

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UB 29 Dar' ekh khiid

Dulmalin khiid

Tibetan name: sgröl-ma gling btsun dgon

English name: Dar' ekh nunnery, Dulma lin/Dolma Ling nunnery

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. (For history see UBR 931)

Bayanzürkh district, 12th microdistrict, near the final bus station of Botanik.

Phone: 90157706, 99279465

GPS was taken in front of the main gate (on the north of the complex)

Dataprovider: Tüwden Balmuu (Thubten Palmo, Tib. *Thub-brtan dpal-mo*, by her religious name) or Denjen Myandagnyam, the head of the present nunnery from the nunnery of Kopan Monastery, Nepal) (27 years old)

Sources: Website of the Ulaanbaatar Center (Shedrup Ling) of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (<http://www.fpmtmongolia.mn>)

Printed leaflet of the nunnery

Oyuunbileg, Z., "Dar ekhiin süm", in: Dashnyam, L. (ed.) *Mongol nutag dakh tүүkh soyoliin dursgal. Sedewchilsen lawlakh*. Mongoliin Khүmүүnligiin Ukhaanii Akademi.

Mönkhbat, D., *Mongoliin tүүkh soyoliin dursgaliin lawlaga. Ayalal juulchlaliin mergejiliin ангиin oyuutnuudad zoriulaw*. Ulaanbaatar 2004, pp. 255-256.

Nowadays, the remaining buildings inside the boundary walls are being used as a nunnery. It is the only residential nunnery in Ulaanbaatar.

The main gate is on the Northern wall. Only the main temple and the two temples on either side remain and these have been renovated. The main temple functions as such today while the two side buildings are the residence of the female lamas, of whom all live in the nunnery. During the winter, ceremonies are held in the temple room situated in the right side residential building. The two steles are in the middle at the south end of the buildings on the two sides. The ornaments, style and characteristics of the remains show Chinese features. A new stupa was consecrated by Choden rinpoche in 2004 on the north of the main temple building.

The present monastic community was established in 2001, at the initiation of Zopa Rinpoche, the founder of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). Prior to this two *Gandan* lamas, O. Sodnom and his disciple, A. Badamkhand, had established a community of Buddhist women building a residential building for them and carrying out some restoration on the main temple in 1991, where ceremonies in honour of *Dar' ekh* (Tib. *sgröl-ma*, Skr. Tara) began once again in 1994/5 (Oyuunbileg, p. 256.).

According to the data published on their website, FPMT Mongolia received the historic ground of the former *Dar' ekh* monastery in April, 2001, with the main temple building already renovated in the original style but the other buildings in very bad state of repair. In October, 2001, a small group of women asked to be ordained, and the abbot of Sera Jey monastic school (*Ser je/Sera je datsan*, Tib. *se-ra byes grwa-tshang*) of Sera monastery in South-India, *agramba* Luwsandonoi, ordained them. The FPMT City Centre sponsored the repairs and converted the buildings into a nunnery, and still supports it.

Currently, there are twenty female lamas, between fifteen and 93 years old, living in the nunnery. The head is Thubten Balmo (Tib. *thub-brtan dpal-mo*), from Kopan monastery in Nepal with the other teacher, Denzin Dolgor (Tib. *bstan-'dzin sgröl-dkar*) also coming from there. There is also one chanting master and one disciplinary master in the nunnery.

All the female lamas have *getselma* vows, given variously by Zopa rinpoche, Rigzon rinpoche and

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Bakula rinpoche. There are close connections with Zopa Rinpoche's Kopan nunnery in Kathmandu, Nepal of 300 nuns where two female lamas from *Dar' ekh* are currently studying. According to Sue Byrne, there are also two female lamas from this community studying in the Institute of Dialectics in Dharamsala, India who will be the most highly qualified Mongolian female lamas when they return to Mongolia. They are from the first community that was established here.

Daily chanting starts at 8.00am, and there is another at 5.00pm. The most important monthly ceremonies are: The Four Mandalas of Tara (*Dar' ekhiin mandal shiwa*) on the 8th of the month from 9.30am; and the Guru Puja (*Lamiin chodow*) on the 10th and 25th of the month from 9.30am; on the 15th of the month there is also a ceremony to *Manal* (Tib. *sman-bla*, Skr. Bhaishajyaguru), the Medicine Buddha from 8.30am; on the 25th of the month the female lamas who have the initiation of *Narkhajid* (Tib. *na-ro mkha'-spyod*, Skr. Sarvabuddhadakini), hold a ceremony in honour of this dakini (*Khajidiin chogo*) in a separate room.

The annual ceremonies have a unique and distinctive feature in this monastery, based on Kopan nunnery's practices: in the evening on which an annual ceremony has been held, the female lamas, holding candles, butter lamps and incense sticks while playing various musical instruments, circumambulate around inside the walls of the nunnery followed by crowds of believers also holding candles (following the practice of Kopan monastery's nunnery).

According to the FPMT homepage a community center named 'Dolma Ling Community Center' was also established by FPMT Mongolia in 2003, attached to Dolmalin nunnery, to carry out social services in the areas of education, social development, health and environmental protection in Ulaanbaatar's Bayanzurkh district with the aim of alleviating poverty in the area. It has its building on the right of the main entrance of the nunnery, on the north. It includes the Soup Kitchen which provides daily meals and basic medical support, the Children's Character Development Program, the Women's Skills Development Program (helping local residents improve their sewing and knitting skills and creating independent working groups for them), the Vegetable Garden Project (with a small vegetable garden and a greenhouse cultivated), and the Community Health Care Clinic (providing basic medical attention and advice).