

## Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

### UB 30 Tögs bayasgalant töv, Emegteichuudiin khural

English name: Tögs bayasgalant Buddhist Women's Centre

At the corner of Amarsana street and Damdinbazar street, west of Gandan

**Informants:** Narangerel, the disciplinary master of the temple; Chantsal, female lama (*genenmaa*) in the temple

*Tögs bayasgalant* is one of the three Buddhist Women's centres in Ulaanbaatar. This temple was founded in October, 1990, on the initiation of Bakula Rinpoche, the former ambassador of India to Mongolia and founder of *Betüv* monastery in Ulaanbaatar. He gave the vows of *genenmaa* (the vow of female lay practitioners) and the initiations (*van*, Tib. *dbang*, 'initiation, empowerment' and *jenan/jonan*, Tib. *rjes gnang*, 'authorization, empowerment, permission blessing') of Tara and *Khajid* dakini to the female lamas. The head of the temple is N. Gantömör.

Presently it has 17 female lamas. Most have *genenmaa* vow with only two of them being *getselmaas*. The women in this monastery, like those of *Narkhajid* süm, wear traditional Mongolian women's dresses during the ceremonies. They are also allowed to wear long hair arranged in various styles, and to use make-ups and wear jewels such as earrings. Since the old times, female lamas or female practitioners (they most probably had *genen* vows) who grow their hair have been called *khandmaa* (Tib. *mkha'-gro-ma*, Skr. dakini/yogini or female sky-goer) in Mongolian. All the women in Tögsbayasgalant temple wear a special white *khadag* worn across the left shoulder, which substitutes for the *orkhimj* (scarf worn over the left shoulder) of the lama robe. Only the two ordained female lamas (*getselmaa*) wear nun's dresses and shave their hair. One of them has studied in India for ten years and is highly educated in Buddhist studies. Apart from the head of the community, the temple has two chanting masters (*unzad*) and a disciplinary master (*gesgüi*), there are no other ranks.

The temple has its entrance in the south, but the commonly used entrance to the *khashaa* is from the east i.e. from Amarsana street. There are various other buildings, such as a carwash, and a medical consulting room in the yard. There is a stupa with a small statue of Buddha's in its upper part i.e. in the treasure vase (*khumkh*) of the stupa. There are four images of Tara, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas carved into stone on the front of the stupa. There is a small wooden building near the stupa for light offerings.

Inside the main temple building, there is a shop selling religious articles on the right. People can request texts from the women sitting on the left side of the temple. The fortune-teller of the temple sits there as well. During the daily chanting, a women, sitting at a table on the right side of the shrine, recites texts requested by individuals. Daily chanting is held from 9.30am. Texts for individuals (without fixed prices) are read every day during and after the chanting until 1.00pm.

Thangkas of the twenty-one Taras hang around the sidewalls of the temple. The main deity is *Dari ekh* (Tib. *sgrol-ma*, Skr. Tara), the main tutelary deity is *Narkhajid* (Tib. *na-ro mkha'-spyod*, Skr. Sarvabuddhadakini), and the main protector deities are *Lkham* (shortly for *Baldan lkham*, Tib. *dpal-ldan lhamo*, Skr. Shridevi) and *Gombo* (Tib. *mgon-po*, Skr. Mahakala). On the altar there are images of a white dakini, Majiglavdonmaa (the 11-12<sup>th</sup> century founder of *Zod* ritual), Tsongkhapa and his two disciples, the 11 headed *Janraiseg* (Tib. *spyen-ras-gzigs*, Skr. Avalokiteshvara) and *Maidar* (Tib. *byams-pa*, Skr. Maitreya). On the wall there are thangkas of various Gelukpa and Nyingmapa lamas. There is also a thangka showing the assembly tree of Padmasambhava (*chuulganii oron*, Tib. *tshogs-zhing*).

On the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of the month they hold a ceremony in honour of *Narkhajid* dakini (*Khajidiin chogo*), and there are ceremonies for the wrathful deities (*Sakhuis*) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month and one especially to *Lkham* on the 29<sup>th</sup>. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month the Four Mandalas of Tara (*Dari Ekhiin mandal shivaa*) is performed. On the 15<sup>th</sup> Guru Puja is performed together with a feast offering (*Lamiin chodviin tsogchid*), and on the 30<sup>th</sup> *Maani yerööl* is recited. Texts to *Dari ekh*, the main goddess, are recited every day. The tantric *Lüijin* is performed from 4.00pm on Mondays and Fridays, and also on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

The temple has a religious College for women (*Shashnii Deed Surguuli*), the classrooms being

## Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

housed in the main building. The College, which belongs to Gandan's Zanabazar Buddhist University, was opened in September 2002. Teachers of Zanabazar University come to hold lessons here. At the time of the survey it had 16 students with four of them from Buddhist women's centres in Buryatia. This is the first class of students and graduated in spring 2006.