Basic Mongolian Expressions

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Basic Mongolian Expressions for Peace Corps Trainees in Mongolia

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TRACK 1. WELCOME TO THE MONGOLIAN LANGUAGE.

Thank you for taking the time to study the Mongolian Language. The Mongolian language is considered one of the more difficult languages from the countries the Peace Corps serves. However, it won't be that difficult once you figure out some of the basics elements of the language.

Mongolian is the primary language of Mongolia. By origin, Mongolian is one of the languages in the Mongol group from the Altaic family, a language family which includes Turkish, Manchurian-Tungus, Japanese, and Korean.

Modern Mongolian, based on the Khalkh dialect, developed following the Mongolian People's Revolution in 1921. The introduction of a new alphabet in the 1940s developed along with a new stage in Mongolia's national literary language. Mongolians still use two types of writing: the classical script and the Cyrillic alphabet. The classical Mongolian alphabet, which is written vertically, is a unique script used by speakers of all the various dialects for about a thousand years. In spite of increasing interest in using only the classical alphabet, along with the decision by Parliament to use it for official papers, the majority of Mongolian people use the Cyrillic alphabet, which was adopted in the early 1940s.

The Mongolian language is classified as agglutinative (from the Latin 'agglutinate'-'to stick on'). The most important characteristics of agglutination are:

1. The word stem doesn't change; **instead**, grammatical changes are made by adding (or sticking on) suffixes to the word stem.
2. Every suffix and case ending expresses only one grammatical meaning. Mongolian does not have prepositions. A lot of English prepositions are expressed in Mongolian with a case. The cases demonstrate the kind of relationship the two words have.

Other characteristic features of the language are:

1. ***Word order of a sentence.*** Subjects and objects precede verbs. Verbs are often located at the end of a sentence: *Subject – object - verb*
2. ***Genders*** are based on vowels (masculine, feminine, or neutral). Vowel harmony is the main law of vowels.
3. ***The absence of subject/verb*** agreement and plurals (in most cases). It's common to drop the subject if it's implied. For example:
   What did do yesterday? Instead of 'What did *you* do yesterday?'
   Read some books, washed clothes and cleaned my house. Instead of
   I read some books, washed clothes and cleaned my house.
4. Compared with Indo-European languages, ***nouns that act as verbs*** are much more prevalent than normal nouns.
5. ***Shift of stress***. Stress in Mongolian usually falls on the first syllable of a word.

With the following basic survival phrases we'll try to give you a brief introduction to the Mongolian language. By reading the following pages, and listening to the tape while repeating the phrases and words, you'll see what the Mongolian language looks like and how it sounds.

If you choose to come to Mongolia, you will be provided with more information about the Mongolian language and you'll get a lot of resources to help with your studies. You will also receieve intensive instruction in Mongolian by native speakers during Pre-Service Training. You can use the following books, which are available in the USA:

- MONGOLIAN GRAMMAR by Rita Kullmann and D.Tserenpil
- COLLOQUAL MONGOLIAN by Alan J.K. Sanders and Jantsangiin Bat-Ireedui
- Lonely planet MONGOLIAN PHRASE BOOK

You also can check other resources from the websites:

- www.amazon.com
- www.livelingua.com/peace-corps-mongolian-course.php
- Mongolian Society www.indiana.edu/monsoc/

The pronunciation of the Mongolian dialogues and phrases on these recordings is a little slower than normal speech. This is intended to be helpful to beginning students of the language.

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TRACK 2. MONGOLIAN ALPHABET

The Mongolian alphabet is comprised of 35 letters.

№	Printed	Cursive	English sound	Approximate sound in English word
1	***Аа***	*Аа*	Like 'a short a'	f**a**ther
2	**Бб**	Бб	b	**b**ird
3	**Вв**	Вв	v	**v**ase
4	**Гг***	Гг	g (ck)	**g**et
5	**Дд**	Дд	d	**d**ay
6	***Ее***	*Ее*	y	**ye**ah (ye)
7	***Ёё***	*Ёё*	yo	**yo-yo**
8	**Жж**	Жж	j	**j**eans
9	**Зз***	Зз	dz	**z**oo
10	***Ии***	*Ии*	e	city / **ea**sy
11	**Й**	Й		
12	**Ы**	Ы		
13	**Кк**	Кк	k	**k**ilo
14	**Лл***	Лл	l (lateral-fricative)	**l**aw
15	**Мм**	Мм	m	**m**odern
16	**Нн**	Нн	n (ng)	**n**ame - ha**ng**
17	***Оо****	*Оо*	o (open)	l**aw**
18	***Өө****	Өө	o (closed)	t**o**ne
19	**Пп**	Пп	p	**p**ark
20	**Рр***	Рр	r (rolled)	**r**ather
21	**Сс**	Сс	s	**s**ing
22	**Тт**	Тт	t	**t**all
23	***Уу****	*Уу*	u (open)	**o**ld
24	***Үү****	Үү	u (closed)	s**ou**p
25	**Фф**	Фф	f	**ph**oto
26	**Хх***	Хх	h (hindi)	lo**ch** (Scottish) / **h**orn
27	**Цц**	Цц	ts	l**ts**
28	**Чч**	Чч	ch	**ch**eese
29	**Шш**	Шш	sh	**Sh**ort
30	**Щщ**	Щщ	shch	Engli**sh ch**annel
31	***Ээ***	*Ээ*	e	g**a**te
32	***Юю***	*Юю*	yu	**you**
33	***Яя***	*Яя*	ya	**ya**cht
34	**Ъ**	Ъ	hard sign	
35	**Ь**	Ь	soft sign	

These sounds especially are approximate only; an equivalent sound in English is unusual, or unlikely. When you arrive in Mongolia you will begin to hear these letter sounds more clearly. The sound shown here is close enough to work during the beginning of your studies.

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TRACK 3. PHONETIC DRILLS

1. Listen to the alphabet as many times as you need.

2. Listen and repeat the alphabet below. There are some letters which are written the same as in English, but pronounced differently.

А [ah]	В [ve]	Н [en]	Р [er]
Х [heh]	Е [ye]	С [es]	У [oi]

3. Listen to the sounds of the alphabet and repeat them. Some letters have similar pronunciation to each other.

Ж [dze]	З [ze]	Ц [tse]	Ч [che]	Ш [sh]	С [es]
Х [heh]	Г [g]	К [ka]	Д [de]	Т [te]	
Б [be]	В [ve]	П [pe]	Ф [f]		
О [o]	Ө [ȍ]	У [h]	Ү [ʊ̃]		
А [ah]	Э [a]	И [ea]			

4. Short and long vowels are very important and they change the meaning of a word.

Ав - аав to take - father	нүх - нүүх hole - to move	сэр - сээр wake - backbone
хол - хоол far - meal	ул - уул sole - mountain	өр - өөр debts - different, else

5. Listen to the words and repeat them.

America / American	- Америк	England / English	- Англи
Asia / Asian	- Ази	Europe / European	- Европ
Mongolia /Mongolian	- Монгол	Russia / Russian	- Орос
China /Chinese	- Хятад	Florida	- Флорида
Dollar	- Доллар	Tugrik*	- төгрөг

(*Mongolian currency)

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TRACK 4. GREETINGS AND SAYING FAREWELL.

ENGLISH		MONGOLIAN
Dialogue 1. The following greetings should be used between people meeting for the first time, seeing each other for the first time in a day, or in an official situation.		
A: - Hello, How are you?	- Sain bainuu?	- Сайн байна уу?
B: - Good. How are you?	- Sain. Sain bainuu?	- Сайн. Сайн байна уу?
A: - Good.	- Sain.	- Сайн.
Dialogue 2. The following greetings are used frequently by young people and between friends.		
A: - Hello? How are you?	- Sainuu?	- Сайн уу?
B: - Good. How are you?	- Sain. Sainuu?	- Сайн. Сайн уу?
A: - Good.	- Sain.	- Сайн.
Dialogue 3.		
A: - Hello, How are you?	- Sain bainuu?	- Сайн байна уу?
B: - Hi, How are you?	- Sain. Sain bainuu?	- Сайн. Сайн байна уу?
A: - Good. What's new?	- Sain. Sonin yu bain?	- Сайн. Сонин юу байна?
B: - Nothing much.	- Yumgui taivan.	- Юмгүй, тайван.
A: - Bye. See you later.	- Bayartai. Daraa uulzii.	- Баяртай. Дараа уулзъя.
B: - See you later.	- Daraa uulzii.	- Дараа уулзъя.
Dialogue 4.		
A: - Hello, How are you?	- Sainuu?	- Сайн уу?
B: - Hi, How are you?	- Sain. Sainuu?	- Сайн. Сайн уу?
A: - Good. How's your life?	- Sain. Amidral yamar bain?	- Сайн. Амьдрал ямар байна?
B: - It is OK.	- Dajgui.	- Дажгүй.
Dialogue 5		
A: - How are you?	- Yu bain?	- Юу байна?
B: - I am fine.	- Taivan.	- Тайван.
A: - How's your work?	- Ajil yamar baina?	- Ажил ямар байна?
B: - So so.	- Yahavdee.	- Яахав дээ.
A: - How's your life?	- Amidral yamar baina?	- Амьдрал ямар байна?
B: - It is very good.	- Mash sain.	- Маш сайн.
A: - Goodbye!	- Bayartai.	- Баяртай.
B: - Bye!	- Bayartai.	- Баяртай.

Culture note:

When Americans first meet each other, they say "Nice to meet you." Mongolians don't say anything like this at the beginning of a conversation.

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TRACK 5. EXPRESSING POLITENESS.

Dialogue 1

A: - Thank you.	- Bayarllaa.	- Баярлалаа.
B: - You are welcome.	- Zugair zugair.	- Зүгээр зүгээр.

Dialogue 2

A: - I'm sorry. / Excuse me.	- Uuchlaarai.	- Уучлаарай.
B: - No problem.	- Zugair zugair.	- Зүгээр зүгээр.

Dialogue 3

A: - Are you George?	- Che George munu?	- Чи Жорж мөн үү?
B: - Yes, I am.	- Tiim. Be George	- Тийм, би Жорж.

Dialogue 4

A: - Are you American?	- Che Amerikuu?	- Чи Америк уу?
B: - No, I am not.	- Ugui, Be Amerik bish.	- Үгүй, Америк биш.

TRACK 6. ASKING FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION.

Dialogue 1

A: - What's your name?	- Tanii* ner hen(g) be?	- Таны нэр хэн бэ?
B: - My name is Sean.	- Minii ner Shon.	- Миний нэр Шон.
A: - Where did you come from?	- Ta haanaas irsen be?	- Та хаанаас ирсэн бэ?
B: - I am from America.	- Be Amerikaas irsen.	- Би Америкаас ирсэн.

Dialogue 2

A: - What's your name?	- Taniig hen(g) gedeg wei?	- Таныг хэн гэдэг вэ?
B: - My name is Sean.	- Namaig Shon gedeg.	- Намайг Шон гэдэг.
I am American.	- Be Amerik (hun).	- Би Америк (хүн).
I am not Mongolian.	- Be Mongol (hun) bish.	- Би Монгол (хүн) биш.

Dialogue 3

A: - How old are you?	- Ta heden(g) nastai wei?	- Та хэдэн настай вэ?
B: - I am 25 years old.**	- Be khorin tavan nastai.	- Би хорин таван настай.
A: - What do you do?	- Ta yu hiideg wei?	- Та юу хийдэг вэ?
B: - I'm an English teacher.	- Be angl helnii bagsh.	- Би Англи хэлний багш.
I am a PC Volunteer.	- Be enkh taivnii korpsiin sain durin ajiltan.	- Би Энх тайвын корпусын сайн дурын ажилтан.

* Таны, таныг, та /tanii, taniig, ta/ - is addressed to someone who is older than you.

** When Mongolians first meet foreigners, they typically ask many questions out of curiosity. Some of these questions may seem very personal. For example, they may ask your age or if you are married. To Americans, these types of questions may seem very forward initially, but they are quite common for Mongolians.

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TRACK 7. ASKING ABOUT LANGUAGE ABILITIES.

Dialogue 1

A: - Do you speak English?	Che** angliar yaridag uu?	Чи англиар ярьдаг уу?
B: - I know English well.	Be angel hel sain medne.	Би англи хэл сайн мэднэ.
A: - Do you know Mongolian?	Che** mongol hel medhuu?	Чи монгол хэл мэдэх үү?
B: - I know a little Mongolian.	Be mongol hel jaahan medne.	Би монгол хэл жаахан мэднэ.

Dialogue 2

A: - How do you say it in Mongolian?	Uuniig mongoloor uy geh wei?	Үүнийг монголоор юу гэх вэ?
B: - I'm sorry.	Uuchlaarai.	Уучлаарай.
I don't know Mongolian.	Be Mongol hel medehgui.	Би монгол хэл мэдэхгүй.

Dialogue 3

A: - Do you understand?	Che oilgoj bainuu?	Чи ойлгож байна уу?
B: - I'm sorry. I don't understand.	Ohclaarai. Be oilgohgui bain.	Уучлаарай. Би ойлгохгүй байна.
I'm a foreigner.	Be gadaad hun.	Би гадаад хүн.

**Чиний, чамайг, чи /chenii, chamaig, che/ -is addressed to someone who is younger than you.

TRACK 8. ASKING QUESTIONS.

What?	Yu?	Юу?
What is this?	En yu wei?	Энэ юу вэ?
What is that?	Ter yu wei?	Тэр юу вэ?
Who?	Hen(g)?	Хэн?
Who is he/she?	Ter hen(g) be?	Тэр хэн бэ?
Where?	Haan?	Хаана?
Where is …… …?	… haan baidag wei?	…. хаана байдаг вэ?
Where is the post office?	Shohdan haan baidag wei?	Шуудан хаана байдаг вэ?
To where? (go to)	Haashaa? (yavah)	Хаашаа? (явах)
From where? (come from)	Haanaas? (ireh)	Хаанаас? (ирэх)
When?	Hezee?	Хэзээ?
Why?	Yagaad?	Яагаад?
How?	Yaj?	Яаж?
How much ? / How many?	Heden(g)?	Хэдэн?
How much does it cost?	En yamar unetei wei?	Энэ ямар үнэтэй вэ?
How much is it?	En hed ve?	Энэ хэд вэ?

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TRACK 9. CAN I / MAY I?

* The word 'can' has different meanings depending on context.

Dialogue 1

A: - May I come in?	Orj bolhuu?	Орж болох уу?
B: - Yes, you may	Bolo*n.	Болно.
A: - I have a question.	Nadad asuult bain.	Нада асуулт байна.

Dialogue 2

A: - Can you help me?	Nadad tuslan u?	Надад туслана уу?
B: -Sure	Za, tegii.	За, тэгье.

Dialogue 3

A: - Can you help me?	Nadad tuslahgui yu?	Надад туслахгүй юу?
B: - No. I'm sorry. I can't.	Uuchlaarai. Chadahguine .	Уучлаарай. Чадахгүй нь.

* very short vowel-basically don't say.

TRACK 10. EXPRESSING LIKES/DISLIKES AND FOOD REFERENCES.

It is very tasty.	En ih amttai.	Энэ их амттай.
Are you hungry?	Che ulsej bainuu?	Чи өлсөж байна уу?
I'm hungry.	Be ulsej bain.	Би өлсөж байна.
I'm not hungry.	Be ulsuugui bain.	Би өлсөөгүй байна.
I'm full.	Be tsadsen.	Би цадсан.
Are you thirsty?	Che tsangaj bainuu?	Чи цангаж байна уу?
I'm thirsty.	Be tsangaj bain.	Би цангаж байна.
I'm not thirsty.	Be tsangaagui bain.	Би цангаагүй байна.
What would you like to eat?	Che yu idmeer bain?	Чи юу идмээр байна?
I'd like rice.	Be boudaa idmeer bain.	Би будаа идмээр байна.
I like to eat rice.	Be boudaa idekh durtai.	Би будаа идэх дуртай.
I don't like to eat fat.	Be uukh idekh durgui.	Би өөх идэх дургүй.
What would you like to drink?	Che yu uumaar baina?	Чи юу уумаар байна?
I'd like to drink water.	Be us ohmeer bain.	Би ус уумаар байна.
I like to drink water.	Be us ohkh durtai.	Би ус уух дуртай.
I don't like to drink coffee.	Be koffee oukh durgui.	Би кофе уух дургүй.

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TRACK 11. EXPRESSING YOUR FEELINGS AND WICHES.

I'm happy.	Be bayartai bain.	Би баяртай байна.
I'm sad.	Be setgel tavgui bain.	Би сэтгэл тавгүй байна.
I'm tired.	Be yadarch bain.	Би ядарч байна.
I'm sick.	Be uvchtei baine.	Би өвчтэй байна.
I'm cold.	Be daarch bain.	Би даарч байна.
I'm hot.	Be haluutsaj bain.	Би халууцаж байна.
It's cold.	Huiten bain.	Хүйтэн байна.
It's hot.	Haluun bain.	Халуун байна.
It's nice.	Saikhan bain.	Сайхан байна.
What would you like?	Che yamaar bain?	Чи яамаар байна?
I want to sleep.	Be ontmaar bain.	Би унтмаар байна.
I want to relax.	Be amermaar bain.	Би амармаар байна.
I want to buy this.	Be uuniig avmaar bain.	Би үүнийг авмаар байна.
I want to buy fruit	Be jims avmaar bain.	Би жимс авмаар байна.
I don't want that.	Be khusekhgui bain.	Би хүсэхгүй байна.
I need paper.	Nadad tsaas heregtei baina.	Надад цаас хэрэгтэй байна.
I need to study.	Be davtah heregtei .	Би давтах хэрэгтэй.
Really?	Tiim uu?	Тийм үү?
That's Interesting!	Sonin yum aa!	Сонин юм аа!
That's strange!	Hachin yum aa!	Хачин юм аа!

TRACK 12. EMERGENCY AND SAFETY.

I am not feeling well.	Minii bie saingui bain.	Миний бие сайнгүй байна
I need a doctor.	Nadad emch heregtei.	Надад эмч хэрэгтэй.
I need to call to Peace Corps.	Be enkh-taivnii korps ruu yarih heregtei.	Би Энх тайвны корпус руу ярих хэрэгтэй.
What is the Peace Corps phone number?	Enkh-taivnii korpsiin ytas hed ve?	Энх тайвны корпусийн Утас хэд вэ?
It's an emergency!	Ene bol yaraltai	Энэ бол яаралтай
Help!	Tuslaaray!	Туслаарай!
Please call the police for me!	Tsagdaa duudaarai!	Цагдаа дуудаарай!
Please help me!	Nadad tuslaaray!	Надад туслаарай!
Stop it!	Bolioch!	Болиоч!
Get away!	Holdooch!	Холдооч!

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TRACK 13. FOR YOUR VOCABULARY.

Personal pronouns	***Biyeiin toloonii ug***	***Биеийн төлөөний үг***
I	be	би
You (older than you)	ta	та
You (younger than you)	che	чи
He/she	ter	тэр
We	bid	бид
You (plural)	ta nar	та нар
They	ted nar	тэд

Weekdays

Monday	neg deh uder (lit:the first day)	Нэг дэх өдөр
Tuesday	hoyer deh uder (lit:the second day)	Хоёр дахь өдөр
Wednesday	guraw deh uder (lit:the third day)	Гурав дахь өдөр
Thursday	durew deh uder (lit:the fourth day	Дөрөв дэх өдөр
Friday	taw deh uder (lit:the fifth day)	Тав дахь өдөр
Saturday	hagas sain uder (lit:half good day)	Хагас сайн өдөр
Sunday	buten sain uder (lit:whole good day)	Бүтэн сайн өдөр

Tomorrow	Margaash	Маргааш
Today	Unoodor	Өнөөдөр
Yesterday	Uchigdor	Өчигдөр

Food (general)

Bread	talkh	талх
Meat	makh	мах
Rice	boudaa	будаа
Egg	undug	өндөг

Vegetables:	*Khunsnii nogoo*	*Хүнсний ногоо*
Potato	tumis	төмс
Carrot	lowan	лууван
Tomato	pomidor	помидор
Cabbage	baitsaa	байцаа

Fruits:	*Jims*	*Жимс*
Apple	alim	алим
Orange	apelsin	апельсин
Banana	banan	банан
Grape	usan udzem	усан үзэм

Drinks:	*Uukh um*	*Уух юм*
Soda / coke	undaa	ундаа
Tea	tsai	цай
Coffee	coffee	кофе

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Places	***Gazruud***	***Газрууд***
Peace Corps.	Enh taivnii korps.	Энх тайвны корпус.
bank	bank	банк
shop	delguur	дэлгүүр
restaurant	restran	ресторан
cafeteria	guanz	гуанз
school	surguuli	сургууль
post office	shuudan	шуудан
internet	internet	интернет
toilet/rest room	jorlon /noil	жорлон/нойл

Family members	***Ger buliinhen***	***Гэр бүлийнхэн***
father	aaw	аав
mother	eej	ээж
older brother	ah	ах
older sister	egch	эгч
younger brother	(eregtei) due	(эрэгтэй) дүү
younger sister	(emegtei) due	(эмэгтэй) дүү
grandpa	uwuh	өвөө
grandma	emee	эмээ

TRACK 14. NUMBERS.

1.	neg	нэг
2.	hoyor	хоёр
3.	gurav	гурав
4.	dorov	дөрөв
5.	tav	тав
6.	zurgaa	зургаа
7.	doloo	долоо
8.	naim	найм
9.	eus	ес
10.	arav	арав

10.	arav	арав
20.	hori	хорь
30.	guch	гуч
40.	duch	дөч
50.	tayv	тавь
60.	jar	жар
70.	dal	дал
80.	naya	ная
90.	yer	ер
100	(neg) zuu	нэг зуу
1000	(neg) myanga	нэг мянга
1000 000	(neg) saya	нэг сая

11	arven neg
22	horin hoyor
33	guchin gurav
44	duchin dorov
55	tayvin tav
66	jaren zurgaa
77	dalen doloo
88	nayan naim
99	yeren eus

100 dollars	(neg) zuun dollar
5000 tugriks	tavan myangan tugrik

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TRACK 15. LISTENING PRACTICE - DIALOGUES.

Dialogue 1

A: - What food do you like?	A: - Che yamar hoolond durtai wei?
B: - I like vegetables. How about you?	B: - Be nogoond durtai. Harin ta?
A: - I like meat food.	A: - Be mahan hoolond durtai.
A: - Do you have sisters?	A: - Che egchtei yu?
B: - I don't. But, I have brothers.	B: - Baihgui, harin bi ahtai.
A: - How many brothers do you have?	A: - Che heden ahtai wei?
B: - Two	B: - Hoyor.

In the grocery store

A: - How much is a bottle of water?	A: - Us yamar unetei wei?
B: - 450 (tugrik)	B: - 450 (durven zuun tavin tugrik)
A: - I'll take 2 bottles.	A: - Hoyor us avii
A: - Do you have fruit?	A: - Jims bain uu?
B: - No, we don't	B: - Baihgui
A: - How much is the cola?	A: - Cola hed wei?
B: - 620 (tugricks)	B: - 620 (zurgaan zuun horin tugruk)
A: - I'll take	A: - Za avii.
B: - Here is your change.	B: - Mai, hariultaa av.

In the post office

A: - How much is it to send a letter to overseas?	A: - Gadaad zahia yamar unetei wei?
B: - 980	B: - 980 (yesun zuun naya)
A: - May I see stamps and post cards?	A: - Ene mark, il zahidliig uzej boloh uu?
B: - Yes, please	B: - Bolon
A: - How much are these stamps?	A: - Ene marknuud yamar unetei wei?
B: - 1000	B: - 1000 (myanga)
A: - I'll buy them.	A: - Bi avii.

In the local cafeteria

A: - Here's the menu.	A: - Mai, ene hoolnii tses
B: - Thank you.	B: - Bayarllaa.
A: - What would you like to order?	A: - Ta yu zahialah wei?
B: - Chicken.	B: - Tahia.
A: - Sorry, we don't have chicken today.	A: - Uuchlaarai, onoodor tahia baihgui.
B: - So. What do you have today?	B: - Tegeed onoodor tanaid yu baigaam bei?
A: - Buuz and tsuivan.	A: - Buuz, tsuivan I bain.
B: - Let me have 10 buuz and a cup of milk tea.	B: - Arvan buuz, neg ayag suutei tsai avii.

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