

Mongolian Buddhists Protecting Nature

A Handbook on Faiths, Environment and Development

by

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This publication was funded by NEMO (Netherlands Mongolia Trust Fund on Environmental Reform-II) at the World Bank, and was created by ARC (Alliance of Religion and Conservation) in partnership with Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, MNET, (Mongolian Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism), and TTF (The Tributary Fund). It was produced and translated into Mongolian by Gandan Tegchenling Monastery (the Centre of Mongolian Buddhism), supported by MNET, Mongolia.

Published in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

First printing January 2009
This edition is also published in Mongolian

DDC
294.337
V-59

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The cover illustration is an original work, commissioned for this handbook, by Mr Dulguun, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

ISBN: 978-99929-962-1-8

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PREFACE: Buddhists and the Environment

"We need to live as the Buddha taught us to live, in peace and harmony with nature, but this must start with ourselves. If we are going to save this planet we need to seek a new ecological order, to look at the life we lead and then work together for the benefit of all; unless we work together no solution can be found. By moving away from self-centeredness, sharing wealth more, being more responsible for ourselves, and agreeing to live more simply, we can help decrease much of the suffering in the world," from the Buddhist Statement on Ecology 1996¹.

"I was part of the generation that made the choice – the horrendous strategic blunder – of situating ourselves outside the institutions of faith," Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club – America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organisation, with 1.3 million members

Since 1990, Mongolia has seen a massive increase in the number of groups working in the environmental sector. There are groups helping to reduce pollution, address deforestation, bring in eco-tourism, save species and achieve many other things. However, surprisingly few of them have established direct relationships with one of the most historical, sizeable, and influential sectors of Mongolian society: the Buddhist sangha. This handbook is an attempt to address this.

It is the first comprehensive guide to approaching and working with Buddhist communities in Mongolia, and it explains why this is an area of action and outreach which could, and should, be explored by environmental groups from both within and outside Mongolia.

It is in four sections. The first is full of stories and examples, and an exploration of just why the Buddhist monasteries and organisations have such potential to achieve so much within the environmental movement – through their own beliefs, teachings and structures – and an outline of the potential of these communities for future environmental work. It also provides a practical and useful guide to how to make contact with the sangha in Mongolia, and what the correct etiquette is during meetings and temple visits.

The second part includes a number of case studies from around Mongolia, of Buddhist monasteries that have already made sizeable steps to increase their environmental activism, and improve the natural environment around their communities.

The third part is much more list-based. It also includes details of some of the major monasteries, as well as the major secular environmental organisations operating in Mongolia, with contact details, a glossary, and a more detailed outline of Buddhism in Mongolia for those who are interested.

¹ Palmer and Finlay, *Faith in Conservation*, World Bank 2002 pp77-82.

The book ends with the outline of the Eight Year Plan, designed to enable Buddhists and those who work with them to have an overall vision of a future in which environmental care is incorporated into the traditional ways of doing things in Mongolian Buddhism. This is linked to the worldwide UN/ARC programme on creating plans for generational change.

This book is intended primarily for readers from secular environment groups, as well as from Buddhist monasteries and organisations, and appropriate governmental and non-governmental organisations from within and outside the country. It is designed to inspire all readers to establish deeper partnerships with each other, so as to ensure the protection of Mongolia's natural environment now, and in the future. It has been created by a team from the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) in partnership with the World Bank, Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists (Gandan Monastery), and with help from other key members of the Buddhist sangha. It was financed through the Netherlands-Mongolia Trust Fund for Environmental Reform.

SECTION ONE

Mongolia is a country with a fragile environment preserved through long-standing environmental traditions. These are now being rediscovered and re-emphasised in the face of the challenges of modern life.

The Baganuur coal mine, 140 km west of Ulaanbaatar, is a filthy place. It extracts some 2.5 million tons of coal every year, and in its place leaves a residue of pollution, lung problems and an unhealthy landscape. In 2005 the monks of the nearby Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery decided to take action, and with the help of the World Bank's NEMO fund and a team of Japanese specialists, undertook a major project to document the environmental and health impacts of the mine. As a result, the miners and their families have been taught ways of reducing some of the health impacts; the mine managers are bowing to public pressure and considering detoxification mechanisms; local schools have added Buddhist understandings on conservation to their core curriculum.

Meanwhile in Chinggis Khaan's former capital of Karakorum (also known as Kharkhorin) there are some extraordinary eco-justice programmes coming to fruition at the Erdene Zuu Monastery, in partnership with ARC, the British Embassy and the Mongolian Government. This includes a project working with children from poor families who had been cutting down trees in protected woodlands to sell to local restaurants for fuel. To try and curb this, the monks decided to run life skills classes for them and their families, and the results exceeded everyone's expectations. In 2005, fifty child woodcutters attended a 40-hour Life Skills course, learning traditional conservation and religious values alongside skills such as building self-esteem, decision-making and creative thinking. It was so popular that in 2006 the monastery not only hosted a second course for a further fifty children, but they devised another one for the parents, who had made requests to experience this inspirational training for themselves. The problem partly remains – it stems from poverty – but many of the children returned to school, inspired by their experiences and more aware of the preciousness of Mongolia's forests. This has helped protect the forests, and the monks' alertness to the issues has resulted in some of the restaurants introducing alternative fuel sources.

And in Ulaanbaatar itself, a group of Mongolian friends set up a Buddhist community initiative in 2004, to promote environmental activism in the community. The Traditional Conservation Centre "carries out small activities which make lasting changes in the minds of people" says the Centre's co-founder Ms. Elbegzaya B. Since it was set up, it has organized clean-up campaigns with monks working alongside students from the University of Agriculture; has set up a tree nursery at Gandan Monastery; has developed an environmental website for the sangha community; and has helped monks train in public relations and communications skills, while emphasizing the importance of looking after nature. During the clean-up campaign in particular, local people were surprised, and moved to see monks joining in. It demonstrated to the public how important it is to take care of one's surroundings and that even monks can get their hands dirty.

These are just three very different examples of how faith communities in Mongolia are already working on environmental programmes that are creative, far-reaching, replicable, and real. Through the course of this handbook we will give many more examples. We will also provide ideas about how more monasteries and faith groups might be stimulated to work on their own plans and solutions - and give a background to the history of faiths in Mongolia, and to what they believe about the environment.

In Section One, the first chapter gives a background to Buddhism in Mongolia – its statistics, impact, history and general beliefs - while in Chapter Two we give an introduction to the Buddhist beliefs about the environment in particular, including oboo worship and the importance of sacred land and species. Chapter Three outlines recent environmental work by Buddhists in Mongolia, while Chapter Four gives ideas and possibilities for Buddhists expanding this work in the future. The final chapter in this section is a guide to arranging meetings with Buddhist monks and nuns – whom to talk to about environmental initiatives, and how to behave appropriately.

In Section Two there are several important case studies, with more specific details about the actions of various monasteries, NGOs, governmental and other institutions and departments, while Section Three has full contact details.

The Mongolian Buddhist guidebook to creating an Eight Year Plan for Generational Change is in Section Four, together with a glossary.

CHAPTER ONE: BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA



Buddhism was the major religion in Mongolia from the 13th century until the early twentieth. Indeed, some archaeological evidence suggests the presence of Buddhist life in Mongolia in the eleventh century, at least two centuries before the rise of Chinggis Khaan.

However for nearly 70 years, from the arrival of Soviet communist rule in the 1920s until the arrival of democracy in 1990, the official “religion” in Mongolia was atheism, and since the late 1930s Buddhist practice was banned, its temples and practitioners destroyed – many of them in brutal purges which meant that the most senior monks were executed, their deputies imprisoned, and many thousands of younger monks sent back into the community.

It has only been since the 1992 Constitution’s approval of people’s rights to freedom of religious practice that temples, monasteries and monks have again become visible in the everyday life of Mongolians. Buddhism is once again the predominant religion in Mongolia with an estimated 1.5 million Buddhists out of a population of nearly 3 million – around 50 percent. Most of the others – some 40 percent – are atheist, while the remaining 10 percent is made up of Muslims (4 percent), Christians, followers of shamanism, and others.

The prolific reconstruction of Buddhist religious life has been followed by the construction of religious buildings belonging to other faiths – including Christian churches in urban areas like Ulaanbaatar in particular and mosques in western Mongolia where many Muslim Kazaks have made their home.

By 2005, according to the Mongolian Statistical Yearbook, there were more than 157 Buddhist temples and monasteries in the country, with 70 churches, seven mosques and six further places of worship belonging to other religions. That same year it was calculated there were some 2,349 Buddhist monks and nuns, 223 Christian priests and clergy, 349 Moslem imams, and six other faith clergy. Most of the Christian churches were located in Ulaanbaatar, while all but one mosque and imam could be found in the western region of the country. In addition there were more than 5,000 university-age students and some 2,400 adult students studying religion, although only around half of these chose to specialize in Buddhism.

While more than half of Mongolia’s monks reside in Ulaanbaatar, only 27 of the country’s monasteries are in the capital, with the other 130 distributed around every “aimag”, or geographical region. There are also, for the first time in Mongolia’s history, newly established communities of nuns, mostly based in Ulaanbaatar.

Shamanism and Interfaith in Mongolia

The native traditions of Mongolia are still active, with some four percent of Mongolians counting themselves formally as shamanist. The traditional beliefs incorporate an animistic worldview with the worship of the Eternal Heaven. Shamans, or *boo*, are initiated to serve the community as healers and intermediaries between the material and spiritual worlds. While these indigenous traditions have come to share many features with both Buddhism and Islam, in return they have also influenced the local practice of these religions considerably.

There has long been an interfaith tradition in Mongolia. Although Chinggis Khaan (Genghis Khan c.1162 to 1227) was an active worshipper of the Eternal Heaven, he is said to have had the first multi-religious court in the country. Here, in the early 13th century interfaith meetings were held to discuss religious and secular dilemmas. Advice was given by Buddhist lamas, Daoists from China, Catholic Christian priests, Muslim imams, Church of the East priests from China and Confucian scholars, also from China. There are some 100,000 (mostly Sunni) Muslims in Mongolia, mostly in the west of the country, and an estimated 120,000 Christians. According to US sources, Christians constitute some 30,000 of Ulaanbaatar's registered population of one million.

What do Mongolian Buddhists believe?

Mongolian Buddhism is a unique blend of various local traditions that were incorporated during its long history. The Buddhist tradition is traced back to the sixth century BC, when the Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha achieved a state of sublime wisdom and compassion, described as Enlightenment, and began to teach. He had discovered the cause of suffering, and wanted to tell people the way by which they could be released from its hold. Over the next millennium the religion evolved and changed as it encountered various countries and cultures: missionaries brought it east from India to Tibet, China, Korea and Japan, as well as north to Central Asia, and south to what is now Sri Lanka, and to the countries of South East Asia. On the way, numerous movements and schisms formed; foremost among them the Theravada and Mahayana traditions, of which the latter is relevant to Mongolia. A fundamental difference in conceptualisation between the two lies in the belief about how we can achieve release from suffering, and enter the blissful state of Nirvana. In the Theravada tradition, as practised mostly in Southeast Asia, it is believed that the reason to attain Nirvana or the Perfect Enlightenment is for the liberation of self; in Mahayana Buddhism it is for the sake of all the sentient beings.

Some of the areas in which Mahayana Buddhism is practiced today are India, China, Tibet, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan and Mongolia. Present-day Mongolian Mahayana Buddhism draws strongly from Tibetan practice, while retaining many traces of indigenous pre-Buddhist traditions.

The Noble Eightfold Path

One of the central teachings in Mongolian Buddhism is that all beings are believed to have the potential to gain enlightenment (or “Buddha nature”), and that therefore all forms of life should be respected. Other central tenets are of compassion – an altruistic desire for other beings to be free of suffering – and of the recognition that suffering is the result of negative action in the past. The way to stop suffering in Buddhism is through following what is called the “Noble Eightfold Path”. This involves cultivating wisdom (through practising right understanding and right motivation), ethical conduct (through right speech, right action and right livelihood) and mental discipline (through right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.)

It is this eight-fold path that monks, nuns and other members of the wider Buddhist community are attempting to follow when they take steps to help protect the environment, support justice, and promote education and good development initiatives.

The Bodhisattvas

The main exemplars of compassion are called Bodhisattvas. These are beings that have reached a state of enlightenment but decide to stay behind, and postpone entering nirvana in order to be an inspiration to others and use their merit to release all that genuinely pray to them for salvation. The main Bodhisattva in Mongolia is Avalokitesvara (also called Guan Yin and Chenrezig) and the teaching about Bodhisattvas and their compassion is core to all Mongolian Buddhist environmental initiatives.

A particularly Mongolian form of Buddhism

From the beginning of Buddhism’s acceptance in Mongolia, practices and beliefs were adapted to the Mongolian context. For example the monks’ robes were made particularly thick and warm to compensate for the extreme winter cold, while chanting and ceremonial protocol differed markedly from those found in Tibet.

Something that many visitors notice very quickly is the use of blue khadag ceremonial scarves, as opposed to the yellow and white scarves used in Tibet. This refers back to the ancient shamanic worship of the Eternal Heaven, which was traditionally honoured by making offerings of blue strings, and is very particular to Mongolian Buddhism.

Similarly, the animistic practices surrounding sacred natural places and their spirits were not discarded, but reinterpreted. Sacred sites were recognized as inhabited by Buddhist nagas, or nature spirits, and beliefs associated with these were, and are, used to promote environmental consciousness. Ovoos, sacred piles of stones, previously a shamanic tradition, started to be worshipped in Buddhist ceremonies often being followed by a Naadam sports festival.

The 20th Century

By the early twentieth century, there were more than a thousand monasteries and temple complexes in Mongolia. Ulaanbaatar was known as Ikh Khuree, meaning “big monastery” and was the seat of the Javzandamba Khutagt, who was also known as the Bogd Gegeen, or Bogd Khaan. He ranked third in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Tibetan/Mongolian Buddhism, after the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

A Soviet-supported communist government came to power in 1921, after the collapse of Manchu rule. As in Soviet Buryatia before it, both Buddhism and shamanism in Mongolia became increasingly suppressed. Ritual sites were destroyed and thousands of monks and shamans were killed. A series of purges were carried out between 1938 and 1944 which led to an almost complete wiping out of the Buddhist clergy. Over 40,000 lamas were arrested: the higher ranking ones were executed; the middle ranking ones were jailed for up to ten years, while the novices were forced to disrobe and work in factories or join the army. In this period, virtually all monasteries and temples were closed, most of them completely destroyed. In 1944, Gandan Monastery was allowed to reopen - albeit under strict supervision. However by then, Buddhism was completely removed from public life with most rituals and festivities either prohibited or secularized, and most of the sutras, or Buddhist texts, either destroyed or hidden.

Although freedom of religion was guaranteed by the constitution of 1960, there was still only limited tolerance of religious activity. In 1970, the Mongolian Buddhist University reopened, enabling the study of Mongolian Buddhism. Some of those early graduates have taken a leading role in contributing to the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia and neighbouring Buryatia since 1990. Since that time more than 200 monasteries and other religious sites have reopened, with Buddhism seeing a huge revival in the hearts of the people themselves. Most Mongolians today attend religious ceremonies and many consult lamas for important events, just as their great grandparents did.

The 21st Century

Today, Buddhism, like the Mongolian nation itself, is redefining itself. Modernity and urbanization have brought new opportunities as well as challenges. Rationalism has triggered a desire for understanding, rather than following; for asking, rather than just bowing. Not only has the lay community changed, but the sangha has also changed. The process of establishing new temples and communities in the countryside appears to be a challenge – with most monks seemingly preferring urban life. Another big change is that most monks don’t sleep at their monasteries, but instead live at home with their families. Inevitably this encourages quite different interests and distractions.

At the same time, increased communication has enabled Buddhist communities from all over the world to interact. Mongolian monks go abroad to study – mostly to India where they receive teachings from the Tibetan community-in-exile, where strict

monastic rules are in operation in all of the monasteries. Time will tell what the impact will be of the interaction of these monks with those trained in Mongolia.

Several Tibetan Buddhist organizations are presently in Mongolia helping with the revival of Buddhism: notably the UK-based Tibet Foundation, the NGO Asral, and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (under the direction of a Tibetan and a Nepalese reincarnate lama respectively). Activities include sponsoring the studies of monks and nuns in Mongolia and India, publishing religious texts and more accessible booklets for lay practitioners and promoting charitable activities in Mongolia, according to Buddhist understandings of charity.

Women in Buddhism

Before 1990 women were rarely ordained in Mongolia; today's nuns are therefore the first generation of ordained female Buddhist practitioners. There are two types of Buddhist vows available for women in Mongolia.

1. The full Getsulma vow of ordination, involving 36 monastic promises.
2. The Genenma lay vows, promising not to kill, steal, lie, not to commit any sexual misconduct and not to take intoxicants. These vows are taken by many Buddhists, both male and female in Mongolia.

Women who have taken the Genenma vows visit the nunnery in the daytime but return to their homes at night. They are allowed to marry and when they have children they leave the nunnery for one year to look after the child. They generally wear red or occasionally yellow deels (the traditional dress of Mongolia) rather than the Buddhist robes. They do not shave their heads.

In Ulaanbaatar there are two nunneries run by Mongolians, and one run by Tibetans. The first, Tugs Bayasgalant, meaning Heaven of Joy, was established in 1990 by the current head, N. Gantumur, who became a lay Buddhist nun that year. By 2008 there were 21 nuns, half of whom had recently attended a degree course at Zanabazar Buddhist University, marking the first time that women have ever been granted Bachelors degrees in Buddhist studies at this University. As with many of the monasteries, this nunnery is open only in the daytime - nuns return home at night.

Dolma Ling Nunnery, under the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), is the first residential nunnery in Mongolia. It was opened in 2001 on the grounds of the former Dara Ekh Monastery and is now home to 14 ordained Mongolian nuns. The nuns receive training in Tibetan and Buddhist scripture, and also engage in some environmental outreach activities. The other active Mongolian-run nunnery in Ulaanbaatar is Nar Khajid.

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT DO BUDDHISTS TEACH ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?



"Be gentle with the earth. Then nature will tender you spontaneously"
The Fourteenth Dalai Lama

There was a pre-Buddhist tradition in Mongolia of respecting the environment through recognizing specific mountains, rivers, or other landscape features as being sacred, and decreeing that they were therefore forbidden for activities such as hunting or logging. As in Tibet, Mongolian Buddhism incorporated some of these indigenous faith traditions, some of which are still practiced.

"Venerating, fearing and obeying the deities of mountains, waters and land was a very powerful form of environmental protection," wrote Buddhist scholar O. Sukhbaatar in his 2002 World Bank/ARC publication *Sacred Sites of Mongolia*. "But it was not done only to protect nature. It was done because people genuinely believed, and still believe in many places, that these deities and forces are real. As such, [these traditions] may yet turn out to be one of the greatest gifts of Mongolia's past, to her present."

In early times, many legends, prayers and stories in Mongolia dealt specifically with humanity's correct relationship with nature. All elements of nature were viewed as part of a unified structure. So the blue sky was the father of the Mongolians while the earth was their mother. Each natural element had its own *lus* or spirit master, and in order to co-exist harmoniously with the *lus*, certain offerings were made and rules respected. This included many ecologically sound practices such as avoiding digging the earth in certain places, defiling rivers, cutting trees, destroying the roots of grasses, disturbing the nests of animals or, generally killing of animals unnecessarily. It was considered that breaking these taboos would bring great misfortune to the concerned person as well as his family and community. Many of these practices have been continued with Buddhism, where the nature spirits are called *nagas*. "Mongolians believe that the fate of humanity is inextricably interwoven with the fate of nature itself," O. Sukhbaatar writes.

"Even dust is respected, as the world is believed to have been established from just one mote. *Monks in ancient times and now as well, walk very carefully so as not to kill insects. There are also many souls in the air that have not yet found a body; they can be killed simply by swinging one's arm too fast.*" said N. Batsaikhan of Dashchoilin Monastery

While Buddhism in Mongolia codified previous ecologically sound practices, it also brought its own customs. Buddhist monks are traditionally taught to love and protect wildlife and use their environment in an appropriate manner; even if this has not always been an active part of their actual practice, they have often passively practised a care for nature.

Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes respect not only for all sentient beings but also for their living spaces. According to the Buddhist belief in reincarnation, humans can be reborn as any animal, including insects - or as trees or water. Therefore we mustn't pollute, harm or kill any of these elements of life. "Before this present life we have known the suffering experienced by these elements. Harming any of these elements is very dangerous for all human beings as they may be reborn as any of these in the future," explains N. Batsaikhan of Dashchoilin Monastery. Put simply, each and every sentient being may have been our mother in one of our numerous previous lives, and therefore we do not want to hurt any of them.

Buddhists, however, take a pragmatic approach to life, and in the pastoral Mongolian society meat and dairy products are often the only staples, and therefore often abound in the monastic diet.

Mongolian Buddhism emphasizes the interconnectedness of all elements of nature - both in the visible and the invisible worlds. According to Da Lama Bayambajav of Gandan Monastery, Buddhist philosophy "teaches about the organic and the non-organic world and the relationship between the two".

According to Buddhist beliefs, environmental issues and problems in the organic world are due to impurities in the internal or non-organic world. Also, human greed is unlimited - but the environment is limited - and Buddhist teachings try to regulate this. "Buddhism says one must not kill the mother of young animals or cut down young trees. It provides very practical environmental advice."

Buddhism focuses on the consequences of human activity on the environment through its teachings on the laws of logic and of karma - or cause and effect. So for example, according to Panchen Ötrul Rinpoche of the Buddhist NGO Asral, even good or bad weather conditions result from good or bad collective karma resulting from the actions carried out by a community. He explained that greed and other negative emotions ultimately bring harm, and that failing to recognize the consequences of negative actions on the environment will cause numerous forms of suffering and ecological catastrophes themselves have repercussions on humans².

² *Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development* (pp 64-8); Palmer, Martin. (pp 81-2).



Sacred Places

Many mountains, rivers and other natural spaces are revered as sacred - either because they are the residing place of a deity or because they are viewed as a deity in themselves. These natural sites were historically treated with utmost respect, and protected by taboos. For example, trees should not be cut within their vicinity nor wild animals hunted. Some sacred sites are believed to house spirit masters – who often take a strikingly similar physical form to that of the mountain. So the spirit master of the bird-shaped Bogd Khaan Mountain to the south of Ulaanbaatar for example, is in the shape of a garuda (a huge and powerful mythical bird); to the west of Ulaanbaatar is a mountain with a spirit master in the form of an old, blue man. Some of these spirit masters were thought to be wrathful and therefore liable to punish those people who broke the taboos while others were thought to be benevolent, protecting people from natural disasters for example, and therefore deserving to be thanked. Some deities are female.



Sacred Birds and Animals

Sometimes mountains were named after animals. The ecological significance of this is still important: there is frequently a specific taboo on the hunting or trapping of this animal on the sites, and where these taboos are not apparent today, any ecological initiative can benefit from reminding the local people of the ancient beliefs, through working with the local clergy. Besides their association with certain natural sites, some animals were considered sacred in their own right. The wolf and deer are the most obvious examples, while snakes and fish were considered animals of the nagas, or nature spirits. The hunting, harming, trapping or eating of any of these animals - as well as antelope, argali sheep, mountain goats, migratory birds and other rare species - was considered sinful.

There are also ancient beliefs that casting one's shadow on, or touching, the nest or eggs of any bird is taboo, and that killing certain birds would enrage the heavens. As a result of these beliefs, some internationally endangered birds live comparatively unharmed in Mongolia, although this situation has begun to change.³

³ Sukhbaatar, p 27-30.



Ovoo Worship

Even if you are not Mongolian, you can usually recognise a sacred Mongolian mountain. It is generally an impressive, high feature on the landscape, often with an unusual shape and supporting an abundance of wildlife and fresh-water sources. And, because it has been worshipped for centuries, it almost certainly has an “ovoo” at its summit. Ovoos are piles of stones that traditionally indicate sacred sites. They can be found on the top of mountains or hills, at water sources and on the edge of rivers and lakes that have a sacred significance. When passing an ovoos, people traditionally circumambulate it three times while saying a prayer that translates as: *“Greatness of ovoos to you; Greatness of gains to me; Greatness of glory to you; Greatness of spirit to me; Greatness of height to you; greatness of good fortune to me.”* They then leave small offerings to bless their journey and the pleased spirits are believed to provide land fertility, good weather, health, and prevent disasters in return. They are particularly believed to be critical in helping the regeneration of land that has been developed by humans. Ovoo worship is a very common activity in Mongolia and most laypeople as well as monks know the practices well.

Many monasteries view ovoo worship to be one of their central responsibilities - from both a religious and (increasingly) an environmental perspective. For example, Gandan and Dashchoilin - environmentally active monasteries - are responsible for the worship of ovoos all over Mongolia and in particular the five main government ovoos: Otgon Tenger, Burkhan Khaldun, Altan Khokhii, Tsetsee Gun (Bogd Khaan) and Altan Ovoo. According to Dashchoilin monk N. Batsaikhan, worshipping these five main government mountains and their ovoos is the most important work in Mongolia. “People go along with the monks to worship the mountains. According to tradition, even the President and Minister must attend”.

Sacred Texts

The role of sacred texts, or sutras, in protecting the environment is a very special part of Mongolian Buddhism - and is an important consideration for anyone wanting to work on environmental protection with faith bodies. After Buddhism became Mongolia's state religion in the 13th century, Mongolian scholars codified and incorporated core components of ancient pre-Buddhist traditions into the new faith, embracing among other things the worship of natural sacred sites. So, of the 600 or more venerated mountains and sacred sites in Mongolia, at least 280 have their own associated sutras honouring the local environment. More might once have had such references, but the texts were most likely lost in the purges.

These texts have helped preserve ancient ecological practices over the ages: some through describing rituals that would protect Mongolia from ecological dangers⁴; others through offering prayers to the nature spirits to bring blessings and purify past misdeeds that disrupt nature; others through inviting Buddhas and deities to clear obstacles such as natural disasters or incursions of evil; some asking for the increase of sacred animals such as the snow leopard; and finally some – critically for today's ecological initiatives – describing taboos and outlining punishment. For example, in one area the sutra described how the local goddess would flood a village if the trees on the mountain were cut down.

“The veneration of mountains is one of the most popular methods of traditional nature conservation among Mongolians. Mountain-sutras are not only religious books for ritual ceremonies, but they are also an invaluable repository of wisdom derived from Mongolian culture⁵.”

The Mongolian Lord of the Nature

Tsagaan Uvgun is the White Old Man of Mongolian mythology, often depicted surrounded by the six traditional symbols of longevity (in Tibetan, “Tsering Nam Tuk”. These are: the divine peach tree, the conch-shaped rock, the crane, the crystal rosary, the pure stream welling up from a sacred rock, and the deer – which are said to be the only creatures able to locate the plants (or fungus) of immortality.

In Tibetan, he is called “Tsering Tuk”, or the Bodhisattva of Longevity. In China he is Shou-lao. But wherever he is, whatever he is called, he is a supreme example of how to live in harmony with nature. What use is living for a long time, if we are not living in a beautiful place?

⁴ For example the Purification, *Offering and Auspicious Rain Maker* sutra was composed by the Fourth Panchen Lama at the request of his Mongolian student Undur Gageen Zanabazar. The request was for a rite to protect Mongolia from various dangers and disasters by making offerings to Lamas, Buddhas, protector deities and naga and savdag spirits.

⁵ (O. Sukhbaatar, pp 24-5)



A painting commissioned by Gandan Monastery in 2008, and painted by the respected Mongolian artist Mr. Dulguun, reinterpreted this image – popular throughout Central and Northern Asia - to encourage people to remember how powerful their role can be in protecting the land.

In this new painting, Tsagaan Uvgun is still there at the centre: an old man with white hair and flowing beard, living in a tranquil, beautiful landscape: the kind of place which human beings inhabit in their happiest dreams. And close to him are the deer and the water and cranes and the other traditional symbols of longevity. But also around him - helping create, perpetuate and protect the perfect landscape - are monks and laypeople.

Some of them are doing a sacred sand offering to a stream and pouring it sweetly. Others are worshipping a sacred ovoo to protect the mountains – with the support of lay devotees. Others are going out into the landscape to do an animal liberating ceremony by reciting the appropriate sacred sutras for this event so that the animal can go with no fear from humans. In another scene, monks are performing prayers and pleading with the nagas of the trees to forgive those who cut them down. The tree-cutters themselves are shown making confessions: they have suffered unhappiness because the nagas have been angry.

The symbols of longevity and natural harmony⁶ are:

* Peaches, said to be the fruits of everlasting life. They represent the abundance of the natural world.

* A pine tree, which being evergreen, is also a sign of long life: it represents how we need vegetation.

* The water of longevity, with the eight precious qualities of being clear, cool, healing, odourless, soothing, delicious, light and soft. It represents the importance of pure, unpolluted water both for drinking and for sustaining the earth and its creatures. It comes from a rock that is in the shape of a conch.

* The rock of longevity, which does not change: its fissures are often curved like the bends of a conch shell. Mongolians and Tibetans see it as a holy mountain, which must be prayed for and respected. This reminds us of the grandeur of nature, and emphasizes that humans are only a part of something greater.

* Cranes, which are believed to be the most long-lived birds.

* Deer, which are the vehicle of Tsering Tuk – who is sometimes shown riding a stag. Deer, like holy mendicants, are traditionally believed to sleep in a different place each night. In this painting the deer and the cranes are reminders of how human beings should respect the lives of animals and birds, in order to ensure a landscape and life that is in harmony. They can't live to be old, unless we allow them to do so by refraining from hunting them and destroying their habitats.

"The six symbols inspire us to cherish all life on the earth," commented His Eminence Khamba Lama, Gabju Chojamts Demberel, the abbot of Gandan Monastery. And Venerable Da Lama Kh. Byambajav added: "And the four scenes in the new painting remind us that now we must actively participate in protecting nature and the land."

Traditional Environmental Laws

Several ancient and more recent laws closely echo the rules set down in Buddhism and ancient legends. Regulations dating back as far as Chinggis Khaan's "Secret History of the Mongols" from 1240 safeguard animals and other forms of wildlife. By the 18th century, official protection was extended to sacred mountains and bodies of water. Laws forbade the pollution of land and rivers, and protected animals from hunting during mating seasons. It is uncertain as to what extent these protective laws evolved from Buddhist legends and sutras or to what extent they preceded them and were then adapted.

⁶ *Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development* (pp 59-64, p 72).

Both processes are plausible given the Mongols' traditionally strong respect for the laws of both the state and the faith.⁷

There have been recent efforts to formalise the protection of natural sacred sites in Mongolia. In 1996, the Mongolian Ministry of Culture proposed three of the country's 16 major and many other minor sacred mountains for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage list⁸. They include the Bogd Khaan Mountain near Ulaanbaatar – the world's oldest official protected area, protected since 1778 when the Manchu Emperor of China passed a resolution to provide for official protection of the site, which also includes archaeological sites and cave paintings from some 3000 years ago. On the south side of the protected area, monks have begun the process of rebuilding the Manzushiri monastery, which dates from 1750. The other two mountains are the Burkhan Khaldun (designated as sacred by Chinggis Khaan) which is located within the 1.2 million hectare Khan Khentii Strict Protected Area in the Khentii Aimag bordering Russia, and the 95,500 hectare Otgon Tenger mountain area in the centre of the country, which was included in the laws of "Khalkh Juram" as a protected mountain, where logging and hunting were prohibited.

Buddhists and Development

Any location designated for the development of a building, settlement, temple, burial site or nomadic camp is traditionally selected according to the special characteristics of the site. Besides fulfilling practical needs such as water and fuel, the site must be chosen in accordance with the instructions contained in Tibetan and Mongolian sutras. The sutras determine whether a site has "good" or "bad" properties. These characteristics relate mostly to the practicalities of setting up residence and refer to the quality of the soil, of the wood, of the flora, etc⁹.

Although most companies carrying out land development projects today now generally choose the location for their development activities without referring to such religious texts, some 80 percent do nonetheless still consult monasteries to enquire about auspicious start dates for their projects and to request the monastery to conduct ceremonies around the laying of foundations or the launch of a new project. N. Batsaikhan at Dashchoilin Monastery believes that more and more mining companies have been consulting them recently because company profits are decreasing and because families in the area are perceived to be experiencing harm from pollution and other similar causes. When such ill fortune is diagnosed as the result of having angered the local spirit masters, appeasement ceremonies with offerings must be conducted.

From the Buddhist point of view, any form of development that affects the land is negative – especially mining – but the most important thing is that the land is later allowed to regenerate. This is the responsibility of the companies concerned. "When companies carry out mining for example they should then help the land to recover and give offerings and prayers to the related ovoo," says N. Batsaikhan.

⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/936/>

⁸ *Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development* (pp 51-3).

⁹ Monkhsaikhan, D. (pp 44-8); *Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development* (pp 55-8)

In summary, it is important when carrying out any form of development in Mongolia to bear in mind not only the environmental impacts but also ancient traditions, and also to avoid both destroying ovoos and developing areas that are considered sacred.

Where development is carried out, it is in accordance with present-day customs to ask monasteries to conduct ceremonies to mitigate damage. From a Buddhist perspective everything is interrelated: good company practice will bring profits and happiness, bad company practice will bring suffering. And according to the laws of karma, mitigating negative impacts on the surrounding environment and the life it sustains are the responsibilities of the company that created them.

CHAPTER THREE: HOW HAVE BUDDHISTS RECENTLY BEEN INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION?



Opportunities

The opportunity for environmental action by monasteries is much greater today than it was in the early post-communist years. Then the main focus of monasteries was on the physical reconstruction of temples and training of monks in theological practice. But almost twenty years on, environmental and social justice activities are becoming an important part of several monasteries' present activities and future plans.

"Over a period of 70 years, communism destroyed the foundations of Buddhism. Now monks are trying to re-establish temples. The main focus at Gandan Monastery is therefore on the construction of temples and on preparing human souls. We are now establishing new targets in the environmental and social areas. These areas will be developed more in the future," said Da Lama Bayambajav of Gandan Monastery.

In 1999 the World Bank, ARC and WWF-Mongolia started a project with Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar, which is the largest monastery in the country. The plan was to rediscover some of the ancient sutras about sacred sites which had been hidden during the communist purges, and translate them into modern Mongolian, since so few people can read Tibetan any more.

The result was a powerful reminder for the monks, lay villagers, and many urban Mongolians, most of whom had not realized the wide scale of the environmental traditions in Mongolia and the extent of the number of sacred places. Many proved to be important sites of bio-diversity, with forested areas that were critical for maintaining the water table. Since 1999 six steles, or monumental stones, have been erected again at some of the most important places around Ulaanbaatar, all of which have once again been recognized as sacred.

According to the former WWF-Mongolia Communication Officer Ms. B. Elbegzaya (now at the International Centre for Mountain Development in Kathmandu): "The monks did not at first realize their own huge potential to protect the environment". While they were already aware of many environmental practices, they had previously considered these from a purely religious perspective. So for example, even while

Buddhism was banned during communist rule, people continued to respect ecologically sound practices such as the taboos surrounding ovoos – but it took the input of outside groups to show the monks the strength they already had in environmental activism. “WWF made the first step along with ARC, working with monks. They saw what was possible,” she said. That project is described in greater detail in Section Two.

Another programme involved setting up an astrological nature calendar, inspired by the traditional belief that nagas descend to earth on certain days every month and throughout the year – and at those times the taboos against hunting, logging and otherwise disturbing nature were said to be particularly strong. After the purges and restrictions of the communist era some of the knowledge of this disappeared. At the request of the monastic community a traditional astrological calendar was produced by the monks of Gandan Monastery, in partnership with the World Bank, highlighting the days when nagas descend. Although the return of the nagas varies according to each tradition in Mongolian/Tibetan Buddhism, this calendar refers to the differences when they occur, and is beginning to be widely recognised and used. Where tree cutting or hunting are specifically forbidden on certain, more sacred, days, then reminding people of these taboos would be likely to have a positive impact on nature conservation.¹⁰

Since Gandan Monastery took up the challenge, Erdene Zuu Monastery in Karakorum has also become an environmental pioneer; as part of the monks’ work to prevent deforestation on the sparse mountainsides nearby they have initiated projects to provide life skills for local children, help encourage alternative means of income for poor families, and set up the beginnings of what is planned to be a huge, forested, meditation garden, as described in the case studies in Section Two. Other monasteries to watch include Khamar Khiid in the East Gobi which has a reforestation program; Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery in Baganuur district which has been providing environmental training to miners and assessing the impact of mining activities in their area; Amarbayasgalant Monastery in the far North and the very active Luvsandanjanjantsan Studies Centre in Bayankhongor District.

Key Meetings

A key event in recent Mongolian Buddhist involvement in environmental protection was the Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Conservation held at Gandan Monastery and Chinggis Khaan Hotel in 2005. This four-day event was the first ever of its kind, and it brought together 250 representatives of monastic communities, governments and NGOs to discuss and develop ideas in the field of environment and development. Joining leading Buddhists from Mongolia, Russia, China, Korea, and Cambodia were senior figures from the World Bank and Dutch Government as well as international environmental organizations including WWF and ARC. See Section Two for more details of these organisations. The event was organized by ARC and hosted by Nambaryn Enkhbayar, President of Mongolia at that time ARC’s

¹⁰ http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/UB_conference.pdf

International President. The World Bank and Netherlands Government were the main sponsors. A full report of the conference proceedings can be found on ARC's website or on www.buddhistecology.org¹¹.

In 2008 a follow-up meeting was co-hosted by Gandan Monastery and the US-based Tributary Fund, which came to Mongolia for a project in 2004 to work with local monastic communities to protect Mongolia's endangered taimen fish in the Khovsgol region to the north of the country. Some 50 monks attended, at least two from each of Mongolia's 21 provinces. They discussed many of the inspiring environmental protection projects they are pursuing, some of which are described in Section Two of this handbook. They also discussed the potential for future activities -- what they can do, and what they would like to do to protect Mongolia's landscape and environment through Mongolian Buddhist Eight Year Plans (See the Appendices for a full guide) and through other programmes. Some of these potential areas are mapped out in Chapter Four.

¹¹ http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/UB_conference.pdf

CHAPTER FOUR: POTENTIALS FOR THE FUTURE



a. Expanded ecological training for monks

Following on from the very successful Otsar Isei Lin Monastery project to research the health impacts of their local coal mine (see Section Two), the head of the monastery expressed enthusiasm about extending the NEMO-funded programme in the future. He suggested that increased environmental training for monks would speed up the process of cooperation among monasteries throughout Mongolia to develop environmental protection projects. This would make countryside replication of future outreach programmes on areas with mining much easier and cheaper to implement.

b. Ecological temples

In 2007 Erdene Zuu in Karakorum opened a tiny branch temple on a hillside on the site of a ruined temple above the town. It is looked after by a single monk and dedicated to the Mongolian God of Ecology. Inside there are posters of the fish and animals of Mongolia, and a wall chart of ecological rules and guidelines. It is a simple and effective form of local education through faith. This idea could easily be extended to other monasteries throughout the country. If ecological temples are to become part of the Mongolian landscape, it was identified that there would need to be an agreement about what constitutes such a temple – is it the dedication, the content, the outreach, or the building materials themselves?

Gandan Monastery, together with ARC, in 2009 commissioned a new thangka, or devotional painting, featuring the Lord of Nature, Tsering Nam Tuk, surrounded by five images of monks venerating mountains (and ovoo), water, trees, looking for sacred texts and protecting animals. This thangka has been used as an illustration to this handbook. Prints of the thangka are available for monasteries throughout Mongolia to copy, or to place in their ecological shrines or temples.

c. Putting the Environment on the Agenda

At the 2008 Gandan meeting, several monks pointed out that considerable time had elapsed between the previous meeting in 2005, during which the environment had not been greatly discussed in inter-monastery meeting. It was thought to be helpful if the environment was put on the agenda for the next six-monthly meeting of senior monks, with the possibility of this finding a permanent position on every agenda, enabling monks to inspire each other with their actions and ideas.

d. Buddhist Environment and Development Network

Gandan Monastery has proposed setting up a Buddhist Environment and Development (BEAD) Mongolia Network. This requires more planning and discussion, but could also be a way for Mongolian Buddhists to move onto Eight Year Plans.

e. Biodegradable Khadags

Some monks, on seeing the way that the blue silk offering scarves can clutter up a mountainside (“now anyone can tie a ribbon to anything”) have expressed interest in bio-degradable scarves, both as a way of dealing with the increased number of khadags, and as an example to Mongolian people, to encourage them to think more about the environmental impact of their actions.

f. More sacred land sutras

One key to Mongolia’s sacred landscapes is its sutras, or sacred texts, many of which describe the local sacred mountains, and how they are required to be revered. Many of these sutras were lost or destroyed in the years of enforced atheism under communism. The Gandan Monastery has been active in collecting sutras from the Ulaanbaatar area, but many monasteries elsewhere are aware of the need to locate the sutras from their soums, or provincial areas, republish them and use them to remember which are the sacred lands. They are also aware that within a generation many more of these sutras might be lost. Publishing in Mongolia is not expensive, but hiring vehicles and using petrol is, today, and this is the chief obstacle to this project being carried out.

g. Eight Year Plans

The idea for Mongolian Buddhist monasteries to develop Eight Year Plans was raised in October 2008, and met with enthusiasm. The idea is that they would spend the next eight years planning and implementing new traditions and rituals to protect the environment for years to come. The process is modelled by and assisted by ARC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and helps the faith groups look at their strengths and potentials in seven key areas: assets (including land and buildings and financial investments); educational outreach; pastoral care; ability to promote simpler lifestyles; media; partnerships; and celebrations. The guidebook is available on www.arcworld.org, and it is hoped that Mongolian Buddhists will join other faith leaders around the world in announcing the launch of their Plans in November 2009. This is the framework by which Mongolian Buddhist can make changes that will last for generations.

CHAPTER FIVE: HOW TO WORK WITH THE SANGHA



Making First Contact

In Section Two, we include a list of the main monasteries in each of the aimags (provinces) in Mongolia, with a list of their environmental activities, lists of whom to contact, and historical background. If there is an area that is not on that list, a good first step would be to enquire at the Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar, or through the local authorities in the region in which you are operating, about active monastic communities in the area. Most monasteries in aimag centres will have a phone or fax, and the abbot might even have a mobile phone. In some cases there is a lay person closely tied to the monastery who might be easier to reach. Some monasteries have no access to phone and are instead reached by faxing to the closest post office, or by a personal visit.

Higher ranking lamas generally have a secretary who can be contacted to arrange meetings. At the Gandan Monastery, for example, the Khamba lama, the principal of the University and the administrator all have secretaries. The Officer in Charge of Foreign Affairs at Gandan Monastery is Ven. B. Munkhbaatar, who speaks English and can arrange initial contact.

Titles and personnel

High lamas can be addressed as ‘Venerable’, while high-ranking lamas, like Venerable Choijamts Demberel of Gandan Monastery, should be addressed as “Your Eminence”.

The foremost abbot in a larger monastery is always called the Khamba Lama; Gandan Monastery’s Khamba Lama’s is the most senior in Mongolia. His full title is “the Head of Mongolian Buddhists, the Abbot of Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, His Eminence Gavj Choijamts”.

The second highest-ranking monk in a monastery is called the Ikh Khamba, or Ded Khamba, while the third-highest-ranking monk is usually the administrator, and is known as the Da Lama (not to be confused with the Dalai Lama). He is usually the administrator, while the monk in charge of economic affairs in a monastery is called the Daamal.

Where there is an abbot, the monk in charge of religious affairs is the Tsorj Lama – and where there is no abbot, the Tsorj Lam is the head monk.

If you visit a dratsang, or college of Buddhist philosophy, the head monk is called the Shunlaiv, and it is useful to know that the highest title of study within the Gelugpa tradition is that of Gavj.

Lamas in Mongolia are commonly referred to as “Lama”, preceded by any title, while if you refer to the Dalai Lama in speech or in documents, it is polite to use the term “His Holiness the Dalai Lama”, or simply “His Holiness”.

Greetings

Monks and nuns will usually greet you with both hands together in front of their chests and with a light bow of their head. They can in turn be greeted in the same manner. Shaking hands is not required unless a hand is extended by the other party. If you do shake hands, your sleeves should always be unrolled to show respect.

If you are a guest, you should begin by handing over a khadag, or blue ceremonial scarf. Use two hands with the palms towards the sky and take the khadag between your thumb and the palm of your hand. This is a traditional greeting in order to pay respect to the host. Your host may, as a sign of respect, hand back the khadag, hanging it over your head onto your shoulders. Receiving a khadag from a lama is considered a form of blessing.

The khadag is folded three times width-wise, and should always be presented with the opening towards the receiver. To hold it in the opposite direction is traditionally considered a great offence, implying an intention to harm the other person.

Holding Meetings with Monks and Nuns

Dress in modest clothing when meeting with members of the sangha, or when visiting a monastery or temple. Although casual dress is accepted, shoulders and knees should be covered. When arranging a meeting or the start date for a project it is best to consult a lunar calendar or contact monasteries regarding the date of special ceremonies – partly because lamas will be largely unavailable, and partly because certain days are also considered more auspicious for starting projects than others. Certain times are more appropriate for meetings than others – for example, monasteries generally conduct prayers in the mornings.

While in the past people were seated according to status – with the highest- ranking person furthest from the door - these rules have now been somewhat relaxed. However, when receiving a lama, stand up as he enters and show him his seat respectfully extending the whole hand. And when a meeting with a high lama is concluding, he may well hand over a khadag placing it over your head onto your shoulders.

Money-related Issues

Specific monks are in charge of the financial dealings of a monastery. All financial matters are decided by a committee that usually consists of the Khamba or most senior lama as well as the administrator and accountant. These decisions are then officially accepted in writing and executed by specific monks, such as the accountant. Most monks participating in any project will have very limited personal funds. Some dedicated individuals will be able to pay for any travel or other expenses incurred by a project or by attending a meeting. However in order to ensure continued attendance and participation, it is highly recommended that any project-related expenses be reimbursed.

What makes a Successful Project?

Working with monasteries is in general a great pleasure. Monasteries are usually vibrant places of worship where there is an active community atmosphere. However it is good to realize that a lot of the vocabulary used in the development world is not always appropriate for the monastery. It is crucial to explain all the different steps and necessities very well, including how to deal with finance, receipts etc. It can be helpful to work with a team rather than an individual and assign clear tasks to all the members.

Temple Etiquette

When visiting a Buddhist temple or monastery it is best to call ahead to ensure that the appropriate person is present.

Many Buddhist centres have a set time that they are open to the public. It is generally fine to enter a college or monastery while the monks are performing prayers or debating when the doors are open – although it is always a good idea to first seek approval from monks inside the compound.

When you go inside, remove your hat, and while shoes are not always removed, due to the cold weather, follow the example of others. If in doubt it is best to start removing your shoes at the risk of being told you can keep them on. Do not stand at the doorpost, and always walk in a clockwise direction when walking around either the inside or outside of a monastery, temple or other sacred structures such as ovoos.

Remain quiet and avoid speaking loudly. Also turn off your cell phone.

Many Mongolians make prostrations when they enter a temple. If you do not wish to do the same, either bow your head slightly with the palms of your hands together at the chest or simply stand quietly until others have finished.

If you enter a monastery or shrine you may be led to the main statue where you can pay respect to the Buddha or deity by laying down a khadag in front of the Buddha in the same way as you would present it to a lama - with two palms of the hand facing towards the sky. Lighting a candle is another way of paying respect; this should be done facing towards the central Buddha or deity statue.

When teachers, monks and nuns enter and leave the main shrine room, visitors should stand to show respect. Otherwise, it is good manners to bow down low when walking directly in front of people, in particular monks, who may be sitting against the walls of the temple.

Sit with your feet folded cross-legged or folded under yourself. If you feel the need to stretch your legs while in a temple, do so in such a way so as not to point your feet directly at the teacher or altar.

When receiving a blessing from the lama or presenting a khadag, monks and nuns are generally asked to go first, in order of seniority. In Buddhist cultures, monks go before nuns. You approach the lama holding out a khadag; he may then touch your head with his hands as a blessing, and then either he or his assistant will give you a red blessing cord with a small knot on it. The cord should be treated with respect and in no case dropped. Mongolians tie the cords around their necks or place them in their shrines.

If you wish to take pictures, verify beforehand that it is acceptable to do so, and find out when a good time would be so as not to disturb any ceremonies.

Buddhist Objects

Every element of Buddhist temples, other Buddhist structures, and natural sacred sites is considered holy. Avoid sitting on the lower part of built structures or touching these with your feet.

Suvrag, also called stupas or chortens in Tibetan, are religious monuments containing prayer books and sometimes relics of high lamas and may also house a Buddha statue or image. They should be treated with respect, and walked around in a clockwise direction.

Regular books containing Buddhist teachings, or those of grouped separate sheets wrapped in a yellow or red cloth, should be treated with respect and not placed on the floor or stepped over; other objects should not be casually placed on top of them.

Prayer wheels, which are metal cylinders containing prayers and frequently found on the circumambulation walks around temples - can be spun in a clockwise direction. It is believed that this releases the prayers into the air for the benefit of other sentient beings and the world at large.

General Etiquette in Mongolia

When indicating an object or person, always do so with your whole hand, palm facing upwards. Pointing is considered particularly offensive in Mongolia. When given food or drink, you should always accept the offering. Even if you don't wish to consume them, it is considered good manners to take a small sip or mouthful, or break off a small piece to eat and then place the remainder on the table in front of you.

SECTION TWO: CASE STUDIES

Monasteries working on Environmental Preservation

Please note, full contact details are included in Section THREE, as well as more details about NGOs and other groups working on environmental projects in Mongolia.

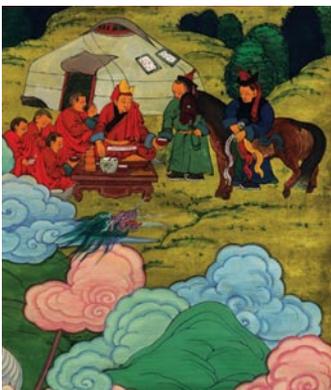
1. Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists (Gandan Monastery)

Gandan in Ulaanbaatar is the largest and most important monastery in Mongolia today, with more than 850 monks. Its name signifies Great Place of Complete Joy. Gandan Monastery, along with Erdene Zuu, has been a pioneer of conscious Buddhist environmentalism in Mongolia. It has been a central monastery in the work that ARC, WWF and the World Bank have undertaken, and a key example for other monasteries wanting to participate in environmental work.

As Ven. Da Lama Bayambajav, who acts as a liaison between Gandan Monastery and environmental NGOs elaborates: “Gandan Monastery’s focus is on the teaching of Buddhism. However environmental protection is an integral part of Buddhist training both here and in other monasteries. Monks are taught not to cut trees, not to pollute water and to love the area because of karma. Most Mongolian monks discuss these issues. Over the past 70 years, communism destroyed the foundations of Buddhism. Now people are trying to re-establish temples. The main focus at Gandan Monastery has therefore been on the construction of temples and on preparing human souls. We are now establishing new targets in the environmental and social areas; these areas will be developed more in the future”.

“Every temple should have a room, or at least a desk, for conservation training and planning,” Ven. Da Lama said. “Monks should go and teach conservation to those who are living in polluted lands, and to those who are living in untouched and unpolluted lands. Buddhist talks are more powerful than rulings from the state.”

Projects conducted by the Gandan Monastery on the environment



These include:

1. Sacred Gifts for a Living Planet. This was a programme developed by WWF and ARC to create a term of recognition for significant new projects launched by the world’s faiths at a major meeting in Kathmandu in 2000. Gandan Monastery participated by reintroducing a centuries-old ban on hunting the snow leopard and the saiga antelope, both of which are endangered. The ban is an expression of the Buddhist teaching of compassion towards all life, which in practice encourages Buddhists to

engage in sustainable natural resource management. In 2001 the Sacred Gift was extended to include the re-creation of seven traditional Buddhist Sacred Reserves, which include the Bogd Khaan Mountain (Mongolia's oldest Buddhist protected area) and the Khan Kentii Strictly Protected area.

2. Sacred Mongolia Series Publications: Sacred Sites of Mongolia (2001), Legends of the Land (2001), and Worship of Sacred Sites (2004).

3. The Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development.

4. Installation of six steles to mark six natural sacred sites. This project was carried out with ARC and WWF.

5. Publishing a magazine on Buddhism and environmental protection.

6. Setting up an active environmental management plan.

7. Starting to set up a Buddhist Environmental Association for Development (BEAD), to create a network of environmentally active monks and monasteries.

8. Reviving and publishing an astrological calendar on ancient lines, giving details of which days were taboo for killing animals, hunting etc (see chapter four in Section One for more details).

9. Like many monasteries, Gandan Monastery conducts regular ovoo worship to help the land flourish and regenerate.

10. Producing the Chansaa newspaper in cooperation with Ven. Purevbat of Mongolian Institute for Buddhist Art of Gandan Monastery. Under this NEMO-funded project Ven. Purevat conducts lectures throughout Mongolia on traditional conservation.

11. Editing, translating and distributing this handbook.

12. Commissioning a new thangka, or devotional painting, depicting Tsering Nam Tuk, the Lord of Nature, surrounded by scenes of monks venerating trees, water and mountain ovoids, protecting species, and also gathering sacred sutra texts. The thangka has been used for the illustrations in this handbook, and it will also be distributed to monasteries and devotees throughout the country to encourage them to be mindful of conservation issues.

Background to the Monastery

The history of Gandan Monastery dates back to 1838, when it was founded at the decree of the 2nd Bogd Javzandamba on the hill named Dalkh Denj. As the temporal and spiritual head of Mongolia, Bogd Javzandamba was considered as a highly learned and noble master of various fields of knowledge pertaining to Buddhism, and was endowed with the supreme power of visualization.

The monastery quickly grew to become one of the largest monasteries with over 5,000 monks and nine dratsangs, or colleges, teaching Buddhist philosophy, traditional medicine, astrology and tantric ritual. Three of them - Dashchoinphel, Gungaacholing and Idgaachoinzinling – which functioned as universities, were regarded as the

three main pillars of Buddhist philosophy in Mongolia, and as they grew, Gandan Monastery became the centre of Mongolian Buddhist education and culture.

The Monastery and all of its universities was closed in the purges of 1938, and reopened six years later in 1944 as a showcase for visitors, as a prayer temple under the strict supervision of the communist government. It was the only functioning monastery in Mongolia during the communist regime. Today it is once again a centre of Mongolian Buddhist studies, with three main temples, the Zanabazar Buddhist University, three colleges of Buddhist philosophy (Dashchoinphel, Gungaacholing, Idgaachoinziling), a College of Medicine & Astrology, and two Tantric colleges (Jud and Kalachakra).

In the early 20th century the town of Ulaanbaatar was known as Ikh Huree, meaning "big monastery". Gandan Monastery was the seat of the Javzandamba Khutagt - also known as the Bogd Gegeen and later as the Bogd Khaan - who ranked third in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, after the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama (both based then in Tibet).

In 1912 a great Buddhist icon was created, in the form of a 26.5 metre-high metal statue of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Migjid Janraisig), in the custom-built Avalokitesvara Temple. During the Soviet period the statue was melted down for bullets – a bitter message for Mongolia's people – but in 1996, as a symbol of a Mongolia that could once again be proud of its beliefs, the statue was rebuilt at the initiative of senior monks of Gandan Monastery and with the support of the then Prime-Minister Enkhbayar.

In 1990, the first Mongolian Buddhist assembly took place, at which the head monks and delegates of various temples were present. According to the resolution of the assembly, Gandan Monastery was declared to be the centre of Mongolian Buddhists and the abbot of the monastery was elected as the head of the centre. Today this monastery represents Mongolian Buddhism at national and international levels.

The monastery also provides the rural monasteries and temples in all the 21 aimags, or provinces, of Mongolia with human resources. It houses the head quarters of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace.

Contacts

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2. The Erdene Zuu Endeavor in partnership with ARC, the British Embassy and the Mongolian Government

The Erdene Zuu monastery is built on the site of Chinggis Khaan's capital, Karakorum (Kharkhorin), in the centre of the country some six hours drive from Ulaanbaatar. In its prime there were 62 temples inside the compound, housing more than a thousand lamas – but during the purges of 1939 all but four were destroyed. In the 1990s, authority over the Lavran temple was returned to the monks, while the other three remaining temples now form a museum complex, visited by many tourists. There are some 30 monks at Erdene Zuu, although the majority of them are children.

Today the monastery is a model for carrying out educational, environmental and social justice projects under its charitable branch Erdene Zuu Endeavor (EZE). Set up in 2005 it is funded largely through donations from Buddhists visiting the temple, and it has also received funding from ARC, the British Embassy and the Mongolian Ministry of Nature And The Environment.

1. Education

In 2005 the monastery opened the “Environmental Buddhist Elementary School” where 30 young monks from throughout Mongolia receive training in traditional and modern conservation alongside their religious education.

2. The Traditional Mongolian Ecology Project

The monastery also runs the Traditional Mongolian Ecology Project, which aims to minimise damage to protected woodland in the region. A key problem is that children from mostly poor families go into the now sparse forest above the town and cut trees down for kindling and to sell to restaurants for their wood burning stoves. From their local knowledge of the community – from which many of the monks have come - the monks therefore decided that they would run life skills classes for these child woodcutters and their families, and the results exceeded their expectations.

Between April and July 2005, 50 young woodcutters attended a 40-hour Life Skills course, based on a UNESCO model, learning traditional conservation and religious values alongside life skills such as building self-esteem, decision-making, critical and creative thinking and communications skills. In 2006, locals requested further training and EZE hosted another course for 50 children – and then another for the parents, who wished to experience this training for themselves. Awareness of the problem of woodcutting also arose, although in a region where fuel sources are critical in winter in particular, the aim is to now also develop training in traditional crafts to sell to the many tourists visiting Karakorum – giving families an alternative source of income – as well as to find a suitable and sustainable fuel alternative for restaurants to use in their stoves, and continue running a tree nursery in which the local people have an active stake.

3. A meditation garden with trees

Karakorum is a landscape on the edge of the vast steppe, with few trees to give fuel and shelter, except in the hills, where the small forest areas are being rapidly depleted. However a few kilometres outside the town, monks have fenced off a 2,000 square metre area, to protect it from grazing animals, experiment in tree growing, and create a huge wooded area for meditation and contemplation, based around a model of the Green Tara deity. At the moment this is still at the experimental stage. In 2007 they brought in 800 pine seedlings from another province but the majority of them died in the Karakorum soil and climate. The intention is to use the land partially to experiment to find out which trees might grow best, in order to extend that knowledge to enable the land to be reforested, to work towards people's fuel needs being met in a sustainable way.

4. An ecology temple

The EZE recently built a small ecology temple on a hillside above Karakorum. It is dedicated to the Deity of Ecology and it contains maps and pictures of Mongolia's wildlife, with strong injunctions to visitors not to mistreat nature. The Ecology Temple distributes a small calendar, inspired by the one produced by Gandan Monastery in conjunction with ARC, on which are detailed the days on which people should not cut wood or kill animals in accordance with local beliefs.

5. Sacred land

Knowledge and reverence of sacred mountains in Mongolia tends to be a local activity. The EZE has plans, which need financing, of going out into the local villages to find out which families have held onto ancient sutra texts, protecting them from the purges. "My idea is to find the sutras, copy them, and then translate them into modern Mongolian and print them locally. That way the local people will be reminded of what they contain, and the local temples can organise puja rituals on the special days," says head monk of Erdene Zuu, Baasansuren. "The problem right now is how to find the sutras – some families are afraid to show them, as they hope they will sell them for cash, which they need."

6. Prison outreach

EZE also arranges outreach into the local men's prison. When the prison governor wanted to arrange for the prisoners to learn horticultural skills he asked the monks if they knew how to find a fertile field for vegetable production. Through the monks they made contact with the British Embassy, which facilitated this.

Contacts

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3. The Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery mining project, in partnership with the World Bank's NEMO fund

In October 2005 Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery in Baganuur District, some 140 kilometres west of Ulaanbaatar, launched a major project to document the environmental and health impacts of the Baganuur coal mine. The mine extracts some 2.5 million tons of coal every year, most of which is sent to Ulaanbaatar which relies on the mine for 70 percent of its coal.

The project, supported by the World Bank's NEMO fund, was a response to the suspicion that the mine's operations were impacting seriously on residents' health, as well as that of the miners. As well as undertaking the baseline studies, activities included setting up an environmental information and research centre in Baganuur town, holding training workshops, working with families to mitigate some of the worst effects of the pollution, and disseminating the results of the research.

When the results came in, they confirmed that Baganuur mine is indeed having a significant negative effect on local residents' health, as well as the health of the local environment. The fine particles of coal dust, the high content of heavy metals found in Baganuur coal and the chemical elements emitted during the mining process are impacting upon local residents' health. The mine's impact extends to Ulaanbaatar where the coal is consumed.

Recommendations ranged from introducing coal detoxification mechanisms in the mine itself to setting up an information centre in the city, adding Buddhist teachings on conservation onto school curricula, and teaching some practical solutions for miners and their families to reduce the toxic effects of coal at a household level. The research and outreach activities received strong community support, although some resistance came from the District Governor's office as well as from some local Christians.

There are currently 16 monks and eight support staff at Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery, which was built in 1996, and then re-opened under its present name in 2003. It contains the Zana Agvaanbaldan Research Centre, set up jointly with the Mongolian National University's Department of Buddhist Studies, with the mission of disseminating religious knowledge to a lay public and sustaining its religious activities. With additional funds, the monastery would like to undertake further environmental and social activities. "We are truly interested in continuation of the project if there are individuals and donors willing to render financial support," says the head lama of Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery.

The head lama says that although they cooperate with other temples and monasteries on religious matters, there is no cooperation in the environmental field. He believes environmental training for monks would help speed up this process. "We welcome any similar projects and initiatives and express our readiness for their support and our cooperation with them."

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4. Dashchoilin Monastery

Dashchoilin Monastery in Ulaanbaatar is known for conducting ceremonies for companies initiating projects that will have an impact on the environment, in particular ones involving mining. According to N. Batsaikhan, a lama at the monastery, 80% of the companies carrying out land development projects in Mongolia come to Dashchoilin Monastery to ask for such ceremonies in order to placate the local nature spirits. These ceremonies are seen as a means to help ensure the land regenerates. The companies do not however consult the monastery as to the location of their activities or the technology to be employed; the monastery therefore has little real say in those matters that have a direct physical impact on the environment.

Another critical environmental activity of this monastery in central Ulaanbaatar is looking after government and local ovoos. Dashchoilin monks also hold worship rituals for the lords of water springs. In 2005, the monastery planted 1000 trees in Tujii Nars and in 2006, 1000 trees were planted on the Bogd Khaan Mountain at Ulaanbaatar. In 2007 a further 1000 trees were planted.

Dashchoilin Monastery cooperates with other religious, humanitarian and educational organizations and is a member of the Young Buddhists' World Union, Asian Buddhists' Peace Conference and Buddha's World Union.

N. Batsaikhan explains how environmental protection is an integral part of Buddhist training. "Buddhist religion is based on science. It traditionally focuses on environmental protection. Buddhism teaches not to litter, dig or kill animals and therefore protects the environment. The key activity of Buddhism is to protect the environment." N. Batsaikhan believes environmental projects should focus on youth. "The key is to raise awareness about environmental protection. Just one schoolchild collecting rubbish outside his school can create awareness in those who pass by."

Background to the Monastery

In the past, Dashchoilin Monastery hosted numerous scientists and monks from all over Mongolia. In 1990 the Zuun Khuree Dashchoilin Monastery was restored. It now has more than 100 monks, three temples (Tsogchen, Sakhuis and Gandanchoinkhorlin) and many rare statues. In 1998, the Zuun Khuree College was created to provide training in general education for the community; including basic Buddhist teachings, Buddhist Philosophy and training in Indian, Tibetan and Mongolian languages.

Contacts

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5. Amarbayasgalants Monastery

Located in Selenge Province in the far north, this is the country's third biggest monastery. Today about sixty novices and ordained monks are in residence – making it one of the few Mongolian monasteries where monks actually live full time. In 2002 Amarbayasgalant Monastery established the NGO Amar Mur, which runs a centre giving guidance to prisoners, orphans and children of disadvantaged families; it organises seminars and training on Buddhism and invites Buddhist leaders to teach in Mongolia.

In 2003 monks participated in an environmental training programme organised by ARC and WWF, in which monasteries received training on climate change and then participated in creating a publication in Mongolian, on the Sacred Sites of Mongolia.

In 2004, the monastery participated in a national Buddhist educational awareness programme run by ARC in partnership with WWF. This combined practical training for monks and herders to maintain springs as vital water sources for monks and herders, with rituals to protect the springs and raise their significance for the local community. This project was linked into the government's Mongolian National Year of campaign. With the influx of pilgrims and tourists, there is a critical concern about how to deal with waste.

Background to the Monastery

Amarbayasgalant Monastery was established by order of Manchu emperor Enkh Amgalan Khan, in honour of Undur Geghen Zanabazar (after whom Gandan's University was named). Construction began in 1726, and was completed ten years later. In the 1930s all senior monks were executed and huge numbers of rare religious relics and sutras destroyed. Amarbayasgalant Monastery became mere ruins, abandoned until 1990 when it was restored and re-established.

6. Khamar Khiid

Khamar Khiid, in the eastern Gobi province of Dornogov, has been a pioneer in a number of environmental initiatives - in particular a reforestation project in the Gobi in partnership with the NGO Tavan Dohio. The first aim of the reforestation project is to restore a grove of 100 elms cut down by Russian soldiers.

Since 2003, hundreds of seedlings have been planted at the monastery, many with the involvement of local schoolchildren. A number of problems have limited the survival rate of these trees: irrigation issues, livestock, inadequate storm protection

and possibly improper species selection and planting techniques. Nevertheless Mr. Altangerel, environmental project leader and the director of Khamar Khiid's museum, is convinced that with the proper planning that comes from experience, such plantations will flourish and help fight desertification by retaining large volumes of water within their root systems.

Future plans for the surrounding area include installing protective fencing and walkways to prevent soil erosion and traffic damage. Mr. Altangerel also advocates the use of Buddhist rituals as a context for conservation activities, arguing for the adoption of a tradition of planting trees for the deceased. In addition, a 25,000 euro project run with international NGO Miseur, is building a kindergarten at Khamar Khiid, an information centre for the rural population as well as a non-formal education centre for illiterate adults and children who have dropped out from school.

Background of the Khiid

Khamar Khiid was established in the 1820s by the Mongolian educator and writer Danzanravjaa, who devoted great efforts to the cause of public education, which he promoted through the establishment of a school, theatre, museum and library at Khamar Khiid. At its peak, the monastery consisted of four colleges, a children's school (training children as artists, sculptors, singers and dancers as well as giving basic and vocational training), more than eighty temples, and a resident population of over 500 lamas. Under Danzanravjaa's influence women were especially encouraged to participate. To the north of the monastery were a series of caves where monks would practice yogic exercises and meditate in isolation for 108 days at a time. Khamar Khiid was an important centre of the Red Hat sect, and was the seat of the Gobiin Dogshin Noyon Khutagt ("Wrathful Noble Saint of the Gobi").

After being completely destroyed in 1938, Khamar Khiid was re-built in the 1990s. At the rear of the new monastery is a well that is believed to have sacred healing qualities. Danzanravjaa claimed in his "Adistet Yosnii Sudar" (Blessed water sutra) that this water was helpful in curing ailments to the stomach, intestines, bile and liver - and he provided special instructions for its drinking and use.

7. Luvsandanjanjantsan Studies Centre

Based in the Bayankhongor district in southern Mongolia, the Centre was established to promote the works of the high lama and renowned scholar Khanchin Chojjil Luvsandanjanjantsan (1639-1704) as well as to conduct activities for the conservation of religion and the environment. It brings together monastic heads, scholars and scientists.

a. Lobbying

The Centre has been very strong in environmental lobbying and advocacy. Successful lobbying of local representatives since the 1990s has led to provincial-level protection of sacred and environmentally significant areas, actually pushing out mining companies operating in these areas. In 2005, three mining companies ceased

their activities; two more are expected to cease operations. It is still a battle, with some 100 companies still licensed to operate in the district. The Centre is working to redefine mining laws in order to preserve the environment. Director of the Studies Centre, D. Batbold, also heads the Homeland and Water Protection Coalition, which was formed in 2006 during a workshop organized jointly with the Asia Foundation and which brings together water protection movements from 14 aimags around the country. Since the workshop, the local community in Bayankhongor has been very active in discouraging mining, and several anti-mining movements have emerged. "We focus on providing environmental education to the local community and making them aware of their legal rights. Educated people are easily motivated and difficult to stop," D. Batbold explains. As a result of local activism mining companies operating in the region have already become more environmentally aware. For example, sea buckthorn is now being planted on land affected by mining in order to help mitigate environmental damage.

b. Sacred sites

The centre is also helping to revive traditional conservation practices and sacred site worship rituals. The monks worked for three years to produce and later distribute "Sutras for the worship of the spirit of the land of Bayankhongor", a collection of sacred site sutras in Tibetan and Mongolian. The centre is presently building several temples dedicated to the worship of local sacred mountains.

c. Tree and vegetable planting

In 2004, the Centre began work to revive the "Tuin River willow" groves, half of which had been destroyed in the previous decade. In cooperation with the Japanese Oita Prefecture research has been conducted on the viability of growing sugar beets as an alternative form of income to mining. Since 2002, the Centre has worked in cooperation with ADRA to implement a vegetable growing healthy food project. The Luvsandanjanjantsan Studies Centre has planted more than 85,000 trees in Bayankhongor since 2003, in cooperation with the office of the Governor of Bayankhongor Province, and within the framework of the Reforestation 20 program.

Contacts

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8. Gandandarjaaling Monastery

Gandandarjaaling Monastery is a small monastery located in the remote Khan Khokhii region of Mongolia. First established in 1818, it was restored in 1990. The monastery currently has 17 lamas.

The monastery has received a grant from ARC to test the water quality at sacred springs in the area. Local sacred sites include: Khan Khokhiin ovoo, Tsagaan Nuurny ovoo, Khosyn ovoo, Takhiltyn ovoo, Delger ovoo, Modtolgoin ovoo, Gichgiin gol, and Khangiltsagiin gol.

Under the WWF/ARC Khan Khokhii Conservation project, activities have also been carried out in the region to help reduce logging and create alternative energy sources. The project provides ecological training targeted at the Buddhist monastic and lay community in support of the struggling monasteries in this remote region.

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9. Gandan Shadduv Ling Monastery

There is a major copper molybdenum plant near to this small monastery in Orkhon Aimag. According to monks, there are suspicions that the pollution from this mine has a role in the high level of congenital heart defects seen in the area. There is a desire to link in with national Buddhist environmental programmes although this has not yet happened.

10 Selenge Aimag Monastery

The monastery has been engaging in small-scale tree planting and education programmes in the area around this northern Mongolian monastery. "I teach that if you plant onions you will grow onions; and if you cut the trees, you have no trees," said senior monk Dhundup from Selenge Aimag. The monks also plant flowers, "so that people who are suffering can be released from suffering by seeing beauty."

SECTION THREE: ORGANISATIONS

A. International and Mongolian development and environmental Organizations linking faith and environment in Mongolia.

1. The World Bank

The World Bank has supported projects linking a wide range of faiths with environment and development around the world. In its 2006 publication *Faiths and the Environment*, the World Bank explains its rationale for engaging with faiths:

“We increasingly recognize the role of civil society as a key network for environment and development programs. However—and with some notable exceptions—the potential of faith communities and faith-based organizations has not been fully explored. Yet in almost every country in the world, the faiths have a wider network on the ground than any other element of civil society. They also have centuries of experience, and in many places provide a substantial part of the educational, medical, and welfare structures and personnel in the country. They also often have larger followings than many political parties, across much wider social ranges. The faiths actually are the oldest, largest, most respected, and deepest-penetrating NGOs. They share with us an agenda of promoting wise environmental management, even if this has been somewhat lost during parts of their history. There is strong potential to facilitate the involvement of the very powerful voice of these groups for environmental stewardship.”

Present environmental priorities in Mongolia are forests and water provision, pollution and sanitation. Under the Urban (Ulaanbaatar) Services Improvement Project 1 (USIP1), the Bank helped to expand the water supply network and improve hygiene standards in low income ger districts of Ulaanbaatar, and this has been extended into a second phase. With GEF financing, the World Bank has supported an energy-efficient urban stoves project in Ulaanbaatar, and a five-year research project in the northeast of Lake Khuvsgul to investigate the interactions between climate change, livestock herders, and biodiversity loss. The World Bank is also midway through the 12-year Sustainable Livelihoods Project which is now active in every aimag. A Forest Landscapes project is currently under preparation, with a wastewater plan for Ulaanbaatar City also planned.

Netherlands-Mongolia Trust Fund for Environmental Reform (NEMO)

This was established in April 2005 with an initial grant to the World Bank of US\$6 million from the Netherlands Government with the objective of strengthening and advancing the environment and natural resources agenda in Mongolia. Although the first phase closed in September 2006, its successful results led to a second phase initiated in 2007 with an additional US\$5 million to be disbursed over four years. The Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE, since mid-2008 including Tourism, MNET), the Netherlands (Royal Netherlands Embassy in Beijing and Ministry of Development

Cooperation), and the World Bank agreed that activities under NEMO2 (2007-2010) would focus on Natural Resources Management, Pollution Management, and Environmental Governance.

Almost all parts of the environmental agenda, almost all environmental agencies and NGOs, and almost all parts of the country have been touched by NEMO. It has: established baselines of knowledge for environmental natural resource management; raised the visibility of environmental affairs, particularly at the national level thanks to the large coverage of the program; broadened the pool of environmental practitioners accessing resources to fund small and medium-size activities with the participation of local communities. One of its aims has been to strengthen the involvement of Buddhist communities in environmental management through the production of education and awareness materials, including the maintenance of an 'eco-ger' at Gandan Monastery, and the contribution towards environmental management of the sacred landscape. This Handbook is one of the outputs.

More details can be found at www.worldbank.org/nemo

The World Bank working with Buddhism in Mongolia

"The World Bank respects religion as an efficient way to reach most people," said the World Bank's Infrastructure Officer in Mongolia, Mr. Orogdol Sanjaasuren, who now works for the World Bank's International Finance Corporation. As the predominant religion of Mongolia, Buddhism represents a suitable path for the Bank to support the protection of the environment, raising environmental awareness and implementing development and environmental projects. The Bank has partnered with ARC, WWF and Gandan Monastery on several projects including:

- The publication of a series of Mongolian-language handbooks for sacred environmental preservation which have been distributed to all Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia. See bibliography for details.
- Sacred sites: stele were erected at six traditional sacred areas of environmental significance. This has reminded the local people of the areas' holy status, and in many cases it has proved to be a more effective actual protection to such areas than government legislation
- The Lake Khovsgol Research Project was a five-year GEF medium-size project executed by the Geo-Ecology Institute of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. It studied the impacts of pasture use and forest cutting on the loss of biodiversity, and on the dynamics of the forest, steppe and streams, with the aim of determining how best to protect this and other similar forest-steppe areas. A leaflet on traditional conservation practices - describing local water deities and associated practices as well as the environmental significance of the rituals - was produced for nomadic herders in collaboration with the Zanabazar Buddhist University and Gandan Monastery. The Tibetan-script sutras chanted to ask for blessings from nature spirits are included to help

local monks revive these traditional practices. Lake Khovsgol is Mongolia's largest lake, and is one of the least polluted in the world. Located in the north of the country, the lake and a large surrounding area of Siberian taiga forest, steppe grassland, and mountain tundra were designated as a national park in 1992, and the park is being formally nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- The Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development 2005- see Section One, Chapter Three.
- The Sacred Urban Landscape Initiative: focusing on environmental issues in the sacred triangle between Gandan Monastery, Tasgan Ovoo hill and Geser Temple. Environmental education and conservation management training were provided to monastic communities, giving the clergy a more active role in spreading this awareness among other segments of society.
- This handbook: This guidebook to working with Buddhists on environmental projects in Mongolia was compiled and written by ARC under contracts with both MNET and the World Bank (NEMO).

Contacts

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2. The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)

ARC is a secular body that was established to help the major world religions develop environmental programmes based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. It helps the religions link with key environmental organizations, creating powerful alliances, as well as helping them develop practical projects, using their own resources, which help make a real difference. It also works with NGOs, international agencies and governments, to help them work with the faiths on environmental projects.

ARC, which was founded by The HRH Prince Philip, became an independent charity in 1995, after operating for a decade under the umbrella of WWF. It now works with scores of different traditions within the world's eleven major religions (Baha'ism, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism).

ARC has been working in Mongolia to 1996 and has established good relationships with several monasteries, in particular with Gandan Monastery. Mongolia's President Nambaryn Enkhbayar, was for several years the International President of ARC. Since 2000 ARC has had a wide-ranging partnership with the World Bank through its Faiths and Biodiversity programme. A summary of this project is available at www.worldbank.org/faithsandenvironment.

Some of ARC's projects, in addition to those already described in the World Bank section, have included:

1. The 'Lost Sutras' Publication Project

This has so far involved three books of sacred texts, including Sacred Sites of Mongolia, the expanded Sacred Sites of Mongolia (2004) and Mongolian Legends of the Land, in collaboration with the scholars of the Zanabazar Buddhist University, Gandan Monastery, WWF Mongolia and the World Bank. It is hoped that the project will be able to be expanded into other aimags. See Section One, Chapter Four for more details. Other well-received ARC/World Bank/NEMO publications include Methods of Traditional Conservation (2006) and Rituals of Worshipping Ovoo (2006).

2. Celebrating springs as sacred

This was part of a national Buddhist education awareness programme in conjunction with WWF and the Buddhist sangha. It has involved practical training for monks and herders to maintain springs as vital water sources, as well as conducting ritual ceremonies that symbolically protect the springs and thereby raise their significance amongst the local community. In 2004 this linked into the Mongolian National Year of Water Government campaign. See the WWF section below.

3. Reforestation

This involved building relationships with the community at Khamar Khiid in the Gobi, a monastery established by the famous religious and political leader and artist Danzan Ravjaa. The local community and Gobi based NGO, Tavan Dohio, have been active in several environmental projects, including a project to grow trees in an area that was deforested by a Russian military base camp.

4. Educational Training

In 2004 ARC liaised with The Wildlife Conservation Society's University Conservation Club at the Biology Faculty of the National University Mongolia to set up an environmental programme at the Zanabazar Buddhist University. The idea was for students of the two universities to exchange their ideas and practices related to the environment. The aim is to broaden their shared outlook on contemporary environmental challenges.

5. Stele programme

ARC has worked with the Buddhist community and WWF to support setting up of stele on sacred mountains, in response to growing concern about encroachment.

6. Altai-Sayan eco-region

ARC is working with WWF in the remote Khan Khokhii region in Uvs aimag to preserve the forests as part of the Altai Sayan eco-region. The project is working to prevent logging, create alternative energy resources and give ecological training to the local community.

7. Conferences

ARC helped organise the Northern Buddhist Conference on Ecology and Development

in Mongolia in 2005 (see Section One Chapter Three) and also attended a major environmental meeting at Gandan Monastery, organised by The Tributary Fund (see below).

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3. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

WWF came to Mongolia in 1992. Its brief was to assist the Government to extend the existing protected area system into a network incorporating all of Mongolia's important landscapes and ecosystems, together with their flora and fauna. WWF works closely with the Mongolian Government organizations, Regional Authorities, the United Nations Development Programmes (Eastern Biodiversity project), German Aid (GTZ) and local stakeholders. Its main goals in Mongolia are to conserve and sustainably manage the bio-diversity and wilderness in two eco-regions: the Altai-Sayan Mountain forests and the Daurian steppe eco-regions. It takes an integrated conservation approach with projects in the areas of species, fresh water, protected areas, toxics, pasture managements and rural development, environmental education, and policy and laws.

Since 2000, WWF-Mongolia has carried out several successful projects with the Buddhist community, mostly in partnership with ARC and/or the World Bank. Some of these are mentioned in the ARC section above. They also include:

- The Sacred Springs project at Amarbayasgalant Monastery and Gandandarjaaling Monastery which involved providing practical training to maintain certain springs as vital water sources for monks and herders, as well as conducting ritual ceremonies to protect the springs and raise their significance within the local communities. WWF supported setting up a stele to denote sacred land near Amarbayasgalant Monastery, and partnered in a reforestation program to train the young monks in the Khan Khokhii region.
- Under the WWF/ARC Sacred Gifts for a Living Planet programme, environmental activities and commitments were promoted as religious gifts given to the earth. The first Mongolian Sacred Gift was the reintroduction in 2000 of a centuries-old ban on hunting the endangered snow leopard and saiga antelope. In 2001, this was expanded to include the re-creation of traditional Buddhist Sacred Reserves.

Contacts

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4. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

ADRA works in the areas of food security, economic development, primary healthcare, emergency management and basic education. In Mongolia it has provided emergency food aid in several areas affected by severe weather conditions. In cooperation with Luvsandanzanjantsan Studies Centre, ADRA implemented a vegetable growing project for the lay community in Bayankhongor district.

Contacts

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5. The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that has funded and implemented programmes with the people and government of Mongolia since 1990. It supports work promoting democratic governance and economic growth. In 2006, the Foundation launched a major new initiative to bring government, the private sector and civil society together to ensure that natural resources would be used more sustainably and responsibly, and that resource decisions would be based upon citizen involvement and informed by hard science and empiric knowledge.

The Foundation's environment and natural resources work focuses on rivers, (which exhibit the effects of mining, industrial and urban discharges), grazing and herding, and other human impacts. Through this process, Mongolians learn more about the ecosystems and watersheds upon which they depend for their livelihoods and sustenance, and thus can participate more knowledgeably in local decision-making that affects them directly.

The Foundation has trained students at the Erdene Zuu Monastery in Karakorum (Kharkhorin), and at other monastic schools, to examine stream ecology and biology, which are indicators of water quality and river health. The Foundation worked with Lama D. Batbold of the Namdalchoikhorlin Monastery and the Luvsandanzanjantsan Studies Centre - who has been among the most engaged leaders influencing government policy on natural resources uses - to publish his translation of Sutras to Sacred Places in Bayankhongor. The aim was to help reconnect citizens with natural resources through their faith.

Contacts

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E-mail: general@asiafound.mn; www.asiafoundation.org

6. Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Mongolia joined the ADB in 1991. Since then it has provided financial and technical assistance for projects in the agriculture, education, energy, finance, health, industry, telecommunications, transport, and urban development sectors. Projects with an environmental component include: improving the living environment of people in urban ger areas; agricultural and rural development involving land and water resource management; and strengthening land use policies and developing renewable energy in small towns and rural areas (partly through providing off grid energy to remote areas).

Contacts

ADB Mongolia, MCS Plaza, Second Floor, Seoul Street 4, Ulaanbaatar 46, Mongolia; Tel. + 976 11 329 836; Fax. + 976 11 311795; adbmnm@adb.org; www.adb.org/MNRM. Country Director: Adrian Ruthenberg

7. The Tributary Fund and Taimen Conservation Fund

The Tributary Fund (TTF) has been working in Mongolia since 2004. Its project on the Eg and Uur Rivers in the northern part of Mongolia has involved financing the reconstruction of the Dayan Derkh Monastery as both a monastery, and as a Buddhist environmental training centre. TTF partnered with private fly fishing ecotourism companies Sweetwater Travel and Hovsgol Travel, research institutions and US universities, and Mongolian Taimen Conservation Fund NGO. For the past four years TTF has been sending young monks to school at the Gandan Monastery to learn about Buddhism and conservation issues, and is also supporting a staff of Mongolians working with community members to implement this project on the ground, incorporating local culture in a conservation strategy for this unique and fragile watershed area. The World Bank/IFC provided the GEF \$1 million for this project, and between them provided a task managers and other experienced assistance.

The Eg and Uur Rivers are the home of the magnificent rare taimen – the world’s largest species of salmon. According to local Mongolia director, L Chimgee, TTF started by inviting Mongolian Buddhist leaders to discuss the best strategy for preservation, as well as recording oral histories from an elderly former monk at the Dayan Deerkh Monastery. “Many monasteries have been restored, but the restoration of the buildings is not enough. They need good monks as well.” TTF helped select 13 boys from the surrounding areas, and hopes that five of them will become future religious leaders in the watershed.

There are school-based eco-clubs in nine of the villages, with the clubs competing with each other on quizzes, and the teachers retrained annually to enhance science teaching skills. “It is partly about giving information to children about preserving the fish, but also about teaching them about birds, letting them use binoculars, and holding nature youth camps in nature,” Chimgee says. She continues “During the 10-day camps, the children have many new experiences, which the organisers hope will

help them make choices in the future that will serve the local environment.”

TTF has also supported resident herders establish a gold mining watchdog group titled “The Motherland Coalition.” “When we first started in the Eg-Uur watershed mining was a pressing problem, with many licenses granted. It was very harmful for the environment, people’s lungs, and, in particular, to the water resources. From 146 licenses granted in 2006, numbers decreased to 92 in 2008, with greater awareness of these issues in the local community.

In October 2008, TTF organised a major environmental meeting at Gandan Monastery. Partners include Gandan Monastery, ARC, the Taimen Conservation Fund, University of Wisconsin and University of Nevada, Hovsgol Travel, Sweetwater Travel, and many local officials and residents.

Contacts

The Tributary Fund, P.O. Box 608, Bozeman, Montana 59715, USA; Tel; 406-585-5560; www.thetributaryfund.org, Executive Director: Betsy Gaines Quammen. E-mail: betsy@thetributaryfund.org. For the Taimen Conservation Fund, contact L. Chimgee, Tel; +976-11-325601; chimgee@taimen.org, info@taimen.org; www.taimen.org

8. United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

USAID runs the Eastern Steppe Living Landscape project in the Dornod, Sukhbaatar, and southern Khentii Aimag. It aims to develop an ecologically aware management system for the Eastern Steppe, focusing on wildlife and on promoting the adoption of sustainable conservation practices among members of the local community.

Contacts

USAID/Ulaanbaatar, PSC 461, Box 300; FPO AP 96521-0002, Tel: 976-11-312-390 Desk Officer: Calista Downey. Tel: (202) 712-1002; E-mail: cdowney@usaid.gov, Website: www.usaid.gov

9. Ecology-Erdem Club

The Club was established in 2003 by ecology and science students at the National University of Mongolia. Its purpose was to: promote nature conservation, conduct ecological research and surveys, and to promote the involvement of science students in global environmental preservation. It has more over 400 members from 22 universities including undergraduates, postgraduates and teachers. The Club works closely with ARC, WWF, secondary schools and environmental organisations.

In 2006, the Ecology-Erdem Club held a workshop for university students and monks in cooperation with the Zanabazar Buddhist University at Gandan Monastery. It provided an opportunity for representatives from monasteries, NGOs and universities

to share information and ideas concerning traditional beliefs and how they can be effectively put into practice in conservation activities. Other activities have included a field trip to Khentii Aimag together with monks from Gandan Monastery, with the aim of venerating sites in the province. Together the club members and monks cleaned up the sacred sites and gave lectures and information to the local people.

In 2007 club members participated in compiling A Field Guide to Tracks and Signs of Mongolian Mammals, implemented by Steppe Forward, a UK based Darwin Initiative run by the Zoological Society of London in collaboration with the National University Mongolia, and funded by the World Bank.

Contacts

Tuvshinjargal: +976-99759896

10. Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia

The Ministry has supported numerous environmental projects. Through the World Bank's Netherlands-Mongolia Trust Fund for the Environmental Reform (NEMO) project, the Ministry, along with the Open Society Forum has implemented 100 small grants projects with NGOs, academics, government offices and citizens, including the project by Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery in the Baganuur district to research the environmental and health impacts of mining in the region (see entry for Ontsar Isei Lin Monastery). and a project in Sergelen soum of Tov aimag to protect the spring sources and surrounding areas of "Mother Rock", which is a nationally sacred place. A further NEMO fund project working with the Buddhist community is the Chansaa newspaper produced in cooperation with Ven. Purevbat of Mongolian Institute for Buddhist Art of Gandan Monastery. Under the project Ven. Purevat also conducted lectures on traditional conservation throughout Mongolia.

The Ministry also has supported the establishment of "Buddha Park" near Zaisan in the south of Ulaanbaatar and partnered in creation of Ochirvaani Burkhan in Otgon Tenger mountain in Zavhan Province. There are number of long-term environmental projects implemented by the Ministry though the World Bank, UN agencies and JAICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency).

Contacts

Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, Government Building - 2, United Nations Street 5/2, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia;
Tel: +976-51-263341; Fax: +976-11-321401; E-mail: mne@mongol.net

11. XAC NGO

In 2003 and 2004, XacBank organised mass clean up environmental campaigns. In 2004 this involved more than 4,100 participants collecting some 720 cubic metres of waste from the Tuul, Selb and Dund river areas in five hours, filling 120 six-ton trucks.

As an incentive, everyone collecting nine bags or more received a free pair of sports shoes, donated by the Nike Corporation. XAC NGO is Mongolia's first non-bank financial institution, established as an initiative by XacBank. The NGO has committed to establishing an environmental management system for all activities financed under microfinance lending operations.

12. Khaan Bank

In 2006, Khaan Bank financed the first Mongolian map of the Khovsgol Lake and Altai mountain regions within the framework of a Nature Conservation Project. The map was printed at Khaan Bank's expense to promote the lake and to provide an educational means of motivating young children to preserve nature. The maps were distributed to local secondary school libraries throughout the country. In 2003 and 2004, the Bank supported a school children's movement to clean the environment in the Terelj region in cooperation with WWF.

B: BUDDHIST ORGANISATION WORKING ON ENVIRONMENT- RELATED PROJECTS

1. Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT)

FPMT is an international, non-profit organization, founded in 1975 by Tibetan monk Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935-84). It is devoted to the transmission of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition through teaching, meditation, and community service. With 141 centres and study groups around the world, and projects in 31 countries, its activities cover five continents. The Mongolia office was founded in 1999 by Lama Zopa Rinpoche as a non-profit religious organization to help revive Mongolian Buddhist culture and provide assistance for the poor. It works through re-establishing destroyed monastic communities; teaching Buddhism to the people; establishing social services; and working with young people.

FPMT Mongolia built the Idгаа Choizinling College of Gandan Monastery, established Dolma Ling nunnery and community centre, and set up the Golden Light Sutra Centre in Darkhan. Its main centre, Shedrup Ling, is located in Ulaanbaatar.

It provides Buddhist teachings and outreach in prisons, schools, universities and monasteries, administers the Mongolian Sangha Food Offering and carries out social services including health clinics and soup kitchens. Staff have translated numerous dharma books, presented TV series "Discovering Buddhism" and hosted the fourth Enlightenment Experience Celebration event. The Dolma Ling Nunnery in Ulaanbaatar is the first residential nunnery in Mongolia, home to 14 ordained Mongolian nuns.

Environmental projects that have been done so far include:

- Sponsoring a children's clean up movement.
- Holding an environmental youth camp in the Terelj National Park.
- Printing environmental awareness material for free distribution and co-sponsoring an environmental awareness billboard.
- Making environmental protection a critical component of the Dolma Ling Community Center child development program and of the Buddhist teachings given at Dharkhan for children.
- Advising WWF on combining environmental protection and Buddhism.
- Supporting a school in the mining town of Nalaikh, where children are made aware of the value of nature.
- Using the community centres and temples to make people more aware of their environment.

Programmes are developed each year according to the cooperation with Mongolian partners, as well as the personnel resources and funding available.

Contacts

FPMT Shedrup Ling, PO Box 219, Ulaanbaatar 13, Tel: +976-11-321580, Mobile: +976-99172272; Fax: +976-11-314115, fpmt@mongol.net, Acting Director: Chimeddavaa Chimedtsogoo

FPMT Golden Light Sutra Center, PO Box 562, Darkhan, Tel: +976-(1372) 28856, goldenlight@mongol.net

FPMT Publication, Translation and Education, PO Box 219, Ulaanbaatar 13, Tel: +976-11-330463, Fax: +976-11-314115, dkhulan@mongol.net, Director: Khulan Dembereldorj

2. Gunchab Jampa Ling & Asral NGO

Founded in 2002 by the Tibetan lama Panchen Otrul Rinpoche, Gunchab Jampa Ling is a religious non-profit organization working to help revive Buddhism in Mongolia. Panchen Otrul Rinpoche first visited Mongolia in 1995 at the request of the Dalai Lama to provide Dharma teachings there. Social welfare activities are carried out through Gunchab Jampa Ling's NGO sister body, Asral NGO.

Asral NGO aims to prevent the disintegration of families by providing sustainable futures for all through training, direct assistance and outreach in the areas of livelihoods, food security, health, education and housing. It runs a successful gardening project in Gachuurt, 20 kilometers from Ulaanbaatar helping people to gain access to a more varied diet and generate an income through selling surplus vegetables. The project encourages people to care and be aware of nature.

Asral NGO's felt and embroidery project, "Made In Mongolia" (MIM) empowers communities to use local natural resources, such as wool, sustainably and generate incomes to support their families and extended communities. MIM preserves local traditional handicrafts and is currently looking into traditional Mongolian natural dyeing processes. Its main community centre is situated on the edge of the ger district in Ulaanbaatar. It also has centres in Ondorshil in the Gobi region and in Gachuurt. They also work in Shankh Khiid, near Karakorum (Kharkhorin) in central Mongolia.

Contacts

Gunchab Jampa Ling & Asral NGO, PO Box 467, Ulaanbaatar 23, Mongolia, Tel: +976 -11- 304838, Fax: +976 -11- 304898, E-mail: jampaling_asral@yahoo.com, www.jampaling.org/mongolia.html, www.madeinmongolia.net. Asral NGO Manager: Munguntsetseg

3. Tibet Foundation

Tibet Foundation is a UK-based charity founded in 1985. One of its main objectives is to help promote education in Tibetan Buddhism and culture, and to support the revival of Buddhism initiated by local communities. Its main activities are carried out in Asia - mainly Tibet, Nepal, India and Mongolia.

The Foundation has worked closely with Mongolian Buddhists since 1990, establishing a country-specific programme in 1993. This programme provides funding for Buddhist education for monks and nuns, as well as translation and publication of Buddhist texts into modern Mongolian, and managing local initiatives to disseminate basic Buddhist teaching to the lay community. Environmentally-orientated projects include an exhibition on the Sacred Landscapes of Mongolia in London in 2004. Traditional value-orientated projects include introducing Wisdom Handbooks to secondary schools in Mongolia in 2008.

Contacts

Tibet Foundation, 2 St. James's Market, London, SW1Y 4SB, UK Tel +44 (0) 20 7930 6001; E-mail: office@tibet-foundation.org; www.tibet-foundation.org Representative in Mongolia Dr. Phuntsok Tsering +976-99196587. E-mail: phuntsogtsering@yahoo.com

4. Tilopa

The Tilopa Center was established in 2004 as a non-profit NGO and focuses on the "Red Hat" Ulaan Shashin tradition, after the Tibetan Drikung Kagyu lineage. Programmes focus chiefly on promoting religious dialogue and the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia. There is an emphasis on traditional medicine. One of Tilopa's projects provided a home for street children at the Amarbayasgalant Monastery. The centre has also built a hospice for the terminally ill.

Contacts

Tilopa, Sukhbaatar Bezirk, "Lucky" Center, 3. Obergeschoss, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Tel/Fax: +976-11-317983, tilopa_mon@yahoo.de, www.webmongolia.com/jan. Contact: Jan Felgentrue

Contacts and addresses:

1.1 Main Buddhist Monasteries

No.	Names	Province	Monastery Name	Contact
1	His Eminence Khamba Lama, Gobju Chojamts DembereI	Ulaanbaatar	Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists	Tel: 360176, 360337 Fax: 360354
2	Khamba Lama Ch. Dambajav	Ulaanbaatar	Zuun Khuree Dashchoilin	352006
3	Sandag	Ulaanbaatar	Dambadarjaalin	99088650
	A. Baasanjargal	Arkhangai	Zaya Khuree	99198073
4	Yu. Batbold	Bayankhongor	Lamyn Gegeen Monastery	91999013
5	Sh. Munkhjargal	Bulgan	Khandchin Vangiin Khuree	99084476
6	N. Enkhjargal	Govi-Altai	Dashpeljeelin	99482003
7	Gomboragchaa	Govi-Sumber	Zuun Janjin Choir Baldandashgampellin	99548008
8	Munkhsukh	Darkhan-Uul	Dari Ekhiin Gotsogdarjaalin	99397647
9	D. Amgalanbat	Dornod	Danrigdanjaalin	99582283
10	J. Bolor-Erdene	Dornogovi	Dechinchoinkhortin	99046099
11	B. Dorjkhoral	Dundgovi	Dashgempellin	91910766
12	S. Bayandorj	Zavkhan	Tugsbuyan tjavkhiant	99093680
13	A. Sandagjav	Uvurkhangai	Gandanpuntsaglin	99733746
14	A. Tumurbat	Umnugovi	Maanyn Khiid	99263429
15	B. Munkhtogoo	Orkhon	Khutagt Lamyn Khiid	99352566
16	B. Battumur	Uvs	Gomyn Khuree Dechinravjaalin	99455301
17	B. Soyol- Erdene	Khovd	Tugeemel Amarjulaqch	95439135
18	Ukhagva-Ochir	Khuvsgul	Gandandarjaalin	99005285
19	Ch. Gombosukh	Khentii	Gundugavarlin	99087783
20	D. Davaajav	Sukhbaatar	Erdenemandal	99519135
21	Ch. Zundui	Selenge	Tugsbayasgalant Nomyn Khurd	99497378
22	D. Davaanyam	Tuv	Manzushir Khutagtyn Dashchoinkhortin	99273043
23	Kh. Baasansuren	Uvurkhangai	Bat-Erdenezuu	99097711
24	E. Olonbayar	Selenge	Amarbayasgalant	88007008
25	T. Uugandul	Darkhan-Uul	Urjin Sanaq Choilin	99044600

1.2 International Development and Environmental Organisations

See at the top of SECTION THREE above, for details and contacts.

1.3 Local development and environmental NGOs

#	Organization	Contact person	Address
1	Association for the Protection of Rare Mongolian Animals and Plants	D. Arimed 343966	
2	Bios Association	D. Tugshjargal 379513	Khan-Uul district, 10 th Khoroо, Bldg 2, Apt. 53
3	Blue Wood-grouse	Z. Lodal 99203227	Tbyalmaг, Erdene souм, 5 th баг
4	Center of Nature and Women	Ch. Purnysuren 99142550	Chingelhel district, 5 th Khoroо, 2 nd floor, number 211
5	Coconut	G. Gansukh 99184903	Peace Ave, Bldg 15, Room 300
6	Ecology Erdem Club	Turshh jargal 99798396	Mongolian National University, Ulaanbaatar
7	Erdene Zuu Endevayr	Van. Baasansuren tel: 99097711 baasansuren@erdenezuu.mn	Erdene Zuu Khild Uvurkhangaг Kharkhorin
8	Foundation for Protecting Hunting Resources	D. Arinbold 99289609	Bayangol district, 1 st Khoroо, Tuiл 14
9	Foundation for the Mongolian Raptor	Sh. Boldbaatar 99131174	Peace Ave, district 51, Institute of Science Academy, Bldg 1, room 311
10	Geo Ecology	976-11-31500, Fax: 976-11-31500	Geo Ecology Institute-301, Barun Selbe-15, Ulaanbaatar 21233, Mongolia.
11	Leopard Foundation	Ankhbayar 99409366	Uv's almaг, Ulaangom souм, 4 th баг
12	Mongolian Bird Association	S. Gombobaatar 99180143	University street, NUW, 2 bldg, room 435
13	Mongolian Butterfly Association	N. Munkhbayer 99095097	Chingelhel district, 1 st Khoroо, Bldg 12, Apt. 3
14	Mongolian Conservation Association	Ts. Chultamnamdag 99254424	
15	Mongolian Ecotourism Society	O. Bum-Yalaqch 99173719	Wedding Palace, number 3
16	Mongolian Gardeners' Association	N. Purnydash 363911	
17	Mongolian Green Movement	B. Jlyandorj 99171654	
18	Mongolian Leopard Center	B. Munkhtog 99182176	
19	Mongolian National Water Association	S. Chuluunkhuyag 99186743	Chingelhel district, Institute of Bio-ecology, room 401
20	Mongolian Nature and Environmental Consortium	M. Badarch 99189276	11 th district, Mongolian notaries' building, 3 rd floor, room 4
21	Mongolian Protected Lands Association	B. Gikhnaran 91183439	
22	Mongolian Saiga Protection Association	S. Dulambaren 343706	
23	Mongolian Warm Eagle Association	A. Bobt 99113313	Bayan-Oigl almaг Central post-office box 403
24	Mongolian Wild Plants and Animals Management Fund	Sh. Gunqadorj 99114805	Ministry of Nature and Environment, room 403
25	National Environmental Association of Mongolia	S. Mandasalkhan 99117825	Seoul street 22a, Altangadas Account building
26	Natural Environment Development/Women's Centre	M. Amaraa 99342011	Songinokhailhan district, Bldg 28
27	Parachute's Association for Conservation	Ts. Bayar 99156399	
28	Taimen Conservation Fund	L. Chimgas, Tel: 11 322001; chimgas@taimen.org imb@taimen.org;	www.taimen.org
29	Union of Mongolian Environmental Non Governmental Organizations	J. Baibald 312806 99113489	Hydrology and Meteorology Institute, Room 170
30	Union of Mongolian Hospitals for Geography	D. Dorj 99243948	National Film Industry, Eneral University

1.4 Local environmental education NGOs

1	New Century Nature	B. Byambasalkhan 99290739	Nabikh district, 2 nd Khoroо, Bldg 31, room 71
2	Information Training Center on Nature and Environment	B. Shinebatag 310200	Hydrology and Meteorology Institute, Room 110
3	Ecology Erdem Club	Tuyshin Jargal 9979890	NUM, Ecology Education Center, room 203
4	Association of Mongolian Botany	Ts. Jamsran 323970, 9979821	NUM, 2 nd building, room 374
5	Sea and Child National center	G. Chuluunbat 304322	
6	Academic, Dr. T. Punbaq's Fund	B. Badrakh 99247117	
7	Quality Education	D. Narantseteg 99300111, 314119	

1.5 Buddhist organisations and government bodies

Please see Section Two.

SECTION FOUR: APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY

Aimag (m)	Province
Bodhisatva (s)	An enlightened being who has vowed to remain in a state of samsara to help all beings attain enlightenment.
Bogd Gegeen (m)	(See Bogd Khaan, below)
Bogd Khaan (m)	The spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia. The first was Zanabazar, (see below) born in 1635. Also known as Bogd Gegeen.
Buryatia	Buddhist republic of Russia, bordering Mongolia.
Circumnambulate	To walk around a religious structure in order to accumulate merit. In Mongolia this is done clockwise.
Dalai Lama	Spiritual head of Tibet. The present Dalai Lama is the 14th reincarnation.
dratsang (t)	College of Buddhist philosophy at a monastery.
Dharamsala	Administrative centre of Tibetans in Exile; home of the Dalai Lama.
Dharma (s)	Buddhist teachings and virtuous path.
Drepung Gomang (t)	Important Tibetan Buddhist Monastery and Study Centre in the southern Indian state of Karnataka.
Eightfold Path	The way to stop suffering – through cultivating wisdom, and practicing ethical conduct and mental discipline.
Enlightenment	The ultimate release from samsara through realizing the true nature of mind, reality, rebirth and the wheel of suffering.
Four Noble Truths	Key Buddhist teaching that life involves suffering, that suffering comes from attachment, and that it is possible to be released from suffering through following the Eightfold Path (see above) .
Gandantegchenling	Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar: the most important Mongolian monastery, and centre of Mongolian Buddhists.
Gelen (t)	Vow taken by monks and nuns when they become fully ordained; 253 vows of moral practice.
Geluk (t)	The “yellow hat” tradition of Tibetan Buddhism of which the Dalai Lama is the most predominant figure.

Genen (t)	Vow and five precepts taken by monastic and lay people.
ger (m)	The traditional rounded felt tent dwelling of Mongolians.
Getsel	Vow taken by monks and nuns to observe 36 vows of moral practice.
Janraisig (m)	Bodhisattva of compassion; the Dalai lama is believed to be an incarnation (s: Avalokitesvara, t: Chenrezig, ch: Guanyin).
Kagyu (t)	The "red hat tradition" of Tibetan Buddhism, headed by the Karmapa.
khadag (m)	Traditional scarf used in ceremonial offerings and to protect trees. In Mongolia khadags are usually blue.
Khamba Lama (m)	The head lama of a monastery.
Khiid (m)	Buddhist monastery or temple.
khoroo (m)	Town-district.
lam (m)	Short word for "lama".
lama (t)	A general word for monk, which also refers to a high Buddhist teacher.
lus (m)	Celestial being that owns or takes care of natural bodies such as mountains, rivers, forests, trees, rocks and plants. (Also known as naga or savdag).
Mahāyāna (s)	The school of Buddhism practiced in Tibet, Mongolia and East Asia; it means Great Vehicle.
mantra (s)	A recitation formula of a Buddha or deity. A word or phrase, repeated during meditation.
naga (t)	(see lus, above).
Nyingma (t)	The oldest sect of Tibetan Buddhism, founded in the eighth century.
ovoo (m)	Cairn of stones indicating a sacred site.
Panchen Lama (t)	The second spiritual head of Tibet after the Dalai Lama.
pandit (s)	Buddhist scholar.
Sakya (t)	School of Tibetan Buddhism, alongside the Nyingma, Kagyu and Geluk. Founded in the 11th century.
samsara (s)	The cycle of birth and rebirth of sentient beings .
Sangha (t)	Community of ordained Buddhist monks and nuns.

savdag (t)	An invisible being, which like the nagas (see above) controls mountains, water, earth and plants – and is angry when it is not respected.
soum (m)	Provincial district.
sutra (t)	Buddhist religious text.
suvrag (m)	A Buddhist structure, usually white, which is sometimes built to hold the remains of a saint or Buddha (s: stupa t: chorten).
thangka (t)	Buddhist painting.
tantra (t)	Esoteric teachings of Buddhism.
Theravada (t)	The oldest school of Buddhism, practised in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.
Three Jewels	The Buddha, sangha and dharma – in which Buddhists take refuge.
tsam (m)	Ritual Buddhist dances, performed by monks wearing magnificent costumes and masks. Tsam dances can last for several days.
Vajrayana (t)	An esoteric school of Mahāyāna Buddhism.
Zanabazar (m)	Undur Gegeen Zanabazar (1635-1723), the first Bogd Gegen (Khaan); renowned artist, political and religious leader;. Zanabazar University Major Buddhist university, at Gandan Monastery.
zud (m)	Extreme winter weather.

(m) Mongolian; (t) Tibetan; (s) Sanskrit (ch) Chinese

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABE	Association of Buddhists for the Environment
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
ARC	Alliance of Religions and Conservation
BEAD	Buddhist Environment and Development
CAFOD	Catholic Fund for Overseas Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EZE	Erdene Zuu Endeavor
FPMT	Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
JAICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MNET	Ministry of Nature and Environment
NEMO	World Bank's Netherlands-Mongolia Trust Fund for the Environmental Reform
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCF	Processed-chlorine-free (paper)
TTF	The Tributary Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

APPENDIX TWO: MORE DETAILS ABOUT FAITHS

Almost ninety percent of all monks in Mongolia are Buddhist; Buddhist monasteries and temples employed over two thirds of all employees working in religious institutions in 2005.

Of the 3,000 people working in Buddhist organizations in 2005, over three quarters or 2,300 were monks regularly participating in religious ceremonies. This is a dramatic increase of 37% from the previous year when some 1,700 thousand Buddhist monks were recorded. In 2005, there were 223 Christian clergy and 49 Muslim imams or religious teachers. There were also six clergy belonging to other religions in 2005.

Most Christian churches and clergy are located in the capital while all but one mosque and imam can be found in the western regions of Mongolia. Christian institutions employ a significant number of people; in 2005, 1,173 people were employed, with less than 20% being clergy, as compared to the figure of 77% in Buddhist temples and monasteries.

Religion	Number of Monasteries/ temples/mosques	Number of employees	Number of monks, priests, nuns, imams	Percentage of employees that are clergy
Buddhist	157	3,041	2,349	77%
Christian	70	1,173	223	19%
Muslim	7	114	49	34%
Other	0	72	0	0%
Total	240	4,400	2,627	60%

In 2005, the number of students studying in religious schools and dratsangs (monastic colleges) had increased by 12.7% from 2004, to 5,600. Most of the students were studying in Ulaanbaatar: 20% at Buddhist institutions, 35% at Christian schools and a further 35% at schools belonging to other religions. The remaining 10% were studying in Muslim schools in the western region.

The number of young students carrying out religious studies at home increased by 2.1% reaching 2,400. Most were located in the capital. Most (around 44%) were studying Buddhism. Just 3% and 2% were studying respectively Christianity and Islam and the remaining 51% were studying interfaith issues and other religions.

Geographical distribution of Buddhist temples and monks

While more than half of Mongolia’s monks reside in Ulaanbaatar, Buddhist monks can be found in every Aimag.

Geographical location	Number of Buddhist temples & monasteries	Number of employees in Buddhist temples	Number of Buddhist monks	Percentage of total number of Buddhist monks
Ulaanbaatar	27	1,667	1,333	57%
Central region	33	417	295	19%
Eastern region	18	237	157	7%
Western Region	26	178	126	9%
Khovd region	33	582	430	18%
Total	137	3,041	2,349	100%

APPENDIX THREE: KEY BUDDHIST FIGURES

Key Mongolian Buddhist Figures

Historical figures

- Zanabazar – Undur Gegeen Zanabazar (1635-1723) was the first Javzandamba or Bogd Gegeen, the supreme spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia, second only to the Dalai and Panchen lamas. He was famous for his sculpture, painting, poetry, medical skills and as a publisher.
- Bogd Gegeen - The lineage of reincarnations that started with Zanabazar. By Manchu rule determined to be Tibetan, to prevent active political participation. The 8th Bogd Gegeen nevertheless became ruler of Mongolia during a short period in the 20th century. The 9th Bogd Gegeen lives in Dharmasala.
- Bakula Rinpoche: Born into the royal family of Ladakh in northern India, Bakula Rinpoche was recognised, at the age of five as a reincarnation of one of the Sixteen Arhats, or direct disciples of the historical Buddha. He studied in Tibet from 1927 to 1941 and later became a Government Minister in the Lok Sabha. He retained a keen interest in Mongolia and in 1990 was appointed as the Indian Ambassador to Ulaanbaatar. Among many other achievements during his decade as the country's most popular foreign diplomats, he established several monasteries including Pethub monastery in Ulaanbaatar, which is one of the key areas for environmental initiatives. He retired in 2000 and died in 2003 at the age of 86.

Present-day Figures

- Ikh Khamba Lama Chojjamts – the Head of Mongolian Buddhists and Abbot of Gandantegchenling (Gandan) Monastery.
 - Vice Khamba Lama Amgalan – the second most important monk at Gandan Monastery.
 - Da Lama Byambajav – the third ranking lama of Gandan Monastery; a liaison person for environmental projects with outside organisations.
- 
- Venerable Purevbat – renowned Buddhist artist and activist, director of the Mongolian Institute for Buddhist Art of Gandan Monastery.
 - Venerable Dambajav, Khamba Lama of Dashichoilin Monastery.
 - Venerable Natsagdorj, Khamba Lama of Mamba Dratsang.
 - Guru Deva Rinpoche: Born in the Inner Mongolia, Guru Deva Rinpoche studied Buddhism in Tibet and later fled to India with the Dalai Lama in 1959. In 1991, Guru Deva Rinpoche visited Amarbayasgalant for the first time for many decades, and since then has helped with the restoration of the monastery.
 - Panchen Otrul Rinpoche: the Panchen Otrul Rinpoche (meaning the Panchen Lama candidate) is an important teacher of the Gelukpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Although based in Ireland, he also leads a religious centre and NGO in Mongolia – see section TWO. His first Dharma teacher was Mongolian; it has always been his wish to repay the kindness of his teacher by helping with the re-establishment of Buddhism in Mongolia.
 - The Dalai Lama: the title “Dalai Lama” originated in Mongolia, where “dalai” means a vast area of water, and the title is often translated as “Great Ocean Lama”. The current Dalai Lama – the fourteenth – has visited Mongolia seven times since 1979, his two most recent visits being in 2002 and 2006.
 - Lama Zopa: Born in Nepal, Lama Zopa is the spiritual head of the Foundation for the Preservation of Mahayana Buddhism established in the 1970s. Lama Zopa has worked extensively with Westerners and has centers and projects all over the world. His involvement with Mongolia began in 1999.

APPENDIX FOUR: LIST OF SACRED SITES



There are over 600 natural sacred sites in Mongolia, including:

1. National (by decree of the President)

1. Otgontenger Mountain (Zavkhan)
2. Bogd Khaan Mountain (Ulaanbaatar)
3. Burkhan Khaldun Mountain (Khentii)

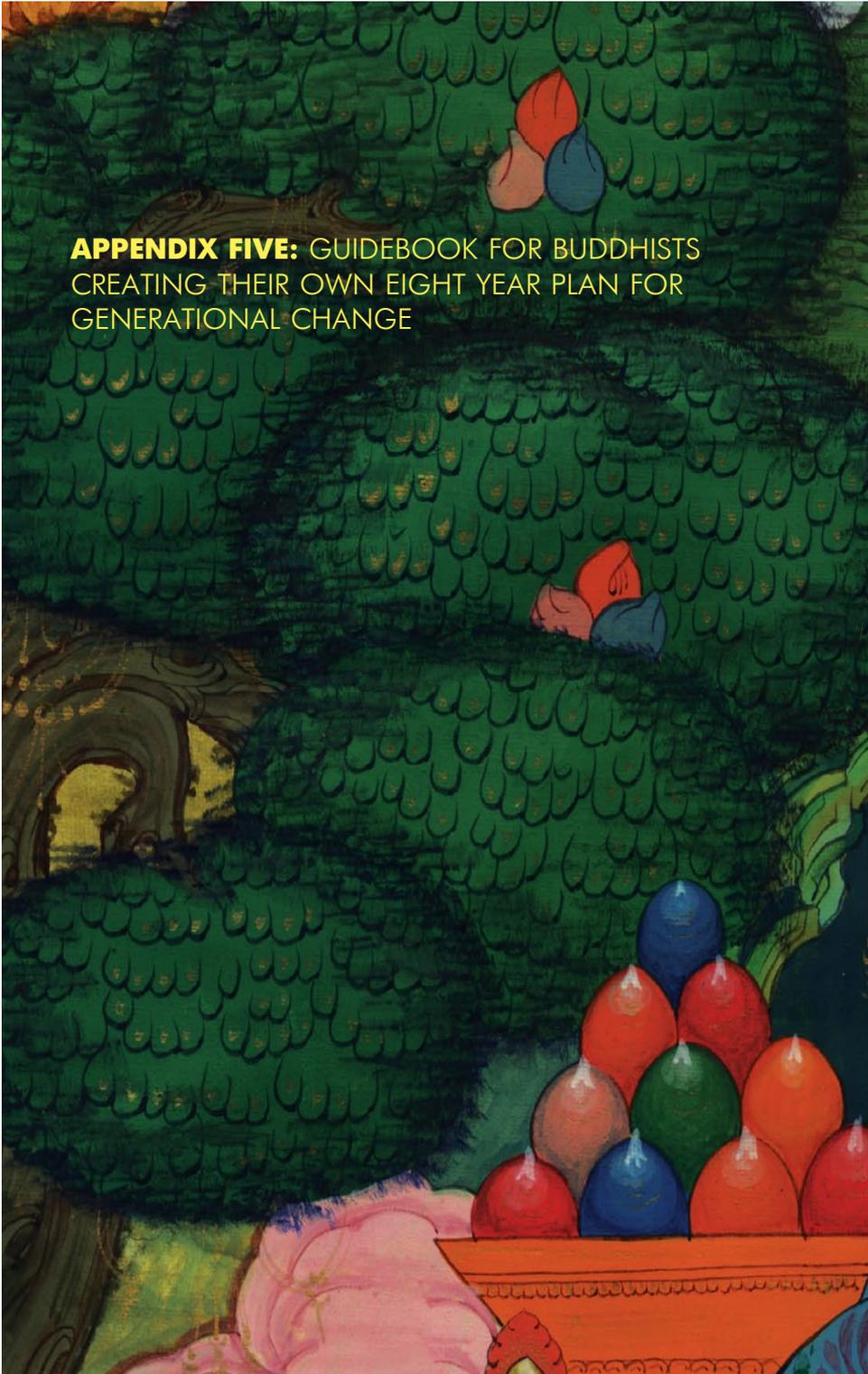
2. Regional (several aimags jointly worship)

1. Bereeven (13 Sansar mountains, rare mountains for Choijoo Naidan ceremonies)
2. Ikh Burkhan (Dornod)
3. Altan Ovoo (Sukhbaatar)
4. Otsol Sansar (30kms from Choir)
5. Darkhan Khan (50kms from Sukhbaatar Centre)
6. Bat-Khan mountain (Tuv, Uvurkhangai & Bulgan provinces)
7. Khogno Khan
8. Tsambagarav
9. Suvrag Khairhan
10. Ikh and Baga Khangai (Khangai mountain ranges; on the way to Bat-Ulzii soum & Kharkhorin soum)
11. Suvrag-Khairhan Uul (Arkhangai)

3. Aimag level

1. Undur Khaan (Khentii)
2. Bayasgalant (Zavkhan):
3. a) Munkh Khaan, b) Altan Ovoo mountain (Sukhbaatar)
4. Ikh Khongor (Gobi-Sumber)
5. a) Ikh Gazryn Chuluu , b) Baga Gazryn Chuluu , c) Gurvan Saikhan (Dundgobi)
6. Lamtny Ovoo (Tuv)

7. Bulgan Uul (Bulgan)
8. Tsogt Sumber Arkhangai:
9. a) Erdenemandal, b) Khongor Khairkhan, c) Bogd Khairkhan (Ikh Bogd)
(Bayankhongor)
10. a) Ulziit mountain, b) Noyon Khairkhan (Uvurkhangai)
11. a) Darkhan Uul, b) Khaliar or Khaidag Uul, c) Noyon Khongor (Darkhan)
12. Bayan-Undur mountain (Orkhon)
13. a) Ulaan Uul (Ulaangom), b) Khan Khokhii Uul, c) Tsagaan Ergiin Ovoo (Uvs)
14. Altai Tavan Bogd mountain (Bayan-Ulgii)
15. Altan Elst (Zavkhan)
16. a) Uliin Ovoo (Darkhad three soums worship),
b) Renchinlkhumbe (as above),
c) Dayan Deerkh (Bulgan aimag shares with Renchinlkhumbe; Chandmani sums),
d) Khovsgol Nuuriin Khuis (Hovsgol Lake belly button) (Khuvsgul)
17. Eej Khairkhan mountain (Gobi-Altai)
18. a) Amarbayasgalant, Burenkhan, b) Tovkhon Khan mountain (Selenge)
19. Hovd
20. Gurvan Saikhan mountain (Umnugobi)
21. a) Bayan Bogd (used to be worshipped by Ulaanbadrah soum),
b) Sharilyn Ovoo (south of the aimag center; once worshipped) (Dorno-gobi)



APPENDIX FIVE: GUIDEBOOK FOR BUDDHISTS
CREATING THEIR OWN EIGHT YEAR PLAN FOR
GENERATIONAL CHANGE

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This document is for discussion, inspiration, and future expansion. Please distribute as widely as you wish and keep an eye on ARC’s website www.arcworld.org for the latest version, containing the most up-to-date stories and examples.

PREFACE

From HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, Founder of ARC.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I am very pleased to know that ARC, in conjunction with its members, is developing seven [and eight] year plans to take forward their commitment to care more effectively for the earth's natural environment.

The fact that the majority of the world's faiths ascribe the creation of the world to an all-powerful deity, implies that the leaders and followers of each faith have a moral responsibility for the continued well-being of our planet, and particularly for its natural environment. In recent times it has become apparent that the sheer size of the human population, and its consequent increasing demand for natural resources, are seriously threatening the future health of our planet and the welfare of all life on earth.

I am well aware of the excellent work undertaken by the faith communities ever since the first encounter between conservationists and the leaders of the major faiths at Assisi in Italy, in 1986, but it is only too evident that, in spite of the commendable efforts of the members of ARC, the situation facing us today is even more critical.

I am happy to commend this very important initiative, and I am confident that it will make a significant difference to the quality of life on earth in the long term.



INTRODUCTION TO THE MONGOLIAN BUDDHIST 8-YEAR PLAN

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) is an international organisation founded by His Royal Highness, the Prince Philip, in 1995. It is a secular body that helps the major religions of the world to develop their own environmental programmes, based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. It has now joined with the UNDP to develop a significant and innovative programme to work with the world's major faiths to address issues of climate change and the natural environment through the development of faith-based long-term plans for generational change.

Addressing the biggest global challenges

The destruction of the natural environment - including the impact of climate change - is probably the biggest challenge to the welfare of all life on earth. It threatens the survival of communities and puts the diversity and wonder of nature at risk. For many people, this has created anxiety about the future. And we believe it is a time when the major religions of the world can take a lead - sharing their insights, and working with their faithful to address these issues for generations to come. The Eight Year Plans are a response to requests by many faiths for advice about what to do next. The aim is to assist faith communities create long-term action plans. The key contribution the religions can make is to develop programmes that will deliver responses based not on fear, guilt, or apprehension, but because they are true to what the faith understands.

Each faith group is developing different parts of the Plans. So Mongolian Buddhists are concentrating on education - because that is what their country most needs - and sacred places - because that is what their country has lost its knowledge of.

In each case, faiths are finding that by going through the formal process of discussing their strengths within the seven key areas, and by writing their commitment down on paper, they have been able to have a vision of the future: a vision that will allow the conditions necessary for the plans to manifest.

What do we mean by 'generational change'?

The heart of this programme is to assist Buddhists to draw up their own plan of action over the next eight years, to create changes that today's children – and their children – will continue to act on, and benefit from.

Human behaviour takes generations to change. There are, of course, some examples of sudden and massive shifts but on the whole, throughout history, change has been gradual and very often has been inspired, guided and enabled by the work and courage of the faiths.

Many secular groups focus upon the idea of ethics as the means by which changes

in human behaviour will be affected. However faiths tend to seek the creation of an ethos, within which ethical choices are made because they arise from the ethos. Such an ethos is created through the interaction of many different forces – not in isolation from what is going on outside, but in organic interaction with it. These forces range from storytelling to science; from sacred spaces and their rituals to the mall and market place; from the work of spiritual teachers to that of novelists, playwrights, musicians and screen-writers.

All faiths pass on wisdom, which instils respect for both tradition and heritage. It is from this inheritance that faiths can reflect on the present and see the potential for the future.

Such awareness of our heritage also helps illustrate that we have been through ecological crises like this before, and that we have emerged from them:

- firstly by adapting what we already have,
- secondly by recovering original insights and teachings which have been forgotten or neglected, and
- thirdly by evolving new ways of tackling the problems.

For example Buddhism in Cambodia is today one of the chief forces helping that country pull itself out of the ecological as well as the devastating social disasters caused by years of Civil War.

I. THE KEY AREAS FOR BUDDHISTS

This is the heart of this Guide, which Buddhists can use in discussion with the appropriate faith bodies, organisations and structures in order to begin to think about how the faith could make a difference through its own resources, traditions and beliefs.

On the following pages, we suggest seven key areas for Buddhist communities to explore, complete with stories and examples from around the world:

1. Faith-consistent Use of Assets – land, investments, medical facilities, purchasing and property.
2. Education and Young People – including school buildings and curricula, as well as nature teaching and camps.
3. Pastoral Care – including theological education and training; as well as rediscovering past traditions and wisdom, and helping people adapt to new situations in areas where climate change makes this necessary.
4. Lifestyles.
5. Media and advocacy.
6. Partnerships, eco-twinning and creating your own environment department.
7. Celebration.

1. Faith-consistent use of assets

a) Construction and Existing Buildings

Have you looked at the environmental impact of your construction activities and decisions? For example to what extent have you assessed the environmental impact of new buildings? What were the key ecological problems and did you find any solutions?

Monasteries in Mongolia were traditionally built with materials that were able to withstand the severe heat of the summer and the extreme cold of the winter. Concrete was unable to do either of these things, and throughout Mongolia there is now the possibility not only of rebuilding monasteries in traditional ways, but also of encouraging the local communities to see that this is the only practical - and fashionable – way to do it.

Daoists in China are placing solar panels on their temple administration buildings in a bid to save resources and live in line with their teachings. In 2006 ARC helped ten monasteries hold their first ever ecological conference. By the following year half of them had installed solar panels, raising the money themselves, with the others intending to follow suit soon. The new ecological temple at Taibaishan in Shaanxi Province was built with local sustainable materials.

b) Land and Forests

To what extent have you examined assets like grazing land and forests, mines and quarries under your ownership or management and asked whether they could be differently protected or managed to better contribute to sustaining our planet? Have you written, or do you have access to a Buddhist theology of land, which outlines your tradition's understanding of land, as well as its understanding of the land's role in your faith today.

Solan is a community of 15 Orthodox nuns in France's Rhone valley. They founded their monastery in an abandoned farm complex, without water or electricity, and since 1991 they have built it into a working organic farm, producing organic wine, apricot jam, chestnuts and figs. The local authority offered a 75 percent subsidy for them to chop down their forest, sell the logs, replant new trees and leave them for 30 years – but they wanted to do it differently. Instead, a forester felled selected trees in the forest, and planted 5,000 new saplings by hand. The result for the nuns and local wildlife is a constantly mature forest, which provides wood and income, while maintaining a sense of a special and sacred place. The result for the local authority is a change in practice (and after long debates it now subsidises the hand planting); and for local landowners there is another - proven and viable - model of forestry to follow.

c) Water

To what extent are you aware of your tradition's theology of water? Can you incorporate this teaching and wisdom into promoting environmentally responsible irrigation, desalination, showers, gardening, sewerage etc? Where there are rivers and marine environments running through or close to your monastery, have you monitored how polluted they are, and if so, have you taken action to reduce that pollution?

The Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions in Bangalore, India, recently conducted laboratory testing into traditional Hindu Ayurvedic teachings, instructing householders to store water in copper pots. The scientists found that e-coli bacteria are killed within 12 hours of being placed into water stored in copper pots. Some four million under-fives die from diarrhoea every year; many from e-coli-related infections. Ancient religious wisdom on water treatment might save some of their lives.

d) Healthcare

If you run medical facilities such as clinics or hospitals have you made an environmentally sustainable management plan on the use of water, sanitation, cleanliness, provisions, buildings, transport, electricity, reducing waste, reusing materials etc? It can help the planet and – through creating cleaner air – it can directly and immediately help your patients. Have you looked at the sourcing of the food served to patients and visitors – and perhaps increased the amount of food that is grown locally, in season, without pesticides and according to natural, vital principles?

e) Food, hospitality and retail outlets

Rites of passage such as births, marriages and deaths often involve times of generous catering and gifts. Have you looked at the hospitality and retail outlets in and around Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia to see if your sourcing is ethically and ecologically sound and that you are using renewable energy if this is workable? Improvements might involve introducing more organic goods, and recommending free range eggs, because it is a more compassionate form of farming than the factory alternative.

In 2008 the Christian Women's Fellowship in Kottayam, Kerala, India set up a food centre in the middle of their town. It was the first outlet in Kottayam to run on biogas. Set up costs were comparatively high – at 40,000 Rs (around US\$1000) - but they are confident that not only will they make it up within a year from reduced fuel bills, but that they will become an example of environmental excellence and an inspiration to other businesses and households. Do the monks and nuns in Mongolia run food centres that could be models of environmental excellence in their communities?

f) Financial Investments and Micro-Finance

Microfinance initiatives represent one of the greatest movements for positive social change over the past 30 years - providing affordable credit to the poor. It doesn't take a great deal of money to start a microfinance initiative. Is this something that the monasteries in Mongolia can encourage and even support?

Nobel Winner Muhammad Yunus started the Grameen Bank by lending \$27 to some poor craftsmen, while volunteering to be guarantor on a larger loan from a traditional bank. Today he runs the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which has lent more than \$5 billion to 5.3 million people. It is built on his conviction that poor people can be reliable borrowers and avid entrepreneurs.

The Ecumenical Church Loan Funds were set up in the UK after World War II to rebuild churches; later they were extended to grant loans for small-scale income-generating projects, and today their main activity is lending to small and social businesses in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, including loans for ecological farm products and environmentally friendly water filtration systems. Link to www.eclof.org.

2. Education and young people

Some 50 percent of educational institutions around the world are founded, managed, or associated with faith institutions.

a) School and out-of-school Curricula

What potential is there for incorporating more in-depth, and faith-consistent teachings about the environment into the curriculum? Do you, or can you, have vegetable patches where you teach pupils how to grow food? Do you look at and promote preparation of food grown without pesticides? Or go into nature to paint and study

birds and wild plants, to help young people appreciate their beauty?

The Erdene Zuu monks have participated in a project working with children from poor families who had been cutting down trees in protected woodlands to sell to local restaurants for fuel. The monks decided to run life skills classes for them and their families, and the results exceeded everyone's expectations. In 2005, 50 child woodcutters attended a 40-hour Life Skills course, learning traditional conservation and religious values alongside skills such as building self-esteem, decision-making and creative thinking. It was so popular that in 2006 the monastery not only hosted a second course for a further 50 children, but they devised another one for the parents, who had made fervent requests to experience this inspirational training for themselves. Not only did the wood-cutting reduce, but many of the children returned to school, inspired by their experiences. Meanwhile the restaurants are being introduced to alternative fuel sources.

All Hallows is a Catholic school in Somerset, UK. On "Earth Day" in April 2008 the timetable for the entire day, for all pupils (aged 7-13), centred around ecological activities. It included bringing in an artist to work with the pupils to create a nearly two-metre high model bird from willow (a material local to Somerset); cleaning a nearby stream and having a lesson in the insect-life that was found in it; dyeing with natural ingredients like onion; making prayer flags based on Buddhist prayer flags, on which environmental prayers were written. The response from children, teachers and parents was overwhelmingly positive with requests to have "Earth Day" every year. Can an Earth Day be incorporated into schools in Mongolia via the monasteries?

b) School Buildings and Grounds

What potential is there in your educational work for making sure that all new builds and extensions are rigorous in their attention to environmental details, and that any playing fields and gardens pay attention to the needs of wild flora and fauna as well as children?

c) Conservation and Recycling Policy

Do you have policies of water and energy conservation for your educational buildings? What do you do about paper, food, sewerage and other waste? And do you organise clean-up programmes?

A Buddhist community initiative run by the Traditional Conservation Centre in UB has organised several clean-up campaigns with monks working alongside students from the University of Agriculture in Ulaan Baator. The people were surprised and moved to see monks joining in with this, as it demonstrated to the public how important it is to take care of one's surroundings, and that even monks can get their hands dirty.

d) Youth Organisations and Camps

Do you have faith-associated youth organisations where environmental ideas could also be integrated - for example through running youth camps in nature, organising street cleaning projects, and forest schools?

In summer 2007 Muslims in the British city of Birmingham hosted a “Cleaner Medina” street party – with music, street cleanups, video, information and fun. It is being used as a model for action and information in other Islamic communities – and could be a model for making cleaning up into a cutting edge activity in Mongolia’s cities.

In 2000 the Maronite Church in Lebanon made its portion of the fragile and sacred Harissa forest into a Maronite-Protected Area. Three major landowners all voluntarily joined the scheme, giving up the considerable money being offered by developers. When asked why he had made that decision, one of the landowners said that he remembered back to when he was a boy, and had gone for a camping holiday in the forest, organised by the church. “It was one of the happiest times of my life,” he said. “That’s why I want to protect the forest now.” Can Buddhist monasteries offer and organise camps on sacred mountains – which one day in the future might mean that Mongolia’s next generation will recognise their sacredness?

e) Environmental Monitoring

As part of life’s education, could you work with the natural curiosity, expertise and grassroots outreach of your faithful to organise environmental monitoring of the world around them? Sometimes it is only through compassionate mindfulness and systematic observation that scientific details will be collected, that rivers and ecosystems will be monitored for flora, fauna and pollution, and that early action can therefore be taken. If there are places that your faith values, perhaps because they are beautiful, perhaps simply because they are, then you are in a wonderful situation to watch over and protect them.

The Baganuur coal mine, 140 km west of Ulaanbaatar leaves a residue of pollution, lung problems and an unhealthy landscape. In 2005 the monks of Ontsar Lsei Lin Monastery decided to take action, and undertook a major project to document the environmental and health impacts of the mine. As a result, the miners and their families have been taught ways of reducing some of the health impacts; the mine managers are bowing to public pressure and considering detoxification mechanisms; local schools have added Buddhist understandings on conservation to their core curriculum. (See the main part of this handbook for more details)

The Catholic Bishops of the dioceses that span the Columbia River along the western seaboard of the USA realised in the 1980s that their precious waterway was becoming polluted. They encouraged their faithful to monitor the river, along its length, and then fed that information back at all levels to the state government, to the polluting companies and to the communities through letters, education, advocacy and influence. The river is now cleaner.

3. Pastoral care – theology, tradition and wisdom

All faiths have a tradition of pastoral care for those who are going through suffering or crisis, and all faiths have tried and tested ways of teaching their future leaders to pass on the wisdom of the ages, adapted to the requirements of the present day.

a) Training

How do you train your religious teachers and future religious leaders on environmental issues? Following Sri Kushak Bakula's example in the college he founded in Mongolia, could the training curriculum for your young monks be even more 'green'?

b) Crisis and Adaptation

What is the role of crisis in your theology and how have you dealt with crises in the past? Does your tradition see climate change as a crisis today? If so, what strategies or tools from your experience could you apply to responding to climate change?

c) Liturgies, quotations and orders of prayer:

Can your liturgies, study of the scriptures, services and orders of prayer and practice be developed in line with your theology to include not only your tradition of caring for the natural world but also your values of treading lightly on the earth and judging people by how they behave, not by what they own?

d) Sacred places

What role have your sacred places such as ovoos and sacred rivers traditionally played in helping preserve habitats for wildlife etc? For example, churchyards are often vital mini-eco-systems especially in urban areas; sacred mountains are sanctuaries for many endangered animals; holy water sources – wells, streams and lakes – can be the last refuge for creatures whose habitats have otherwise been destroyed or polluted.

The sacred mountains of China have been protected for millennia by Daoist nuns and monks. Now Daoism is actively developing environmental protection programmes to ensure that the pressures of tourism, development and logging do not endanger these vital, spiritual and bio-diverse landscapes.

Churchyards, cemeteries and gardens near temples and mosques etc are often rare wild areas in big cities. Some groups are increasingly allowing wilderness areas to grow, through reducing lawn cutting and pesticides - and are producing special educational material for visitors to remind them what natural wonders there are in their local area. For example the ancient trees in the Eyup mosque in Istanbul are the last surviving breeding places for storks on the Golden Horn.

e) Stories and Practices

Are there any stories or half-forgotten traditional practices that highlight how your tradition has always cared for creation/the natural environment, and can these be revived? Can the story of Tseren Dug, the Lord of Nature in Mongolia, be brought into everyday life – through putting up thangkas dedicated to him in temples, but also perhaps incorporating him into children’s animations on television, or into story books or other aspects of popular culture?

g) Adaptation

Have you thought about how your teachers and faith leaders will care in a pastoral way for those affected by climate change or environmental catastrophe? Have you created a plan to do so, so that in case of flood, or famine or typhoon, you are as prepared as you can be?

h) Praying

Prayer is central to Buddhism, as it is for every faith. Can you pray for a better, more harmonious world: for human beings to find solutions to those problems they can change, and to accept those problems they cannot?

When asked what Buddhists should do in response to climate change, Buddhist teacher Thrangu Rinpoche said they should do two things. First they should inform themselves about how things are, to know what practical steps to take. And second they should make aspiration prayers to the Buddha. Perhaps that will not stop global warming directly, he said, “but it will gradually help to transform our minds, and then we will make efforts to help the situation”.

4. Lifestyles

a) Audits

Have you carried out an environmental audit of your assets and use of natural resources, recycling, energy etc as a faith community, families and individuals? Have you or could you encourage your own faithful to do their own environmental audits and take action accordingly? If not, then there are some audit resources at the end of this document.

b) Traditions of Simple Living

Are you encouraging, or could you encourage, your faithful to live more simply and in harmony with the environment – in the areas of food, travel, energy, personal investments, charity giving etc? If so, how are you supporting and assisting them? If not, then could this be a key area for development in your eight year plan? Can you draw upon any of your own traditions - monasticism for example - to develop and promote a simpler lifestyle?

Jain youth organisations in India and elsewhere have long encouraged their members to advocate simple, vegetarian diets. They believe this would not only reduce the negative karmic effects caused by the suffering resulting from killing

animals on such a large scale, but would also improve the earth ecologically, by reducing the grain needed to fatten livestock and the greenhouse gases emitted by cattle fed unnaturally on grain. Mongolia is traditionally strongly meat eating, but is there any place for introducing more vegetables into the diet?

The Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD) has long promoted a campaign for Catholics to “Live Simply, so that Others May Simply Live,” urging people to make pledges, before God, to be more generous by stepping more lightly on the earth. Can Buddhists organise a similar campaign?

c) Families, Population and Choice

The size of the world’s population is clearly an issue for the future of the natural environment and the use of fuels and energy. Even in faiths where there is a tradition or teaching of a particular stance about the size of families, there is still considerable debate on this issue.

One of the most successful countries in voluntary curbing of population growth is Iran – and it was brought about as much through religious teaching as through economics and legal structures. Islamic leaders quoted the Prophet Mohammed saying that a man should have only as many children as the earth can support, while issuing fatwas (or “permissions”) encouraging contraception. From 1986 to 2001 population growth decreased from 3.2 to 1.2 percent.

d) Pilgrimage and Tourism

With their beautiful temples, monasteries, mosques, churches, synagogues etc, faiths own many of the most prized tourist destinations around the world. They are also responsible, in terms of pilgrimage, for much of the “tourist” travel in the world. As a faith, have you looked at your role in tourism and pilgrimage within the countries in which you operate and asked if there might be more environmentally friendly ways to run this? Have you thought about how many pilgrims now travel by plane, coach and car where previously they walked, and considered ways of lessening the environmental impact of this?

e) Purchasing Power

Are there areas where you and your faithful can use your joint purchasing power to help the environment?

Hazon is a Jewish environmental organization in New York. In 2004 it launched a Community-supported Agriculture Programme called Tuv Ha’Aretz – which means “Good for the land and best of the land”. It involves a synagogue entering a partnership with a local organic farmer, and committing to pre-purchase a share of the season’s produce. For the farmer this guarantees a market, for members this gives access to fresh, organic produce at affordable prices. In the wider context, it helps to preserve farmland, build community, and protect surrounding wildlife and water systems from pesticides. By 2008 there were nine Tuv Ha’Artez locations in the US and one in Israel. Hazon also

organises an annual Food Conference and a Jewish Farm school. Can the monasteries in Mongolia ask local people to support environmentally friendly farming initiatives like this?

In 2000, the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church in the US launched an initiative to eliminate chlorine in paper products used by the church – on the grounds that the toxins released into the environment during the production of chlorine-bleached paper causes serious damage to the environment. United Methodist Women in 34 states (plus the District of Columbia) visited Kinko's stores to request processed chlorine-free (PCF) paper, and to show that there was a demand. At that time only 66 percent had PCF paper at all, staff were badly informed about the product, and there was a surcharge. Within months, the shop had eliminated the price differential, and had agreed to stock PCF paper in every store.

5. Media and advocacy

a) Subject Matter

To what extent are your media outlets engaging in these issues? Do your newsletters, radios, newspapers, TV stations, websites etc have special sections on ecology? Are they using their editorial authority to promote simpler living, and looking after the natural environment with more care? Could your website have a special section, blog, picture galleries etc on the development of your Eight Year Plan?

b) Influence

How do you influence your government on its environmental priorities? What extra influence could you wield? Do you have any level of media access to national broadcasting networks where you could raise these issues in, for example, a weekly religious affairs programme?

c) Advocacy

Now that you are active, you are in a position to ask others to be active as well and take these issues as seriously as you do. Could you lobby your politicians – whether local, national or regional – as well as your directors, head teachers, and religious leaders to help stop climate change and the destruction of the natural environment

d) Guides and Handbooks

Could you draw together, from your audits and educational materials, guides or handbooks (on paper, on the web, on mobile phones or on audio or video) for the faithful on how to live more simply and environmentally - with practical suggestions drawn from your experience? How could these be developed through your publishing houses or through your websites?

In 2002 the monks of Gandan Tegchenling Monastery – helped by ARC, WWF and the World Bank – published a collection of ancient sutras entitled "Sacred Sites in Mongolia". The texts, which were translated into modern Mongolian, describe the sacred geography and rituals of 80 sacred sites whose use had

been suppressed under communism. So far six of the most important Mongolian sacred sites have been reinstated by their local monastic communities – and stupas have been placed to mark them. Even within 12 months there was a noticeable increase in the number of wild animals, including marmots and birds of prey. It is hoped that in the long term, with nature allowed to take its own course, the vegetation and tree cover will also return. The project has worked because the stupas are backed up by the monks in each area, who carry influence with local government and nomadic communities.

e) Materials

What more could your media – your newspapers, newsletters, radio stations, websites and printers of your holy books, pamphlets and brochures – do to protect the natural environment in terms of the materials they use, e.g environmentally friendly paper and ink? If you have publishing houses have you examined their impact on the environment? Could you sometimes provide web content instead of paper publishing, for example?

The Gandan Monastery monks worked with ARC and the World Bank to issue a calendar which marks the old sacred days – on which it was forbidden to hunt or destroy the forest. The idea was soon afterwards taken up by the monks at Erdene Zuu, at Kharkorin.

Benedictine Catholic nuns in the US produced *Listening to the Earth* – a handbook for their sister convents and monasteries in Latin America – explaining theologically and practically how to take action on environmental issues. The text can be found on ARC's website, in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

6. Partnerships, Eco-twinning and creating your own environment department

a) Dedicated staff

Do you have staff dedicated to developing environmental work? If not, could you consider developing an environmental temple ?

Buddhists in Cambodia have set up their own environmental organisation – Association of Buddhists for the Environment (ABE). It is staffed and run by monks, while being assisted by many secular agencies in projects such as reforestation, environmental education and sustainable housing. At first it seemed quite expensive and time consuming to create an office, but the Buddhists have realised that it is an important element of reaching out to young people. Living their faith in this way has required new skills, like making films, developing websites, as well as old skills like growing and caring for trees and having compassion for people and nature, and that this is now an important way for the faith to live its ancient beliefs, and to live in the modern world at the same time.

b) Lay people

Have you tried to involve lay people who are active in environmental fields to help you develop appropriate ecological responses to issues? Lay people often want to contribute but no-one asks them to do so. Try establishing an Advisory Group of members of your faith who are specialists in different fields related to the environment – law, water management, land management, education, waste management etc. The Advisory Group will not only offer you the most professional advice; it can also link your programmes into the wider work of local, national or international agencies and governments, and mean that your own efforts are multiplied, or leveraged.

The Board of Deputies of British Judaism established an environment group which drew together some of the greatest minds and most professional environmentalists in the UK. They had never before been asked to think about how their faith shaped their work or how their work could shape their faith. It led to many new initiatives throughout the UK. Are there prominent Buddhists in Mongolia who, although not monks, would be interested in thinking about how their faith can shape their work?

c) Other Partnerships

Look around and see who might partner with you because they share the same interest in organic farming, clean energy usage, recycling etc. There is no need always to reinvent the wheel. Have you made links with secular bodies that are working, environmentally, in the field? Have you made links with other faith bodies in your region that are interested in improving their environmental impact? Are there areas where you can share expertise and experience and avoid duplication? Are there any commercial groups involved in the environment who would work with you, and who might give you a significant discount because you would give their product a greater profile?

7. Celebration

a) Traditional Festivals

Have you set aside a specific festival to focus on the natural environment – for example a tree festival or a Celebration of Creation?

In Judaism, the festival of Tu B'Shabat – the New Year of Trees – has become a major environmental festival with education kits, new prayers and projects helping to mobilise Judaism every year. Meanwhile the day of mourning – Tisha B'Av – marked every summer to mark the destruction of the two ancient Holy Temples in Jerusalem, has been extended in some Jewish traditions as a lament for the destruction of the earth.

b) New Festivals

If you have not got an existing festival of creation in your tradition, could you take an existing festival or custom and adapt its practices and rituals so that there is a deeper environmental message?

c) Introduce new traditions and create a platform

Many religious leaders value tradition so much that they have no hesitation in introducing new ones. Perhaps you can introduce a new practice, which will be wonderful for Nature, as well as for people. Many faiths are expert at bringing people together: and their places of worship are often wonderful buildings for holding forums for events. Open up your place of worship for a party or fete on environmental issues; create a forum for debate; issue an invitation to people in your wider community inviting them to come and tell their story.

The Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania now has a programme of tree planting linked to key life events. For example, trees are presented to children at their baptism, for their parents to plant. Those children in turn must plant a number of their own trees before they can be confirmed. Can Buddhist tree-planting in Mongolia

In 1987, WWF-UK worked with a number of churches around the UK who wanted to make the Harvest Festival into a celebration of Creation. Many decided to invite the managers of their local supermarkets to give a sermon on everything their company was doing to help the environment. It was reported that head office telephones were ringing off the hook as regional managers called to find out what they should say. By the following year, they had programmes in place, and had something to talk about and be proud of. By 1993 it was estimated that around one-quarter of schools and 1,000 churches around the country were doing Creation Harvest Festivals

d) Celebrate beautiful places and new developments

The world, despite all its problems, is still a beautiful place. Sometimes it is the role of faiths, within all the doom and gloom of ecological predictions, to remind people to celebrate the beautiful, good, heroic and brave things about the world and about life. Celebrate good new developments, the potential for better protection of habitats and eco-systems, and give thanks.

II. WHAT NEXT?

Over the next eight years we are inviting the Buddhist communities in Mongolia to draw up their plans, and start to put things in motion.

Once you have explored some or all of the topics above, we invite you to start creating your own Eight Year Plan for Generational Change.

The Plans will take many different shapes as they are taken up by different communities in different countries. What we are interested in is the shape that makes best sense for you and your faith tradition. We have indicated the seven key areas we believe are important. It is likely that of these two or three will be central to your own situation and the others more peripheral.

Be adventurous but also think about how you will fund, manage and sustain this plan – not only over the eight years that it will probably take to initiate new ways of doing things, but over the following generations as well, when the changes in ethos will really start being seen and felt.

To what extent can you build this into existing jobs, staffing or structures? Will you need to appoint or recruit new people to manage this?

We would like you to tell us about your Eight Year Plan by the end of July 2009 at the latest. We have a steering group of representatives from major environmental organisations who will then, if that is appropriate, help you ensure that your Eight Year Plan is as environmentally significant and practical as possible. We would also like to help you think about how to communicate your Plan as widely as possible within your community and tradition, as well as to the wider community.

In November 2009 we hope to announce the number, nature and extent of the Seven and Eight Year Plans around the world. We look forward to Mongolian Buddhism taking its rightful place as one of the most engaged and active of all faith traditions.

III. RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Contact the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), the Tributary Fund, or the monks of Gandan Monastery (see Section Three for contact details)

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Urantsatsral "Tsatsaa" Chimedsegee has worked as project coordinator for ARC. She coordinated the publishing of five well received ARC publications, including *Methods of Traditional Conservation* (2006) and *Rituals of Worshipping Ovoo* (2006). Furthermore, as one of the secretariats, she organized the Northern Buddhists Conference on Ecology and Development in Mongolia.



Amber Cripps:

Amber Cripps has lived in Mongolia and India since 2004, working on environmental and social welfare projects within Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist communities. She has done research into religious rights for the environment and has a background in anthropology, environmentalism and human rights. Amber moved to Mongolia in 2006 inspired by this land of great beauty and strength to work for the preservation of natural sacred sites. She works at the Made In Mongolia (MIM) initiative set up by the Buddhist lama Panchen Otrul Rinpoche to provide sustainable futures for Mongolian women and their families.



Victoria Finlay:

Victoria Finlay is a writer, journalist and the Communications Director of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), based in the UK. She first visited Mongolia in 2002 for the launch of Sacred Sites in Mongolia by O.Sukhbaatar, supported by the ARC/World Bank. She returned in 2008 for the conference on Compassion and Conservation co-run by Gandan Monastery and the Tributary Fund, at which time she visited the inspiring projects being carried out at Kharkorin's Erdene Zuu monastery. She is working with faiths around the world to help them compile Seven or Eight Year plans to bring in generational changes to protect the environment.



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Mr Dulguun graduated from Mongolian Institute for Buddhist Art, and now works at Bethup Monastery in Ulaanbaatar. He created and designed the thangka painting of Urt Nast Zurgaa, the old white-haired man in harmony with nature, for this handbook.

