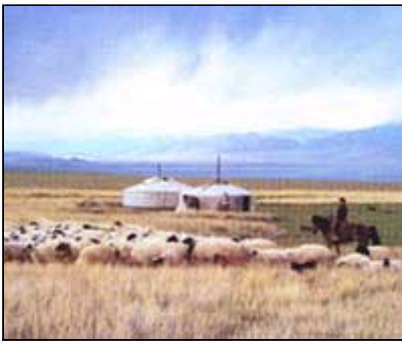
"I had enough clothes on me. Over special design Arctic jacket made of bird feathers I had a wind proof coat as well. Beneath woolen sweater I had also woolen underneath. There were fur boots on my feet. I was well protected against cold, but not enough for the huge refrigerator Mongolia turns into in winter.

"I begun to feel cold sneaking inside me, and my stomach began to miss the fatty lamb I was offered to take to the road. Usually I can not stand fat and always left it untouched. But this time, the local lamb turned to be magic and warmed me up more than any modern clothes.

"Sun went down and it was getting even colder. In a family we stopped over, the housewife, after fumbling in a cloth box, produced a candle. That time it was a rarity and when she light it up, children went into cheers. Soon the dinner was ready. When I eat camel meat it felt rather sourish.

"After dinner we went to sleep. Though hosts offered me to sleep on a bed I chose the floor. The hosts were kind to put a wolf fur blanket, and I slipped into my thick sleeping bag. The host and his two children lay next to me on a thin rug made of sheep wool and covered with a fur blanket. The hostess flew off the candle and went to sleep on the bed with a small baby.

"In the morning I woke when breakfast was already waiting on the table. The hostess put yesterday's booz (minced meat wrapped in flour and steamed) into a cup, filled it with hot tea with milk and gave it to me. So I eat booz in tea. The tea was made of goat milk and booz - of camel meat. This was my first stay in a gher, and the first experience of Mongolian cuisine, I will remember forever. "



"In summer I happened to watch the festive of first airag (mild beverage made of fermented mare's milk) Women were milking mares and the sound of milk dropping to bucks was slowly dissipating in blue skies. "The first milk collected was offered to the nature and then to the hearth. In the back inside the gher old people were sitting and quietly talking. Inside a big caldron a sheep intestines were boiling which looked awful. But

everybody has own tastes and Mongols enjoy eating them. Elder people gave to each a share of the meat and intestines, even the nature got it as this is a custom of nomads to offer some to the spirits.

"In summer nomads eat mostly diary products. There is no lunchtime, and people drink tea with milk and yogurt whenever they want. There is always a pile of boortsog (kind of cakes) on the table and people eat it mixing with fresh cream. "Even alcohol is made of milk. Such food has plenty of milk acid and is good for health.

Probably that is why nomads survived on meat and milk alone for thousands of years.

**Also read in Traveler's Diary:**

- [Foreigners About Mongolia. Part 1](#)
- [Foreigners About Mongolia. Part 2](#)