

The Old Jambal's Account about Certain Artifacts Preserved in Urga

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One of the most interesting pieces of work published by Professor Charles R. Bawden is the *Reminiscences of the Old Jambal (Öwgön Jambaliin yaria)*. The interviews with Boriin Jambal were recorded and published first by Ts. Damdinsüren in 1959, and his book was translated to English by Ch. Bawden and published in 1997.

The reminiscences of Jambal give a lively account of the life in Urga also known as Ikh Khüree, Daa Khüree, Niislel Khüree or Bogdiin Khüree. Urga (*örgöö*), the residence originally founded in 1639 by the first Bogd Jawzandamba khutagt (T. rje-btsun dam-pa), Öndör geegen Zanabazar (1635-1723) became the residential place or monastic town also of his reincarnations.¹ It settled down finally in the present Ulaanbaatar basin in 1855, and consisted of two main monastic parts: the (Züün) Khüree and Gandan (T. dga'-ldan), as well as lay population quarters, Chinese and Russian districts, palaces, and also individual temples and monasteries in the outskirts. After the demolition of monasteries and the confiscation or annihilation of their properties in 1937-1938, not much remained from the splendor of Urga.² In the 1920's Ulaanbaatar came into existence between the different districts of Urga, the temples of which were almost all demolished in 1937-1938. The precious artifacts that remained from the Buddhist Urga are preserved now in different museums (Chojin Lama Temple Museum, Palace Museum of the Bogd Khaan, Fine Arts Zanabazar Museum) and monasteries (Gandantegchenlin, Züün Khüree Dashchoilin). The original location of the majority of these artifacts within Urga are unknown for today.

Apart from D. Damdinsüren's lively account³ and few Tibetan and Mongolian inventories that list the artifacts of a few temples of Urga, B. Jambal's account is the most valuable source related to the holy objects of Urga. The present article summarizes Jambal's memories about these artifacts using Charles R. Bawden's translation as a base (cited word by word in many cases). A table is also attached including the basic data of the artifacts he mentions with the present (presumable or sure) locations.⁴

B. Jambal's Biography

B. Jambal was born in 1882.⁵ His mother belonged to *Ikh shaw'* area, which was subordinated to the Bogd Jawzandamba khutagt. B. Jambal arrived at Bogdiin khüree (Urga) when he was 13 together with his father. He lived in *Khüükhen noyonii aimag*, one of the thirty districts where monks lived. The *aimags* surrounded the centre of the (Züün) Khüree and also Gandan. The Bogd's Yellow Palace (*Shar Ordon*) was situated in the centre of the Khüree as well as the Main assembly hall (*Tsogchin dugan*, T. *tshogs chen 'du-khang*), monastic colleges (*datsan*, T. *grwa-tsang*), and other temples and official buildings.

After ten years of study B. Jambal joined *Badmayogo datsan* (T. *pad-ma yo-ga grwa-tshang*), the college of Tantric rites at Gandan. He spent three years there, and he became one of the four vergers. He received this title in 1922 during the *Danshig naadam* festival (T. *brtan-bzhugs*) held annually for the longevity of the Bogd. *Badamyogo datsan* had fifty monks that time.⁶ Jambal's master was *Tsorj Luwsandondog* of *Biziyaagiin aimag*, who was a very famous monk that time in Urga.⁷ Jambal was a sympathizer with the Mongolian revolution in its early days (1921-), and a covert agent of the revolutionary authorities.

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¹ For details on the temples of Urga see Pozdneev 1892, Pozdneyev 1971, Soninbayar 1995, Sereeter 1999, Pürew 1994, Pürew 2004, Teleki 2011, www.mongoliantemples.net.

² Bawden 1989: 367.

³ Damdinsüren 1995.

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⁵ Bawden 1997: 3.

⁶ Bawden 1997: 5.

⁷ Bawden 1997: 6.

Jambal's reminiscences are important sources to study Urga's busy life during the reign of the Eight Bogd Jawzandamba khutagt (1870-1924), and especially during the time of the Mongolian sovereignty he led as the Bogd Khaan, the theocratic king of Mongolia (1911-1921). Jambal also informs us about certain monastic traditions existed until the monastery demolition in 1937-1938. He also mentions old artifacts that were preserved in different places when D. Damdinsüren interviewed him (in the 1950's). This documented oral history has great importance to determine what an ordinary monk of Urga knew about the settlement he lived, the temples he worked or visited, and the most famous objects of worship (*shüteen*, T. *rten*) that were available in the city. Based on Jambal's account the valuable objects of worship and other holy objects of Urga were as follows.

1. Certain Artifacts and Traditions in the Khüree

Regarding the precious Buddha images of the *Khüree* Jambal claims that there were five unique objects of worship (*nandin shüteen*) in the Khüree: the *Ikhiiin Zuu* Buddha (T. *jo-bo*), *Ochirdar* (T. *rdo-rje 'dzin-pa*, S. *Vajradhara*), *Ayuush* (T. *tshe-dpag-med*, S. *Amitāyus*) of the Kanjur Temple, *Namsrai* (T. *rnam-(thos)-sras*, S. *Vaiçravaóa/Kuvera*) of the *Ikh san* treasury, and *Manla* (T. *sman-bla*, Skr. *Bhaiñajyaguru*, the Medicine Buddha) of the *Noyon shüteen* Temple.⁸ These were all created by Öndör gegeen Zanabazar. Jambal lived in *Khüükhen noyonii aimag*, and he states that it had never been precious objects, but he remembered the *Manla*, which was the *Khüükhen noyon's* precious object of worship,⁹ who was the spouse of Öndör gegeen Zanabazar. This *Manla* had been crafted by Öndör gegeen Zanabazar like the *Zuu* of the *Ikh san*, and its measurements were similar to those of the *Ochirdar*. The *Namsrai* of the *Ikh san* is said to have been of smaller measurements. The *Ayuush* of the Kanjur Temple was said to be placed later [after 1937] to the *Choiijin lamiin süm*.¹⁰

Jambal claims that the people of *Noyon shüteenii aimag* [shortly *Shüteenii aimag*] sold everything as they had to pay taxes and offer gifts to the lamas. Therefore, the *Mintüg* (T. *mi-'khrugs*, S. *Aksobhya*) holding a thunderbolt was also sold, which was an image about a cubit in size, in a leather box (*shiren khairtsag*). The *Mintüg* image had sparkling stones set in its head. Baldantseren, the treasurer of *Noyon shüteenii aimag*, said to Jambal that this Buddha image together with the eight stupas were sold for eight hundred *tögrögs*. These eight stupas of the Buddha were crafted amazingly beautifully. There were many such sets of eight stupas within the Khüree, and Jambal heard that one of the sets had been given to the lama Jamyantiw and was moved to Dornod aimag.

Jalsrai gegeen (T. *rgyal-sras*) was the main Kālacakra Tantra lama of the Fourth Bogd (1775-1813) and the Dalai Lama.¹¹ His portrait was to be found in the shape of a brass Buddha image in the *Dechingalwa* Temple (T. *bde-chen bskal-pa*) within the Yellow Palace. 16 waiters had access to the Bogd's meditation tent, together with the two bursars of his personal treasury. At the *Danshig* anniversary for the longevity of the Bogd twelve lamas chanted text continuously.¹² Three Buddha images were located there: *Damjan Dorlig* (T. *dam-can rdor-legs*, S. *Vajrasādhu*), *Naichüin Choijon* (T. *gnas-chung chos-skyong*), and the white-faced Buddha wearing a helmet said to have been brought from the place of *Ürjin Khand* (T. *u-rgyan mkha'-'gro*). The Eighth Bogd was born on the 8th of the first autumn month, and for this anniversary service lamas had a pavilion with an ornamental red roof-cover to the north-west of the *Ochirdar* Temple and to the south of *Dechingalwa* Temple. There was a bronze stupa outside the Yellow Palace.¹³ The philosophy lamas (*Choiriin lam*, T. *chos-grwa'i bla-ma*) said that if one circumambulated this stupa at night from sunset until sunrise it would help one to attain wisdom.

The total number of lamas permanently resident in Ikh Khüree was said to be in the register called the Assembly Hall Yellow-bound book.¹⁴ The *Lowon lam* (T. *slob-dpon*) of *Bandidiin aimag* was an old lama.¹⁵ He was always at service in the Assembly Hall, even when it was raining and stormy. He used to worship the *Ikhiiin Zuu* Buddha every day. *Bandidiin aimag* was situated north of *Süingiin aimag*. It was established by the Stone-fingered Ācārya master. Stone-finger's object of worship was a bundle of Buddha images. It was kept in a certain household in those years. Jambal said that it was still there at the time of the interview recorded by Damdinsüren.

The *Jakhar* Plate (T. *lcags mkhar*) was a big iron platter, and was one of the most precious objects in the *Khüree*.¹⁶ It was made by hammering in one nail per hundred thousand recitations of the *Yamaaranz* mantra. There must have been several hundred nails in it. It was square in shape and measured about a meter each way, and it looked merely like a big ugly platter. It was kept by the lay foreman of the *Sangai aimag*, who kept all sorts of odd things. Two *Jakhar* ceremonies were held each year: one in summer, and one on the 29th day of the middle winter month. The *Jakhar* was a terrible *Sor* (T. *zor*) of *Choiijoo*, the Lord of Death (T. *chos-rgyal*, S. *Yamarājā*). In both occasions *Tsam* dances were held, and the *Sor* was carried. The *Jakhar* plate disappeared for the winter 1901. It

⁸ Bawden 1997: 6.

⁹ Bawden 1997: 7.

¹⁰ It was not destroyed but were turn to be a museum in 1938 or 1940.

¹¹ Bawden 1997: 29. Presumably, it refers to the Eighth Dalai Lama, 'Jam-dpal rgya-mtso, 1758-1804.

¹² Bawden 1997: 8.

¹³ Bawden 199.

¹⁴ Bawden 1997: 75.

¹⁵ Bawden 1997: 60.

¹⁶ Bawden 1997: 13.

is said that it was sold to the Buryads or given to the *zoch* Agwaan, who was a good *zoch* (practitioner of *zod*, T. *gcod*).¹⁷

2. Artifacts at Gandan

At *Gandan* there was a Kanjur with holes for strapping it (*ganzagalakh nükhte*).¹⁸ The Bogd's lion throne was in the Gandan chapel.¹⁹ The Thirteenth Dalai Lama used to sit on the throne (in 1904-1905), which had been set out in front of this, to recite the scriptures.

3. Artifacts in the Palaces situated on the Bank of the River Tuul

The White Temple or *Güngaadejidlin süm* (T. *kun-dga' bde-skyid gling*) included a very exquisite *Yamandag* (T. *'jigs-byed*, S. *Yamātaka*) image made of steel (*gan*).²⁰ It was said to have been made in the banner (*khoshuu*) of Dalai Choinkhor wan in the time of the Eighth Bogd. In height it was about a full cubit, and its implements were all of silver, skillfully made and sparkling. There was a similar image of *Damjan Dorlig* riding a goat, and also a similar *Jamsran* (T. *lcam-sring, beg-tse*), the head of which was gilded (painted with gold) and the rest was of iron. The Dalai Choinkhor wan presented many gifts to the Bogd, such as tents, pavilions and braziers for the *Naadam* festival. They were skillfully made, and all the iron items sparkled. There was a precious *Khajid* image (T. *mkha'-spyod*, S. *dākini*)²¹ at the White Temple, which was venerated by the Fifth Bogd (1815-1841) when he was performing the meditation of *Khajid*.²² It was a gilded brass image, completely covered over, with only one hand visible. The hat and the cloths of Öndör gegeen Zanabazar were kept there, too: a hat in the form of a skull-cap with four leaf-shaped peaks, big red Mongolian boots, a summer gown like a Buryad gown, made of stuff like yellow silk pleated at the waist and with a lining of gauze, with small cuffs and a rough fur (*taiwinduu*) collar like black otter fur. There was a statuette made of paper [paper-maché] in the likeness of Öndör gegeen Zanabazar in the White Palace. These clothes were wrapped up in a bundle near it. A portrait of Tārānatha (1575-1634) was also kept there. This image was kept in the Choijin Lama Temple Museum when Jambal was interviewed.

The *Khajid* Temple or *Baldankhajidlin* (T. *dpal-ldan mkha'-spyod gling*) or *Pandellin*

(T. *phan-bde gling*), which had been in front of the White Palace and south of the River Tuul is said to have been flooded out.²³ It was altered and rebuilt at Zaisan valley. Responsibility for the equipment for the *Khajid* Temple was assumed for six months by the Bogd's treasury and for six months by the Darkhan wan.

In the Bogd's palace there was said to be a valuable and precious *Jadamba*, known as the Magnolia *Jadamba* (*Zambagan Jadamba*).²⁴

4. Artifacts in Dünjingaraw Temple

Related to the temples dedicated to the cult of *Dünjingaraw* (T. *dung-skyong dkar-po*): Bogd khan uul was worshipped twice a year.²⁵ The Manchu Amban went to the spring worship, and the Mongol Amban to the autumn one.²⁶ A temple called *Dünjingaraw* had been built by the O. wan. There were a number of bronze Buddha images inside it. This was O. wan's shrine, who had set up the *Wangain aimag*. *Dünjingaraw* was said that the spirit lord of the Bogd uul inhabited this temple.

5. Artifacts in the Temple Complex of Choijin Lama

There were three guardian spirits which dwelt within the Choijin Lama (1872-1918): *Naichün* (T. *gnas-chung*), *Zemer* (T. *tsi'u dmar-po*) and *Shüig* (T. *shugs-ldan*).²⁷ Thirty lamas were drawn from the thirty *aimags* of the Khüree to clear the temple rubbish in ox carts. The finest craftsmen were summoned from all the banners in Mongolia and put to work making the Buddha images and other cult objects for *Zankhan* Temple (T. *gtsang-khang*). Shoiw' Ayuush of *Wangain aimag* was in charge of making these Buddha images and cult objects, and Wanchig lama of *Noyonii aimag* also took part.²⁸ Ayuush probably made the elegant *Naidans* (T. *gnas brtan*) of the Temple. He worked for many years in the *Choijin lamiin süm*. He was a man of the banner of Zorigt wan or O. (Odsorbazar) wan in Tüsheet khan aimag. A lot of Chinese and Mongols worked together in building the *Choijin lamiin süm* and making the Buddha images. It was Chinese for the most part who built the temples, while Mongols for the most part made the Buddha

¹⁷ Bawden 1997: 14.

¹⁸ Bawden 1997: 7.

¹⁹ Bawden 1997: 42.

²⁰ Bawden 1997: 8.

²¹ It might have been Naro's *dākini* (T. *Na-ro mkha'-spyod*)

²² Bawden 1997: 9.

²³ Bawden 1997: 18.

²⁴ It might refer to the Gandantegchenlin Temple or even the Yellow Palace or the Green Palace which were not situated at Gandan.

²⁵ Bawden 1997: 16.

²⁶ It refers to the period before 1911.

²⁷ Bawden 1997: 10.

²⁸ Bawden 1997: 11.

images and objects within it. Shoiw' Ayuush made the very tall *Jigid* (T. *'jigs-byed*, S. *Yamāntaka*) which has now gone. The temple dance was performed in *Choijin lamiin süm* in the period of Autonomy (1911-1921). They had the *Mam* (T. *ma-mo*), *Zan* (T. *brtsan*), and the Five Kings' (*Tawan khaan*, T. *rgyal-po sku lnga*) dance. This was very different from the *Khüree Tsam* dance. In the Five Kings the *Daichin khamba* himself appeared.²⁹ This dance was put on for about three years but stopped under the People's Government (1924-). After the death of the Choijin Lama, *Daichin khamba* took a wife and died during the period of the People's Government. A special temple which he caused to be built was over by the Lenin Club.³⁰ *Choijin lam* had many livestock. He used to count his herds and hold a games meeting at the place called *Bökhög* [*örtöö* relay-station] to the west of Bogd uul.

At the time of the interview with B. Jambal the following things were kept in *Choijin lamiin süm*: an image of *Düwchin Nagbojodba* mahasiddha which used to be in the White Palace. Its skull hand-drum has been lost, and he hold a drum of black wood instead. There was an image of *Lowon* Badamjunai (T. *slob-dpon* Pad-ma 'byung-gnas, S. Padmasambhava) from the White Palace. Two of the three *Dansorrigsum* (T. ?) from the White Palace were in the left-hand yurt. There was a sculpture of the Preceptor Baldanchoimbol *khamba* (having the abbot title from 1865-1899) which used to be in the White Palace – he became proctor in the *Zankhan* Temple. There was a paper structure of *Öndör* gegeen from the White Palace covered by a brocade mantle. A man called Lofty Tsend, the image-maker of *Nomchiin aimag* made it in the twenty-sixth year (1688) of the reign of the Manchu emperor, Kang-xi (1663-1722). In the left-hand yurt there was the *Öndör* gegeen from *Wangain aimag* and a *Dorjsembe* (T. *rdo-rje sems-dpa'*, S. *Vajrasattva*) the origin of which was not known by Jambal. Both were created by *Öndör* gegeen Zanabazar. The sixteen *Naidan* from the same temple were situated in the central row. Most of the property and herds and flocks of *Yonzon khamba's* palace (*Yonzon khambiin süm*) were ruined by the Revolutionaries, but some seventy of the ox carts which they used in their work survived.³¹

6. Artworks of Contemporary Artists

Marzan Sharaw also known as Luwsansharaw or Sharaw (1869-1939) used to paint Buddha images and portraits of the Bogd and his wife, the Ekh Dagina, and so on for the Bogd.³² His paintings of the *Tsorj* (T. *chos-rje*) of *Biziyaagiin aimag* and the *Khachin* (T. *mkhan chen*) Baldan were kept in the State Central Museum when Jambal was interviewed. The pictures of the Bogd khaan and the Ekh Dagina Marzan Shar painted were kept in the State Museum. He painted a picture of the Bogd and later it was copied as a photograph. His paintings were: the Eighth Bogd in religious dress, the Eighth Bogd as *Shanag* (T. *zhwa-nag*), wearing a black hat, painted in the year of the Chinese revolutionaries (1919-1920), the Ekh Dagina with plumes, the Ekh dagina wearing a five-sided tiara, dressed as a Buddha, with bell and thunderbolt, the Bogd and the Ekh Dagina in four-sided diadems, with the Bogd in his ceremonial dress after his enthronement as king; portrait of the *Tsorj* lam of *Noyonii aimag* (Luwsantseren); picture of the Tibetan lama, the old *Yonzon* (T. *yongs-'dzin*) Baldanchoimbol; picture of Lenin.

Agwaandorj had ten metal chests prepared.³³ Many artist mush have painted the panoramas of the *Khüree*. The Bogd adopted Sosorbaram, and he became a monk of *Dashchoimbel datsan* (T. *bkra-shis chos 'phel grwa-tshang*) and *Badmayogo datsan*. He became a man who had the job of casting Buddha images in wax (*lawchin*). He performed as the White Old Man in the *Khüree Tsam*. When *Badmayogo datsan* needed to be repaired, Sosorbaram and Jambal himself were responsible to move the chapel and the Buddha images. Dugarjaw and Sosorbaram also cast and made the Bogd's golden seal.³⁴

7. Oral History related to the Bogd's Rites

On the 3rd day of the Lunar New Year (*Tsagaan sar*) the Bogd had to worship the statue of *Öndör* gegeen Zanabazar in the Lower Temple [White Palace], the stupas of the Fifth and Seventh Bogds at Gandan, and the Buddha in the Gandan Temple. The Bogd processed *Badamyogo datsan* because *Damdin yansan* (T. *rta-mgrin yang-gsang*) came to his dreams.³⁵ Having worshipped *Ochirdar* on the 1st day of the month he worshipped him again on the 3rd day, and whenever he went there he would worship the statuette (*güden*, T. *sku-rten*) of the *Khamba*, his teacher and then return. Every time he went off the Bogd would worship *Ochirdar*. When the Thirteenth Dalai Lama left Mongolia [in 1906], he gave a man called Jowuu *Shanzaw* (T. *phyag-mdzod-pa*) the job of supervising the Tibetans who were in Mongolia.³⁶ One or two years after the departure of the Dalai Lama, what was known as the "throwing out" began to be performed,³⁷ what meant that the Bogd's disseminated his staff throwing from the

²⁹ *Daichin khamba* was the title of Luwsanpeljee, who was the interpreter of Choijin lama's words in trans, and the abbot of the monastic complex after the death of Choijin Lama.

³⁰ It might have been *Agwa datsan*.

³¹ The temple of the Yonzon Khamba was situated east of the Temple complex of Choijin Lama. Bawden 1997: 72.

³² Bawden 1997: 15.

³³ Bawden 1997: 69.

³⁴ Bawden 1997: 53.

³⁵ Bawden 1997: 43.

³⁶ Bawden 1997: 45.

³⁷ Bawden 1997: 46.

eastern window of his (Winter) Palace for ordinary people, and from the western window to high and low officials.

The Bogd was holding a General worship at the Lower Temple.³⁸ On the 29th day of the last winter month, at the Bogd's command, the 30 *aimags* and the ten colleges (*datsan*) all joined in a common service and at the hour of the horse they carried a Repulsion Figurine (T. *gtor zlog*) of *Kâetrapâla* out towards the south.³⁹ He sent word to the *Yonzon* lama to have many prayers recited and ablutions and mandalas offered to the *Ikhiin Zuu*, the *Ochirdar*, the *Ayuush* of the Kanjur Temple, and the 21 *Tārā* (*Dar'ekh*, T. *sgrol-ma*).⁴⁰

The Bogd did not know the *Lüijin* (T. *lus-sbyin*) text, but the *Tsagaan Dar'* (the Bogd's spouse) knew the *Lüijin* text well.⁴¹ After Legtseg's death the Bogd enclosed some things in a square box and put his seal on it, and had it taken to the Dambadarjaa Monastery (T. *bstan-pa dar rgyas gling*) and deposited in a stupa where the old robes (*naws*) and so on of the various Bogds had been placed.⁴² After the passing away of the Bogd Khaan, everything he left was confiscated by the commission of the People's Government.⁴³ The bronze pail which was one of the Bogd's curios was auctioned two years later and fetched 25 Russian banknotes. Many things went in the auction, one year after the Bogd put a sheep's shin-bone up for auction.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Jambal's account includes the most precious artifacts of Urga created by Öndör geegen Zanabazar as well as many others he saw or heard about. The majority of the artifacts of Urga's temples were destroyed or delivered to Russia in and after 1937-1938. Due to the work of the Institute of Sutras and Scripts founded in 1921, which also had a museum (situated in the Winter Palace of the Bogd after 1924) some of the most precious artifacts could be preserved. Many of them are now on exhibits in the Choijin Lama Temple Museum, the Palace Museum of the Bogd Khaan, and the Fine Arts Zanabazar Museum, whilst others are still used as objects of worship such as the ones preserved at Gandan Monastery. The artifacts and other objects mentioned by Jambal are listed below. The list includes the present (presumable or sure) locations of these objects as well, thought further research of their stories and present availabilities are required. N. a. (not available) is used for unknown data.

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³⁸ Bawden 1997: 52.

³⁹ Bawden 1997: 55.

⁴⁰ Bawden 1997: 58.

⁴¹ Bawden 1997: 40.

⁴² Bawden 1997: 28.

⁴³ A list of the Bogd's possessions and the prices for which they were later sold were published in *Il Towchoo*. 20-31 August 1995.

⁴⁴ Bawden 1997: 35.