
Krisztina Teleki, Bogdiin Khüree: Monasteries and Temples of the Mongolian Capital (1651-1938)



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REFERENCES

Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Budapest, Hungary, 2008.

- 1 The Mongols consider the nomadic camp founded in 1651 in Övörhangai province by Öndör gegeen Zanabazar (1635-1723), the 1st Bogd or Ževcündamba hutagt as the base of present-day Ulaanbaatar. Its main assembly hall (*cogčin dugan*, Tib. *tshogs chen 'du-khang*) was set up in 1654 for holding everyday ceremonies. Over the following centuries, during the lifetime of Öndör gegeen's further incarnations the camp developed into the biggest monastic city of the country, the most significant religious site of the Yellow Sect, a centre of Manchu administration, and Chinese and Russian commerce.
- 2 After twenty-eight re-locations, the city settled down in the present Ulaanbaatar basin in 1855. After the collapse of the Manchu empire, during the reign of the Eight Bogd (1911-1921), it was famous for its high-level monastic education, ten monastic schools, numerous temples, 15 000 lamas, thirty lama districts, spectacular religious festivals, and wealthy treasures. However, due to the reforms starting in 1921, when the collectivization of ecclesial property and the suppression of religion started, followed by the purges, and the countrywide destruction of monasteries from 1937-1938, the monastic city was unable to survive. The whole area of the old capital city was utterly built over, and today only a couple of old temples recall the beauty of the old city. Thus, the overall goal of composing the thesis was to show the history of the city and its active religious life at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the sources mention the city under various names, such as Urga (Örgöö, 'residence'), Great monastic city (Ih Hüree), Rivogezai Gandanshaddüvlin (Tib. *ri-bo dge-rgyas dga'-ldan*

bshad-sgrub-gling), the old lamas refer to it as Bogdiin Hüree ('monastic city of the Bogd').

Sources and Survey Methods

- 3 To describe the foundation of the camp, I used Tibetan and Mongolian chronicles, whilst travelers' notes and Mongolian researchers' recent publications were used to analyze the city structure and temple life at the beginning of the twentieth century. I also read foreign researchers' books, and articles published in the Socialist period related to political changes. To list the once-existing temples of the city, I used Rinchen's map published in 1979 as a primary source, whilst Jügder's painting from 1913 helped to piece together the layout of the old city. Other lists, maps, drawings and paintings, and old photos available in books and in the collection of the Film Archives were also used to identify certain temples. To get authentic data about the old administrative and religious life of the city, I thoroughly studied approximately 230 catalogues of the National Central Archives (Ündesnii Töv Arhiv). The contents of 159 catalogues (Manchu Period: 51 catalogues, Bogd haan's reign: 52, Modern Period: 56) relating to 57 temples of the city are briefly summarized here. Among these texts the most significant finding was a data sheet written in 1937 which lists the ceremonies of 20 temples. Thus, in addition to the most attractive religious festivals (e.g. *Cam*, Maitreya circumambulation) more than 400 ceremonies are mentioned in the thesis which were held annually until 1937. Old lamas who once lived in the old city were interviewed about their personal memories. The locations of all the temples were basically determined (GPS) and their present conditions were documented.

Chapters

- 4 The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 summarizes research methods and lists all written and oral sources used. Chapter 2 gives a chronological overview of the three-hundred year development of the city starting from the Manchu overlordship until the Soviet suppression ending in the purges. Chapter 3 discusses the religious organizations and events of the city. Chapter 4 provides basic information about the administrative and financial organizations of the city, detailing the activity of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Chapter 5 is the most extensive part of the study. It discusses the history, administration, function, religious life, main deities or main objects of worship of all the monastic sites one by one according to their location in the city. The Appendices include maps, lists, old photos, and useful charts (I prefer to use this word instead of 'documents' as here I refer not to original documents but charts which I completed, such as a list of names of the 279 financial units, and a glossary containing 904 terms mentioned in the study.

Conclusion

- 5 At the beginning of the twentieth century the monastic city was divided into the following main parts: the principal monastic districts called Züün Hüree and Gandan (or Baruun Hüree); the areas inhabited by lay people, called *Ih šav'*, Züün harčuud, Züün ömnöd horoo, and Baruun ömnöd horoo; the trade districts Züün damnuurčin

and Baruun damnuurčin; the Russian quarter called Konsuliin denž; and Maimaačen, the Chinese merchant district. All the areas had their own religious assemblies, and as some of them were complexes with several shrines we can conclude that more than one hundred temples once stood in Bogdiin Hüree.

- 6 In Züün Hüree the main assembly hall was situated in the centre together with the Bogd's fenced-off Yellow Palace, three monastic schools (medical, tantric, astrological), ten temples and the residences of the main abbot and the main treasurer. This centre was surrounded by thirty lama districts where the lama population lived. All the *aimags* had their own temple. Gandan was the place of education and pure morals in the city. Apart from the main assembly hall and the relic temples of the Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth Bogds, Avalokiteśvara temple, three philosophical schools, and some small temples were situated there surrounded by 22 lama districts. The huge jaranhašar stupa stood behind the complex. The Bogds' five residences, namely the White Palace, the Green Palace with the winter palace, a garden, the Haistai lavran, and Pandelin were constructed on the banks of the Tuul River. The temple complex of Čoižin Lama, the state oracle, was surrounded by some small assemblies, (here I mean that a master had a few pupils and devotees, and they formed an assembly. These assemblies often operated in yurts, so the word 'temple' cannot be used in this sense. Shrine might be used if assembly is absolutely not correct.) and the Temple of Yonzon hamba lama stood on its right side. The Mongolian lay population of the city and the lamas who did not keep the monastic regulations, and were thus chased from the monastic districts, lived in yurts in the lay population areas. These areas also had some small Yellow Sect and Red Sect temples, as well as assemblies of a couple of tantric practitioners (*zoč, lüižinč*). As for foreign beliefs, the Manchu governor had a private shrine, and in 1873 a small Orthodox church was opened. Inside the fence of the Chinese town, there were seven Chinese temples, whilst outside the fence there were a Chinese temple and six Mongolian temples. When the Chinese town was emptied in the 1920's the temple of Guan-yu was moved to the Chinese trading area near Gandan. In the northern suburbs, there were two large monasteries, and a meditational retreat as well as seven or eight individual chapels where local shepherds worshipped the mountains and water spirits.
- 7 All in all there were about 47 monastic sites with about 100 temples in the old capital before the demolition of the monasteries: two monastic complexes (i.e. 20 central and 30 *aimag* temples of Züün Hüree, 11 temples of Gandan), seven palaces, three suburban monasteries, and 36 individual temples, among them one Manchu, one Orthodox, nine Chinese (among them one Muslim, one in honour of Confucius, two in honour of Guan-yu, two in honour of the Lord of Death), and at least six Red Sect assemblies. It is obvious that the majority of the temples belonged to the Yellow Sect. No monastery complexes survived completely intact. What has remained from the old capital city are: three yurt-shaped temple buildings of Züün Hüree; the main courtyard and Avalokiteśva temple of Gandan; the Bogd's Green Palace together with the Winter Palace; some buildings of Haistai lavran; the temple complex of Čoižin lama; Geser temple; a part of the small Orthodox church; the Tārā Temple of the Chinese town; a couple of buildings of the walled-off and revived Dambadaržaalın monastery; and the foundation of Cecee gүн assembly in Bogd khan Mountain, on which an ovoo was erected for the good fortune of Mongolia.¹

Publications related to the Topic of the Thesis

- 8 Mongólia kolostorai az Arany Krónika jegyzéke alapján. [Monasteries of Mongolia based on the List of the Golden Annals]. In: Birtalan Ágnes (ed.), *Bolor-un Gerel. Kristályfény. Tanulmányok Kara György professzor 70. születésnapjának tiszteletére*, ELTE Belső-ázsiai Tanszék, Budapest 2005.
- Majer Zsuzsa – Teleki Krisztina: A mai Ulánbátor kolostorai és szentélyei. [Present-day Temples and Monasteries in Ulaanbaatar], In: *Keréknyomok. Orientalisztikai és Buddhológiai Folyóirat*, Budapest 2006, pp. 147-158.
- Az egykori mongol kolostorfőváros szentélyei. [Old Temples and Monasteries in Ulaanbaatar], In: *Keréknyomok. Orientalisztikai és Buddhológiai Folyóirat*, Budapest 2008 winter, pp. 63-85.

Scholarships related to the survey (Ulaanbaatar)

- 9 2004 Hungarian Scholarship Board (six month)
2005 Hungarian State Eötvös Fellowship (five month)

NOTES

1. At the same time as writing the present Ph.D. thesis, a survey was carried out between September 2005 and March 2006 together with Zsuzsa Majer at the request of the Arts Council of Mongolia (ACM) with the aim of recording all the monasteries that were closed before the purges, and the temples which were revived or newly established after the democratic change in 1990. The result of the survey was used in the theses of the researchers and was offered to the ACM to upload it to their database (www.mongoliantemples.net) that includes all the once-existent as well as all the present-day monastic sites in the territory of present-day Mongolia. See Zsuzsa Majer– Krisztina Teleki, *Monasteries and Temples of Bogdiin khüree, Ikh khüree, or Urga, the Old Capital City of Mongolia in the First Part of the Twentieth Century*. 2007, www.mongoliantemples.net; Zsuzsa Majer – Krisztina Teleki, *Survey of Active Buddhist Temples in Ulaanbaatar in 2005 – 2006 with some annotations in 2007*, 2007, www.mongoliantemples.net.