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Qing Imperial Mandalic Architecture for Gelugpa Pontiffs Between Beijing, Inner Mongolia and Amdo

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Key-words

Sino-Tibetan architecture, Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, Dolonnor, Zanabazar, Yongzheng, Beijing

Abstract

This article discusses a particular architectural style of Gelugpa monasteries' assembly halls (*dugang*) adopted in Inner Mongolia, Mongolia and China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the *huilang*-style *dugang*, “*dugang* [adopting] the style of galleries [taking the shape of the character] *hui*” 回廊式. It is a large square temple with a central skylight, that can be built with Chinese and/or Tibetan construction techniques and materials. The second floor consists in galleries or rooms arranged around a courtyard surrounding the central skylight: this concentric layout forms a three-dimensional mandala. Seen from the exterior, the complexity of the inner structure remains unsuspected. Chinese sources present it as modelled on the architecture of the Potala palace. The most prestigious examples of this style are Dalaimiao of Xihuangsi (Beijing, 1651-52, destroyed), Shanyinsi's main *dugang* (Sira süme, Dolonnor, Inner Mongolia, 1727-31, destroyed), and Amur bayasqulangtu keyid's main *dugang* (Mongolia, 1727-36, preserved). Two of these temples have a curious system of hollow pillars that drain off rainwater.

Although this architecture was especially appreciated by the Manchu emperors, other temples possess a comparable elevation in Inner Mongolia. By discussing the genesis of this style, the possible sources of inspiration in the Kukunor region, and its diffusion in Mongolia and China, I will attempt to offer a new interpretation of the Qings' purpose in building such monasteries.

* * *

In 1727, Emperor Yongzheng ordered had two imperial Gelugpa monasteries erected in the Mongol territory, Amur bayasqulangtu keyid in the steppe north of Ulaanbaatar, and Sira süme in Inner Mongolia. These two monasteries, built on an ambitious scale, became prominent religious, cultural, political and economic centres during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹ They embodied the “politics of temples” that aimed to pacify the various Mongol groups and bring them to rally behind the Qing’s cause: for the Kangxi emperor, “building only one temple was equivalent to feeding one hundred thousand soldiers in Mongolia.”²

The central part of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid follows the Chinese imperial style, except for its assembly hall, which has a complex two-storied structure with concentric galleries surrounding a skylight pavilion. The most appropriate term to refer to this complex “mandalic” assembly hall is probably the one we find in Chinese sources: “assembly hall [adopting] the style of galleries [taking the shape of the character] *hui*” (*huilang shi dugang* 回廊式都崗).³

Sira süme no longer exists, but ancient photographs and descriptions allow me to assert that it was built on the same model as Amur bayasqulangtu keyid. I will also try to demonstrate that the assembly hall of a third monastery, Xihuangsi of Beijing, was probably the first example of this imperial *huilang* style. At least six other Mongol temples belong to the *huilang* style (although with different frameworks and roofings). However, the striking similarities between the three imperial assembly halls prompt me to believe that Amur bayasqulangtu and Sira monasteries copied Xihuangsi.

Table 1. Imperial monasteries with a huilang-style assembly hall

Name of the monastery	Xihuangsi 西黄寺	Sira süme, Shanyinsi 善因寺	Amur bayasqulangtu keyid
Location	Beijing	Dolonnor, Inner Mongolia	Qalqa Mongolia
Date of the main <i>dugang</i>	1651-52	1727-31	1727-36
Size of the <i>dugang</i>	7x7 bays	7x7 bays	7x7 bays
State of preservation	destroyed	destroyed	partially preserved

Besides, old accounts also tell us that Sira süme’s and Xihuangsi’s assembly halls were modelled on the Potala of Lhasa: long before the erection of Putuozongchengmiao 普陀宗乘廟 in Chengde (Jehol) ordered by Emperor Qianlong in 1767-71, Shunzhi and Yongzheng had built two Buddhist monasteries in Beijing and in Inner Mongolia based on their own vision of the Potala. Yet the question is the extent to which they were actually modelled on the Potala of Lhasa. The central assembly hall of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid could provide an indication of Shunzhi and Yongzheng’s visions of the Potala.

For Chinese observers, the *huilang*-style imperial temples appeared exotic and belonged to Tibetan architecture, even though the building techniques and materials were entirely of Chinese origin. At the same time, modern Western scholars often describe this style as purely

¹ On monasteries built by the Qing emperors in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia: Charleux 2006a: 103-104.

² See Zhang 1988.

³ Mong. *dugang* or *duyang*, < Tib. *'du khang*, “assembly hall.” My use of the term “mandala” here only concerns the architecture. The nature and organization of the inner iconographic program probably followed contemporary Tibetan and Mongol arrangements according to a south-north axis (the main statues of Buddhas and lamas being at the north), as shown by photographs and descriptions of Sira süme’s main hall (see Ren 2005: 76-80, 82). I have not seen old photographs of the arrangement of the icons at Amur bayasqulangtu keyid and Xihuangsi monasteries.

Chinese.⁴ As for modern Mongols, some of them now consider the impressive architecture of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid as indigenous, dating back to the Mongol empire. A Mongol architect even proposed a reconstitution of the Palace of Ten Thousand Tranquilities of Ögedei Qan in Qaraqorum based on the model of the assembly hall of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid (**fig. 1**). However, as in the case of the majority of Mongol monasteries, the *huilang* style combines Chinese techniques and materials with a Tibetan conception, influence, or inspiration, and can thus be labelled as “Sino-Tibetan” or “Tibeto-Chinese.” As for the three imperial monasteries, it would be more appropriate to describe them as imperial Qing-style architecture since their architects were acting on the orders of the Qing Emperor.

I will briefly describe the architecture of these three imperial monasteries in order to discuss this particular architectural style of assembly halls adopted in different locations of the Qing empire as well as to clarify its relation to the Potala of Lhasa. By discussing the genesis of this style, its possible sources of inspiration, and the Mongol temples related to it, I will attempt to offer a new interpretation of the Qing’s purpose in building such monasteries.

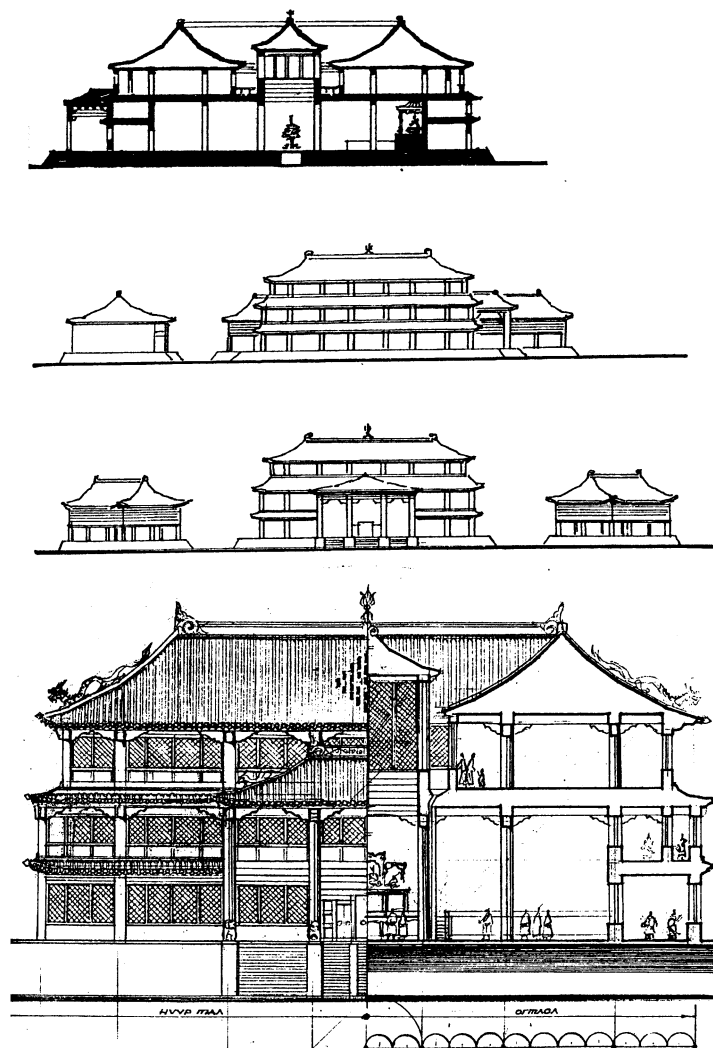


Fig. 1. Tümen amuḡulang ordo, palace of Ögedei Qan, thirteenth century, Qaraqorum, hypothetical reconstitution by Daajav (2006, I: 119, 123)

⁴ For instance P. Berger (2003: 31-32) depicts Amur bayasqulangtu keyid as a “Chinese-style monastery” and a “Chinese palace much like Yonghegong 雍和宮 in Beijing”—actually, Amur bayasqulangtu’s architecture is very different from that of Yonghegong, which, moreover, is not a Chinese-style monastery.

1. Xihuangsi, the “Western Yellow monastery” of Beijing

In 1652, Emperor Shunzhi built Xihuangsi in the northern suburb of the capital city (between Deshengmenwai and Andingmenwai) to accommodate the Fifth Dalai Lama who would be visiting Beijing, and allocated 90,000 taels for its construction.⁵ Shunzhi had appointed a lama known under the title of Nom-un qan (Skt. Dharmarāja, “King of the Buddhist Law”) as the architect of the Yellow monastery.⁶ Nom-un qan, who was the *jasay da blama* (title of the abbot) of Kūriye banner⁷ in Inner Mongolia, built the White stupa (Baita 白塔) of Beihai 北海 (Qionghua island 瓊華島, Beijing) for the visit of the Fifth Dalai Lama as well. One hundred and eight Mongol monks lived in the new monastery.

After his arrival in January 1653, the Dalai Lama stayed in Xihuangsi for five months. Xihuangsi later served as the residence of high Tibetan and Mongol lamas paying tribute to the Emperor and visiting the capital. The great lama Zanabazar, the First Jebcündamba qutuytu, along with Mongol nobles, made an important contribution (40,300 taels, statues and scriptures) to the restoration of the monastery when he visited Beijing in 1722 to attend the funeral of Emperor Kangxi.⁸ But on the fourteenth day of the first month of Yongzheng 1 (1723), Zanabazar died in Xihuangsi just after having started to organize the restoration.⁹ The monastery was then restored in 1731 and 1771. It welcomed the Sixth Panchen Lama who died there from smallpox in 1780, and for whom Emperor Qianlong had the nearby Qingjinghuacheng 清淨化城 white marble stupa erected. In the nineteenth century, the Yellow monastery was a large complex including both Xihuangsi and Donghuangsi; it was famous for its annual festival and its bronze workshop that sold its production to Mongolia and Tibet.

Xihuangsi was composed of Dalaimiao 達賴廟 and Qingjinghuachengmiao. The Anglo-French armies destroyed Dalaimiao in 1860, and only Qingjinghuachengmiao, including the pagoda, has been preserved.¹⁰ Dalaimiao consisted of an entrance pavilion, a Great hall (Dadian or Daxiongbaodian containing the statues offered by Zanabazar), a Dugang (assembly hall that could house 250 monks), two lateral pavilions for two stone inscriptions, a Dalailou 達賴樓, and the monks’ dwellings in the rear part.¹¹ The axis of these buildings was aligned with the one of the Forbidden City (particularly the Taihedian), with the monastery acting as a protective geomantic barrier for the palace. The two stone inscriptions commemorate the 1723 restoration by Zanabazar (eastern stele, offered by Yongzheng) and the 1771 restoration by the Zhangjia qutuytu (western stele, offered by Qianlong).¹²

The Dalailou was the largest building of the complex. According to the “Hearsay from close to heaven” (*Tianzhi ouwen*), it was modelled on the Potala of Lhasa.¹³ It was a large square building of 81 *jian* (9x9 bays—in fact 7x7 bays inside and 9x9 bays including the

⁵ In 1651, Shunzhi had previously ordered to rebuild a nearby monastery dating from the Liao dynasty to accommodate the important retinue of the Tibetan lama: it was later called Donghuangsi 東黃寺, Eastern Yellow monastery.

⁶ Zhenjun (1903), the stone inscriptions of Baitasi and Pushengsi 普勝寺 (Zhang 1988: 221-222) and other sources simply call him Nom-un qan. On the identity of this lama, who may have been either Sbyin ba rgya mtsho, the First Pa’ gru *shabs drung chos rje*, a reincarnation from Kumbum, or Sibja Günrüg (d. 1657), a Tibetan lama who obtained the *rabs ’byams pa* degree and was appointed Third *jasay da blama* of Kūriye banner (1646-55): see Huang Hao 1993: 47; Delege 1998: 359-361.

⁷ Or Siregetü Kūriye banner, Baya Kūriye banner, Kulun qi 庫倫旗, modern Jirim/Zhelimu league 哲裡木盟.

⁸ According to the 1723 stone inscription: see note 12.

⁹ Bawden (ed.) 1961: 67.

¹⁰ Since 1987, it shelters the Zhongguo Zangyuxi gaoji foxueyuan 中國藏語系高級佛學院, a school for Tibetan reincarnated lamas. Since it is strictly forbidden to enter in the precinct, I could not have a look at the ruins.

¹¹ See the complete description of its architecture in Danjiong Rannabanza & Li 1997: 130-178.

¹² Preserved in Yu *ca.* 1785, *juan* 107, p. 1787-1788; also Zhang 1988: 909-310.

¹³ “There was a two-storied building imitating the style of Ü (Tib. dBus, Central Tibet), with 81 *jian* [...] it imitated the architecture of the style of the Potala of Tibet” (Zhenjun 1903: *juan* 8/1b, p. 866).

peristyle). It was two stories high with communicating galleries, made of *nanmu* 楠木, a precious southern Chinese wood.¹⁴ The lateral wings served as dwellings. Old pictures of the building show that its architecture was very close to that of the main temples of Amur bayasqulantu keyid and Sira sūme (fig. 2).¹⁵ Although the pictures do not show the inner structure, the similarity of the outer view is striking: the Dalailou would be the earliest known example of the imperial *huilang* style.



Fig. 2. Façade of the Dalailou, Xihuangsi, Beijing (destroyed). Boerschmann 1925, pl. 30.

The Dalailou served as the residence for the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Sixth Panchen Lama; it was a place where the lamas lived, ate, slept, and welcomed visitors:¹⁶ in this sense it was not an assembly hall (*dugang*) but a *labrang* (< Tib. *bla brang*), a residence for the reincarnated lamas for which no equivalent can be found in other Chinese or Mongol Buddhist monasteries.

2. Amur bayasqulantu keyid, 1727-36, Outer Mongolia

Let us now turn to the only example of this imperial style that has been preserved. Amur bayasqulantu keyid, the “Monastery of Blessed Peace,” was planned by Emperor Kangxi and founded by his successor Yongzheng to shelter the relics of Zanabazar. With this extraordinary project, Yongzheng wished to honour the relationship between his father and the Mongol lama. In 1727, the imperial treasury allocated the sum of 100,000 taels of white

¹⁴ Danjiong Rannabanza & Li (1997: 134) also quotes the Fifth Dalai Lama’s journal describing the temple as a forest of the gods, with a red wall surrounded by monks’ dwellings.

¹⁵ See also a picture from Albert Kahn Museum (Boulogne, France): *Chine – Zhongguo - China 1909-1934* 2002, II: 293 (photograph dated 1909, D 2144).

¹⁶ Zhenjun 1903; Danjiong Rannabanza & Li 1997: 18-20.

silver for its construction.¹⁷ The construction spanned two reigns, starting in 1727 and ending in 1736. In 1736, Emperor Qianlong named the monastery Amur bayasqulangtu keyid/Qingningsi 慶甯寺. This name was displayed on a name plaque suspended over the entrance of the main assembly hall. He also wrote an edict in three languages (Mongolian, Manchu, and Chinese), which was engraved in steles, which are still standing in the first courtyard.¹⁸ The inscriptions remind the reader of the fact that the pontiff had submitted to the emperor who in turn granted him religious sovereignty over the entire population of Outer Mongolia (however, no reference is made to Xihuangsi).

By establishing such a prestigious foundation with this sophisticated architecture in a very remote location, the Manchus sought to leave their mark on the Northern border of the recently 'tamed' Mongol territory. Yongzheng's intention (according to the stone inscription) was to build a monastery comparable, on the academic level, to the Dalai Lama's and Panchen Lamas' monastic institutions in Central Tibet, in the northernmost area of his empire. During the nineteenth century, Amur bayasqulangtu keyid indeed became a large academic monastery with eight colleges, gathering two thousand monks divided into six *ayimay* (academic subdivisions of a monastery), who could acquire the *gabju* (Tib. *dka' bcu*) degree.¹⁹

The monastery is located in the fertile valley of the Yeben river, 278 km from Ulaanbaatar and north of present-day Darkhan city in the Selenge province. Only a small part of the buildings has withstood the the destruction of 1937. The central part is in the Chinese majestic architectural style, unfolding over four main courtyards along a south-north axis (**fig. 3A**).²⁰ The two western and eastern axis communicate with each other in the north of the central section of the complex, forming a reverse U-shape, and enclose other temples and colleges. In the past, hundreds of felt tents, separated by alleyways and divided into groups representing the academic subdivisions, circled this central walled complex. 28 temples out of 40 have been preserved (**fig. 4**).²¹

The *huilang*-style assembly hall is a large square temple measuring 7x7 bays (6 x 6 pillars)²² with a central skylight (**fig. 5, fig. 6**). Its second floor, accessible by two staircases, consists of galleries arranged around a courtyard surrounding the central skylight pavilion. The courtyard opens up a view onto the first floor through the pavilion's southern window (**fig. 4, fig. 6**). This concentric square layout, emphasized by a peristyle on both floors, forms a three-dimensional mandala. Only the six-pillars porch in the façade disturbs the general symmetry. While the southern façade consists of claustra, the others are of brick masonry.

Seen from the exterior, the complexity of the inner structure remains unsuspected (**fig. 4**). The roof over the southern second-floor gallery seems to cover the entire temple. In reality, however, each gallery and the skylight pavilion are covered by a separate roof (**fig. 6**). The skylight pavilion is not covered by a high roof dominating the entire structure. On the contrary, it is invisible from the outside. Several pillars added to the edge of the gallery support the inner slant of the roof.

¹⁷ During that period, medium-size temples costed about one thousand taels of silver; the most expensive one was the Putuozongchengmiao of Chengde, built at the staggering cost of 700 000 taels at the end of Qianlong's reign.

¹⁸ On Amur bayasqulangtu keyid: Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 16-32; Daajav 2006, III: 113-117, 242-247. Mongol text and translation of the stone inscriptions: Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 18-22; Chinese text: Zhang 1988: 330-331.

¹⁹ The restoration of the monastery started in 1975 and accelerated from 1981 thanks to a joint project between the People's Republic of Mongolia and the UNESCO. In 1992, Gurudeva rinpoche, a reincarnated Mongol lama from Inner Mongolia, undertook new restorations, spent \$400 000 to buy a thousand statues in Nepal and refurbish the temples. The monastery now shelters more than sixty monks, who founded a centre for Buddhist training in Ulaanbaatar, the "Peace's Voice." Since 1996, it has been listed as a World Heritage site.

²⁰ See Chayet & Jest 1991 for a complete description of the monastery.

²¹ See the old layout in Maidar 1972, fig. 113.

²² 32 meters by side and about 15 meters high. Its 110 pillars (36+4 supplementary pillars inside, 28 pillars hidden by the walls, 36 pillars for the peristyle, 6 for the porch) are symbolically described as 108, a sacred figure in Buddhism. See more details in Chayet & Jest 1991: 77-79.

For the draining of the rainwater, the constructors used an original engineering solution: water drains leading both outwards, towards the exterior of the temple, and inwards, towards a square-shaped gutter on the second floor where the rainwater runs downward through four additional hollow pillars in the centre of the temple and then outwards through horizontal drains beneath the floor. This sophisticated solution needed constant maintenance, and unfortunately, it is evident that the building has suffered considerable damage from lack of watertightness (Chayet & Jest 1991: 78-79).

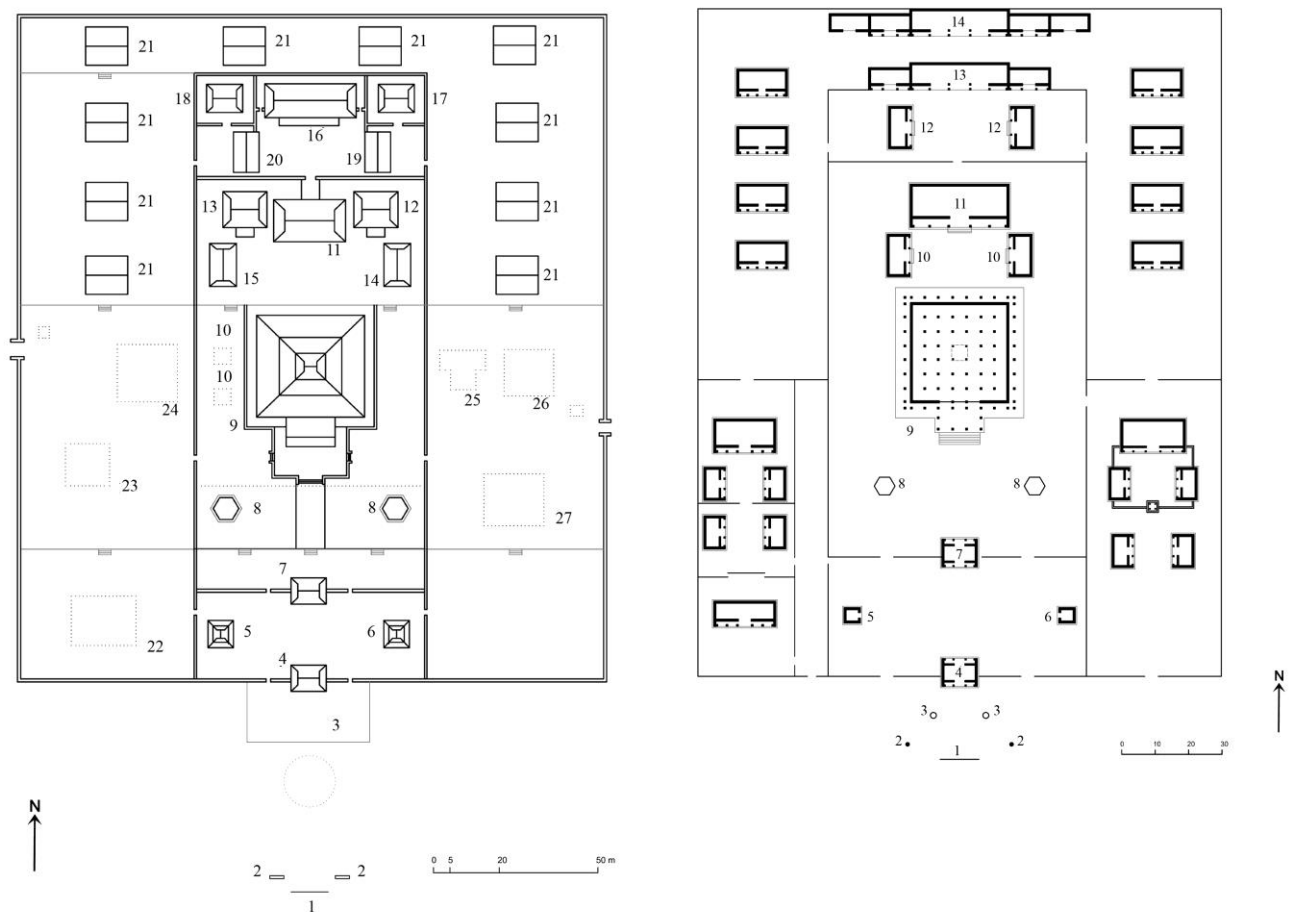


Fig. 3. Compared layouts of the central part of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid and Sira süme (Shanyinsi).

A. Left: **Amur bayasqulangtu keyid**. From a drawing by Ch. Jest, in Chayet & Jest 1991: 74, fig. 3. 1. Screen wall); 2. Stone inscriptions; 3. Platform for cam (Tib. 'cham) ritual dances; 4. Entrance pavilion (shanmen 山門, temple of the Seal); 5. Drum tower; 6. Bell tower; 7. Hall of the Four celestial kings (Mong. Maharanja-yin süme); 8. hexagonal pavilions sheltering imperial stone inscriptions; 9. Main assembly hall (dugang); 10. Small temples (destroyed); 11. Temple of Shākyamuni; 12. Temple housing the relics (sharil) of the First Jebcündamba; 13. Temple housing the relics (sharil) of the Fourth Jebcündamba; 14. Temple of Amitāyus; 15. Temple of the Mandala; 16. Labrang; 17. Temple of Maitreya; 18. Naruuqajid-un süme; 19. Mong. Yamu-yin süme; 20. Tonilaqu süme; 21. Ten White temples; 22. Temple of Maitreya (destroyed); 23. Collège of Doctrine (destroyed); 24. Gürüm dugang (destroyed); 25. Juud dugang (destroyed); 26. College of Medicine (destroyed); 27. College of Philosophy (destroyed).

B. Right. **Sira süme**. From Zhang 1986 [1985]: 342

1. Yingbi (screen wall); 2. Flag poles; 3. Stone lions; 4. Entrance pavilion; 5. Drum tower; 6. Bell tower; 7. Hall of the Four celestial kings; 8. Steles' pavilions; 9. Main dugang; 10. East and west halls; 11. Rear shrine; 12. Reception rooms; 13. Residence for the abbot (Labrang); 14. Library.



Fig. 4. View of the central part of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid. © Gérard Beilin

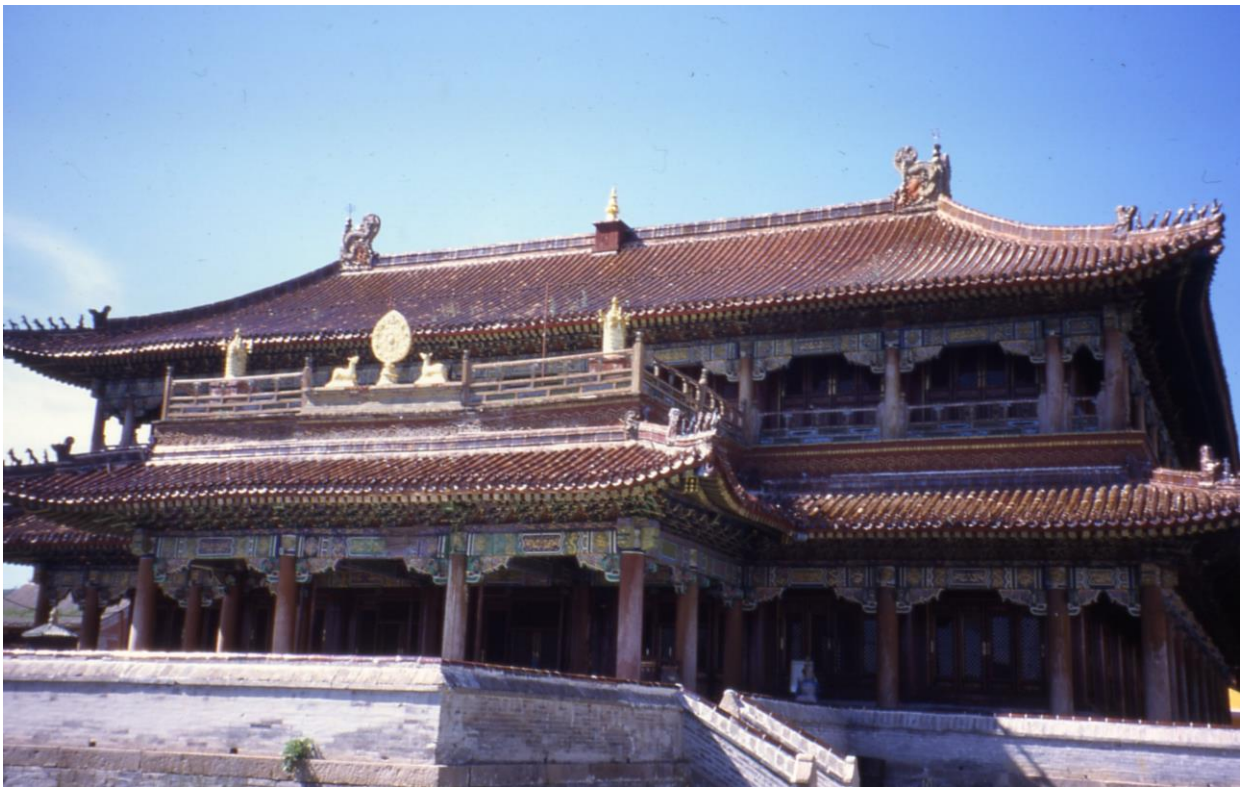


Fig. 5. Main assembly hall of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid. © I. Charleux

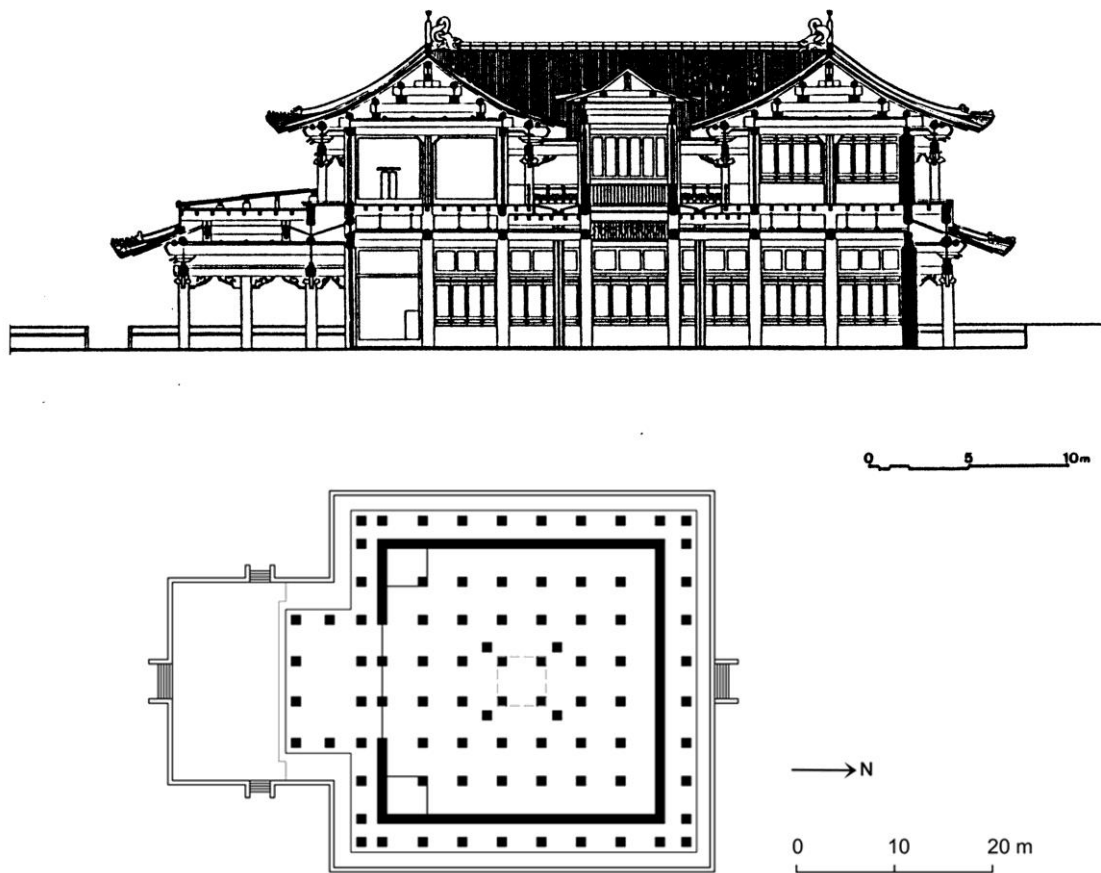


Fig. 6. Layout and cross-section south-north of the main assembly hall of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid, first floor. On the second floor, from left to right: the porch, the veranda, the main gallery (2 bays), the corridor (1 bay), the skylight (1 bay), the corridor, the main gallery and the veranda. Note on the first floor the additional pillars enclosing the water conduits. © Ch. Jest, in Chayet & Jest, 1991: 77, fig. 7 & 8.

3. Sira süme, the “Yellow monastery,” or Shanyinsi, 1727-1731, Inner Mongolia

Sira süme in Dolonnor²³ shared many common features with Amur bayasqulangtu keyid. Kangxi had previously founded Köke süme, the “Blue monastery,” in Dolonnor to commemorate the allegiance of the Qalqa with the Qing empire in 1691.²⁴ Around that time, Dolonnor became the major administrative centre of Inner Mongol Buddhism as well as an economic and metalwork centre.

In 1727 (according to its stone inscription²⁵), Yongzheng ordered the construction of Sira süme, southwest of Köke süme. The “Veritable Records” mention that in the same year

²³ Doluγan naγur, ch. Duolun nuoer 多倫諾爾, now in Duolun xian, south of Shilingol league (Sili-yin γoul / Xilinguole).

²⁴ Title: Ciγulγan-u uy süme, Ch. Huizongsi 隴宗寺, 1691-1693 or 1701. On these two monasteries: Charleux 2006a: [80] and [81]; Ren 2005.

²⁵ The emperor erected commemorative stone inscriptions in Chinese and Manchu at the monastery’s foundation. Their text is preserved in the *Da Qing yitong zhi*, juan 409, 2.2a-2b (also Zhang 1988: 318-319; Ren 2005: 51-52).

Yongzheng arranged for the erection of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid to enshrine the relics of the First Jebcündamba qutuγtu, while Sira süme was to serve as a residence for the Zhangjia qutuγtu (from Tib. *lcang skya* and Mong. *qutuγtu*, Ch. Zhangjia hutuketu 章嘉呼圖克圖).²⁶ Since he had been a disciple of the First Zhangjia before his accession to the throne, Yongzheng wanted to strengthen the position of the ten years-old Second Zhangjia in Inner Mongolia and honour him. He asked the Yangshifang 樣式房, the Office of National Architectural Design, administrated by the Lei 雷 family (hence its other name Yangshi Lei 樣式雷), to design Sira süme. Lei Jinyu 雷金玉 (1659-1729), the son and successor of Lei Fada 雷發達, and famous architect of imperial palaces, temples and gardens (especially Changchunyuan 暢春園), undertook the construction. The plans designed by the Yangshifang apparently also served for the construction of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid.²⁷

The construction cost 100,000 taels of white silver from the imperial treasury, just like Amur bayasqulangtu. The construction was completed in 1731, and the monastery was named Shanyinsi (Mong. Sayin-i ündüsülegci süme). The stone inscription recalls the Dolonnor Treaty and the foundation of Huizongsi (Köke süme), but does not mention Amur bayasqulangtu keyid.

In 1945, the Russian troops razed the Dolonnor monasteries to the ground, with the exception of a few buildings, among which was Sira süme's assembly hall, which was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution though. Four dilapidated halls are still standing in the walled complex: the entrance pavilion, the temple of the Four Celestial kings, and the Bell tower, and the Drum tower. Thanks to an old plan of the monastery (**fig. 3B**), a description by Huang Kewang (*jinshi* in 1739),²⁸ and photographs taken in the 1930s and 1940s by the two Japanese scholars, Henmi Baiei and Nakano Hanshirō, the architecture of Sira süme can be reconstructed.²⁹ The main building in the rear part of the reversed U-shape was the library. The roofs of the temples of the central section were covered with yellow (the imperial colour, which is actually rather orange than yellow) glazed tiles, hence its name. The entire area covered 169 hectares; it was larger than Köke süme. Eight *sang* (Ch. *cang* 倉, “treasuries”) surrounding the central walled compound functioned as quasi-independent temple units.³⁰ Up to three thousand monks (400 at the end of the nineteenth century) were living in houses (*bavising*) located around the walled compound.

If we compare this layout to the one of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid, we find a similar arrangement: the rather rare reversed U-shaped plan around the central axis—a Chinese layout³¹ that is not seen anywhere else in Mongolia—, similar temples and halls as well as comparable scales and proportions. The photographs of Sira süme's temples show buildings that are very similar to Amur bayasqulangtu's temples and halls, including the decorative elements (roof ornaments: *chiwei* 鴟尾 and *daogou tangcao* 倒鉤唐草 at the ends of the ridgepole, paintings on the beams). Ren (2005: 79) compares this sumptuous architecture with that of the Imperial Palace (i.e. the Forbidden City).

As for the main assembly hall, an eighteenth-century description reminds of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid:

²⁶ *Donghualu*, Yongzheng, *juan* 11, p. 25. Also Huang, 1758, *juan* 4, 35a-b, “Duolun nuoer.” Although it also included a residence for the Zhangjia qutuγtu, Köke süme was not the Zhangjia qutuγtu's own monastery.

²⁷ Ren 2005: 75.

²⁸ Huang 1758, *juan* 4, 35a-b, “Duolun nuoer.” A similar description, certainly copied from the *Koubei santing zhi*, is found in Yang, 1933: 37 and in Miaozhou, 1935 (*juan* 7, p. 52). See also Henmi 1975 [1965], I: 556-566; Na Būkeqada 1999: 408-409; Ren 2005: 75-83.

²⁹ Henmi & Nakano 1943-1944, II, fig. 90-101; Henmi 1975 [1965], I, fig. 94-102; II: fig. 470-473.

³⁰ On these *sang*: see Charleux 2006a: [81]; map in Ren 2005: 122. Other exterior buildings included a travel lodge for the Panchen Lama (1778), another one for Emperor Yongzheng, and a Printing Office.

³¹ For instance the Pilusi 毘盧寺 of Nanjing: Prip-Møller 1967 [1937]: 57, fig. 89.

[*Sira sūme*] imitates the architectural style of the *dugang* where the Dalai Lama of Tibet lives. The *dugang* is the Huayanjinglou 華嚴經樓 (*Avatamsaka sūtra* hall). [...] The main hall is composed of two parts; the foremost hall is a two-floor building; the total area is 81 bays. In the middle, all the pillars are hollow to allow water flowing (其中柱皆中空以洩水). It is a work of great skill. The roof is covered by yellow glazed tiles (Huang 1758, *juan* 4, 35a-b, “Duolun nuer”).³²



Fig. 7. Façade of the main assembly hall of *Sira sūme* (destroyed). *Sun* 2002: 307.

Photographs of the façade show a two-storey temple with a porch and a peristyle, very similar to the façade of Amur bayasqulangu’s main assembly hall (fig. 7).³³ Like the latter, its inner area measured 7x7 bays, and the peristyle was nine-bays large, with a total area of 9x9=81 bays (as described by Huang 1758). The photographs and the history of the construction allow me to assert that the assembly hall of *Sira sūme* belonged to the imperial *huilang* style.

A. M. Pozdnev (1851-1920), who was the first to notice the similarity between the two monasteries, observed that the façade of *Sira sūme*’s temple was decorated more sumptuously than Amur bayasqulangu’s façade.³⁴ The fact that these two monasteries were designed on the same model, at around the same time, and at the same cost shows that the two great lamas, the Zhangjia and the Jebcündamba, recognized by the the Qing Emperors as the religious heads of Inner and Outer Mongolia respectively, were honoured equally by Emperor Yongzheng.

Why are the imperial monasteries of Beijing and Dolonnor both called “Yellow monastery”? Yellow is the Qing imperial colour, but likewise the colour of the Gelugpa

³² Another description, in the *Chahaer koubei liu xian diaocha ji*, presents the chapels of the building, with a *mgon khang* (chapel of the protectors) on the first floor and golden mandala on the second floor: “The first floor of Shanyin is a Buddha shrine; above are kept books. There is also the (Living) Buddha’s seat. On the left side of the main hall of the two monasteries, there is a small pavilion; hidden by a yellow curtain are worshipped the *yi dam*; in front of the pavilion are disposed a tiger’s head and a leopard’s head. They look real. It is said that a Qing emperor hunted them and that one must worship them. In Shanyin (’s pavilion) hang fake human skins and other things. [...] In front of the pavilion are knives, bows and other weapons for the *dharmapāla* to tame demons. At the second floor of Shanyin there is a golden mandala” (Yang, 1933: 38). See also the description and sketch in Ren 2005: 76-80, 82.

³³ Also Henmi & Nakano 1943-1944, II, fig. 90.

³⁴ A. Pozdnev, who visited Dolonnor in 1892, admired the “lavish style, the design of cornices, the abundance of fantastic sculptures, the marvellous reliefs and graceful, tapering, polished and gilded columns” of *Sira sūme* (1977 [1896]: 193).

school (called “Yellow Hats” in Chinese and Mongolian), and more generally the colour of Buddhism (*sira shasin*, the Yellow religion/teaching) for the Mongols. The Yellow monastery of Dolonnor might have been named after the Beijing Yellow monastery, but this name was also common for Qing imperial monasteries: for instance Huangsi (or Shishengsi 實勝寺) of Mukden (Shenyang 瀋陽), or the imperial Yellow monastery (or Tügemel amurjiyuluyci süme) near Qobdo (Khovd) in Outer Mongolia.

There was also a close connection through the person of Zanabazar between Xihuangsi, Sira süme and Amur bayasqulangtu keyid: Zanabazar patronized Xihuangsi and also died there; he was one of the main initiators of the Dolonnor Treaty, and Amur bayasqulangtu keyid was founded in order to house his funerary stupa. After having written the 1723 stone inscription for Xihuangsi, Yongzheng may have taken an interest in the Dalailou and sought to reproduce it at Amur bayasqulangtu keyid, or he wanted to erect a temple for the late Zanabazar similar to the one where he had died.³⁵ I therefore think that Lei Jinyu, who built the two Mongol imperial monasteries—the funerary temple for the Jebcündamba and the residence for the Zhangjia in Dolonnor—took the Dalailou of Xihuangsi as a model for the assembly halls of these monasteries. Thus, the three great Gelugpa pontiffs recognized by the Qing Emperor each had his imperial monastery built on the same model.

4. The origin and meaning of *huilang*-style mandalic architecture

The Huangsi’s Dalailou and the two Yongzheng foundations are not unique in the East Asian world. Another imperial monastery, now destroyed, may have been built on the same model, with a *huilang*-style assembly hall: Altan serege keyid, founded by Emperor Shunzhi in 1651-52 in Inner Mongolia to serve as another residence for the Fifth Dalai Lama on his way to Beijing.³⁶ Apart from that, a number of other assembly halls of non-imperial monasteries in Inner Mongolia and in (Outer) Mongolia possess a *huilang*-style elevation.³⁷ But none of them shows exactly the same elevation, roofing, dimensions and façade as the three imperial temples studied above: their framework is either Chinese or Tibetan; their porch is two-storied, the second-floor galleries have a flat-terrace roof or a *juanpeng* 卷棚 roof; and from the outside, the skylight pavilion³⁸ may either not be visible, as it is obstructed by the second storey, or it is visible, dominating the surrounding storey (fig. 8).

³⁵ The Amur bayasqulangtu keyid’s stone inscription evokes the Fifth Dalai Lama’s travel to Beijing but does not mention the foundation of Xihuangsi (Zhang 1988: 330).

³⁶ Or Daiya-yin süme, in Junmamuchang 軍馬牧場 pastures, Caqar banners. See Charleux 2006a: [83] and [84].

³⁷ For example Siregetü juu (Höhhot, 1616-40s), Huiningsi 惠寧寺 (Beipiao, Liaoning, ca. 1876), Xiangyuansi 興源寺 (Küriye banner, 1901), Yanfusi 延福寺 (Bayanhot, rebuilt in 1931-32), Guanghuasi 廣化寺 and Anlesi 安樂寺 (Fuxin, Liaoning) in Inner Mongolia. See Charleux 2006a [2], [98], [100], [127].

³⁸ On the symbolism of the skylight in the Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese worlds: Stein 1987: 150-151; Charleux 2006a: 241-243.

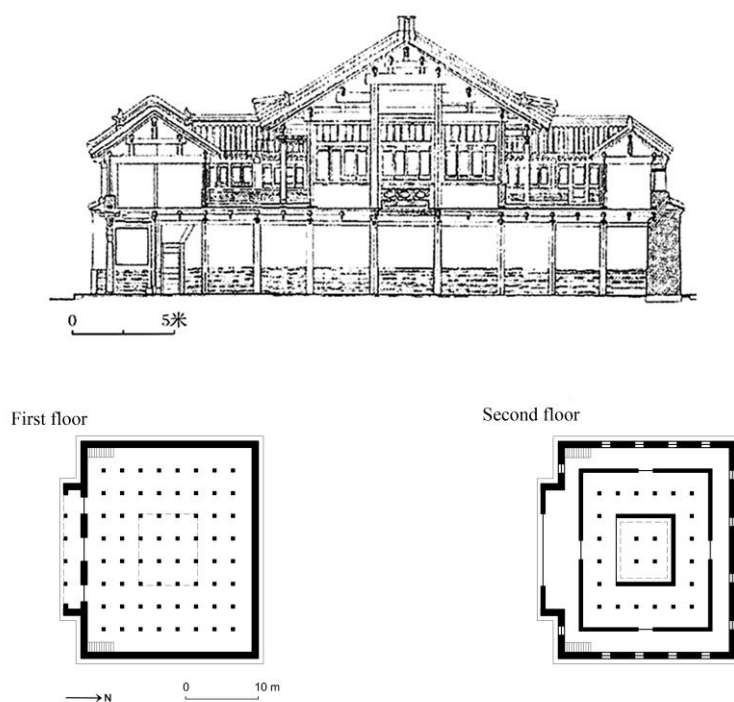


Fig. 8. Plan and cross-section of Xingyuansi's assembly hall of Kūriye banner (Jirim league). *Zhongguo wenwu ditu ji: Nei Menggu zizhi qu fence 2003, I: 339.*

Although most of the *huilang*-style Mongol assembly halls are of a later date, the possible influence of the Qing imperial monasteries on Mongol monasteries is not obvious; they are more likely to stem from the same sources. The Mongols were particularly interested in mandalas, symmetrical designs, and favoured square symmetrical architecture.³⁹ Following Chinese monastic architecture rather than the Tibetan contemporary model,⁴⁰ they often chose to build their assembly halls with a separated Buddha shrine relegated in a northern courtyard. Besides, as A. Chayet and C. Jest⁴¹ have pointed out, the *huilang*-style assembly halls also draw on old models, such as the three concentric enclosures surrounding the cruciform Utse of Samye monastery and other pre-fifteenth century Tibetan temples that had been inspired by old Indian temples such as Odantapuri or Nalanda, and perhaps also from local schemes and Chinese models as well.⁴² More generally, the concentric courtyard around the skylight pavilion is a transposition of the blind corridors for circumambulation (*skor khang*) surrounding the sanctuary in old Tibetan temples. It also remind of temples surrounded by concentric walls such as Cabciyal-un sūme built by the Mongols near the Kükunor Lake in 1577.⁴³ The *huilang* style emphasizes the mandala symbolism and the progression towards Enlightenment, similarly to stupas such as Gyantse or Borobudur.

However, the more direct source of this style is probably to be found in Amdo (now Qinghai region).⁴⁴ Since the second conversion of Mongols in the sixteenth century, many

³⁹ Charleux 2006b; Charleux 2006a: 248, 250, 257.

⁴⁰ Meyer 1987.

⁴¹ Chayet & Jest 1991: 77.

⁴² Chayet 1988.

⁴³ Destroyed in 1591 (see Charleux 2006a: Chapter 1).

⁴⁴ The plan and elevation of the great assembly hall of Kumbum (rebuilt in 1915: Chen Meihe 1986: 153, fig. 2-156, 2-157) can be called *huilang* style but with flat terrace roofs, as well as the assembly hall of Labrang (Gansu), the Dharmapāla hall

Tibetan missionaries had come from Amdo, and founded or helped to build the first Mongol monasteries. During the eighteenth century, the ties between Amdo reincarnations and Beijing and Mongol monasteries were very close. Almost all the reincarnated lamas who intermittently lived in Beijing (the Zhujing qutuytu 住京呼圖克圖) and who had a residence in Dolonnor came from Amdo.

The Yongzheng era is also the time of the Chinese conquest of Tibet. After having destroyed the monasteries of Amdo and slaughtered their monks during the suppression of the Mongol Khoshuud (Mong. Qoshuud) chiefs' rebellion in Kukuror (1723-24), Yongzheng financed their reconstruction. For this reason, Amdo temples could have influenced both Mongol and imperial foundations. As the Zhujing qutuytu supervised the reconstructions, they may have also participated in the foundation of Sira süme and Amur bayasqulangtu keyid and proposed a hybrid style that looked Chinese from the exterior but showed a Tibetan inner conception of space.

Conclusion – A copy of the Potala?

The main architects responsible for spreading the *huilang* style were influential lamas from Amdo and Mongolia who visited Beijing or lived there, such as Nom-un qan. However, when Yongzheng had Amur bayasqulangtu keyid and Sira süme erected, he wanted to do more than please the Mongol lamas with a mandalic architecture: he entrusted the best architect of his palaces, Lei Jinyu, with the task, and bestowed identical copies of the Potala on both the Jebcündamba (who had died) and the Zhangjia qutuytu to make them equal to each other and to the Dalai Lama. With these palatial monasteries, the Qing emperor symbolically put the three reincarnations of the three Buddhist provinces of his empire, Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia, and Tibet, on a par with each other. Amur bayasqulangtu keyid and Sira süme are comparable to the affixing of the same imperial seal on two parts of the conquered territory.⁴⁵ As P. Berger demonstrated,⁴⁶ the Manchu emperors were particularly keen on making replicas: copying was an ideological and political means to manipulate the past, present, and future and to symbolically appropriate objects.

Nevertheless, the questions remains whether the *huilang* style could have actually be modelled on the Potala. Xihuangsi was built only three years after the completion of the White Palace, the first part of the Potala, in 1645-48.⁴⁷ Its architects may have tried to reproduce the Great Eastern Assembly hall (Tshoms chen shar) of the White Palace, used for state ceremonies, with two storeys around a central skylight. However, the architects working in the imperial workshops certainly did not have the opportunity to peer the original building. Even if they could have had access to painted representations of the palace, they did not try to replicate the façade of the Potala, the high white walls, the defensive architecture, and the flat roofing. All this supports my hypothesis on the origin of the *huilang* style as the adaptation of a generic model of the mandalic square hall with a central skylight, probably developed first in Amdo and then in Mongolia. Chinese observers argued that the model for the three imperial monasteries was the Potala since the architecture was not Chinese and because they were built as residences for high reincarnations.

The question of foreign architectural models and their copies has been extensively explored in connection with Emperor Qianlong but not with his predecessors. The original

of Kumbum (bTsan khang chen mo, 1692, enlarged in 1809 and 1826), and the Esoteric, Kālacakra and Medicine colleges of Kumbum (Chen Meihe 1986: 150-151, fig. 2-152; 115, fig. 2-82.)

⁴⁵ Metaphor employed by Chayet & Jest 1991: 75.

⁴⁶ Berger 2003.

⁴⁷ Meyer 1987: 396.

architecture of the assembly halls of Amur bayasqulangtu keyid, Sira süme, and Xihuangsi shows the capacity of innovation and of integration of foreign elements while keeping Chinese materials and techniques of construction before Qianlong's reign.⁴⁸ In contrast, although the many architectural "copies" commissioned by Qianlong in Beijing and Chengde are whimsical rather than faithful interpretations of their models, they integrate many Tibetan elements. The Tibetan façades with trompes-l'oeil and fake windows are picturesque and convey a meaning that is completely different from the Yongzheng copies.⁴⁹ Putuozongchengmiao of Chengde tried at least to replicate the incredible complexity and general aspect of the original Potala. Only the Wanfagui 萬法歸, the wooden temple standing in its centre, with its surrounding galleries, is evocative of the *huilang* style.

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⁴⁸ On another exotic architecture copied at the period of Emperor Yongzheng: Charleux 2006b.

⁴⁹ See Chayet 1985.

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