

Мэдээллийг Төв аймагт 2004 онд хийсэн сүм хийдийн анхны судалгаагаар цуглуулсан Information collected by surveyors in the DOMM Pilot Study in 2004 in Tov Aimag

ТӨЖР 033 Zoeoekhein Khoural / Khoendii (Rinchen 366: Zoekhein Khoural)

Current situation (2004)

There are remains left on the site: some stone temple foundations, holes and stone piles that suggest some stupas or graves. There is an owoo on a hill to the north. There are no plans for reconstructing the Khoural

The size of the monastic compound is obvious from the green vegetation covering the area. There are no buildings as such remaining but there is enough evidence still on the ground to suggest the layout of the complex. Materials are lying on the ground throughout the site e.g. wooden beams, wooden fence 'spikes', the blueish bricks made by the Chinese traders (brick size: 14 x 11 x 5.5 cm). There are also many signs that the site has been excavated quite thoroughly over time whether by locals for 'treasure' or by academic archaeologists was not determined.

The entrance step into the compound (GPS of the entrance: Elevation: 1042m N048°43.451' E105°33.662') is still visible on the southern side of the fence that surrounds the site. Inside the compound there are three large stones about 8 metres from the entrance. The first one seems to mark the entrance to the main temple (foundation measurement: 11 x 11 metres). There are remnants of carved stonework found in this part of the site. The second and third stones marked the entrance to a small hall (2 x 1.5 metres), which stood in front of the main temple. There is a row of stones parallel and seven metres away from the southern wall of the main temple, which appears to mark the division of the temple space into two discreet parts.

Behind the main temple there is another smaller temple (5.5 x 5.5 metres) with a big stone in front of it, which also has a small entrance hall (1.5 x 2 metres). There are the foundations for a further four stone temples.

On the left side of the compound there are the remains of two small structures. This area is scattered with blueish bricks. The northern structure is in the northwestern corner. It seems as if there is a long building in the middle to the north and a square one in the northeastern corner and on a grave (fourth from the west).

Outside the fence, about 20 metres in front of the monastery on either side there is a round-shaped structure possibly indicating the site of a stupa. Along its eastern side there are a further two round-shaped remains of buildings and a small rectangular structure behind them with another a round structure next to it. There are what appear to be excavation holes in all these remaining structures.

The entrance to the monastic compound directly points to an owoo on a hill to the north, which was said to be worshipped by this monastic community. GPS of the owoo: Elevation: 1097 m N048°43.825' E105°33.681'. A stone stela with a carving of a stupa with eyes and nose stands on the owoo along with what appear to be fragments of artefacts that came from the monastery. Possibly local people took them up this high hill to offer them to the owoo. Examples of objects found on the owoo: 1 Small head of a golden Buddha 2 A very small metallic head of a Buddha (the size of a fingernail) 3. A big metallic hand (natural size) of a Buddha 4 Pieces of metal with flower decoration 5. A big nail with a square head 6. A small bell.

Between the hill with the owoo and the monastery there is a row of either 8 graves or the remains of a line of stupas oriented from west to east. The remains, which were mostly round with a stone square on the top, are about 10 metres apart except for the two in the middle of the line where the space is greater. Thus, it seems there is a western group of four stupas and an eastern group of 4 graves.

Source(s): Un-named person living nearby who originally came from Zavkhan or Sergelen Aimag whose family lived close to the ruins one summer and thus learned about the site from local people.)

Oral Histories

Zoeoekhein Khoural was a big monastery with an abbot (*Khamba*) who oversaw about 200 to 300 monks. Elderly monks lived in the surrounding area of the monastery. The monks built the temples themselves and the walls were made of blueish bricks made by Chinese who came to Mongolia from Beijing on camels primarily to trade silk. Having made the bricks to build Zoeoekhein Khoendii the Chinese traders took raw materials such as skins and furs back to Beijing, a journey that took about one month. The trade stopped probably around 1921 when the White Russians came to Mongolia.

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The destruction took place in 1937 under Choibalsan. All the monks were arrested and most of the monastery belongings were taken away to a big lake (*doloon nouour*) and thrown into it.

Source(s): Dashdondog: Tov Aimag, Ougtaaltsaidam soumin bor khujir, nogoo brigad, Luvsangiin Dashdondog)