

JA-LAMA WITH HIS LEGENDS

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JA-LAMA (MONGOLIAN: ЖА ЛАМА, ALSO KNOWN AS DAMBIJANTSAN
MONGOLIAN: ДАМБИЙЖАНЦАН OR DAMBIJA, MONGOLIAN: ДАМБИЙЖАА

(1862–1922 ?)



COMPARED TO CHRISTIAN-EUROPEAN VERSION, THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT WOULD BE MORE SUITABLE FOR JA-LAMA

- Ja-Lama (Mongolian: Жа Лама, also known as *Dambijantsan*, Mongolian: Дамбийжанцан or *Dambija*, Mongolian: Дамбийжаа, (1862–1922) is a person whose existence many have doubts although there are still facts and traces in history about him.
- There are some photos of Ja-Lama and papers on his arrest and release from prison.
- He is claimed to be an adventurer of unknown birth and background who posed as a Buddhist lama, though it is not clear whether he actually was one. It is alleged that the Ja-Lama itself originated from the Astrakhan steppe, at the same time, another parallel version exaggerates the fact that he was a Torgut Palden.
- This is a problem for orientalists. Lamas do not have such a headache because for them Ja-Lama is a being from different category not from the same place where we, the ordinary beings are.
- Compared to Christian-European version, the Buddhist concept would be more suitable for Ja-Lama. Buddhism says that human moves from a body to a body constantly, and we all are like passengers on the train-express fluttering to the future.
- For us it seems as a movie where we move from one life to another and as travellers in samsara, we keenly change wagons on this time-train. This cosmic express tows us all along because we always have an illusory ticket *Trishna* in our hands.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND JA- LAMA

- As Kalmyks lived in Russian empire, then by the law Ja-Lama lama was considered a subordinate to the Russian state. Sadly Damba Djamtsan lama absolutely did not care about this law and authority. Ja-Lama lama lived in the world of his own laws, based on the lamaist views. Besides, he always was in conflict with power in Mongolia, Russia, China, and more over - he forced others to live with his thoughts and principles.

From this I might conclude that Ja-Lama was a nice and pleasant person - self-centeredness and egocentrism are always enjoyable if followed from distant. But being in close contact with someone who tries to destroy your understandings and worldview would certainly trigger a conflict. Interestingly, there was no such conflict between Ungern and Ja-Lama. They were both well-known for their dominant behaviour and direct negative reactions.

- In 1867 Kalmyk Amur Sanajev (also Amursan or Ja-Lama lama), was sent to Mongolia with pilgrims to study in Dolon-hiid, and later he as a gifted boy was directed by lamas to Drepung monastery in Tibet, where was already Agvan Dorjiev.
- This fact gives us an opportunity to understand better the nature of Ja-Lama and his actions in later years, and how Buddhists who lived in Russian soil valued education given in Tibet.
Imagine, 150 years ago, Buddhists dragged their small children over mountains and desert to gain wisdom. Considering that transport and its speed were mystically slow at that time, it was really heroic deed.

AGVAN DORJIEV



DIFFERENT OPINIONS

- My teacher Munko Lama from Ivolga monastery told me that Ja-Lama studied in Drepung philosophy and at the same time also medicine. He was an emchii and a very smart and skilled doctor.
- During his studies in Lhasa Ja-Lama went to pilgrimage to Indian holy places. There is a story that after coming back he allegedly killed his room-mate monk. It has also been considered the first ritual killing of Ja-Lama, but it is also supposed that it was a common struggle in which the ferocious nature of the future freedom fighter became fatal.

Although this story of itself seems dubious as he was were actively communicating with the 13th Dalai Lama during Dalai lama`s visit to Mongolia. In the event that Ja-lama would have been a murderer, the 13th Dalai Lama would have been detained for and punished him for the offense committed in Drepung. The Dalai Lama spent over a year in Urga, he met the 8th Bogdo Gegen several times and also Ja-lama was introduced to him. All four Pan-Mongolists - Karl Tonisson (also Brother Vahindra), Ja-lama, Agvan Dorjiev and Ungern von Sternberg met often in Urga and Erden Zuu.

- When Ja-Lama lama fled from Drepong monastery and Lhasa, he rocketed to Beijing where he studied different Buddhist disciplines and according to the legends, some mystic tantric practices. In China he also met with Taoists.
- Dharma-Dhodji lama from Ivolga monastery considered that Ja-Lama lama knew such tantric practices which made him immortal. Dharma-Dhodji and Hambo Erdineev confirmed me that Ja-Lama lama was an excellent astrologer and lama with deep knowledge in Buddhism.
Munko told about him as very clever and wise doctor-lama.
There is also a version about the passage of Jama Lama to Tibet with the expedition of P. Kozlov in 1899 - 1901. Ja-Lama was there as a guide.

SHAMBALA WARRIORS

- Many stories describe the education and erudition of Ja-Lama lama on issues related to Buddhism. In addition, there are many legends about his hypnotic abilities. Allegedly he also knew a very good Russian language. But this statement seems suspicious because he went Mongolia at early age and then moved to Tibet, so it is difficult to assume that there were people who knew Russian and bothered to educate him about the Russian language. Among the Mongolians, and especially the Tibetans at that time, the Russian language was not particularly widespread.
- In 1890, he returned to Mongolia to Erden Zuu monastery where he had spent his childhood. When he came to Urga, local lamas invited him to dispute and Ja-lama won everyone.
- Such a strange and mystical person as Ja-Lama, was not seen in an Asian steppes for a long time. Mongols are telling stories about him to this day; they admire him and consider him a Buddhist saint and miraculous immortal warrior. Both Ungern and Ja Lama are regarded as Shambala Warriors and emanations of six hand Mahakala.
- What does it mean?
- They both represent the ground army of Shambala warriors. According to the legend, there is fire flowing from the sky's, dropping on the local troops who fight against Shambala forces. The heavenly army arrives from Shambala on mystic flying machines and with them join countless number of warriors marching out from the ground, leaded by an experienced warlords who have fought against the enemies of Buddhism in their previous incarnations. Thanks to the cooperation of two different Shambala forces, the World will be free from all evil doings.
- It is hard to believe this version of underground Shambhala forces, but the future shows us how it will be.

MAHAKALA (BUDDHIST PROTECTOR)
SHADBHUJA (SIX-HANDS, SHANGPA)



DHARMA-FRIENDSHIP

- Ungern von Sternberg and Ja-Lama lama fought together against red plague that destroyed Buddhists and everything connected to Buddhism. In my opinion, it is natural that these old friends rocket to the ground on their horrible horses and become Dharma warriors as they were at old times in Mongolian steppes.
- It is said that such dharma-friendship arisen between Shambalists in the battles, will last until the end of time.
- Here an interesting link comes up - masses always love the smell of blood and persons who offer it, all such individuals are always valued.
- Damba Djamtsan Lama shared the same opinion about non-violence with prince Padmasambhava – people with bad karma could be killed to enable them better life in their next incarnation. Luckily, Guru From Lotus Flower limited to one victim in his youth compared to Ja-Lama whom we can freely call a mass murderer along with Ungern von Sternberg as they were great friends, like-minded and fight-companions. Ungern von Sternberg and Ja-Lama had similar attitude- all people killed and fallen in battle will be guaranteed better incarnation. Additionally, warrior friends Ja-Lama and Ungern claimed that they will take on victims bad karma.
- From here the only correct Buddhist conclusion is that many tshekists owe their better incarnation to these two dharma-warriors who fought in Mongolian steppes.
- Ja-Lama Lama and Ungern von Sternberg were old friends, and an average Mongol was afraid of Ja-Lama because of his nature which was molded by Chod masters in Tibet. Such a hair-raising couple like Ungern and Ja Lama had fatalistic impact, both directly and indirectly

BARON ROMAN NICOLAUS MAXIMILIAN VON UNGERN-STERNBERG



Parun Roman Ungern von Sternberg

JA-LAMA



UNGERN VON STERNBERG



KOBDO BATTLE

- In 1912, Damba Dzjamtsan Lama started a campaign against Chinese dominance in the steppes of Mongolia and Kazakhstan. He described himself as the successor to Amursan, a legendary freedom fighter, and later declared himself an incarnation of Amursan - the Khoit-Oirat prince who led the Dzungar Khanate to its extermination in 1757.
- Ja-Lama lama took control over the Kobdo fortress and district governor, and threatened with establishing of an independent Oirat empire in Western Mongolia.
- The castle town Kobdo conquered twice in 1869 and 1871 before arrival of Ja-Lama. The city's population was around 3000. Mostly they were Chinese inhabitants of the city, in addition to a few hundred Mongols, and the whole complex consisted of the fortress and the houses in it, where local craftsmen and merchants lived.
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- The first attack was a great success for Ja-lama, in the encounter with the Chinese at Kobdo Fortress, the Mongolians lost three, Chinese but 140 soldiers. The Mongols have explained the matter so that Ja-lama created an illusion to the Chinese that they are surrounded. The Chinese fired a lot with great fear and of course passed the target. For Mongols he created an illusion about the golden city in Shambala, and said that everybody who dies will be in the golden city by the evening. These moments enabled precise and effective fire from the Mongols, which was reflected in the outcome of the battle.
- This incident gave rise to the legends that those who fight with Ja-Lama are left untouched by the bullets and will always be victorious in the battles. The whole story of Kobdo's conquest was published in 1912 in the "Ogonjok" autumn edition, which was the most popular illustrated magazine in that time in Russia.

KHOVD

(FORMERLY KNOWN AS KOBDO OR KHOBDO)



DOKSHIN-NOJOON-HUTUHKTU

- There was a long description of the conquest of the fortress and was announced that the hackneyed Mandzude's power is about to go through the waves of Mongolia over and over. Many of the Mongols who took part in the conquest with the Ja-Lama, were marked in the name. The article was accompanied by a large number of photographs where was also Ja-lama. To the end, a long release of praise at the address of the national liberation movement highlighted and cheered the role of Ja-Lama.
- For successful attack to Kobdo's fortress, Bogdo Gegen granted Ja-Lama lama the title of "Dokshin-nojoon-hutuhktu", one of the highest Buddhist hierarchies, and the title 'Bator' (hero). Ja-lama was a great friend with Bogdo Gegen. He attributed to himself the title nojoon-hutuhktu and considered himself equal to the Head of state.

There are stories that when Ungern von Sternberg who liked planes and cars, drove Bogdo Gegen and Ja lama on a plane. When Ungern solemnly opened the first electric power station and newspaper in Urga, Ja-lama was next to him as always. On Ja-lamas comment, Ungern ordered to clean up the streets in Urga.

- In fight Ja-lama used bloody terror, including raids, torture of prisoners, and tantric rituals. From the Buddhist point of view, the assassins secured a new and better reincarnation for the slaughtered, taking on their bad karma. He liked to cut out red commissar's hearts, saying that they do not need hearts. Many Lamas condemned such a bloody interpretation of Buddhism. Ja Lama let it be known everywhere that he was going to free the Mongols from the rule of China.
- Ja Lama possessed a cap to which a golden vajra was affixed, instead of a button as common among Mongols. He quickly mobilized his own force and joined the 5,000 Mongols from the Kobdo province. This force, led by Ja Lama, liberated Uliastai and Kobdo, where Chinese garrisons were stationed, declaring their unity with the newly founded Mongolian state.

MAGIC SKILLS

- There is a wide-spread rumour that Ja-Lama stabbed the prisoners in the chest with a knife and tore their hearts out with his left hand. He then likely laid the hearts together with parts of the brain and some entrails in skull bowls so as to offer them up as sacrifices to the Tibetan terror gods and hung on the walls of his yurt the peeled skins of his enemies. Interestingly all these men were alive later and no harmed.

Ferdinand Ossendowski in his book "And beasts, people, and gods" describes Ja-Lama lama`s magical skills:

- "With several knife strokes, he cut through the chest of the Mongol, and I saw with my own eyes how softly the lungs of the unfortunate waved and the heart pulsates violently. Lama touched the hands of these organs, the blood ceased to flow, and the expression on the face of the shepherd was surprisingly calm. He lay with his eyes closed and seemed to sleep in a serene and deep sleep. Lama began to open the abdominal cavity, but then I shuddered with horror and disgust, closed my eyes. And when he opened them again, he was surprised to see that the shepherd was sleeping peacefully, and although his shirt was still unbuttoned, there was not the slightest trace of a wound on his chest. Tushegon-lama was sitting near the brazier, smoking a pipe and looking in deep thought at the fire."
- After the Kobdo was taken, Ja-Lama acquired a huge support among masses and influence on the local princes, as an incarnation-hubilgan, possessing magical properties. Gradually, around Ja-Lama formed a truly princely entourage - two thousand families who chose his holy patronage.

POLITICAL CENTRE NEAR MUNDIZKHUR MONASTERY

- Under his authority were nearly 5,000 horsemen; and his headquarters were located about 60 kilometers from Kobdos near the Mundizkhur monastery and became the substantive political center of the country. There were over a dozen yurts, the white tent-ail, striking in the imagination of the nomad, was unseen in size, disassembled and transported on twenty-five camels. Near the tent was a dug and artificial lake, throughout the territory of the state was maintained an ideal cleanliness, which many perceived as a shocking innovation
- Ja-Lama did not drink, did not smoke, and severely punished his subjects for his addiction to alcohol. He enforced strict religious discipline according to Tibetan Buddhism. Those lamas who broke the code were turned to soldiers. He used to say that there will be less lamas but only good lamas in the future. All people had to work; lay people were kept busy by regular physical labor. Nobody was not allowed just hang around as earlier.
- J-Lama's power was supported by the superstitious fear of people over his supernatural abilities; In his methods of administration were mixed energy, practical wisdom and extreme cruelty. This pushed away from him, for example, the Kazakhs.
- In 1914, his attack on the Chinese forces broke off the Russian-Chinese talks. Bogdo Gegen decided to get rid of ambitious warlord and asked Russian authorities to arrest him. The Ja-Lama's title was revoked, he was first taken to the Russian prison in a prison in Tomsk, then moved to Astrakhan, where he remained until 1918. His treasure stood at 250,000 rubles at the time of writing it up.
- In the summer of 1918, Ja Lama returned to Mongolia whose government immediately issued a warrant for his arrest. Ja Lama, however, managed to evade Mongolian authorities, and established himself in a retreat in the Black Gobi on the border between Mongolia and the Chinese provinces of Xinjiang and Gansu.

JA-LAMA (RIGHT)



LEGENDS ABOUT JA -LAMA` DEATH

- After the October Revolution of Russia, Ja-Lama appeared again in southern Mongolia. He refused to cooperate with the Mongolian Red Government and 300 soldiers under his command were mainly involved in robbery of caravans. With the work force of the prisoners, he founded the Tenpei-beishin castle near the Shara-Hulussun oasis, and a settlement of 500 yard.
- In 1921, the government forces conquered the storm in which the Dža-Lama was hidden. According to the legend, Dambijantsan was captured in 1922 by Mongolian special forces who were dressed as Tibetan pilgrims
- Also Ja-Lama`s death is somehow mysterious. My Ivolga lamas told me that he was shot dead four times. Firstly in Kobdo, the second time in Altai, and the third time near Kyahta. Then finally Lenin demanded Ja-Lama lama`s head as proof that he would pose no further danger. The fourth time he was killed near Ulan Ude and his head was taken to Urga from where it came to Petrograd.
- Later Ja Lama` head was put on display at Kunstkammer of the Hermitage. Now it is stored in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography as an exhibit № 3394, "Skull of the Mongol" bringing illness and trouble to employees of the reserve. The head has firmly settled in the Kunstkammer storage rooms and has never been exhibited publicly.
- In connection with the strange death of Sukhe-bator and other people involved in the murder of Ja-Lama lama, a legend about the curse of the rebel monk's head was soon born and strengthened. Among his victims was Kazakevich, who stole his head - he was accused of espionage to Japan and shot.

JA- LAMA APPEARS AGAIN

- Interestingly Ja-Lama has seen countless times after his alleged death.
- In Buryatia I heard a story which happened before the Second World War in Mongolia. Some women were in steppe with cattle, when suddenly the weather changed and cold hail storm came on them. Women were in trouble; cold already seemed to kill them and didn't know where to go and what to do. Then a man with a hat adorned with a double *vajra* hat appeared out of darkness. He advised women to cut off the cows' abdomens and hide themselves into it because cows do not cool down so fast. Women did as was told, and were saved.
- The other incident was from 1957, when Ja Lama was riding in Mongolia, having the same old berdanka which he had used to shot the Red Commissars.
- In autumn 1962, children-pioneers with their leader were camping in steppe and one girl disappeared in the morning. She didn't come back all day and late evening campers were sitting at the campfire and discussed what to do. Then a horseman rode from the dark with the girl and putting her down told to the pioneer-leader in old Mongolian language- look better after your children so that they wouldn't disappear.

CONCLUSION

- Inessa Lomakina, a Mongolist-scholar from St. Petersburg whom I knew personally, told me a story in 2006. It was about the old woman to whom a mysterious man with vajra-hat brought food which was marked with old time colonial shop labels. This story was told to Chinese film group who visited Lomakina regarding Ja-Lama lama`s life, and later an interview with this old lady was filmed by Chinese.
- The contradictory image of Ja-lama, contradictory and mixed with Mongolian mysticism, continues to disturb the minds of researchers. Many of the miracles attributed to him are confirmed by some scientists and are refuted by others, and his life has become so legends that the truth in it has been inseparably mixed with fiction

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