

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Concerning some archival documents related to the Choijin Lama Temple Museum

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Lwsankhaidav, widely known among Mongols as the Choijin Lama, was the State Oracle, holding the titles of Precious Wisdom, Clear Devotion Qutuqtu, and Gujer Khamba, as well as being the younger brother of the Eighth Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, Mongolia's last sovereign. Archival research surrounding the Choijin Lama Temple and its subsequent conversion into a museum offers critical insights into long-neglected chapters of Mongolian history. Drawing on primary archival sources, this article examines the historical, spiritual, and cultural significance of the museum and broader monument preservation efforts, while contextualizing the socio-political and religious landscape of 20th-century Mongolia. Furthermore, by illuminating previously overlooked aspects of Lwsankhaidav's life – including his Tantric credentials, his standing in the broader Buddhist world, and

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his true impact on the Bogd Khaan period – this study highlights the importance of preserving and promoting Mongolia’s cultural heritage today.

**State Oracle Lama of Mongolia, ‘Precious Wisdom and Clear Devotion’
Qutuqtu Luvsankhaidav**

The Choijin Lama Temple Museum, located in the centre of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, is one of the few surviving Buddhist monastic complexes that endured the socialist purges of the twentieth century. Originally constructed between 1904 and 1908 for Luvsankhaidav, the younger brother of the Eighth Jebtsundamba Khutuktu and the State Oracle of Mongolia, the complex today functions as both a museum and an important site of cultural memory. Architecturally, the museum consists of several interconnected temples arranged within a walled compound that preserves the characteristic features of late Qing-period Mongolian Buddhist architecture, including elaborately ornamented roofs, vividly painted wooden structures, ritual courtyards, and highly detailed iconographic decorations. The museum houses an extensive collection of Buddhist sculptures, tsam masks, thangka paintings, ritual instruments, and ceremonial objects that reflect the religious and artistic traditions of Mongolian Buddhism.

Beyond its architectural and artistic significance, the Choijin Lama Temple Museum occupies an important place in contemporary discussions of heritage, religion and national identity in Mongolia. As one of the rare monastic institutions that survived the widespread destruction of monasteries during the socialist repression of the 1930s, the museum serves not only as a repository of religious artifacts but also as a symbolic reminder of Mongolia’s Buddhist history and cultural resilience. Today, the museum functions simultaneously as a heritage institution, a tourist destination, and a site through which historical memory and post-socialist cultural revival are negotiated. Its preservation and public representation reveal broader tensions between secular museum practices, religious traditions, and the reconstruction of national identity in post-socialist Mongolia.

Gujir Abbot, State Oracle Lama of Capital Khuree, Precious Wisdom and Clear Devotion Qutuqtu Luvsankhaidav (1872–1918), renowned among the Mongols as the Choijin Lama, was the younger brother of the Eighth Bogd Jetsun Dampa Agvaan Luvsan Chojii Nyam Danzan Wanchig Bal Sambuu (1869–1924),

the last theocratic ruler of Mongolia.¹ Chojin is a Tibetan word meaning ‘Protector of Buddha’s teachings’. Most of the Dharma protectors in Tibetan Buddhism were originally spirit lords of Tibetan mountains and lands, subdued by an eighth-century Indian master, Padmasambhava, who was invited by the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (742–797).² It is said that these spirit beings created various obstacles when the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery, Samye, was under construction.³ Thereafter, oracle trance performances of Chojin or Dharma protectors spread widely. ‘Chojin Lama’ refers to a lama who acts as the physical vessel for a dharma protector deity to communicate with people. Even Cham dance, a masked and costumed ritual dance, originated as a victory celebration after subduing those spirit beings.

Luvsankhaidav began his oracle trance training around 1883–1884, when the Manchu Qing dynasty was noticeably declining and global political affairs were in turmoil due to power struggles among major world powers. An archival document describes the visit of a Tibetan oracle trance expert channelling the Setrab protector in Mongolia. It states:

...Setrab Chojin Lama is the head of Nimdan Monastery in West Jowo.⁴ Initially, he was invited to the Zasagt Khan Aimag of Khalkha. He was called to Yeke Khuree by Vajradhara Bogd when he was about to travel back to Tibet.⁵ Thus, he sent some of his retinue back to West Jowo to report his prolonged stay. When he had an audience with the Bogd Lama in Yeke Khuree, he was instructed to stay in Khuree for a few years. He respectfully followed this instruction...⁶

¹ Agvaan Luvsan Choji Nyam Danzan Wanchig Bal Sambuu (Tibetan: *ngag dbang blo bzang chos keyi nyi ma brtan 'dzin dbang phyug dpal bzang po*) is the full name of the Eighth Bogd Jibzundampa.

² Guru Padmasambhava (Tibetan: *pad ma 'byung gnas*), “Lotus-born Master”, was the eighth-century Indian tantric master invited to Tibet to subdue obstacles in constructing Samye Monastery, and founder of the Nyingma tradition. Trisong Detsen (Tibetan: *khri srong lde brtsan*) was the eighth-century Emperor of Tibet.

³ Samye Monastery (Tibetan: *bsam yas*) was the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet.

⁴ West Jowo is the Mongolian designation for Lhasa, Tibet.

⁵ Vajradhara Bogd is a reference to the Eighth Bogd Jibzundampa Qutuqtu.

⁶ MNCA, Fonds XM-85, Inv. 1, File 1253, fols. 119a–120a.

Based on this document, we believe that the Oracle Lama was invited to train Lama Luvsankhaidav in oracle trance performance. However, while there is no explicit mention of mentoring Luvsankhaidav, it is clearly stated that he stayed in Yeke Khuree (Urga) for several years following Bogd Jibzundampa's instruction.

In the 29th Year of the Guangxu Emperor (1903), the administrative lamas of Dashdandarling Aimag, including a head lama, a gegu, a zaisan, and messengers, consulted together and decreed: ⁷

Whenever the Chojjin lama attends the pujas, provide full information about that day's puja. Gegu should welcome him along with Duganch from a distance and place a red felt at the temple entrance.⁸ A Lama responsible for making offerings should receive his ceremonial hat at the entrance and place it on the table beside his seat. When he returns from the puja, several Gegu lamas should accompany him to his residence.⁹

This document reveals a close relationship between the Chojjin Lama and Dashdandarling aimag, as his presence in this aimag's puja was highly revered.¹⁰ This lends support to the claim that previously, he performed oracle trance activities in a small wooden temple beside the main temple of Dashdandarling Aimag in Khuree.¹¹

Scholars hold different viewpoints regarding Luvsankhaidav's primary protector deity for oracle trances. For example, some consider him a medium for Nechung, while others claim Zemar, or even Dorje Shugden.¹² This divergence appears to stem from the recollections of the elder Jambal. However, archival documents indicate that he served as a medium for both Nechung and Zemar protectors. According to Oracle Lama Luvsankhaidav's official letter, dated the 10th day of the Lunar New Year in the 3rd Year of Bogd Khan (1913):

⁷ The 29th year of Guangxu corresponds to 1903.

⁸ Gegu (*ge-skeos*) was the monastic disciplinarian, and Duganch (*du-khang-pa*) was the temple caretaker.

⁹ MNCA, Fonds XM-85, Inv. 1, File 1253, fols. 121a–122b.

¹⁰ MNCA, Fonds XM-85, Inv. 2, File 1062, Item 1.

¹¹ Dashdandarling Aimag, one of the 30 monastic aimags of Yeke Khuree. MNCA, Fonds XM-210, Inv. 1, File 1, Item 9.

¹² Nechung, state protector deity of Tibet and Mongolia; Tsiu Marpo (Zemar), protector deity; Dorje Shugden, protector deity.

I, Luvsankhaidav, a humble Lama, am fortunate to be connected to the golden family of Bogd Lord. Moreover, I was bestowed the title of Oracle Lama along with a special temple for the sake of dharma and sentient beings and two otog disciple subjects due to the Sublime One's compassionate consideration of the fact that Nechung and Zemar protectors were channelling in my body...¹³

Furthermore, a decree by Bogd Khan and the Eighth Jibzundampa, dated the 5th Year of Bogd Khan (1915), officially bestowed a seal, ceremonial umbrella, and tiger tail recognizing him as a Nechung Oracle.¹⁴ Another notable document concerns Joloo Khamba, an elder brother of Oracle Lama Luvsankhaidav, travelling to Lhasa. When he requested the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, and the Great Nechung Protector (the main protector of Great Jowo) to verify the authenticity of Luvsankhaidav's oracle trance performances, their replies unanimously confirmed: 'Yes, indeed Nechung'.¹⁵

Thus, it was officially confirmed that Luvsankhaidav became a physical vessel for a wrathful protector (Kutenpa). A specially dedicated complex, consisting of two temples (one large and one small), a residential building, a storage house, and protective walls, was constructed between 1899 and 1901. Fifty monks were transferred to his charge from the disciples of Jibzundampa Qutuqtu.¹⁶ This temple is recorded as 'Zankhan' in archival documents and in the Eighth Bogd Jibzundampa Qutuqtu's decree, dated the 4th day of the 4th month in the 28th Year of the Guangxu Emperor (1902), which states:¹⁷

Zankhan temple should forever be a home for all holy objects and instruments related to the Dharma protector and its oracle trance activities, and hence it is the same as all monasteries established over my many lifetimes.¹⁸

¹³ MNCA, Fonds XA-4, Inv. 1, File 499, Item 1.

¹⁴ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1090, Item 9.

¹⁵ MNCA, Fonds XM-101, Inv. 1, File 23, Item 1.

¹⁶ MNCA, Fonds XA-3, Inv. 1, File 414, Item 26.

¹⁷ Zankhan (*gtsang-kehang*) was a sanctuary or main shrine hall.

¹⁸ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1090, Item 9.

In 1903, Chojjin Lama's temple complex, including his residence, was completely destroyed by fire overnight. Consequently, the oracle lama and his tantric consort lost all their possessions except the clothes they were wearing. Following this loss, site analysis experts selected the present-day museum location for a new complex, and construction began in 1904. Archival documents suggest that construction of the main temple and residence was completed in 1906. Luvsankhaidav sent official letters to Erdene Shanzudpa, head of the Treasury House, and Da Lama, principal administrators of Jibzundampa Qutuqtu's disciples, requesting an officially recognized name for his newly constructed complex.¹⁹

The letter states:

The request letter of Luvsankhaidav Lama, a subject of our teacher Jibzundampa Qutuqtu's disciples, conveys the following: I, humble lama Luvsankhaidav, have constructed a temple consisting of 55 halls using wood, brick and mud, housing various holy objects and texts such as the Kangyur, with over 300 monks performing daily prayers dedicated to the long life of the Supreme One and the benefit of all sentient beings in the southern area of Khuree, which is within the administrative domain of Beize Puntsagtseren, Mongol minister of Khuree. My resources and voluntary offerings from many benefactors funded the construction of this complex. I humbly request you to convey my request to receive an official name for this temple.²⁰

Erdene Shanzudpa and Da Lama forwarded this request to the Manchu and Mongol ministers responsible for Khuree affairs on the 29th day of the 3rd month in the 32nd Year of the Guangxu Emperor (1906).

The Khuree Ministers submitted the request to the Ministry of Outer Mongolian Affairs, which then petitioned the Guangxu Emperor on the 21st day of the 5th month of the same year.²¹ The Emperor subsequently named the temple

¹⁹ Erdene Shanzudpa was the chief administrator of the Bogd's personal estate (Ikh Shav'), and Treasury House (*Erdene Shanzudpa's Office*) was the office of the Erdene Shanzudpa. Da Lama was the senior administrative monk.

²⁰ MNCA, Fonds XM-85, Inv. 2, File 958, Item 2.

²¹ Qing Ambans were officials stationed in Khuree.

‘Compassion (or Forgiveness) Developing Temple’.²² Donir Lama Jambal was likely sent to Beijing to bring this imperial decree back to Mongolia at the end of the 33rd Year of the Guangxu Emperor (1907).²³ At that time, official regulations required that temples with more than 55 halls request their formal designations directly from the Emperor.

In 1908, construction of the Compassion Developing Temple complex was completed. Total expenditure for construction and holy objects amounted to 69,230 liǎng, 7 qián, and 8 fēn of silver (2,582 kg), mostly covered by disciples of the Jibzundampa Qutuqtu.²⁴ Over 300 craftsmen, led by Master Ombo, constructed the complex. Archival records state that all musical instruments, deity paintings, and consecration items were completed by Mongol artists, while specific statues and offering vessels were ordered from Beijing and Dolon Nuur. Popularly, the site became known as the ‘Choijin Lama Temple’.

Accounts of Luvsankhaidav’s subjects and disciples are recorded in the *Laws and Regulations of the Mongolian State Founded by Decree* (Batsaikhan et al., 1995, p. 6) under Erdene Khamba Qutuqtu’s Otog subjects within the jurisdiction of the 30 great otogs of Jibzundampa Qutuqtu.²⁵ By 1915, disciples of Erdene Khamba Qutuqtu resided in Altanbulag (territory of Darkhan Qingwang Khoshuu, Tusheet Khan Aimag) and Burenkhan (territory of Darkhan Qing and Heshuo Qingwang Khoshuus, Setsen Khan Aimag).²⁶ Furthermore, Luvsankhaidav Lama held agricultural lands in Buyant Am, Davaat and Bayangol of Zuun Mod in the territory of Baatar Wang Khoshuu, Tusheet Khan Aimag by 1921.²⁷ Records also indicate that the Compassion Developing Temple owned 751 head of large livestock and 11 head of small livestock.²⁸

Prior to independence from the Qing dynasty in 1911, Luvsankhaidav was referred to as ‘Khamba Choijin Lama’ or ‘Gujir Khamba’ in archival documents.

²² Chinese: *Cihang Puanshang Si* (慈航普渡寺).

²³ Donir (*don-nyer*) was an official protocol officer. Beijing was at the time the capital of the Qing Empire.

²⁴ MNCA, Fonds XM-210, Inv. 1, File 1, Item 9.

²⁵ Otog was an administrative division of Shav’ subjects. MNCA, Fonds X-180, Inv. 1, File 18.

²⁶ Jibzundampa Qutuqtu was the title conferred on Luvsankhaidav. Altanbulag is located in present-day Selenge / Tuv provinces; Burenkhan is located in present-day Khentii / Sukhbaatar provinces.

²⁷ MNCA, Fonds X-180, Inv. 1, File 18.

²⁸ MNCA, Fonds X-233, Inv. 1, File 11, Item 2.

Following Mongolia's independence, he was consistently recorded as 'Choijin Kutenpa of Capital Khuree'. Naturally, he could not be styled as 'Choijin Kutenpa of Capital Khuree' under Qing rule; he was recognized and confirmed in this title by imperial decree of the Eighth Jibzundampa Qutuqtu.²⁹

Luvsankhaidav Qutuqtu and Russia

Luvsankhaidav Qutuqtu was a prominent figure whose renown extended to the foreign diplomatic community. As noted by I. Ya. Korostovets (2010, p. 223), who served as the Tsarist Russian Representative in Mongolia from August 1912 to May 1913:³⁰

A younger brother of the Qutuqtu served the Government as a divination monk, and hence he sets appropriate dates for launching important State missions, and celebrating holidays and ceremonies.

This confirms his role as an influential minister serving as State Oracle.

The decree bestowing the Nechung Oracle seal by Bogd Khan in 1915 specified its purpose as 'for the sake of forever protecting dharma and State'.³¹ This status effectively designated him as the State Oracle Lama. In the memoirs of the elder Jambal (1959, p. 10): 'Choijin Lama became the main Choijin. The main Choijin means the State Oracle'.

According to the memoirs of Tsarist Russian Lieutenant General G. M. Semyonov (2002, p. 20):³²

As I recall from my younger days, Choijin Geegen (Qutuqtu) was an unforgettable personality among high-ranking figures in the Yellow Hat Tradition of Buddhism. Choijin Qutuqtu had good knowledge of Russia. He had a special talent for predictions, and I was deeply impressed by his high intellectual capacity. As a person who often interacted with him, I witnessed that he could foretell even unthinkable events with exact detail. He predicted the future

²⁹ MNCA, Fonds XA-3, Inv. 1, File 414, Item 26.

³⁰ Ivan Yakovlevich Korostovets (1862–1933) was a Tsarist Russian diplomat.

³¹ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1090, Item 9.

³² Grigory Mikhailovich Semyonov (1890–1946) was the Ataman of the Baikal Cossacks.

great war and how Russia would inevitably participate in it, the fall of Tsarist Russia, civil war, and my involvement in this civil war. After I emigrated, I heard about Choijin Lama's prediction regarding the death of Sukhbaatar, commander of the Mongolian Red Army, at the hands of the Communists from one of my friends in Mongolia. Soon after, it is said that Sukhbaatar wished to support people planning to revolt against communism in Urga, but they were all shot. Choijin Lama also predicted that slaughter in Urga by the Reds would mark the end of communism.

Korostovets also recorded his impressions of the Qutuqtu during a visit (Korostovets, 2010, p. 223):

We went out from Gandan and visited the Qutuqtu's younger brother, who owned a large estate near Khuree. We were welcomed at the door of his residence by a handsome brown Mongolian man in his 30s with an appealing look... A younger brother of the Qutuqtu served the Government as a divination monk, setting dates for state missions and ceremonies. It seemed he was inactive in administrative state affairs and therefore not influential in that arena. We were led to a large yurt with a fully carpeted floor. In typical wealthy Mongol fashion, brown cupboards and red tables stood along the walls, displaying Chinese and European items such as statues, vases, lanterns and a German clock. In the centre stood a finely crafted iron stove with its pipe extending through the roof ring. In his compound, several small Chinese-style temples and stupas had been constructed.

Buriat officials Tserenjav, Ayushjav and Sedbavuu, citizens of Tsarist Russia, submitted a letter to Prime Minister Sain Noyon Khan Namnansuren nominating the Choijin Lama as commander of the Mongol armed forces:³³

...Due to Heaven's empowerment, the Holy Bogd dominates this era; thus, Mongols enjoy great fortunes since gaining independ-

³³ Sain Noyon Khan Tugs-Ochiryn Namnansuren (1878–1919) was the first Prime Minister of Mongolia.

ence, glorifying state and religion alike. Seeking to strengthen our ancient bond and friendship, we suggest appointing Khamba Chojin Lama, younger brother of Bogd Khan, as commander of the armed forces, as he is an internationally recognized, qualified and highly accomplished teacher. We hope this will foster goodwill and justice. Moreover, many countries, such as Russia, appoint the Emperor's younger brother as prince second in power and military commander. Implementing this practice regarding Khamba Chojin Lama would be highly appreciated internationally. Kindly consider this matter.³⁴

On the 16th day of the 2nd Month in the 8th year of Bogd Khan (28 March 1918), Qutuqtu Luvsankhaidav collapsed, and treatments proved ineffective against his sudden illness. He passed away during the Dragon hour.³⁵ His death occurred shortly before the Kuomintang Chinese army invaded Yeke Khuree. Bogd Khan allocated 100 liangs of silver from the State Treasury for dedication prayers; the Ministry of Finance issued this sum in Tsarist Russian currency (200 rubles).³⁶

Mongolian National University Professor J. Urangua (2016) discovered in the Russian Imperial Archive on Foreign Policy (AVPRI, 'Chinese Table' fund) an official letter sent by Lyuba, Russian Consul in Khuree prior to the 1911 Revolution, to the Foreign Ministry:

The Eighth Bogd has sent his brother Chojin Lama to Beijing. The Bogd requested assistance for his brother during a meeting with Korostovets, Russian Ambassador in Beijing. We should assist Bogd's brother because Bogd is a famous and influential personality.

While direct evidence of Luvsankhaidav meeting Korostovets in Beijing remains lacking, he likely travelled to Beijing to gather intelligence on Qing political developments and assess prospects for Mongolian independence. This indicates active

³⁴ MNCA, Fonds XM-170, Inv. 1, File 655, Item 5.

³⁵ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1331, Item 3.

³⁶ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1331, Item 2.

involvement in statecraft. Consequently, he was awarded a yellow horse rein, green carriage wheels, and a Jùnwáng salary following independence.

After Luvsankhaidav passed away, state oracle trance rituals ceased, though monastic activities continued until the late 1930s. During the 1930s anti-religious campaigns, Choijin Lama Temple was closed alongside hundreds of monasteries, though its structural fabric and sacred objects were spared total destruction.

In the 1930s, Soviet architect Vasiliyev evaluated Choijin Lama Temple as an irreplaceable architectural monument and recommended establishing it as a museum.³⁷ Similarly, scholars from the Institute of Sciences submitted a 1937 report urging preservation of the temple's internal and external design as a masterwork of religious architecture.³⁸ Consequently, Prime Minister A. Amar and Deputy Prime Minister Kh. Choibalsan issued a joint decree in 1938 transferring the temple to the Institute of Sciences (now the Mongolian Academy of Sciences) for the purposes of research and exhibition.³⁹ Oral traditions suggest Choibalsan's wife Bortolgoi, a devotee of Choijin Lama, advocated for the preservation order. This established the legal framework for converting the temple into a museum. On 20 October 1941, scholars petitioned the State Baga Khural to protect historic monuments under the 'Protection of Ancient Items Rule', adopted via Resolution No. 79 on 13 November 1941. Under this regulation, the Shield Wall of Choijin Lama Temple received state protection.⁴⁰

Mongolian State Oracle Trance Instructions

To date, two oracle trance instruction documents authored by Choijin Lama Luvsankhaidav have been recovered. One is preserved by Lama N. Amgalan at Gandantegchenling Monastery, written in Tibetan verse and titled 'A Vajradhara Lama's Long Life Prayer as Uttered by the Great Protector During the Oracle Trance' (Figure 1). This short, two-page manuscript contains a long-life prayer dedicated to the Eighth Bogd Jibzundampa Qutuqtu and Queen Dondogdulam, uttered during an oracle trance on the 15th day of the first winter month, 1912. The prayer describes Bogd Jibzundampa Qutuqtu as reborn for the benefit of all beings, particularly in Khalkha (Mongolia). It invokes protection against foreign

³⁷ MNCA, Fonds X-23, Inv. 1, File 230, fols. 1a–5b.

³⁸ MNCA, Fonds X-23, Inv. 1, File 230, fols. 1a–5b.

³⁹ MNCA, Fonds X-23, Inv. 1, File 481, fol. 30; File 522, fols. 1–28.

⁴⁰ MNCA, Fonds X-11, Inv. 1, File 526, fols. 124–144.

and domestic conflicts, pacifies contagious diseases, and praises his enlightened activities. Queen Dondogdulam is depicted as a mother of wisdom perfections and a source of spiritual realizations. The text concludes by wishing the two leaders fulfillment of their holy intentions as tantric partners. Based on evidence from ritual items at the Green Palace, they engaged in Yamantaka tantric practices.⁴¹

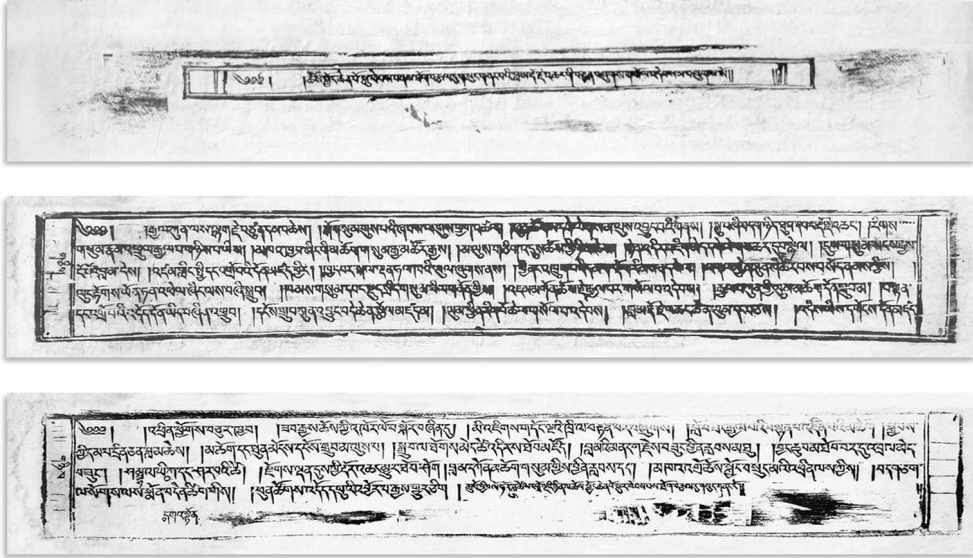


Figure 1. Long Life Prayer manuscript

The second instruction, preserved at Gandantegchenling Monastery, is written in Tibetan and Mongolian on yellow silk under the title ‘In front of the Perfect White Protector, Lord of entire samsara, crown of all dharma protectors’ (Figure \2). It depicts Undur Gegeen Zanabazar flanked by verses to Shakyamuni Buddha, Tsongkhapa, Padmasambhava and Yamantaka, symbolizing the Eighth Bogd as their embodiment. The text records questions posed by high lamas to the protector upon entering Choijin Lama’s body regarding national security, the longevity of Bogd Khan, Queen Dondogdulam, and Puntsag Lama, as well as prayers for rebirth in Shambhala. The ending note specifies: ‘Dharma protector’s instructions when he entered the body on the 15th day of the 12th month in the Year of the Female Blue Rabbit’. While this date was interpreted by N. Nanzaddorj (2015, pp. 14–21) as 15 December 1915, the 12th lunar month of the Blue Rabbit Year in

⁴¹ The Green Palace corresponds to the modern-day Bogd Khaan Palace Museum.

fact corresponds to 20 January 1916. The text instructs: ‘Perform rituals as the Precious teacher instructed; initiate my Cham [ritual dance] and offer the great secret tormas without obstruction!’ Consequently, the Choijin Lama Temple instituted its own Cham in 1916.⁴² According to Jambal (Jambal, 1959, p. 11), this Cham incorporated unique figures (Mamu, Zang and Five Kings) and was performed for three years prior to being banned.

Administration Seals of Precious Wisdom, Clear Devotion Qutuqtu Luvsankhaidav

Luvsankhaidav received the title ‘Gujir Abbot’ upon establishing his initial temple.⁴³ Later, he was granted the title ‘Clear Devotion’ in 1908 on the occasion of his brother’s Geshe examination at Gungaacholing college.⁴⁴ The official seal for Kutenpa (Oracle Lama) of Capital Khuree was conferred on the 24th day of the last summer month, 2nd Year of Bogd Khan (1912), accompanied by a decree recognizing him as a Qutuqtu for all future incarnations.⁴⁵ The Ministry of Internal Affairs directed Khamba Nomun Khan and Erdene Shanzudpa to prepare silver materials for casting the seal. Following independence in 1911, Bogd Khan renewed imperial seals formerly granted under Qing authority.

In 1914, Bogd Khan conferred a Qutuqtu seal for all future incarnations upon Luvsankhaidav (received on the 24th day of the 7th month, 1914). Official protocol placed his ceremonial seating immediately after Manjushri Qutuqtu Tserendorj, Khamba Nomun Khan, Clear Devotion Qutuqtu Puntsag, Vice-Abbot Dorje Lopen, and Nomch Biligtu Qutuqtu Sonomdarjaa.⁴⁶ His administration was assigned 1 shanzudpa, 2 attendants, 4 errand lamas, administrative staff, and 4 doorkeepers.⁴⁷ In 1915, Bogd Khan appointed him head of Choijin Lama Temple, granting a silver seal, ceremonial umbrella, and tiger tail as a Nechung oracle.⁴⁸

⁴² MNCA, Fonds X-179, Inv. 1, File 53, fols. 343a–343b.

⁴³ Kujir (*sku-bcar*) was a personal attendant to a high incarnation.

⁴⁴ MNCA, Fonds XM-85, Inv. 1, File 1169.

⁴⁵ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 813, Item 3.

⁴⁶ Protocol records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1914.

⁴⁷ Protocol records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1914.

⁴⁸ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1090, Item 9.

Luvsankhaidav passed away on 28 March 1918 (16th day of the 2nd month, 8th year of Bogd Khan) during the Dragon hour (07:40–09:40).⁴⁹ His silver administrative seal is preserved at the Mongolian National Museum (transferred in 1927), while his State Oracle seal is held at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia.⁵⁰

Conclusions

Archival documents confirm that Choijin Lama Luvsankhaidav was invited to Yeke Khuree under imperial decree to perform and transmit oracle trance traditions. Following the destruction of his first temple complex by fire in 1903, the second complex was constructed and named ‘Compassion Developing Temple’ by imperial decree of the Guangxu Emperor in 1906. Luvsankhaidav was granted seals as State Oracle (1912), Qutuqtu (1914), and Nechung Oracle (1915).

Upon his death in 1918, the State Treasury funded 100 liangs of silver for funeral rituals. In 1922, a petition by his disciples to bring his reincarnation from Tibet was denied by the People’s Government. Luvsankhaidav practised tantric union meditation with his consort Surenkhorloo (‘Sharp Wisdom’), adhering to Vajrayana precepts rather than lay domestic life.

Choijin Lama Luvsankhaidav was an influential political and ritual figure in late Qing and early Bogd Khan Mongolia. Archival records demonstrate that oracle trance divination was an integral component of state protection, political legitimacy, and religious administration in modern Mongolian history.

⁴⁹ MNCA, Fonds XA-74, Inv. 1, File 1331, Item 3.

⁵⁰ MNCA, Fonds X-23, Inv. 1, File 137, Item 33.



Figure 2. Oracle Trance Instruction Document

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