

Head Abbots of Ikh Khüree (17th-early 20th century) Based on a Mongolian Manuscript of Ts. Damdinsüren's Archive

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the translation of an old Mongol manuscript about the Khambo Nomun Khans (Tib. *mkhan po*, Mong. *nom-un qayan*), head abbots of Urga (Ikh Khüree), the monastic capital of Northern Mongolia (17th – early 20th century). The manuscript were written in the early 20th century and stored in the museum archive of Ts. Damdinsüren in Ulaanbaatar. Erdenipel (1877–1960), the author of the manuscript, was the first abbot of the Gandan monastery in Ulaanbaatar when the religious practice was revived in 1944. His writing style maintains the traditions of old Mongolian literature. The manuscript tells about the history of the head abbots in Ikh Khüree and provides brief biographies of 23 abbots who held this post until 1937.

KEYWORDS

Mongolia, Buddhist monastery, abbot, monastic community, biography

I was lucky to find three manuscripts of Gabju (tib. *dka' bcu*, a title in Buddhist philosophy) Naidan Erdenipel (1877–1960), the first abbot of the Gandan monastery in Ulaanbaatar when the religious practice was revived in 1944. He was a traditional Mongolian scholar. The first writing 'Hor choijung' (Tib. *hor chos 'byung*) or 'The History of Religion in Mongolia' titled 'The Final Reason of Religions in Mongolia' is kept in the Institute of Oriental Studies, which is a part

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of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. In the archive of Ts. Damdinsüren's¹ museum in Ulaanbaatar, there are two more manuscripts in Mongolian by Erdenipel – 'History of Urga's Head Abbots' (Mong. *Yeke küriy-e'-ü qural-un kereg erkilekü udirdaqui qambo nomun qan lam-a nar-un üy-e daray-a*) and 'The History of Tsam'² in Khalkha Mongolia' (Mong. *Qalq-a mongyol-du čam yaruyšan tuqai*).

'The History of Mongolia' seems to have been written by Erdenipel in the 1930s when he left the monastery as it was shut down by the communist authorities. According to some notes in the text, he completed his work in 1939. It was written in the framework of traditional Mongolian historiography in the genre of '*hor choijung*'. It provides the context of the history of Mongolia since ancient times, describes Mongolian beliefs, the history of dissemination of Buddhism in Mongolia, and talks about the events of how the Mongols joined the Qing empire (1644–1911) in the 17th century. The narrative was interrupted somewhere during the second half of the 17th century, which gives ground to speculate that it was only the first volume (Erdenipel 2005).

It is not clear why this manuscript was translated into Russian and how it appeared in Moscow. The writing was translated in the early 1940s by Rinchen and Sambuu. Judging by his name and numerous remarks made in the text, the first translator was Byambiin Rinchen, who was a Mongolian scholar and academic. It is known that in the early 1940s he was jailed and accused of espionage in favour of Japan. The authorities used him as a translator from Mongolian into Russian. The second name is most likely that of Jamsrangiin Sambuu who was a Mongolian Ambassador in the USSR from 1937 to 1946. Later, from 1954 to 1972, he was a Chairman of the Great People's Khural³ in Mongolian People's Republic. I suspect that he did not personally participate in the translation, but only reviewed the text as Rinchen's knowledge of Russian was by far superior to that of Sambuu. Perhaps, the translation was sent to Moscow to be used in the one-volume History of Mongolian People's Republic planned for publication in the USSR after the end of WWII. The above are just hypothetical speculations since there is no additional information on the matter, and the manuscript itself does not contain any information on the translators or the author. The Mongolian origin of the writing has not been found so far.

Neither can I explain the appearance of two of Erdenipel's works in Ts. Damdinsüren's collection, namely 'History of Urga's Head Abbots' and 'The History of Tsam in Khalkha Mongolia'. These two were kept in the folder together with other materials for the Buddhist Encyclopedia which was due to be published in Ceylon. It is possible that Damdinsüren was going to use these sources to write articles for the Encyclopedia.

All three pieces were probably written under the order of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. In the 1920–30s, there existed a practice initiated by Onkhodiin Jamyang (1864–1930), Tseben Zhamtsarano (1881–1942), and Mikhail Tubyansky (1893–1937) to inspire the educated lamas to write historical and philosophical works.

'The History of Tsam in Khalkha Mongolia' is a manuscript written with ink and pen. According to the notes made by Damdinsüren, it was written in 1942, highly likely by Erdenipel himself. It contains many notes and corrections which could have only been made by the author himself.

¹ Ts. Damdinsüren (1908–1986) was a Mongolian writer and scholar. He collected a unique collection of Mongolian and Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs, as well as archival documents. Currently the collection is located in the museum of Ts. Damdinsüren in Ulaanbaatar.

² Tib. *cham*; a religious mystery in the form of a dance performed in Buddhist monasteries to pacify demons.

³ The unicameral parliament of Mongolia.

The work lists the Mongolian monasteries and types of *Tsam* in them and has a short introduction about the origin of *Tsam* in Mongolia (Tsendina 2018).

The third text is ‘History of Urga’s Head Abbots’. It is the first copy of a typed script. It describes the history of the origin of Khambo Nomun Khans, i.e. heads of monk communities at monasteries in Urga, the capital of North Mongolia. It also provides short biographies of 23 abbots up to 1937. Below is my translation of this writing.

‘KHAMBO NOMUN KHANS, ADMINISTRATORS OF MONKS’ COMMUNITIES IN IKH KHÜREE’

Khambo (Tib. *mkhan po*) in Tibetan, Uvadiyaa (Skr. *upādhyāya*) in Indian language, Ubadini bagsi (Mong. *ubadini bagsi*) in Mongolian means head or administrator of a Buddhist monastery. He must be an educated lama who goes through three types of initiations⁴ exacted by the monks professing both Hinayana and Mahayana. He must be comprehensively educated and experienced in the sense and rules of the thirteen volumes of the *Vinaya*.⁵

‘Vinaya’ is an Indian word. Its Tibetan analogue is ‘*Dulva*’ (Tib. *’dul ba*). It means ‘Pacification’ in Mongolian. It is a doctrine about meek, peaceful, and obedient behaviour. There are dozens of detailed and short writings of famous Tibetan lamas which interpret and explain the essence of ‘*Dulva*’.

There were many lamas in Mongolia, the experts in *Vinaya* called Tsorji Agvan Dorji who, under the order of the Fifth Bogdo⁶, composed six extensive volumes for the ‘*Dulva*’ book collection. Among them were such scholars as Alasha Dambi Gombo, Tümed Lubsan Tsevel, Bari Khambo Damtsag Dorji, Baldan Tsorji, Choinzod Dambi Domi, Khalzan shiregetü Gendün Choimbel, Gabju Gonchog Jantsan, Dandar Agramba, Samdan Jamtso Rabjamba⁷ and others. There are certain texts regulating the monks’ life, ‘Jayag’ (Tib. *bca’ yig*, ‘written rules’)⁸, specifically designed for the administrators. It is necessary to mention that Khambo have power to change the routine and regulate the life of lamas.

That is how the story runs. In the year of a yellow bull of the 11th sixty-year cycle, in 1649, a fifteen-year-old (2) Dzanabadzar⁹, son of Khalkha TüsHEET Khan Gombo Dorji, set out for Tibet, to Western Dzu¹⁰, to get educated. He became a student of Banchen Erdeni Lubsan Chojji Jaltsan¹¹ and Dalai Lama Agvan Lubsan Jamtso¹². Both tutors recommended him to return back

⁴ Three main types of vows (Tib. *sdom gsum*) accepted in the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism: vows of individual salvation, bodhisattva’s and tantric.

⁵ The thirteen volumes of the *Vinaya* are the first part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon *Kangyur* (Tib. *bKa’ gyur*).

⁶ Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu refers to reincarnated lamas, the heads of Buddhists of Mongolia. 5th Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu was Lubsan Chultim Jigmed (1815–1841).

⁷ Mongolian learned lamas mostly of the 19th century who specialized in the interpretation of the writings of the *Vinaya*.

⁸ For more information about this genre of Tibetan literature, see Ellingson 1990.

⁹ Dzanabadzar (1635–1723), Öndör Gegeen was a Mongolian religious and political figure. He was proclaimed the First Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu, head of the Buddhist community of the Mongols. He played a major role in the spread of Buddhism in Northern Mongolia and laid the foundations of the Northern Mongolian school of religious art. He contributed to the entry of Northern Mongolia into the Manchu Empire.

¹⁰ Lhasa.

¹¹ The 4th Panchen lama (1570–1662).

¹² The 5th Dalai lama (1617–1682).

home and establish monasteries there, pointing out that it would be more useful than studying in Tibet. Banchen Erdeni appointed Rabjamba Baljur Rabdan to teach the Mongolian melodic canon of praying and ritual of performing divine service in the shrine. Dalai Lama sent to Mongolia his best artisans who could mould *burkhans*¹³ belonging to Shardze and Lima¹⁴ schools, as well as those who painted *burkhans*. He also sent Shandzodba¹⁵, doctors, and carpenters to build temples. These were headed by Serkan Khutugtu Agvan Lubsan Jambal Dandzan, the Lobon¹⁶ of his Namjil Datsan.

In 1650, he returned home accompanied by more than fifty Tibetan lamas. In Baruun Khüree monastery, which he founded, a divine service was organized, including seven *aimaks* (Mong. *ayimay*)¹⁷ and modelled from the Tibetan monastery Drepung (Tib. *'bras spungs*; in Mongolian pronunciation: *Braibun*). Later, in 1654, he built another monastery¹⁸ upon the southern slopes of the Khentei mountains. Chief lamas of the monks' community, namely Serkan Khutugtu and Rabjamba Baljur Rabdan, were granted the titles of 'Nomun Khans'. The first head was Agvan Lubsan Jambal Dandzan, and the second one was Mergen Nomun Khan Rabjamba Baljur Rabdan. Both were awarded the title of 'Mergen Tsorji Nomun Khan' for their merits in teaching and introducing rites of divine service and canons of praying. These two Nomun Khans were the teachers of Öndör Gegeen Dzanabadzar or Dambi Jaltsan¹⁹.

(3) The third one was Lubsan Dandzan Jaltsan. He was born in the noble family of *taiji* prince Luyag Tsökhur, a younger brother of Khalkha Tümenkhen Sain Noyan in 1639 (the year of a yellow hare of the 11th sixty-year cycle). At the age of five years he became a student of Tibetan lamas Yondzin²⁰ Namkhai Sodnom Dagva and Gachin Lubsan Yaringpel and eventually mastered the Tibetan language and the doctrine. At the age of 17, he went to Western Dzu where he improved his education. At the age of 20, he obtained the monk's status and Gelong vows. When he was 23, he returned home according to Banchen Erdeni instructions, and in 1662 started building monasteries. Later, in 1694 (the year of a blue dog of the 12th sixty-year cycle), he became chief lama of Öndör Gegeen's monastery. According to the inner rules of Vinaya, he took monastic vows of Gelong from many monks. According to his own short notes and also according to old people's oral stories, it was around that time when it was first settled that the title of 'Khambo Nomun Khan' would become permanent.

The forth was Geleg Rabdan Dorji who was born in 1663 (the year of a black hare of the 11th sixty-year cycle) in the family of the first class *taiji*²¹ Gonchig Dorji. The latter was nicknamed Ebei Akhai, and was a younger brother of Galdan Junvan, whose Khoshun banner was known as Darkhan Chinvan's Khoshun, which separated from his father's banner, Tüshetü Khan Chakhun Dorji's Khoshun.

¹³ *Burkhan* is painted and metal images of Buddhist deities.

¹⁴ Shardze (?) and Lima (Tib. *li ma*); metal alloys from which *burkhans* were made.

¹⁵ Tib. *phyag mdzod pa*; head of the monastery's economy, treasurer.

¹⁶ Great teacher, the title of lamas.

¹⁷ First seven monk's communities or districts, see Teleki 2011: 23.

¹⁸ Sardagiin khiid monastery is located on the territory of the modern Central *aimak* of Mongolia.

¹⁹ First Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu of Mongolia.

²⁰ Tib. *yongs 'dzin*; a title which was given to the teachers of supreme re-born lamas, *khutugtus* and *khubilgans*.

²¹ During the Qing Empire, *taiji* were the title given to the untitled nobility (in contrast to *khan*, *van*, *beile*, *beise* and *gün*), divided into four ranks.

He was declared to be the reincarnation of Mergen Nomun Khan Baljur Rabdan and was ordained a monk. At about 43, Lubsan Geleg Rabdan Dorji was promoted to Khüree abbot (4) and given the title Khambo Nomun Khan. The data are taken from ‘The Origin of Braibun Nomun Khans’ and from Mongolian texts which are incomplete and contain contradictions, so cannot be regarded as reliable. At that time Khüree was transferred from Khentei to Erdeni Tolgoi locality²². It was there and then that the first Tsogchin Dugan²³ was built and the monastery was named Ikh Khüree.

The fifth was Dulva Lama Sodnom Rinchin, who was called to Beijing from Lhasa and appointed Khambo. (I failed to find exact data in what monastery he had been a Khambo before and when exactly he arrived in Ikh Khüree). He occupied the post of Khambo Nomun Khan, head of Ikh Khüree, in 1722 (the year of a black tiger of the 12th sixty-year cycle). In the following year, the year of a black hare, emperor Nairaltu Tövä²⁴ granted him a brass seal with the inscription ‘The seal of Khambo Nomun Khan, the Highest Authority for education, rites and lay-brothers’ affairs, Prominent Promoter of Jebdzun Damba Lama religion’. On this occasion, a palace was erected for the head to the North of the main temple, and there the seal of Ikh Khüree Khambo was kept safe. Sodnom Rinchin Khambo ordained into Gelong Tsorji Erdeni Dzu Dagva Darjaa and other novices and lamas from different close and distant areas. Sodnom Rinchin retired when he grew old. These data are borrowed from Dalai Lama Galsan Jamtso’s, the 7th Dalai lama’s (1720–1757), biography and some Mongolian writings.

The sixth was one of Banchen Erdeni’s Khambos. He was in charge of ‘Jaldzadva’²⁵ at Tashilhunpo (Tib. *bkra bshis lhu po*)²⁶ monastery which was responsible for the western Tibetan province Tsang. Yongdzin Gachin Lubsan Darjaa was a teacher of the second Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu²⁷. (5) In 1771, (the year of a white hen of the 12th sixty-year cycle), he occupied the post of Khambo Nomun Khan which he left later. Information about this Lubsan Darjaa is taken from the State Archive and from the first part of the third volume of *Sumbum* (Tib. *gsung ‘bum*)²⁸ of Banchen Baldan Ishi²⁹.

The seventh, Jambal Dorji, was born in 1747 (the year of a red dragon of the 12th sixty-year cycle) in the family of the second Khubilgan Noyon Nomun Khan Dondub Dorji, a subordinate of the Shabi³⁰ department. He became Khambo Nomun Khan at the age of 23. In 1774, emperor Tenggriin Tetgesen³¹ granted him a silver seal with additional inscription ‘Bringing happiness to living beings’.

²² Most of the monasteries in Mongolia were nomadic until the 18th–19th centuries. The headquarters of Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu, together with his monastery, made about 20 migrations during its existence. The Erdeni Tolgoi area is located on the territory of the modern Arkhangai *aimak*. The monastery was located there from 1686 to 1719. The modern location of the capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, was chosen by the headquarters of the Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu in 1778. See Teleki 2011: 25.

²³ Assembly hall.

²⁴ Emperor of Qing dynasty Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1722–1735).

²⁵ Tib. *rgyal mdzad ba*; department in the administration of Tashilhunpo.

²⁶ One of the largest Buddhist monasteries in Tibet, located in the Shigatse city district, it is the residence of the Panchen Lamas. The monastery was built in 1447.

²⁷ Lubsan Dambi Donme (Tib. *blo bzang bstan pa'i sgron me*; 1724–1757), born in Mongolia.

²⁸ Collected works.

²⁹ The 6th Panchen lama (1738–1780).

³⁰ Outer Mongolia during the Qing dynasty (1691–1911) included four *aimags*, Kobdo district and so-called Shabi branch, which included the *arats* who served the Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu.

³¹ Emperor of Qing dynasty Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735–1796).

Some time later, the Khans and Vans³² who governed four *aimags*³³ and Khutugtu lamas met to determine the third reincarnation of Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu. They chose seven boys of appropriate age to be sent to Tibet, accompanied by seven men. Among them were Erdeni Bandida Banchen Balbar, Jambal Dorji Nomun Khan and others. The lamas transmitted their request for the Highest Permission to approve reincarnation, which was acknowledged by lamas Banchen Erdeni and Lhamo Choijin. However, the emperor's Edict read that although sending the emissaries was considered legal, the trip was banned because sending seven boys for only one to be chosen was wrong and did not follow the rules. It was recommended to send Jambal Dorji's elder brother Shagdur accompanied by a few people. Shagdur had lived in Dzu for some years and had a title of Darkhan. According to the emperor's order, Shagdur Khambo was sent to Beijing and then to Tibet to meet a boy from Litang to determine his reincarnation. On returning back, he approved the authenticity of Khubilgan Khutugtu. (6) So the Highest Edict was issued which read that as all Khalkhas were unanimous in their will to appoint the boy Khutugtu, Shagdur Khambo should return to Dzu to escort Khubilgan Jebdzun Damba [to Mongolia], and he himself was appointed teacher of Khutugtu. Later, in accordance with the Edict issued in 1763, Nomun Khan Jambal Dorji was appointed as the teacher of the third Jebdzun Damba. Together with his brother the two Khambo began teaching Khutugtu how to read prayers.

However, on the sixth day of the eighth month of the 30th year of emperor Tengriin Tetgesen (1765), an Edict was issued which read that Khambo Nomun Khan Jambal Dorji, Shagdur Khambo and the new Shandzodba under pretense of having trade relations with Russia had carried improper, ill talks, and should have been removed from the place of the event. They were interrogated as the accused. On the 14th day of the 9th month, the same year the Edict was issued which read: 'Jambal Dorji, Gombo Dorji, Shagdur and Sundub Dorji pled guilty. However, due the fact that they belong to holy leaders I grant them My Highest Mercy. Military dignitaries must bring them back to their locality and put them under surveillance. They must be deposed to ordinary lamas. The seal of Khambo Nomun Khan should be immediately transmitted to a new Khambo Nomun Khan.' They returned to Khüree. On the second day of the 10th month, the same year Khebei Gün Sandub Dorji and Jasag Gejei Dorji who were responsible for the life in Khüree launched a petition to the emperor with a plea to change his Edict, expel Shagdur Khambo from Khalkha, and put him under the surveillance of Jangi Kharachin Tümed. The presence of Shagdur Khambo in Khüree can do big harm to religion, they explained, since Khutugtu was in his green years. The plea was satisfied (7) and Shagdur was sent to exile. Some old lamas state that Shagdur Khambo had taught the third Bogdo written Mongolian. They say, there exist short writings in his translation.

In his work, Inner Mongolian writer Tsembe Gushi³⁴ says that the spiritual leader Shagdur Khambo Erdeni of Khalkha during his stay in Khüree Khoshun,³⁵ glorified the religion as the sun, translating 'The Steps of Bodhi Way'³⁶, 'Exploring Intellect' and other texts. These actions exposed his true goals and endeavors. As for his younger brother Khambo Nomun Khan Jambal

³² Khan and Van are ranks of Mongolian aristocrats.

³³ *Aimag* is an administrative unit of Outer Mongolia.

³⁴ I.e. the work by Tsembe Gushi 'History of Buddhism in Great Mongolia Called the Torch that Lightens Precious Doctrine of the Victorious' (1819), see Huth 1896.

³⁵ The Khoshun in Inner Mongolia.

³⁶ Tib. *Lam rim chen mo*; the famous work of Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), the reformer of Tibetan Buddhism and founder of the Gelug order.

Dorji, he was the first to start summer divine service *Khailan*³⁷ in Khüree, introduced many canons, methods, and order of singing prayers and performing divine service. He is regarded as one of the most educated lamas. Some communities and Datsans³⁸ still follow the rules set up by him. Jambal Dorji died at the age of 42. The above is borrowed from the archive of documents in Manchurian.

The eighth was Gachin Lubsan Tsembel. He was invited from the Tibetan monastery called Tashilhunpo to become Khambo in the shrine of Total Blessing at the Palace of Coolness.³⁹ Emperor Tengeriin Tetgesen granted him with the title of Nomun Khan; great Jasag⁴⁰ of Khalkha Manibadar was charged to bring him to Khalkha. In 1765 (the year of blue wooden hen of the 13th sixty-year cycle), he occupied the post of Khambo Nomun Khan and became instructor Yondzin of the third Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu. When the latter died in 1773, his Tibetan instructor Yondzin was called by emperor Tengeriin Tetgesen (8) for another mission. Being a perfect man, he was appointed teacher for a little boy Damba Gombo who was brought from Tibet and determined as Dagsan Gegeen. He taught him for ten years and then returned to Tibet. After he had left his post...⁴¹ Borrowed from Dambi Gombo's biography [from the archive of documents in Manchurian].

The ninth one. In 1755 (the year of a blue pig of the 13th sixty-year cycle), the third [Khubilgan] Braibun Nomun Khan Tseden Dorji was born in the family of Khoshun *taiji* Galsan Tseden, a subordinate of Khebei Gün Gombojab from Setsen Khan *aimak*. He got educated and in 1776, at the age of 23, he claimed the post of Khambo Nomun Khan. In 1782, he became a teacher of written Mongolian for the fourth Jebdzun Damba Kutuhtu. In the same year, he introduced *damja* exams for Gabju degree in Choira Datsan.⁴² At the age of 35, he introduced *damja* for Agramba degree in Jüd Datsan⁴³. At 36, he founded the Braibun monastery⁴⁴. He died at the age of 37.

The tenth was Lubsan Dobdan Vanchug, born in the family of Khoshun *taiji* Idam, the subordinate of Beile Dagdan Dorji from Setsen Khan's *aimak*. He was the first reincarnation of Manjushri Khutugtu in Khalkha. He achieved great results in education and became Khambo Nomun Khan at the age of 38 in 1791. He retired at 53 because of illness.

(9) The eleventh one, Janchuv Dorji, was the third Khubilgan Mergen Khambo. He was born in 1785 (the year of a yellow tiger of the 13th sixty-year cycle) in the family of Sandub, a subordinate of Shabi. In 1806, at the age of 49, he became Khambo Nomun Khan. He died at the age of 63.

The twelfth one, Lubsan Prenlei Dandar, was born in 1764 (the year of a blue monkey of the 13th sixty-year cycle) in the family of a subordinate of Shabi. He was the fourth reincarnation of Erdeni Khambo. He went to Western Dzu to get educated when he was 21. He earned the Dalai Lama's and Banchen Erdeni's approval for his knowledge and was awarded with the title

³⁷ Tib. *dbyar khas len*; summer divine service which lasted for 45 days. Within this period monks possessing Gelong vow did not leave the monastery and did not visit any places out of the monastery. It is an oath strengthening period.

³⁸ Tib. *grva tshang*; monastic college.

³⁹ Perhaps, it is the shrine in Beijing.

⁴⁰ Jasag is the title of the ruler of Khoshun in Mongolia during the Qing Empire (1696–1911).

⁴¹ The phrase is cut here.

⁴² *Choir*a (Tib. *chos grwa*) is a philosophy faculty of a monastery, where exams (Tib. *dam bca'*) are held.

⁴³ Tantra faculty (Tib. *rgyud*) of a monastery, where the Agramba (Tib. *sngags rams pa*) degree can be gained.

⁴⁴ Baldan Breven khiid in Khentei *aimag*, Mongolia.

of Erdeni Mergen Bandida Tsorji. At the age of 30, he returned home and got the post of Khüree Ded (vice) Khambo. In 1820, at the age of 56, he became Khambo Nomun Khan of Khüree. He died when he was 58.

The 13th one was Erenchinjab, the fourth reincarnation of Noyan Nomun Khan. He was born in Khalkha in 1794 (the year of a blue tiger of the 13th sixty-year cycle). At the age of 10, emperor Saishaltu Yeröltü⁴⁵ granted him the title of ‘Ilagugsan Khutugtu Nomun Khan’ legitimised by a charter and a seal. In 1882, at the age of 29, he claimed the post of Khambo Nomun Khan, but at 37 he left it because of illness. At 43, he founded a monastery upon the southern slopes of the Tobkhur Khan mountains. He passed away when he was 80.

The 14th one, Lubsan Shirab, known as Öndör Gachin, was born in the valley of Tibet’s (10) Tsang province. From early years he was educated in the Tashilhunpo monastery and became one of the prominent lamas. He was a success at *damja* exams for the Gachin⁴⁶ degree. He was initiated into many tantric doctrines. When he was meditating in seclusion, Banchen Erdeni called him and appointed the lama in charge of fetching water for ablutions for Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu, and sent him to Khüree. He was gradually honored with the titles of ‘Tsorji’, ‘Nomun Khan’, and ‘Khambo’. In 1830 (the year of a white tiger of the 14th sixty-year cycle), he claimed the post of Khambo Nomun Khan and was granted a seal. However, he did not like a high-ranking position and preferred living the life of a perfect Gelong. He discharged his duties officially, paying attention mostly to spiritual studies in rituals and monk communities. He passed away in 1833.

The 15th one, Lubsan Khaidub, was born in 1779 (the year of a yellow pig of the 13th sixty-year cycle) to the West of Mt. Bogdo Khan Uul in the northern part of the Tula river valley, not far from the Mandal Tolgoi mountain, in the western extremity of Tariat area in the family of Lubsan and Bubei, the subordinates of Shabi. When he was a boy, his father taught him Tibetan. Then he joined Jidoriin *aimak* of Choira Datsan as a monk and became a student of Gabju Gonchig and Gebshi Agvan. After he had mastered the first volume composed of five books⁴⁷ and also stages of ‘Lama yoga’⁴⁸ and other writings, he felt an irresistible endeavor to be merciful for living beings (11) and move to Western Dzu for further education. He applied to Tsogchin Gesgüi⁴⁹ with such a request but got their refusal. ‘You have nothing more to study, do you?’ was Tsogchin’s answer. In despair, Lubsan Khaidub applied to his teachers, namely Yondzin Agvan Prinley, Tsorji Dashi Jamtso, and Gabju Gonchig. They agreed to fulfill his wish which was received from the fourth Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu the Highest Permission to send Lubsan Khaidub to Western Dzu. Thanks to that, at the age of 17, he started for Tibet to Western Dzu. There he became a monk of Gomang Datsan in Drepung. After he had mastered perfectly all five books, he obtained the title of Rabjamba⁵⁰. Besides, he had learnt a great number of other rites and initiations and became a sophisticated scholar. He paid homage to his teachers and when Damba Darja from Raden⁵¹ said

⁴⁵ Emperor Jiaqing 嘉慶 (1760–1820; r. 1796–1820).

⁴⁶ Tib. *bka’ chen*; academic degree awarded at Tashilhunpo monastery, equivalent to *gebshe* (Tib. *dge bshes*).

⁴⁷ The five sections of Tsanid (Tib. *mtshan nyid*) course of epistemology in Buddhist monastic education is as follows: 1. *Tsadma* (Tib. *tshad ma*, ‘valid cognition’); 2. *Parchin* (Tib. *phar pyin*, Skr. *Prajñāpāramitā*, ‘The Perfection of Wisdom’); 3. *Uma* (Tib. *dbu ma*, Skt. *madhyamaka*, ‘Middle Way’); 4. *Dzod* (Tib. *rtsod*, ‘debate’, ‘dispute’), and 5. *Dulva* (Tib. *’dul ba*, Skr. *vinaya*, ‘discipline’).

⁴⁸ Tib. *bla ma’i rnal ’byor*; the tantric religious practice of meditating a spiritual teacher (Skr. *guru*).

⁴⁹ Tib. *dge bskos*, ‘disciplinarian’, ‘mentor’.

⁵⁰ Tib. *rab ’byams pa*; degree in philosophy.

⁵¹ Tib. *rva skreng mgon pa*; monastery founded in the 11th century.

to him: ‘You have reached the level of Lharamba⁵² by your knowledge and deserve being Khambo of Gomang, but it would be more useful if you returned to Ikh Khüree and serve to Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu; he showed obedience to his teacher’s will and at the age of 32 returned home.

The fourth Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu⁵³ welcomed him with great respect and in the course of their conversation about life said: ‘Öndör Gegeen had lived to a great age and had done much for religion. His two next reincarnations could not reach his age and do as much for religion.’ Rabjamba Lubsan Khaidub replied: ‘Holy deeds of the second Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu are extensive.’ – ‘What are they?’ – ‘He had founded and left us two Datsans of sutras and *tarni*⁵⁴, the two eyes of the religion, Choira and Jüd. (12) Of course, some people can be not so much satisfied with them.’ They say, Khutugtu smiled at his words. Rabjamba Khaidub went on with explanations: ‘Religious order in Khüree as well as teaching practice in Choira and Jüd Datsans are not quite perfect. When numbers of lay-brothers combine instructions with the analysis, when they strictly keep up with their vows and follow discipline of sutras and *tarni*, when their learning and behavior are irreproachable, it is only then that we can speak about true religion. If lay-brothers are many but they do not follow discipline and order, they plunge into sedition and ruin religion. The worst sin is killing living beings. Our Öndör Gegeen pointed out that those who cook meals not only in the monasteries but also in the *urtons*⁵⁵ for the civil officials should not kill animals, although they should not leave people with no food at all. Sutras and *tarni* teach us that Burhan [Buddha] is not satisfied when meat of killed animals is sacrificed to him. Meanwhile, some people constantly kill a great amount of sheep to consume mutton daily. They drink alcohol and gluttonize everywhere!’ His words shocked hypocrites, those who disguised as lay-brothers but oppressed common people instead, who thought that the grandeur name of the Manchu emperor and his religion could save them in that and following lives. They suggested that Lubsan Khaidub Rabjamba should be expelled. The fourth Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu replied: ‘I have no one here like Khaidub. If I have him alone with no one else, I will be glad.’ After that the number of honest lamas mindful of their duties increased (13), and the studying of five books of Buddhist philosophy improved. Later, on request of his students, he wrote a text about the lamas who force others to kill animals, about goat, cow and sheep which are killed, and about butchers who kill them. This writing exposed a deep sense of monks’ vows and rules of their behavior; depriving animals of their life was declared evil and sinful.

Bogdo Gegeen said to Shandzodba Damchoi Ravjaa that Khaidub Rabjamba’s intellect and knowledge in Choira were boundless and ordered to grant him the title of Tsorji. On being honored with this title, Khaidub Rabjamba went on teaching the sutras of five books in Choira. At the age of 42, he occupied the post of Ded Khambo and in 1834 (the year of a blue horse of the 14th sixty-year cycle) the post of Khambo Nomun Khan with the granting of a seal. He achieved great knowledge and improved the Ikh Khüree school. He wrote five big volumes of texts. Among them there are many literary works, for example a writing in the form of a dialogue between a monk and a dog called pandit Tserenpil. On behalf of the author he criticized the life of high lamas of his time; as the old proverb says ‘If the river-source is muddy, the mouth is muddy, too; if roots are poisonous, leaves are poisonous, too.’ In his work ‘A Wheel that Runs over Fools Ridden

⁵² Tib. *lha rams pa*; degree in philosophy gained during the Lunar New Year festival in Lhasa.

⁵³ Lubsan Tüvden Vanchug (1776–1813).

⁵⁴ Skr. *dhāraṇī*; Buddhist chants (Tib. *sngags*).

⁵⁵ Horse drawn postal stations in Mongolia.

by Demons', he reproached Khubilgans. It is a parable full of obvious sense and clear words that describes what is due to happen in the future. I can also mention his 'Wonderful (14) Phenomena', poetry, biographies of Khalkha lamas' written allegorically. He educated many students – Bichechi Tsorji Agvan Dorji among them – and passed away at the age of 60.

The 16th one, born in Tibet Lubsan Jamyan Lharamba, came from Lhasa and was the appointed teacher of the fifth Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu. He taught him science since childhood and did much good educating the novices of Choira Datsan. In 1838 (the year of a yellow dog of the 14th sixty-year cycle), he claimed the post of Khambo Nomun Khan, but left it two years later.

The 17th one was Dorji, the fifth reincarnation of Erdeni Mergen Bandida, who was born in 1823 (the year of a black sheep). At the age of 18, he became Khambo Nomun Khan. In 1843, he took part in searching investigation of the sixth reincarnation of Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu in Khalkha, and in 1870⁵⁶ was fined nine fours,⁵⁷ or 123 *lans*⁵⁸ of silver for that and also deposed.

The 18th one was an aged Tibetan Tsorji Gachin Lubsan Namjil. Banchen Erdeni appointed him Jabtui⁵⁹ of Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu. In 1846 (the year of a red horse of the 14th sixty-year cycle), he became Khambo Nomun Khan, but left it a year later. [From Mongolian archive documents.]

(15) The nineteenth was Lubsan Chultim Jigmid, the fourth reincarnation of Mergen Khambo. He was born in 1821 (the year of a white snake of the 14th sixty-year cycle). In 1847, at the age of 27, he claimed the title of Khambo Nomun Khan. He retired at 33 because of illness and died at the age of 37.

In 1854, the 17th Khambo Nomun Khan Erdeni Mergen Bandida Dorji was reinstated and became the 20th Khambo Nomun Khan at the age of 32. At the age of 43, he retired because of illness and passed away at 44.

The 21st one was a Tibetan Gachin Baldan Choimpel who was appointed Jabtui Lama of Bogdo Gegeen. In 1865 (the year of a blue cow of the 14th sixty-year cycle), he was transferred from the post of Ded Khambo to the post of Khambo Nomun Khan. In 1874, on the invitation of the 8th Jebdzun Damba Khambo Nomun Khan, Baldan Choimpel and *toin* Dashi Dorji headed the delegation of *shabinars* and went to Lhasa.

At that very time, the heads of four *aimaks* together with Naichun Chojin⁶⁰ voiced their doubts about Bogdo's authenticity. That caused debates and conflicts. Baldan Choimpel and Dashi Dorji, in agreement with *amban* of Dzu, stood for the candidate approved by the emperor and thus strengthened Gonchog Tseren's positions (Tibetan official). In response to the doubts, Gonchog Tseren declined 50 000 *lans* of silver presented to him by Khalkha people as not sufficient. Gonchog Tseren imposed punishment and another 50 000 *lans* of silver penalty upon five Khalkha provinces.⁶¹ (16) When the delegates returned from Lhasa, rumors among dignitaries and rich people of the community about the conflicts in Dzu were spread. Then Gachin Khambo Nomun Khan Baldan Choimpel wrote a text 'The Transparent Ocean of the Believers which Suspend Water Streams'. In his work, he repulsed high lamas who spread rumors and false

⁵⁶ The date probably is incorrect.

⁵⁷ Special fine.

⁵⁸ Chinese *liang* 兩; unit of weight (mass) in China and some neighboring countries, equal to 31.25 g

⁵⁹ Tib. *byabs khrus*; purifying liturgy.

⁶⁰ Tib. *gnas chung chos skyong*; Nechung oracle, the State Oracle of Tibet.

⁶¹ Four *aimags* and Shabi.

words of reproach. He cast xylographs and spread his work as a part of Uuliin Lama Tserinjab's⁶² works. Thus, he rebutted all suspicions. Honorary Baldan Choimpel, who laid the basis for the 8th Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu's education, was appointed teacher Yondzin, and Dashi Dorji was appointed Shandzodba. In 1889, Yondzin Khambo Nomun Khan passed away. To commemorate him, Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu set up funeral rites and lit lanterns all over Khalkha.

The 21st one⁶³ was Puntsug, the son of Khaltarin Tsebegjab, the subordinate of Shabi who moved because of the poverty from Choyan *otok* in Sharhai area, which was rich in *tarbagans*⁶⁴. Up to the age of 13, he provided for his living by hunting the *tarbagans* with his parents. Then he settled in Da Khüree⁶⁵ in the family attached to the Dzogai *aimak*. He fed dogs and carried *mandza*⁶⁶ in Dashchoimpel Datsan. Later he became a novice in the same Datsan and same *aimak*. Upon getting some skills he performed a festive service⁶⁷, then got a Gabju degree, served as Gesküi for a few months, and then was promoted to a Tsorji degree. People called him Mogun Gebshi, Gabju, and Tsorji. (17) One late evening, people came to take Shanji Dzaisan's horses of the Jidor *aimak* and found no Puntsug in his yurt. Someone called Dandzin said: 'During day time Sharkhai hunter hunts *tarbagans*, where can he stay at night?' Dandzin was fined 80 *lans* for his ill words and blackmail. In 1900, at the age of 54, he became Nomun Khan. His elder and younger relatives – four families all in all – began to pay tax from the *otok*. In 1911, he was raised to Tungalag Biligtü Khutugtu alongside with the determination of his following reincarnations. Some monks of Sangai *aimak* were appointed Shandzodba Khutugtu, two Soibons⁶⁸, and two Donirs⁶⁹. Monks from Choyan *otok* built new *khashans*⁷⁰ and houses for Khutugtu, and one small house for children's divine service. Thus, the conditions for setting up a new *aimak* appeared. Tungalag Biligtü Khutugtu Khambo Nomun Khan passed away in the first winter month of 1920 at the age of 75. Up to 1930, the Sangai *aimak* supported a little boy who was called his Khubilgan.

The 23rd one, Lubsan Khaimchog, who had the title of Gachin of the Tashilhunpo monastery, was born in Tibet in 1873 (the year of a black hen). Banchen Erdeni appointed him Jabtui Gachin of Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu Khan. In 1915, at the age of 43, he arrived in Neyislel Khüree.⁷¹ Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu Khan appointed him Khambo with the title of Nomun Khan (18), and later Yondzin Bagshi. In early 1920, he was enthroned to become Khambo Nomun Khan. Three years later he went to Tibet, to the Tashilhunpo monastery. Upon his return back, he grew disdainful of the believers, ordinary people, and monks. As the proverb says, 'To fetch water in gratitude for good deeds', together with some lamas who accepted false goals and refused the order which gave freedom and set care of peace and happiness for friends keeping up to their vows he discharged his duties formally, with cold heart. It was brought to light, and as a result, he lost people's trust. In 1937, was accused by law.

This corresponds with the predictions made by the fifth Jebdzun Damba Khutugtu Lubsan Chultim Jigmed Dambi Jaltsan Gegeen. He foretold that religion would be in the hands of its

⁶² A 19th-century Mongolian lama. Unidentified.

⁶³ Misprint. Read: *qorin qoyaduyar*.

⁶⁴ Mongolian marmot (*Marmota sibirica*).

⁶⁵ Da Khüree, the name of Ikh Khüree in Manchu time; *Da* 大 (Great) in Chinese is the same as Ikh in Mongolian.

⁶⁶ Tib. *mang ja*, tee for monks.

⁶⁷ Divine service which was performed when studying two first works of five Tsanid books was over.

⁶⁸ Tib. *bso'i dpon*; head of the Khutugtu's personal staff.

⁶⁹ Tib. *dgon gnyer*; monastery secretary.

⁷⁰ Yards.

⁷¹ The name of the capital of Mongolia in 1912–1924 years.

demolishers, heretics would become teachers, and objects of worship and *burkhans*, sacred places of worship and sacrifice would disappear. One can say his prediction came true.

The above was taken from different manuscripts and written by Erdenipel, the old Khambo from the Gandan monastery.

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