

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UBR 915

Rinchen 915 - Choijin lamiin süm

Nomiig tetgegch, Shashin sakhigchiin ordon, Zepellin süm, Örshööllig khögjüülegch süm, Zankhan

Tibetan name: chos-skyong bla-ma, brtse-'phel gling, gtsang-khang

English name: Temple of Choijin lama, Temple of the "Protector of the Teaching", Temple of Increasing Mercy, Sanctuary

N 047°54.904

E 106°55.102

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

Source: Bawden, C. R. (translated and edited), *Tales of an Old Lama*, The Institute of Buddhist Studies [Buddhica Britannica Series Continua VIII], Tring, U. K. 1997

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Painting by Jүgder (1913)

Photo: Tsültem (61-69, 168), Maidar (40, 62, 91), Sereeter (79), Film Archive (K23921-K23967), Shepetilnikov (26, 60-69), Geleta/Forbáth (8), Dashnyam (245, 272)

History

According to Sereeter (pp.77-78.) the head abbot (*khamba nomon khan*) of Ikh Khüree, Baldanchoimbol (bearing the title between 1865-1899), recognized Erdennamjil (known later as Luwsankhaidaw, Tib. blo-bzang mkhas-grub), the younger brother of the 8th *jewtsүndamba khutagt* as the oracle and interpreter of the *Choijin* (Tib. *chos-skyong*, Skr. dharmapala), which means 'protector of the Teaching'. He became the official state oracle (*goliin choijin* or *albanii choijin*, 'main or official oracle') (Jambal, English text p. 10., Mongolian text p. 688.). However, Jambal states that during the Guangxu period (*Badruult tör*, 1875-1908) Tserendorj of Maimaachen khot, being in control, made Luwsankhaidaw the oracle giving him the title of oracle lama (*Choijin lam*). He adds that the oracle lama took Sürenkhorloo, daughter of the Zaisan Damdin of Maimaa khot, as his wife.

The oracle, who was educated by a lama from India or Tibet called *Sotow/Seti/Seetew Gүrtembe* (Tib. bse khrab, 'hide plates/corselet', a guardian deity and *sku rten-pa* 'man possessed of deity, body support/representation', that is, oracle), was recognized in order that the Buddhist Teaching, which had already become widespread in Mongolia, would be protected.

According to Ölzii's book (pp. 107-109.), a Mongolian lama, Luwsanpeljee (Tib. blo-bzang 'phel rgyas) of *Wangain aimag* in Züün Khüree composed a text to invoke the protectors. Jambal says that the oracle Luwsankhaidaw was his pupil (English text p. 10., Mongolian text p. 688.). To begin with the rituals were held in a big felt yurt, after this a small wooden temple was built between 1899 and 1901, which was next to the temple of *Dashdandarlin aimag*, north-west of the Yellow Palace. It contained a large and a small temple, a palace, some yurts and a financial unit (*jas*). The temple had the privileges of a small *datsan* and, 50 lamas were appointed to participate in the ceremonies. According to Jambal, the *Ikh shaw'* (areas subordinated to the *jewtsүndamba khutagt* and his ecclesiastical estate) supplied all the financial resources (English text 11., Mongolian text 690.) for this temple. In 1903 the temple burnt down and many yurts were put up for the *Choijin lam* in the enclosed yard of *Tsakhriin shadar гүн Shagdarjaw* (*Tsakhhar Shagdar гүн*), where permanent ceremonies were held (Jambal, English text p. 11., Mongolian text p. 689.). These were sponsored by the *gegeen's* treasury (*ikh san*) and the rich *datsans* (no exact data which *datsans* were they), but procuring them did a lot of harm to the *shaw'* (subordinated areas) and the colleges.

According to Sereeter (p. 78.) a year later, in 1904, 83,000 *lan* (or 88,779 *lan*, means 1,821.2 kg) of silver was given by the great treasury (*ikh san*) and from donations, and a separate enclosed complex was established between 1904 to 1908 with brick buildings designed by architect Ombog who also built the Bogd khaan's Green
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Palace. According to Jambal's account (English text p. 11., Mongolian text p. 689.), the finest craftsmen were summoned from all the banners in Mongolia to make the images and other ritual objects for the temple. Chinese and Mongols worked on the buildings and on the images, with Chinese, for the most part, building the temple, and Mongols, for the most part, making the Buddha images and devotional objects. The work of creating the latter was led by Shoiw Ayuush of *Wangain aimag*, who was from the territory (*khoshuu*) of Zorigt wan, Osorbazar (O. wan) in Tüsheet khan aimag, and Wanchig, the lama of (*Khüükhen*) *Noyonii aimag* also took an active part. According to Jambal, it bore the name *Zankhan* temple. In 1906, the temple was named *Örshöoliig khöggjülegch süm* or *Zepellin* (Tib. *brtse 'phel gling*, 'Temple of Increasing Mercy'). Jügder's painting shows the whole temple complex with its surrounding courtyards and buildings.

The principal activity of the assembly was to propitiate the *Choijin* protector. According to Dashtseren lama, around 30-40 lamas took part in the daily chanting in the temple. Lamas from Züün Khüree were invited to participate in the bigger ceremonies. The invitation of *Choijin* (*Gürtembe*) was performed in the beginning of every month and consisted of calling the souls of the three protectors *Naichün Choijin* (Tib. *gnas-chung chos-skyong*), *Zimur/ Zemer/Zemur Choijin* (Tib. *rtse-ma-ra/tsi-ma-ra chos-skyong* or *tsi'u dmar-po*, the special protector deity of Samye monastery) and *Dorjshüg/Shüg Choijin* (Tib. *rdo-rje shugs chos-skyong*) which occupied the oracle's body. Luwsankhaidaw became known as an interpreter of *Choijin* and Luwsanpeljee translated his mystical texts. Bawden translates (English text p. 10., Mongolian text p. 688.) the term *gomboo lam* used by Jambal as 'speaker lama' saying that Luwsanpeljee was the oracle's speaker lama who understood and transmitted his pronouncements. The exact meaning of this term *gomboo* could not be identified (perhaps Tib. *mgon-po*, protector?, though Ölzii (p. 188.) interprets the term as *gomboo lam* or *khiidiin lam*, Tib. *dgon-pa'i bla-ma*, 'lama of the monastery'). Jambal adds (English text p. 10., Mongolian text p. 689.) that the speaker lama managed the most important affairs of the oracle. He was given the title *Daichin khamba* ('heroic abbot', *daichin* being a Mongolian word meaning 'hero' and *khamba*, Tib. *mkhan-po*, meaning abbot).

According to Jambal's lively account (English text p. 10., Mongolian text p. 688.), the oracle never spoke while in trance, but when one listened there was a humming emanating from his armpit which sounded something like words. The speaker lama, Luwsanpeljee, listened to this, wrote it down and made it known to the assembled people. Of the three guardian spirits, *Naichün/Naichin*, and *Zimur* were not very fierce, but *Shüg* was a very fierce guardian spirit (*dogshin sakhuis*). So when the guardian spirit *Shüg* was within him, the oracle took on a very fierce aspect, hopping and leaping about, bobbing up and down and foaming at the mouth.

During the summer this ritual was performed in the *Gonkhon* (Tib. *mgon-khang*, protectors' chapel, attached to the main temple in the north, which is entered from the main hall) of the temple, and during the winter in a heated wooden yurt east of the temple.

According to Ölzii, the Bogd khaan ordered the invocation of the *Choijin* protector in the *Tsogchin temple* to take place on the 8th day of the Lunar New Year through the ceremonies held to the honour of the three protectors. The numerous titles and seals given to Luwsankhaidaw, such as *Güjir khambo* (*Gürtembe Güdjir khambo*, Tib. *sku rten-pa sku bcar mkhan-po*, Bawden, p. 10.) or *Erdene biligt tungalag bishreelt khutagt* ('Khutagt of precious wisdom and pure belief') show the great prestige of *Choijin lam*. His temple complex owned the same privilege rights as *Dechingalaw* in the Yellow Palace and numerous administrators belonged to it.

According to Sereeter, the main tutelary deities of the temple were *Jigjid* (Tib. '*jigs-byed*, Skr. Bhairava, epithet of Yamantaka) and *Damdin* (Tib. *rta-mgrin*, Skr. *Hayagriva*), while its main protectors were *Naichün/Naichin*, *Zimur* and *Dorjshüg*. An own treasury, *Choijin lamiin san*, and two following financial units (*jas*) belonged to the temple, namely *Sümiin jas* and *Agwa datsangiin jas* as *Agwa datsan* (Tib. *sngags-pa grwa-tshang*) or *Akhu datsan* was situated within the temple complex in the east (for details on this *datsan* see entry NOT in Rinchen 953).

According to Dariimaa (p. 41.), the *Tsam* dance was held on the 29th of the last summer month, though Ölzii claims (p. 92., p. 113.) that from 1916 it was held here once a year on the 25th of the 8th month, with 108 lamas taking part. Before the dance, the lamas rehearsed for 6-10 weeks. This *Tsam* dance differed from *Khüree tsam*. Jambal (English text p. 11., Mongolian text p. 689.) lists deities that appeared in it, namely *Mam* (Tib. *ma-mo*), *Zan* (Tib. *brtsan?*, a kind of demon, powerful ghost) and *Tawan khan* (Tib. *sku-Inga rgyal-po*, 'Five Kings'), with the speaker lama Peljee (Luwsanpeljee, the *Daichin khamba*) acting as *Tawan khan* (Ölzii, p. 113. confirms it). However, the *Tsam* was performed here only three times. Jambal (English text p. 11., Mongolian text p. 689.) also says that the *Tsam* dance was performed during the Period of Autonomy (1911-1920), but was organized only about three times (most probably three subsequent years), and, according to him, ended in 1921 with the

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revolution when the people's government was established. (It may well be that it ended with the death of Luwsankhaidaw.)

In 1918, the oracle Luwsankhaidaw passed away suddenly and the invocation to *Choijin* stopped. (His death seems to have put an end to the *Tsam* dances as well.) According to Ölzii's book (p. 107-109), Luwsanpeljee was appointed to lead the temple and was given the title *Güjir khambo* (Tib. *sku bcar mkhan-po*, 'personal attendant lama, who is company of a great lama'). Ceremonies were held in the temple until 1936. The temple was closed two years later, in 1938. In 1937 and 1938 many artifacts and objects of worship were dumped here from the temples and monasteries that were destroyed.

According to Sereeter (p. 78.) from 1940 the complex was handed over to the Academy of Sciences (*Shinjlekh ukhaanii khüreeleen*). In 1941 the collection of religious objects kept here became strictly protected. The monastery was included in the list of historical and cultural monuments and put in charge of the Committee of sciences in 1942. In that year the temple was converted into the Museum of Religious History. It was separated from Bogd Khaan Museum in January 2000. To begin with numerous sculptures, thangkas, images, masks of *Tsam* dance and other ritual objects were effectively piled up and stored in the building. However, in 1960-61 the complex was renovated and the objects were arranged into an exhibition. In the 1960's two buildings in the first courtyard were pulled down. The temple buildings were repainted in 1972 and the roof of *Zuugiin süm* was renovated in 1995. The buildings were renovated again in 2004.

Current situation

After the democratic change there was a wish among some with a form of demonstrations taking place (Film Archive photos, 44896-44898, Box 163), to revive the temple complex and once again perform ceremonies there. However, this did not succeed and the monastery is no longer an active place of worship being still used as a Museum. The basis of the exhibition is the many religious objects collected there at the time many monasteries were being destroyed in 1937-38.

The temple complex of *Choijin* lama is a good example of Manchu religious architecture. Almost all the buildings, the *yampai* (Chinese yang pai, protective wall in front of the temple), gates and temples survived the purges. The temples were constructed of blue brick and wood, decorated with green tiled roofs the spines of which are ornamented with animal-shaped figures.

There are five temples in the complex. As you enter, the first temple is the Temple of the Maharajas (*Makhranz*, Tib. *rgyal chen*, Skr. Maharaja, 'great king', guards of the four directions), called *Makhranziin süm* with statues of the guards of the four directions. In front of it once stood a stone gate (Film Archive: Box 93, K23967) and a stone stele decorated with carved monster heads (Film Archive: Box 93 K23943) but these no longer remain. According to Geleta (Forbáth, p. 215), a large flat stone was situated here in earlier times which was believed to assist in healing illness if one lay down on it.

In the main temple (*Gol süm*) there are statues of buddhas, the thrones of *Choijin lam* and Baldanchoimbol with the statue of *Choijin lam* to the right and the embalmed mummy of Baldanchoimbol (the *yonzon lam*, teacher of the 7th and 8th *jewtsündamba khutagt*), which survived the purges, to the left. (According to some sources, the statue of *Choijin lam* contains his ashes as his embalmed body is said to have been destroyed in the purges.)

There is a unique and rich collection of old *Tsam* masks and robes, made by famous masters of Ikh Khüree in the 19th century. The most attractive figure is *Jamsran* (or *Ulaan sakhuis*, Tib. *lcam-sring*), the Red Protector, whose mask ornamented with about 30 kilograms of coral was made by Puntsog Osor in the 19th century. Paintings exhibited in the hall are: thangkas of the Buddhist cold and hot hell realms; carved replicas of the palaces (*Loilan*, Tib. *blos bslangs*, also called *ordon* ('palace') in Mongolian) of different deities, namely *Jigjid*, *Yansan yadam* (Tib. *yang-gsang yi-dam*), *Maidar* (Tib. *byams-pa*, Skr. Maitreya) and *Awid* (Tib. *'od-dpag-med*, Skr. Amitabha) (their palaces being called *Jigjidiin ordon*, *Yansan yadamiin ordon*, *Maidariin ordon*, *Awidiin ordon*) made from myrtle wood by master Balgan; some old photos of the *Tsam* dance; numerous magnificent thangkas and appliquéés. Until 2004, the central part of the temple was furnished as a real temple with two rows for the seats for the lamas with the religious musical instruments displayed as if ready for use, but since 2005 it has become an exhibition hall for *Tsam* masks and other artifacts. At the back of the main hall, annexed to it, there is access to the chapel of the protector (*Gonkhon*, Tib. *mgon-khang* or *Zonkhon*, Tib. *gtsang-khang*, 'sanctuary'), where the oracle's throne and statues of different wrathful protector deities are on display. Hanging from the ceiling are symbols of hearts, lungs, and stomachs of beings. This is the place where the *Choijin* occupied the body

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of the oracle when he went into a trance with the speaker lama translating his words. (In winter he conducted this ceremony in a yurt to the east of the temple). The statues of the six *Chojjin*, namely *Ochirwaan'* (Tib. *phyag-na rdo-rje / phyag-rdor*, Skr. Vajrapani), *Naichün*, *Zimur*, *Dorjshüg*, *Damdin Sandüw* (Tib. *rta mgrin gsang sgrub*) and *Perenleijalwa/Perenleijalbuu* (Tib. *'phrin-las rgyal-po*, one of the 'Five Kings', *Tawan khaan*, Tib. *sku lnga rgyal-po*) worshipped by Luwsankhaidaw are exhibited in this hall.

The *Zuugiin süm*, 'temple of the Lord/Buddha Shyakyamuni' is situated to the north-west of the main temple. This temple is dedicated to Shakyamuni Buddha and in it there are huge statues of the Buddhas of past, present and future, statues of the 16 main disciples of Shakyamuni (*Naidan*, Tib. *gnas-brtan*, Skr. sthavira or arhat), and the statue of *Lkham*. The *Naidan* statues were most probably made by Ayuush of *Wangain aimag* (Jambal, English text p. 11., Mongolian text p. 689.). The guards of the four directions (*Makhranz*) are depicted on either side of the door.

Behind the main temple is the *Yadamiin süm* ('Temple of the tutelary deity', Tib. *yi-dam*) or the *Ariun nandin shüteeniin süm* ('the temple of the pure precious object of worship'). The bronze and wooden sculptures of the main tantric deities worshipped by *Chojjin* lama are kept here, such as *Dowchinnagwa/Düwchinnagwa* (Tib. *grub chen nag-po*), one of the 84 Indian Mahasiddhas (*düwchin*, Tib. *grub chen*), *Yansan yadam* and *Düinkhor* (Tib. *dus-'khor*, Skr. Kalacakra), *Makhamayaa* (Tib. *sgyu-ma chen-mo*, Skr. Mahamaya), *Ochirdar'* (Tib. *rdo-rje 'dzin-pa*, Skr. Vajradhara) and other tantric deities. One of the most beautiful bronze statues made by Öndör gegeen, *Dorjsembe* Buddha (Tib. *rdo-rje sems-dpa'* Skr. Vajrasattva, a sambhogakaya buddha, adibuddha of the Kagyüpa Sect) with his consort, is on display here.

The *Khotol chuulganii tus amgalant tiwiin süm* ('Temple of the continent of the great happiness') or the Temple of Öndör gegeen (*Öndör gegeeniin süm*) is an octagonal shaped two-storey building built in 1907 and dedicated to the memory of Öndör Gegeen. The temple contains a self-portrait of Öndör Gegeen and a stupa apparently brought by him from Tibet. Characteristic statues of the 16 *Naidans* can also be seen in the wall, as well as sculptures in Tibetan and Indian style.

It is said that the whole Tibetan *Ganjuur* and *Danjuur*, brought from Tibet by the 4th *jewtsündamba khutagt*, is also kept in the museum.