

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UBR 931

Rinchen 931 - Dar' ekhiin süm

English name: Tara temple

Presently a nunnery, called *Dolmalin khiid* works in the remained buildings of this old Chinese monastery, the only one in Ulaanbaatar currently with resident female lamas.

Bayanzürkh district, 12th microdistrict, near the final bus station of Botanik.
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GPS was taken in front of the main gate (on the north of the complex)
Elevation 1293 m,
N. 47°54.375'
E. 106°59.955'

Sources: Pürew, O., *Mongol töriin golomt*. Ulaanbaatar 2004
Dügersüren, L., *Ulaanbaatar khotiin tүүkhees*. (2nd edition), Ulaanbaatar 1999
Idshinnorow, Sh., *Ulaanbaatar khotiin khuraangui*. Ulaanbaatar 1994
Oyuunbileg, Z., "Dar' ekhiin süm", in: Dashnyam, L. (ed.) *Mongol nutag dakh' tүүkh soyoliin dursgal. Sedewchilsen lawlakh*. Mongoliin Khүmүүnligiin Ukhaanii Akademi. Ulaanbaatar 1999;
Mönkhbat, D., *Mongoliin tүүkh soyoliin dursgaliin lawlaga. Ayalal juulchialiin mergejiliin ангиin оyuutnuudad zoriulaw*. Ulaanbaatar 2004, pp. 255-256.
Photos: Film Archive (23978, 23979-23980, 23985, 23986, 44811), Palsi 114 (may also represent Geser süm), Shepetilnikov (47, 58, 112), Maidaar 204

History

One of the Chinese temples in the south-east quarter (*khorooolol*) inside the walls of Maimaachen was the complex of *Dar' ekh süm*. It was built 230 years ago in the south-east part of the Chinese settlement on the initiative of the Manchu emperor of the time. There were about 15 buildings in the complex mostly constructed from wood and blue bricks, with tissue paper windows.

According to Oyuunbileg (pp. 255-256.), the complex was enclosed by three rows of walls made of blue bricks. There was a large gate on the southern wall and a smaller gate on the east. Photos of the monastery are in the Film Archive (within the Chinese temples category, K-23971 – 23987, box 93). As the photos show, it was a complex built in Chinese style, with white terracotta fences, oil lamps and Chinese calligraphic inscriptions. In the main temple the curtained off image of the Chinese form of *Dar' ekh* (Tib. *sgrol-ma*, Skr. Tara) deity was worshipped. In the temples on either side *Khashin khaan* and *Tsagaan öwгөн*, the White Old Man were worshipped. *Khashin khaan* (T. *hwa-shang rgyal-po*, *hwa-shang* originating from the Chinese word for Buddhist lamas) represents the figure of the Manchu emperor, Kang-xi (17th century), who supported the dissemination of the Yellow Sect tradition of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia. He became a donor and protector of the Teaching and also appears in the *Tsam* religious dances. The White Old Man (*Tsagaan öwгөн*, Tib. *rgan-po dkar-po* or *lha chen tshе-ring*) is always depicted as an old man with flowing long white hair and beard, and also appears in the *Tsam* dance.

Behind the main temple there is a smaller temple, with even smaller temples on either side of it. According to Pürew (*Mongol töriin golomt*, p. 103.) the two steles directly south of the main temple were erected in 1783. The 11m high granite stele had carved ornamental decorations of mythical beings and other symbols. Ornamented pillars of this height are unique in Mongolia, so they have been strictly protected since 1994.

According to Oyuunbileg (pp. 255-256) the Chinese script on the left pillar reads: 'Liberates every being of the world from the suffering of the intermediate stage (between death and rebirth)'. The Chinese script on the right pillar reads: 'It saves the million beings with great compassion'. She adds that Chinese lamas held the great feast of Tara every year on the 15th day of the first summer month. For three days Chinese plays (*shii*, Chinese *shi*) were performed and everybody burnt incense and came to prostrate in the temple with the women adorning themselves with their jewellery and best robes. During the big feasts the main gate was opened, incense was
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burnt and offering lamps were lighted. The lamas played the drums, rang the bells and waited for the believers coming to bow. They also told people about their future on request.

During the winter the Chinese lamas went outside the monastery to worship Tara by playing the drums and other musical instruments. During the great feast a black flag with Chinese script was hung on the pillars and different kinds of plays were performed along with a street festival. During the play, Mongolian and Chinese officers sat on the second floor of the Western temple, and Chinese lamas and Chinese workers sat on the second floor of the Eastern temple, to see the performance.

According to Soninbayar lama, female lamas called *khandmaa* (Tib. *mkha'-gro-ma*, female sky-goer, dakini, used for female practitioners), belonged to *Dar' ekhiin khural*. According to the female lamas in the present temple the *khandmaas* had long hair and also performed religious dances. No evidence could be found to prove these statements, these may only be based on the fact that today women belong to the community in the site.

According to Pürew (*Mongol töriin golomt*, p. 103.), *Dar' ekhiin süm* became the primary school for Amgalan in 1922. Maybe this is why the buildings survived. According to D. Mönkhbat (p. 16), some buildings in the complex were destroyed in 1937-1938.

Current Situation

Nowadays, the remaining buildings inside the boundary walls are being used as a nunnery. It is the only residential nunnery in Ulaanbaatar. See UB 29 Dar' Ekh khiid/ Dulmalin khiid