Current situation (2004)

At this site there are very few remains beyond a number of stone outlines on the ground indicating where buildings had been in the past. There is also a working well. There are many fragments of statues lying on the ground in one part of the site; this could be the place where the monastery artefacts were burned at the time of the destruction e.g. sutras, paintings, statues etc. It is alleged that this was a common practice at that time i.e. before a monastery was destroyed the Socialists emptied it of all its contents, threw them into a pile and burned them.

Source(s): Khamba Lama of Ikh Shaviin Khuvilgaan Lhavin Dash Peljeelin Khiid (the successor of Bambar Erdene Khuvilgaan Lamin Khiid)

Oral Histories

Oral Histories states that the monastery was established in 1846 by the 5th (?) reincarnated lama, Avgaan Luvsan Dandav, together with the governor and administration staff of the province (named as Dorigjav, Gavjaljir, Tuvdin and Demelig). The first monastery building was a ger in the midst of four settlements and it was here they started ‘reading books’ and chanting. Lay people began making offerings of livestock and other goods so the monastery prospered. A year later, in 1847, the disciples (monks and laypeople) sponsored 7 temples, a kitchen and a storage place. At its height 300-400 monks were attached to the monastery.

The process of destruction began in 1928 with the final devastation in 1937 when there were about 280 monks. Most of them were arrested and taken to prison where they died. Of the total only 10 monks were not arrested and three of them are alive today (2004).

In 1937 the 6th reincarnated Lama, Luvsangombotsogmed, known as ‘Tsegmed’ to his parents, was the head of the monastery. He was recognized as the 6th reincarnation when he was three years old by the usual procedure of selection. He was 18 years old when he was arrested and taken to Russia where the members of the Office of Internal Affairs shot him. When he was arrested he said ‘The state might kill me, but what would you do if this monastery is reopened in the future?’

The name of the first incarnation was Bambar Erdene. Erdene is an honorific title similar to ‘Khuvilgaan’ or ‘Tulku’ meaning ‘torch’. Bambar Erdene was one of the 4 monks who were chosen to carry the torches burning with eternal light. They put torches on two trees in front of the monastery. The third reincarnated Lama came from the present Dornogovi province. He was found when he was 5 years old and died in 1849. The original records of the monastery were burned. The information provided by the State Archives is contradictory as it is based on three different calendars. The succession of the reincarnated lamas is still controversial.

Source(s): Khamba Lama of Ikh Shaviin Khuvilgaan Lhavin Dash Peljeelin Khiid (the successor of Bambar Erdene Khuvilgaan Lamin Khiid)