Chapter 20
Patterns of Monastic and Sangha Development in Khalkha Mongolia

Lkham Purevjav

Editor’s introduction: In this detailed and well-researched presentation, Lkham Purevjav delineates aspects of the social organizational, political, and economic history of Mongolian Buddhist monasteries over the course of several centuries. With an eye for detail and careful consideration of original sources, she is able to trace the growth of the monasteries and the number of monks, monastic organizational structure, the importance and organization of economic support, and, relatedly, their sometimes willing submission to higher outside political authority (including Qing Manchu). In all, Ms. Purevjav is able to greatly enrich our understanding of Mongolian monastic history, including its relationship — parallel in some ways, but different in others — to that in Tibet. Such rich primary research by skilled Mongolian historians such as Ms. Purevjav should form the basis for larger reconsiderations of Mongolian history within the country itself progressively and increasing in future years. In the present volume, for instance, there are striking parallels — and differences — between the forms of religious organization discussed by Ms. Purevjav and those flexible organizational structures of identification discussed in Dr. David Sneath’s presentation concerning the historical formation — and reformulation — of Mongolian social and political organization over time.
Introduction

The Mongol Empire (13th-14th centuries) was tolerant of most of its people’s religions. It is interesting that Mongols initially became familiar with Buddhism through Dhayana (Zen) and Chinese Buddhist practitioners who served for the empire court. During Möngke Khaan’s reign, Tibetan Buddhism became influential in the court. With the weakening of the Mongol Empire, however, Buddhism lost its ascendant position. Mongols converted to Buddhism for the second time by the late 16th century, and in ways that contrasted with the former empire’s relation to Buddhism, which had been built upon a court-based and preceptor-based patron structure. Strong monastic organization, development of sangha (lay congregations), and intense laity education concerning the precepts of Buddhism characterized the second conversion. This conversion was conditioned by the claims of separate political entities, missionary activities, and, later, the features of the Manchu Qing administration system. By the end of 19th century, Mongolia had established one of the largest Buddhist monastic systems, including more than one thousand monasteries with ritual temples and associated lay sangha. In this paper, I outline the foundation and development of monasteries in Khalkha Mongolia from the 16th through the 19th centuries.

The Chinese Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) was founded by Kubilai Khaan as a successor to the Mongol Empire in China. After decades of strife and unstable leadership during the 14th century, the dynasty crumbled due to political disintegration in which groups and associated nobles sought separation of their community (ulus) from state (tör). At the time, contact with Tibetan Buddhist orders and monasteries became the most authoritative way to legitimate power as an independent community. This pattern had been modeled by Kubilai Khaan.
himself, who had been the patron of Sakya lama Drogön Chögyal Phagpa, from whom he received tantric teachings and initiations. This became a classic relationship in which the lama help legitimate the emperor’s power and, reciprocally, the emperor patronized the clergy. The nobles’ competing contacts with Tibetan Buddhist orders and conversion characterized late 16th and 17th century history of Mongols. Consequently, Buddhism spread among all Mongol groups, including Tumed, Khalkha, Tsakhar, and Oirat. As Elverskog has argued “…Tibetan Buddhism and its orders were enabled to legitimate their powers separately for different Mongol groups (ulus) in the situation of political disintegration…The fact was that various leaders and their ulus realized that reasserting their independence on the grounds that the Dayan Khanid state had failed no longer served their interests.”

This early conversion situation continued until 1691 when the Khalkha Mongols came under Manchu rule. The Manchu Qing administration organized Khalkha Mongols into 36 noble appanages or banners (khoshuu). The Banners continued to be expanded until they reached 86 in number by the end of the 19th century. Growth of self-sufficient communities or banners under Qing administration paved the way for another stage for Buddhism in Khalkha Mongolia in which each banner established its own monasteries, marking and making it a separate community. At the same time, with the growth of banner monasteries, Qing court-funded monasteries were also established. They were a few, but competitive and well known among Mongols.

**Early Development: Idol and Ascetic Temples**

The monastery *Erdene zuu*, the first largest Buddhist monastery in the second Mongol conversion, was built at the initiative of Abtai Khan, Khalkha in 1587 and marks the beginning of
Mongolia’s major monastic development. Other monasteries were founded by ruling nobles and incarnate lamas who were identified within Khalkha’s influential families. Tsogtu Taiji, one of the major nobles of Khalkha, built several temples in 1601-17. The first Jebtsundamba, Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar, the head of Khalkha Mongol’s Buddhism (from a major ruling family of Khalkha, Tusheet Khan), built the monasteries of Ribogejejiling, Gandenshedubling (Shankh), and Dubkhang (Töbkhôn). These monasteries were dedicated mainly to meditation and “creation” (büteel). Zanabazar’s nephews, other high lamas of Khalkha, Zaya Bandida, and Lamyin Gegeen, were identified as his first powerful incarnate disciples, and they founded their monasteries in 1650 and 1677. But the Oirat Galdan Boshogt campaign in Khalkha Mongol destroyed most of these early temples and monasteries, and it took more than a half-century for them to be revived again.

Below is a list of monasteries founded in 1587-1686, during the early phases of the second period of Buddhist conversion in Khalkha Mongolia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of early monasteries of the second conversion</th>
<th>Founded Date</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Root Order and Ritual school (Deg) from Tibet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Erdene Zuu monastery</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>Tusheet Khan Abtai</td>
<td>Sakya</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Narang monastery</td>
<td>1607</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Zayayin Khüree monastery</td>
<td>1616</td>
<td>Zaya Bandida</td>
<td>Gelukpa, Sera dratsang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Setgeshgu Chandmani 6 temples</td>
<td>1601-1617</td>
<td>Tsogtu Taiji</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gandendondubling monastery</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gandenshedubling monastery (Baruun khüree or Shankhyin khiid)</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>1st Jibzundamba -Zanabazar</td>
<td>Gelukpa, Braibung dratsang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Monastery</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Founder</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Gonganden dedling monastery</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Lamyin Geegen (Lamyin Gegeenii Khüree)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ribogejeiling monastery</td>
<td>1654</td>
<td>1st Jibzundamba (Saridagiin khiid)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Debsenbulag monastery</td>
<td>1659</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Gündugarboling monastery</td>
<td>1660</td>
<td>Gelukpa, Tashilhumpo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Gendunling</td>
<td>1686</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Galdan’s campaign and Öndör Gegeen’s absence in Khalkha resulted in a period of stasis during the second conversion till the mid of 18th century. The surviving temples and monasteries can be characterized mainly as statue and ascetic temples which were objects of veneration and/or pilgrimage but had no regular services, monastic training, or schooling. Gandentegchinlen, the leading Geluk monastery of Khalkha Mongol founded by Öndör Gegeen, had to be moved 23 times due to warfare and pasture management. The first monastery in the second conversion, Erdene Zuu evolved further as a central monastery for housing statues and pilgrimage center for Khalkha Mongols. The 108 stupa forming the wall of Erdene zuu were built by different banners, and represented and symbolized unity of all Khalkha Mongolia. It is interesting that while Erdene Zuu could have been developed as a Buddhist center of Khalkha Mongolia, its root order and primary dedication kept it mainly as a center for statues. The monasteries established by the first Jebtsundamba, Zanabazar (1635-1723) kept and continued this early tradition while becoming the foundation for further monastic development in Khalkha Mongolia.
Banner Community Monasteries

Banner community monasteries (*khoshuunii sum khiid*) are the major part of the Khalkha Mongol monastic system. The Chinggisid nobles turned into Banner governors, and through founding monasteries they legitimated their power as well. This was exemplified by the collaboration of Tumed Altan Khan and the 3rd Dalai Lama, Sodnomjamts, and by the later conversion activities of three khans of Khalkha Mongolia during the 16th century. As Ürgükh Tsesii records show, each Banner governor established a new temple, datsang (a monastic college) or chanting service (*jasaa khural*) when they came to power. By the end of the 19th century, each Banner had between seven and fifteen monasteries. They were relatively small, with 50-100 monks, and no regular (*togtmol*) year-round ritual activities. The majority of monks in Banner monasteries had a largely laity-like lifestyle (for instance, they were not necessarily celibate, and could have wives and children). They gathered for important ritual events in certain periods of the year at their associated monastery.

Monastic resources were managed within specific funds or endowments (*jisa*) that were set up to support each specific prayer service (*khural*) and ritual. This corporate endowment system was organized to preserve those prayer services and rituals, as well as to create new services and rituals by establishing new funds and raising additional donations. These funds consisted of two parts, a *jisa* and a *sang*, in which a portion of all funds were accumulated in a central account. When separate jisa funds faced difficulties, the *sang* became the source of support to preserve prayer services. But most of the Banner monasteries had no central *sang* and had limited support due to their lack of on-going functions. Therefore, it was often the case that some prayer services and rituals were not held, at least according to the Urgukh Tses records. If
additional funding or a new *jisa* was established for a specific prayer service or ritual, it could be restored.

During the Bogda monarchy, some Banner governors expressed an interest to join the Bogda Ikh Shabi. While giving up independent existence, in the process they were spared the fiscal burdens of maintaining their monasteries. Compared to the fragile economic positions of Banner governors, the Qing funded monasteries were solid, settled institutions with strong economic foundations. Economic records show that the Banner governors were the most active loan clients of monastic funds.

While the first Buddhist monasteries were established in the 16th century, after implementation of the Qing administration in Khalkha Mongolia, several monasteries were built with the sponsorship of the Qing court. Pozdneev called them Qing Emperor monasteries. The Qing court brought enormous funding to these monasteries, though they had not played an important role in establishing Mongolian Buddhism. Since the Qing court provided the main funding, there was no need to develop a complex *jisa* system. Thus, in the second half of the 19th century their functions ceased without the customary imperial support.

**Monasteries of “Great Disciples” (Ikh Shabi)**

The third group of monasteries relates to *Ikh Shabi* (Great Disciple)iii of Jebtsundamba, the head religious figure of Khalkha Mongolian Buddhism. A special administrative office, *Erdene Shanzodba*, administered these *Ikh Shabi* monasteries, which were about twenty in number. The Jebtsundambda’s powerful position and the associated financial resources of *Ikh Shabi* compared favorably with the more tenuous condition of banner monasteries.

*Ikh Shabi*’s Gandentegchinling monastery in Ikh Khuree played an important role in Khalkha Mongol Buddhism due
to its function as the main root of the country’s high monastic education. In its five *datsangs* monks were trained in different fields of Buddhist knowledge. Its *tsanid* datsangs Tashichoinpel, Gungachoyling and Idgachoynzenling used three different curriculums exemplified by Gomang, Drepung, and Sera monasteries of Tibet. Ikh Khuree’s Gandentegchinling developed as another strong example of the Geluk monasticism in Inner Asia. Ikh Khuree monasteries had a total of over 10,000 monks by the beginning of the 20th century and they trained the most learned monks of Khalkha Mongolia.

Monks came from the banner monasteries to attend the *datsangs* of Gandentegchenling monastery. After completing their study, some of them continued their learning and resided at the administrative unit *aimag*. The remaining majority of monks returned to their original Banner monasteries. Due to Ikh Khuree *datsangs’* strong network with local banners, advanced scholarship, extended monasticism and grand rituals, Gandentegchenling grew as the central monastery of Khalkha Mongolian Buddhism. There was even a tradition that after studying in Sera, Drepung and Ganden in Lhasa, the three great seats of Gelupk learning in Tibet, Mongolian monks stayed for some time in Ikh Khuree attending one of the *datsangs* of Gandentegchinling and then went back to their Banner monasteries. This exemplifies how Ikh Khuree grew as the center and sole legitimate institution of Khalkha Mongolian Buddhism.

**Extended Monasticism and Regional Monasteries**

The fourth group of Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia is comprised by those that were established in 1820-1880. As mentioned earlier, they grew rapidly in the second half of the 19th century. I identify them as “*regional monasteries*”. Their functions were not limited within Banner borders and most
of them were located near main and central roads, post relay stations between Uliastai and Ikh Khuree, and trading posts along the Chinese border where they functioned as regional centers. One of them, Khand Ching Wang khüree, had 800 monks by 1890 and 1427 in 1931. In addition to having a complex jisa organization, these monasteries had tight networks with Banner monasteries, having shared rituals and khurals that enabled their rapid rise. For example, they sent groups of young monks to perform elaborate rituals and at the same time holding khailan khural – summer retreats for young monks.

Regional monasteries thus provided funding cooperation with Banner monasteries, while the Banner monasteries benefited from having important rituals. For example Yaruuguin khüree was nicknamed badarchinguudiin khüree, as it allowed wandering monks to stay there, which was not usual in most monasteries. Incarnate lamas played important roles in these regional monasteries. Earlier reincarnates such as Lamyin Gegeen’s and Zaya Bandita’s monasteries grew as large centers. However, later reincarnates as Narobanchin’s and Naran’s monasteries were not large centers, as the reincarnates themselves were mobile, traveling to different Banner governor’s residents and Banner monasteries. These mobile reincarnates were the bridges for inter-Banner interactions. The emergence of large regional monasteries, monasticism in Ganden, expansion of the Bogda Ikhi Shabi monasteries, and weakened Qing administration control in the late 19th century all resulted in a noticeable increase in the number of Buddhist monks in Mongolia.

The records of Urgukh Tses show us that the biggest monasteries, which had in residence 700-1500 monks, were mostly founded in 1810-1880. For example:
Monastery | Founded | Number of Monks
--- | --- | ---
Khand Chin Wangyin khüree | 1867 | 1427
Yaruugiin khüree | 1867 | 824
Galuutyin khüree | 1855 | 736
Dejeelen khüree | 1814 | 880
Ulzyit khüree | 1808 | 1010

Records show that large monasteries founded in the second half of the 9th century grew rapidly within 60 years. Many great scholars who trained in Ilkh Khuree began establishing Buddhist schools even in local regions enabling attendance of monks from banner monasteries. In turn these regional monasteries helped to develop further the Ilkh Khuree’s training. Highly qualified monks from these regional monasteries were quite competitive vis-à-vis each other in the central monastic institutions.

**Administrative and Economic Organization of Monasteries**

There were two different administrative structures found in the monasteries in the 18th and 19th centuries.

1. The Jebtsundamba Incarnate’s *Shabi* (group of disciples or subjects) was organized according to the *otoq* system. An *Otoq* was a pre-Qing, clan/territorial administrative unit that was kept only by the Jebzundamba’s *Ih Shabi* (great disciples) during Qing period. The nature of an *otoq* administration was that it included people of the same kinship within each administrative unit.

2. Second organizational approach was the datsang structure in which people of different kinship, clans and territories were all included. The Lamyin Gegeen monastery used this *datsang* system, however, it had a specific territory and the *shabi* and
lay people were mostly from the same or similar areas, making it similar to the otoq.

According to Urgukh Tses’ records

In Qianlong’s 43rd year (1778) eight temples of were established, Tsogchin, Labrang, Nuvlin, Sharlin, Gushig, Divaajin, Mamba, and Choir and divine services for monks and laypeople began in Erdene Bandida Khutagt monastery.

This describes an administrative organization based on datsang, not on the Jebtsundamba’s Great Discipline organization of otoq. Mongolian scholars have also confirmed this, as “lay, monks and sangha were organized by datsang.” Datsang served not only as schools but as main administrative units as well. Datsangs were divided into smaller units, which were named with letters of the Tibetan alphabet like Sha, Shi, Sho, Ge (he), Bu, Gu (Hu), O, Khor, So, Ni, Ul, Ju, Kha, Ga, Da, Do, and Dui; a total of sixteen. These units did not appear in the monasteries of the Jebtsundamba, and economic records show that monks and lay people were enumerated according to these units.

The monks of Gandentegchilen monastery had a different system that initially divided monks into thirty aimag affiliations. The aimag were the main administrative units that were also associated with the monks’ home Banners. Each aimag thus received monks from certain Banners, which had fixed relationships of alms giving and “sacred realm” (takhilyin oron). James Miller argues, “The localization of groups of monks within a monastery was based on their relationship with the lay community.”

As it was mentioned above, the jisa was an economic organization of Buddhist monasteries designed to provide
expenditures for khural (chanting services), and regular rituals. Jisa (spyi-sa) is a Tibetan term meaning “community property, “communal good”, or more literally “place of property.” ix

In practice, jisa describes three modes of using money or material goods (cloth, food, land, buildings, livestock) that were given to purchase religious service for the donor. A jisa may refer to:

1. A storehouse, the place where donated goods or capital funds are stored
2. Goods or funds so donated that are liquidated to carry out the purpose of donor
3. A fund from the interest is used to pay for a specific recurring monastic function

The first record on a jisa in Khalkha Mongolian documents comes in 1656, describing how the Jebtsundamba’s shabi (subject and disciple relationship) and monastery were established. x At that time, a jisa was not yet a form of organization. It referred to the livestock, goods, and food that were gathered and distributed to the participants. The herd, the primary form of monastic property, was placed in the hand of the people who offered the animals. When monasteries expanded, each datsang, temple and khural got its own jisa. Therefore, the names of jisas refer to their initial designations and purposes, like Manla, Khailan, Molom, Tsanit, Duinkhor, and Jud.xi

Let us take for example Lamyin Gegeen monastery. The first economic record of Lamyin Gegeen monastery concerns 1787xii and is an account of the Labrang Datsang livestock herd. However, there was no mention of a jisa. But jisa did appear in the numeric records of herds of the Labrang datsangxiii and it was a Tsogchin jisa, À (Tibetan letter) jisa.
Jisas were differentiated by their duties. A Tsogchin jisa was for support of divine services and main rituals. A sangai jisa was for maintaining agriculture and an alivaa khurlyin jisa (jisa of divine service-khural) was responsible for occasional divine services. The small monasteries had 1-2 jisas and the biggest monasteries had 10-20 and sometimes more than that 50-100. According to the Urgukh Tsesxiv Lamyin Gegeen monastery had 10 jisas (however there is another suggestion that it had approximately 20xv jisas) and 20 temples.

The economy of Mongolian nomadic society relied on livestock, which is dependent on climate. There is risk involved and the benefits are seasonal. But a monastery was a different institution that required consistent functions of monastic services; they needed an accumulation of wealth. Mongolian culture and lifestyle did little to counter these risks, so monasteries adapted new strategies to manage this problem. The accumulation of livestock and treasure is called sang.

Some researchers viewed sang as the private wealth of the reincarnatexvi lamas. But sang was divided into two parts, internal and external. The monasteries of the Jebtsundamba and Narobanchin reincarnates had private wealth, which was considered the internal sang.xvii Another view is that the sang was the accumulated wealth of high ranking monks in the monastery. But sang was established to accumulate livestock and wealth, and it included all three types of wealth, the private wealth of incarnate lamas, the herds of high ranking monks and the reserve herd of the monastery. Today, in the modern Mongolian vocabulary, sang has two meanings: any kind of fund, and state property. Both also relate to monastic economic activities.

James Miller argued that jisa and sang are semi-independent economic organizations and they function like corporationsxviii. Jisas are not dependent on each other and the jisa nyarav (Tib. nyerba - meaning manager) runs each
independently. It means that the increase or decrease of *jisa* wealth depends upon the *nyarab*'s management skill. A Jisa *nyarab* makes decisions on trading and arranging caravans—as well what kind of individuals and families can herd *jisa* livestock. The semi-independency of a *nyarab* can be seen as having unlimited right to use the *jisa* herd in order to preserve and increase it and to avoid risks. The term *Jisa nyarab* carries special meaning in the modern Mongolian language— that of a person who has wealth but is very careful and not willing to use it. Also, a term that is closely related *nyarab* is “hetsuu hun,” clever one.

All *jisas* contributed to *sang* accumulation and when *jisas* were harmed by harsh winters and droughts, attempts were made to maintain the monastery *sang* by chanting services, rituals, and other monastic activities. Economically, *jisa* and *sang* units which substituted for each other. When a *jisa* went bankrupt and was unable to provide regular chanting and rituals, *sangs* contributed these, which the *jisa* later repaid after it had recovered.

Natsagdorj Sh argued that the Bogd Jebtsundamba’s internal *sang* was constituted of alms and offering and the external *sang* was dedicated to making extra profits through trading, renting, and loans. As the *sang* is the accumulated institutional wealth of the monastery, it is possible to understand why internal *sangs* were named *Badrakh* (Flourishing) in both the Jebzundamba and Lamyin Gegeen monasteries.

A *jisa* did not possess households and individuals; it contracted or made agreements for herders with lay people, *shabi*, sometimes even those from neighboring Banners. Among the *jisas* of monasteries, the Tsogchin jisa played an important role. According to the economic records of Lamyin Gegeen monastery, the main duty of the *Tsogchin jisa* was the arrangement of rituals and gathering of contributions when other *jisas* were not able to conduct them.
Tsogchin Gonkh, Danrag ritual, Namsrai yamun’s balin and offering, Tseder zed, Manz of Manla khural, Labrang festival (khurim), Deity’s candle offering, Tsesem of four directions, Tanjid, offering and balin of Oidov, Choinpormolom jisaa, Ravnai of Ikh Zuu, manz of doorombo damjaa.

These were main khurals and they all had their own jisas, even though the Tsogchin jisa could demand certain contributions for them.

In that day when Tanjid was held the sang joined it and contributed 25 tea blocks, two blocks of wood, two pots of milk, some butter, and one pot of salt. Also, that night we contributed for Ninsa zed one medium size pot of flour, some butter, and one light; for offering horse, one inner dash khadag, four colored sambai zuuvei.xxi

This illustrates how the Tsogchin jisa cooperated with the sang in the some ritual performances and occasional events. Another record of the Tsogchin jisa is as follows:

This jisa is weakened (chinee muhus bolson) thus imposition of one lang (liang), one tseng of goods: one inner-dash (khadag) will be imposed on other datsangs.

This indicates that if any of the jisas of a monastery weakened they could transfer and divide their duties among other jisas. Sangs and Tsogchin jisas coordinated this management. Based on activities of Inner Mongolian monasteries in 1940s, Miller argued that:

Generally, jisas function independently; however, central administration Tsogchin cares about them . . . Tsogchin
jisa is a main organizing and administration center and all jisas were subjected to it.”xxii

Some smaller monasteries didn’t have a Tsogchin jisa, so instead the sang of one of the biggest jisas took on the duty of coordination and management in the monastery.

Challenge of Monasticism and Increase of Monks

Inevitably, establishment of extensive monasteries and the growth of hundreds of banner and regional monasteries increased the number of monks. However, Buddhist scholars of the 18th-19th centuries criticized this growth, as this growth was associated with reduced commitment to monastic celibacy, which they considered a challenge to the development of Geluk monasticism in Khalkha Mongolia.

In Tibet, Tsongkhapa established Ganden monastery in 1409, and Drepung and Sera followed within a decade to become the three main schools in the Geluk tradition. These monasteries grew rapidly and there were more than 13,000 monks at the beginning of the 20th century. Scholars have often suggested that such growth is the root of the success of the Geluk tradition.

In Mongolian, the three main schools in the Gelukpa tradition were collectively called Senbraigesum.

In this situation, monastic discipline and rule became particularly important. According to the monastic educational curriculum of the Gelukpa tradition, Vinaya, or the subject of the morality of monks, was studied only at the end of monastic curriculum. George Dreyfus clarified this situation “Monks notice this paradox. A caustic Mongolian Geshe is supposed have said, “When there are vows, there is no [knowledge of the] Vinaya. When there is [knowledge of the] Vinaya, there is no vow. …When monks begin their careers, they are enthusiastic
and pure, but they do not know monastic discipline. Instead of studying it immediately, they wait for ten or fifteen years, when they finally turn to Vinaya, they understand what they should have done - but it is too late. By then they have become blasé and have lost their enthusiasm for monastic life.”

This approach reflects the belief that morality cannot be understood theoretically – since moral rules can never be from observation or deduced philosophically. In Buddhist epistemology, morality is often described as “thoroughly hidden,” a domain of reality that is inaccessible to direct experience or to reason. Therefore the discipline of monks is mainly regulated by rule of monasteries, not Vinaya.

There is an interesting story about an earlier response of Gandentegchinling monastery to this issue.

The Fifth Rabjaa Khutagtu was faithful to the Fifth Bogd, who was assumed to be an incarnation of the Demchig deity. The Rabjaa incarnation lineage was banned due accusations against the Fourth Rabjaa. A head lama of Ganden monastery, Agwaankhaidub did not want him to visit, and so Rabjaa was not given permission to come. However, the Fifth Rabjaa still came to Ikh Khüree and prostrated to the Fifth Bogd. In that time there was female demon who weakened the discipline and spirituality of the monks of Ikh Khüree. Agwaankhaidub decided to use Ravjaa to suppress that demon and made a sacrificial ritual cake. When the Fifth Rabjaa stepped on the other side of Tuul River, Agwaankhaidub threw the torma and recited praise to a main protector of Geluk, Damdinchoijoo. Damdinchoijoo was not happy with the head lama’s sacrificial ritual and intended to sacrifice Rabjaa to save the discipline of the monks of Ganden. Rabjaa fainted and fell down. When he awoke there was the demon laughing at him. Rabjaa suppressed the
demon through his tantric power and discipline of Ganden monastery improved greatly.

According to Buddhist monastic education, the study of Vinaya at the end of the curriculum reveals that discipline and morality rely primarily on the personal claims, choices, and decisions of the monks themselves. Whether to get married or to follow one’s vows is a monk’s decision.

As Pozdnyev observed, banner monasteries had just a few monks and they usually had no permanent residence at monasteries. For the important rituals, they gathered and performed the ritual and then went back to nomadic life, living like lay people. On the other hand, banner and regional monasteries were cultural, economic, and social centers which networked within banner and across banners, including in terms of herding livestock and holding and attending important community rituals and events. Through involvement in monasteries, families and individuals benefitted from social networks and expanded connections in addition to their direct ritual benefit or spiritual participation.

Endnotes

ii Urgukh Tses is records of banner monasteries which were collected in 1918. This was the result of the composition of a ten-volume history of Mongolia completed during the Bogda Monarchy (1911 – 1921).
iii Ikh Shabi means Great Disciple and it denotes subjects of Jibzundamba Khutagtu.
iv Tib. Dratsang-monastic school.
v Tib. Mtshan-nyid, mo. tsanid–1. philosophical studies, 2. the faculty for pursuing these studies.
x “Erdene Zuu and Biography of Ündur Gegeen”, Central Library of Mongolia, Fund of manuscripts.
xii MNCA, Í-89, D-1, HN-6: Complete Expenditure Records of Tsanid Datsang of Shuteen Aimag, Purevjav S. (1961): Khubisgalyn Umnuh Ih Hüree. UB.
xii MNCA, Í-76, D-1, HN-1, p 57.
xiii MNCA, M-76, D-1, HN-8, p 5.
xiv Central Library of Mongolia, Urgukh Tses 7695.
xvii Dilav Khutagt Jamsranjav, “Narvanchin Monastery in Outer Mongolia” in Ariun Setgel Avarlyin Undes (Compassion Is The Root of Taking Refuge) (2000), UB.
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