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THREE MONASTERIES BY THE ONGI RIVER

The aim of the present article¹ is to give a detailed description of three interconnected monasteries of the Gobi area, including their history, their temples and monastic schools or colleges, their famous lamas, and monastic life and ceremonial activity, as well as the connections between them; and thus to give another sample of the extensive field researches I conducted on the sites of old but destroyed monasteries of different size and type in Mongolia.² This included a survey executed in 2007 summer together with Krisztina Teleki on 150 old monastic sites and in 40 present-day or revived Buddhist temples in three provinces (Öwörkhangai, Dundgow' and the south part of Töw) in the framework of the Documentation of Mongolian Monasteries project of Arts Council of Mongolia aimed at documenting all once existed sites in the area of the present Mongolia and collecting, in the very last moment, oral history on them from the very few still living informants: old lamas who had been lamas before the 1937 purges (mass executions and destroying of monasteries).³ I visited the sites of all three monasteries in 2007. For this article, I collected information from written sources on the given sites as well, and included the data from the recorded interviews in the descriptions of the sites and their history.

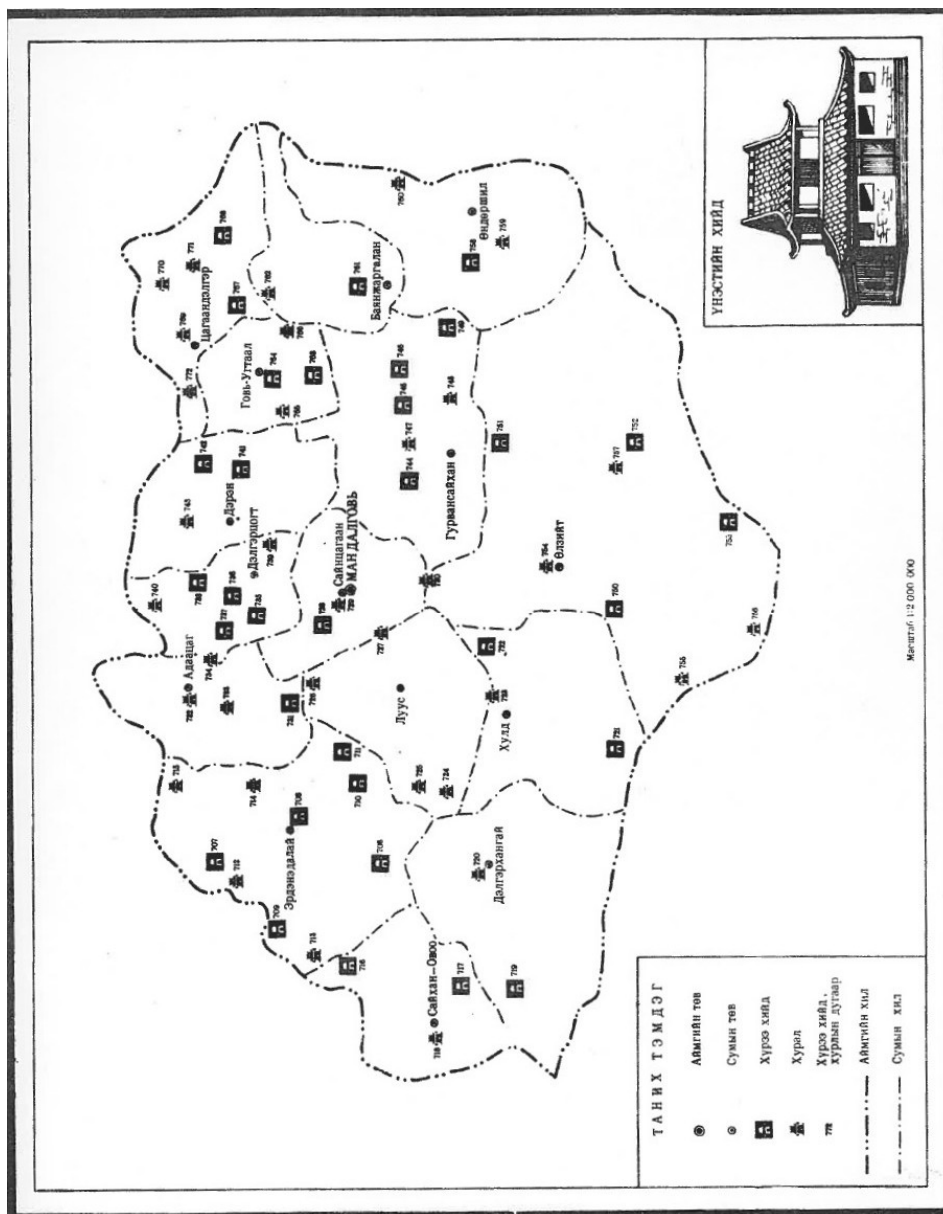
The present article deals with the history, present condition and revival of three monasteries of the Gobi region headed by the same high lama, called collectively 'the three monasteries by the Ongi river', Ongiin gurwan khiid, after being situated by the same river in the Dundgow' region (middle Gobi province). All three were situated in the old Tüshee güinii khoshuu of Tüsheet

¹ The present article was written by the support of the János Bolyai Research Scholarship (Bolyai János Kutatási Ösztöndíj) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

² Another article of mine describing another important Gobi monastery appeared in an earlier issue of ZAS: Majer, Zs., Delgeriin choir, the Monastery of Zawa lam Damdin, In: *Zentralasiatische Studien* 41 (2012), pp. 7-42., Bonn.

³ On details of this see Teleki, K., Building on ruins, memories and persistence: Revival and survival of Buddhism in the countryside. In: *Silk Road* 7, Seattle 2009, pp. 64-73.; Majer, Zs., Buddhism in Mongolia Today: Continuation or Disjuncture with the Past and the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition, In: *The Silk Road*, Volume 7, 2009 autumn, Seattle, pp. 51-63.; and Majer, Zs. — Teleki, K.: On the Current Condition of 190 Old and Present-Day Monastic Sites in the Mongolian Countryside. In: *Zentralasiatische Studien* 39 (2010), pp. 93-140., Bonn and the homepage of the project www.mongoliantemples.net.

khan aimag (that is, the land of Tüshee gūn in the administrative division belonging under Tüsheet khan), and today two are in Saikhan-owoo sum and one



Map of Dundgovi province. No. 717 Khutagt lamiin khiid, No. 719 Khoshuu khüree (Bari lamiin khiid is not marked)

in Delgerkhantai sum of Dundgow' aimag (two neighbouring subprovinces in the same province).⁴ The Bragri lama monastery was also called by its north location Khoid khiid, 'rear or northern monastery', while Khutagt lama monastery was also called Dund khiid, 'middle monastery', as it was situated in the middle, with the third monastery, Khoshuu khiid being situated on the south about 20 kilometres from these two, being also known as Urd khiid, 'southern monastery'.

One of them, Khoshuu khüree, was among the about 60 bigger ones of the once existing 1000 monasteries, being a real *khüree*⁵, big monastic city with 500-1000 lamas, and being the central monastery in its khoshuu, namely Tüshee gүнii khoshuu. However, considering the number of lamas it had, it did not belong to the biggest monastic cities of the old Mongolia, as these had well above a thousand or several thousand lamas. Khoshuu khüree and Khutagt lamiin khiid were also important due to being places of Buddhist education with specialized monastic schools or colleges in various subjects of Buddhist studies and all three monasteries housed their own *khutagts* ('saint, majesty, dignified', a class of high Buddhist incarnate priests in Mongolia).

The close interconnections that were characteristic of monasteries and temples of different size and type of the same administrative units can also be demonstrated through the descriptions of these three sites. Also, as interviews with three old lamas were recorded concerning these sites, these are one of the cases during my researches where the first-hand data gained resulted in the most detailed descriptions.

No intact temple or other monastery building remained on any of the three sites. As widely known, the destruction was almost complete in 1937-38; even huge monastic complexes with their hundreds of buildings were pulled down

⁴ The area of Dundgow' province is divided into 15 sub-provinces, with the centre being Mandalgow' city. The aimag area belonged to different *khoshuus* of the old Tüsheet khan aimag (namely Daichin beisiin khoshuu, Tüsheet wangiin khoshuu, and possibly Achit gүнii khoshuu) and Setsen khan aimag (Borjigin Setsen wangiin khoshuu). The administrative divisions of Mongolia at the beginning of the 20th century were totally different from that of today's Mongolia. While in the old times the area of the *Khalkh* Mongols was divided into four big areas of the four *khans*, today there are 18 big and some smaller provinces (*aimag*), and some cities with county level state. The old *aimag* divisions were divided into smaller units (*khoshuu*, 'banner, battalion, administrative unit'), the centre of which was the monastic city of a worldly noble (*khüree*). These *aimag* divisions and especially the *khoshuu* subdivisions within them had changed many times.

⁵ Old monastic sites can be divided into the following categories: monastic city (*khüree*) with about 800-2000 lamas, monastery (*khiid*) with about 50-500 lamas, temple (*süm* or *dugan*, T. 'du-khang) with some dozens of lamas and assembly (*khural* or *jas*) with only a few lamas with permanent or only temporary ceremonies.

or burnt down completely. What was not destroyed then was finished in different ways in the 70 years that went on. It is only a very few percent of old monastic sites where there are still even partial remains, with at least a temple building standing, and a very few monasteries remained intact but even these only partly. In some cases these remained temple buildings were revived and are currently used as a temple, but in other cases they were not revived, and thus are now in an extremely bad state of repair. There are again sites where no temple buildings remained, but there are considerable remnants of the other buildings, mostly lama dwellings with standing walls or wall fragments and where the layout of the old complex is still easy to make out. The site of Khoshuu khiid, which is situated in Delgerkhangai sum (subprovince), is completely abandoned with even no partial remnants, only the foundations and heaps marking the sites of old temple buildings are visible. Its site is subject to treasure hunters, shown by traces of digging in form of numerous holes. This old monastery was revived in the sum centre Delgerkhangai but is inactive by now. The other two sites are in Saikhan-owoo sum, neighbouring each other. On the site of Bari lamiin khiid, only partial remnants, walls of some buildings and stupas stand now, but a new temple was erected at the site with ceremonies being held by a small lama community. This site is also being visited by tourists. The neighbouring site, Kutagt lamiin khiid, which is visible from the hillside of Bari lamiin khiid if one looks down, is similarly in complete ruins with only some walls of lama dwellings standing. On this site there is the construction of a new temple building in process (in 2007, unfortunately I have no information on its current state). The three sites, all in all, represent well the current conditions of old monastic sites all around Mongolia.

On the monasteries this article deals with, three old lamas were found who could provide first-hand data. With them personal interviews were recorded. It was exceptional during our work conducted with old lamas with the aim of collecting oral history from them between 2005 and 2009 that on any other monastery we could find more than one still living informant. It was usually a happy case even if one old lama was found to tell his memories on an old monastery, though we interviewed all old lamas we were able to reach in Ulaanbaatar (this work started in 2006 and new or also repeated interviews were recorded in 2007 and 2009) and during our countryside stays and travels. Ts. Dashdorj, who was born in 1908, is currently the offering master (*da chowombo*, T. *mchod-dpon*⁶) in the present Züün khüree Dashchoilin monastery (T. *bkra-shis chos-gling*, 'auspicious monastery of the Teaching', the second biggest monastery complex in Ulaanbaatar following Gandan or Gandantegchenlin

⁶ Tibetan equivalents of Mongolian terms are given (T.), and in some cases also the Sanskrit terms (S.)



Ts. Dashdorj lama

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B. Budjaw lama



Naidan lama N. Dawaa

(T. dga'-ldan theg-chen gling), Tögs bayasgalant ikh khölgöniin süm in Mongolian translation, 'The joyous (mahāyāna) monastery', the main monastery), but belonged once to one of the so called 'three monasteries of the Ongi River', namely Khutagt lamiin khiid. As he lives in Ulaanbaatar, and was easy to reach, he was interviewed repeatedly three times: in 2006, 2007, and 2009. The other two old lamas were interviewed only once during the 2007 fieldwork in Dundgow' as they both lived on the monastery site or nearby. B. Budjaw lama lived in 2007 in a yurt on the site of Khutagt lamiin khiid. He was born in 1927 and had been a lama of Bari lamiin khiid belonging once to its Lamiram dugan (Lamiram/Lamrim temple, T. lam-rim, named after the gradual path to enlightenment composed by Tsongkhapa), situated a bit further on its east side from his age of 5 till 10 (that is, till 1937). His father was a lama there, too (although most of the Mongolian lamas belonged to the Gelukpa tradition, which requires celibacy, many of them married and had children). The third lama, Nürewjawiin Dawaa who was found living in his yurt some kilometres from the monastery site is also known as Naidan lam, as he is considered to be a reincarnation of a famous local saint of Bari lama monastery, Naidan tsorj (T. chos-rje, S. dharmasvámin, 'lord of religion', a high rank), who was the reincarnation of the Tibetan teacher of Bari lama. Dawaa lama was born in 1913 and belonged to Bari lamiin khiid from his age of 8 till about 1927. Thus Dawaa lama was in 2007 one of the very few living reincarnations in modern Mongolia. Additional information was gained from lamas of today, like M. Bat-Erdene, the present head of the revived Gündüjambaalin monastery at the site of Bragri lama's monastery and B. Gantogtokh, once head lama of the new but by 2007 inactive temple in the centre of Delgerkhangai sum, Dashpuntsoglin khiid. Apart from the site visit outcomes, my aim was to collect as much available information from recent Mongolian language sources as I could, as more reliable primary written sources, such as Tibetan and Mongolian language historical chronicles, lack information on these monasteries. Even the latest of these, which has the most detailed account of Mongolian monasteries, the Khor Chojjün, 'History of Buddhism in Mongolia' (T. hor chos-'byung) or Altan Dewter, 'Golden Annals' written in Tibetan by Zawa lam Damdin (T. rtsa-ba bla-ma rta-mgrin, 1867-1937), a famous Mongolian philosopher lama of the 20th century, known also as Luwsandayan (T. blo-bzang rta-dbyangs), and as Luwsandamdin (T. blo-bzang rta-mgrin) left even the biggest of these three sites, *Khoshuu khüree* out. From the 19-20th century travellers P. K. Kozlov and Roy Chapman Andrews described the Khoshuu khiid monastery, both visited it in the 1920s.⁷ Apart from these, any details available are in recent Mongolian

⁷ Roy Chapman Andrews, *The New Conquest of Central Asia. A Narrative of the Explorations of the Central Asiatic Expeditions in Mongolia and China, 1921-1930*, New York 1932, p. 164.

books and articles, the data in which comes often from the accounts of surviving lamas. A few published sources contain scattered data on the monasteries, like books appeared on a given aimag and its history, or the publications dedicated to anniversaries of the sub-provinces, but these three sites are not included in general books on Mongolian architecture or on historical sites⁸, as they were not among the biggest and most well known ones. From the three monasteries two are included on the monastery lists and maps of Rinchen's atlas⁹, which shows monasteries and temples that existed in the past in Mongolia (941 in number) on separate maps for each *aimag* and the Ulaanbaatar area. These maps indicate the names of the old monastic sites and their location with place names, and show their rough place on a simple blank map of the given *aimag*. Maidar's list of monasteries¹⁰ was also checked. It includes monastery names and in some cases additional data on its founder or abbot, number of lamas, number of buildings, but these data in general proved to be very unreliable (Maidar's map was made prior to and indicates fewer places than that of Rinchen). About the three monasteries of the Ongi River a couple of old photos are available in the collection of the Film Archives in Ulaanbaatar (Box 92, K23643-K23650). Among them, according to their description K23644 shows Khushuu khural [Khoshuu khiid], K-23645 shows its main assembly hall, whilst K-23646 shows the stupa of Bariin khambiin khiid [Bari lamiin khiid], and K-23647 shows the Maidar temple of Khutagtiin khüree [Khutagt lamiin khiid]. However, in fact all show details of Khoshuu khüree, the monastery names are given mistakenly in the descriptions. Another photo has the following description in the Film Archives catalogue: 'the ruins of Ongiin goliin khiid', which shows the ruins of Bari lamiin khiid from 1983 (Box 163, 44789). Some of the above pictures are available in books on Mongolian architecture.¹¹

⁸ Such as, for example Dashnyam, L. (ed.), *Mongol nutag dakh' tüükh soyoliin dursgal. Sedewchilsen lawlakh* [Handbook of Mongolian Historical and Cultural Sites], Ulaanbaatar 1999; and Daajaw, B., *Mongoliin uran barilgiin tüükh* [History of Mongolian Architecture], Ulaanbaatar 2006.

⁹ Rinchen, B., *Mongol ard ulsiin ugsaatsnii sudlal, khelnii shinjleliin atlas* [Ethnographic and Linguistic Atlas of the Mongolian People's Republic], Ulaanbaatar 1979 (map No. 36. on Dundgow' *aimag* was made by O. Pürew and D. Maidar)

¹⁰ Maidar, D., *Mongoliin khot tosgonii gurwan zurag* [Three Maps of Mongolian Settlements], Ulaanbaatar 1970

¹¹ Picture of the Maitreya temple of Khoshuu khiid in Tsültem, N., *Mongolian Architecture*, Ulaanbaatar 1988, picture No. 13. of the introduction; two drawings of the Maitreya temple and the main assembly hall in Maidar, D., *Mongoliin arkhitektur ba khot baiguulalt*, Ulaanbaatar 1972, picture No. 66 and 67. and a photo of several temples of Khoshuu khiid in picture No. 64. The main assembly hall and Maitreya temple picture

Bari lamiin khiid

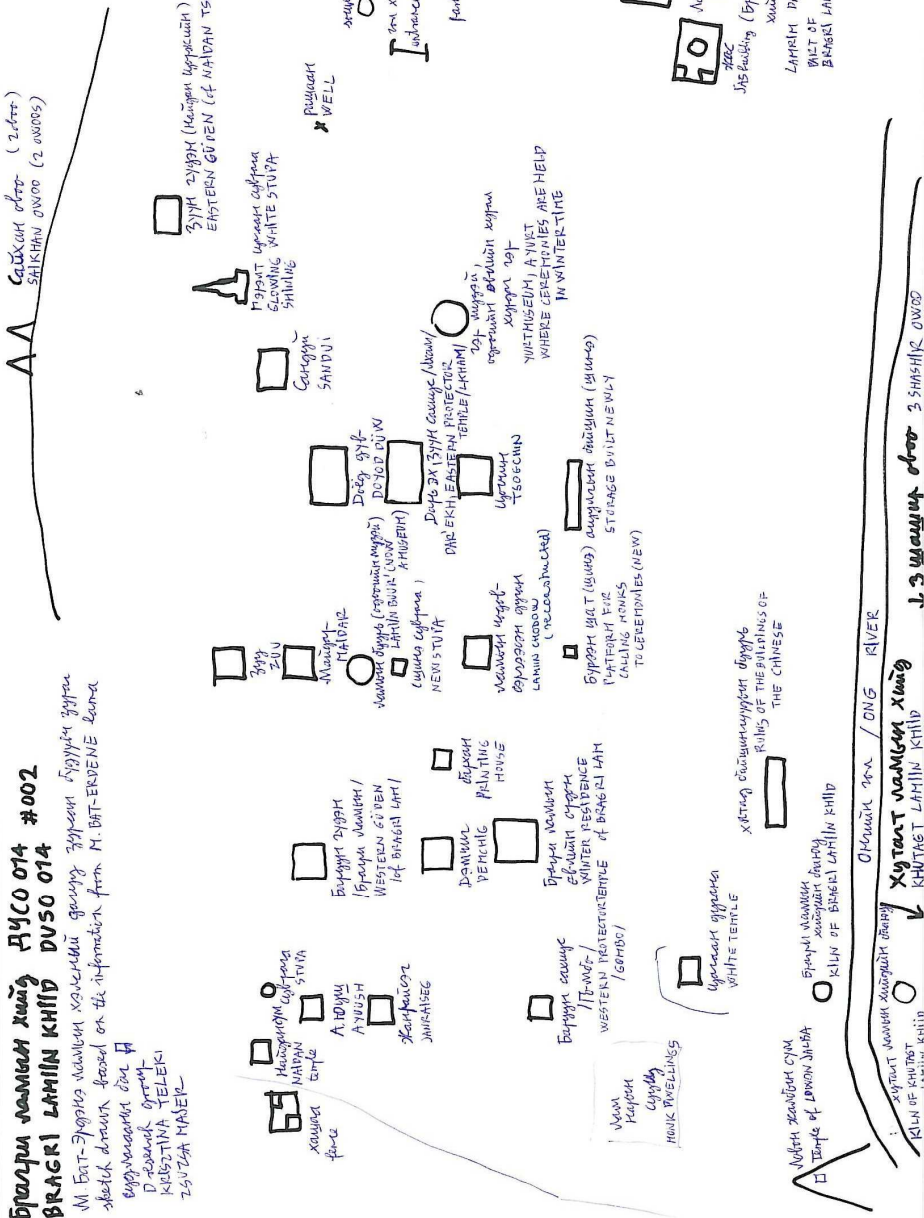
Location and site

Bari lamiin khiid ('monastery of Bari lama', Bari / Bragri (khamba) lamiin khiid, 'monastery of Bari lama abbot', Bari / Bragri lam Damtsigdorjiin khiid, 'monastery of Bari lama Damtsigdorj'), which was known also as Khoit / khoid khiid ('Monastery on the north', as it was situated to the north of Khutagt lamiin khiid), as well as Gündüjambaalin khiid (T. kun-tu sbyin-pa gling, 'all the time giving generously'), or Bүgdiig бүтеегч сүм¹², was not marked on Rinchen's map.¹³ The monastery site is situated at the western bank of the Ongi River, on the Melkhii towgo hillside (N 45°20.351', E 104°00.427', Elevation 1256m). The place is about 18 kilometres from the sum centre of Saikhan-owoo, to the south-east. The main peaks worshipped with owoos on them (heaps made of stones at mountain peaks or road junctions for the local spirits) near the monastery site are: Khoyor Saikhan owoo ('Two beautiful owoos', a name for two mountain peaks and owoos on them) on the north-east, Janjin owoo to the east (named after a kind of traditional Mongolian hat its form resembles to), Gurwan shashir owoo ('Three *shashir* owoos', *shashir* is a kind of ceremonial cap worn by lamas) to the south and Tsagaan шүкхерт owoo (named after a deity, 'the goddess with the white umbrella', also known as Dүger / Dugar or Seded, T. gdugs-dkar, S. Sitātapatrā) on the west, while Man-

are also available in N. M. Shepetilnikov, *Arhitektura Mongolij*, Moscow 1960, pictures No. 59 and 95.

¹² T. Sainjargal (Sainjargal, T., *Delgerkhangai sumiin түүхэн тоим* [History of Delgerkhangai subprovince], Ulaanbaatar 2003, pp. 56-57.) says that the names of the three monasteries situated on the banks of Ongi River were Shashniig бүтеегч сүм, Bүgdiig бүтеегч сүм and Өлзийгөөр арвижуулагч сүм. However, this later, Өлзийгөөр арвижуулагч was a name for Khoshuu khiid, as well as for Khutagt lamiin khiid. Bүgdiig бүтеегч is most probably for Bari lamiin khiid, but no sources mentioned the third name, Shashniig бүтеегч for any of the three.

¹³ Mongolian monasteries were and are known under different names or name variants. Usually a monastery was known under several different names, such as for example a name given after the place it was situated; in case of central monasteries of a *khoshuu* they were named after the *khoshuu* itself; another, Tibetan name (all monasteries and temples, and even individual temples and monastic schools within a monastery complex had Tibetan names, but only for a couple of them was the Tibetan name the widely used one); a name which is the Mongolian translation of the Tibetan name; and perhaps a name including the name or title of a famous lama or khutagt associated (founder or head) with the site. There were also monastery names given after a noble whose area it was situated in, and there were many other types of monastery names as well.



Bari lamiin khiid Sketch of the site based on information gained from M. Baterdene lama



Ruins of Bari lamiin khiid

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Remnants of the famous shining stupa of Bari lama monastery



Old drawing of Bari lama monastery

dal owoo (named after the maṇḍala ceremonial offering, S. maṇḍala) is on Bayan-öndör Mountain nearby. Ongi River flows in front of the monastic site between the two monasteries Bari lamiin khiid and Khutagt lamiin khiid. By the time that passed on till today and especially in the last several years many of the springs and rivers dried out in Dundgow', including the Ongi River, but the trees that managed to survive in the dried out river bends still show in how beautiful areas these monasteries were built.

The ruins cover an area of approximately 150 m x 150 m. The monastic site is beautiful even in its ruined state. Due to its far-away location many temple walls made of brick and mud survived as well as walls of lama dwellings. Terra-cotta fragments and roof pieces remained from the old monastery buildings are exhibited in the monastery's yurt museum which operates at the site. A revived temple is situated here as well. Therefore, due to the presence of lamas, the place is saved from relic hunters, which causes a lot of damage on other abandoned sites. There is a beautiful sight to the remnants of Khutagt lamiin khiid which was situated nearby, at the other bank of the river, below this monastery. A very big brick burning stove or kiln and the foundations of 4-5 buildings of the Chinese dwellers that worked at monastery construction works or as merchants are situated at the bank of Ongi River, below the ruins of this monastery. Remnants of Lowonjalbiin süm, a small shrine are visible nearby high on a hillside, situated a bit further than the ruins of the Chinese settlement and the kiln.

History

On the site and its history Ts. Dashdorj (born in 1908), who had been a lama once to Khutagt lamiin khiid, the neighbouring monastery, served data in several interviews recorded in 2006, 2007 and 2009 in Ulaanbaatar. Apart from him, during the 2007 fieldwork two other old lamas being able to serve first-hand data on the old monastery and its life were found and interviewed, namely B. Budjaw (born in 1927), who had been a lama of Bari lamiin khiid between his 5-10 years of age, and Nürewjawiin Dawaa (born in 1913) who belonged to Bari lamiin khiid from his age of 8. M. Bat-Erdene, the young lama presently heading Gündüjambaalin temple, the temple revived at the old monastery site, also provided useful data. Several books and printed materials also contain useful data on the site, like a collection of articles appeared for the 80th anniversary of the subprovince¹⁴; the book of L. Pürewdorj¹⁵; and the leaflet of the monastery (in English).

¹⁴ *Saikhan owoo 80, Nutag am'tai zayaa* [Saikhan owoo subprovince, 80th anniversary], Ulaanbaatar 2003

The monastery was founded by Tseweendashiin Damtsigdorj (T. dam-tshig rdo-rje, S. Samayavajra, 1781-1848), who became famous as Bragri/Bari lam, after the name of his monastery which he founded in his motherland on the mountain he called 'rocky mountain' (Bari/Bragri, T. brag-ri or Bragriribo/Bargririwo, T. brag-ri ri-bo, Mongolian khadtai / khadan uul). Damtsigdorj was born to a poor family from the father Tseweendash in 1781 at a place called Ötgön Ulaan khoshuu near Ongi River. He started to learn Tibetan and religious topics in his childhood. His first teacher was Ishlkhündew / Ishlkhündüw gelen or Ishdonilkhündew khutagt (T. ye-shes (gdon-gyi) lhun-grub) from his 6-7 year of age. He took his first monastic vows from him. Later he went to Ikh khüree (or Bogdiin khüree, the then monastic capital of the Mongols) to study, where his teacher was gawj Ishdondow (T. ye-shes don-grub) and where he learnt philosophy in Dashchoimbel datsan (T. bkra-shis chos-'phel grwa-tshang, 'monastic school auspiciousness spreading the Teaching', in Mongolian translation Ölzii khutgiin nomiig arwiuulagch) of Ikh khüree. At the age of 16 he took *getsel* vow (T. dge-tshul, S. śramaṇera, novice) then he travelled to Tibet for study. He went to the Tibetan Gonlün monastery (Golong Jampa ling, T. dgon lung byams pa gling, situated in Amdo, Qinghai,) when he was 19 and studied from Luwsanchojinnyam (T. blo-bzang chos-kyi nyi-ma, 1737-1802, a great scholar) known as *tuugan gegeen* (Tuguan, T. thu'u bkwan) and from Gonchigjigmedwanwo (T. dkon-mchog 'jigs-med dbang-po), who was also known as *günten gegeen* (Gonlün monastery was the seat of the *janjaa* (T. lcang-skya) and *tuugan* lineages, two main lineages. *Günten gegeen* must have been a third reincarnating high lama associated with the monastery). He studied in the *Choir* or philosophical monastic school (T. chos-grwa grwa-tshang). He acquired many kinds of initiations (*lün*, T. lung, 'scriptural/ oral transmission, spiritual teachings; *wan* / *awshig*, T. dbang, S. abhiṣeka, 'empowerment, initiation'; and *jinan* / *jenan*, T. rjes gngang, 'authorization, empowerment, permission blessing'). He also went to the Tibetan Kumbum (Gumbum, T. sku-'bum, 'hundred thousand images'), Labrang (Lawran, T. bla-brang, 'residence') and Tashilhunpo (Dashlkhünbe, T. bkra-shis lhun-po, 'heaps of glory', the seat of the Panchen lamas) monasteries and to Lhasa (T. lha-sa, 'abode of the Gods', capital of Tibet). He learnt from *güüsh* Agwaangalsan (*güüsh*, T. gu-shri, a Chinese title; T. ngag-dbang bskal-bzang) in Alagsha region in Inner Mongolia, too. He learnt philosophy, poetry, literature, astrology and studied Tibetan and Chinese languages as well and took part in monastic debates with Mongolian and Tibetan lamas. After studying in Tibet he became a *bandid* (S. paṇḍita) when he was about 20 years old.

¹⁵ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tüükh* [Short History of Delgerkhangai subprovince], Mandalgow' 1993



Bari lama Damtsigdorj painted by Pürewbat lama

When he returned home at his 40 years of age he founded Bragrüi khiid on the north of the Ongi River, at Khadan uul (rocky mountain), upon the initiation of his teacher, Ishdonilkhündüw. It became an important monastery. He lived there till the end of his life. He passed away in 1848 at the age of 67. As for the exact date of founding the monastery, only one source has data¹⁶, giving 1804 as the date of founding. About the foundation of the monastery, L. Pürewdorj accounts the following¹⁷: Once when Damtsigdorj lama, who spent many years in Tibet studying, was on his way to the monastery called Lamiin gegeenüi khiid (this was situated in Erdenetsogt subprovince of today's Bayankhongor aimag and was headed by Erdene mergen bandida Lamiin gegeen khutagt), he became very ill. Hearing this, the lamas of the area gathered many objects of worship, like pictures and sculptures of deities and sutras. When all necessary objects of worship and equipments were collected, the monastery was founded at the same place.

He became the abbot of the three monasteries of Ongi River in turns with the abbot of Khoshuu khiid, and was the tutor (*yonzon*, T. yongs-'dzin) of the 5th *bogd* ('saint') or *jewtsündamba khutagt* (T. rje-btsun dam-pa, 'the holy venerable lord', the head of the Mongolian Buddhist church), Luwsanchültemjigmed (1815-1842, T. blo-bzang tshul-khrims 'jigs-med). He wrote many famous works and texts, such as the *Lkham mam tugon* (T. lha-mo ma-mo thugs-dgongs, 'Wisdom mind of Śrīdevī'), and compiled 22 volumes in Tibetan on different questions of philosophy, history and literature. When he returned home to Mongolia he wrote a famous commentary work on Madhyamika (*töw üzel*, T. dbu-ma, 'middle way'). His work on *Lamrim* (T. lam-rim, the gradual path by Tsongkhapa), entitled *Pandelamsan* (T. phan-bde lam-bzang lam-rim, 'excellent beneficial gradual path of enlightenment') became a very important text in Mongolian monasteries. It is used as a main text in Sera (T. se-ra) monastery in Tibet.

Temples and their arrangement

Before the purges 17 temples, 10 financial units (*jas*) and about 100-300 lamas belonged to the monastery complex (Ts. Dashdorj mentioned 200, B. Budjaw 100, and L. Pürewdorj¹⁸ gives 300), which had *Gombo*¹⁹ (or *Makhgal* T. mgon-po,

¹⁶ Tsogkhiimor', D., *Saikhan-owoo sumand baisan odoo baigaa süm khiidiin sudalгаа*, 2007 [Study on the old monastic sites and present-day temples of Saikhan owoo sum], 1 printed page, given by the local governor in the subprovince centre

¹⁷ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tүүkh*, p. 14.

¹⁸ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tүүkh*, p. 14.

¹⁹ In this article names of deities, as well as other terminology such as text titles, names of different types of temples are given in their Mongolian names, even though their Tibetan or sometimes Sanskrit origins are more known to the readers.

S. Mahākāla) and *Lkham* (or *Baldan lkham*, T. dpal-ldan lha-mo, S. Śrīdevī) as the main protector deities.

According to M. Bat-Erdene, the present head of the revived Gündüjambaalin monastery at the site, the first temple of the monastery that was built was called *Naidan dugan* (T. gnas-brtan, built for the worship of the arhats or the main disciples of Buddha) and was constructed by the incarnation of *Khutagt lam* of the neighbouring Khutagt lamiin khiid, who was the tutor of Bragri lama Damsigdorj, and Bragri lam became its abbot. The monastery consisted of the following temples²⁰: *Naidan*, *Ayuush* (T. tshe-dpag-med, S. Amitāyus, the Buddha of Boundless life or Longevity, a form of Amitābha), *Janraiseg* (T. spyen-ras-gzigs, S. Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of Compassion), western protector temple (*Baruun sakhius* for the worship of *Gombo*), *Tsagaan dugan* (White Temple), *Demchig* (bde-mchog, S. Cakrasaṃvara), *Zuu* (T. Jo-bo, Buddha temple), *Maidar* (T. byams-pa, Maitreya, the future buddha), *Lamiin chodwo/chodow* (T. bla-ma'i mchod-pa, 'offering to the masters', S. gurupūjā, ceremony for Tsongkhapa, the teachers and masters who transmit the Buddhist Teaching), *Doyoddüw* (T. mdo bsdus-pa, 'abridged sūtra', in Mongolia a short version of Prajñāpāramitā is called by this name), *Tārā* temple (*Dar'ekh*, T. sgrol-ma, S. Tārā) and the eastern protector temple (*Züün sakhius* for the worship of *Lkham*) in one building, the main assembly hall (*Tsogchin*, T. tshogs-chen, 'great assembly') and *Sandui* temple (T. gsang-'dus, S. Guhyasamāja). The relic temples of *Naidan tsorj* and Bragri lama were located here as well and were called *Baruun güden* and *Züün güden* (T. sku-rten, 'images and sacred objects, body representation'), western and eastern relic temples as mentioned by Ts. Dashdorj. There was a printing house called *barkhan* (T. par-khang) and the summer and winter residences (*Lawran*, T. bla-brang) of Bragri lama. The monastery of Bragri lama was the place of great ceremonies and rituals while philosophical and other monastic schools (*datsan*, T. grwa-tshang, specialized monastic school) were located in Khutagt lamiin khiid. Only *Lamrim datsan* (T. lam-rim, named after the gradual path to enlightenment composed by Tsongkhapa) was situated here

²⁰ Ts. Dashdorj mentioned the following temple names: *Tsogchin*, *Lamiin chodow*, *Maidar*, *Janraiseg*, *Zuu*, *Baruun güden*, *Züün güden*, *Baruun sakhius* or *Gombo*, *Züün sakhius* or *Lkham*, *Naidan*, *Lawran*, *Ayuush*, *Demchig* and *Sandui*. N. Dawaa remembered the followings: *Tsogchin*, *Jüd*, *Tsagaan dugan*, *Manba*, *Zuugiin*, *Janraiseg*, *Maidar*, *Düinkhor*, *Choir* [in fact Bari lamiin khiid did not have a *Choir datsan*, nor a *Jüd*, *Manba* or *Düinkhor datsan*, the monastic schools listed by him were all situated only in the neighbouring Khutagt lamiin khiid]. M. Bat-Erdene listed the following 17 temples: *Ayuush*, *Janraiseg*, *Baruun sakhius*, *Tsagaan dugan*, *Demchig*, *Zuu*, *Maidar*, *Lamiin chodwo/chodow*, *Doyoddüw*, *Dar'ekh* temple and the *Züün sakhius*, *Tsogchin* and *Sandui* temples, the relic temples of *Naidan tsorj* and Bragri lama, the summer and winter residences of Bragri lama, and *Lamrim datsan* which was built on the right side of the site.

in the monastery of Bragri lama, built on the right side of the site [as the 18th temple building, not counted in the 17 temples as it was built somewhat separated]. B. Budjaw lama belonged once to this *Lamrim datsan* or *Lamiram dugan*. According to him, one *jas* (financial unit) belonged to it which was situated in a fenced-off courtyard on its southwest.

There was a stupa composition called *chodenjad* (T. *mchod-rten brgyad*, 'eight stupas') on the northeast side of the complex, which consisted of 8 stupas with a large white stupa in the middle. It is said that its main stupa used to be shining on the great days of the months (*düitsen ödör*, T. *dus-chen*), and therefore it was called *gerelt tsagaan suwraga*, 'the radiating white stupa'. Its light was so strong that it had to be covered with another layer of bricks outside. According to N. Dawaa, in Khutagt lamiin khiid nearby there was a similar stupa which also radiated light on these days, and so light was reflected between the two stupas of the two neighbouring monasteries. Many smaller stupas also stood on the site. The temple buildings were made of brick. The dwellings of lamas were situated on the east, west and south part of the complex, on the hillside above one another.

The old *Lamiin chodow* temple was reconstructed (in the way that a new temple was built on the old foundations) and there is a platform for calling lamas to the ceremonies on that very place where it was situated before the purges. There is a well with holy water on the right of the complex, which is still used by the lamas and visitors.

Seven or eight owoos were worshipped in the area such as the two owoos of Saikhan owoo (Khoyor Saikhan owoo) on the north-east, the Gurwan shashir owoo to the south (of Khutagt lamiin khiid), Janjin owoo to the east and Tsagaan shükhert on the west. On the Bayan-öndör Mountain the owoo called Mandal owoo was situated. N. Dawaa accounted that on the 2nd of the last spring month lamas of the monastery (more possibly lamas of the two monasteries together) worshipped the Shashir owoo and on the 3rd of the first summer month they worshipped the Saikhan owoo. These owoo worships are kept on the same days again today by lamas of the revived temple.

Ceremonial life

There were lively connections between the two monasteries situated very near to each other, this one and Khutagt lamiin khiid, and the lamas visited each other's ceremonies. Maitreya circumambulation (*Maidar ergekh*) was held together by the lamas of the two monasteries in the first summer month (N. Dawaa mentions the 22nd of the first summer month, but Ts. Dashdorj the 16th). They circumambulated the sculpture of Maitreya together on the *goroo* (T. *skor*, 'circle, encircle, circumambulation') circumambulating route. *Tsam* ceremonial dance (T. 'chams) with many characters was not performed in this

monastery only in Khutagt lamiin khiid, but on the 29th of the last winter month, before the Lunar New Year, one dancer, a *Shanag* (T. zhwa-nag, 'black hat' dancer), also appearing in *Tsam* dances, performed a dance inside the temple. Ts. Dashdorj remembered the date, and according to B. Budjaw the dance took place in the *Güden* temple. B. Budjaw also mentioned that lama pupils used to perform a kind of dance, called *Düdog* (T. bdud-bzlog, 'exorcist ritual against demons'). The volumes of *Ganjuur* and *Danjuur* (T. bka'-gyur and bstan-gyur, Buddha's Teaching and its commentaries) were circumambulated annually, too. The annual 45 days *Khailen* oath-taking period (T. mkhas-len) was held separately in both monasteries. The *Khailen* of the Bragri lama monastery was held by its lamas at a place nearby where there were many trees. According to N. Dawaa, on the 1-15th of the first summer month *Yerööl* or *Molom* texts (T. smon-lam, prayer) were recited for 15 days. M. Bat-erdene mentioned *Tsagiin yerööl*, 'temporary yerööl' recitations that took place from the 11th until the 15th of the first summer month, which should relate to the same. According to N. Dawaa, the *Sandejigsüm* ceremony also used to be held, sometimes with the initiation part (*wan*, T. dbang). *Sandejigsüm* (T. gsang bde 'jigs gsum) is the summary name for three main tantric deities of the Gelukpa tradition, namely *Sandui* (T. gsang-'dus, S. Guhyasamāja), *Demchig* (T. bde-mchog, S. Cakrasamvara) and *Jigjid* (T. 'jigs-byed, S. Bhairava, epithet of Yāmāntaka), and this ceremony was held in their honour. According to an article written by the daughter of N. Dawaa or Naidan lam based on his reminiscences²¹, the main deities of the monastery, *Gombo* and *Lkham* were worshipped every day in the old monastery. At the beginning of the middle spring month different important ceremonies were held, such as the one in honour of the tutelary deities (*yadam*, T. yi-dam) for three days from the 17th of the middle spring month.

Lamas from Bogdiin khüree or Ikh khüree frequently came to the monastery to give initiations and empowerments (*lün*, *wan*, *jenan*), but none lived there permanently.

There were some *zoch* (T. gcod, 'cutting the ego clinging') tantric masters practicing nearby the two monasteries. N. Dawaa accounted that two different lineages (*jüd*, T. rgyud), namely *Khandnanjidiin jüd* (T. mkha'-gro snang-brgyad/spyod rgyud or mkha'-gro nyams-kyi rgyud) and *Tantangiin jüd* (T. thang-stong-gyi rgyud, T. thang-stong rgyal-po, name of a Tibetan siddha) were followed by them. B. Budjaw said that Choimbel gawj (T. dka'-bcu, name of a philosophical exam meaning 'ten hardships') was a *zoch* master of Bari lamiin khiid, while Wanchin and Gembel were *zoch* masters of Urd khiid (that is, Khutagt lamiin khiid). Choimbel *zoch* was the master of the other informant, Ts. Dashdorj (who belonged once to Khutagt lamiin khiid). N. Dawaa mentioned that

²¹Saikhan owoo 80, *Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 34-35.

Wanchin *zoch* had a building, while other *zoch* masters gathered in yurts (Ts. Dashdorj said however, that even Wanchin *zoch* did not have a temple, so it had to be only a building). B. Budjaw also mentioned others, like Ochir and Yonzon lamas who lived with their families outside the monastery. N. Dawaa accounted that on the 22nd of one of the autumn months a big *Zod* ceremony was held, when they performed *Lüijin* (T. lus-sbyin, 'giving one's own body', a ceremonial meditation offering the body as a means to sever ego-clinging and concepts of individuality) and many people came to prostrate.

Famous lamas and the closing of the monastery

On closing the monastery contradictory data was gained: Ts. Dashdorj claimed that the monastery was closed in 1937-38, B. Budjaw mentioned the same, M. Bat-Erdene said that the monastery was closed in 1937 and its herds and flocks were confiscated, and written sources confirm that it was destroyed in 1938, but N. Dawaa claimed that the lamas were caught in 1927-28, which is highly impossible. According to the leaflet on the new revived monastery, during the purges about 100 lamas of the monastery were executed (possibly that was almost all lamas still residing in the monastery in the last months before closing). According to B. Budjaw, the lamas of the monastery were arrested in 1937 and delivered to Ömnögow', including his own father who was a *gawj* (arrested in May, 1937). According to M. Bat-Erdene, a stupa was erected on the site in 2000 for the memory of the lamas of the monastery and its area sentenced during the purges. Their names are listed on marble boards on the side of the stupa. Only some of these lamas returned back to home after spending some years in prison. In the socialist times a *brigad* / *barigad* ('brigade', smaller regional work units inside the agricultural cooperation or *sum* districts, between about 1960-1990) was founded on the monastery site. According to the article written by the daughter of N. Dawaa²², the monastery site was used after the purges as a communal handicraft cooperative (*gariin üildwer*) with many different units, where ex lamas and also other people, men and women had to work together. Later this cooperative was moved to the *sum* centre.

According to Ts. Wolodya and N. Ölziikhutag²³, Wanchinsonomiin Dawaadorj was the last incarnation of Bari lama. He was born in 1919. After the death of the previous incarnation, Agwaanluwsanchoimbol (T. ngag-dbang blo-bzang chos-'phel) his reincarnation was searched for among the possible 100 local children. From the three most possible ones the 8th *bogd* or the *Bogd khan* ('saint khan') Agwaanluwsanchoijinyimadanzanwanchug (T. ngag-dbang blo-bzang

²² Saikhan owoo 80, *Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 34-35.

²³ Wolodya, Ts. – Ölziikhutag, N., *Ögöömör bayan Erdenedalai* [The rich land of Erdenedalai], Ulaanbaatar 2003, pp. 105-105.



The last incarnation of Bari lama Dawaadorj

chos-kyi nyi-ma bstan-'dzin dbang-phyug, 1870-1924) choose him. Therefore, Dawaadorj was nominated as the reincarnation and became in this way the abbot of Bari lamiin khiid when he was three years old. He was known also by the name of Örshöö bagsh. After the purges he was sent to the army and later died at his age of 58 (that means 1977).

Apart from the incarnation of Bari lama himself, there were several other famous lamas in the monastery, like Yonzon *bagsh* or Minjüür yonzon and Naidan *bagsh* or Naidan lam. According to D. Dagwadorj²⁴, Luwsanminjüürdorj (1865-1937), was the *shireet* lama ('chair lama, enthroned lama') of Bar' lamiin khiid. According to Ts. Wolodya and N. Ölziikhutag²⁵, Minjüür yonzon was the trainer or master (yonzon, T. yongs-'dzin, tutor, spiritual teacher) of the last incarnation of Noyon khutagt Luwsandorj (T. blo-bzang rdo-rje, he was the last incarnation of the *khutagt* in Khutagt lamiin khiid). Therefore, he owned the title *yonzon*. Minjüür yonzon studied in Dashchoimbel datsan of Bogdiin khüree (T. bkra-shis chos-gling grwa-tshang), starting from his childhood and later he obtained *gewsh* (T. dge-bshes, 'virtuous friend', high academic degree) degree. He was arrested during the religious repression (M. Bat-erdene accounted that in the middle winter month in 1937), and it is not known what happened to him. He disappeared and there came no news about him. According to the article written by the daughter of N. Dawaa²⁶, Minjüür or Yonzon *bagsh* was arrested very early in 1925, but this is not likely.

According to M. Bat-Erdene, the other famous lama, Naidan *tsorj* was the reincarnation of the Tibetan teacher of Bragri lama. N. Dawaa, one of the old lama informants is regarded as the incarnation of this famous Naidan lam among the lamas and people of the area. According to the article written by his daughter²⁷, Dawaa lama was born in 1913, in Tüsheets khan aimag, Gow' Tüshee güinii khoshuu, which is the present Saikhan owoo sub province of the present Dundgow' aimag. His mother was called Nüremjaw. He became a lama at his age of 9 and was a lama in Bragri lamiin khiid. He took the vows *barmarawjun* / *barmarawjün* (T. bar-ma rab-byung, pre-novice, renunciate or 'intermediate' vow), *getsel* (T. dge-tshul, S. śramaṇera, novice), and *gelen* (T. dge-slong, S. bhikṣu) in the proper order. He was there a lama till 1926. The last ceremony he participated in there was a *Yadam* ceremony (T. yi-dam, tutelary deity, meditational deity). After that he gathered only once in Khutagt lamiin khiid, at a *Yadam* ceremony, and did not take part in any other ceremony afterwards. One of his relatives, his uncle was the above mentioned Minjüür or Yonzon *bagsh*,

²⁴ Dagwadorj, D., *Mongoliin gün ukhaanii mergediinn zokhioliin tsomorlig* [Collected Works of Mongolian Philosophers], Ulaanbaatar 1998, pp. 168-169.

²⁵ Wolodya, Ts. – Ölziikhutag, N., *Ögöömör bayan Erdenedalai*, pp. 105-105.

²⁶ Saikhan owoo 80, *Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 34-35.

²⁷ Saikhan owoo 80, *Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 34-35.



Tsembeldorj naidan the last incarnation of naidan lama before the purges

who was arrested and never returned. Dawaa lama got many initiations (*lün, wan, jenan*) from Yonzon *bagsh*. The collected works of Minjüür yonzon are kept by him. Dawaa lama himself, after 1926 when he left the monastery, was forced into military service in 1935. He also worked in the local handicraft cooperative where he sewn decorations to boots. Later he worked in salt mines. As a result of doing this unhealthy work for ten years, he became blind at the age of 38, in 1961. Later he worked in the local brigad. He participated in the revival

of the monastery in 1990, and had a new stupa erected on the monastery site in 1998 in honour of Yonzon lam.

Gündüjambaalin, the revived temple

Gündüjambaalin (T. kun-tu sbyin-pa gling, 'all the time giving generously', Khötöl öglögch in its Mongolian name) is the temple revived on the old monastery site of Bari lamiin khiid. On its history of reopening and its current activities the abbot M. Bat-Erdene provided information in 2007. On its revival N. Dawaa lama, one of the refounders, also provided data. Articles in a book appeared on Saikhan-owoo subprovince²⁸ and the article written by the daughter of N. Dawaa lama²⁹ were also useful.

There are three tourist yurt camps near the site. Tourist frequent the place as it is situated on the road to Dalandzadgad (the aimag centre of Ömnögow' province) through the Gobi desert and is spectacular as well. There is an Art Shop where relics can be bought some of which may be dated back to centuries. There is an entrance ticket to the monastery area which includes or is situated at the old ruins.

The monastery, which follows the Gelukpa tradition (T. dge-lugs-pa, the reformed school), was revived in 1990 by Nüremjawiin Dawaa or Naidan lam, who became the abbot with the title *khamba* (T. mkhan-po, abbot); the two Cherenchimed lamas; D. Sodnom, who became the *umzad* (T. dbu-mdzad, chanting master); Wangan; Dugar, who became the *gesgüi* (T. dge-bskos, disciplinary master); Sugarragch; Jijjaa; and Naidan, who was the local party leader that time. According to M. Bat-Erdene, who is the abbot of the revived temple since 2004 (following N. Dawaa), about 20 old lamas belonged to the community that time. They moved to the centre of Saikhan-Owoo sum in 1994 where they gathered in a yurt, and came back to the old monastery site 7 years later. N. Dawaa had a new stupa erected on the monastery site in 1998 in honour of Yonzon lam. Another stupa, a Bodhi stupa (*Bod' suwraga*, T. byang-chub mchod-rten) was erected in 2000 dedicated to the memory of the victims of the purge from this and nearby monasteries. Names of old lamas of the monastery who were arrested, imprisoned and sentenced are carved on marble plates on the sides of the stupa. Only several of them returned after the purge. The erection of the stupa was organized by Ts. Mönkhbold. *Ongiin khiid san* (Ongi River Fund) was founded in 1998 on the initiation of the relatives of the victims of the purge and the stupa was erected from this Fund. The Fund also supported the organization of the celebration of the 220th anniversary of the birth of Bragri

²⁸ *Saikhan owoo 80, Nutag am'tai zayaa*

²⁹ *Saikhan owoo 80, Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 34-35.



Novices in Gündüjambaalin revived temple



Baterdene head lama of Gündüjambalin temple

lama (in 2001) and a conference which was dedicated to his honour.³⁰ The yurt temple was moved back to the present site in 2001 and the old *Lamiin chodwiin dugan* (*Lamiin chodwo* temple, T. bla-ma'i mchod-pa), where ceremonies are held since then during the summer, was rebuilt on its old site in 2004. In the socialist period a brigad operated in the area of the monastic site. According to the abbot bricks from the ruins were taken away and used for building houses

³⁰ Saikhan owoo 80, *Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 21-23.

during the socialist period, but bricks were brought back by the lamas to construct new buildings on the site.

Two yurts function now as museums at the site, with holy books composed by Damtsigdorj, the first incarnation of Bari lama, many old ceremonial equipments and utensils, musical instruments, and old terracotta fragments saved from the ruins of the old monastery on display. On the site of the old summer residence called *Lawran* of Bragri lam a yurt houses the collected works (*sum-bum*, T. gsung-'bum) of Bragri lam Damtsigdorj, such as his famous work entitled *Lkham mam tugon*. The reprint of these volumes was supported by Gurudev rinpoche. An old picture of the complex, old religious objects, musical instruments and traditional pots and vessels are also exhibited in this yurt museum. A bigger yurt, situated next to the base or foundation of the old main assembly hall (*Tsogchin*, T. tshogs-chen) is used for the exhibition of old bricks, terracotta fragments, nicely decorated pillars and other equipments which were found at the ruins of the old monastic place. In winter ceremonies are held in this yurt, not in the temple building (as usual in Mongolia from practical purposes, as a yurt is easier to be heated as a relatively more spacious temple building).

The beautiful golden statues of Buddha, Tsongkhapa and Maitreya and ten other artefacts were acquired and placed at the temple altar in 2005. The present temple building has a separate chapel (*gonkhan*, T. mgon-khang, chapel housing images of the fierce protectors, protector's temple) on the northern side where the three large golden sculptures of Buddha, Tsongkhapa and Mañjuśrī (*Manzshir*, T. 'jam dbyangs), as well as representations of *Lkham* (T. dpal-ldan) lha-mo, S. Śrīdevī), Bragri lam Damtsigdorj and his last incarnation, and some old sculptures and ceremonial cups are placed.

In 2007 the temple had 14-15 lamas, mostly young novices, but there weren't any lamas with *gelen* or *getsel* vow. According to M. Bat-Erdene, since 2001 permanent ceremonies are held here. The melodies of the chanting of texts used here at the ceremonies follow the rules prescribed and introduced by Bragri lam himself. Apart from the daily chanting, they hold several monthly ceremonies, like *Dar' ekhiin mandal shiwa* (T. sgrol-ma'i mandala bzhi-ba, the Four Maṇḍalas of Tārā) and *Manal* (T. sman-bla, S. Bhaiṣajyaguru, the medicine buddha) on the 8th of the lunar month, *Sanduin jūd* (T. gsang-'dus rgyud, S. Guhyasamāja tantra) on the 15th, *Sakhius* (T. bstan-bsrung, the wrathful deities protecting the Teaching) on the 29th, and *Naidan chogo* (T. gnas-brtan chog-ga, a ceremony for the sixteen arhats, the main disciples of the Buddha, who vowed to preserve the Dharma until the coming of Maitreya) on the 30th of each lunar month. *Gombo* and *Lkham* are the protector deities (*gol sakhius*) as these were the protectors of the old Bragri lamiin khiid. The lamas of the monastery revived the *owoo* worship ceremonies of mountain peaks around the site men-



Inside the yurt museum



Terracotta fragments in the yurt museum

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tioned at the Bari lama monastery description. The temple has connections with Delgeriin Choir monastery of Zawa lam Damdin (T. *rtsa-ba bla-ma rta-mgrin*, 1867-1937, the famous Mongolian philosopher lama, founder of many temples, among them Delgeriin choir and composer of the last Buddhist chronicle, the Golden Annals), situated in Delgertsogt *sum*. For example, lamas of Gündüjambaalin temple go there for the annual occasion of Maitreya circumambulation (*Maidar ergekhe*).

A holy water well is situated at the site serving drinking water to the lamas and visitors. In front of the temple stands the platform for calling lamas to ceremonies (*büreen shat*). The abbot of the temple lives on the monastery site on the old ruins, on the right side of the platform, where there are some small buildings and yurts.

Khutagt lamiin khiid

Location and site

Khutagt lamiin khiid was also known as Dund khiid 'middle monastery', as it was the middle one from the three monasteries by the Ongi River in the area, and also as Urd khiid, 'southern monastery', relative to the neighbouring Bragri or Bari lamiin khiid (this later being the Khoid khiid, 'rear or northern monastery')³¹. By its Tibetan name it was known as Dashtseepelin / Dashtseepellin (T. *bkra-shis tshe-'phel gling*). The monastery was marked on Rinchen map³² as Khutagt lamiin khiid (Ölziigöör arwijuulagch khiid³³) as No. 717.

The monastery site is situated at the eastern bank of the Ongi River (N 45°20.100', E 104°00.193', elevation 1286m). Rinchen gives the place name as Ongiin gol, Maidar³⁴ as Bor khongor. The place is about 18 kilometres from the *sum* centre, to the south-east. It is near the peak called Lowon jalba (T. *bslob-dpon rgyal-po*, the king of the *nāgas* (lus, T. *klu*, Skr. *nāga*) or water spirits), but that is on the other bank of the river. The main peaks with *owoos* worshipped near the monastery site are the same as given at the description of Bari lamiin khiid.

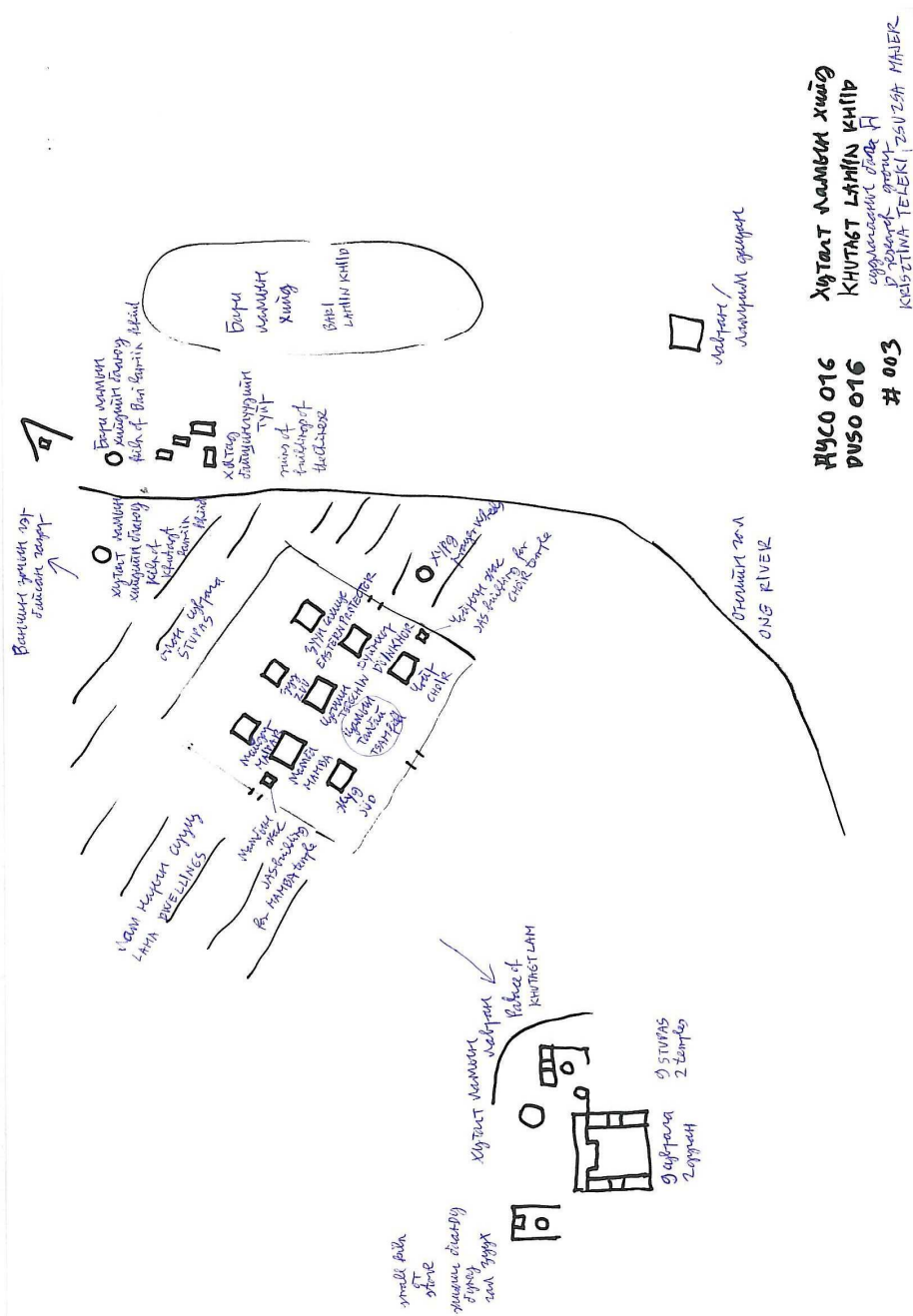
The ruins cover an area of approximately 150 m x 150 m. There is not much remained on the site of this once big monastery, but the foundations of the temple buildings still can be seen clearly. There were eight big temple buildings, a big square for performing the *Tsam* dance in front of the main temple,

³¹ The name Urd khiid was also used variably for Khoshu khiid of the three as it was situated to the south of the other two.

³² Rinchen, B., *Mongol ard ulsiin ugsaatsanii sudlal, khelnii shinjileiin atlas* (map No. 36. Dundgow' *aimag*)

³³ This name, Ölziigöör arwijuulagch was a name also for Khoshuu khiid.

³⁴ Maidar, D., *Mongoliin khot tosgonii gurwan zurag*



Khutagt lamiin khiid: Sketch of the site based on information gained from Ts. Dashdorj



Ruins of Khutagt lamiin khiid - view from Bari lamiin khiid

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The kiln of Khutagt lamiin khiid

and two smaller *jas* (financial unit) buildings. On the three sides there were the residences of the lamas, and from these remnants of many buildings are still visible. On the south-west on a small hillside the two temples of the *Lawran* (T. bla-brang, residence) of the Khutagt lam, the founder and head of the monastery were situated as well as 8 stupas with an additional central one. The ruins of *Lawran* are still visible there. At the monastery site no walls remained intact; the highest wall remnants are no more than 30 centimetres high. The buildings were made of brick and mud. Bricks and terracotta ornaments and decoration fragments were found scattered on the site, mainly on the site of the *Lawran*. The burning stove or kiln (*baayuu*) of the monastery, a very huge one is on the west of the complex, on the right bank of Ongi River. In this bricks and clay images of deities were burnt. In 2007 the family of an old ex-lama of the monastery of Bragri lamiin khiid, B. Budjaw, lived on the site, on the right side of the temples in some new buildings and a yurt. They were trying to revive the monastery, and a new building was being built (started in 2006) on the place of the old *Düinkhor datsan*, on the right of the main temple ruins. The walls were

already put on but the author has no information if the temple was put in operation since then or not.

History

On the monastery the same old lamas provided first-hand data as on Bari lamiin khiid, that is, Ts. Dashdorj (born in 1908) who had been a lama of this monastery once and B. Budjaw (born in 1927), who had been a lama of Bari lamiin khiid, the neighbouring monastery. M. Bat-Erdene, the present head of Gündüjambaalin temple also helped with information. Among the books Pürewdorj³⁵ has published data on the monastery, and also several articles were useful³⁶.

The monastery was founded between 1746 and 1750 by Khutagt lam Donilkhündew gegeen or Ishdonilkhündew Gowiin noyon khutagt, who was an astrologer lama (*zurkhaich*) and was the first incarnation of the *Khutagt lam* ('saint lama') here, the head of the monastery. Once the monastery had about 200-300 lamas (Ts. Dashdorj said 200, Pürewdorj³⁷ and also the leaflet of the revived Gündüjambaalin temple mentions 300).

Temples and monastic schools and their arrangement

Before 1937 presumably there were 11 temples including four monastic schools, an additional two temples in the *Lawran* of the khutagt, and 9 *jas* or financial units and in the monastery. The main protector was the Red Protector (*Jamsran* or *Ulaan sakhius*, T. *lcam-sring* / *beg-tse*), whose sculpture as well as that of *Yansan yadam* (T. *yang-gsang yi-dam*, S. Hayagrīva) was placed on the altar of the Protector's temple according to B. Budjaw. *Yansan yadam* or *Damdin Yansan* (T. *rta-mgrin yang-gsang (yi-dam)*) is a four-faced and six-armed tutelary deity with wings, and a horse-head in his hair, who is embracing his consort. He was worshipped by Padmasambhava, and is a main tutelary deity in Red Sect temples. Among the three main Gelukpa monasteries of Tibet, he is also the main tutelary deity in Sera and as such is worshipped in monastic schools following the manual book (*igchaa*, T. *yig-cha*) of Sera.

There were the following temples in the complex: the big main assembly hall (*Ikh Tsogchin dugan*), the smaller main assembly hall (*Baga Tsogchin*), Buddha temple (*Zuugiin dugan*), Maitreya temple (*Maidariin dugan*), Avalokiteshvara temple (*Janraisegiin dugan*), and the four monastic schools. There were also temples dedicated to the wrathful protectors: *Baruun sakhius* (western sakhius)

³⁵ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tüükh*

³⁶ *Saikhan owoo* 80, *Nutag am'tai zayaa*, pp. 34-35., an article written by the daughter of the old lama, Nüremjawiin Dawaa or Naidan lam.

³⁷ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tüükh*, p. 14.



Ruins of the Lawran of the khutagt lama and its 9 stupas

for the worship of *Yansan yadam*, and *Züün sakhius* (eastern Sakhius) for the worship of *Jamsran*, the main protector of the monastery. The four datsans were a philosophical monastic school (*Choir datsan*, T. chos-grwa), a Kālacakra monastic school (*Düinkhor datsan*, T. dus-'khor), a medical monastic school (*Manba datsan*, T. sman-pa) and a tantric monastic school (*Jüd datsan*, T. rgyud). There were also two temples at the *Lawran* or palace of the Khutagt, built separately.³⁸

According to B. Budjaw, in front of the main assembly hall (*Tsogchin*) a *Tsam* dance field was situated. Behind the main assembly hall were situated the Maitreya temple (*Maidariin dugan*), the Buddha temple (*Zuugiin dugan*) and the temple of the Protector (*Sakhiusnii dugan*). Ts. Dashdorj however mentioned two protector temples, *Baruun* and *Züün sakhius*. The area of the temples was surrounded by a white wall with three gates (on the east, south, and west). A large prayer wheel stood outside the wall on the south-east side. According to Ts. Dashdorj 9 financial units (*jas*) belonged to the monastery: *Tsogchin jas*, *Zuugiin jas*, the financial units of the four monastic schools, *Maidar jas* (belonging to the Maitreya temple), *Sangain jas* and *Khailen jas* (T. mkhas-len, the annual oath-taking period). According to B. Budjaw, who mentioned only 5 financial units, *Choiriin jas* and *Mambiin jas* (being two of the four monastic school financial units) stood inside the surrounding wall. Many stupas stood behind this central area, some on the north. On the east, west and north of the central area dwellings of lamas stood. The palace of the Khutagt lam (*Lawran*) was located south-west of the monastic area on the top of a hill. This had two temples, called *Lawran dugan* or *Suwragiin dugan* (*Lawran* temple and *Stupa* temple), inside a courtyard, together with a complex of 9 stupas (8 stupas with a large one in the middle, the same composition as in Bari lamiin khiid). According to B. Budjaw, the brick burning stove or kiln (*baayuu*) of the monastery was to the north of the complex, opposite to the kiln of Bragri lamiin khiid, which was on the other bank of the river. Chinese lived near the stoves, on the other bank. *Lowon jalbiin süm* (temple of the king of the nāgas or water spirits, T. bslob-

³⁸ B. Budjaw listed 8 temples, among them the 4 monastic schools: *Choir*, *Düinkhor*, *Manba* and *Jüd datsans*, and *Tsogchin*, *Maidar*, *Zuu* and *Sakhius* temples. Additionally he mentioned the *Lawran* of the Khutagt lam and also *Lowon jalbiin süm*. He spoke about 5 financial units. Ts. Dashdorj said there were about 11-14 temples, but listed 13 of them including the monastic schools: *Ikh tsogchin*, *Baga tsogchin*, *Zuu*, *Maidar*, *Janraiseg*, *Baruun sakhius*, *Züün sakhius*, two temples in the *Lawran* of the khutagt (saying *Suwragan* and *Lamrim*), and the datsans *Choir*, *Jüd*, *Manba*, and *Düinkhor*. He mentioned and listed 9 financial units. The third old lama, N. Dawaa only listed the four monastic schools. The leaflet of the revived Gündüjambaalin temple writes about 11 temples, 4 monastic schools (only naming these) and 9 financial units.

dpon rgyal-po) was located on the hillside near the brick burning kiln. Ceremonies were not held there.

According to Ts. Dashdorj, there was no surrounding fence for the monastery, but the temples themselves had fences and also the lama dwellings. The buildings were made of brick and mud. The *Tsogchin* temple was a two-storey building and the *Zuugiin dagan* was a three-storey building, while all the other temples were one-storey buildings. According to M. Bat-Erdene, the *Lawran* was surrounded by a white fence.

In the monastic schools lamas of the nearby Bari lamiin khiid also gathered as there were no philosophical monastic schools in that monastery (no monastic schools apart from *Lamrim*). One of the interviewed old lamas, Ts. Dashdorj himself used to gather and study at the philosophical monastic school, *Choir datsan*, where about 100 lamas gathered from the two monasteries. Its curriculum followed the philosophical manual book called *Günchin yigchaa* (T. kun-mkhyen yig-cha, the handbook by Günchin jamiyaan shadaw, T. kun-mkhyen 'Jam-dbyangs bzhad-pa, 1648-1721, which is the same as the system of Gomang monastic school or Goman datsan, T. sgo-mang grwa-tshang). This monastic school had the most lamas within the complex. *Jüd* and *Düinkhor* monastic schools had about 30-40 lamas. In the monastery the philosophical exam for *gawj* degree (*gawjiin damjaa*, T. dka'-bcu'i dam-bca) was taken in the *Choir* philosophical monastic school annually from 1921 on, and also the tantric exam for *agramba* degree (*agrambiin damjaa*, T. sngags-rams-pa, doctor of tantric or Vajrayāna studies) in the *Jüd* tantric monastic school. According to the leaflet of Gündüjambaalin temple, the exams for the *gawj* degree were held in autumn. Also there were exams for *dom* degrees (*domiin damjaa*, T. sdom-pa'i dam-bca). Though the monastery had a *Manba datsan*, medical monastic school, the exam of *Maaramba* degree (T. sman-rams-pa, medical exam) was not taken here, only at Khoshuu khiid about 20 kilometres from here.

According to Ts. Dashdorj, in the main assembly hall (*Tsogchin*) there were all kinds of ranked lamas, like *tsorj* (T. chos-rje, S. dharmasvāmin, 'lord of religion', a high rank), *lowon* (T. slob-dpon, master), *da lam* ('main lama'), *ded lam* ('vice lama'), two chanting masters (*unzad*, T. dbu-mdzad), two disciplinary masters (*gesgüi*, T. dge-bskos) and two *nyaraw* (T. gnyer-pa) or bookkeeper/treasurer lamas. The monastic schools had one-one chanting master and one-one disciplinary master. Among the lamas, several had full ordination (*gelen*) and many had *getsel* vow (novice).

One of the informants, Ts. Dashdorj (born in 1908), belonged once to Khutagt lamiin khiid from his age of 5 till 30 (1913-1938). He used to be a *takhilch*, that is, a lama taking care of offerings, in the *Janraiseg* temple, then in the main assembly hall *Tsogchin*. Later, he was a *donir* lama (T. don-gnyer, custodian of temple property) in the *Lawran* temple. He participated in the *Tsam* dances at

the monastery for 4 years as a dancer, and was among those very few survivor lamas who could help the revival of the dances in Mongolia after the democratic change. He trained the young lamas in Dashchoilin monastery, Ulaanbaatar how to perform the dance, where it is performed annually again since 2002.

Ceremonial life

As for the biggest ceremonial events, the *Tsam* dance and the Maitreya circumambulation, the three old lamas interviewed gave somewhat different details. Maitreya circumambulation was held together by the lamas of the two monasteries (this one and Bari lamiin khiid) in the first summer month (N. Dawaa mentions the 22nd of the first summer month, but Ts. Dashdorj the 16th, probably the two monasteries had separate Maitreya circumambulations, in Bari lamiin khiid on the 16th and in Khutagt lamiin khiid on the 22nd). *Tsam* dance was performed in the monastery on the 22nd of the first summer month according to N. Dawaa, or on the 6th - 9th of the middle summer month according to Ts. Dashdorj. Ts. Dashdorj recalled that the preparations (*tsamiin deg*, T. sgrig, 'preparations, arrangement') for the *Tsam* dance started right after the Maitreya circumambulation (*Maidar ergekh*) held according to him on the 16th of the first summer month. N. Dawaa gave different dates for these, as he said they used to perform the Maitreya circumambulation on the *goroo* encircling road around the monastery on the 22nd of the first summer month and on the same day the *Tsam* dance was performed in which about 30 dancers participated. According to him, the preparations for the *Tsam* dance started every year on the 2nd of the first summer month and lasted for 20 days. As accounted by Ts. Dashdorj, in the *Baruun sakhius* temple (which was for the worship of *Yansan yadam*) they used to hold a big ceremony of *Yansan yadam* for five days from the 11th till the 15th of the middle spring month. In the *Züün sakhius* temple (erected for the worship of *Jamsran*) the ceremony of *Jamsran* was held from the 6th till the 8th of the middle summer month, before the *Tsam* dance. According to him, *Tsam* dance was held on the 8th - 9th of the middle summer month, with the participation of about 60 dancers: 42 masked and 21 *Shanag* (T. zhwanag) or Black Hat dancers. On the 8th they used to burn the *Sor* (T. zor, a wooden construction with a sacrificial cake inside) of *Jamsran* and on the 9th they used to burn the *Sor* of *Chojoo* (T. chos-rgyal, S. Dharmarāja, epithet of Yama). According to the leaflet of Gündüjambaalin temple, *Tsam* dance was held on the 6th - 9th of the middle summer month (this is the same as Ts. Dashdorj said, including the days of the *Sakhius* ceremonies to *Jamsran*) with about 100 dancers. According to Ts. Dashdorj and M. Bat-Erdene, *Tsam* dance was introduced to the monastery following the rules of *Khüree tsam*, that is, the rules of *Tsam* as performed in the monastic capital Ikh khüree, during the period of the 2nd

Khutagt lam (called ‘tall incarnation’, *öndör dūr*). The Mongolian word *khüree* (‘circle, place fenced off’) refers to the fact that the dancers move in a circle, or, with the other meaning of this word *khüree* (monastic city) refers to Ikh khüree, the Mongolian capital of the time. Other names for this type of *Tsam* can be *Choijoogiin tsam* or *Erleg nomon khaanii tsam* as it is presided by the Lord of Death, *Choijoo* (or *Erleg nomun khaan*, T. *chos-rgyal*, S. *Dharmarājā*, *Yama*), or *Jakhar tsam* (T. *lcags mkhar*, ‘metal palace’), named after the palace of him. This type of *Tsam* was the most popular in Mongolia, including traditions like the burning of the *Sor* and the *Jakhar* or the destruction of the effigy (*lingka / linga*), being invariably parts of this type of *Tsam* ceremony.³⁹

According to Ts. Dashdorj, on the 6th–15th of the first summer month they held the ceremony called *Tsagiin molom* (‘temporary prayer’, T. *smon-lam*) in the monastery. On the 3rd–5th of the middle spring month the *Jasaa Ganjuur* (T. *bka’-gyur*) was recited in the *Tsogchin* temple. The 45 days *Kailen* (T. *mkhas-len*) retreat ceremony was also held, according to Ts. Dashdorj, in the *Tsogchin* assembly hall. On the 15th and 30th of every month lamas performed the *Sojin* (T. *gso-sbyong*, S. *poṣadha*, ‘restoring purification’, confession of sins, purifying the precepts / vows). According to the article written by the daughter of the old lama, N. Dawaa⁴⁰, in Khutagt lamiin khiid, in the temple of *Zuugiin dugan*, some old lamas used to hold the ceremony in honour of *Ulaan sakhius* or *Jamsran*. Apart from *Tsam*, Maitreya circumambulation and *Khailen*, all other festivals of the ceremonial year were also celebrated, like the great days of Buddha, the Lunar New Year ceremonies and the annual commemoration of Tsongkhapa, the founder of the reformed or Yellow school, *gelukpa*. The *Ganjuur* circumambulation (*Ganjuur ergekhe*) was performed in this monastery as well.

Some *zoch* tantric masters belonged to the monastery. According to Ts. Dashdorj, they had a separate white coloured building on the north-west. There were two famous *zoch* masters, one being Wanchin *zoch* who followed the lineage (*jūd*) of *Khandnanjid*, the other being Choimbel *zoch* who followed the lineage of *Tanton*. Choimbel *zoch* was the teacher of the informant, Ts. Dashdorj. B. Budjaw however said that Choimbel *gawj* was a *zoch* master of Bari lamiin khiid

³⁹ On Mongolian *Tsam*, its history, different types, and characters a detailed description is available in my PhD thesis: *A Comparative Study of the Ceremonial Practice in Present-day Mongolian Monasteries*, PhD dissertation, Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Arts, Doctoral School of Linguistics, Program on Mongolian Linguistics, Budapest, 2008, 285 pages. In 2013 a DVD on Mongolian *Tsam* dances is going to be published in English and Hungarian by Krisztina Teleki and Zsuzsa Majer with photos and videos showing all characters, special accessories, and main events of the dance at the Department of Inner Asian Studies, ELTE University, Budapest.

⁴⁰ Saikhan owoo 80, *Nutag am’tai zayaa*, pp. 34–35.

and not of Khutagt lamiin khiid, while Wanchin *zoch* and Gembel were *zoch* masters of Khutagt lamiin khiid. According to M. Bat-Erdene, Choimbel *zoch* lived in the hillside of Tsagaan owoo. According to B. Budjaw, Wanchin *zoch* lived north of the kiln (*baayuu*) of the monastery which was to the north of the complex. N. Dawaa mentioned that Wanchin *zoch* had a building, while other *zoch* masters gathered in yurts. B. Budjaw named more *zoch* lama masters who lived nearby, such as Gembel, Ochir and Yonzon, who lived with their families. Laymen only lived outside the *goroo* circumambulating road.

Famous lamas and the closing of the monastery

The monastery was closed and destroyed in 1937–38. Ts. Dashdorj was 30 years old then, and remembers that the ranked lamas were arrested in spring in the year of the cow (1937). He accounted that he visited the place in 1939 and saw that by that time it was completely burnt down. In the interviews he repeatedly mentioned that the artifacts and sutras of the Khutagt lam and Bari lam monasteries were burnt by Sakhal Yondon and Batjaw [unfortunately we have no information on who were them]. B. Budjaw mentioned that his own father, who was a *gawj* in this monastery, was also arrested in May, 1937. According to him, other lamas of the monastery were also almost all arrested in 1937 and were transported to Ömnögow’.

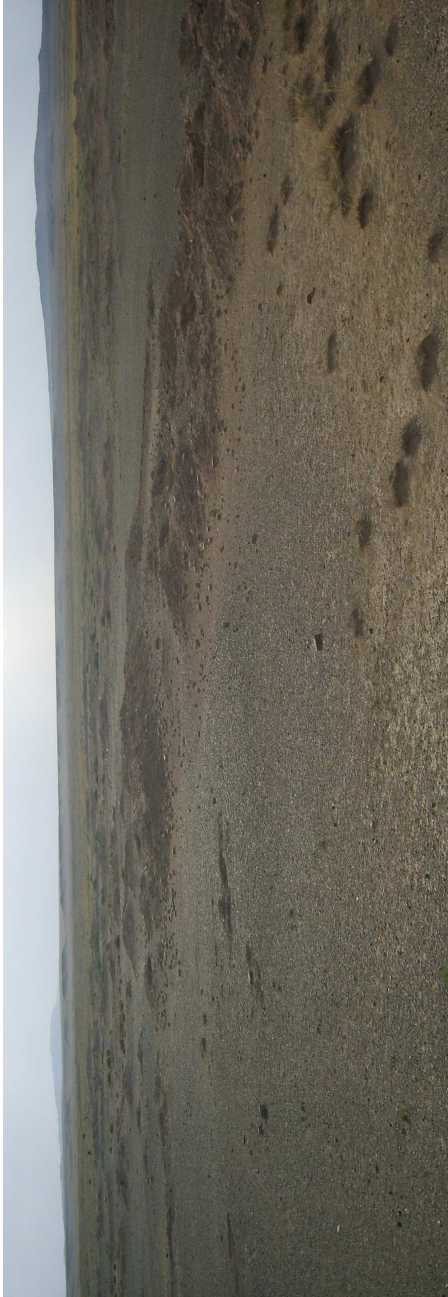
The *Khutagt lam* of the monastery had five incarnations, the fifth one was Khutagt lam Luwsandorj (T. blo-bzang rdo-rje), who was born in 1907 (one of the informants, Ts. Dashdorj mentioned that the *khutagt* was only one year older than he himself). He was a son of a prince. He was sentenced in 1937 during the purges, but there is no clear news about what happened to him.

Khoshuu khiid

Location and the site

Khoshuu khiid, the biggest of the three monasteries, and once the central monastery of TüsHEET wangiin khoshuu, similarly to other Mongolian monasteries, was known by a wide variety of different names. It was called Khushuu khurliin khüree, TüsHEET wangiin khoshuunii gol khiid (‘The main monastery of TüsHEET wangiin khoshuu’), Ongiin gurwan khiidiin Urd khiid (‘The south one of the three monasteries by the Ongi River’)⁴¹, Dashpuntsoglin (T. bkra-shis phun-tshogs gling, ‘monastery of the auspiciousness excellence’), Ölziigöör

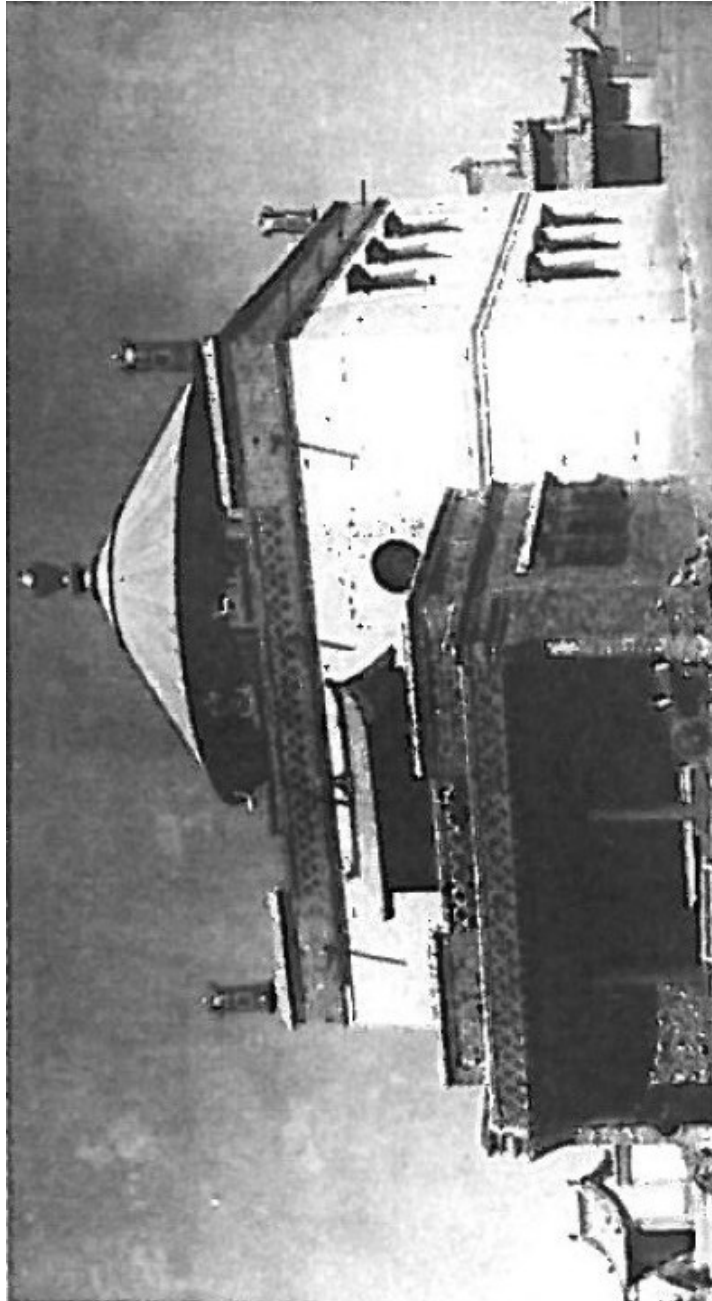
⁴¹ The name Urd khiid is also used variably for Khutagt lamiin khiid of the three, as it was situated to the south of the neighbouring monastery, Bari lamiin khiid.



*The Khoshuu khiid monastery site
in complete ruins*



An old picture of Khoshuu khiid



The Maitreya temple of Khoshuu khiid (from Tsültem, N., 'Mongolian Architecture'. Ulaanbaatar 1988, introduction, picture No. 13.)

arwijuulagch khiid, Gandanshaddüwlin (T. dga'-ldan bshad-sgrub gling, 'the joyous monastery of theory and practice' (literally explanation/commentary and practice)), and Ülemj arwijuulagch. It was marked on Rinchen⁴² as Khoshuu khüree (Tüshee wangiin khüree, Ongiin goliin khüree, Gaikhamshigt sain bilegt süm) as No. 719.

The site is situated at the east bank of the Ongi River, in front of Chandmaan' Mountain (N 45°09.982', E 104°07.95', elevation 1281m). According to B. Gantogtokh, once head lama of the new temple in the centre of Delgerkhangai sum, Dashpuntsoglin khiid, the exact place name is Aman khond. It is about 70 kilometres from the sum centre Delgerkhangai, to the south-west. This area belonged to Gow' Tüshee gүнii khoshuu of Tüsheet khan aimag, similarly to the site of the other two monasteries which are situated in today's Saikhan-owoo sum.

The ruins cover an area approximately of 200 m x 250 m. There are numerous traces of diggings by treasure hunters at the site, mostly at the site of the large temple buildings. Numerous terracotta fragments and bricks still scattered show how beautiful this huge monastic complex had been. As the ruins show, storeyed temple buildings were situated here and stupas surrounded the area from the north. Due to the huge size of the complex and the high number of its buildings it was impossible to draw a sketch of the remnants, which are only the foundations of the buildings that existed once. The monastery was not revived at the site and the site is not used for any purpose now.

History

On the monastery first-hand data was provided only by Ts. Dashdorj (born in 1908), who had been a lama of Khutagt lamiin khiid once, and only visited this monastery. B. Gantogtokh, once head lama of the new temple in the centre of Delgerkhangai sum, Dashpuntsoglin khiid (ceased operation by 2007) where the old monastery Khoshuu khiid or Dashpuntsoglin khiid was revived; and M. Bat-Erdene, the present head of Gündüjambaalin temple at the Bari lam monastery site also helped with information. The books of Pürewdorj⁴³ and Sainjargal⁴⁴ and the book entitled 'Encyclopaedia of Dundgow' aimag⁴⁵ were useful about this monastery, as well as printed materials gained during the fieldwork (2 pages material given by B. Gantogtokh; 10 pages material on the monasteries in Dundgow' aimag area gained from the Museum of Dundgow'

⁴² Rinchen, B., *Mongol ard ulsiin ugsaатnii судlal, khelnii шинjелеiin atlas* (map No. 36. Dundgow' aimag)

⁴³ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui түүkh*

⁴⁴ Sainjargal, T. *Delgerkhangai sumiin түүkhен toim*

⁴⁵ *Dundgow' aimagiin tol'* [Encyclopaedia of Dundgow' aimag], Mandalgow' 2002, pp. 56-57.



The now neglected yurt temple of Dashpuntsoglin revived temple

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aimag, Mandalgow' city; and a 1 page material summerizing the results of a study made by D. Tsogkhiimor⁴⁶.

According to B. Gantogtokh, the monastery was founded in 1840-1850 by the Khoshuu noyon S. Baldirdorj (1837-1875, he had the rank *tüshee gүн* of this *khoshuu*) and the *tsorj* lama Bari / Bragri yonzon Ts. Damtsigdorj (1781-1855, head and founder of Bari lamiin khiid). However, written sources⁴⁷ say that it was founded during the reign of the Manchu emperor Enkh Amgalan (Kang-xi, 1663-1722), which is a totally different date.

The monastery once had about 500-1000 lamas. According to Ts. Dashdorj it had 500 lamas, while according to B. Gantogtokh, 800-1000 lamas were registered, and 300-400 gathered in the *Tsogchin* temple. Written sources⁴⁸ mention 800 lamas who either lived here regularly or only came for bigger ceremonies (*tsagiin khural*). Most probably there were about 400-500 lamas who lived there permanently, but lamas from smaller monasteries and temples of the *khoshuu* came and studied here for periods of several years, and took their exams here, which meant an around 1000 or even more lamas at a time.

Temples and monastic schools, and their arrangement

P. K. Kozlov visited the monastery in 1925, and according to his account, the monastery that time had 3000 lamas (this number is much higher than the above numbers, but this was the time of the flourishing of the monastery), 13 bigger and 7 smaller temples, all in all 20 temple buildings. He described the Maitreya temple built at the beginning of the 19th century as the most important temple of the monastery and also mentioned a yurt-shaped temple with golden top ornament in which the sitting statue of Tsongkhapa (Bogd lam. T. tshong-kha-pa) was housed.⁴⁹

The Maitreya temple (*Maidariin dugan*) of the monastery was famous, and housed a 81 arm (*tokhoi*, being a Mongolian measure unit) high statue of Maitreya, the future buddha. It had a golden ganjir top ornament. This Maitreya temple followed the same special type of the Mongolian Maitreya temples housing huge Maitreya statues, and thus resembled the Maidar temple of Ikh

⁴⁶ Tsogkhiimor', D., *Saikhan-owoo sumand baisan odoo baigaa süm khiidiin sudalgaa*, 2007 [Study on the old monastic sites and present-day temples of Saikhan owoo sum], 1 printed page

⁴⁷ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tүүkh*, p. 13.; *Dundgow' aimagiin tol'*, p. 56.; and the 10 pages material on the monasteries in Dundgow' aimag area gained from the Museum of Dundgow' aimag, Mandalgow' city.

⁴⁸ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tүүkh*, p.13.; *Dundgow' aimagiin tol'*, p. 56.; and the 10 pages material gained from the Museum of Dundgow' aimag.

⁴⁹ Maidar, D., *Mongoliin arkitektuur ba khot baiguulalt*, Ulaanbaatar 1972, p. 26. quotes form his account.

khüree. These were temples with white coloured simple Tibetan style basis having big trapezoid windows, topped with a yurt-shaped dome with green roof. According to the Encyclopaedia of Dundgow' aimag⁵⁰, the statue was made in the 1920's from 25,000 *lan* (Chinese measurement money unit, 1 *lan* = 37,3 gramm) money with the help of the local noble (*khoshuu noyon*), Tüsheetsan Lkhamsüren, and *agramba* Bawuudorj and *gün* Ölziinorow. Five monastic schools belonged to the complex, namely the philosophical monastic school (*Choir*), *Günreg* (shortly for *Günreg Nambarnanzad*, T. kun-rig (rnam-par snang-mdzad), S. Sarvavid Vairocana, a form of Vairocana Buddha), *Jüd* (tantric monastic school), *Düinkhor* (Kālacakra monastic school), and *Mambiin dugan* (medical temple). The philosophical *gawj*, tantric *agramba*, and medical *maaramba* exams were taken there as it was a big monastic complex. The monastery was famous for its education activities in the field of medicine. The *Tsogchin dugan* (main assembly hall) was a two-storey building. T. Sainjargal⁵¹ writes that the *Tsogchin* temple was big enough to house 300-400 lamas. It had very similar structure than that of the Ikh khüree main assembly hall, called Battsagaan, 'massive white' after its white, flat temple design. There were also many smaller temples and buildings of financial units (*jas*), etc. On the north of the complex several white and golden stupas stood. Lama dwellings were situated around the monastery together with warehouses, *jas* buildings made of wood or mud, yurts and fenced off yurts. According to L. Pürewdorj⁵², the lama dwellings were made of wood and mud, and in the monastery or nearby there were Chinese merchants' stores and shops and taverns or restaurants. The monastery had also a *baayuu* (kiln) to burn brick and terracotta. According to B. Gantogtokh, the main deity of the monastery was *Jamsran*, but M. Bat-Erdene lama gave contrary information saying that the main protector (*gol sakhius*) was *Chojoo*.

Ceremonial life

On the ceremonies once kept in this monastery not much information was gained, being no old lamas alive from here by the time of my research. *Tsam* dance was performed regularly there, in the first summer month, with 76 dancers appearing (all sources give the same number of participants), till 1935. The only old lama, Ts. Dashdorj, who had visited the monastery when it was still operating, said that *Tsam* dance was performed annually as well as the Maitreya circumambulation (*Maidar ergekhe*). Other sources⁵³ also mention the

⁵⁰ Dundgow' aimagiin tol', p. 57.

⁵¹ Sainjargal, T. *Delgerkhangai sumiin tүүkhөн toim*, p. 56.

⁵² Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui tүүkh*, p. 13.

⁵³ Dundgow' aimagiin tol', pp. 56-57. and the 10 pages material gained from the Museum of Dundgow' aimag.

Maitreya circumambulation, but none of them give details. During the *Tsam* dances the *Sor zalakh* ritual (burning of the *Sor*), and the *lyanga* ceremony (destroying the *lyanga* or *lingka* effigy, T. ling-bsgral) were performed here.

Famous lamas and the closing of the monastery

In the last years or last decades before closing famous lamas of the monastery were Baruun *tsorj* or Chimiddorj *shunlaiw*, Züün *tsorj* or Doorow, and Jantsan. According to B. Gantogtokh, there was also a famous astrologer in the monastery called Doyod *zurkhaich* (*zurkhaich* means astrologer). One of the lamas of the monastery was called Sosoriin Tsedenbaljir, who took *gawj* exam at the age of 20 or so, took *agramba* exam at the age of 30 or so, and after the 1930's worked in the State Central Library (*Töw nomiin san*) translating Tibetan books. He lived in Ulaanbaatar till the 1970's, as the last of those lamas who survived the purge from this monastery.

According to B. Gantogtokh, the old monastery was the centre of the old administrative unit Gow' Tüshee *günii khoshuu* in Tüsheet khan aimag, which was the area of the Tüshee *gün* of the Gobi. The last to fulfill this rank '*zasag noyon* of Gow' *tüshee günii khoshuu*' was Chagdarjawiin Lkhamsüren, who after the passing away of his father, became titled as *chin wan*. In 1921 he agreed to form a party office (*namiin үүр*) in the area of his *khoshuu*. He participated in the activities of the party office, and of the co-operative (*khoshoo*). According to T. Sainjargal⁵⁴, he was caught in 1937, and rehabilitated in 1990.

According to B. Gantogtokh, The operation of the monastery was gradually stopped from 1935 on and fully in 1937-38 when it was closed and destroyed. According to T. Sainjargal⁵⁵, the lamas of *Khoshuu khiid* were caught and murdered in 1938. From the young lamas who remained on the site after the confiscation of the artifacts, properties and livestock of the monastery temples, about 70-80 were made to establish a handicraft co-operative (*gar üildweriin artyel'*), which later moved to the centre of Delgerkhangai sum. According to L. Pürewdorj⁵⁶, about 100 lamas from this monastery were rehabilitated by 1993 (after being executed or sentenced in 1937-38). Many others disappeared without exact information about what happened to them. Only about 10 lamas returned after approximately 10 years in prison. From among the lamas with *gawj* rank, who were all arrested and taken away, Gombojaw, Jimee and Luwsan lamas returned after about one month. Such a case was very rare so local people considered it as a miracle. He confirms that young novices were not arrested as usual, but had to form communal handicraft cooperatives (*artyel'*) and

⁵⁴ Sainjargal, T. *Delgerkhangai sumiin түүхэн toim*, p. 27

⁵⁵ Sainjargal, T. *Delgerkhangai sumiin түүхэн toim*, p. 54.

⁵⁶ Pürewdorj, L., *Delgerkhangai sumiin khuraangui түүх*, pp. 13-14.

work there. All the buildings were ruined and within 10 years almost nothing remained of them, by the 1970's the last big stupa and other remnants became all completely ruins.⁵⁷ Currently only the foundations visible show the once huge size of the site.

Revival and the ceasing of the operation of the new temple

According to B. Gantogtokh, Khoshuu khiid was revived in the sum centre (Delgerkhangai) in 1990, with the name Dashpuntsoglin (T. bkra-shis phuntshogs gling), on the 8th of the first spring month by about 10 old lamas like Tsewegnamjil gawj, who became the abbot; Barkhas, who became the chanting master; Tersendorj; Daansüren; and Janchiw who became the disciplinary master. The lamas of the old monastery were unable to save any old objects of worship, except for two silver offering cups (*takhiliin tsögts*), which were stored in the revived temple. This time about 7-8 old monks from the old Khoshuu khiid and 5-6 novices made the assembly. Following Tsewegnamjil, B. Gantogtokh was once the head lama of this new temple, which became inactive in the 1990's. In 2007 the yurt shaped temple in which it once worked was totally abandoned and emptied, in a very bad state of repair, and Gantogtokh keeps all the images and ceremonial objects once used at the temple at his home.

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⁵⁷ 10 pages material gained from the Museum of Dundgow' aimag

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2 pages printed material in Mongolian without title given by B. Gantogtokh, head lama of the new temple in the centre of Delgerkhangai sum, Dashpuntsoglin khiid

Sources of pictures:

No. 1 is map No. 36. from Rinchen, B., *Mongol ard ulsiin ugsaatsanii sudlal, khelnii shinjileiin atlas* [Ethnographic and Linguistic Atlas of the Mongolian People's Republic], Ulaanbaatar 1979

No. 9. portrait of Bari lama Damtsigdorj is painted by Pürewbat lama

No. 22. The Maitreya temple of Khoshuu khiid: Tsültem, N., 'Mongolian Architecture'. Ulaanbaatar 1988, introduction, picture No. 13.

