



Research Paper

## Monasteries of Uizen Zasag and Baatar Zasag Hoshuuf Zasagt Khan Aimag

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**Annotation:** This article summarizes the results of a survey about the history of monasteries, named as SharavdarjaalinKhuree, ShavarynKhuree, GandarjaalinKhuree and KhongorKhuree, which were established and operated in BaatarZasag and UizenZasagkhoshuu /administration division as province / of Zasagt Khan aimag. The monks of these monasteries have been performing meritorious deeds among the people of the county, ordaining priests, spreading and disseminating religious teachings, and worshiping mountains and ovoos /ovoo is a place on the top of the mountain where spirits are worshipped/.

**Key words:** counties, religions, monk, church

*Received 04 Jan., 2023; Revised 14 Jan., 2023; Accepted 16 Jan., 2023 © The author(s) 2023.  
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From the end of the 16th century, Buddhism flourished in Mongolia, and the influence of ancient Indian and Tibetan culture penetrated the snowy Himalayas from the Ganges to the steppes of Mongolia. Since that time, hundreds of monasteries have been established in Khalkha Mongolia and religious activities have been carried out. Some of them are monasteries operating in Baatarzasag of KhalkhynZasagt khan aimag (now Khukhmorit and Bayan-Uulsoums /administration division/ of Gobi-Altai aimag) and Uizenzasagkhoshuu (now Jargalansoum of Gobi-Altai aimag).

Since the end of the 16th century, Buddhism flourished in Mongolia, and the influence of ancient Indian and Tibetan culture penetrated the snowy Himalayas from the Ganges to the steppes of Mongolia. Since that time, hundreds of monasteries have been established in Khalkha Mongolia and religious activities have been carried out. Some of them are very famous monasteries operating in Baatarzasag province of KhalkhynZasagt khan aimag (now Khukhmorit and Bayan-Uulsoums of Gobi-Altai aimag) and Uizenzasagkhoshuu (now Jargalansoum of Gobi-Altai aimag).

BaatarZasgiinKhoshuu was established in 1696, and SharavdarjaalinKhuree and Shavar Monastery have been operating in the province. UizenZasgiinKhoshuu was established much later, in 1728, and was inhabited by monasteries such as ArynKhuree and KhongorynKhuree.

However, there is almost no research on the history and traditions of the monasteries established and operating in BaatarZasag and UizenZasagt in Zasagt Khan aimag. Therefore, this article will tell you about the history of the monasteries.

SharavdarjaalinKhuree: The main religious center of BaatarZasgiinKhoshuu is SharavdarjaalinKhuree. SharavdarjaalinKhuree was established in 1696 on the initiative of Mr. Erdenegomba, the first governor of Baatar province. Later, in 1881, he moved to a place called Lake Snake. The locals also call the area "Lake Snake monastery/ NuurMogoinkhuree".

When the monastery was first established, a meeting of forty lamas was convened, and the Tsogchin Dharma School, called the Forty Duut established a meeting and named it Sharavdarjaalin. During the reign of Mr. Choimbol, in 1828, the Lamrim Dharma meeting was held, and during the reign of Manjbazar, the Dalai Lama's Dharma meeting was held in 1862. During the reign of Governor Sonomtseren, Megzem's work was created and has started r Maidarfestival and the tsam dance [1].

Later, during the reign of Baatar van Bazarvaan, in 1890, he started a school in Tsanid and named it Shadavchoimjin. In 1891, Yar began to melt. In 1916, the Judo School was established.

The Khuree has a total of nine datsans. It is said that the Khuree had an original complete Ganjuur and Danjuur sutras. The main idol is the Lham amulet. There were also two Maitreya gods as tall as a two-year-old child [2].

SharavdarjaalinKhuree first moved around the Zavkhan River and then to the Western Shana of the Sangiin Dalai. It is said that the great monks and seers of the time decided to look for a place to live in the monastery and then concentrated on the Lake Snake /NuurMogoi/. When they arrived here, they met a shepherd near NuurMogoi, and when asked about his name, he said Munkh. The seers and astrologers looked at the place and thought it was a reasonable place [3].

After SharavdarjaalinKhuree settled in NuurMogoi /Snake lake/, an expert said that the monastery was formed between three mountains as if three snakes were coming from three sides of the lake, so it would recover three times and disperse three times. According to the words of the expert, it was destroyed three times [4].

Russian tourist and geographer G.N.Potanin wrote that "...this monastery is located in the middle of Gichgenrange and Moga lake (snake), which is called The Three Rivers [5].

As local people said, the Sharavdarzhalinmonastery had over 100 monks at the time of its establishment, and this number has increased to over 600 monks. In 1921, when the White Russians fled, they destroyed the Sharavdarzhalinmonastery, mistakenly believing it to be Khatanbatar Wang's rmonastery and killed many monks. According to locals, more than 10 Russian soldiers first arrived here. After that the number of them was increasing, finally about 400 soldiers surrounded the monastery for about 20 days, killed many people, looting livestock and property and burnt the monastery. In some research it was noted that NuurMogoi monastery had over 600 monks, and Whites of Kazantsev troops came to the area, surrounded it and killed the monk [6].

Monks of the monastery worshipped in the Lovon mountain ovoid in early summer. Every summer, the monks performed a full-scale ritual of Maitreya here. The monastery was closed in 1938. Now the ruins of the monastery are located 18 km in the north-west of Bayan-UulSoumcentre in Gobi-Altai AIMAG, at the coordinates of the N 470 10212 and the E 950 07789. A stupa was erected on the ruins of the frame [Figure-1].

According to locals, the stupa was built in 1995 by A.Danj, a native of Bayan-Uulsoum, who was a student of the monastery. He created the stupa to his teacher-monk. Later Danj became a great monk [7].

In 1991, NuurMogoi monastery was restored by the monks A.Danj and B.Dalkhjav, who studied here. Now in the center of Bayan-UulSoum, there is a monastery called Shirevdarzhalin. In 2004, it was built in Bayan-UulSoumcentre and is still active [Figure-2].

Shavarynhuree: In this area there is another monastery. The monastery is described in some literature as Sharav monastery (Vandandashlin church, Yunshubei church) [8]. But locals called it "Shavarynhuree /mud monastery?". In this monastery tsam-dance was performed and in the ceremony twenty-one children were included.

The monastery in Baatarzasag was called "the Temple of the Princes of Enshoobu" [9]. As local people said, it was Shavarynhuree. Because area belonging to the Shavaryn river and the Shavaryn monastery has been inhabited by Enshoobu tribe, who are now known as the "Ogotorenshoobs". Ruins of the monastery are located 23 km in the east of Bayan-UulSoum center of Gobi-Altai province at the coordinates N 460. 864 85 and E 950. 45 409. Shavaryn river is the main summer place in Chandmankhairkhan Bag of Bayan-UulSoum.

When I visited the ruins of the monastery, I could clearly see the ruins of the foundation in several places. Now there are some mud houses near the ruins of the monastery. They were built of mud from the ruins of the monastery later. A stupa has now been erected on the ruins of the Khuree [Figure 3].

I asked local elders about the history of the area, but I didn't find anything specific. In any case, nothing has been restored in Shavryn Monastery.

Arynhuree: Gandandarjaalin Monastery was the largest area of UizenZasagkhoshuu in Zasagt Khan aimag. During the reigns of Mr. Ravdan and Sonomdorj, the governors of the Uizen government, no monasteries were established. But in 1819 during the reign of Governor Yondondash, a Mongolian ger was built and the TsogchinKhural /monk meeting/ was established. But there was no fixed place, they moved many places as here and there [10].

In 1833, during the reign of Governor Galsandondov, two temples were built and the Tsogchin and KhailanKhurals were established. In 1877, during the reign of Governor Mipamsambuu, TsanidDatsan was established, and in 1895, during the reign of Governor Damdinsuren, ManbaDatsan was established.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 50-60 lamas had meeting in 5-6 temples of Choir, Tsogchin, Manba and Khailandatsans. The head lama of the monastery was Baajuu or Bavuujuvageen. Monks performed a full-scale ritual of Maitreya in summer and Ganjuur in early autumn. The Ganjuur and Danjuur original scriptures were fully preserved in the monastery.

Local people called the monastery Arynhuree. But in some research literature noticed as "Arynhuree" [11], "Gun Lama Khural", "KhasagtArynhuree" [12].

Today the ruins of the Khuree are located in the back of the KhasagtKhairkhan mountain range, more than 20 km southwest of the center of Jargalansoum of Gobi-Altai aimag, at the intersection of N 460. 85180 and E 950. 73272. In 2021, we went to the ruins of the monastery. The monastery ruins in the area have almost disappeared. There is only one large ruin land. [Figure 4]. There are ruins of the Teacher's Palace 2 km away from here.

GN Potanin wrote: "... The Teel River flows through the territory of this province, and the monastery is located on the banks of this river"[13].

During our field study of ethnography, we recorded some myths and legends from local people related to the history of the monastery. For example, a rotating crane at the back door was made of silver. The last head lama of the monastery died in 1938 when he was captured alone by the green hats of the Ministry of the Interior. It is said that when the monks were taken away, the candles they were holding were left on [14]. After that, monastery was closed.

Today, Gandandarjaalin Monastery has been rebuilt in the center of Jargalansoum, Gobi-Altai aimag. Unfortunately, this monastery does not constantly work [Figure-5].

KhongorKhuree: There was KhongorKhuree in UizenZasagkhoshuu. As local people said, the Khongor monastery was part of the IkhMyanga tribe, and was inhabited mainly by people from the IkhMyanga tribe [15]. In the literature, it is written as KhongorKhuree (DoodKhuree, Genpilin) [16].

The ruins of KhongorKhuree are located more than 20 km in the southeast of Jargalansoum at the coordinates of N 950.992 07and E 460. 82 003 in the place KhongorynShilof KhasagtKhairkhan mountain. The locals called KhongorKhuree by the monastery place name where it is located [Figure-6].

Khongor monastery was smaller than Aryn monastery. It has only 2 datsans and over 70 monks. There are no remnants of buildings. There are several bumps on the ruins. They seem to be traces of the monks' homes. In the summer, the monks of the Khuree used to gather at the Khunkher of KhasagtKhairkhan to make medicine [17]. The monastery was closed in 1938 due to the political policies of the time. Currently, Khongor Monastery has not been restored.

In conclusion, the monks of SharavdarjaalinKhuree, Shavar Monastery, Gandandarjaalin and KhongorynKhuree monasteries, which were established in BaatarZasag and UizenZasagkhoshuu performed meritorious deeds and ordain priesthoods, spread religious teachings among the people of the khoshuu. During the research, it was revealed that they have been performing rituals such as khairkhan /mountain/ and ovoov worship.

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Appendix. Figures



Figure 1. Ruins of SharavdarjaalinKhuree (Nuurmogoi)



Figure 2. Shirevdarzhalin – new restored khuree



Figure 3. Ruins of ShavraynKhuree



Figure 4. Ruins of Arynkhuree



Figure 5. New restored GandandarjaalinKhuree



Figure 6. Ruins of KhongorKuree