

Монголын Сүм Хийдийн Түүхэн Товчоо Төсөл

UB 016 Gūngaachoilin datsan in Gandan Monastery (UB 01)

Tibetan name: *kun-dga' chos gling grwa-tshang*

Mongolian translation: *Khotol bayasgalant nomiin sūm*

English name: Gūngaachoilin monastic school

Data provider: Enkhbishtogtokh, the main disciplinary master of the datsan

The tradition of this *datsan* was revived in 1990 in a classroom of Zanabazar University, where young lamas began their training. The temple was built in 2001 on its original site. At present, around 75 lamas belong to the *datsan*, among them about 10 have *getsel* vows and three young lamas have *gelen* vows. In the past the *Wanchin Sodnomdagwa* philosophical manuals (*Wanchin igchaa* (Tib. *pan-chen yig-cha*) or *Losalin igchaa* (Tib. *blo-gsal-gling yig-cha*) served as the basis of study in *Gūngaachoilin datsan*. Although this philosophical system follows the system of the Tibetan Losel ling monastic school of Drepung monastery, it is not possible currently for lamas to study there.

However, about 30 lamas are studying in other Tibetan monastic universities in India, such as the Gomang monastic school (*goman datsan*, Tib. *sgo-mang grwa-tshang*) of Drepung monastery or in Varanasi University for between 2 and 12 years. The temple authorities feel that after obtaining deep knowledge of another philosophical system it is possible to observe the differences in *Wanchin Sodnomdagwa's* manuals, so that, in time, this philosophical view can also be taught once again. At present no-one in this *datsan* has completed his training in this distinctive interpretation of Buddhist philosophy and there are no special classes in it.

The *shunlaiw*, Ö. Gündsambuu, has headed the school since 2001. There are two chanting masters and two disciplinary masters. Unfortunately, there are no Tibetan teachers in this school, which is a consequence of the worship of a specific deity. The two protectors of the temple are *Lkham* and *Shügden*. The 14th Dalai Lama had forbidden the worship of *Shügden* so he does not support the activities of the present temple. The novices are trained by Tibetan teacher lamas in *Dashchoimbel datsan*, and by six Mongolian lama teachers.

The daily chanting is held between 9.00 and 11.00am. There are special monthly ceremonies, like the worship of *Shügden* on the 2nd of the month or a smaller ceremony in honour of *Manal*, on the 8th of the month. *Doodüd* (Tib. *mdo sdud-pa*, a short version of Prajnyaparamita) is read on the 15th of the month, and a special ceremony in honour of *Lkham* goddess is held on the 30th of the month. On the occasions of bigger monthly and annual ceremonies the novices are sent to the *Tsogchin* temple to participate. Every year there is a special two-day ceremony performed to *Lkham* as the main protector of the school. It is held on 1st of the middle autumn month, when a thanksgiving offering (*Danrag*, Tib. *gtang-rag*) is also a part of the ritual. According to the lamas a horse is led to the shrine, symbolizing the vehicle of *Lkham* goddess.

The main statues on the altar are the following: a lama in debating posture, Tsongkhapa and his two disciples, Buddha, and some smaller statues. On the left of the altar the sculpture of *Lkham* is situated behind a curtain. It can be seen only on the 30th of the month when the *Sakhius* ceremony dedicated to her is held. Next to it, a cupboard contains the volumes of Tibetan *Ganjuur*. On the right of the altar there is another cupboard with curtains to hide the statue of *Shügden*. In front of it, various objects of worship are arranged. Next to the seat of the main disciplinary master there is a thangka covered by curtain, which shows different offerings to wrathful deities (this kind of composition is called *ganzai* (Tib. *bskang-rdzas*), 'articles of sacrificial offering, fulfillment offerings'), and, likewise, can only be seen on the day of the *Sakhius* ceremonies. From the ceiling hangs a silk banner with *Lkham's* mantra written on it.

The entrance of *Gūngaachoilin datsan* was re-designed in 2006 with red pillars, the wheel of the Dharma with the two gazelles and the traditional blue coloured board with the name of the monastery in Tibetan, Mongolian and English written in gold. In front of the *datsan*, a small building made of glass was put up in 2007, for burning butter lamps.

NOTE in 2011: Gūngaachoilin datsan no longer worships Shügden, and the building has a new interior.