

THE AGA MONASTERY

(Aginski datsan)

The Aga monastery (Aginski datsan) the largest buddhist monastery of the Transbaikal region, was built in 1811-1816 in the lower reaches of the river Aga. The Aga monastery is known as a publishing centre and for its philosophic schools. The first abbot of the Monastery was Pagbaev Rigdel. In the middle of the last century, about 1850-1860, the abbot of the monastery Galsang Jimba Tuguldurov founded a philosophic school chos-ra or mtshan-ñid, for which a special temple was erected known as tsanyidīn siime or coirīn dugan. In 1880 the Tantric faculty or Jyud-pa was founded, and in 1894 a medical school (S Man-grwa). In the beginning of the XX century a Kāla-cakra college was established.

In the XX century the Aga monastery comprised one large cathedral temple or tshogs-chen and six large temples or du-kha khan. Four of these temples were especially built for the philosophic, Tantric, medical and Kāla-cakra colleges. The others were especially built to house the gigantic brass image of Maitreya (80 cubits in height), and for the temple of the Buddha Amitābha with two models of the Sukhāvati and Tushīta paradises.

About 1860 a Printing Press was established at the monastery for printing xylografically of Buddhist texts in Tibetan and Mongol. This monastery became the centre of publishing activity in Buryatiya. The Printing Press issued books in Tibetan on philosophy, Tantric systems, astrology and medical texts, Tibetan-Mongol dictionaries and a certain number of popular Buddhist texts in Mongol. The catalogue of the Printing Press lists the following works:

1. Treatises on logic by Dignāga,
2. Works on madhyānika philosophy by Candrakīrti,
3. The Abhidharma-kosha by Vasubandhu,
4. Works of Asanga on the vijñānavāda,
5. Legs-bsad gser-phren by Tsong-Kha-pa.
6. Lam-rim chen-mo by Tsong-Kha-pa.
7. The Siddhānta of Jam-dbyan s bzed-pa.
8. Works on philosophy by the ^{same} author.
9. Collection of works by Nag-dbañ bkraśis.
10. Collection of 39 works on philosophy, astrology, and ritual by dkon-mchog bstan-pa'i sgron-me (Tu-kwan gegen).
11. Collection of works of the fifth Dalai Lama.
12. Collection of works by Don-yod mkbas-grub.
13. The rite of Sri Cakrasamvara according to the method of the Mahāsiddha Lu-yi-pa.

This list gives only a brief idea of Tibetan works published by the Printing Press of the monastery.

The monastery's Printing Press published also a number of Buddhist texts in Mongol, such as:

1. The Buddha's answers to Subhūti.
2. Yekhe Onol ("The great understanding"),
3. "The wise and idiot" (mDfāns-blun),
4. "The biography of Tsong-Kha-pa,
5. "Drops of Amrita",
6. "Subhāshita".

The printing press also published original works by Buriyat scholars-monks. This literature was published both in Tibetan and Mongol languages.

The printing press of the monastery published the following dictionaries:

- 1. Mongol-Tibetan dictionary by Rinchen Nomtsov.
- 2. Tibetan-Mongol dictionary by Galsang-Jimba Tuguldurov.

The following members of the monastery are known to have composed original works in Tibetan:

- 1. A work on the Kalacakra system by Dandzan Zharbaev.
- 2. A text-book of the philosophic school of the monastery

Sodnom Jamtsho was a student of the philosophic school of the Aga monastery and received the degree of rab-byams-pa in the Mongol monastery of Badgar; mtshod-bja-don-gyi dge - dun iñi-su'i rnam-bzag.

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The story of twenty lamas followed the path of wisdom. This book was used as a text-book in the prajñāpāramitā class;

A text-book on the madhyānika philosophy;

Work on the notion of Sunyata in the philosophy of madhyānika and yogacāra.

In 1867 abbot Tuguldurov wrote in Tibetan a book on astronomy and founded an astronomical school.

Among the authors and translators who wrote in Mongol, the first place belongs to abbot Subsang Dorje Danjinov. He became known as a translator and editor of popular books in Buriyat. He edited the biographies of well known Buddhist leaders in Mongolia, popular books on ethics, mongol primers, grammars,

collections of jātaka stories the songs of Milaraspa, and was one of the authors of a series of books on ethics published in 1892.

Well known as a translator and editor was Dilgirov, especially known as a translator of philosophic text-books, such as chu⁷i bstan-bcos, sing-gi bstan-bcos, and a commentary of the Lam-rim chen-mo.

The Present abbot of the monastery is Gomboev, Jambal Dorje

Most of the literature published by the printing press of the Aga monastery can be found in the library of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the Buriyat Research Institute of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the Museum in Ulan-Ude, capital of the Buriyat Republic of the USSR.