



*Mr. B. Tuvdendorj, national wrestling champion
(seven times), first sport master of Mongolia*

WRESTLING TITLE RECITATION

The wrestling title recitation is an art of song which has the melody and verse. The wrestling ceremonial dance has the characteristics of a traditional dance. But the wrestling itself represents a martial art that challenges one's readiness and power. This shows a connection between bodily movement, song, and music that reflects characteristics of compound arts when games, drama, and rituals were still deeply interconnected.

The wrestling title is recited by two *zasuuls*, (wrestler's seconds) one standing on the right side of the match ground and the other on the left side, making for a spectacular feature of this ritual. There is no title, however, that is recited for the last two wrestlers remaining in the wrestling match.

In Mongolian wrestling, the titles are recited at the beginning of all the odd-numbered rounds, starting from the third one, to the wrestlers standing in lines aligned on the left and right sides. The greatest and most famous wrestler shows up at first in the left line, and has his title recited. To start reciting the title, the *zasuul* calls out, saying, "Attention to the *zasuul* on the right side," with melodious and loud voice, and the *zasuul* on the right-side responds, "Yes" or "I am listening." In return, the first *zasuul* improvises an overview of the festive event and, if the top wrestler is a champion, he recites his title:

Garuda winged
Exceptionally mighty
Vanguard of all wrestlers
Nationally famous
Winner at the national wrestling championships
Exclusive from all
Invincible
Vigorous
And renowned
Thrice a nation-wide champion

At the end of the title recitation, the wrestler then enters the arena. This recitation of the wrestler's title has a double function. It defines the wrestler's success, physical strength, and quickness, as well as his accomplishments through progressively higher rankings in a lyrical manner; but it also serves to encourage and inspire the wrestler for the match. Specific verses are recited to each wrestler, depending on each wrestler's rank. Additional epithets are used to praise their strength, tactics, physical appearance, characteristics, and behaviours. For instance, '*ulam nemekh*' (more advancing) refers to those who achieve constant progress in terms of his wrestling accomplishments, whereas '*saruul shalamgai*' (robust and expedite) refers to those who are agile in wrestling and resourceful in any situation.

In accordance with ancient beliefs in the magical powers of words, the wrestler's title originated with an initial dedication of blessing and a wish for the power and cleverness to the wrestler. This feature is visible particularly in the mode of wrestler's title recitation. The title recitation requires the professional skill from the *zasuul*. The person who recites the title has to foremost have a crystal-clear voice and a singer's talent to pronounce the title verses with clarity and to melodiously describe various movements of wrestling, rank and fame of the wrestler.

Wrestler's title epithets

Highly ebullient
Magnificently robust
Eagerly expeditious
Apparently mighty
More promising
Favourably titled wrestler
Clearly perspicacious
Amazingly enterprising
Conqueringly mighty
Dauntlessly mighty
Gracefully elephant titled wrestler

Once again rejoicing
Firmly trustful
Admirably wrestling
Quick-moving
Eagle-winged
Vigorously lion titled wrestler

Garuda flapped
Exceptionally mighty
Vanguard of all wrestlers
Nationally famous
Winner at national wrestling
Exclusive from all
Invincible
Vigorous
All renowned
Thrice-nationwide champion,