

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UBR 928

Rinchen 928 - Khutagt Troitskiin süm

Sbyato-Troitsiin süm, Gegeen Gurvaliin süm, Ünen aldart süm

English name: Holy Trinity Church, Orthodox Church

Elevation 1333m

N 47° 55.000'

E 106° 57.573'

Data provider: Father Alexej (Trubach), the present dean of the Church

Sources: Dүгөрсүрен, Л., *Улаанбаатар khotiin түүхөөс*. (2nd edition), Ulaanbaatar 1999

Forbáth, L., *A megújhodott Mongolia*, Franklin [A Magyar Földrajzi Társaság Könyvtára], Budapest 1934
Nawagchamba, Ts., Yewrop khelberiin ankhni baishin. In: ? (This short Mongolian article was shown to us by the data provider. Its date and the source where it appeared is unknown.)

Pүrew, O., *Mongol төрийн голomt*. Ulaanbaatar 2004

Rupen, R.A., "The City of Urga in the Manchu Period", *Studia Altaica*, Festschrift für Nicholas Poppe, Wiesbaden 1957, pp. 157-169.

Photo: Film Archive (K23684, 2708a = H-50377), etc.

History

The founding of a Russian community in the Mongolian capital began with the establishment of Russian factories and trade companies in the 19th century. According to Rupen (pp. 163-164.), the number of Russians was negligible before 1860, when the first Russian consulate was established. According to Dүгөрсүрен (p. 41.), the white two-storey building of the Russian Consulate was the first European-style building in the capital. It was situated between Zүүн Khүree and Maimaachen in a hilly area, which was called 'the hill of the consulate' (Konsuliin denj) from that time. Additional buildings were built around the consulate itself: an Orthodox church, an office for the Russian doctor, the Urga post office and also a cemetery on the north.

According to Father Alexej, the present dean of the Church, the first divine liturgy in the Mongolian capital was celebrated by Father Ioann Nikolskij on 22 March 1864. Since then priests from the Russian Clerical Mission in Beijing came to Urga from time to time to conduct services and celebrate the holy rites: Brother Sergij came in 1865 for a year, and brother Gerontij served from 1866 through 1868. In 1872, during the Dungan rebellion, the Cossack barracks were set up to protect the Russian consulate. In that very year the construction of the Orthodox Church to serve as a spiritual center for the Cossacks, was finished. This chapel was a small one-storey building that stood on the left of the consulate, precisely it was immediately adjoining the building of the consulate as it can be seen from photos.

According to Pүrew (*Mongol төрийн голomt*, pp. 98-99.), the building was constructed in 1869-70, and its tower was built in 1872. He writes that Nikolaj Sokolow, the priest from Blagoweshen Church, and Paroenaj, a famous orthodox priest, came from Irkutsk to consecrate the temple in 1872. It was the only Christian church of that time in Urga. According to Father Alexej the church was also connected with Irkutsk and Baikal Clerical Missions of the Russian Orthodox Church. As Pozdneev accounts (p. 94.), the request for a residential priest in Urga arose before Pozdneev's first visit there in 1876. It seems that the Russian tea merchants of Urga, aware of the wishes of their compatriots, initiated the move to establish a parish in Urga. A special annual tax was levied for this purpose collecting 2500 to 3000 rubles annually. However, until 1892, they were only able to invite a priest to Urga once a year, usually for the Easter liturgy. Pozdneev claims that in 1892 the state council, in accordance with the report of K.P. Pobedonostsev, the attorney-general of the Holy Synod, approved the appointment of a permanent clergyman to the Orthodox Church of the Urga Consulate.

From the Baikal Clerical Mission Nikolas Shestin was appointed by the Moscow Patriarch as the first permanent dean of the Consulate Church of the Holy Trinity in 1893. Since that time regular liturgies were held.

After Mongolian independence in 1911, Russian influence became stronger in Mongolia. That year the supervision of the parish was transferred to the Irkutsk Eparchy. A wooden church was also built in Altan-Bulag in the north, near the Russian border.

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In the summer of 1914, an Irkutsk priest, Feodor Parnyakow, was appointed as the new Dean of the church in Urga. Owing to his deep faith, he was very progressive in his religious activities and, during his time, religious life in the parish was revitalised. As a missionary he visited the countryside many times. Furthermore, he established a library and, at his initiative, the first commercial college was opened. Due to his non-sectarian behaviour he was very respected among the Jewish and Chinese communities in the city as well. In 1920 the army of the white Russians, Baron Ungern von Sternberg, captured the Mongolian capital and expelled the Chinese. Baron Ungern wanted to restore the monarchy in Russia, so he was fighting against Siberian communists. His army started the Jewish pogroms and his soldiers committed atrocities all over the capital. Geleta mentions (Forbáth, p. 136.) one of the sorry episodes of Ungern's bloody terror in Khүree, which had Jewish people as one of its main targets. This was the execution of the Jewish Scheinemann family who escaped to Mongolia from Russia. Their baby was saved by his nanny, who took him to the Russian priest. He urgently baptized the baby telling Ungern's soldiers, who were looking for the baby, that he was not Jewish anymore but an Orthodox Christian. Finally, the soldiers killed his nanny.

On 15 January 1921, Father Parnyakow was arrested and charged with being in collaboration with the Russian communists. After three days of cruel torture, Baron Ungern killed the priest.

In 1921 when the civil war in Russia was over and the communists came to power in Mongolia, thousands of Russians left the Mongolian capital. Since that time no deans were appointed to the capital, but priests came time to time to hold services. The last divine service was celebrated in 1928 and in the early 1930's the church was closed.

According to an article written by Ts. Nawagchamba, the Russian consul Chikanow left the consulate in 1922. The building was used as a hotel for Europeans led by Milich Karakow. The consulate was partly destroyed in 1937 as a 'representative of a perverse religious thought'. According to Father Alexej, the temple building with its bell tower remained until the 1970s. Then, the bell tower was destroyed.

At the beginning of the 20th century there were some other small churches in the city. According to Pүrew (*Mongol төрийн голomt*, p. 77.), some Swedish doctors and teachers came to live in the area of Setsen wangiin khoroo in 1919 where they ran a primary school until they were expelled by the communists in 1924. Pүrew also mentions that there was a Christian church there. He mentions another Christian church, which was situated in one of the streets of the laymen's area called Baruun damnuurchin. It was situated west of the Chinese store (*pүüs*, Chinese pu zi/ pu li) of Wan-Shin-Khun (*Mongol төрийн голomt*, p. 82.). In 1939 the Fifth grammar school (*Tawdugaar dund surguul'*) was built there where it still stands on Baga toiruu today.

Current situation

Site of the new church (opposite to the old building), Jukow Street 55a

Elevation 1340m

N 47°55.057'

E 106°57.481'

Photos of the present Church can be seen on a Russian homepage www.mospat.ru.

Partial remains of the old church building can be located on the west of the Film Factory (*Kino үйлдвэр*). It is a white building with two doors to the left of a shop. According to Father Alexej the building is now used as a warehouse.

On the opposite side of Jukow Street there is a new light green coloured large temple church building (number 55a, phone: 454425) that can be seen from afar. After the democratic changes, the Russian inhabitants of Ulaanbaatar requested Alexej II, His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, to appoint a priest to Mongolia for regular services. In 1997, priests from Buryatia and Chita Eparchies began to travel to Mongolia regularly. On 19 January 1998 the chief priest of the Holy Trinity church, Father Anatolij Fesechko, arrived in Mongolia to take up a permanent post. In that year, the Russian Church was given the former Russian trade mission building, which was built at the beginning of the 20th century and which became free having been used as an office and a hostel. It was repaired in 2000, the first time since 1937.

After reconstruction, a conference room for religious meetings and consultations and the dean's private quarters were installed on the first floor. The actual church is on the second floor with an altarpiece (iconostas),
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several smaller icons, candlesticks and other religious artefacts. The present dean, Father Alexej arrived to Mongolia in June, 2005. Services are celebrated regularly on Sunday from 9.00am and on the holy days such as Easter and Christmas. Smaller services are held four times in the morning and five times in the evening during a week. The permanent community of the parish numbers about 30 people. During the year about 100-150 believers visit the church coming from the capital and the countryside. People from Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Belorussia, Latvia, France and mixed Mongolian Russians belong to the community and attend the church. In Erdenet, the copper mining city north of the capital, there is also a community of 15 believers whom Father Alexej visits once a month. The Church plans to establish a temple there, too.

During the time the present dean has been in post an imposing new facade to the building has been put up along with other construction work including a baptism font for adults on the first floor. A baptism bath for children was recently sent to the parish from Ulan-Ude. The most important plan of the Church is to build a separate church building in the garden attached to the current building and maybe a small park around it. However, to do this they need substantial donations. If they are unable to raise sufficient money their default plan is to pull down the older part of the present building and building a new chapel in its place. They also plan to start a grammar school for Russian and Mongolian students and a library in the present building. (In 2007 the site was visited again and the new church building with golden cupola is almost finished. It is on the west of the other building.)

The declared purpose of the Orthodox Church is not to convert Mongolians but give spiritual support to existing believers. This church in Ulaanbaatar is the only representative of the Orthodox faith not only in Mongolia but also in China, where the Chinese government forbade the operation of the old Orthodox temple. In Hongkong a priest gives support to the believers. In Phenyan, South Korea, an Orthodox church is presently under construction so that a Korean priest who studies in Moscow can lead the Korean community in the future. In Japan there are numerous Orthodox churches.