

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UB 014 Dashchoimbel datsan in Gandan Monastery (UB 01)

Tibetan name: *bkra-shis chos-'phel grwa-tshang*

Mongolian translation: *Ölzii khutgiin nomiig arwijuulagch*

English name: Dashchoimbel monastic school

Data provider: Batbuyan, lama of the temple (born in 1977)

For History see relevant section in UBR 912

Current Situation

This *datsan* was revived in 1990 and the temple was rebuilt in 1994 on its original site. The Dalai Lama himself opened the temple building in 1995 when he was in Ulaanbaatar to give the Kalachakra initiation. At the time of the survey, about one hundred lamas and disciples belong to it. Most of the lamas have *gelen* or *getsel* vows, but novices start with *genen* vow and became *getsel* later. Co-operation with Tibetan institutions now in India has also been revived with around a hundred lamas studying for a minimum of 5 years in the Tibetan Gomang monastic school of Drepung monastery. Others study at Sera monastery. From 1992, Tibetan teachers from Gomang monastic school, some of whom held the *gewsh* (Tib. *dge-bshes*, 'virtuous friend', high academic degree) and *lkhaaramba* (Tib. *lha-rams-pa*, the highest philosophical degree that could only be gained in Lhasa, once a year during the Lunar New Year) degrees were invited to teach in *Dashchoimbel* datsan, where they are improving the standard of the lamas' knowledge. Presently there are five Mongolian and two Tibetan teachers teaching the lamas. Some of the Mongolian teachers, such as *gawj* D. Luwsanjams or *gawj* S. Gantömör, were among those lamas who went to study in Gomang monastic school of Drepung monastery in India and have now returned.

The curriculum is the same as in pre-communist times. Of the three philosophical monastic schools in Gandan monastery, it was only in *Dashchoimbel* datsan that the academic degrees of *domiin damjaa* and *gawjiin damjaa* could be obtained. Since 1990 it has been possible for lamas to take *domiin damjaa* and examinations have been held five times from this time, the latest being in January 2005 when five lamas took it successfully. The next graduation in this examination will be in five years time. The *gawjiin damjaa* was revived in 1989 December by *gawj* B. Osor of the old *Baruun Khüree* or *Skhankh* monastery, who was the *shunlaiw* (Tib. *gzhung lugs-pa/ gzhung las-pa*, head of the monastic school) that time. The eighth *gawjiin damjaa* exam was held in 2006 during the *Tsagaan sar*.

Presently, the *shunlaiw*, S. Gantömör *gawj* leads the school. There are three chanting masters (*darkhan un zad, ikh un zad, бага un zad*) and two disciplinary masters. About three old lamas belong to the temple, for example the current main disciplinary master, Gonchig (born 1917), who had been a lama in this *datsan* prior to 1937.

The main deities of the temple are *Gombo, Sendom, and Nagoon Dar' ekh*.

There are two kinds of monthly ceremonies: on the 8th of the lunar month the ritual in honour of *Manla* or *Manal* is celebrated. On the 29th of the month a ceremony to the honour of the wrathful deities, especially *Gombo* is performed. There is a special annual ceremony, called *Jamchoi derna* (Tib. *byams chos sde lnga*), when the 'Five treatises of Maitreya' are recited.

Daily chanting is held from 9.00am. There is a monastic debate every day in which the students hone their knowledge. It is usually in the afternoon.