

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UB 26 Choi dechin dashsümprellin

Tibetan name: *chos bde chen bkra-shis zung-'brel gling*

Bayanzürkh district, 12th khoroo

NOTE in 2011: the old buildings have started to be pulled down

Informants: Dr O. Pürev; J. Batkhaan (Choi), head of the temple

The temple is situated on the east side of the square near the Cultural Centre named after D. Sühkbaatar (known by locals as Janjnii Club), in Bayanzürkh district, 12th khoroo.

Choi dechin dashsümprellin is operating in a yurt, situated between ruins which are said to be the remains of an old Chinese store (*püüs*) according to O. Pürev. It is not clear what these buildings were used for after the purges.

However, the head of the temple, J. Batkhaan (his monastic name is Choi) says that these are the remains of the old Geser temple of Amgalan. We could not find any sources to confirm his statement, all sources say that the only temple remains in Amgalan are found at the site of *Dari Ekh süm* (UBR 931 Rinchen 931). In this area known in the past as Maimaachen, the Chinese town for merchants, just a few buildings have survived. One of them (1320 m, N. 47°54.427', E 106°59.893) is located between *Choi dechin dashsümprellin* and *Dari ekhiin süm* and is said to have served as a prison in the middle of the 20th century according to the inhabitants of the yurt behind it.

The ruins of the *püüs* buildings in the fenced-off area of *Choi dechin dashsümprellin* are good examples of Chinese style architecture. Renovation started in 2005. In the south of the site, the large entrance gate and the brick buildings have been completely demolished and re-built to the same form using modern materials. Note that in Mongolia today there are few people who have the skills needed to protection and restore historical buildings. However, the complex can currently only be reached from the north side.

A building, which stood on the left side of the site until a few years ago, was in a very bad state and has been stripped down to the wooden framework. They plan to 'restore' it as well. The building standing at the back, which Batkhaan claims was the *Tsogchin* temple, is the biggest on the site but in a very bad state of repair. On either side of its entrance two original Chinese style wall paintings are still visible. The painting on the left side can be made out relatively well, the right hand side one is in a very bad condition. Chinese script and ornamentation decorate the façade of this building. According to Batkhaan after the purges in the late 1930s, the complex was used as a hospital, then, as a prison for Japanese prisoners of war. However, it is not clear that he was referring to the two remaining buildings on this site or to what he had read or heard about *Geser süm*.

At present there are two yurts between the ruined buildings. One acts as the present temple, the other is the residence for the guard. At the north side of the bigger building, there is a new stupa built in 2005.

The new temple was founded in 2002 by its present head, J. Batkhaan (Choi) lama who was a lama at Dashchoilin Monastery before he founded this temple. At present there are only two boy lamas in the temple, who are taught by him. Earlier, there were ten lamas, but most went to other, bigger monasteries to study.

The head has connections with *Khamriin khiid* (one of Danzanravjaa's monasteries in Dornogovi aimag, near Sainshand) as he follows the *jüd* tradition of the Noyon khutagt Danzanravjaa (1803-1856). As the fifth reincarnation of a Sakyapa saint, this famous incarnated lama was the abbot of *Khamriin khiid* in the present Dornogovi aimag, the author of Tibetan-Mongolian bilingual poems, plays, founder of numerous monasteries in the Gobi, a monastic theatre, and a museum.

The head also has connections with the *Namdoldechenlin* Nyingmapa (Red Stream) monastery in Bayankhoshuu (UB 19 New Temples 19), and with a temple lead by lama Erdenebat, which is attached to Ulaanbaatar's only crematorium being situated on the west of Ulaanbaatar (though well outside the city borders). Some lamas from *Züün khüree Dashchoilin* monastery also come and participate in the most important monthly ceremonies, especially at the ceremony of the wrathful deities.

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The main deities of the temple are Padmasambhava and Noyon Khutagt Danzanravjaa. The main tutelary deity is *Jigjid* (Tib. *'jigs-byed*, Skr. Bhairava, epithet of Yamantaka), while the main protector deity is *Amaa* (Tib. *a-ma*) a special form of *Lkham* (Tib. *dpal-ldan lha-mo*, Skr. Shridevi). *Bayan Namsrai* ('Wealthy Namsrai' Tib. *rnam-(thos)-sras*, Skr. Vaishravana, Kuvera) is also worshipped here, to continue the merchant tradition of praying to him in order to get higher income. The head of the temple plans to revive the old tradition of worship of the Chinese Geser and to commission an image of him. The thangka of *Nogoon Dari ekh* (Tib. *sgrol ljang*, Skr. Shyamatarā, the Green Tara), and a carpet representing Danzanravjaa hang on the temple yurt wall. Inside a wooden box there is a statue of *Damdin Sandüv* (Tib. *rta-mgrin gsang-sgrub*), a special 'secret' form of Hevajra. There are images of *Zangad* (Tib. *brtsan-rgod*), Padmasambhava, Buddha, Tsongkhapa and a blue coloured deity together with his consort (most probable *Yansan*, Tib. *yang-gsang*) who is a special tutelary deity of the temple. The thangka of *Lkham* hangs on the right of the altar.

Daily chanting is held from 9.00am. Special texts to Padmasambhava are read every day. On the 10th and 25th ceremonies are held to honour of Padmasambhava and *Yansan*. On the 29th of the month the ceremony to the wrathful deities is, with a special offering to *Chojoo* (Tib. *chos-rgyal*, Skr. Dharmaraja, epithet of Yama), called *Chojoo dügjüü*.