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BUDDHIST MONASTERIES IN SOUTHERN MONGOLIA: A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

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From the end of the sixteenth century onwards, Tibetan Buddhism flourished among Southern Mongols, bringing revolutionary changes to their nomadic society. With the support of Mongol kings and, later, the Manchu emperors, the Gelugpa (dGe-lugs-pa) Buddhist institution expanded all over the country, while local religious life organised itself around Buddhist monasteries. Although Tibetan Buddhism was first introduced among the Mongols during the thirteenth century, it failed then to take hold in Mongols' hearts and very few monasteries were founded. Almost nothing of the present physical heritage of Mongol Buddhism dates from this period. Therefore, I will focus on the historical background and the architectural aspects of the Southern Mongolian monasteries from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Inner or Southern Mongolia[1] is today an "autonomous region" of the People's Republic of China, and has been largely settled by Han Chinese since the mid nineteenth century. Due to border modifications that occurred repeatedly during the twentieth century, former Mongol territories now belong to other provinces of China (especially Liaoning), and thus are included in this survey.

This study is mainly based on fieldwork undertaken between 1993 and 1999, which allowed me to visit more than thirty monasteries. The data gathered on the field along with the historical documentation were exposed in detail in my dissertation thesis (Charleux 1998).

In Mongolia, as in Tibet, the frontiers between a monastery and a temple are blurred. Should we call by the same name small "temples"[2] kept by one or two monks, "monasteries" inhabited by ten monks yet attracting hundreds of them during festivals, and large permanent communities of over 500 monks? Mongolian monasteries and temples were called by different names, each with a precise original meaning:

- *süme*: sedentary monastery or temple sheltering a statue, without monks' dwelling;[3]
- *juu*: "image", then "temple", from the Tibetan *jo-bo*, the famous statue of Shākyamuni in Lhasa;[4]
- *küriye*: ring, enclosure, encampment, a nomadic monastery with a yurt or a wooden temple surrounded by monks' dwellings;

[1] The former Outer Mongolia was part of the Qing empire from 1691 to 1911. Thereafter under the sway of the former Soviet Union, Mongolia is now a sovereign nation. Qalqa Mongols form the majority of its population.
[2] We also use the term "temple" to designate a place of worship inside a monastery, often dedicated to particular deities or bodhisattvas.
[3] *Süme* is also the official term for a Mongol monastery in Qing documents.
[4] Transcribed *zhao*召, 昭 or 招 in Chinese.

- *keyid*: hermitage.[5]

The oldest constructions were temples built to shelter an image of Buddha, while the first monastic communities lived in yurts (felt tents). Later on, *juu*, *süme* and *keyid* often became monasteries and *küriye* settled. Hermitages seem to have either completely disappeared or merged with the monasteries. Eventually, probably after the seventeenth century, all these appellations came to designate any kind of religious buildings, from small local temples to large monasteries.[6] Nunneries never existed in Southern Mongolia—although old women sometimes took monastic vows, while staying at home.[7]

The main difference between a shrine, a temple and a monastery is thus a difference of size—size of the monastic communities and physical size of the architectural complex. Within a period of four centuries, many temples became monasteries and during the present revival, old monasteries were revived as small temples. The adaptation to a local as to a large scale is one of the original characteristics of the Tibeto-Mongol institution.

I. BUDDHIST MONASTERIES IN SOUTHERN MONGOLIA UP TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

1. Introduction of Buddhism in the country

Mahāyāna Buddhism was initially introduced in the territory of Southern Mongolia during the Northern Wei (Toba) dynasty (386-534). The nomadic people who occupied this area later on, like the Kitan and the Jürchen, were also converted to Mahāyāna Buddhism; they used Buddhism as a state religion in order to unify their heterogeneous empire, to protect and legitimate their dynasty.[8] Large monasteries of the Kitan, who founded the Liao dynasty (916-1125), could be found in every city of their empire, such as Fengzhou 豐州 (near Kökeqota), Qingzhou 慶州, and their five capital cities.[9] The main remaining sites are located in Chifeng district and in Liaoning province. Kitan Buddhist architecture was mainly of Chinese style and techniques. Except a few cave temples, seven to thirteen storeys Chinese-style pagodas are the only remains of their numerous foundations that dotted the whole Mongolia.[10] The Kitan cave monasteries of Gilubar juu [30][11] and Öbür juu, located near their upper capital (Shangjing 上京, Baγarin banner) became under the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) important monasteries and pilgrimage sites.

The Jürchen, who founded the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), reoccupied and restored many Liao Buddhist sites. Several Jin pagodas have been preserved. In the Western part of the territory, the Tangγud founded the Xia empire (1032-1227) whose nobility was first converted to Mahāyāna, and then, in the twelfth century, to Tibetan Buddhism. They built monasteries, invited Tibetan lamas at their court, exchanged sutras and paintings with the Mahāyānist Song,

[5] *Küriye* and *keyid* are seldom used in Southern Mongolia.
[6] Pozdneev 1978 [1887]: 25; Miller 1959: 11-14.
[7] In 1636 the Manchu emperor Hung Taiji prohibited women to become nuns. There were a few exceptions among the Tümed, and nowadays in Northern Mongolia.
[8] Sinor 1990; Kessler et al. 1993.
[9] The only complete study in a Western language is Steinhardt 1997.
[10] Such as Wanbuhuayanjing ta 萬部華嚴經塔 of Daming 大明 monastery (Fengzhou, near Kökeqota), three pagodas in the Central capital (Dading 大定, west of Ningcheng), South and North pagoda of Shangjing, Baita of Qingzhou.
[11] The number in brackets refers to the list of cited monasteries in Table 3 and on the map.

Liao and Jin people. Their Buddhist vestiges in Inner Mongolia include ruins of monasteries, Tibetan style *stūpa* in Qaraqota city in present Alasha Ejin region, and Chinese style square pagodas.[12]

2. Buddhist monasteries under the Yuan dynasty: twelfth to fourteenth centuries

Tibetan Buddhism (often referred to as "Lamaism") was first introduced among the Mongols during the thirteenth century.[13] The descendants of Chinggis Khan who founded a universal empire met with different religions: Nestorianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Islam. Those who conquered China (and called themselves the Yuan dynasty, 1277-1368) adopted Buddhism as a state religion, seeing a political advantage in an alliance with the flourishing culture of Tibet. The emperors, especially Qubilai (r. 1260-1294), ordered the conversion of the Yuan empire to Tibetan Buddhism, patronised constructions, translations and debates. Several Sakyapa (Sa-skya-pa) lamas contracted with the Mongol rulers a *yon-mchod* (donator-lama) relationship, like 'Phags-pa, who served as Qubilai's spiritual adviser. In this personal relationship, the lama recognised the Qan as an incarnation of a bodhisattva and a universal emperor *(cakravartin)*; in exchange the Qan gave him titles, honours, protection and patronage. The motivations for the Qan's interest and patronage were not only religious: he expected his rule to be legitimated as he was identified as Great Qan, ruler of all the Mongol domains. Lamas were appointed to high offices and monasteries were built with state funds.

The influence of Karmapa (*karma-pa*) and Kakyapa lamas at the Yuan court affected essentially the Mongol nobility. Tibetan Buddhism remained mainly an urban religion organised around the imperial monasteries of Northern China, and very few monasteries were founded in Southern Mongolia. Shamanism was still the religion of the majority of the Mongols, while the Chinese were mostly unaffected by this policy.

Almost nothing remains of the architecture of these few Yuan foundations, except some Tibetan-style *stūpa*. They probably mixed different styles, mainly Chinese and Tibetan, but also imported ones. Qubilai recruited a Muslim architect to help him plan his capital city, Dadu 大都/Beijing. Later he employed other foreigners, including the Nepalese sculptor and architect Arniko (Anige), to build monasteries in Dadu. The Yuan emperors wanted to be perceived as the rulers of a universal empire by using multiethnic styles of architecture. However, the excavations of Shangdu 上都 (or Kaiping 開平), their summer capital, revealed that the architectures were mainly Chinese.

Some Yuan monasteries are known by archaeological vestiges in the territory of Southern Mongolia, such as the Sakyapa monasteries in and around Shangdu (the largest were Huayan si 華嚴寺 and Qianyuan si 乾元寺),[14] and the Longxing si. Isolated pagodas are still standing in Yingchang 應昌 (Kesigten banner) and Kailu 開魯 cities. The Longquan si [24] is the only one that was still in activity under the Qing dynasty, but nothing of the Yuan buildings has remained.

Of these nomadic people who once occupied the territory of Southern Mongolia up to the sixteenth century, very few Buddhist remains are left, and nowadays all are deserted. More have been preserved in China proper because they were restored by the following dynasties up to the Qing. Most of their Buddhist monuments were located in settled urban

[12] Linrothe 1995 and 1998; *Sulla vita della seta* 1993.
[13] On the general history of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia: Heissig 1973 [1970].
[14] Shangdu was imagined as a mandala, surrounded by eight monasteries at the cardinal plus intermediary points. The place is also known as "a hundred and eight monasteries". According to Delege (1998: 61), there were 167 monasteries in and around Shangdu, yet no archaeological evidence confirms their existence.

agglomerations, ruins of which still dot the countryside. A few archaeological sites are documented by Russian and Japanese expeditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and by recent Chinese excavations.

II. HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN SOUTHERN MONGOLIA FROM THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY ONWARDS

1. The Dark Age, 1368- sixteenth century

After the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368, most of the Mongols returned to nomadic life in their homeland. During this "Dark Age", virtually nothing is known of Buddhism in Mongolia: it seems to have retreated when faced with the resurgence of Shamanism.[15] However, the speed and the strength of the revival of Buddhism during the sixteenth century can only be explained by the fact that it still coexisted with Shamanistic practices during this period. Moreover, Southern Mongols had diplomatic, commercial or bellicose relations with the surrounding Buddhist people of Gansu, Turkestan and Amdo (A-mdo, especially the Kukunor area) who certainly influenced their Buddhist renaissance. There were probably nomadic monasteries adapted to the pastoral life, too small to be recorded in the historical sources. Indeed, the recently discovered Arjai (Baiyanyao百眼窯) caves show a rare case of the continuity of a Buddhist presence from the Northern Wei (386-534) up to the Ming period (1368-1644) (Charleux 1998: 18).

During the fifteenth century, the Western Mongols, who founded the Oyirad khanship adopted Buddhism in order to legitimise their power. Their monasteries were probably also moveable, nothing having been left after the fall of their kingdom.

2. The Mongolian renaissance of the sixteenth century

Tibetan Buddhism was officially re-introduced at the end of the sixteenth century by Altan Qan (1507-1582), a descendant of Chinggis Khan and leader of numerous military campaigns. During the early period of this cultural "renaissance" (1566-1634), older schools of Tibetan Buddhism (Sakyapa, Nyingmapa [rNying-ma-pa], Karmapa) were in competition with the growing Gelugpa school founded by Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419).[16] Monks from Amdo, Gansu, Central Tibet but also from China competed to convert the Qan.

Altan's Tümed Mongols lived in the rich plain situated in the Northeast corner of the loop of the Yellow River. Buddhist predication there was part of a larger socio-economic change: the construction of towns, palaces and houses preceded the foundation of temples by Altan Qan. From 1546-1550 onwards, the Tümed Mongols used the manpower of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand Chinese immigrants and prisoners (perhaps as numerous as the Tümed themselves) who developed agriculture and contributed their technical and architectural skills. Altan Qan first constructed in the mid-sixteenth century a palace and a town commonly referred to as Yeke bayising.[17] In 1572, the year following the Sino-Mongol peace treaty re-establishing border relations, Altan Qan founded a new capital, Kökeqota

[15] Serruys 1963 and 1966; Jagchid 1972; Charleux 1998: 15-24.
[16] "The Virtuous", also called "Yellow hats" or "Yellow religion" in China, in Mongolia and in Western countries because of the colour of their hats. Compared to the "Red hats" or older schools, the Gelugpa insist on strict monastic discipline, on celibacy and on the "gradual way" of the spiritual formation.
[17] Litt. "The Big house". *Bayising* first refers to the houses of Chinese settlers in contrast to the Mongolian yurt.

(Hohhot, "the Blue City", Ch. Huhehaote 呼和浩特).[18] The establishment of these urban centres offered new opportunities for craftsmen, thus inspiring a renaissance of the arts and architecture. The acceleration of the settling process among the Tümed encouraged the foundation of fixed religious centres.

From 1572 to 1577, the Mongols repeatedly asked the Chinese court for religious texts, images and other worship items, as well as for monks and carpenters. The propagation of Buddhism in Mongolia initially came from Amdo and China, which explains the numerous Chinese features of the Buddhist monastery in Mongolia.[19] Kökeqota was then inhabited by Mongols and Chinese who seemed to cohabit peacefully,[20] contributing to the foundation of the same temples and monasteries. The Blue City quickly became the economic, cultural and religious capital of Mongolia, redistributing the Chinese products from the market-towns of the Great Wall to the other Mongol groups, who, save the Ordos, refused to sign any treaty with the Chinese. The commercial relations between the Mongol groups contributed to the rapid diffusion of Buddhism.

The Tümed and their allies, the Ordos and Qaracin groups eventually gave pre-eminence to the Gelugpa school in 1578, when they met its hierarch, bSod-nams rgya-mstho (1543-1588), at the Kukunor lake. Altan Qan gave him the title of Dalai Lama. He was in turn recognised as a reincarnation of Qubilai Qan, reinstating the interdependent relationship between Mongolian kings and Tibetan lamas.[21] The adoption of Tibetan Buddhism had mutual political advantages for the Tümed and for the Gelugpa. Altan Qan, acting as a *cakravartin* king, assumed a legitimacy based not only on inheritance but also on reincarnation. He hoped to unify again the Mongol polities in a confederation based on this universal and organised religion, which had attracted the settled Tümed nobility by its sophisticated rituals, doctrine, and literature. For his part, the Dalai Lama hoped to find in these new allies a strong military support that could allow the Gelugpa to consolidate their influence and to conquer the whole of Tibet.

From this time onwards, the Tibeto-Mongol relations intensified while the Sino-Mongol relations were limited to economic exchanges. The Mongol princes all wanted to visit the holy city of Lhasa and to meet the Dalai Lama, in order to either reinforce the relation or to establish a concurrent relation. The trip of the Dalai Lama to Mongolia in 1586-87 expanded the young faith, provoking a huge wave of conversions and foundations of monasteries. Within the next few decades, ordinary Mongols became Buddhist, either voluntarily or under pressure. The Tibeto-Mongol connection became even stronger when the Fourth Dalai Lama Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1589-1617), the reincarnation of bSod-nams rgya-mtsho, was recognised in the person of a great-grandson of Altan Qan.

The mobile monasteries that followed Altan Qan in his military campaigns progressively settled: a small temple was probably founded in Kökeqota around 1572. In 1575 Altan Qan founded the Mayidari-yin juu (temple of Maitreya) [3],[22] maybe on the site of his former palace, and the Yeke juu ("Big Temple") [1] a few years later, the first two of the large princely monasteries that survive today.

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[18] Kökeqota is now the capital city of Inner Mongolia. On its history: Hyer 1982; Charleux 1998.

[19] At first, for several reasons, the Tümed did not directly address their demands to Central Tibet, as one may have expected. No official relation with Tibet was established before 1577.

[20] In the end of the sixteenth century the Chinese immigrants suddenly disappeared from the records: some of them returned to China or died during the outbreaks of smallpox epidemics; perhaps others stayed in Southern Mongolia and became mongolised.

[21] Altan Qan enacted new Buddhist laws for Mongolia, including the prohibition of human sacrifices and *ongγud* (Shamanistic figurines) worshipping, and the conferment of status and privileges for monks.

[22] Charleux 1998: 44-48, 68-71; Charleux 1999.

3. The early seventeenth century and the elimination of the Red sects

The first foundations were made by members of the chinggiskhanid nobility; then followed "spontaneous" communities formed at the end of the sixteenth century around monks and hermits arriving from Tibet or from within Mongolia. Missionaries from Central and Eastern Tibet, but also from Chinese Tibeto-Mongol centres and members of the Mongolian nobility such as Neyici toyin (1557-1653) extended their activity all over Mongolia. They converted princes, established congregations and acted as ambassadors mediating the internal disputes between the various polities. The missionary struggle against Shamanistic practices was especially tough in the Eastern part of Southern Mongolia.[23] Buddhist missionaries also obtained favours from the rising Manchu dynasty, who gave them money, *shabinar*[24] and land to establish monasteries.

The history of foundations reflects the irresistible progression of the Gelugpa "orthodoxy". The reasons why the Tümed Mongols chose the Gelugpa sect rather than a "Red" one remain unclear. They probably gave their preference to this young school because the Karmapa were too close to Beijing, while the Sakyapa were politically feeble and lacking missionary ardour. Other princes like Ligdan Qan (1592-1634), descendant of the elder son of Chinggis Qan, hence the legitimate emperor of all Mongols ("Qan of Qan-s"), patronised the "Red" orders. The Gelugpa sect gained the support of the Manchu dynasty and then the religious monopoly over all Mongolia after the defeat of Ligdan Qan, who failed to reunite the fragmented groups.[25] The monasteries of the older sects, with a very few exceptions, were probably converted into Gelugpa ones, although the sources are silent on this subject.

4. The heydays of the Manchu period: 1636-1840

By 1636, all the Mongol princes had negotiated alliances with the Manchus or had become their subjects following military defeat. Seduced by the Manchu support of Tibetan Buddhism, they recognised the emperor as their legitimate ruler.[26] Their cavalry significantly increased the military might of the Manchus who conquered China, taking the mandate of Heaven from the fallen Ming dynasty in 1644. At the same time, in 1642, the Western Mongol Gushri Qan conquered Central Tibet for the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). The centralisation of the political and spiritual powers in Beijing and, in a lesser degree, in Lhasa established a new deal that challenged the previous independence of the Mongolian Buddhist centres.

The Manchu emperors of the new Qing dynasty became in the seventeenth century the masters of a vast empire including Mongolia, China, Tibet and Eastern Turkestan. It was by that time that a distinction was introduced between the Southern or Inner Mongols, who were by now Qing subjects, within the borders of the Qing empire and the Northern Qalqa or Outer Mongols, who were outside that border. By 1691 the Qalqa Mongols were so pressured by their enemies, the Western Mongol Jungar that they called the Manchus for help and submitted to their rule.

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[23] Heissig 1953. Shamanism was never completely eliminated, and Buddhism had to accommodate with several Shamanistic practices.

[24] "Disciples", laymen given by a prince to a monastery.

[25] Ligdan Qan attempted to restore the glory of the Mongol empire by terrorising other Mongol groups to submit to his harsh rule, causing the majority of his subjects to finally join the Manchus.

[26] The Manchu emperor proclaimed himself as Qan of Qan-s, Yuan emperors' true heir because he appropriated Qubilai's imperial seal and the sacred image of Mahākāla carved under the Yuan dynasty, then transmitted to Ligdan Qan. Moreover, he presented himself as an incarnation of the bodhisattva Mañjushrī, spiritually equal to the Dalai and to the Panchen Lama.

After the Manchu conquest of China in 1644, the situation became stable in Southern Mongolia. The Qing established new political and institutional structures to control the society. The traditional economy was transformed by the creation of banners with a fixed territory, hence restricting the mobility of the nomads. Chinggisqanid princes were appointed rulers of these banners and thus officials of the empire, subordinate to the Lifan yuan 理藩院 (Court of Colonial Affairs) in Beijing. The Qing tried to isolate Mongolia from China and from Tibet, prohibiting the Chinese to settle there.

Early on, the Qing encouraged and patronised Buddhist foundations in order to maintain peace among the Mongols, and especially to solve the conflict between the Qalqas and the Jungar. According to the Kangxi emperor (1662-1722), who hoped that the pacific message of Buddhist doctrine could prevent the Mongols to rebel, "building only one temple is equivalent to feeding a hundred thousand soldiers in Mongolia." The Qing established the lCang-skya qutuγtu, a reincarnation discovered in Amdo, as the spiritual leader of Inner Mongolian Buddhism, to counterweight the Boγda gegeen of Outer Mongolia. In order to facilitate the control of the Buddhist institution, they made Beijing into one of the major centres of Inner Mongolian Buddhism. Imperial foundations in Beijing, Chengde (Jehol) and in Mongolia proper (especially in Dolonnor/Doluγan naγur), marked the important political events. All these "imperial monasteries" were characterised by a monumental and syncretic architecture devised to impress the Mongols.

These few prestigious constructions did not overshadow the numerous private foundations that testify of the faith of the people. Although their political role was limited to a banner or a district, the academic and spiritual renown of monasteries founded by lamas or Mongol princes crossed the borders. All over the country, small communities developed into large "academic" monasteries,[27] with colleges for the study of the doctrine, esotericism, Kālacakra (including astrology, mathematics and divination), and medicine, that attracted the most learned Mongols. Because academic studies were expensive, rules were strict and examinations difficult and only about one percent of the monastic population entered colleges. The monks had to travel to famous monasteries of Southern Mongolia (Badγar coyiling süme for instance), then to Kumbum, Labrang or Beijing and finally to Lhasa to pass the higher degrees.

In other words, by that time, a three-fold categorisation among Mongolian Buddhist places had become clear. It distinguished between:

1. "Imperial monasteries"—four monasteries founded by the Qing emperor and twenty "imperialised" old monasteries of Kökeqota.[28] All are located in banners directly administrated by the Lifan yuan (because of the elimination of local Mongol nobility who rebelled against the Qing). The emperor took the place of the Mongol prince in the role of the donator.

2. Monasteries founded by a monk or offered by a layman to a famous monk. The monk became the abbot and his reincarnation, found after his death, guaranteed a long-date reputation for the monastery.

[27] Monasteries are classified by Nagao Gajin 1991 [1947] into "academic" and "ritualistic". The first ones place their major emphasis on learning, the second ones, on worship and rituals.

[28] For all these imperial monasteries, the Lifan yuan enacted an ordinance fixing the status and income of the monastery, appointed its administrators, gave an official title to the monastery and ordination certificates to a quota of monks. When monastic communities were created *ex nihilo*, every banner was ordered to send monks and money to support them. Besides the imperial monasteries, other large monasteries received an official title with a wooden board.

3. Local monasteries, founded by and belonging to a prince ("banner monasteries") or a lay community. Some of them attracted famous lamas and became large academic monasteries. The modern chief-towns formed around such banner monasteries.

The monastic institution expanded its influence to become the dominant force in the culture and the economy of Mongolia. Monasteries were not only spiritual centres of learning but also played an important role in finance, trade and patronage of arts. Moreover, the management of their flocks and herds provided a livelihood for many dependent people called *shabinar*. They promoted changes in the traditional Mongol society and in the physical appearance of the country, counterbalancing the impact of sinicisation.[29]

Every family aspired to have at least one child accepted into the monkhood. Quotas of monks imposed by the Qing to the largest monasteries[30] were not respected, therefore the vast majority of monks was "unofficial". Among them, some[31] lived permanently in the monastery and depended on it. However, the majority of them were just novices; they worked as herders or farmers most of the time, coming to the monastery only to attend the festivals. Other were wandering monks, beggars, bards or pilgrims. Hence, by the middle of the nineteenth century, between thirty and sixty-five percent of the male population of the banners had taken monastic vows, and the largest congregations gathered several thousands of monks.

Monks were often travelling to Tibet and China (especially Beijing and mount Wutai 五臺山) for scholarly, diplomatic or pilgrimage purposes. High ranking lamas occupied a privileged position, all the more so since the lay nobility did not, like in Tibet, counterbalance them. The clerical hierarchy was equated with the civil one in the Manchu administrative system, the highest rank being the *qutuɣtu* (title of reincarnated monks). There were in the nineteenth century 157 reincarnations recognised by the Lifan yuan in Inner Mongolia. Exempted from taxation and corvée labour, they accumulated considerable property, wealth and labour force, exploiting an important population of *shabinar*. The most learned ones were translators of Buddhist texts, writers, painters, sculptors and architects.

5. The end of the Qing dynasty: 1840-1911

When the ideological and economic conjuncture was turned upside down after 1840 because of the Chinese internal crisis and recession, the Buddhist church lost the support of the court. The ban on Chinese immigration was lifted, and colonisation began at a rapid pace. As a result of one hundred fifty years of immigration, the population of Inner Mongolia is now overwhelmingly Chinese, Mongols representing only sixteenth percent. Moreover, during the many upheavals of this troubled period, many monasteries were abandoned, destroyed or squatted. From 1862 to 1877 the Chinese Muslims' rebellion destroyed most of the monasteries in Ordos and Alasha. The imperial monasteries rapidly declined, but independent monasteries continued to prosper until the beginning of the twentieth century. Paradoxically this period witnessed an efflorescence in literature and arts, as shown by the bronze workshops of Dolonnor for instance.

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[29] For the economic, institutional and socio-political aspects of Mongol Buddhism: Miller 1959.

[30] The official monks received from the Lifan yuan an ordination certificate and a prebend. They were exempted from military service, taxation and corvée labour.

[31] Initiation degrees were the same as in Tibet. A fully ordained monk is a *gelung*, from Tibetan *dge-slong*. Gelugpa monks are not supposed to marry.

Table 1. Number of monasteries compared to population and area at the beginning of the 20th century

Leagues	Population 1911 census	Surface km^2	Number of monasteries	Density of population	Density of mon. for 1,000 km^2.	Nb. of mon for 1,000 inhab.
Tümed of Kökeqota	56,337	20,000	41	2.82	2.05	0.73
Ordos (Yeke juu)	66,096	100,000	274	0.66	2.74	4.15
Ulaγancab	52,550	110,000	118	0.48	1.07	2.25
Alasha	24,942	270,000	24	0.09	0.09	0.96
Caqar	42,211	75,000	92	0.56	1.23	2.18
Sili-yin γoul	54,297	105,000	130	0.52	1.24	2.39
Josutu	237,195	30,000	282	7.91	9.40	1.19
Juu-uda	274,633	90,000	107	3.05	1.19	0.39
Jerim	561,909	120,000	197	4.68	1.64	0.35
Barγa	60,933	250,000	42	0.24	0.17	0.69
Yeke mingγan	4,110	?	34			8.27
Buteha	59,282	?				
Southern Mongolia	1,494,495	1,170,000	1,341	1.28	1.15	0.90

Table 2. Maximum number of monks per monastery in Southern Mongolia at the end of the Qing dynasty. The number of monasteries counting less than 500 monks is the substraction of the two previous columns to the first one.

Number of monasteries	Total number of monasteries	**> 1000 monks** Nb. mon.	% total	**500-1000 monks** Nb. mon.	% total	**< 500 monks** Nb. mon.	% total
Tümed of Kökeqota	41	3	7,3%	1	2,4%	37	90,2%
Ordos (Yeke juu)	274	2	0,7%	7	2,5%	265	96,7%
Ulaγancab	118	3	2,5%	3	2,5%	112	94,9%
Alasha	24	4	16,6%	2	8,3%	18	75%
Caqar	92	3	3,3%	1	1,1%	88	95,6%
Sili-yin γoul	130	2	1,5%	5	3,8%	123	94,6%
Josutu	282	3	1,1%	8	2,8%	271	96,1%
Juu-uda	107	1	0,9%	13	12,1%	93	96,1%
Jerim	197	3	1,5%	3	1,5%	191	97%
Barγa	42	0		1	2,4%	41	97,6%
Yekemingγan	34					34	100%
Total Southern Mongolia	1,341	24	1,8%	44	3,3%	1,273	94,9%

In the beginning of the twentieth century, there were about 1,340 monasteries and temples[32] in an area with less than two million inhabitants, and an average of twenty monasteries per banner (Table 1). Compared to the population, monasteries were more numerous in pastoral regions of Ordos, Ulaγancab, Caqar and Sili-yin γoul, and less numerous in agricultural regions of the north-east. The density of religious buildings was higher in the Tümed and Ordos regions, probably because their construction began as soon as the sixteenth century. The apparent disparities between different areas (Table 2) can also be explained by the heterogeneity of sources and by the concentration of monks in the largest monasteries in the beginning of the twentieth century, forsaking smaller ones. In the 1930's and 1940's, the

[32] According to estimations based on Mongolian, Chinese and Japanese sources. Charleux 1998: 218-222. The figures of Table 1 are global estimations.

only two large academic monasteries in activity were Badγar coyiling süme [4] and Bandida gegeen süme [18]. At the end of the Qing dynasty, about five percent of the monasteries had more than five hundred monks[33], a concentration which was comparable to that of Tibet and Northern Mongolia. These larger (and more documented: Table 3) monasteries tend to conceal the number and dispersion of small local monasteries in Southern Mongolia.

6. Present situation

Most of the monasteries have been destroyed at the beginning of the twentieth century and during the iconoclast Cultural Revolution (Charleux 2001). Preserved architectures were emptied of their statues, paintings and sacred books; the monks' dwellings and lateral monastic buildings were destroyed. Since the partial authorisation of religious activities at the end of the seventies, between one and three monasteries were reopened and re-occupied by a few monks in every banner or county under public or private initiative. The Buddhist revival was strong in the nineteen eighties and has become more cautious in the last decade. The more intense manifestations of religious life are seen during the great annual festivals, which attract many Mongolian, but also Han Buddhists (ill. 3). Pilgrimages, cult to local gods and *oboγa* (cairns, pronounced *ovoo*) became popular again.

The revived Buddhist institution, subordinate to the Chinese National Buddhist Association, remains strictly controlled by the state, and very few people are allowed to become a monk. Some young monks receive a basic religious education in Buddhist schools of Inner Mongolia, Kumbum (sKu-'bum, in Amdo) or Beijing.[34] The monastic communities are very small compared to the situation at the turn of the century. The largest monasteries (housing from five hundred to two thousand monks before) have nowadays thirty to forty monks plus some unofficial monks.[35] The People's Republic did not recognise new reincarnations in Inner Mongolia, but the Dalai Lama recently recognised the reincarnation of the lCang-skya qutuγtu, who lives in India.

Even when in activity, monasteries are considered as museums under the administration of the Bureau of "Cultural Heritage." In 1995, seventy four reopened monasteries received national or provincial protection. Twenty seven of them had been partially rebuilt after having been severely damaged or razed to the ground. In the eighties, the authorities invested fifteen million *yuan* in reconstruction and restoration of the main historic and scenic monasteries. But official protection does not mean conservation, except when a quick profit can be expected from tourism. There is no sustained policy and punctual restorations often go with the sinicisation and/or folklorisation of the monastery (building of Chinese pavilions, stone inscriptions, shops and even Disneyland-like attractions).

Today, probably a hundred monasteries are in activity, some of them waiting for official recognition. Scattered data on some banners suggest that many non-official small monasteries have been locally reconstructed without reporting to the authorities. Today's active monasteries are located in the historical Kökeqota region, in villages and in remote places inhabited by Mongol nomads and farmers who support them[36]. In rural areas where Chinese are more numerous than Mongols, or where Mongols are sinicised (the southern part of Inner Mongolia), there is no rebuilding. Mongol monasteries previously situated in remote

[33] For descriptions of the largest monasteries: Qiao Ji 1994; Delege 1998.
[34] In 1984, according to a census, there were more than five thousand monks. 3,850 of them were very old.
[35] Among the 31 monasteries I visited, 20 of them were active. One claimed to have 100 monks, two had 40 monks, three had 30 monks, one had 20 monks, 13 had between one to 15 monks.
[36] Nine out of twenty are in remote areas, six in small villages and five in towns.

areas, far from urban centres are now integrated in Chinese villages or settlements, in towns or in industrial areas. Today's largest Inner Mongolian towns are mainly inhabited by Chinese people.[37] The old capital city Kökeqota still has two active monasteries, but the "new" big towns—Baotou (Boγutu), Jining, Chifeng, Hailar—and smaller county seats—Xilinhot (Sili-yin qota), Dongsheng, Bayanhot (Bayan qota), Wulanhot (Ulaγan qota), Balinzuoqi, Balinyouqi (Baγarin Left and Right banners) etc.—have no monastery at all, or an old monastery turned into a museum.

Modern monasteries have to be economically self-sufficient, so they engage in the service industry and exploit their "relics". Yet they cannot revive the old economic relationship with the laymen. The Buddhist revival (survival?) is now threatened by the generation gap within the clergy, the superficial training of young monks, the folklorisation of the sites, and the impoverishment of rural Mongols. On the other hand, spontaneous rebuilding of a monastery by young monks trained in Kumbum shows instances of a genuine, popular revival.

Table 3 and map. The largest Buddhist monasteries of Southern Mongolia

This table gives the common names of the monasteries, their localisation (town, tribe or banner, with their early twentieth century definition), the main dates of their foundation and the present state of preservation. Chinese names ending by si *(monastery) are titles given by the Lifan yuan. Twenty-six "large" but poorly documented monasteries are not listed here.*

W.P: Well preserved D: Destroyed
P.P: Partly preserved R: Rebuilt

Tümed of Kökeqota

1. Yeke juu (Dazhao 大召, Hongci si 弘慈寺, Wuliang si 無量寺), Kökeqota, 1579-1580, W.P
2. Siregetü juu ("Xilitu zhao", Yanshou si 延壽寺), Kökeqota, 1585 — 1616, W.P

3. Mayidari-yin süme ("Meidai zhao" 美岱召, Lingjue si 靈覺寺, Shouling si 壽靈寺), east of Baotou, 1575 — 1606, W.P

Ulaγancab league

4. Badγar coyiling süme (Udan juu, "Wudang zhao", Guangjue si 廣覺寺), north-east of Baotou, 1727-1749, W.P
5. Mergen juu (Guangfa si 廣法寺), west of Baotou, 1677 or 1702, P.P
6. Kündülün juu (Faxi si 法喜寺), Baotou district, 1713 or 1729, P.P
7. Beyile-yin süme (Bailing miao, Guangfu si 廣福寺), Darqan vang, 1703, rebuilt in 1925, P.P
8. Sira mören süme (Xilamulun miao, Puhe si 普和寺), Dörben keüked, 1758, P.P
9. Bayan shanda-yin süme ("Shanda" miao), Urad, Rear banner, 1738, D, R

Ordos : Yeke juu league

10. Jungγar juu (Baotang si 寶堂寺), Jungγar, 1623 — 1920-1922, W.P
11. Üüsin juu (Γanjuur nom-un süme), Üüsin, 1713 — 1764, P.P

[37] Mongols represent only 5% of the population of Kökeqota city. The Chinese there have a few Buddhist (and Taoist) temples but I do not know of any Chinese monastery.

Alasha banners

12. Aγui-yin süme (Lobuncimbu süme, "Agui" miao, Chongcheng si 崇乘寺), Left banner, 1798, D, R
13. Baraγun keyid (Helanshan nansi, Guangzong si 廣宗寺), Left banner, 1756-1757, D, R
14. Jegün keyid (Helanshan beisi, Fuyin si 福因寺), Left banner, 1804, D, R
15. Yamun süme (Yanfu si 延福寺), Bayanqota, 1733, W.P

Caqar banners (these banners are now divided between Sili-yin γoul league and Hebei)

16. Köke süme (Huizong si 彙宗寺), Dolonnor, 1691-1711, D
17. Sira süme (Shanyin si 善因寺), Dolonnor, 1727-1731, D

Sili-yin γoul league

18. Bandida gegeen süme (Beizi miao 貝子廟, Chongshan si 崇善寺), Sili-yin qota (Abaγanar), 1729, P.P
19. Caγan oboγa süme, Sünid, Left banner, 1714, P.P
20. Blama-yin küriye ("Lama kulun miao"), Üjümücin, Right banner, Qing, ?

Josutu league (part of this league is now included in Liaoning province)

21. Falun si 法輪寺, Qaracin, 1745-1803, P.P
22. Fuhui si 福會寺 (Wangfu miao 王府廟), Qaracin, Kangxi reign, P.P
23. Lingyue si 靈悅寺, Qaracin, 1692-1711, P.P
24. Longquan si 龍泉寺, Qaracin, Yuan — Qing, P.P
25. Xingyuan si 興源寺 (Kulun si 庫倫寺), Siregetü blama küriye, end of Ming or 1649, P.P
26. Fuyuan si 福緣寺, Siregetü blama küriye, 1733-1742, W.P
27. Caγan diyanci-yin keyid ("Folama" miao, Ruiying si 瑞應寺), East Tümed, 1640-1650, P.P
28. Huining si 惠寧寺, East Tümed, 1738-1757, W. P
29. Youshun si 佑順寺, East Tümed, 1698-1707, W. P

Juu uda league

30. Gilubar juu (Shanfu si 善福寺), Baγarin, Left banner, about 1770, P.P
31. Huifu si 薈福寺 (Dongda miao 東大廟), Baγarin, Right banner, 1706, W. P
32. Fanzong si 梵宗寺 (Beida miao 北大廟), Ongniγud, 1743-1755, P.P
33. Qan süme ("Han miao", Cheng'en si 誠恩寺), Aruqorcin, 1674, P.P
34. Gembi-yin süme (Guang'en si 廣恩寺), Aruqorcin, 1816, D.R
35. Balcirud süme (Baoshan si 寶善寺), Aruqorcin, 1665 or 1689, P.P

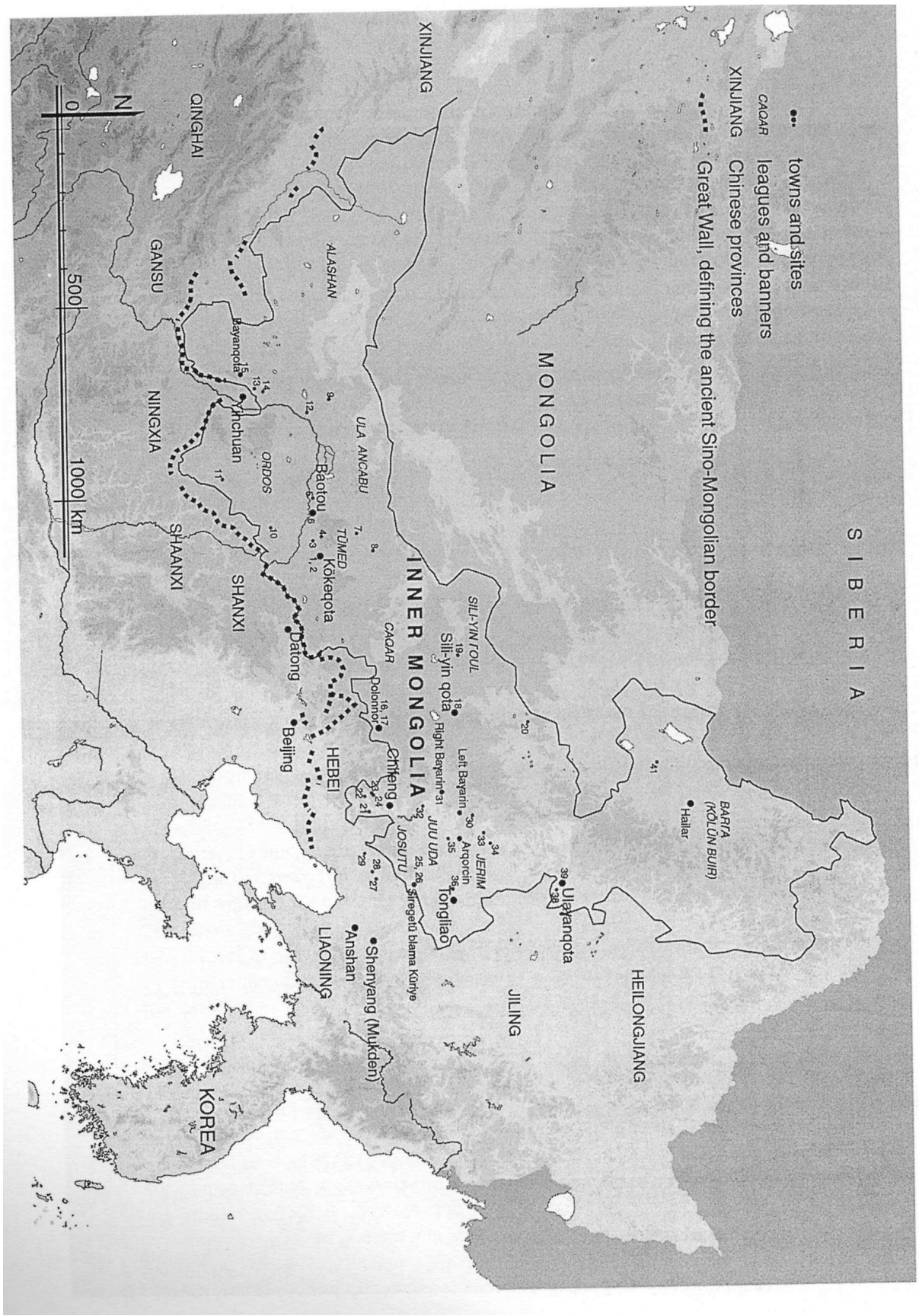
Jerim league

36. Morui-yin süme ("Moli miao", Jining si 集寧寺), Darqan vang, Shunzhi reign or 1679, 1801, 1826, P.P
37. Shongqoru-yin süme (Shuangfu si 雙福寺), Boγu vang, 1680, P.P
38. Gegeen süme (Fantong si 梵通寺), Jasaγtu vang, 1740, D, R?
39. Vang-yin süme (Wangye miao 王爺廟, Puhui si 普慧寺), Ulaγanqota, 1619 or 1691, D, R?
40. Bayan qosiγun keyid (Xiafu si 遐福寺), Tüsiyetü vang, 1813, D, R?

Barγa banners (Kölün buir)

41. Γanjuur süme (Shouning si 壽寧寺), New Barγa, Left banner, 1781-1784, D
42. Baraγun süme (Xi miao 西廟), Left banner, 1887, D, R.

Map of the largest Buddhist monasteries of Southern Mongolia



III. GENERAL LOCATION AND DENSITY OF THE MONASTERIES

1. The monastery and its environment

1.1. The ideal and concrete siting of a monastery

The choice of an auspicious site is an essential stage of the founding of a monastery (ill. 1). For Southern Mongols, there is no contradiction between Chinese and Tibetan rules of geomancy,[38] the two systems being considered as equivalent. The work requires a monk astrologer, who uses Tibetan and Mongol handbooks—the latter being translated from the Chinese. A famous Chinese *fengshui* 風水 specialist can be invited too. The astrologer is further consulted to tell where to search for building materials and to solve problems of "pollution" by building *stūpa* to tame evil forces, by changing the orientation of a building or even by deciding to move the whole monastery to another place. The construction is then punctuated by a series of rituals such as the propitiation of the deities of the soil and the consecration ceremony.



Ill. 1. Mural painting in Sira mören süme depicting the ideal features of a site. © Isabelle Charleux

[38] Indeed, as early as the seventh century Tibetan geomancy was influenced by Chinese geomancy.

Rules of geomancy are so strict that the choice of a site presenting the ideal characteristics can last several years. The location of mountains and cliffs, the view of the site, the direction of flow of the nearby rivers, the location of wells, wooded areas, auspicious or inauspicious signs must all be interpreted on a symbolical level. For instance a mountain looking like a bell or a site compared to an eight-petals lotus are excellent omens. Besides the Daqing 大青山,[39] Helan 賀蘭山 and Kingγan (Xing'an) ranges, Southern Mongolia is not a mountainous country, so the founders have to content themselves with hillocks, sand dunes or artificial terraces. The geomancer adapts the ideal rules to the characteristics of the landscape and manages to compensate a defect of the ground by another advantage, or by the edification of a *stūpa*. These geomantic rules match up with more practical considerations to determine the site of a nomadic camp. A northern elevation protects the camp as the monastery from the northern and north-western winds, while the presence of water—a river, a well or a spring—remains the most important criteria of selection for a site in this continental country.

Provided the geomantic constraints were satisfied, a monastery was free to settle almost wherever it wanted. The agreement of the banner prince was easy to obtain, the *Vinaya* rules were flexible and the only decree issued by the Qing on this subject aimed at protecting the surrounding fields that could be damaged by the construction.

Among the sixty eight monasteries housing more than five hundred monks in the early twentieth century (Table 2),[40] four were built in pre-existent cities, Kökeqota (ill. 2) and Bayanqota. Eighteen "banner monasteries" founded by the banner prince were built within six kilometres from his residence. In a city or in the steppe, a temple could not be built contiguous to the back side (northern wall) of a palace or residence: it was usually built on the south, east or west side. Most of them are now located within cities or in the suburb of the city that was formed around it. Eighteen other monasteries are far from the banner centre and urban centre, yet eleven out of these eighteen are close to old travel routes (for trade or nomadisation), like Bayan shanda-yin süme [9]. Therefore, it is often difficult to know if the initial desire was isolation. Seven are found in "dramatic spots" in the mountains, like Aγui-yin süme [12] in Helan shan.

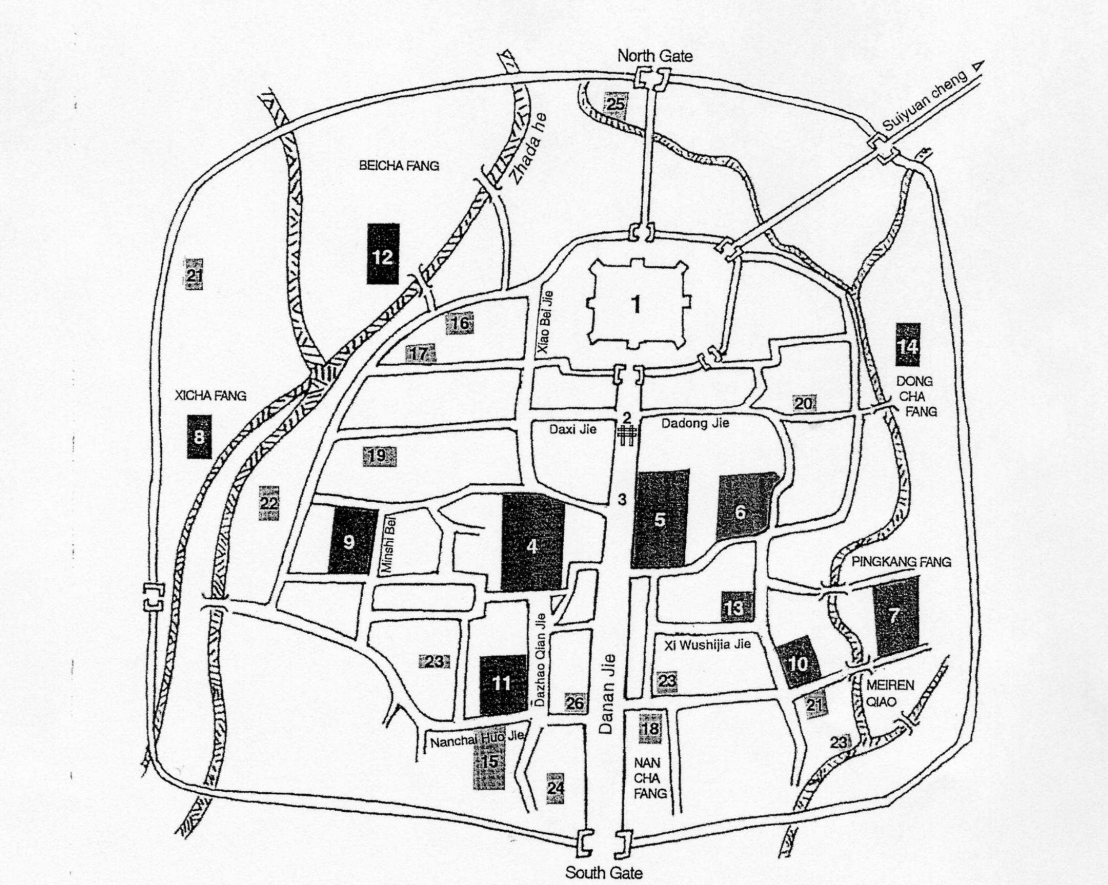
As a general rule, a more contemplative or academic monastery searched for an isolated site, off the tracks, in a curved valley at the end of a narrow gorge, with a nice view on the plain. But as the basic criteria for selecting a site—the proximity of water and wooded areas—were the same as for the settlement of a camp, a monastery was never very far away from human beings. Even when isolated in the mountains, it received donations from laymen and possessed herds grazing in the plain. The examples of Badγar coyiling süme [4] and Aγui-yin süme [12] show that the apparent isolation of a monastery was not a bridle to its economic development.

Monasteries founded by members of the nobility were often situated near their residence. Every banner had a "banner monastery" close to the camp or to the settled residence of the prince. The human density in Inner Mongolia was very low (0.3 to 1.3 inhabitant per square kilometre in the early twentieth century), and until the nineteenth century, there were only a few urban centres, such as Kökeqota, Bayanqota, Dolonnor, plus Manchu garrisons where Chinese and Manchu soldiers had their own temples, and a few Chinese settlements. "Ritualistic" monasteries, more dependent on liturgical services and related donations than "academic ones" settled near travel routes and thus often assumed a

[39] Many monasteries were built at the foothill of Daqing mountain (Yin range), facing the Yellow River: Mayidari-yin juu [3], Kündülün juu [6], Mergen juu [5] etc.

[40] Small and medium-size monasteries are not documented. As we have already stressed, the majority of the monks was herders or farmers and came to the monastery only to attend the festivals.

prominent role in trade. The attraction of Mongol and Chinese tradesman to the monastery fairs as well as the location along trade routes led to the growth of trade centres around the main monasteries. As they required supplies even outside the fairs, food and crafts, villages and towns developed around the religious centres. Monasteries thus both followed and fostered a slow but steady trend of sedentarisation and urbanisation over the whole period sixteenth to twentieth century.



2 – *Kökeqota at the end of the 19th century*
(Guihua cheng ting zhi)

1. Fortress-yamen
2. *Pailou*, Dashizi
3. Danan street

Mongol monasteries

4. Yeke juu (Wuliang si)
5. Siregetü juu (Yanshou si)
6. Baγa juu (Chongfu si)
7. Tabun suburγan-u süme (Cideng si)
8. Pungsuγ juu (Chongshou si)
9. Emci-yin juu (Longshou si)
10. Corji-yin juu (Yansi si), Yanfu si
11. Rabji-yin juu (Hongqing si)
12. Qosiγun-u süme / juu (Taiping zhao)
13. Guangfu si
14. Γaran juu

Chinese temples

15. Guanyin miao
16. Shiwang miao
17. Wen miao
18. Guandi miao
19. Sanguan miao
20. Lüzu miao
21. Longwang miao
22. Jisheng miao
23. Wudao miao (3 temples)
24. Menggu wen miao
25. Chenghuang miao
26. Caishen miao

Ill. 2. Kökeqota at the end of the 19th century. Guihua cheng ting zhi 歸化城廳志

1.2. Mountain caves and occupancy of ancient sites

Mountain caves were essential to the Mongol and Tibetan religious tradition. Moreover troglodytic dwelling was common in Inner Mongolia. Originally the dwellings of ascetics, caves became sanctuaries protected by an architecture and were later integrated into a monastery. About fifty monasteries were named *aγui*, "cave". In the Nyingmapa monastery of Aγui-yin süme [12], the five caves where Padmasambhava, according to the legend, meditated in 774, are up to the present time an important pilgrimage site. Like Tibetan "womb-caves", they contain sacred sources, circumambulation corridors around statues, and narrow initiatory passages.

Monasteries turned the old Shamanist natural sites (mountain graveyards, natural caves, rocks, woods) into reservations where it was prohibited to hunt, pasture, cut trees, build, ride horse and cultivate land. Tibetan Buddhism superimposed a new sacred geography upon the old Shamanistic and Buddhist one and took possession of ancient sites. Two monasteries were founded around well preserved Kitan caves containing Buddhist sculptures: the Öbür juu and the Gilubar juu [30]. The three caves of Gilubar juu still contain images of Buddha and bodhisattvas. An assembly hall was built during the Qing dynasty to protect their entrance.

A few Buddhist monasteries took possession of ancient historical sites in order to re-use their building materials, like Darqan aγula-yin süme near the ruins of the Yuan city of Yingchang (Kesigten banner, Juu-uda). However, except for the Kitan caves previously mentioned, a new monastery was never built directly on an old site, to avoid to clear the ruins, and out of fear that the ruins may be inhabited by a *deus loci*. This can explain why the old Kitan pagodas were not restored and included in new monasteries.

1.3. The relation between the realised structures and locally available resources

Most of the Mongolian monasteries, as well as the earlier Kitan and Tangγud ones, used local building materials and resources. These are, like in North China, baked bricks for the walls, timber for the framing and stone for the basement, the staircases, the terraces and the courtyards' pavement.

Wood: Conifers (pines, cypress, larches, cedars), mountain poplars, oaks, and also white birches, elms, and willows were commonly used. Monasteries were usually situated near protected wooden areas; in addition, monks planted trees within the fence or near the monastery to supply for their needs. Southern Mongolia was rich in forests before the eighteenth century, but none of the monasteries that have subsisted is entirely built of timber, which was common in Northern Mongolia. Scarcity of wood due to wood-collecting for fuel,[41] extensive agriculture of Chinese settlers and exportation of timber to China has been a major problem since the eighteenth century. Decrees issued by the Qing to forbid tree-cutting proved to be useless. Except for the more forested areas of the north-east, Southern Mongolia imported large quantities of timber from Northern Mongolia.

Tibetan architecture is well adapted to deserted areas like Ordos and Alasha, where wood is scarce and timber-consuming Chinese roofs are seldom seen. Chinese roofs often appear to be a luxury decorative item placed up on a Tibetan flat roof. For reasons of prestige, wealthy monasteries used to import high quality timber and stone from thousands of kilometres away.

[41] The main fuels used for building (baking bricks) and living (heating, cooking) were wood, charcoal, and coal after the discovery of mines in the Daqing mountains in the nineteenth century.

Bricks: Baked bricks—a building material well fit to the region and the climate—have been baked in Southern Mongolia since the first millennium. Glazed bricks and tiles were imported from Datong. Bricks and stones were sometimes taken from ruined or partially ruined architectures, such as old cities or the Great wall.

Stone: Very few monasteries were entirely built in stone. They are located in mountainous regions, mainly in the Western part of the country (Yin 陰, Helan mountains), such as Baraγun and Jegün keyid [13, 14], Gembi-yin süme [34], or Badγar coyiling süme [4].

Itinerant Chinese and Mongolian carpenters were employed in the construction and directed local workmanship. When and how they were employed and where they came from are still open issues, which need addressing before we may fully understand the foreign influences and trends. These anonymous carpenters had the difficult task to combine Chinese and Tibetan construction techniques, which were fundamentally opposed.



Ill. 3. Festival in Siregetü juu gathering Mongolian lamas, Chinese Buddhist monks and lay believers, summer 1995. © Isabelle Charleux

IV. THE MONASTERY LAYOUT—SIXTEENTH TO TWENTIETH CENTURY

The minimum monastery consists of the assembly hall or *coγcin* containing the main statues and altar, located at the northern side, and the monks' dwellings. To this central nucleus can be added many elements according to the development of the community. As in Tibet and China, monasteries are continuously repaired, restored, enlarged by lay donations and by the monks' initiatives. They reached their maximum size under Qianlong reign (1736-1796). Therefore, it is often difficult to distinguish the original state and layout of the monastery.

Like Tibetan monasteries, larger Southern Mongolian monasteries are real towns built on an area of one or two hundred thousand square meters. The hierarchy between the different buildings is immediately perceptible because of their situation, height, size, roofing and decoration. The main assembly halls and temples (the highest and the more decorated buildings) lie in the middle or on the northern side of the compound, and face south, except when the configuration of the ground does not permit it. They are surrounded by colleges'

minor assembly halls, the reincarnations' residences and their storehouses, *stūpa* and minor temples, monks' dwellings, kitchen and miscellaneous buildings. Layouts can be divided into five basic categories: the *küriye* or circular layout of itinerant monasteries, the Chinese symmetrical arrangement, the "scatter-shot" arrangement, the mixed arrangement and the fortified monasteries.

1. Mobile monastery in yurts

During the sixteenth and seventieth centuries, except for the Tümed and a few groups already settled and partly living on agriculture, the great majority of Mongols was nomads and lived in felt tents. In Alasha, Western Mongolia (and Qalqa Mongolia up to the eighteenth century), monasteries in yurts followed the nomadic way of life of the lay community, and nomadised with their herds.[42] Even the great kings (Qan) had no fixed religious centre. All Inner Mongolian banners used to build fixed monasteries since the end of the seventeenth century, but small nomadic monasteries-in-yurts still existed in the Ordos and Ulaγancab leagues, and were widespread in Alasha banners at the beginning of twentieth century. Among settled Mongols, the presence of monasteries in yurts can be explained by a lack of finance.

The monastery-in-yurts followed the *küriye* (litt. "ring") layout of princes' encampments, with minor temple-yurts and monks' yurts arranged in circle around the central yurt for assembly. The mobile Γanjuur süme [41] settled in 1781-84, adopting a "mixed layout" reminiscent of the circular arrangement. Wooden structures that could be dismantled are not attested, unlike in Northern Mongolia.

2. Symmetrical Chinese style layout (ill. 4)

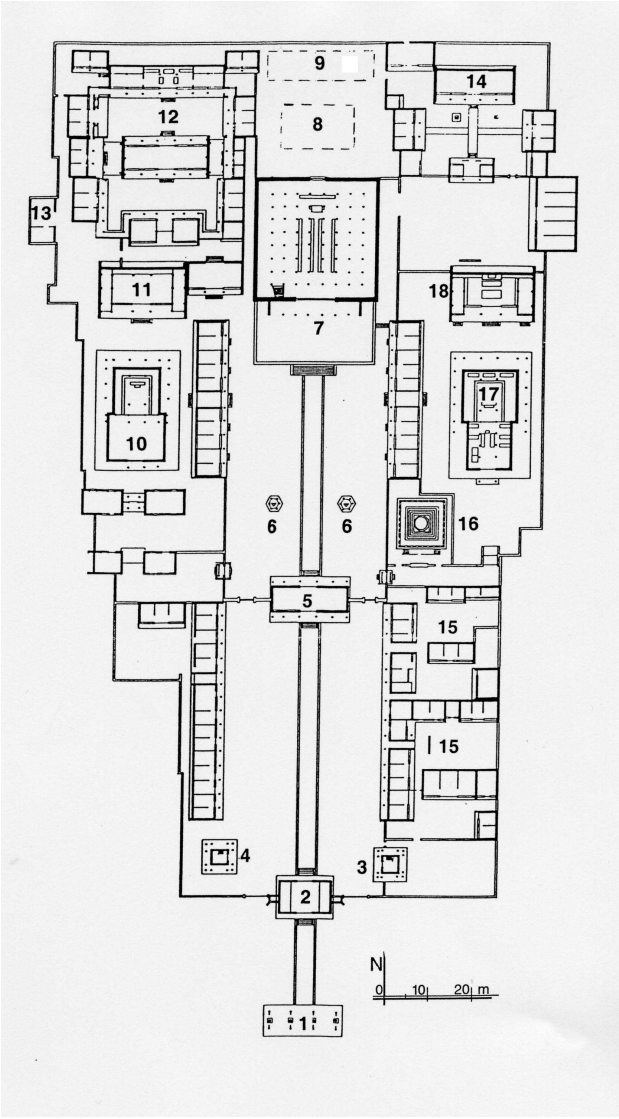
The necessity of building a sedentary monastery appeared when big Buddhist statues had to be sheltered. The earliest monasteries showed a preponderance of Chinese style layout and structure, because in the sixteenth century the Tümed employed Chinese carpenters. Later on, all the imperial monasteries and Kökeqota's imperialised monasteries also followed the Chinese style layout. Generally, the majority of the sedentary monasteries adopted a symmetrical layout, especially among the Tümed and in Eastern Mongolia. This layout is adapted to cities and steppe areas, but is also often seen in mountainous regions. Asymmetrical elements in a general symmetrical layout may be explained by the historical development, the topography and the geomantic situation.[43]

In this layout, the monastic compound is surrounded by a rectangular wall defining its extent. Ranging from 1.7 to 2.5 meters in height, the enclosure wall has no defensive purposes. The main halls are symmetrically arranged on the central axis with gradation of importance from south to north (ill. 4). The buildings and courtyards commonly built on the central axis are: the entrance gate (with one or three doors); the first courtyard leading out to the hall of the Four guardian kings *(lokapāla)* that can be crossed to enter the second courtyard; the Central assembly hall with lateral temples for a particular deity (ill. 5); and, at the northern side of the compound, the Chinese style two storied abbot's dwelling. Miscellaneous Chinese elements can be added, like an archway (*pailuur*, ch. *pailou* 牌樓) in front of the entrance gate, Bell and Drum towers symmetrically arranged in the first courtyard, screen-walls in

[42] Documentation on mobile monasteries is restricted to a few descriptions in Chinese sources, in nineteenth-twentieth centuries travelogues, and some photographs.

[43] In Siregetü juu [2] for instance (ill. 4), the first historical axis was the western one; in the seventeenth century the founder added two axis to the east and the central one became the main axis. Charleux 2000.

front of entrances. Other ordinary Chinese elements are stone lions and incense-burners. Stone inscriptions recording the foundation and restorations are found in imperial monasteries (ill. 5) and recently repaired ones. None of these Chinese elements is absolutely necessary. Moreover, many elements of Chinese Buddhist monasteries are absent, such as the ordination platform, the bathroom, or the garden. Monks' dwellings and minor buildings are arranged in two or three lateral private axis, to the east and west. The western axis is considered as superior to the eastern one and the richest lamas used to live in the north-west corner. Courtyards are large, the buildings forming only about 15% of the total surface area. Entrance gate, temples, storehouses and dwellings are Chinese pavilions (*dian* 殿) covered by a Chinese sloping roof. The adaptation of the Chinese layout are the same as in the Tibeto-Mongol monasteries of China (Yonghe gong 雍和宫, mount Wutai). The only Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan architectures are the Central assembly hall, lying in the centre of the main courtyard, the college halls and the *stūpa*.



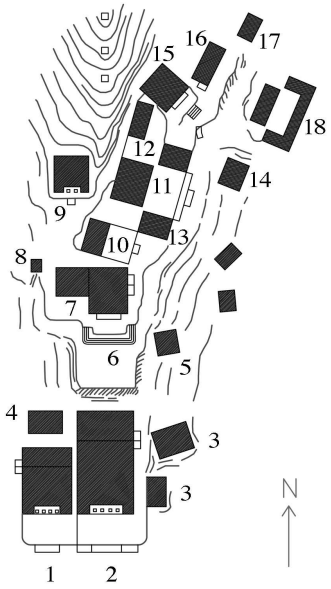
Ill. 4. Layout of the Siregetü juu [2]
1. *Pailou*; **2.** Entrance gate *(shanmen)*; **3.** Drum tower; **4.** Bell tower; **5.** Temple of the *arhat*; **6.** Pavillons for stone inscriptions; **7.** *Γoul coγcin* (central assembly hall); **8.** Main shrine (destroyed); **9.** Jiujian lou (destroyed); **10.** Old Buddha hall (Gu fodian); **11.** Temple of the *Kanjur*; **12.** *Labrang* of the Siregetü qutuγtu; **13.** Stables; **14.** *Labrang* of the Darqan corji qutuγtu; **15.** Monk's dwelling; **16.** *stūpa*; **17.** Naicung (Pe-har) temple; **18.** Temple of the *Tanjur*.



Ill. 5. The main courtyard of the Siregetü juu (Kökeqota) : stone inscriptions under pavilions and Central assembly hall. © Isabelle Charleux

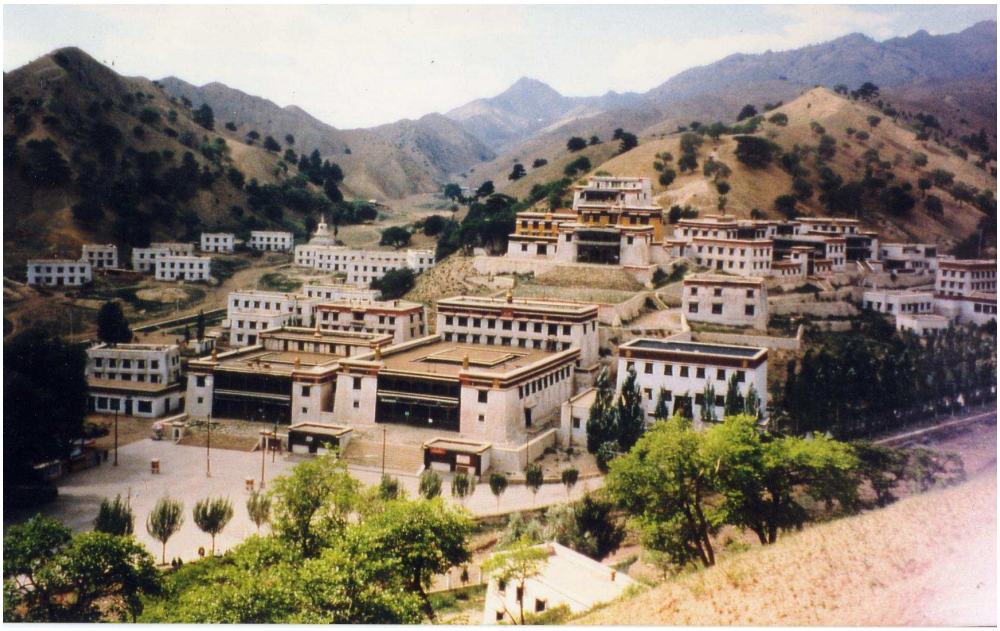
3. The “scatter-shot” layout (ill. 6)

The scatter-shot layout is comparable to the layout of the Gelugpa monasteries in Tibet: it usually can be explained by the landscape’s features and by the growth of the monastery over the centuries. Followed by a quarter of the main fixed monasteries, it is common in mountains and hills of Western Inner Mongolia (Qaraγuna mountains, Helan mountains), and also in the steppe (Ulaγancab, Ordos, Sili-yin γoul, Aruqorcin and Baγarin banners in Juu-uda). This apparently unplanned (“organic”) layout is characterised by the absence of enclosure wall, of entrance gate, of axis, and of symmetry. It is organised in conformity with the terrain, favouring narrow mountain passes, deep gorges and defile opening into a large circle at the foot of a high peak. Buildings are scattered up and down a mountain or hill slope in step-like style. Assembly halls can stand side by side on an east-west line or along a ridge (Badγar coyiling süme [4], Baraγun keyid [13]). The most important halls face approximately south while minor ones can open east or west according to the terrain. As in Tibet, the Central assembly hall, main temples and residences of reincarnated monks are located higher on the slope and the monks’ quarters spread out in various directions around the main buildings (ill. 6). The buildings are built mostly in Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan style flat-roofed square or oblong structures with thick outer walls (ill. 7). Large temples have two to four storeys, with each succeeding storey being built back from the edge of the last, so that the result presents a step-like appearance. The walls made of brick or stone are whitewashed with limestone. Ornamentation is given to the more important temples and halls: red attic friezes bearing decorated brass mirrors, wooden decorations carved into beams, capitals and columns, porch, window frames with a cornice at the top, plates of glazed ceramic on the wall, animal figures and symbolic ornaments on the roof... Decorative Chinese roofs (covered with tiles), symbols of prestige, can be added atop flat roofs.



Ill. 6. The layout of the Badγar coyiling süme [4] (Urad, Ulaγancab league), central part, before 1947. Nagao Gajin, 1991 [1947], fig. 2, p. 137

1. Coira dugan (College of Doctrine); **2.** Coγcin dugang (central assembly hall); **3.** Main *sang* (treasury) and kitchen; **4.** *Sang* « sanishito »; **5.** *Sang* of the Duyingqur qutuγtu; **6.** Duyingqur dugang (college of Kālacakra); **7.** Doγsid dugang (Jangqan dugang); **8.** Shrine of Tsong-kha-pa; **9.** Lamrim dugang; **10.** *Labrang* of the lCang-skya qutuγtu; **11.** *Labrang* of the Duyingqur qutuγtu; **12.** *Labrang* of the Γanjurwa qutuγtu; **13.** *Sang* « rapuran »; **14.** Suburγa-yin sang (*sang* of the *stūpa*); **15.** Aγui dugang (college of esotericism); **16.** Temple of the funerary *stūpa*; **17.** *Sang* « sepuchi »; **18.** Gegeen-yin sang (*sang* of the *gegeen*).

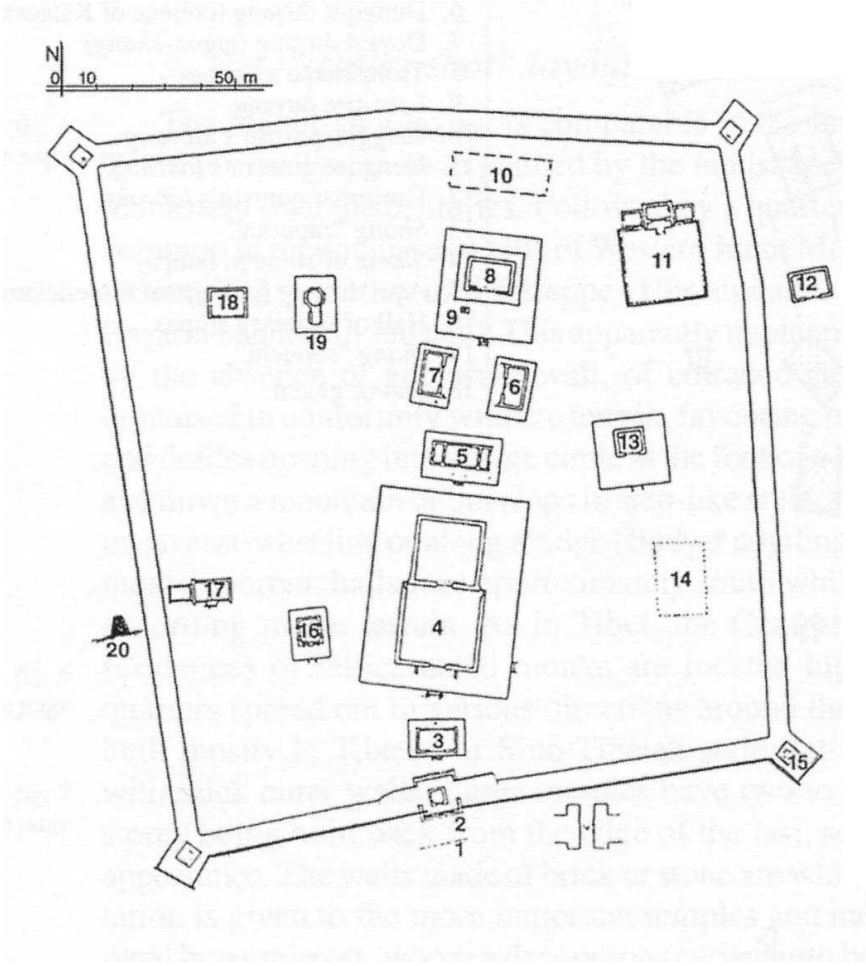


Ill. 7. Badγar coyiling süme [4] (Urad, Ulaγancab league). © Isabelle Charleux

4. The mixed layout

Some monasteries combine the symmetrical and the scatter-shot layout. The main temples are enclosed in independent courtyards but we do not find central and lateral axis with successive courtyards. Moreover the typically miscellaneous Chinese buildings like Bell and Drum towers or archway are lacking. This layout can sometimes be explained by the growth of the monastery, the first foundation being enclosed by a wall, which later finds itself located in the middle of the monastery. The mixed layout is also seen in Kumbum and in other monasteries of Eastern Tibet. It is common to find in the same compound Tibetan style temples, Chinese and mixed-style architectures.

5. Fortified monasteries (ill. 8)



Ill. 8. The layout of Mayidari-yin juu [3]. Jin Shen, 1984, p. 27
1. Screen-wall *zhaobi* (destroyed); **2.** Taihe gate; **3.** Hall of the Four guardian kings *(lokapāla)* (destroyed); **4.** *Γoul coγcin* (central assembly hall); **5.** Temple of the God of wealth (ruined); **6.** Temple of Avalokiteshvara; **7.** Temple of the eighteen *arhat*; **8.** Liuli dian (hall with green glazed tiles), main shrine (also called Sanfo ge); **9.** *Stūpa* (destroyed); **10.** Gongye fu (Wangye fu, residence); **11.** Temple of the Dalai Lama; **12.** Eastern hall of the Ten thousand Buddhas; **13.** Taihou miao (temple of the Empress, with a funerary *stūpa* inside) or Lingta dian; **14.** Dajiwa dian (destroyed); **15.** Pavilions at the four corners; **16.** Naicung süme (temple of Pe-har); **17.** *Qutuγtu*'s residence; **18.** Western temple of the Ten thousand Buddhas; **19.** Octagonal temple (Laojun miao); **20.** Cross-section of the wall.

The necessity of fortification was a main criterion for only two known foundations of the sixteenth century (Mayidari-yin juu [3] and Huayan si). It became unnecessary in Southern Mongolia under the *pax manjurica* of the Qing dynasty.[44] The walls, covered with stone and bricks, are typical of Chinese fortifications that could also be seen in Amdo monasteries such as Honghua si (fifteenth century). These religious compounds seem to be a survival of Central Asian square fortified monasteries of the ninth to the eleventh century like those of Turfān, Qocho and Duldur-āqur. Their inner arrangement follows the "mixed layout".

This schematisation must not conceal the great diversity of layouts. Moreover, because of the bad state of preservation of minor buildings and enclosure walls, it is sometimes difficult to know what the original complete layout of a monastery was.

V - THE ELEMENTS OF THE MONASTERY[45]

The various monastic buildings (or yurts) had the same functions as in monasteries of Central and Eastern Tibet, and the inner arrangement did not differ from that of a Tibetan monastery, even in yurt-monasteries. However, the architecture freely adapts to various situations and needs. Buildings' layouts have a square or rectangular shape, sometimes with a porch and a small apse or *cella* at the back.

1. For religious functions

1.1. Monks assembly and rituals: the Central assembly hall

The Central assembly hall (*γoul coγcin*)[46] is the most important edifice of a monastery. It was used for daily services carried out by the monks, as well as for ordinations, teaching, examinations, and confessions. Laymen were not supposed to attend the rituals—except when they asked for private prayers in exchange for offerings—, but could observe them from outside, standing under the porch or indoors. When the "*cella*" is at the back side of the assembly hall, with no door opening on the outside, laymen were sometimes allowed to enter during ceremonies to make their devotions to the Buddha images: they then walked along the walls, knelt, prayed, placed their offerings on the altars, and went out without stopping, so as to not disturb the assembly.

The building opens on a courtyard used for open-air rituals, debates and gatherings (ill. 1, ill. 5), where one or two poles are erected for hanging prayer-banners (ill. 1). A large *thang-ka* could be suspended between the two poles during the festivals. The hall has a south-facing entrance with a portico and a large hypostyle hall. Its size should be proportional to that of the whole monastic community, who was supposed to daily gather inside. During the Qianlong period, as communities increased in size, many assembly halls were enlarged or rebuilt. The largest have sixty four columns, a square shape (8x8 columns, about 700 square

[44] It was not the case of Northern and Western Mongolia until the late eighteenth century because of the wars between the Jungar and the Qing dynasty. Hence, other examples of fortified monasteries are known in Qalqa Mongolia (Erdeni juu, Caγan bayising) and in Western Mongolia (Ablai keyid of the Qoshuud).

[45] Our presentation of the organisation of the monastery is mainly based on our fieldwork observations, completed by old photographs (*Nei Menggu gu jianzhu* 1959), nineteenth and twentieth century travelogues (such as Pozdneev 1977, 1978), records and studies done by the Japanese during the Manchukuo (Nagao Gajin 1987, 1991), and modern studies (Su Bai 1994). The massive destruction of purely monastic buildings such as monks' quarters and offices does not allow us to draw a complete survey of these elements.

[46] From Mongol *γoul*, "central" and Tibetan *tshogs-chen*, "assembly hall."

metres), and could house five hundred monks. Bays are regular in measure except in the sixteenth century temples of Kökeqota (Yeke juu [1], Mayidari-yin juu [3]), characterised by "missing" columns and irregular bays, according to Chinese Ming architecture. Because of its large size, the hall receives light from a skylight. Assembly halls all follow the same basic inner arrangement which does not differ from a Tibetan assembly hall, with many paintings, banners, seats for the monks according to their rank,[47] cupboards containing small images, offerings and sometimes secondary shrines with statues. The musical and liturgical instruments used during the services, the costumes and masks for the masked dances are stored in a room near the entrance.

*1.2. Cult for monks and laymen: the main shrine (*γoul süme*)*

At the north of the Central assembly hall lies the main shrine or "*cella*", that houses altars and offerings in front of the images of Buddha and deities, paintings, plus a library of sutras. Canopies and silk banners hang from the ceiling. The main statues, along the north wall and facing south, are the Three Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future, with four bodhisattvas and a *dharmapāla* on each side (along the eastern and western walls). The back wall has no opening. On the altar are displayed incense-burners, oil-lamps, the eight auspicious symbols and food offerings. Cushions for prostration are displayed in front of the altar. A Chinese style incense-burner or a fumigation stove is often seen outside.

Like in Tibetan monasteries, there is a clear separation between assembly halls for rituals and chapels for the cult. The architecture of the Central assembly hall and the main shrine, either combined in one building or in two separate buildings, illustrates the "conflict" between rituals and devotion. As this relation is the more original architectural feature of Mongolian monasteries, it deserves a special attention.

A. <u>The assembly hall and the shrine in the same building (ill. 9):</u>

In Tibetan style and in some Sino-Tibetan style architectures (ill. 10, ill. 11), the main shrine is the rear part of the large gTsug-lag-khang, a building comprising the assembly hall and the shrine on the ground level, chapels and rooms on the second and third floors. The skylight of the assembly hall opens on the inner courtyard of the first floor, and the back shrine, with a very high ceiling, receives light from a window opening on the flat roof of the first floor. The gTsug-lag-khang adopts different layouts and sizes:

1. The small square temple with no inner division. Images are placed along the back wall (the shrine) and a few monks can sit and pray in front of the images (the assembly room); there is no other shrine. It can be the main hall of small monasteries or a minor hall of large monasteries. The elevation is Chinese, Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan.

2. The Tibetan style gTsug-lag-khang, with a rectangular shape composed of a square assembly hall and a main shrine at the back, in a separate room. The elevation is Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan (ill. 10, ill. 11, ill. 12). The growing Tibetan influence on Mongol architecture coincides with the rise of the Manchu dynasty (1644), and the establishment of the Dalai Lama's rule in Tibet. The pure Central Tibetan style is rarely seen in Mongolia, though: buildings are made of bricks and have Chinese roofs upon the flat roof (ill. 13). They are smaller, more decorated and more symmetrical than their Tibetan models.

[47] The monks' seats are on the right and left side of the central aisle; the seats of the reincarnated monk and of the important monks are close to the altar, on the west side and facing right (or east). The central seat near the altar and facing south is reserved for the highest ranking monk who is likely to visit the monastery, such as the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and occasionally the reincarnated lamas.

3. The Kökeqota style gTsug-lag-khang. The elevation of the whole building is Sino-Tibetan, covered by a succession of three Chinese roofs (ill. 14, ill. 15): the first one covers a room on the first floor above the porch; the second one, larger, covers the skylight of the assembly hall surrounded by a flat roof; and the third one, higher, is above the high ceiling of the back shrine. The back shrine is a quadrilateral apse on the northern side of the assembly hall, surrounded by a peristyle on the east, north and west side for outer circumambulation, which recalls the circular corridor found in ancient Indo-Tibetan layouts. Two doors at the north-east and north-west of the assembly hall open on the peristyle. After the sixteenth century, the circumambulation seems to have been abandoned, the two doors being closed. The tripartite facade is inspired by contemporary Gelugpa models with a projecting central part surmounted by a veranda and rectangles with metal disk recalling the vegetable frieze (ill. 16). The building technique and materials are entirely Chinese. This original building appears as soon as 1575 and was never exported out of the Tümed banners. Although inspired from the Tibetan gTsug-lag-khang, it has no direct Tibetan antecedent. The general layout of the monastery follows the Chinese arrangement or the fortified one.

4. The square assembly hall with a smaller square shrine at the back. Although the layout is close to type 3, the elevation is completely different. The assembly hall is covered by a high Chinese roof with a skylight on the false second storey and the back shrine is covered by a lower Chinese roof (ill. 17). There can be a second larger separate Chinese style shrine (type 6, 7) in the back courtyard. This type is found in Josutu and Juu-uda leagues (Fanzong si [32], Fuhui si [22]).

Compared to the assembly hall, the main shrine of type 3 is larger than in other monasteries, because Kökeqota monasteries are “ritualistic” temples founded by the nobility with an emphasis on devotion. In type 4, the back shrine is small but there is a larger separate shrine behind, which is much more practical to ease the flow of the numerous visitors. On the contrary, the Tibetan style academic monastery of type 2 emphasises the assembly hall to the detriment of the shrine.

<u>B. The assembly hall and the independent shrine</u>

The main shrine can also be a separate Chinese style building placed in a courtyard located north of the assembly hall, which often has a door on the north side.

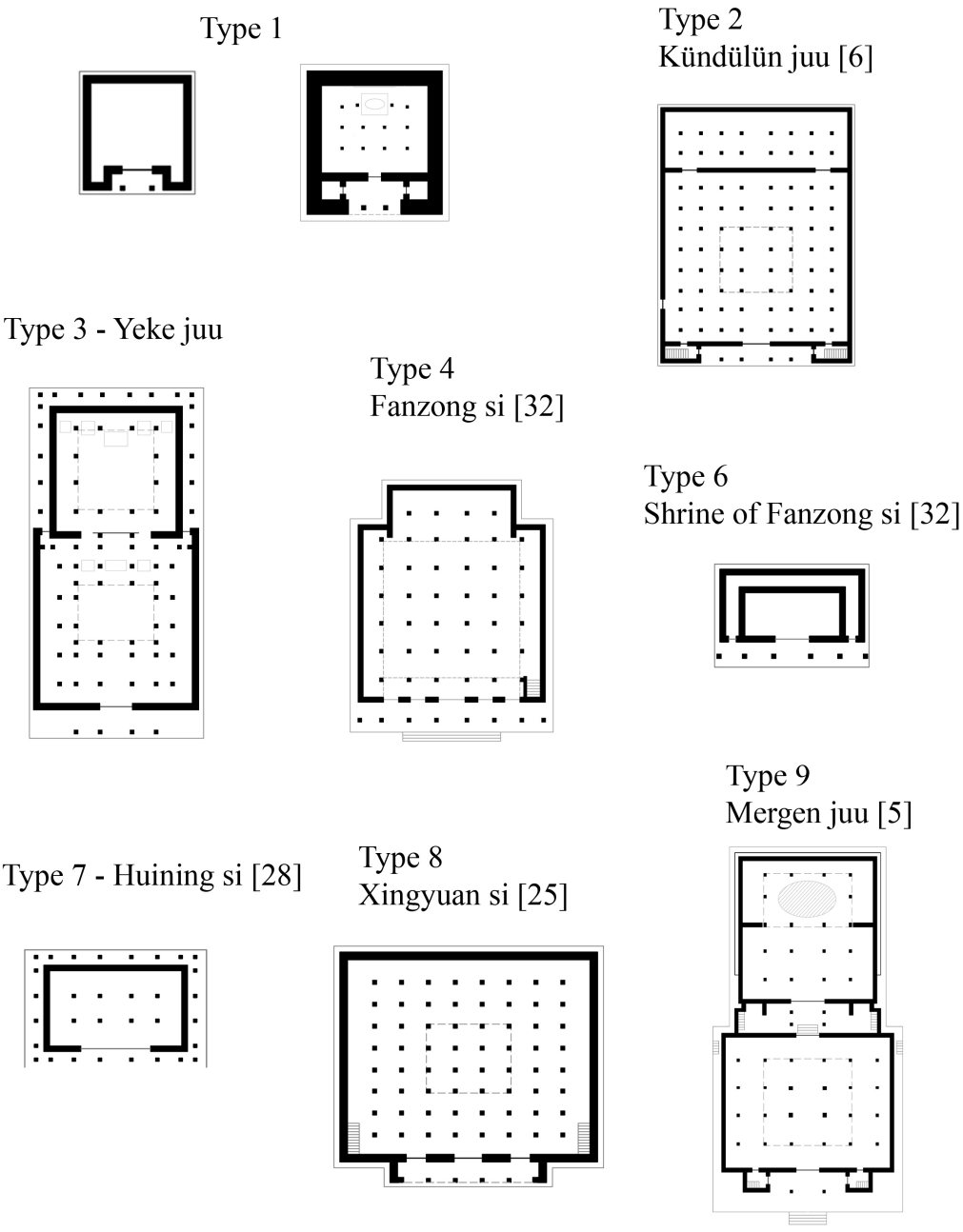
5. Mobile “monastery-in-yurts”. According to old photographs and descriptions, in mobile temples two different yurts were used for the assembly hall and for the shrine.

6. The small shrine with an inner corridor to circumambulate main images. It exists in Fanzong si, in several cave temples and probably in two other temples now destroyed. These corridors are surviving examples of ancient types of buildings in Amdo and Central Tibet. The elevation is entirely Chinese with the entrance on the larger side *(dian).*

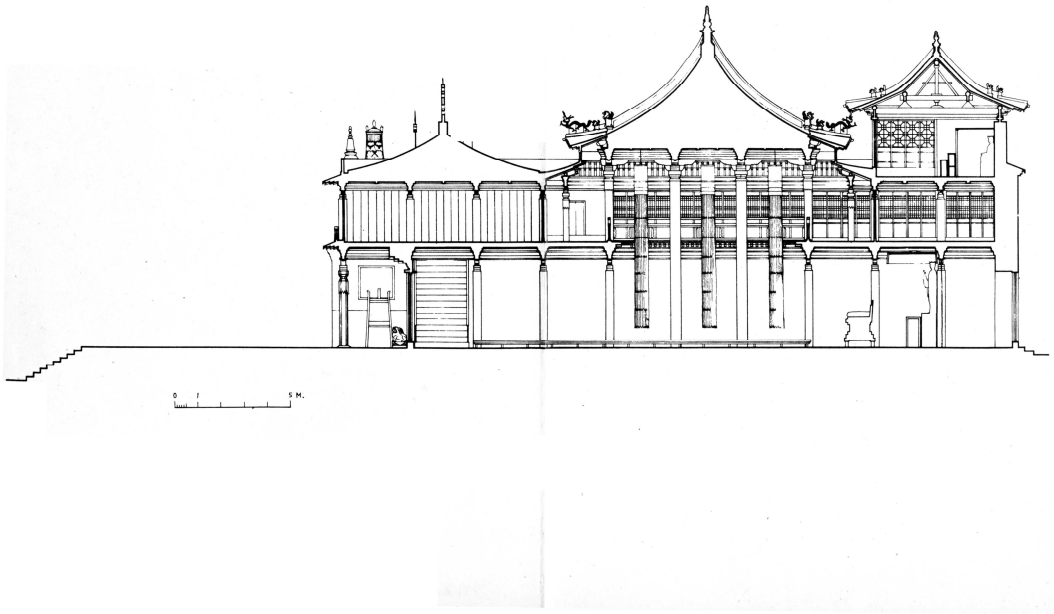
7. The rectangular Chinese style separate shrine sometimes surrounded by a peristyle. The elevation is entirely Chinese *(dian).* It is found behind assembly halls of type 4, 8, 9 and sometimes behind assembly-hall-in a yurt.

8. The large square assembly hall with no inner division and a Chinese, Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan symmetrical elevation around a central skylight. It often has a door opening in the northern wall to go to the separate shrine (1 or 3).

9. Other types of gTsug-lag-khang. In Mergen juu [5] and Jungγar juu [10], the courtyard between the assembly hall and the shrine is a small impluvium giving some light to the shrine. The shrine of Mergen juu is built to shelter a huge image of Maitreya. The elevation is Tibetan, Chinese or Sino-Tibetan.



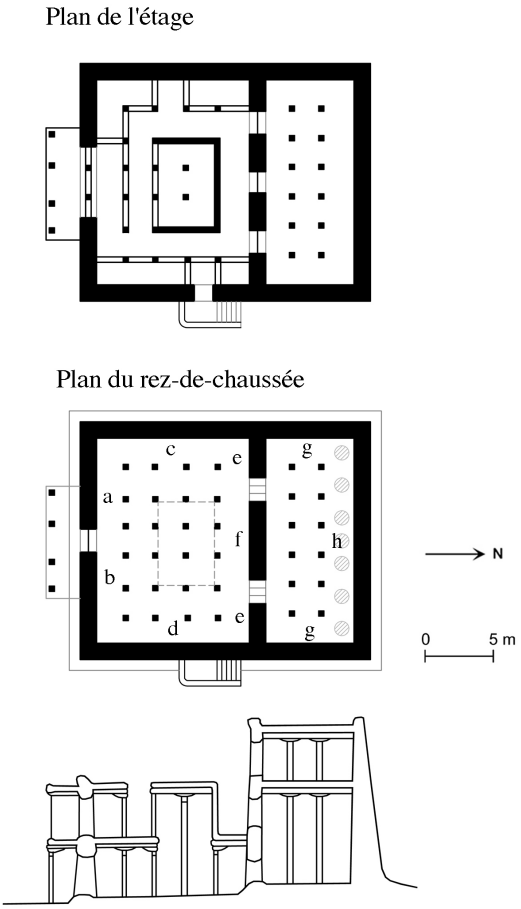
Ill. 9. Typology of assembly halls and shrines.



Ill. 10. Siregetü juu [2], Kökeqota, cross section of the assembly hall (Type 2). From Liu Dunzhen 1991 [1984].



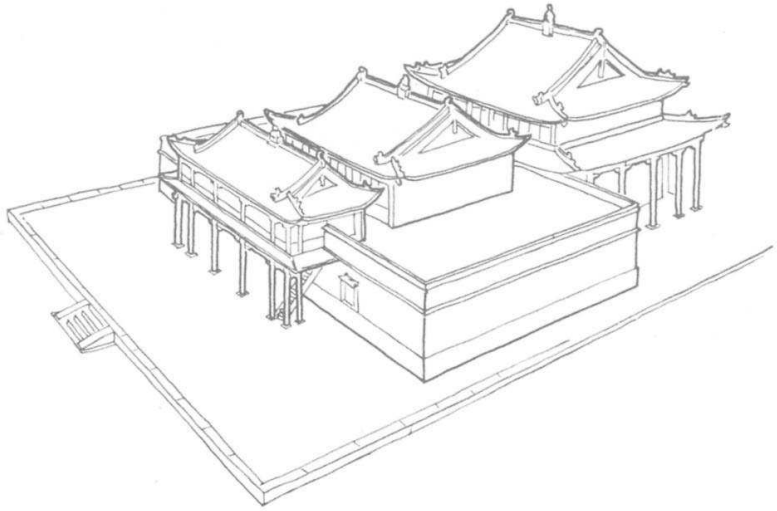
Ill. 12. The Mergen juu [5] (Type 2). © Isabelle Charleux



Ill. 11. Badγar coyiling süme [4], Duyingqur duγang (Type 2).
From Nagao Gajin, 1991 [1947], fig. 8, p. 221.
a. Elevation; **b.** Cross section; **c.** Ground-floor plan; **d.** First-storey plan.



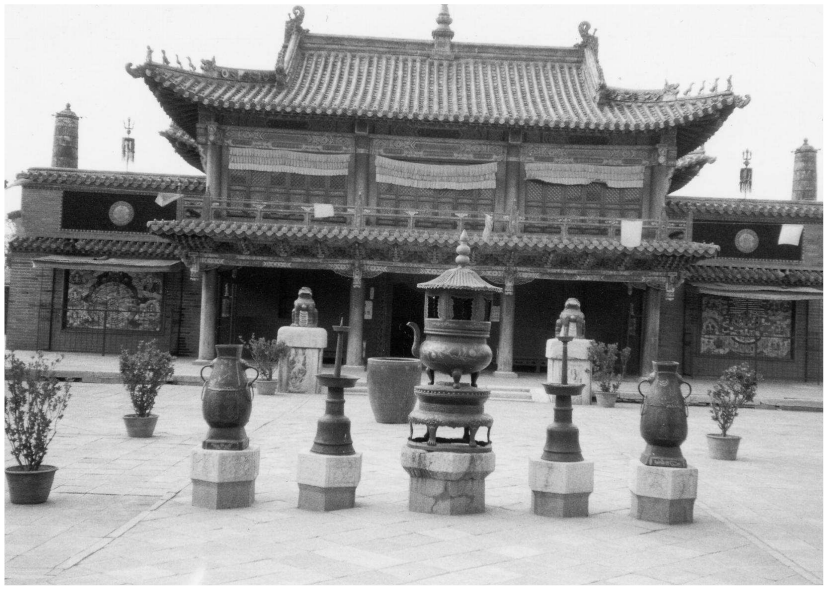
Ill. 13. The Sira mören juu [8] (Type 2) (Puhui si, summer residence of the Sixth Siregetü qutuγtu).



Ill. 14. The Beyile-yin süme [7] (Type 3). View from above.



Ill. 15. Mayidari-yin juu [3], central assembly hall from west (Type 3). © Isabelle Charleux



Ill. 16. Yeke juu [1], front vue (Type 3). © Isabelle Charleux



Ill. 17. Fanzong si [32], front vue (Type 4). © Isabelle Charleux

*1.3. Other assembly halls (*duγang, *< Tibetan* ‘du-khang*)*

In academic monasteries, the monks can study medicine, doctrine and Vinaya, esotericism, and/or Kālacakra in colleges (*rasang* or *dacang*, from Tibetan *grwa-tsang*). Some monasteries are specialised in one of these four subjects but large academic monasteries have an important college of doctrine and sometimes two or three other colleges. These have an independent organisation and treasury. During the services, the monks recite sutras and learn specific rituals in their college assembly hall (of type 2, 5), which has a small shrine along the rear wall with the main images (Tsong-kha-pa for the college of doctrine, Kālacakra for the

college of Kālacakra). Laymen cannot attend these specific rituals. In the nineteenth century, nineteen monasteries of more than five hundred monks were academic.[48]

1.4. Cult for monks and laity: other shrines

Besides the main shrine, any number of chapels (*lha-khang*) may be built according to the wishes of clergy and laity. These can be single buildings around the Central assembly hall or rooms located at the upper storeys of a Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan style assembly hall. The higher the place the deity occupies in the very large Tibeto-Mongol pantheon, the "higher" his shrine will be located—on the second floor of the assembly hall, on the northern part of the symmetrical compound or higher on the hill. For instance, the chapel of Maitreya is "higher" than that of the *lokapāla*. The most common shrines are consecrated to Maitreya, Avalokiteshvara, Tārā, Tsong-kha-pa and the eighteen *arhat*. The shrine of the wrathful tantric deities—the *yi-dam* and *dharmapāla*—called *mgon-khang*, is often located at the southern or western side of the assembly hall. In Chinese style monasteries of Eastern Mongolia, small shrines in the north of the compound are dedicated to Chinese deities such as Guandi (martial god identified with Gesar) and Niangniang (child-giving goddess). In the nineteen and twentieth centuries, it was common to build high constructions sheltering a monumental statue of Maitreya or Avalokiteshvara (4 to 15 m high). Local mountain deities are sometimes found in small individual chapels or included in the *mgon-khang*. The inner arrangement is the same as in the main shrine. Monks and laymen make their private devotions; laymen can also pay some monks to perform a special service. Therefore, there is often some place and seats in front of the altar, like a small assembly hall, so that a few monks can sit and pray.

Other cultual elements include *stūpa* (see 2.1.) and prayer-wheels. Even when there is no enclosure wall, *stūpa*, cairns, prayer flags, prayer-wheels, painted and carved rocks delimited a cirumambulation path which is often difficult to find today because of the massive destruction of these elements. Prayer-wheels, often housed in small pavilions or surrounded shrines and assembly halls, have been removed during the Cultural Revolution.

1.5. Meditation, ordinations and debates: the monks' activities

The nature, organisation and buildings housing the monks' activities were the same as in Tibet. The Tibeto-Mongol monastery has no special building for ordinations: these ceremonies were performed in the Central assembly hall. Debates between monks, an ordinary and ritualised exercise of Tibeto-Mongol Buddhism, took place in a specific courtyard enclosed by walls and planted with trees. When there was no such delimited area, debates were organised on the paved ground or on the platform in front of the Central assembly hall or in front of the college of doctrine. The monks practised meditation and prayers in their own dwelling. There was no specific building for collective meditation like in China, and the assembly hall was not used as a meditation place. For individual long-term meditation, monks locked themselves in cells or caves depending on their monastery. Ideally, these were located high up in the mountain, above the main temples.

[48] For the course of studies in Badγar coyiling süme [4] —twenty-one years for the college of doctrine—: Nagao Gajin 1987 [1947] and 1991 [1947].

1.6. Ceremonies for the laity: festivals, rituals, and initiations

The laymen often came to the monastery twice a month (the 1st and 15th days of the Moon calendar) and for the festivals (New Year festival with a procession of Maitreya, Buddha's Birthday etc) that also attracted many Chinese traders. During the festivals, the laymen of the whole countryside gathered to give offerings to the monks, to buy Chinese items in exchange for cattle and wool, and to participate in the *naadam* games. The monks performed various rituals such as processions round the enclosure wall and public masked dances. Some monasteries had a special platform in front of the assembly hall or even in front of the main gateway (in the Köke süme and Sira süme [16, 17]) for the masked dances, but these were usually performed in front of the Central assembly hall.

At any time, the lay donators were welcomed in a reception room or yurt, located near the main halls. Noblemen could receive special initiations in their residence, but there were no public sermons and teaching for the laymen, and very few public initiations were given (the most famous one was the Kālacakra initiations given by the Panchen Lama in the 1930's).

2. For reliquary, commemorative or funerary functions:

2.1. Stūpa

As in Tibet, the *stūpa* (Mong. *suburγan*) can be a commemorative, funerary, reliquary and/or votive monument. It cannot be entered, and its size ranges from a small reliquary sheltered in a special hall to a monumental building. The location and number of outside *stūpa* is not fixed: there can be one on a lateral axis, two twin *stūpa* in front of a temple or assembly hall, a "forest of *stūpa*" in a lateral courtyard, the complete set of the eight canonical *stūpa* corresponding to the eight important events of Buddha's life (Mahāvaitya), *stūpa* above the compound wall of a monastery, above the main gate of a compound, or *stūpa* lined up on the ridge of a mountain. Small *stūpa* placed on an altar or in a special building often have a funerary or a reliquary function.

The Mongol *stūpa* is modelled on the contemporary Tibetan one and borrows elements from contemporary and older models, like the Xia *stūpa* of Qaraqota or Yuan and Qing dynasties *stūpa* of Beijing (ill. 18). It is externally adorned with a small niche containing a Buddha image, tiles around the top of the *anda* and glazed ceramic. Some atypical ones are the *stūpa* of Kündülün juu [6], close to Chinese votive columns; the *stūpa* of Hanbai miao with its quasi-spherical *anda*; the huge *stūpa* of Bayan shanda-yin süme [9] with a peristyle; the big *stūpa* of Üüsin juu [11] with a decreasing octagonal base and 24 niches around its *anda*. The one exception far from Tibetan models, is the Tabun suburγa (Ch. Wuta, "Five *stūpa*") of Kökeqota (ill. 19), which takes the Ming dynasty *stūpa* of Dajue si 大覺寺 (Beijing as a model).[49] The only examples of Chinese style tower *stūpa* date from the Kitan Liao dynasty.

[49] "*Stūpa* sharira of the diamond throne" type, imitating in Chinese style the temple of the Mahābodhi in Bodhgayā.



Ill. 18. Stūpa of Siregetü juu [2]. © Isabelle Charleux



Ill. 19. Tabun suburγa (Wuta si) of Kökeqota. © Isabelle Charleux

2.3. Funerary building: *Stūpa* containing the ashes or the mummy of the dead reincarnated monks were set in a funerary hall. During the initial period of the Buddhist renaissance, several Mongol members of the nobility were cremated after their death and their ashes were preserved in a *stūpa* set in the temple they founded (Mayidari-yin juu [3]). The cremation was not a local tradition—corpses were abandoned to animals of prey or buried in the mountain—; because of opposition to habits and popular belief it was soon abandoned for laymen.

2.2. Obuγa *(cairns)*

One of the most original characteristics of Mongolian monasteries is the presence of *oboγa*-s. Although basically opposed, the *stūpa*, “support” (Tib. *rten*) of Buddha’s mind, and the Shamanistic *oboγa*, support of a local god, share common characteristics. The first meaning of a “*stūpa*” is a pile of stones and earth above a tomb. Buddhist monks took over for their own purpose the *oboγa* worship and even wrote prayers for *obuγa* rituals. Laymen can offer to build an *obuγa* to fulfil a wish, and it is common to find 13 or 108 *obuγa* representing the Buddhist cosmology (mount Sumeru surrounded by the four continents and the eight minor continents). Other *obuγa*-s are found on mountain passes and summits above and around a monastery, and often side by side with a *stūpa*, on the ridge of a mountain, close to the compound. *Obuγa* can be surrounded by *stūpa* or surround a *stūpa* to protect it and subdue the *deus loci*. In Blama-yin küriye [20], an *obuγa* is even located on the central axis of the Chinese style layout.

3. For educational functions: library, classroom and printing workshop

Buddhist scriptures were stored on shelves in assembly halls and in shrines. Some Chinese-influenced monasteries had a library in a distinct building, indifferently situated north or south of the Central assembly hall. In the monasteries of Kökeqota, the Jiujian lou 九間樓 (“two-storied building of nine bays large”), located at the northern part of the compound, has a library on the second floor. The hollow Tabun suburγa pagoda was used as a library. Monks also possessed books they kept in their dwelling.

There was no specific classroom for young monks: they studied prayers, Tibetan language in the Central assembly hall and studied rituals by attending celebrations. They also learnt by heart and recited private lessons in their dwelling or in their master’s dwelling. Students learnt rituals in their college assembly hall and debated in a courtyard. The majority of the monks was assigned to simple tasks or worked as apprentice with the relevant master. No education was given to laymen in the monasteries. Many young noblemen were trained as novices in a monastery and quitted before pronouncing monk’s vows.

Some of the largest monasteries had a printing office (located on a lateral axis in symmetrical layouts). None has subsisted. They did not supply books for all Southern Mongolia: books were mainly produced and bought in Beijing or in Tibet. Beijing printed liturgical books in Tibetan, but also in Mongolian.

4. Offices and treasuries

In symmetrical layouts, the religious administration was located on a side axis. Monasteries with an official title had a *tamaγa-yin γajar—yinwu chu* 印務處 in Chinese—, "place where the seals [(given by the Lifan yuan) are kept]". None has subsisted.

The treasuries (*sang* or *jisa*) were essential economic components of a monastery. They stored food and all kind of donations (monk's clothes, carpets, silk, silver), products for trade, religious implements, books and other goods. The treasury of the assembly hall was the public treasury of the whole monastery, while individual ones were attached to particular colleges, to specific religious services and to the reincarnation(s) living in the monastery. They were located close to their unit, usually on its northern side (where the god of wealth resides). There were twenty-two treasuries in Dolonnor [16, 17], and fourteen at Bandida gegeen süme [18]. Very few have been preserved.

Larger monasteries also had workshops for carpenters and painters, buildings to stock timber, fabric limestone, brick kilns, medical house, stables...

5. For accommodation

5.1. Residence of the reincarnations: As in Tibetan monasteries, the *labrang* (from Tibetan *bla-brang*) was an important residential complex for the reincarnation. Often located in an enclosed courtyard, it included a chapel (on the ground floor), an apartment (on the second floor), a kitchen, a reception room for high-ranking visitors and an office in the main building, a storehouse, quarters for the servants and sometimes a library in other buildings. During the summer, the reincarnated lama could live in a yurt inside the courtyard. In symmetrical layouts, the *labrang* was a Chinese style compound lying at the northern part of a lateral axis. In Tibetan style monasteries, it was a courtyard similar to those of Kumbum or Labrang in Amdo.[50] Every reincarnated monk had his own *labrang*: in Badγar coyiling süme [4] for instance, there were three *labrang* for the three reincarnations (although two of them resided elsewhere most of the time).

5.2. The abbot's residence: The abbot (*kambo*, from Tibetan *mkhan-po*), who was the effective ruler of the monastery, lived close to the Central assembly hall. In symmetrical layouts, his residence was the northernmost building of the central axis. In Kökeqota monasteries the abbot lived in the Jiujian lou, which also comprised of a library on the second floor.

5.3. Monks' quarters: Ordinary monks' dwellings were simple mud-brick huts or and/yurts, with an area around 10-12 m2 (3 bays). There was a bed heated by a *kang*, an altar for individual daily prayers plus a small kitchen. The roof was flat or slightly inclined and covered with clay and straw. A monk might have a small compound with a hut used for storage and study, coupled with a yurt for living quarters. Fortunate monks had a brick house with a sloping roof covered with tiles, north of the compound. Lamas lived with their disciples and with their servants. In Tibetan style monasteries like Badγar coyiling süme [4], the dwellings were big cubic houses of two or three storeys, in brick or stone covered with limestone (ill. 20). Monks dwellings were located around the main temples; they could form small streets when attached to each other. In the symmetrical layouts they were arranged in

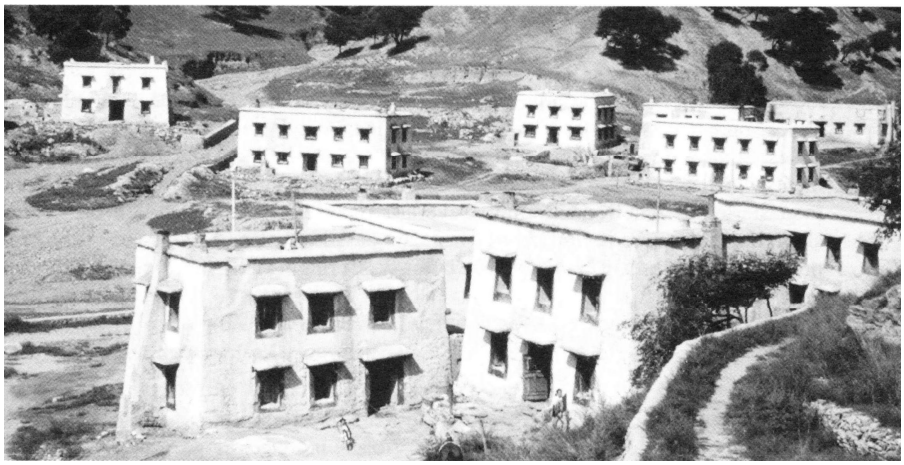
[50] Perhaps the reincarnated lama could also live on the first on second floor of the Central assembly hall, as in Tibetan monasteries.

the private lateral axis, and often out of the compound too. There were no dormitories like in Chinese monasteries.

High-ranking visitors (rich donators, important monks and reincarnations) stayed in a reincarnation’s residence or in a yurt. Other visitors were accommodated in monks’ dwellings, laymen yurts or houses, or brought their own tent for festivals.

The kitchen and a small contiguous storeroom were located either near the assembly hall or in the southern part of the monastery. It was specialised in the preparation of milk tea and food for the services. Monks had a small kitchen in their room to prepare independent meals; they ate meat and took food after noon. There was no refectory or dining room.

Monasteries settled close to rivers or wells. There were usually no toilets or sanitary facilities. Monks normally relieved themselves by squatting anywhere they like (in order not to soil their long robes). Perhaps there were Chinese style toilets in urban monasteries, but none has been preserved. Some Chinese style monasteries had a pond or a garden (without the Chinese Buddhist religious background).



Ill. 20. Badʒar coyiling süme [4], monks’ dwellings. © Gilles Béguin

6. Inscriptions, trees

Chinese style stone inscriptions in Mongolian, Chinese and Tibetan were made for the first foundations of the sixteenth century but this practice was soon abandoned by Mongols. Later, the Qing emperors offered stone inscriptions sheltered in Chinese pavilions in the main courtyard, to commemorate the foundation and restoration of the imperial and imperialised monasteries. The official title received by the largest monasteries was calligraphed (sometimes by the emperor himself) in four languages (Mongol, Chinese, Tibetan and Manchu) on a horizontal wooden board suspended above the monastery’s gate. In Chinese style monasteries, every major building can bear a name written on a wooden board.

From ten to several hundred meters outside the monastery, a stone tablet notified it was compulsory to dismount from one’s horse.

Many trees located in the courtyards were considered as sacred. People making vows used to tie red ribbons to the boughs, which is a Shamanistic practice. Pipals cannot grow in Mongolia (there is one in a temple-greenhouse in Ivolginsk datsan, Buriatia).

Conclusion

The Mongolian Buddhist architecture has a relatively short history when compared to other Buddhist countries. Our very limited knowledge of the Mongol secular or religious building traditions before the sixteenth century makes it difficult to find the local roots of the Mongol monastic architecture. In any case, from the sixteenth century onwards, the mixture of various influences borrowed from China and Tibet led to typical Mongol features, such as the adaptation of a Tibetan multilevel structure with local materials and Chinese techniques, the creation of a framework and a sloping roof adapted to the large square structures of the assembly halls, a peculiar taste for external decoration with glazed tiles and brass objects as well as some iconographical specificities. The role of the "Red" sects of Tibetan Buddhism, which were influent until the mid-seventeenth century, may explain some original features like the inner corridor for circumambulation around the shrine, that seem to contradict a certain uniformisation of Gelugpa architecture. The result in the physical aspects of these buildings is often a large heterogeneity of styles and techniques, ranging from almost pure Tibetan styles to various Sino-Tibetan styles and imitations of Chinese styles. Some are very original and prove to be unique technical and aesthetic achievements which later served as models for Northern Mongolian temples and Sino-Manchu monasteries of Chengde and Beijing. Several structures organised around the central skylight pavilion are reminiscent of mandala-based temples of India and of the First propagation of Buddhism in Tibet like bSam-yas, bringing to light a typical Mongolian taste for symmetry.

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