

bayarsaikhan-bayaraa-2019-05-02.mp4

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:00:10] OK. Uh, I need tell, uh, some history. I grew up in Soviet time. 1960S, 70s. Uh, many educated people, educated in Eastern European countries, and Mongols start eating fish. You know, in the Mongolian flag, right in the center this round, symbols they're, if you're looking in, two fish, together, two fish together, that means. And this is Mongolian flag. These symbols are central since the 13th, 13th century.

James Thull [00:00:57] Ah, look at that.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:00:58] 13th century and longer time.

James Thull [00:01:00] Wonderful. Very nice.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:01:01] This is, inside, this is two fish. Respect fish. We have an, also one thing is, we have a religion, Buddha. And there are two kind of uh buddhas. We have, yellow hats, that's like Tibetan and like, in Northern India, it's the same religion. That's a religion that, uh, it says a Buddha religion says, respect the fish, respect the fish. Not kill anybody. That is our grand, grandfathers, grandmothers, all those people respect the fish. People never fished, never killed until... 1996? 96. I think so. Maybe some people fish too before. Mostly people start fishing 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 80s. Uh, when I started fishing, my story, that uh history and maybe interesting, and my father, he was a PhD, a doctor, a veterinarian. He stayed in Russia in 1960s. He came, I was at this time nine, seven years. Seven, nine years. And the 1970s, early 1970s, my father mostly after degradation in Soviet, in the Russia. He worked with mostly in the countryside. It was his job was agricultural veterinarian, working mostly of countryside, work research, research work. And in summer time, I was out with my father many times in the countryside and he likes fishing. This time he learned spinning fishing. This Soviet time it was popular too. Just people start fishing to learn how to eat the fish in European countries, Eastern European countries, including, you know, fifteen sets in this country, at this time was different system here in Mongolia. Uh, fifteen countries, including East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Soviet Union, and also many countries. And my father was [with] many, many people. I think 70 percent of this time people educated Eastern European countries. You know, people learned to have to eat the fish and [unintelligible]. And my father, he likes eat the fish alone in Russia. My grandfather, grandfather would never eat the fish. I remember I when grow up many time visit my grandfather, grandmother, his mother's land is very beautiful spend in that province. There's many rivers, full canoes, very good fishing. We're going to try to fish in some of them. And the grandfather? They don't like fishing, don't kill fish. No fishing. That is our god.

James Thull [00:04:20] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:04:20] And my father fished and many time I fish too with father. And when I was a kid I started fishing with father. I got some grayling, lenok, some smaller taimen. And when grow up in high school, that's I started fishing. Then I didn't fish long time. Because I stayed in the Russia University. Six years, didn't fish. Long time. And maybe just offhand with the Russians, wintertime fish and ice fishing with, in a small pond and small lakes. Ice fishing. Just for fun with friends, that's all. And then 19- uh, 1990s. Uh, with the friends, the vacation, we to go to the countryside and I fished couple times, caught the taimen, this time spinning fishing. No more kind of fishing. Then I admit, there were millions who's running fishing operation in Mongolia. Sweetwater Travel Company

they're getting [unintelligible] and uh my friend uh Huji, who is owning half the trail company. [Unintelligible], Huji's a partnership with the [unintelligible] millions, and they're running a fishing operation in a river in Mongolia for taimen fishing. And my friend, Huji, suggest me uh working at the guide? And, uh, but that's my fishing starts.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:06:28] Ah, I'm guiding since 1999, now 20 years guiding, fly fishing guide.

James Thull [00:06:34] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:06:41] OK. You know, guiding is, I like. It's like, I'm feeling it. I'm catching fish and feeling. When I, my clients catching fish because I'm giving instructions to people, because taimen is very unique fish is catching and many Western fishermen coming fishing. Mostly from United States and Canada, fishing and we have to fish, have to cast, have to man, have to sink fly, everything fishing techniques be guiding. And when does my clients caught fish? It's, I'm like feeling myself and catching. And also I like when people, when happy. It's, also I'm happy to people is making happy. Happiness. That's, I like guiding.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:07:57] OK. Yes. And mostly I told them before. In mostly Mongolia it was spinning fishing and I was also for, uh, the spinning fishing when I start guiding I started fly fishing. And fly fishing as it came to Mongolia, I think. Nineteen ninety, in the middle of 1990s, and not very popular it was inside, in the fishermen's. And through the social media and through the every information. And many fishermen have the knowledge about the fly fishing, and many people come into fly fishing. It's early 2000s. And many people asking me how to fly fish. 'What is the fly fishing? What is the main goal of fly fishing?' And many people are asking me; this time friends, through their friends, many people asking. And I thought, I need to teach how's to fly fish, mostly, and catch-and-release those before that. It's been a fishing, many fishermen the kept the fish, killing fish. This is why, this, I'm worrying about the killing fish. Cause we have old, wild fish. We don't have natural, uh hatchery fish. We don't have wild fish. All them native fish. Thousand, thousands are they lived this fish here. He should continue to for my kids, continue this fishes, fisheries to kids and generations, next generations. This is our main goal. [Unintelligible] I need to teach the people how to fly fish and also catch-and-release. Very important thing is it, here. For example, this is wild fish and also this, I would say this is territorial fish.

James Thull [00:10:30] Wonderful.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:10:31] Yeah. For example, in the United States and trouts, and the trout; Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout is, some's hatchery, you know, and wild fish and also native, native fish. That is, I need, I decided to teach the people fly fishing. And now every year, increasing interest. People to fly fishing, even in the foreigners. And since last year, [laughs] many foreign people, foreign citizens, going to our fly casting school and learning how to fly fish. And of course, catch and release.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:11:29] OK. During the guiding in my 20 years, fish population is going down. And also, I'm working in a taimen conservation fund, working with the scientists from U.S. through University of Wisconsin, University of Nevada, Reno University and the California State University. Working on 10 years and working in sorting fish, tagging, and population's going down in my-.

James Thull [00:12:11] You see it.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:12:14] I can see it. 20 years when I guided. You know, we can see the fish when the fishing, drive boat. You can see, you look at the fish. Now, how many taimens here? Oh five, six, oh today I count ten, twelve. Today, I cannot count like this.

James Thull [00:12:35] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:12:38] It's population going down. Why? I think is my opinion mm, uh. Pollution river. And the climate is changing. And mining.

James Thull [00:12:52] Ah.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:12:55] Through this man go, is men, a population going down. And also, some rivers is overfishing. Overfishing. For example, Tuul [river] it's starting to be, not better this year. Used to, very good fishing taimen, lenok, grayling. Every freshwater fish there was in the Tuul River. It's 10 miles from here. Now is close to the river, populations, pollutions, overfished. You cannot catch fish. Very difficult. And if you're driving upstream 30 miles, 40 miles. You can just start fishing. You can see fish right? Abo-, downstream river polluted, nothing. It passes big town. You know, it's pollution. A river and very difficult fishing. And down 50, 60 miles down.

James Thull [00:14:07] Mm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:14:11] That means overfishing. Many people coming to fishing. You know, without their knowledge is fishing. And also illegal fishing. Non-Licensed fishing. And what means illegal fishing is, means it's called, it's period time of fishing. Because in Mongolian law we have a [unintelligible] law until 15 June. We cannot fish it's spawning time. Right now, fish is spawning and spawning season and protecting fish at this time. And some people, you know, fishing before the 16th, 15 June, and that's very bad. And called illegal fishing, and, uh, poaching.

James Thull [00:15:11] Mm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:15:11] Now... last 10 years, as city boys, as educated knowledge about the fishing, and, uh, and fishing laws, and many people, I mean city boys and um catch and release. And they tried to, I mean, it is a new generation fishermen is very educated now, is catching and release mostly. And some problem in the countryside even in, along the river, kids they can fish everywhere, and anytime, and they kill. That is my main goal of project working in Taimen Conservation Fund, to educate people in the countryside. Now we educating people in big cities, and big cities is okay. And now men go to countryside, because was living across the river.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:16:33] Okay. Taimen Conservation Fund, uh, founded in 6003 [2003] and still working. And my main goal is Taimen Conservation Fund, and search of the taimen. Uh taimen is the biggest freshwater salmonid in the world. There is a five species of taimen, um Hucho Hucho is a European taimen, in your Alp Mountains and freshwater Alp Mountains. Everything. And I heard this fishing is tough. Some people, uh countries, including Austria, they start a hatch, hatchery in the Danube River in Austria. And. But some countries, including Bavaria, Slovenia, medi- and catch the Hucho Hucho, uh. Other species of taimen; Hucho Ishikawae, and which is in [unintelligible] province,

China. This species of taimen is gone. Overfishing and pollution, everything. And in the culture, people eat the fish in their eastern, southeast Asian countries. There they eat, people fish. Uh, it, this culture is you know, this is gone almost. And also Parahucho Perryi in Sakhalin Island in Russia and not in Japan. And also population, I think is... I don't know yet, but some of them. And, most, uh, one of the species uh taiman is Hucho Taimen. Hucho Taimen is, taimen is living in Mongolia and in Russia, Siberia. That is biggest taimen. But that's taimen about the history. And main goal- sorry too much talking, its uh-.

James Thull [00:18:46] No, no, no, no. It's perfect.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:18:48] The main goal in Taimen Conservation Fund is search taimen. How is the living? How the migration, how the growing? How did, uh mm, you know, is breeding? And everything, searching in scientist. And another goal is a River Keeper program. I'm working in River Keeper program and protect the fish, and working with the rangers, uh patrolling the river against illegal fishing and also advertising and promotion. Illegal fishing. Laos and Mongolia. And billboards, making posters, through the social media important. Everything. And that's my job. And mostly working with the River Keeper program. And also my colleagues, who's working in the searching, and scientists, mostly ecologists, is working with this project and [unintelligible] might protect fish in the River Keeper programs. My, my job.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:20:17] Yeah. Doing the guiding in 20 years, many times, so. Taimen is living in couples. For example, as, as a home pool. Also, uh, taimen is territorial and predator fish. They owning places, like lion in Africa. For example, many taimen, many years, watching and in a home pool, for example, thats five, six fish. This is maybe family fish. One family. Or maybe brothers. I don't know yet. And next pool. Maybe five hundred meters or three miles, next pool, there's another family.

James Thull [00:21:13] Mm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:21:16] Family. And many time I saw, they're living in a couples in the rivers. They're living in, one is up front. I think in a male in the front, protecting. Female maybe three feet, just down and aside. That's, I think is instinct to fish is to protect the female.

James Thull [00:21:45] Mm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:21:47] Yeah. And many time. And when my, uh, fishing operation running the taimen, uh, taimen fish, and mostly fly fishing. No. Only fly fishing and catch and release. Western fishermen is coming and is fly fishing and catch and release. That's the rule of Mongolia, and this operation working in Mongolia. And when you are guiding people. My anglers and my clients, and catching fish and fish is fighting, jumping, running, and many times I saw another couple worrying about running, jumping trying to release. Release, this, his, uh couple. A couple, this was couple yeah, trying to help him, trying to release him and worrying about and jumping all over it and disappearing.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:22:58] Yes, it's very benefit. Uh, it's people, uh learning. How's the fishing, and releasing. Uh, I mean, for example, I was, when I was at work and guiding and the western people in catching and release. It's a very good education for country people, catch and release fish. For example, people fishing in the shore; country people, working herders, and the horseback, kids, mostly important thing is kids. The

young people watching, interesting, how's western people fishing? And the watching and how people uh fish! Caught the fish and the releasing! Is it's very important thing. And second thing is, many fishermen coming here and we're raising money and for Conservation Taimen. From United States, all over the world who came here fishing. Understand is how is important fish and the collecting money, again to raise special organization, and the United States and raise money for protect the taimen in Mongolia.

James Thull [00:24:20] So people have come here to fish, remember the beauty, and the experience and want to preserve that. Well, that's wonderful. That's great.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:24:28] Many fishermen. Uh when I was in, in New Jersey, fly fishing show. I was many times in a New Jersey fly fishing show. This time I met many, many my clients there.

James Thull [00:24:41] Ah!

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:24:41] Yes. Of course it is east coast is many people coming because , uh, travel west coast is too far, coming to.

James Thull [00:24:54] Well that's great.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:24:54] And met the people, and many people, uh, and uh, they're donating, giving money to protect it.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:25:08] Yeah, in the last 20 years, uh uh as uh, uh many things and they changed in Mongolia. Many country people moved to towns and, uh, you know, wilderness. And many, it's almost young people coming to big towns. And there's, another thing is the last 20 years mining is increasing. Gold mining, coal mining. Every mining. And Mongolia has a very rich in, how to say in English, this chemical elements, underground.

James Thull [00:25:57] Yeah, yeah. Mining resources, minerals resources.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:26:01] Mineral resources. Yes, it's many in Mongolia. And mining in my, I worrying about the uh the mining. Some rivers. Gold mining. Gold mining is, now we have many, eh, uh, uh people, country people, local people, now is protecting gold mining protect. And we have law, government law, protect the river, and close the gold mining. There's a river as we are guiding, that in the top section was once gold mining and government did that 10 years ago. It's law against the gold mining in the river system and many people protected now is closed, as many gold mining is closed and I'm happy that.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:27:10] Um. It's a good question. I, when I was with the kids and I start with fishing with father and I like, and also when I am fishing, sometimes, I remember my father. Reminding me back to 70s, 80s, my father, dad. And sometimes funny histories [laughs] and all of us fishing with father. And it's like hobby. And also my job as a fishing guide, and I like my job. I like fishing. That's. [Laughter].

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:28:01] Oh, yes. I have history when I was young. And uh, my father at this time was spinning fishing. I was maybe twelve years or 13 years old. And I hold the father, dad's, rod and, uh, throw the river. And there was a, I don't know what kind of fish, and fish strike, fish on. And I didn't, I didn't crack, maybe I cracked, and I just hard pulled. I didn't know about the fishing, and my father was very angry. Cause you brought

the leader and hooks, tip of hooks in the mouth, fish. This is not good. Because this is, tips of hooks is causing it's very, very dangerous for fish. And my father was very angry, but it's, I'm just jerking. Broke the leader, and fish is gone. That is, I don't have experience cranking and release, cranking and release. [Laughs]. That is, my funny story.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:29:27] Uhh, uh. We have also many fish in the freshwater fish, lenok and the trout. This is trout. This is Siberian trout, just called, lenok is very similar to Brown Trout.

James Thull [00:29:42] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:29:42] One family. And we have grayling. Two different kind, three different kind of grayling. It's mostly Arctic Grayling in, like in Alaska.

James Thull [00:29:55] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:29:55] Arctic Grayling. And we have another species, Mongolian Grayling. This is bigger size and big dorsal fin.

James Thull [00:30:02] Ah ya.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:30:04] Colorful, black and very beautiful. This is called the Mongolian Grayling. And also, we can catch in the freshwater perch, pike, that's mostly five, six fish, we can catch in the freshwater. And many foreign fishermen, I would like to, many foreign fishermen coming to fish in Mongolia. Of course, catching taimen, biggest freshwater salmonid, and also, lenok and grayling is a very good fishing in the summertime.

James Thull [00:30:46] And beautiful fish.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:30:47] Yeah, beautiful fish and very good hatches. And dry fly fishing is very easy. Every cast you could catch. [Laughs] Some rivers awesome. Some rivers, you know, pollution and under the gold mining, and some rivers difficult to catch some fish. Polluted. I'm sad. Everywhere in the world, climate changing. When I was a kid and in the salt, you'd be called Bogert Mountain. There was every small mountain, in between the mountains was, a creek. Creek, creek. I know. We had a cabin in the this side.

James Thull [00:31:42] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:31:44] And every small hill, small mountain, but would call in English between the high peaks and ditch.

James Thull [00:31:52] Valleys. Yeah. Like a little valley.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:31:55] Yeah a little valley and the big ditches.

James Thull [00:31:56] Yeah.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:31:57] Yes. There was a creek, uh now it's gone. Every river when I driving, and driving and mostly fishing in the countryside. Now is it big mats is

disappearing. Disappearing was stocking mat. Funny driving. Stocking mat. Now is no mats in that way.

James Thull [00:32:20] So you've definitely seen the effects of climate change? Here in Mongolia.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:32:23] Yes it's climate changing. Small rivers disappearing. Immigration of fish, and is is also changing.

James Thull [00:32:31] Mhm.

Bayaraa Bayarsaikhan [00:32:33] I think that the fish life is changing.