

## Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UB 013 Migjidjanraiseg datsan in Gandan Monastery (UB 01)

Rinchen 913 - Janraisig datsan

Migjidjanraiseg datsan

Tibetan name: mig 'byed spyan-ras gzigs grwa-tshang

English name: Migjid Janraiseg Temple, Avalokiteshvara Temple

Mongolian translation: Melmiigeeree bolgooson süm

This temple is situated in Gandan monastery.

**Data provider:** Dashtseren lama of Züün Khüree Dashchoilin monastery (Born 1921)

**Sources:** Daajaw, B., "Megjidjanraiseg", in: Dashnyam, L. (ed.) *Mongol nutag dakh' tүүkh soyoliin dursgal. Sedewchilsen lawlakh*. Mongoliin Khүmүүнligiin Ukhaanii Akademi. Ulaanbaatar 1999, pp. 261-262.

Pүrew, O., *Mongol töriin golomt*. Ulaanbaatar 2004

Sereeter, Ö., *Mongoliin Ikh Khüree, Gandan khiidiin түүхөн бүтэсiin towch*. 1651-1938. Ulaanbaatar 1999

Painting by Jүgder (1913)

**Photos:** Tsүltem (36, 82, 91, 180, 182, 185), Maidar (61), Sereeter (74), Film Archive (K24236, K24735), Shepetilnikov (85), Dashnyam (262)

This imposing building, which became a symbol of Mongolian independence, is a temple dedicated to the honour of Avalokiteshvara (*Janraiseg*, Tib. *spyan-ras gzigs*), the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

### History

The temple, which is a mixture of Tibetan and Chinese styles, was built behind *Gүngachoilin datsan* and *Lamrin datsan* of Gandan monastery (for details see entry UBR 912 Rinchen 912). Its foundation stemmed from the time when the 8<sup>th</sup> Bogd khaan's eyesight was seriously affected in 1911. Mongolian clerics and princes asked the Bogd khaan what would help to heal his eyes. The Bogd khaan declared if Mongolians built an eighty cubit high statue (c. 26 metres) of *Janraiseg* (Tib. *spyan-ras-gzigs*, Skr. Avalokiteshvara), the Bodhisattva who looks on all sentient beings with great compassion, his eyesight would improve. On 29<sup>th</sup> November 1911, Mongolians conferred the ultimate rights of the Bogd khaan, until this time borne by the Manchu emperor (as Mongolia was not a separate state, but part of the Ching empire), to the 8<sup>th</sup> *jewtsүndamba khutagt*. Chinese builders using copper from Doloon nuur ('Seven Lakes', name of a lake in Inner-Mongolia) built the *Janraiseg* statue in 1911 to 1912 with the gilding being done by Mongolian and Chinese masters. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1913 the statue was consecrated. The measurement used for the planning and building of the statue was based on a measurement of the Bogd khaan's forearm. (*tokhoi*, 'forearm' was a traditional Mongolian way of measurement.) Ten thousand statues of *Ayuush* or *Tsewemed / Tsegmid* (Tib. *tshe-dpag-med*, Skr. Amitayus) made by Mongolian and Polish masters surrounded the statue. The distinctive Tibetan shaped brick built temple with Chinese roof also contained one thousand copies of the Prajnyaparamita sutra (*Yum*, Tib. *yum*, 'Verses of Eight Thousand') printed by bronze blocks, and the eight stupas marking the events in Buddha Shakyamuni's life.

According to Sereeter (pp.72-74.), the idea for building the statue first occurred in 1905. Notwithstanding this, it was only in 1911 that the people of the four *Khalkha* aimags and the subordinates of the *jewtsүndamba khutagt* (*Ikh shaw'*) donated 33,000 *lan* silver to celebrate the independence of Mongolia from the Manchu overlordship, which had just been gained. The main tutelary deity of the temple was *Jigjid* (Tib. '*jigs-byed*, Skr. Bhairava, epithet of Yamantaka) and its main protector was *Gombo* (Tib. *mgon-po*, Skr. Mahakala). The following financial units belonged to the temple: *Ikh jas*, *Mönkh zuliin jas*, *Janraisegiin nүnnain jas*, *Da-nin-ag khurliin jas*, *Mönkh Dorjzodwiin jas*, *Dörwön lamiin Gүнregiin jas*. According to Dashtseren lama, there were ceremonies held here regularly and the temple had one disciplinary master.

The communists destroyed the original statue in 1938 and metal from it was used to make bullets for guns. The temple itself was not destroyed and, according to Pүrew (*Mongol töriin golomt*, pp. 73-74.), it was used as a military barrack from 1938. Pүrew claims (*Mongoliin улс төриin төw*, p. 56.) that 10,000 *tögrögs* were offered to pull down the temple in the 1950s, but nobody applied. From the 1950s it functioned as the State Archive and it was renovated in 1962, 1971 and 1973.

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### Current situation

In 1988, the Mongolian Culture Foundation initiated the reconstruction of the central statue, supported by P. Ochirbat who became the first President after 1990. The building of the present statue by Mongolian masters using copper from the Erdenet mines, began in 1991 funded in part by generous donations of around 350 million *tögrögs* from Mongolian devotees. His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama consecrated the part-built statue in August 1995 when he was in Mongolia and conducted the Kalachakra initiation (*Düinkhoriin wan*), too. In 1996 the precious statue was completed under the leadership of G. Pürewbat lama and his students in the Mongolian Institute of Buddhist Art (*Mongoliin burkhanii shashnii urlakhui ukhaanii deed surguul'*) with the formal opening ceremony led by President Orchibat taking place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the last autumn month. A set of the *Ganjuur* and *Danjuur* and other religious scriptures, tons of herbs and incense, a complete yurt along with its furniture, and other objects were placed inside the statue, according to the requirements for the preparation and dedication of holy statues or stupas. The eighty cubit or twenty-six metre high figure of *Janraiseg* is decorated with precious stones and is gilded in gold. It is surrounded by prayer wheels and numerous sculptures of *Ayuush* or *Tsewegmed / Tsegmid* most of which are copies although some of the originals have been recovered. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rebuilding was celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2006. (For a detailed story of the rebuilding of the temple and the statue, see Mend-Ooyoo, G., *Bilgiin melmii neegch*, Ulaanbaatar 1997)

This temple is now a focal point for all Mongolians. It is a favourite place for everyone to have their pictures taken: for families from the countryside on their visit to the capital; for newly married couples, for newly graduated classes and so on. There are now several professional photographers in front of the temple building. On the north, east and west sides of *Janraiseg* temple there will stand soon three-three stupas. On its west side there is a yellow coloured stupa and an other one, with the third one being built in 2007. On the south of these three stupas there is a stele erected as well. On the east of the temple there are again two stupas with the third one being built behind them. On the north three stupas are standing in a row. In front of *Janraiseg* temple, there is a small building made of glass, for burning butter lamps. On the west of the temple itself there is a small yurt-shaped building, which belongs to *Janraiseg* temple. In the open area in front of *Janraiseg* temple flowers are arranged in flower-beds, which was also a nice novelty in 2007.