Additional Material collected by Survey Team

Attachments:
Data from the book ‘Bayanjargalan sum baga toli’, D. Lonjid, Mandalgovi, 2004, p. 4. The 4th incarnation of Lovon lam, Agvaandanzannyam, Lovon khuvilgaan, was born in 1882 and was accepted as an incarnation at the age of 12 at the monastery Uuliin jas. Later he went to Baruun Choir monastery where he took the exams for ravjamba and agramba. He got the rank of Tсорж with privileges like sitting on 7 pillows from the Bogd khan. He was executed in 1937 at his age of 55.
As the 5th incarnation, Batmönkh from Tsagaandelger sum was accepted.

There was an annual ceremony on the 17th of the last summer month, on the monastic site when the surveyors visited. The monks who do not belong to the monastery but study in Ulaanbaatar, provided valuable information about the temples, which once stood at this site. One of them, Molom showed the surveyors which foundation was which temple. He is in the revived Baruun Choir monastery (ДУЦД 075) The new stupa, erected on site of the philosophical monastic school (Choir) has the following inscription: Боржигин-у Багудун жанжун чойр эне-дүн байбай, 1754-1938, i.e. it indicates that the monastery operated from 1754-1938. The stupa was erected in 1990/1991 in memory of the monks from this monastery. The main assembly hall was situated in front of the Choir, while Badamyogo datsan stood in the far West of the site and the Düinkhor datsan stood in the north. The raised ground areas indicate 3 smaller temples and probably a small stupa and a prayer wheel stood east of the philosophical monastic school. There are signs of many courtyards, yurts and buildings where monks lived. There is an ovoo on Ölıziit tovgo south of the complex. The main assembly hall and the philosophical school were extremely large. A monk said that Mamba datsan, Lamrim and Agva jas stood southeast from the main assembly hall.

Interview A63
According to Kh. Lodoijamts (born 1920) who was a monk of Baruun Choir between his the age of 10 to 18, the monastery had 7 monastic schools (datsan): Choir (philosophy), Mamba (medical), Lamrim (gradual path), Düinkhor (Kalachakra), Yog (yoga), Ag (Tantra) and Gürem (healing practices). The monastery was established more than 200 years ago. Its main protector was Khandam. Sharavjamts was the abbot of the monastery (Choirin khamba). Lodoijamts monk himself belonged to the philosophical monastic school. Tsam dance was held in the summer. Maitreya’s sculpture was circumambulated on the 15th of the last summer month. The volumes of the Kanjur were circumambulated, too. Khailen summer retreat was held in the Khailengiin dugan. On the west the ovoo of Ikh Zalaa was worshipped. The zod masters had a separate temple on the west. Khandmaas did not belong to the assembly. Some stupas stood in the monastic complex. A well called Düültsengiin khudag stood on the north-east, where the sand of the sand mandala (TIB: rdul-mtshon) was ritually thrown. The monastery closed in 1937. Maitreya temple also belonged to the temple. Kh. Lodoijamts monk is the present abbot of Зүүн Janjin Choir khii, which is situated in Choir city of Govisümber aimag.

Interview A67
Interview made with Agvaandarjaa monk.
The informant now lives in the centre of Tsagaan delger sum, and is a monk of the revived temple, Gandanravjaalin. He is presently about 85-86 years old. He became a monk at Baruun Choir at the age of about 10, and studied for 12 years there. He belonged to the Choir Datsan, and was studying at the Lorig Zindaa (philosophical class called Lorig) when the monastery was closed.
Apart from listing some of the temples of Baruun Choir (choir, tsogchin, ag, lamrim), the surveyors could get no other information from him, because of his old age. (The surveyors were not able to take his picture.)

According to the local governor (sumin darga), on the 15th of August in 2007 (a short time after the surveyors visited on the site) a new memorial statue was to be erected near the monastery site. It was to be on the place called Muushgia Zandan, which is where three famous incarnated monks (Khuvilgaan) were born on the same place, on the same dwelling (buuts). After that, a Naadam festival was to be held.

#001
Data from the book ‘Dundgovi aimagiin toli’, Mandalgovi, 2002, on Baruun Choiriin khhid

Written by Krisztina Teleki and Zsuzsa Majer
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Additional Material collected by Survey Team

The first ceremony was held in this monastery in 1754 (wooden dog year of the 13th cycle) when 7 monks gathered. B. Dagdandorj who held the title janjin beil gave permission to found the monastery, and Yadamjav, also known as Erdene Jonon Khuntaij, gave donations. It was founded in Tsagaandelger sum (in the present division), on an area currently part of Jargalan bag (subdivision) on a place called Ükher büg. The abbot (khamba) became Aranjamba Güngaaajaltsan. First, the monastery was moving from place to place. The first place it was founded was called Mushgia Zandan. In 1791 (iron pig year of the same cycle) a philosophical monastic school (choir) was founded here, which followed the tradition of the Baldandashgomonlin monastery in Tibet. The monastery was named as Gandantegchinlen. In 1850 (14th cycle, iron dog year) the Tsogchin temple was founded, than the following temples in the following years:
1846 (fire horse year) Avga datsan
1858 (earth horse year) Nügneen datsan
1864 (wooden rat year) Mamba datsan
1865 (wooden ox year) Düinkhor datsan
1868 (earth dragon year) Lamrim datsan
(fire rat year) Yogiin datsan

The Tsam dance was performed first in the fire hare year of the 15th cycle. There were different types of Tsam dances performed, for example Maidariin Tsam (Maitreya). There were 9 monastic schools and about 20 smaller temples. There were about 900 monks. There were the following temples: Ganjuur, Danjuur, Lamtnii, Maidariin, Üüdnii, Khailengiin and every monastic school had Gürem temples and temples for reading texts on individuals' requests.

From its founding onwards, it had 31 heads during its 185 years. The last abbot was Luvsanperenlei. Many famous monks belonged to the monastery such as Lovon Khuvilgaan Dorjjantsan, Sanjaadagva, Danzanyam, Ishchültem who was a Gürten, Danzanyarinpil, Sharavjamts. There were many famous doctor monks, such as Maaramba Sodov, Güngaa, Genden Tsogol, Danzandarjaa, Gonchigchültem. A famous astrologer was Jambalgarav. Naichün deity was propiciated here. The first mediator1 (gürten) was found in 1818, who worked for 25 years. He was called Luvsanbaldan. The next gürten-s were Güngaa, Danzannyam, Sanjaadagva.

In the period between 1937-38, 83 high ranking or qualified monks were arrested at this monastery. 12 from among them returned after about 10 years in prison, while all the others were executed or disappeared.

The monastery was closed on the 15th of the first summer month in 1938. In 1990 its revival was initiated by local old people and old monks and a new temple was erected in the sum centre of Tsagaandelger. Also in 1990 a memorial stupa was erected on the old monastery site. A big stupa for the memory of the executed monks was erected in 1998.

Interview with Möriin Samdan lama #003
28 March 2006/
Ulaanbaatar, made by Zsuzsa Majer and Krisztina Teleki

M. Samdan monk presently belongs to Gandan monastery, Ulaanbaatar. He was born in 1918 and became a monk of Borjignii Baruun Choir (Janjnii Baruun Choir) when he was 7 years old. He claims that about 1,000 monks belonged to this monastery with some famous saints and reincarnations such as Lovon Khuvilgaan. There were 7 monastic schools in the monastery, namely the philosophical monastic school (Choir), which had a 2-3 storey temple housing 7-800 monks, the tantric monastic school (jüd) with 100 monks, the medical monastic school (mamba) with 100 monks, the gradual path monastic school (Lamrim) with 100 monks, the Kalachakra monastic school (Düinkhor) with 100 monks and Badamyogo monastic school. There was also the main assembly hall (Tsogchin), which was a one-storey building. All the temple buildings were made of wood. The Choir temple was a 2 storey building. The Choir followed the system of Güncchin igchaa philosophical manual book. Domii damjaa and Gavjiin damja philosophical exams were held there. The Maaramba exam was held in the medical monastic school. The main protector of the monastery was Khandam. There were 4 stupas one each on the 4 directions. Tsam dance was held on the 8th of the middle autumn month with the participation of 30 monks. The 10 wrathful deities appeared in the dance, for example Khandam and Gombo.

1 Note: This is similar to a Shaman, a mediator of Heaven and Earth, or Gods and people.
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Additional Material collected by Survey Team

Maitreya’s sculpture was circumambulated in the first summer month. Kanjur’s volumes were circumambulated once a year, in summer.

Khailen summer retreat was held with the participation of about 60 monks in summer.

About 30 zoch masters belonged to the monastery. They had a separated temple: Lamrim datsan. Women masters did not belong to the monastery. There were no aimags for monks as monastic residences were arranged in accordance with their monastic schools.

According to Samdan monk every monk had to participate in the winter ceremony (Tsagaan sar), which was held in the main assembly hall. Ceremonies were held in every temple following their own systems: philosophy, tantra, etc.

Badamyogo temple was situated far in the west of the other temples. It was a red coloured temple. On the east Tsogchin, Choir, Jüd and Mamba stood. In front of Jüd temple stood the Düinkhor temple. Lamrim temple was situated in front of Manba datsan (see drawing!).

The following high-ranking monks belonged to the monastery Khamba (‘abbot’), Lovon (‘master’), Tsorj (‘master of religion’), 2 chanting masters and 2 disciplinary masters belonged to the main assembly hall.

The monastery was closed in 1937.

Züün Choir was about 70-80 km east of Baruun Choir monastery. He visited the monastery which consisted of about 10 temples. The monastery had an own abbot.

<1 page „drawing”>

Data from the interview made with Banzariin Shiravnamjil monk if Dashchoinkhorlin monastery of Zuunmod (Töv aimag)
2006.03.25., 2007.05.18.
Interviews recorded by Zsuzsa Majer and Krisztina Teleki

The informant, who was born in 1921, belonged to the monastery of Borjignii Baruun Choir or Tsagaandelgeriin Choir from the age of 6 or 7 to the age of 18-19 (1937). According to him, the monastery was founded 200-300 years ago.

There were about 1,000-1,200 monks in the monastery.

The head of the monastery was Lovon Khuvilgaan. He was executed during the purges. He was the 12th or 13th reincarnation (the informant was not sure). The monastery was situated in the area of the old Borjigin Tsetsen Vangii Khoshuu.

There were 6 or 7 monastic schools or big temples in the complex: Tsogchin, Choir (the biggest one, philosophical one, with 7-900 monks), Mamba (medical, with 300 monks), Agva or Jüd (Tantric), Düinkhor or Zurkhai (Kalachakra or astrology, with 300 monks), Badamyogo (where Tsam preparations were held and Tsam dance was organized, with 2-300 monks), Lamrim Datsan (with about 300 zoch masters who performed Lüijin rituals). The Tsogchin temple was very big with 3 doors. The temple buildings were made of wood, in Tibetan style (Note: the informant said Tibetan style like the buildings in Gandan (Ulaanbaatar)- but that is not Tibetan style).

The temple buildings were surrounded by a wall. Wood for temple buildings was taken from the Khangai Mountain.

There were 4 living areas for monks (but these were not called aimags) around the monastery.

The agricultural areas and pastures of the monastery were situated in Töv aimag. In the monastery it was possible to take exams like Gavj, Dom, Agramba, Maaramba. Monks used to come for philosophical debates from Ikh Khüree and other monasteries. Also itinerant monks (badarchin) came to visit. Also high ranked monks came from time to time, and they used to give teachings and initiations or empowerments (Lün, Van, Jenan). The main protector deity of the Choir Datsan (which the informant himself belonged to) was Khandam with his two attendants (nökhör), the three deities being called together as Khandam Choinkhor süm.

Protector deities (Choijin) were propitiated in the monastery. There was a Tibetan master in the monastery, with the rank of Maaramba or Lkhaaramba.

There was Maitreya circumambulation (Maidar Ergekh) and Tsam dances (on the 8th of the middle summer month). In autumn a different Tsam was held. During the Maitreya circumambulation monks stopped at the 4 directions, performed a libation ceremony (tüü) and performed incense rituals (san). (This is usual practice during this circumambulation.)

During the Tsam different deities appeared, like 4 skeletons (Khokhimoi), two monkeys (Mich), two characters called Jiwa Dedüüg, the Old White Man (Tsagaan Ovgön), Khashin Khaan and his 6 children, the wrathful deities like Choijoo, Mahkgal, Gombo and Khadam.

The Tsam dance was organised by Badamyogo datsan, and the Sor was also prepared there. The Ganjuur Ergekh
Additional Material collected by Survey Team

ceremony (Ganjuur circumambulation) was also performed in the monastery, when weather conditions required. The informant claimed that in the middle summer month for 45 days (it was Molom (TIB: smon-lam, ‘prayer’) ) there was a rest period, when they went to the countryside Jas monasteries to held ceremonies, and when they returned the autumn Tsam ceremony was held.

Khailen ceremony was also held according to the informant. It was held in Choir datsan. After the lunar new year, Tsagaan sar, the Choinpürel Molom Yerööl ceremonies were held for 15 days as usual. On the Eve of the lunar new year a ceremony for Baldan Lkham was performed. Zolgokh greetings were held on the morning of the first day. During the winter ceremonies there were 6 chanting masters (unzad), a Lovon, a Tsorj and 4 Kambia (abbot, probably separate abbots of the datsans). There were separate Jas financial units for the different datsans and San-s (treasuries).

There were 3 wells or waters around the monastery.

On the south the water called Muushgia Us, on the west another and the third well on the north-east (Öndög Shandan Shiree Khudag).

A new stupa was erected in the year of the white horse on the old monastery site. The monastery was revived in the sum centre of Tsagaandelger. The informant participated at the ceremonies there and about 8-10 years ago he moved to Zuunmod in Töv aimag.

According to him, Züün Choir monastery was situated about 30 kilometres from Baruun Choir. Many small Jas temples on the countryside came under Baruun Choir monastery, where monks went in the summer to hold ceremonies for some days. One of them was Dari Ekhiin Jas (ДУЦД 072), a small temple where monks of Baruun and Züün Choir gathered together.

According to the informant, the monastery was closed in 1937, when he was 18-19 years old.

Interview with Ishbaldan monk
(A68-A69)

Ishbaldan monk (born 1916) is the present abbot of the revived Baruun Choir monastery (ДУЦД 075). He joined to the old Baruun Choir monastery when he was 8-9 years old. Later, he studied in the philosophical monastic school (Choir). According to Ishbaldan monk the philosophical school had 1,000 monks and its system followed the Günchin igchaa manual. Ishbaldan monk took Domii damjaa exam in the philosophical monastic school. He learnt Parchin for four years.

The main protector of the monastery was Khandam. The stupa, which stands presently on the old monastic site, was erected on the site of the old philosophical monastic school. The main assembly hall was situated in front of the philosophical school. East of the philosophical school Ag, Mamba and Lamrim were situated. Mamba and Lamrim stood separately. On the north of the complex a wooden fence, called Bogdiin shar khashaa was situated. Yogo datsan was situated on the west. All the 7 temples had their own financial unit (jas).

On the 29th of the last autumn month sor (TIB: zor) was burnt and Tsam dance was performed. Jamsran, the Red Protector appeared in the dance. Tsam dance was maybe performed in front of Ag tantric temple. Zod /zoch tantric masters held their ceremonies in Lamrim datsan. In Züün Choir (of Govi-Sümber aimag) there weren’t any zoch masters. Khandam ceremony was held in the middle of the 9th month (after the 10th).

Stupas were situated on the 4 sides of the monastery, a bit far.

Baljir lam guai was the abbot of the monastery. There were other famous monks, such as Lügvin(?) lam, Buyan lam, Ikh Tsagaan lam, etc.

Ishbaldan monk didn’t eye witness the prophecy of Choijin made in a trance, but he had heard about this event.

There were no lay people living near the monastery, nor any Chinese. Only monks lived there.

The mountains and ovoos worshipped by the monks were as follows: Nor büree, Bayan uul, Tsagaan Khairkhan, Baga Tsagaan uul, and Ikh Zala uul. There were many territorial or local assemblies (jas) (otog etgiin jasuu), such as Lovongiin jas, Bayan uulii jas / Tulgiin jas, Khongor tolgoin jas, Baruun Cheejin, etc. These small assemblies were not permanently active. There was only one takhilch monk (i.e. offering preparer) in each of these temples preparing offerings to the Buddhas and deities and keeping the mönkh zul (eternal lighting butter lamp) lit. Monks from Baruun Choir went to these places in summer to hold ceremonies. These 4 or 5 days ‘excursions’ were called Molom (‘Prayer’), as monks recited prayers at these smaller temple sites. After this 45 day period Maitreya’s statue was circumambulated and Khailen summer retreat started (and lasted for another 45 days). These small assemblies were closed when Baruun Choir monastery was closed. He said that Baruun Choir closed in the 1920’s but he most probably confused the date. Ishbaldan monk participated in the revival of Baruun Choir in the sum centre. It had 40 old monks in 1990, and Ishbaldan monk was the youngest one among them. See ДУЦД 075 for further information.

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Additional Material collected by Survey Team

Interview A70

Ishbaldan monk adds that monks with gevsh, gavj and aravjamba degree were part of this monastic community. Philosophical exams (gevsh and gavj), and tantric exam (agrambiin damjaa) were held annually. There were otoch monks (doctor) with a maaramba degree.

There were no Tibetan monks in the monastery. Monks of Bogdiin Khüree visited the monastery many times. Famous monks of the monastery were for example Lüngiin lam, Sharavjamts, Bayangiin lam guai, Baldan puntsog doorombo, Jamiiyaa zoch. There were 4 wells in the 4 side of the monastery: Nariin us was on the east, Muushgaaiin us on the south, and other two, one on the west near the monastery and another one on the northeast.

The biggest jas was those of the Choir and the Ganjuur temples. The abbot of the monastery did not have a bigger residence. He resided in a yurt just like other monks. There were 4 prayer wheels on the 4 sides of the monastic complex. The yellow fence north of the complex (Bogdiin shar khashaa) had a large gate. The fence was named after the Bogd. When he visited the monastery he came from the north from Bogdiin khüree and entered the gate. Düinkhor temple was the last temple to be built in the complex, and the Choir temple was the most beautiful. All temples were white, except the Yogo temple which was painted in red. The fence on the north side (Bogdiin shar khashaa) was painted yellow. The monks’ robes were mainly the simple del (jigüün deel) but on special ceremonies monks could wear more elaborate deel with velvet edge. The high-ranking monks had even more decorative garments.

Baruun Choir was a strict monastery with many sculptures and sutras. There were strict rules. Monks lived mainly in yurts with one novice in each. The monks’ families came to visit the monastery bringing dairy products, animals, etc. from the countryside. Some monks had a wife and these monks lived in the countryside and came to the ceremonies in the morning and went home in the evening. The rules of the monastery were very strict. Every temple had disciplinary masters having this rank for a year. Then, they were changed. The disciplinary masters were monks with agramba tantric degree. Every temple had a disciplinary master and 2-2 chanting masters. However, the main assembly had 4 disciplinary masters and many chanting masters. There were high ranks such as Khamba, Tsorj, Lovon (not every datsan had a lovon). Jinsreg fire-offering was performed, but not before the Tsam dance. Güreg ceremony was held in Lamrim temple. Nyamba was held during the ceremonies and in winter. The ceremony in honour of the 10 wrathful deities (Choijidsarnag), Khuuchin khural ceremony, was held before the Lunar New Year and Yerööl was held on the first 15 days of the Lunar New Year. The herds and flocks of the monastery were herded in the countryside.

Tsam dance lasted only for one day, Shor was burnt during it. There was no communal meditation session for the monks, each one doing it on their own. Black Hat dancers and the 10 wrathful deities appeared in the dance.

<3 pages printed Mongolian>