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Recent research on the Maitreya Monastery in Inner Mongolia (China)

Abstract: This review article evaluates recent Chinese publications (5 books and 30 articles) on Mayidari Juu (Maitreya Monastery, Ch. Meidaizhao 美岱召), in Inner Mongolia, China) – a remarkable fortified Tibetan Buddhist monastery that has preserved sixteenth- to nineteenth-century mural paintings and architecture. Its study is not only important for the history of the Tümed Mongols, but also for the history of Mongol monasteries, art, architecture, religion, society, economy, and funerary practices. The recent books reviewed here, correspond to a new campaign of restoration of the monastery, and reflect the modern revalorisation of Inner Mongol tangible heritage. Besides introducing recently discovered archives, they provide excellent quality photographs of the murals and framework décor, as well as new hypotheses on the dating and function of buildings, and on the dating, iconography and authors of mural paintings. By synthesizing the main debates on history, architecture and painting of Mayidari Juu, the present review essay aims at helping global scholarship on this major part of the Mongol heritage move on to a new stage.

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1 Introduction

This review article evaluates recent publications on Mayidari Juu (Maitreya Temple/Monastery),[1] located about 87 km west of Kökeqota (Hohhot) city in Inner Mongolia, in the Tümed Right Banner of Baotou/Buyutu[2] municipality.[3] Founded

1 The three main ones are Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009; and Zhang Haibin 2010. I thank Chou Wen-shing for having bought me the first one, and Uranchimeg Tsultem who sent me the second one.

2 I used Mostaert's system to transcribe the traditional Uyghur-Mongolian script spelling, but I replaced "č" and "ǰ" by plain "c" and "j". Tibetan words are transliterated according to Wylie's system. For some foreign words that have entered the English-language academic literature I have departed from the transcription systems noted above and kept now familiar spellings, e.g. khan.

3 Or Mayidari-yin Juu/Süme, Mayidari Keyid Dasilhungdub (< Tib. bKra shis lhun sgrub), Ch. Meidaizhao 美岱召.

in the late sixteenth century by Altan Khan (1507/8–1582), it is the only surviving fortified monastery of all Inner Mongolia, hence its appellation *chengsi* 城寺, fortified [city-]monastery.[4] It also preserves the most remarkable mural paintings of the whole region (covering a total of 1,500 m²) and eight buildings from the Ming period (1368–1644). Its architecture and paintings reflect the encounter between Mongol Khans and Qatuns, Tibetan hierarchs of different schools, as well as Chinese architects and artists. Its study is not only important for the history of the Tümed Mongols, but also for the history of Mongol monasteries, art, architecture, religion, society, economy, and funerary practices.

Mayidari Juu was damaged during the Cultural Revolution and all its statues were destroyed or melted down, but its main buildings and their murals are extant. It was protected in 1979, turned into a museum run by the Institute of Conservation of Mayidari Juu's Heritage (Meidaizhao wenwu baoguansuo 美岱召文物保管所) in 1982, restored several times from 1983 on, and opened to visitors in 1984. Since 1996 it is protected as a "First-class National Heritage" of China.[5]

Father Antoine Mostaert (1881–1971) visited the monastery in 1921[6]; he was the first scholar to discuss its 1606 stone inscription in his introduction to the *Erdeni-yin tobci*.[7] A first period of studies of Mayidari Juu started in the 1950s with Father Henry Serruys' (1911–1983) articles on the annotated translation of the inscription and the identity of the princesses who sponsored the monastery. In 1955, Japanese scholar Hagiwara Junpei 萩厚淳平 wrote an article on Altan Khan's first capital. Two years later, Rong Xiang 榮祥 (1894–1978), a Chinese historian and high official native of the Meidai Village,[8] authored the first survey of Mayidari Juu in an article devoted to the monasteries of Kökeqota. In 1959, Yang Yugui 楊玉桂 from the National Heritage Bureau drew a simple layout of the buildings which now helps locate the temples and residences that have been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Chu Qiao 初橋 published an article on Mayidari Juu with eight pictures in 1963 (before the destructions of the Cultural Revolution).[9] The second wave of studies started in the 1980s along with an important

4 *Cheng* means both "city wall" and "city". The Tümed Mongols built other fortified cities and monasteries, such as Huayansi 華嚴寺, Cabciyal-un Süme/Yanghuasi 仰華寺 and Olan Süme.

5 Quanguo zhongdian wenwu baohu danwei AAA 全國重點文物保護單位AAA. On questions of heritage, including the village of Meidai which has been listed as "National Heritage" in 2005: Wu Jiayu/Ding Jinglei 2013.

6 There was a Scheutist (CICM) mission east of Mayidari Juu from the early 1920s to the 1930s; in 1921 Rev. Benoni Dewilde copied the 1606 inscription (Serruys 1958b: 102, 104, n. 16–17).

7 Mostaert 1956, I, "Introduction": 11–13, n. 33.

8 See his biography in Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 91.

9 Chu Qiao 1963: 65–68.

campaign of restoration: Chinese historians and archaeologists (Jin Shen 金申,[10] Li Yiyou 李逸友, Li Yiyun 李漪雲, Wang Degong 王德恭, Cheng Xuguang 程旭光 and Liu Yibin 劉毅彬, Bo Yinhu 薄音湖, Coyiji, Yao Guixuan 姚桂軒 and others) published articles in local, sometimes confidential publications. In 1983, a team of about twenty art historians from the Inner Mongolia Normal University (including Cheng Xuguang) made an extensive survey of the monastery, including copies of the paintings and architectural layouts. In 1994, the Chinese specialist of Tibetan architecture Su Bai 宿白 made a survey of the oldest monasteries in and around Kökeqota, published in the national periodical *Wenwu* ("Cultural Relics") which arose the interest of historians of Tibetan architecture.[11] The discovery of Altan Khan's biography and its extensive study by Chinese, Japanese, German and American scholars provided a new source and renewed interest for the history of the Tümeds.[12] The books published in the late 2000s and reviewed here, correspond to a new campaign of restoration of the monastery.[13]

Unfortunately, no archives predating the eighteenth century have been preserved. Altan Khan's Mongolian biography and several Chinese official and unofficial sources of the late Ming period mention various edifices built by Altan Khan and his descendants, but identifying buildings mentioned in written sources with extant buildings is problematic. In addition to these issues, scholarship has also run into problems of its own. So, within some Chinese publications, certain errors perpetuated. Also, although great progress has been made in the understanding of history and architecture, local scholars seldom quote their sources, rarely make distinctions between what is firmly grounded in sources from what are mere hypotheses, and often take for granted data based on oral records. Besides, they focus on local history and do not have a global view of the Mongol

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10 In 1995, I had the opportunity to meet Jin Shen, art historian and expert in Buddhist sculpture who graciously gave me photographs he took of the mural paintings. He worked in Kökeqota during the Cultural Revolution, and described to me the great pyres the Red Guards lightened in the temples' courtyards to destroy religious books and paintings.

11 Chinese specialist of Tibetan art and architecture Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝 (Beijing Capital Normal University, Institute of Sino-Tibetan Art) led fieldwork studies at Mayidari Juu with his students and encouraged them to study the monasteries of Kökeqota and Baotou.

12 *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur orusiba* (hereafter, *ETS*). This manuscript discovered in 1956 is now preserved in the Library of the Inner Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences in Kökeqota. It only became widely known to scholars after a type-printed version, prepared by Jurungya, was published in Beijing in 1984. A Chinese translation with annotations, again by Jurungya/Zhurongga 珠榮嘎, appeared in 1990; two Japanese versions by Morikawa Tetsuo 森川哲雄 and Yoshida Jun'ichi 吉田順 were published in 1987 and 1997, respectively; a German translation by Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz in 2001; and an English translation by Johan Elverskog in 2003.

13 The China Academic Journal database lists over thirty articles on Mayidari Juu published after 1994. Here, I only cite those that bring new materials.

Buddhist "renaissance"; for instance, they ignore contemporary foundations in Inner (Southern) and Northern Mongolia. Moreover, studies on Inner Mongol art, archaeology and architecture in the Tümed area being published in Chinese only, Mongol and Western scholars of Mongol art who cannot read Chinese do not have access to these publications on the oldest monastery of the Mongol renaissance. This is why I hope the present review essay will help advance global scholarship on this major part of the Mongol heritage.

The main recent publications under review are written by Han and Mongol historians and art historians who hold official positions in museums and research institutes of Inner Mongolia.[14] They provide new material, notably 1) archives of the late Qing (1644–1911) and Republican periods; 2) excellent quality photographs of the murals and framework décor, including previously unpublished (and almost impossible to see on-site) paintings of the coffered ceilings; 3) oral records of old monks and laypersons. They propose new identifications, a closer architectural and pictorial survey, as well as new dating. Zhang Haibin 張海斌's *Meidaizhao bihua yu caihui* ("Wall Paintings of the Maitreya Monastery") is a comprehensive survey of the murals. His first chapter synthesizes the main debates by quoting original sources and the arguments of the leading scholars. Wang Leiyi 王磊義 et al.'s comprehensive monograph, titled *Zangchuan fojiao siyuan Meidaizhao Wudangzhao diaocha yu yanjiu* ("Survey and Study of the Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries Mayidari Juu and Udan Juu"), is the conclusion of a survey conducted between 2003 and 2006.[15] The authors document not only the monastery itself, including technical data on the fortified wall and its restoration, but also its surroundings (the cemetery, the brick oven, the branch monastery south of Mayidari Juu), and local customs.[16] Miao Runhua 苗潤華 and Du Hua 杜華's *Caoyuan fosheng* ("The Buddhist Sound of the Steppe") is comparatively less detailed and addresses a larger audience, but brings some new material on Qing period history from the recently discovered archives. Another recent book comparable to Miao Runhua and Du Hua's, Gu Wenzu 顧問組 (ed.)'s *Saiwai*

14 Miao Chunhua is a Mongol archeologist, Deputy Director of the Baotou Municipality Heritage Management Office, and Director of Mayidari Juu (since 2003). Zhang Haibin is Director of the Baotou Municipality Heritage Management Bureau, where Yao Guixuan and Guo Jianzhong 郭建中 work as well. Wang Leiyi, researcher at the Baotou Museum, participated in the 1984 restoration campaign. Jin Feng 金峰 (Altanorgil) is a renowned specialist of Mongol history, and a high official at the government of the Tümed Right Banner.

15 This book surveys two different monasteries, Mayidari Juu and Udan Juu (Badyar Coyiling Süme) without making any comparison between them.

16 Agriculture, cattle-breeding, toponymy of villages, dialect, daily life, festivals, popular rituals (*oboo* ritual, New Year), song, music, Sino-Tümed relations, houses, and funerary customs (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 85–89).

chengsi: *Meidaizhao* ("Fortified Monastery Outside the Passes: Mayidari Juu"), synthetizes recent research: the first part recounts the history, architecture and paintings of Mayidari Juu, while the second part gathers twenty-five articles from Chinese and foreign specialists.[17] Finally, *Daqingshan xia Meidaizhao* ("Mayidari Juu at the Foot of Daqing Mountains"), edited by Jin Feng (Altanorgil) gathers articles with original and new hypotheses on historical and art questions.

Yet these books do not provide definite statements about many questions that remain unsolved after years of controversies. The multiplication of recent publications on Mayidari Juu reflects the modern revalorisation of Inner Mongol tangible heritage,[18] but also of local lore and heroes (see for instance the erection of statues of Altan Khan and Jönggen Qatun in the 2000s). Chinese historians promote the image of a sage Khan who converted his people to Buddhism and made peace with China, and of his amazon-like third wife who maintained peace after his death, thus perpetuating the image of "good barbarians on the way to civilization/sinicization". The fact that so many publications exist on this ancient Mongol monastery, along with so many different understandings and interpretations, reveals the historiographical and ideological stakes.

Here, I would like to propose a state of the field of more than fifty years of debates by assessing recent discoveries, results and hypotheses about the following questions:

1. The relation between Mayidari Juu and Altan Khan's buildings documented by written sources;
2. the transformation of Altan Khan's palace into a temple;
3. the locations of Altan Khan's two burials;
4. the identity of the woman buried in the *stūpa*;
5. the problem of different orientations and alignments of the temples, and of different architectural styles;

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17 Yao Guixuan and Du Hua contributed to the preparation of the first volume which was written under the direction of Zhang Haibin and Miao Runhua. The second volume includes articles of Li Yiyou (1981), Rong Xiang (1981), Li Yiyun (1981), Yu Yongfa (s.a.), Bo Yinhu (2005), Jin Chenguang (2004), Miao Runhua et al. (2008); articles on Altan Khan, Jönggen and Macay Qatun, as well as an article translated from Mongolian by Suo Mingjie 索明傑 about a beam of the Central Temple of Erdeni Juu which bears a Chinese inscription with the date 1587: Khadan Baatar/Hadan Bateer 哈丹巴特爾, "Shilun E'erdenizhao zhusi hengliang shouxie mingwen yu Andahan de gongjiangmen" 試論額爾德尼召主寺橫梁手寫銘文與俺達汗的工匠們, 343–345.

18 The official directives of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for the twenty-first century are: "accelerate the cultural development and build a great cultural ethnic area" ("Jiakuai wenhua fazhan, jianshe minzu wenhua daqu 加快文化發展，建設民族文化大區") (Yin Fujun 2012: 64).

6. the dates of the construction of the buildings and of the paintings;
7. the possible initial affiliation of Mayidari Juu to non-Gelukpa traditions of Tibetan Buddhism;
8. the iconography and identity of the characters of "The Altan Khan Family Portrait".

In addition, I will summarize the Qing dynasty and early Republican period history and rituals documented by archival documents.

2 Historical questions

The late sixteenth century, which saw a cultural and religious renaissance of the Mongols who massively reconverted to Tibetan Buddhism, was a prosperous period thanks to the peace following Altan Khan's conquests, the development of commerce and Sino-Mongol relations (after 1571) and the monetarization of the economy. Mayidari Juu was probably the first permanent religious structure of the Buddhist renaissance, built in Altan Khan's "capital city", at the foot of the Daqing 大清/Qarayuna mountains. It was built by Chinese carpenters settled in Mongolia.[19]

2.1 The stone inscription and the "country of Jin" (Jinguo)

The first source that has attracted scholars' attention toward Mayidari Juu is the stone inscription written in Tibetan and Chinese, dated 1606, that commemorates the rebuilding of the main gate by Princess Macay Qatun (see below, Fig. 1).[20] Curiously, it does not mention the consecration by the Mayidari Qutuytu but insists on honorific titles given by the Ming to the Tümed rulers. The sloppy calligraphy and mistaken characters show the poor quality of the work which may be attributed to a Chinese artisan who contributed to the construction. I will not

19 On Chinese carpenters working for the Mongols: Charleux 2010b.

20 The inscription (69.6 × 52 cm) is now in the Museum of Inner Mongolia (Kökeqota). The text was studied and translated into English by Serruys (1958b: 102–104), in French by Charleux (2006: 55–56), and studied by Mostaert (1956, I, "Introduction": 11–13, n. 33); Li Yiyou (1981: 148–149); Li Yiyun (1981); Wang Degong (1984, correcting Serruys' article which was translated into Chinese in 1984: Sailusi Hengli 1984); Jin Shen (1984d); Huang Lisheng (1995: 311); Jin Chenguang (2004); Bo Yinhu (2005); Li Qinpu (2008); Zhang Haibin (2010: 4–5); Yao Xu/Zhang Jingfeng (2011).

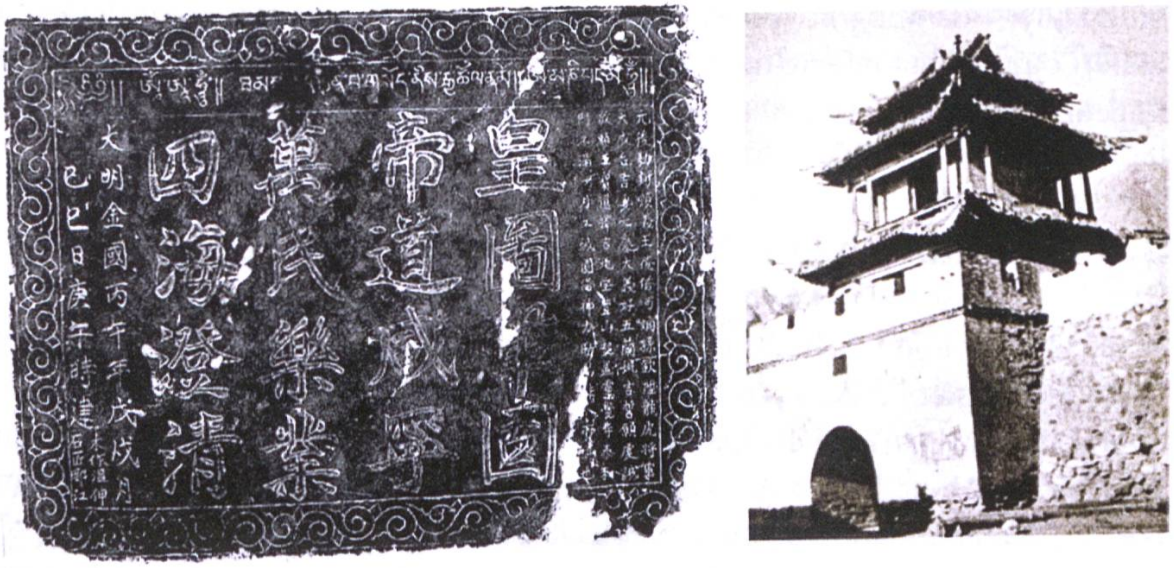

Fig. 1: Old picture of the Supreme Harmony Gate and rubbing of its stone inscription. Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, II: 6, ill. 2–1, 13, ill. 5–6.

enter into the debates about the meaning of this inscription which mostly deal with the identification of titles and names.[21]

The Chinese part of the inscription mentions the "Golden State/Country of the Great Ming/Light", Da Ming Jinguo 大明金國. Rong Xiang (1981), followed by most Chinese authors[22] including Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 11–15) and Zhang Haibin (2010: 1–4) believe that "Jinguo" was the name of the state of Altan Khan and his descendants from 1558 to 1586 (or 1632). Because there is no expression such as "Altan ulus" (that would translate "Jinguo") in Mongolian sources, I do not share this opinion.

For some authors, "Ming" is a reference to the Ming dynasty: Altan Khan's state would have been called "Golden state of the Great Ming" (Yeke Gegen Altan Ulus) after Altan started paying a tribute to the Ming in 1571 which in my opinion is wrong.[23]

In his article on "Mongol *Altan* 'Gold' = 'Imperial'",[24] Serruys has argued that "Jin", "gold" must be understood as an epithet meaning "imperial"; Jinguo should then mean "Imperial State/Country". In my opinion, however, we should follow Mongol historian Coyiji, who argues that "Da Ming" translates Altan Khan's epithet Geg(eg)en ("light, splendour, brightness") which is found in his

21 Discussion summarized by Zhang Haibin 2010: 5.

22 Cf. Li Yiyun 1985 [1982].

23 Discussion in Zhang Haibin 2010: 5; Li Qinpu 2012: 94.

24 Serruys 1962, and Serruys 1958b: 104, n. 24.

biography:[25] Da Ming Jinguo would therefore not designate a "Golden/Imperial State/Country" but refer to the State/Country of Great Brilliant Altan [Khan] (Yeke Gegen/Altan [Qa(ya)n-u] ulus).

2.2 Was Altan Khan's first palace on the site of Mayidari Juu?

When was Mayidari Juu built? Except from this inscription, no other contemporary sources document this monastery. Mongolian sources that mention it are scarce. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor's *dPag bsam ljon bzang* (1748), written in Tibetan, lists it as Jo bo'i lha khang ("Jo bo's Temple").[26] The 1787 "Survey on the Original Foundation on all the Monasteries of the Caylasi Ügei Süme's Type" could not find other sources than the 1606 inscription and concludes that the Mayidari Juu or Lingjuesi 靈覺寺 (Monastery of the Spiritual Enlightenment) was founded in 1606 by Macay Qatun (on this princess, see below).[27] Several scholars such as Serruys and Su Bai followed this dating.[28] But Ishibaldan's *Erdeni-yin erike*, written in 1835, mentions the monastery known as Mayidari or Dašilhüng-dubza (Dasilhungdub), built by "Dooradu-yin Köke Qota-yin Tümed-ün Altan Qayan" (Altan Khan of the Tümeds of the Lower Kökeqota).[29]

In 1957, Rong Xiang was the first to propose that Altan Khan's first capital, known as Bansheng, and then Dabansheng 大板升[30] (Mo. Yeke Bayising, "Great Building") in Chinese sources, was not located on the site of modern Kökeqota but on the site of Mayidari Juu.[31] In 1981, both Li Yiyou and Li Yiyun brought additional proof to this:[32] Chinese sources such as the *Wanli wugonglu* localize

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25 *ETS* fol. 26r: "Gegen Altan Qayan". According to Jin Chenguang 金晨光, "Da Ming" could be a Buddhist reference to light, and for Bo Yinhu, it just means "great, vast".

26 Heissig 1961: xxii, n. 187. *Jo bo* ("Lord", Mo. *juu*) refers to the Jo bo Śākyamuni and Akṣobhya Vajra icons of Lhasa. By metonymy, it came to designate in Mongolian replicas of these icons as well as a monastery or temple enshrining a precious statue.

27 "Besides this [inscription], there is absolutely nothing else" (*Caylasi ügei süme* 1787: fol. 13r, passage translated by Serruys 1958b: 109; see also Heissig 1961: xxii, n. 188).

28 Serruys 1958b: 109; Su Bai 1994: 55–56.

29 *Erdeni-yin erike*, fol. 37r, in Heissig 1961: 75.

30 In Chinese sources, *bansheng* (Mo. *bayising*, "building, house", < Ch. *baixing* 百姓, "the people" or *banqiang* 板牆, "pisé") designates houses, settlements and towns, and *cheng* designates a walled city. On *bansheng/bayising* see Serruys 1975: 240–245; Charleux 2006: 33–34.

31 Rong Xiang 1979 [1957]: 226; Rong Xiang 1981: 205. In 1959, Hu Zhongda 胡鍾達 supported this hypothesis but he localized it in the old Liao city of Fengzhou (now Baita Village, 20 km east of Kökeqota).

32 Li Yiyou 1981: 145–149; also Li Yiyun 1981: 215–219. This hypothesis is now supported by all authors.

the first palace of Altan Khan at 300 *li* (about 170 km) from the Chinese border (modern Kökeqota is only at 80 km from the border), near Saraci (modern Tumote Youqi 土默特右旗, 100 km west of Kökeqota, which corresponds to Mayidari Juu), in the Fengzhou 豐州 Plain – at that time, Fengzhou designated the plain north of the Yellow River around Saraci. It is now widely accepted that Mayidari Juu was built in the sixteenth century by Altan Khan on the site of his first palace(s).

According to Chinese sources, Altan Khan started to build rammed-earth walls between 1551 and 1553.[33] His Mongolian biography does not explicitly mention the foundation of a first palace but writes that in 1556/57 he built "eight great *bayising*s and five *suburya*s": Scholars now believe that this designates the palace of Dabansheng, with eight great buildings surrounded by a wall. The five *suburya*s would not be *stūpa*s but towers above the gate and the four corners of the wall.[34] Dabansheng may have initially been a walled compound with no construction, where Mongols pitched their tents. It was burnt by Ming troops in 1559 (Table 1). Because of remains of old walls at Mayidari Juu, Chinese archaeologists do not doubt that all the walls mentioned in Chinese sources were at Mayidari Juu.

In the years between 1565 and 1567, according to the *Wanli wugonglu*,[35] Chinese migrants[36] built (rebuilt?) Dabansheng for Altan Khan with a nine-pillar hall (Jiuying zhi Dian 九楹之殿) or a nine-bay hall (Jiujianlou 九間樓) – both terms being usually understood as being synonymous – surrounded by a wall. We will see below that Chinese scholars propose to identify this hall with the Liulidian of Mayidari Juu. We also know from other sources that Altan Khan did not really reside in his palaces: He lived in a yurt camp moving from one place to the next (Yeke Bayising, Kökeqota, Olan Süme in summer to escape the heat of the plain), and occasionally travelled to the Kukunor region.[37]

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33 Or perhaps as early as 1539 and 1547: Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 33.

34 Elverskog 2003: 106, n. 128; Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 22; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 15. Some authors identify the "eight great *bayising*s" with a village near Kökeqota, others believe it could have been an eight-bay hall (discussion in Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 16).

35 Charleux 2006: 31–36.

36 These Chinese – deserters, war prisoners, landless farmers and "sectarians" fleeing religious persecution, as well as scholars and literati – introduced farming, architecture, Chinese weapons, etc. among the Tümed Mongols. After the 1571 peace treaty, they lost all influence at Altan Khan's court.

37 Charleux 2007.

Table 1: Chronology of main events and construction at Mayidari Juu (*In italics: hypotheses that need to be confirmed*)

Main events	Construction in Mayidari Juu
Yeke Bayising 1551–1572	
1551–1553 Bayising, first palace of Altan Khan?	*1551–1553 surrounding walls*
1557 Yeke Bayising: headquarters of Altan Khan, five *suburyas* and eight *bayisings*, agriculture, villages	*1557 walled palace with 4 corner towers and a gate tower (five* suburyas*)*
1565–1567 Zhao Quan and Li Zixin build a palace for Altan Khan = Yeke Bayising	*1565 walled palace with a nine bay hall = Liulidian?, 7 buildings and 5 towers*
Palace-Temple 1572–1606	
1572–1575 Foundation of Kökeqota (Guihuacheng)	*1572 construction of Lingjuesi = Western Thousand Buddha Hall?*
Yeke Bayising becomes the secondary capital	
Altan Khan offers Yeke Bayising to Dayicing Ejei (Right wing of the Tümeds)	*The Liulidian (audience hall) is turned into a Buddhist shrine*
1578 Meeting between the Third Dalai lama and Altan Khan at Kukunor	
1582 Death of Altan Khan.	*1582 burial of Altan Khan in a "palace"-tomb near Mayidari Juu?*
1583 Death of Dayicing Ejei. Macay Qatun inherits of Yeke Bayising	*1570s–1600s construction of the (Back) Shrine of the Main Buddha Hall (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009 I: 61); Dalai Temple; Octagonal Temple*
1583–1585 Reign of Sengge Düğüreng	
1587 The Third Dalai Lama visits Yeke Bayising. He had Altan Khan's body deterred, cremated and the ashes placed into a *stūpa* to be placed in Yeke Juu, Kökeqota.	*1587 Altan Khan's funerary* stūpa *in or near Mayidari Juu*
1587–1607 Reign of Cürüke (Namudai Secen Khan)	
Temple-Palace 1606–1632	
1606 Invitation of the Mayidari Qutuytu to consecrate the statue	(Re?)construction of the Supreme Harmony Gate, construction of the Maitreya statue, *of a Tibetan-style residence for the Mayidari Qutuytu (Nayicung Temple), restoration (or reconstruction) of the fortified wall*
1612 Death of Jönggen Qatun	*>1612 or >1625 construction of the Empress Temple to enshrine the relics of one of the two princesses*
1613 Bošoytu becomes *shunyiwang*	
1625 Death of Macay Qatun	
1627 Mayidari Qutuytu leaves the monastery	
1632 Ombo (4th *shunyiwang*) surrenders to the Qing	

Table 1 (cont.)

Main events	Construction in Mayidari Juu
Family monastery, Qing dynasty	
	Qing period: *Construction or reconstruction of the Assembly Hall of the Main Buddha Hall,* construction of the Foyefu, Eastern Wanfodian
1756 Lamajab receives the title of *fuguogong* and resides in the monastery	
1760 Lamajab in disgrace	
1787 Qianlong grants the title Shoulingsi to Mayidari Juu	
1819 42 monks + 4 laypersons	1808 White Horse Deity Temple
Festivals attended by Mongols and Chinese	1835 Lokapāla Hall
18th–19th centuries: land sold/rented to Chinese, Chinese immigration	1849 Screen wall
	1869 Restoration of the Main Buddha Hall
Twentieth century	
1920s, esp. 1928 Occupation by soldiers	Destruction, theft of statues
1951–1952 Agrarian reform	Loss of arable land
1969 Destruction during the Cultural Revolution	Turned into granaries and later fruit garden
1980 Meidaizhao wenwu baoguansuo	1980–1984 Restoration (1.1 million Yuan)

2.3 Which monastery was built in 1572 according to the *Wanli wugonglu*?

The *Wanli wugonglu* writes that in the 6th year of the Longqing era (1572), Altan Khan informed Chinese official Wang Chonggu 王崇古 that he had "built a monastery 寺 in the Daqing Mountains", and requested from the Ming craftsmen, painters, and lamas.[38] This cannot be Yeke Juu, the monastery he founded in 1579–1581 just south of Kökeqota. Since, according to his biography he also started to build Kökeqota ("Blue City") south of the Daqing Mountains in 1572,[39] scholars made different hypotheses about the identity of this monastery.

38 *WLWGL*, *juan* 8: 149. Later sources that describe this event speak of *chengshi* 城市, "an apparent phonological transcription error that links it to the by then well-known city of Guihua Cheng" (Elverskog 2003: 134, n. 211).

39 *ETS*, fol. 18v–19r, Elverskog 2003: 133–134. The walled compound was quite small and should be called a palace rather than a city (Charleux 2007). On the foundation and development of the city of Kökeqota: Bao Muping 2005.

- According to Coyiji, followed by Elverskog and Zhang Haibin,[40] there was only one foundation in 1572: Dabansheng/Mayidari Juu which was also known as "Kökeqota".[41] These authors think that Kökeqota/Guihuacheng 歸化城, then known as Jade (Qas) Kökeqota, was built in 1581 (i.e. when it received the Chinese title "Guihuacheng")[42] or 1586 (date of restoration by Jönggen Qatun and Cürüke).[43] I think they are wrong for several reasons, one of them being that the long scroll painting dated 1580 that accompanied a letter addressed by Altan Khan to the Ming emperor with the horse tribute clearly shows Guihuacheng and Yeke Juu Monastery (founded in 1579–1580):[44] Kökeqota/Guihuacheng was therefore built as a walled city before 1581.[45]
- More probably, in 1572, one year after having signed the peace agreement with Ming China, Altan Khan founded Kökeqota/Guihuacheng, thereby moving his headquarters closer to the Chinese markets.[46] At the same time, he transformed his former palace Yeke Bayising "in (at the foot of) the Daqing Mountains" into a monastery: Mayidari Juu. Yeke Bayising/Mayidari Juu then became a secondary capital, like Olan Süme. This is now accepted by most authors.

  Chinese scholars[47] also understand that the 1606 inscription[48] names the existing monastery to which the gate was added "Lingjuesi", and deduce that Lingjuesi is the Chinese name of the monastery built in 1572. However, "Lingjuesi" is not found in sources earlier than the 1606 inscription.[49]

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40 Coyiji 1996; Elverskog 2003: 133, n. 311; Zhang Haibin 2010: 3.

41 Coyiji's (1996 and Qiao Ji 2007) main argument is that Mayidari Juu is quite close to the Yellow River unlike (modern) Kökeqota, especially in late Ming times when the Yellow River flew much closer to the monastery. Elverskog adds that Kökeqota/Guihuacheng was not founded by Altan but "grew out of the Bayising settlements that Chinese immigrants built for Altan Khan and the large monastery he founded there after meeting with the Third Dalai Lama in 1578", and naturally became the obvious capital (2003: 133, n. 211). Another of Elverskog's arguments is that Guihuacheng was maybe not called Kökeqota at that time (according to Serruys, Kökeqota would be an imitation of Chinese "Guihua") (Elverskog 2003: 134, n. 211).

42 Hu Zhongda 1959.

43 See Zhang Haibin 2010: 2. The term Qas Kökeqota is found in *ETS*, fol. 42r, Elverskog 2003: 186.

44 See Charleux 2006: 29.

45 Other arguments refuting Coyiji's hypothesis: Charleux 2006: 36, n. 80.

46 On the foundation date of Kökeqota: Charleux 2006: 36, n. 80. Yet it is possible that Altan Khan founded Kökeqota on a pre-existing village and marketplace, though the 1580 painting only shows the palace and Yeke Juu.

47 Li Yiyou 1981: 149; Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 33 157, and Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 5, 28.

48 "Uran Beyiji [Macay Qatun] (...) started the construction of Supreme Harmony Gate of Lingjuesi" (*qigai Lingjuesi Taihemen* 起盖靈覺寺泰和門).

49 It is unclear when the monastery received this Chinese title. In 1787 a new title, Shoulingsi, was granted by the Qing emperor.

The small Thousand-Buddha Hall being the oldest hall of present-day Mayidari Juu, they further conclude that the Lingjuesi founded in 1572 is the Thousand-Buddha Hall.[50] These are mere hypotheses.

- A third hypothesis would be that a monastery was erected in 1572 within Kökeqota (such as the one that will later become Siregetü Juu). But it is not depicted on the scroll painting dated 1580.

2.4 Is Fuhuacheng a copy error?

According to the *Wanli wugonglu* and the *Ming Shizong shilu*, in 1575, upon Altan Khan's request, the Ming granted Kökeqota the name Guihuacheng ("Town Returning to Civilization").[51] But the *Quanbian lüeji* (preface dated 1628),[52] followed by later accounts such as the *Mingshi jishi benmo* (1658),[53] notes that in 1575 the Ming entitled Altan Khan's city Fuhuacheng 福化城. Rong Xiang understood that this was Mayidari Juu, to be distinguished from Guihuacheng (Kökeqota).[54] Most scholars have then named Mayidari Juu "Fuhuacheng" in academic publications, in books on Mongol history, in museums' captions and so on.[55] Zhang Haibin, following Coyiji and others, maintains that Kökeqota was built in 1581 (or 1586); consequently the title of Fuhuacheng, "given by the Ming in 1575", can only be for Dabansheng/Mayidari Juu, while "Guihuacheng" was later granted to the "Jade" Kökeqota.[56] The argument that Fuhua would transcribe Mongol Köke does not hold, even in local dialect.[57]

It is important to note that the name Fuhuacheng is not attested in official Chinese sources; and I follow scholars who believe that Fuhua is a copy error, *fu* replacing *gui*: Guihua was the title given to the new city of Kökeqota built from 1572 to 1575 closer to the Chinese border and markets.[58] Li Qinpu 李勤璞 also rightly notices that while the Chinese court granted many titles including *hua* ("transform, civilize, convert") to border towns, none of them include terms con-

50 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 5, 28–29; Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 33.

51 *WLWGW*, *juan* 8: 149.

52 *Quanbian lüeji*, *juan* 2, "Datong lüe", vol. I, 329. This text seems to copy the same source as the *Ming shilu* (Wada Sei 1984 [1959]: 717, n. 1).

53 *Mingshi jishi benmo: juan* 60, vol. IX: 23–24.

54 Rong Xiang 1979 [1957]: 226; Rong Xiang 1981.

55 Li Yiyou 1981: 148; Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 30–32.

56 However Zhang Haibin acknowledges that this question is not completely settled (2010: 2–3).

57 Li Qinpu 2012: 94.

58 Wada Sei 1984 [1959]; Li Yiyun 1982; Bao Muping 2005; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 8; Yu Yongfa, s.a.; discussion in Zhang Haibin (2010: 3).

noting blessings and good fortune such as *fuhua*, "blessing civilization/blessing and transforming".[59] As for the appellation "Lingzhaosi 靈照寺" found in some Chinese sources, it is probably a mistake for Lingjuesi.[60]

2.5 Where was Altan Khan buried?

According to his biography, after Altan Khan died in 1582, a "palace" (*ordo qarsi*) was built above his tomb on a southern slope of the Daqing Mountains, on a site chosen by Chinese astrologists and the main reincarnated lama of Kökeqota.[61] In 1587, the Third Dalai Lama, invited to Kökeqota, had the remains of Altan Khan deterred and cremated to reveal the *śarīra* relics; he had them enshrined in a funerary *stūpa* made of "jewels, gold and silver". The text then describes the construction of a "magnificent blue palace" on the west side of Kökeqota's Juu Sigemüni-yin Süme (i.e. Yeke Juu), certainly to enshrine the *stūpa* (although this is not explicitly mentioned).[62] Other sources that mention the cremation, such as the *Erdeni-yin tobci* and the Third Dalai Lama's biography, do not give more details. In Tibetan Buddhism, *stūpa*s are only built for members of the clergy; the burial of Altan Khan in a *stūpa* can only be explained by the fact that he was considered as a saint.

If a "palace" was built above the tomb, it was not a secret burial; but when the body was later cremated and put inside a *stūpa*, the original place of the tomb may have been forgotten. Where were the first tomb and the *stūpa* located?

- Wang Leiyi et al. assume that Altan Khan's first "palace"-tomb was located in the cemetery of the Dukes (Gongyejiafen), located less than 1 km to the north-west[63] of Mayidari Juu, on a terrace at the foot of the Baofengshan 寶豐山 (name of the portion of the Daqing Mountains north of Mayidari Juu).[64] The tombs were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and no pre-Qing century tomb was identified.[65]

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59 Li Qinpu 2012: 93.

60 Serruys 1958b: 104, n. 17.

61 "Thereupon, to inter the majestic corpse of Altan, King of the Dharma/Chinese astrologers and the supreme Manjushri Khutugtu Dalai Lama/Personally inspected the good and bad signs for the burial site/Then, according to the [three] jewels, they constructed a palace on the sunny-side of the Kharagun Mountains" (*ETS*, Elverskog 2003: 180).

62 *ETS*, fol. 43v–45v, Elverskog 2003: 191–193.

63 North according to Li Yiyou 1981: 147.

64 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 43–44.

65 Described by Rong Xiang 1979 [1957]: 227.

- Serruys, based on Chinese travel accounts and maps, has proposed that the place called Ongyon Dabaya would be a pass giving access to the cemetery of Altan Khan in the Daqing Mountains (10 km north-west of Kökeqota).[66] Considering the Mongol custom of burial in wild areas of mountain slopes and summits, in my opinion, Serruys' hypothesis on the location of the first tomb is the most viable.

As for the funerary *stūpa*: there is no trace of a "blue palace" with a relic *stūpa* in later descriptions of Yeke Juu.[67] The funerary *stūpa*, if initially located within Yeke Juu, may have been moved to Mayidari Juu in the early Qing dynasty when the descendants of Altan Khan left Kökeqota to reside there. The *stūpa* made of precious materials or only the relics it contained may have been enshrined into a new hall or inside a larger outdoor *stūpa*:

- Some authors believe the 4-m high Baofeng White Stūpa on a peak behind Mayidari Juu enshrined Altan Khan's remains.[68] Destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, it was rebuilt in 1984. But *stūpa*s are often built behind, "above" monasteries for geomantic protection, and we have no indication that the Baofeng Stūpa was ever a funerary *stūpa*.
- Two *stūpa*s used to stand in front of the Liulidian. The left one was opened during the Cultural Revolution: a silk garment with pearls was found inside, but no ashes or bones[69] (Miao Runhua and Du Hua think it could have been the relic *stūpa* of the Mayidari Qutuytu[70]). But according to a local tradition, one of them would have been the funerary *stūpa* of Altan Khan, and the nearby Octagonal Temple would have been built in 1585 along with the Baofeng White Stūpa to geomantically protect it. Mayidari Juu would then have looked like Erdeni Juu, with the two funerary *stūpa*s of Abadai Khan (d. 1588) and his son Γombodorji in front of the Central Temple (Γool Juu). But

66 Serruys (1979: 102) quotes a passage of the *WLWGL*, where Jönggen Qatun speeding towards the Northern mountains passed Altan Khan's grave.

67 According to Bao Muping (2011: 135) who does not quote her sources, a "blue hall" was built in 1587 west of the Main Buddha Hall of Yeke Juu to enshrine Altan Khan's *stūpa*, and a relic *stūpa* for the Third Dalai Lama was erected in 1588 north of the Main Buddha Hall.

68 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 168–169. Others say it was dedicated to the *dharmapāla* who protects the monastery, or (according to old people) to Laojun/Laozi: it would have had the same orientation and the same deity as the Octagonal Temple (Yao Guixuan 1988: 51). South of the *stūpa* is a cemetery for monks.

69 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 54. See a picture in Chu Qiao 1963: 67. The right one was destroyed "long ago" according to Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 54). According to Miao Runhua/Du Hua (2008: 163), it is the right *stūpa* that was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

70 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 163.

Wang Leiyi and Yao Guixuan noticed that the style of the *stūpa*s in front of the Liulidian was different from sixteenth-century *stūpa*s.[71]

- Jin Feng has proposed that in 1587 the Back Shrine of the Main Buddha Hall enshrined the funerary *stūpa* of Altan Khan before the Maitreya statue replaced it. "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" would have been made to pay homage to the *stūpa* (see his interpretation of the painting below).[72]
- During the Cultural Revolution, when the Maitreya statue was removed to be sold, inside its throne a casket with no cover was found, containing the following objects: a bow made of rhinoceros horn, ten arrows, an ivory comb, ivory chopsticks, mirrors, ceramic bowls, a small bronze seal carved with the characters *gui* 貴 and *guiren* 跪人, books, medicinal woods, and remains of bones after cremation, wrapped in yellow silk: they are obviously relics of a high-ranking layman. All these relics were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.[73] Wang Leiyi et al. have hypothesized that they could be the remains of Altan Khan hidden in the statue's pedestal after his cremation.[74] At a later period when the funerary *stūpa* was destroyed, the ashes and personal objects of Altan Khan would then have been moved into the statue's pedestal. For Yao Xu 姚旭 and Li Xiangjun 李向軍, the burial of ashes inside the pedestal of the statue is comparable to burial inside a *stūpa*: both are "sacred and inviolable" places of burial.[75] But I know no other example of burial inside the pedestal of a statue – this may have been done so as to hide the relics in times of war (before 1606?).

In my opinion, Altan Khan's *stūpa* may have been moved from Yeke Juu to Mayidari Juu, and it seems logical to search for it near or in Mayidari Juu. But we will probably never know where Altan Khan's relics were kept.

Elverskog wrote that "the importance of Altan Khan and the conversion of the Mongols have become irrelevant to the concerns of the Mongols of the Buddhist Qing in the eighteenth century", and "the most striking evidence for this fact is that even the whereabouts of Altan Khan's 'tomb/*stūpa*' [...] was lost".[76] How-

71 Wang Leiyi/Yao Guixuan 2003: 77.

72 I did not have access to Jin Feng's book (2011). It is, however, summarized by Yin Fujun (2012: 66).

73 On the occupation of the monastery and the destruction and pillage of its religious treasures during the Cultural Revolution: Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 45–46.

74 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 46, quoting oral accounts; Yao Xu/Li Xiangjun 2012: 87. The list of objects is slightly different in Wang Leiyi/Yao Guixuan 2003: 77.

75 Yao Xu/Li Xiangjun 2012: 88.

76 Elverskog 2006: 112.

ever, as we will see, local Tümed people continued to worship Altan Khan and his family up to the early twentieth century.

2.6 The 1606 consecration and the two princesses

After Altan Khan's death, the Twelve Tümeds were divided into two wings headed by two Buddhist princesses, Jönggen Qatun and Macay Qatun, that fought over power. Jönggen Qatun (1550/1–1612), Altan Khan's third wife (known in Chinese as Sanniangzi 三娘子),[77] married Altan Khan's son Sengge Dügüreng (ca. 1522–1586) (from his first wife), grandson Cürüke (also known as Namudai Secen Khan, r. 1586–d. 1607) and great-grandson Bošoytu after the successive death of each husband. She ruled the Tümeds *de facto* for thirty years from Altan Khan's death in 1582 to her own death, guaranteeing the Sino-Mongol peace and trade. Jönggen Qatun may have resided some time in Yeke Bayising[78]/Mayidari Juu, but we have no proof of it: Altan Khan's sons and wives had their own encampments. After Altan Khan's death she was based in Kökeqota, and headed the Left Wing.

Altan Khan had left the people of Yeke Bayising and his personal troops under Dayicing Ejei's (one of his grandsons, also known as Ba-han-na-ji) control.[79] After Altan's death, Dayicing Ejei headed the Right Wing in Yeke Bayising/Mayidari Juu, but died in 1583. His widow, Macay Qatun Uran Beyiji (1546–1625),[80] also known as Baya Beyiji (the Small Princess), became the leader of the Right Wing in Yeke Bayising. In 1584, with the aim to control the resources of Yeke Bayising, the Left Wing tried in vain to besiege the fortress.[81] Against Jönggen's will, Macay Qatun married Cürüke, but in 1585 Cürüke eventually divorced her to marry Jönggen Qatun and to be entitled *shunyiwang* 順義王 ("Obedient and

77 Noyancu Jönggen Qatun married Altan Khan in 1567 or 1568 as his third consort. Also called Erketü Qatun, the Powerful Queen/Princess, she had a strong political influence. In 1586 or 1587, the Ming granted her the title *zhongshun furen* 忠順夫人 ("Loyal and Obedient Lady").

78 Yu Yongfa, quoted by Zhang Haibin 2010: 4.

79 A Chinese stone inscription recently found at Sha'erqin 沙爾沁 Village (about 30 km west of Mayidari Juu), "Da cheng tayiji bei 大成太吉碑", mentions the extension of Ba-ha-na-ji's territory from Mayidari Juu to the old town of Baotou (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 16; Yao Xu/Zhang Jingfeng 2011: 61).

80 Cecen Uran Beyiji is her popular name, Macay, Majiy or Maciy (< Tib. *ma gcig*, "one mother") Qatun her official title used in literary works. The first to have identified Macay Qatun with Uran Beyiji was Serruys (1958b: 109). Uran is from Mo. *uran*, not from *ulaan* (as asserted by Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 74).

81 *Wanli wugong lu*, *juan* 9: 7; see Serruys 1975: 210–211.

Righteous Prince");[82] in 1586 Macay then married Budasiri (Jönggen and Altan Khan's son, d. 1597). After Jönggen's death, Macay Qatun was granted the title *zhongyi furen* 忠義夫人 ("Loyal and Righteous Lady") by the Ming, and controlled the markets, thus becoming the most influent ruler of the Tümeds. Serruys' articles and book on the genealogical tables of the descendants of Dayan Khan, including the Tümed royal family, have helped clarify the identity of Altan Khan's descendants and the web of intrigues and complex kinship relations linking the two princesses with descendants of Altan Khan.[83]

According to Sayang Secen's *Erdeni-yin tobci*, in 1606, Macay Qatun invited the Mayidari Qutuytu to conduct ceremonies for the consecration of a statue of Maitreya,[84] and probably also for the Supreme Harmony Gate (erected in 1606 according to the inscription). Altan Khan's biography, written around 1607, just after the 1606 construction, does not mention this consecration.

Who was the Mayidari Qutuytu? As pointed out by Kollmar-Paulenz, "we have quite divergent information about the Mayidari Qutugtu, information that is not easily (or even impossible) to be reconciled".[85] Altan Khan's biography mentions two lamas who were granted the title Mayidari Qutuytu. The first one, bSod nams ye shes dbang po (1556–1592), received this title at the meeting between Altan Khan and bSod nams rgya mtsho in 1578.[86] He was recognized as the reincarnation of *paṇ chen* bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554), the fifteenth abbot of dGa' ldan, and the author of an important work about the Gelukpas; the Third Dalai Lama received his name from this renowned Gelukpa lama.[87] The second lama who bore the title of Mayidari Qutuytu (1592–1635) according to Altan Khan's biography was sent to Kökeqota in 1604, at only twelve years old, to "compensate" for the departure of the Fourth Dalai Lama (1589–1616, found in Altan Khan's family)[88] to Tibet in 1602. His life is not documented in Tibetan sources, prob-

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82 Title given by the Ming court to Altan Khan, and later to his heirs.

83 For the biographies of Altan Khan's relatives and descendants see Serruys 1958a, 1958b and 1975; Elverskog 2003. The successive marriages of the two princesses are summarized in a diagram drawn by Françoise Aubin (in Serruys 1987). Serruys (1975) asserts that Jönggen was Altan Khan's grand-daughter, but according to modern Chinese authors, she was an Oyirad, offered in marriage to Altan Khan during his conquests (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 19–20).

84 Haenisch 1955: 523–524, VIII, fol. 1r–1v.

85 Email, May 2, 2013.

86 *ETS* fol. 27v, 30r.

87 According to the biography of the Third Dalai Lama, written by the Fifth in 1646 (fol. 26v2–3)" (Kollmar-Paulenz, email, May 2, 2013).

88 A "portion" of the Fourth Dalai Lama – his placenta – was kept in the 22-m high white *stūpa* (destroyed during the Cultural Revolution) of the Stūpa Temple (Suburya Juu), a branch temple of Mayidari Juu about 20 km to the south (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 57).

ably because he lived in Mongolia. Since he was born in the year bSod nams ye shes dbang po died, he may have been the reincarnation of the latter according to Kollmar-Paulenz. His school affiliation will be discussed below. He was enthroned on the Third Dalai Lama's throne at Yeke Juu[89] and was given the name dGe 'dun dpal bzang rgya mtsho.[90] The Mayidari Qutuytu then became the residing reincarnation of the monastery, which from that time became known as Mayidari(-yin) Juu. Whether the name Mayidari Juu comes from the statue or the reincarnated lama is unclear.

2.7 Why a Maitreya statue and what happened to it?

According to the *Erdeni-yin tobci*, Macay Qatun had the statue of Maitreya built with all kinds of precious stones.[91] Later sources speak of a statue made of 80 *jin* of silver (similarly, Yeke Juu's Jo bo Śākyamuni would be in silver). Did Macay Qatun build the Maitreya statue in honour of the Qutuytu? The cult of Maitreya and its festival were said to have been introduced in (Qalqa) Mongolia by the First Jebcündamba Qutuytu Zanabazar (1635–1723),[92] but here we have the first mention of a Mongol monastery dedicated to Maitreya. The Mayidari Juu probably needed a new identity to compete with Yeke Juu and its silver Jo bo Śākyamuni. While Yeke Juu and Baya Juu of Kökeqota were viewed as counterparts of the Jo khang and Ra mo che temples of Lhasa, Mayidari Juu perhaps was to become a new dGa' ldan Monastery in Mongolia.

We have no picture documenting the silver Maitreya statue which was gilded, inlaid with precious stones and painted. Some scholars think that it was initially housed in the Ten Thousand-Buddha Hall, before being moved to the Main Buddha Hall – "according to local tradition", the Mayidari Qutuytu preached in the Thousand-Buddha Hall.[93] But more probably, the statue was enshrined in the Back Shrine of the Main Buddha Hall.[94] Serruys proposed that the monastery may have been completed shortly before 1606: the image of Maitreya may have been

89 *ETS*, fol. 51v–52r.

90 In 1614, Bošoytu Jinong invited him to Ordos to consecrate the Jo bo statue of the monastery he founded (also known as Yeke Juu). Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 35) confuses the two Bošoytu: the fourth *shunyiwang* and the *jinong* of Ordos. Bošoytu Jinong of Ordos gave the Mayidari Qutuytu the title *yeke asarayci nom-un qayan*.

91 *Erdeni-yin tobci*, Haenisch 1955: 524, VIII, fol. 1v.

92 On the developments of the cult of Maitreya in Mongolia see Tsultem, forthcoming.

93 Li Yiyou 1981: 146, repeated by Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 157, and Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 28–29.

94 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 33.

installed to mark the official consecration of the monastery to celebrate the final completion of the whole enterprise (an argument for dating the Main Buddha Hall to the early 1600s).[95] The statue was there in 1928 when, according to oral accounts, troops of the Fengtian Army pillaged the monastery. Hearing that the statue contained gold, the soldiers pierced a hole in its back but only found *sūtra*s and small bronze Buddha statues.[96] During the Cultural Revolution, the statue was melted to be sold and the above-mentioned casket containing relics was discovered in its pedestal. It has been replaced in 1989 by a modern wooden statue of Maitreya.[97]

2.8 Who was buried in the sandalwood *stūpa*?

The Empress Temple (Taihoumiao) enshrined a funerary *stūpa* with a square Sumeru pedestal said to be made of sandalwood (1 × 1 m).[98] When the *stūpa* was opened during the Cultural Revolution, three wooden caskets of the same size, with no lid, were found inside its square pedestal, arranged on three levels. According to old people's memories, they contained (from the top to the bottom casket):

1. a red and yellow woman's hat decorated with yellow pearls; ten false braids; two combs of oxen horn and two of peachwood with yellow cloth above; jewelry, hair ornaments, a triangular casket in silver and copper containing necklace and earrings[99] or medicine;[100] a bowl for the five cereals, and food offerings;
2. two or three embroidered garments decorated with pearls; two Mongol knives, as well as ashes and fragments of bones wrapped in yellow silk;
3. seven pairs of shoes of several sizes, from children to adult.[101]

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95 Serruys 1958b: 109.

96 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 45–46.

97 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 156; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 52.

98 Mongol icons, *stūpa*s and various objects "made of sandalwood" were actually made of local precious wood.

99 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 163–166.

100 Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 46) say it still smelled medicines when open. A slightly different list is given in Wang Leiyi/Yao Guixuan 2003: 77.

101 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 163–166; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 46; Yao Xu/Li Xiangjun 2012: 86. Jin Shen (1984a: 20), and Yao Guixuan (1988: 51) mention male and women braids, and two small boxes containing cremation ashes.

The inner relics of the *stūpa* therefore "represented" a woman from hairdress to feet. It was destroyed in 1966 and has been rebuilt (Fig. 2). Some of the relics were sent to the Beijing History Museum;[102] others had disappeared before an inventory was made in the 1980s. The remaining relics are now exhibited in the Empress Temple (seven braids, the four combs, the triangular box, the necklace and earrings, the ashes and the two knives).[103]

The Empress Temple also exhibited eight large hanging scrolls depicting Jönggen Qatun as an old woman sitting on a throne, and receiving the homage of courtiers or surrounded by scenes of travels or entertainments.[104] According to Miao Runhua and Du Hua, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama visited Mayidari Juu in 1908 and asked the Buryat Lama Dorji (Agvan Dorjiev?) to purchase the paintings,[105] but according to other sources, they were stolen and sold to a "foreign monk"[106]

Fig. 2: Funerary *stūpa* (rebuilt) in the Empress Temple, and exhibit of some of the objects it contained: necklaces and hair ornaments. Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, II: 10, ill. 4–4.

102 Su Bai 1994, 55.
103 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 165–166; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 46.
104 Each was 1 *zhang* long, 2 *chi* large, i.e., 3.2 × 0.64 m.
105 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 163.
106 Rong Xiang, [1957] 1979: 227.

or a Russian trader in the Republican period.[107] In the early twentieth century, the Empress Temple was understood to be Jönggen Qatun's ancestor shrine; it was opened only five days a year before and after the New Year, and on the third day of the New Year a commemoration ritual for Jönggen Qatun and members of Altan Khan's family was performed, with a circumambulation of the *stūpa*.[108]

Who was buried in the *stūpa*? Since it enshrined female relics, it could be one of the two princesses. "Taihou" (Empress) was a Chinese title commonly given to Mongol princesses.[109] Most Chinese scholars think that it was Jönggen Qatun's (d. 1612), because of the scroll paintings depicting her, and of oral accounts of sacrifices to Jönggen Qatun in the Empress Temple.[110] Wang Leiyi and Yao Guixuan add that in 1612, Sonam (or Sodnam, 1588–1627, son of Macay and Budasiri) could have built a temple in the monastery of Altan Khan's family to enshrine the funerary *stūpa* of his grand-mother Jönggen Qatun. The political conditions (and particularly Ligdan Khan's [1592–1634] "migration") were not favourable to build a new temple in Mayidari Juu after Macay Qatun's death in 1625.[111]

Contrarily, Mostaert, followed by Serruys, because of the tradition linking Mayidari Juu to Macay, has proposed it was the funerary *stūpa* of Macay Qatun.[112] Zhang Haibin, quoting Yu Yongfa 于永發, wonders why Sonam – who was furious because he did not inherit Cürüke's fief as Jönggen had married Bošoytu – would have erected the funerary *stūpa* of Jönggen Qatun in the palace temple where he resided.[113] Sonam may rather be responsible for building the funerary temple of his beloved mother Macay in Mayidari Juu. Then again, why would Macay Qatun be buried separately from her first husband Dayicing Ejei?[114]

To me, it would also seem more logical that Jönggen Qatun would be buried in or near Kökeqota and Macay Qatun in or near Mayidari Juu where she resided. Supposing that Macay's *stūpa* was buried in the Empress Temple, we can imagine that she was forgotten later on and her *stūpa* was mistaken for Jönggen's. Then, the temple was dedicated to Jönggen, and paintings of her were hung on

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107 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 167. They were described by Fu Zengxiang 傅增湘, *Zang yuan youji* 藏園遊記, 1940.

108 The *stūpa* was initially in the middle of the room to allow circumambulation. The new one was placed against the wall (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009 I: 55).

109 Mostaert 1956, I, "Introduction": 12–13, n. 33.

110 For example Su Bai 1994: 55.

111 Wang Leiyi/Yao Guixuan 2003: 77.

112 Mostaert 1956, I, "Introduction": 12, n. 33; Serruys 1975: 238. This is also the opinion of Li Yiyou 1981: 148; see the discussion in Zhang Haibin 2010: 4.

113 In addition, Sonam and Bošoytu quarrelled for the possession of Yeke Juu and its treasures (see Serruys 1975: 219).

114 Zhang Haibin 2010: 4.

the walls. Perhaps "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" was painted at the same time, focusing on Jönggen Qatun as the main ancestor.

It must be noted that in Tibetan Buddhism, only monks are cremated and buried in *stūpa*s. The cremation and burial in *stūpa* of Altan Khan and *a fortiori* of a woman is problematic.[115] They must have been considered as exceptionally holy figures – both princesses were faithful Buddhist devotees and patronised the translation of the *Kanjur* into Mongolian from 1602 to 1607; they were believed to be emanations of Tārā.[116] In addition, Jönggen Qatun is depicted as a Buddha on "The Altan Khan Family Portrait".[117]

2.9 Mayidari Juu in the Manchu period

After the death of Macay Qatun in 1625, the commemorative function of the monastery became prominent: Mayidari Juu became the family shrine of Altan Khan's family. Mayidari Juu was damaged and probably partially burnt by Ligdan Khan who, pursued by the Manchu ruler Hungtaiji, briefly occupied the monastery in 1632, or by the troops of Hungtaiji. Its prosperity brutally declined after the Mayidari Qutuytu left the monastery in 1627 to settle in Siregetü Lama Küriye,[118] and even more after the submission of Altan Khan's descendants to the Manchus in 1634, and their elimination in the 1640s. Yet the Mayidari Qutuytu was still considered the spiritual leader of the monastery. The new Maitreya Monastery he founded in Küriye Banner, known as Mayidari Gegen Süme, was viewed as a branch monastery of Mayidari Juu.[119] His eighth reincarnation (1880–1953) resided in the Residence of the Qutuytu (Foyefu) when he visited Mayidari Juu.[120]

Emperor Qianlong (1736–1796) granted Mayidari Juu a new title, Shoulingsi 壽靈寺/Mo. Öljei Jibqulangtu Süme, probably in 1787 which was written in four languages on a name plaque above the entrance.[121] New shrines were built within

115 The Mongols actually used to build small edifices above laypersons' tombs which looked like *stūpa*s but were not (for instance in the cemetery west of Mayidari Juu). This may also be the case of the square-based "*stūpa*s" of Abadai Khan and Γombodorji in front of the Central Temple of Erdeni Juu which are different from Tibetan-style bottle-shaped *stūpa*s.

116 According to colophons of translations (Serruys 1975: 236, 238); besides, Jönggen had been recognized as an incarnation of Tārā by the Dalai Lama in 1578 (*ETS*, fol. 30r, Elverskog 2003: 161).

117 Charleux 1999.

118 On this monastery see Charleux 2006: CD-ROM [98], [100].

119 Title: Nasun Urdudqayci Süme. On this monastery see Charleux 2006: CD-ROM [102].

120 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 35.

121 Discussion in Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 37.

the compound in the Qing period (Table 2), and murals were repainted. Yet, the poor quality of the timber and paintings of the residence of the Qutuytu shows that the monastery had fallen on hard times.[122]

The late Qing and Republican history of the monastery is known to us thanks to archives. In 1985, in a farmer's house 1612 pages of archival material dating from 1767 to 1950 were found – contracts for arable land rented by the monastery to Chinese tenants, for mills, water use, land mortgage, but also archives on rituals, temples' restorations, and land offered by Tümed nobles to Mayidari Juu. These contracts inform us of different economic activities of Mayidari Juu, and more particularly, of rituals.[123]

During the Qing period, Mayidari Juu was considered a minor monastery of the Kökeqota region. It was a "ritual monastery" that performed rituals for the benefit of the lay community, as opposed to academic monasteries that trained monks in colleges.[124] The monks resided outside the monastery. It had no reincarnation in residence, and was ruled by a *siregetü* lama.[125] The 300 families of *šabinar* (laypersons working for the monastery) lived at a distance of 6 km from the monastery. According to an old monk, no cleric had the right to reside inside a perimeter of 20 km, and every morning they had to walk all the way to the monastery and back home in the evening.[126] However, Wang Leiyi et al. show that monks lived in or just outside the monastery at certain periods, and that *šabinar* as well as Han Chinese lived in nearby villages and cultivated fields.[127] Monks started to cultivate fields during the Kangxi period.

During the Qing period, herders progressively left the region to nomadize north of the Daqing Mountains, and since the Yongzheng period (1722–1735) the monastery progressively rented its arable lands to Chinese farmers. Although its prosperity declined in the nineteenth century, its festivals were still extremely lively thanks to the landed properties, allocated to specific rituals.[128] Like other Mongol monasteries, it organized monthly rituals (from the 8th to the 15th day of each month) and major festivals to commemorate the birthday of Śākyamuni, the day when he reached enlightenment, the death day of Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa), the New Year, etc.

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122 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 62.

123 These archives are presented in Miao Runhua et al. 2008; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 92–100. Other archives include the *Lingzhaosi shijian dang'an* 靈照寺始建檔案, dated 1847.

124 According to Nagao Gajin's classification: Charleux 2006: 113–115.

125 In 1819, the *1819 Huhehaote 15 zuomiao renkou puchabiao 1819* 呼和浩特15座廟人口普查表 counted 42 monks and 4 laymen (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 37).

126 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 115; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 89.

127 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 89.

128 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 39, 98.

Its main festival, the "Blessing Ritual" (Ch. *guandingjie* 灌頂節) of the fifth month of the Lunar calendar, commemorated the meeting between Altan Khan and bSod nams rgya mtsho at Cabciyal in 1578. According to old Mongols' memories, in the early twentieth century, this ritual lasted from the 13th to the 17th day. It included a procession of Maitreya, and involved the participation of six *nayicung* lamas[129] who performed an exorcist march (Fig. 3). It started with a ritual to Guandi;[130] the apex was on the 15th day, with the *nayicung* lamas' purification of the ritual area, a *cam* ritual dance, recitation of *sūtra*s, circumambulation of the monastery following the Maitreya cart which carried a small bronze statue of Maitreya, and offerings to the deities (Mo. *baling*, Tib. *gtor ma*). The circumambulation started with two *nayicung* lamas dressed in black robes and wearing a mask, walking at a rhythmical pace imitating a military march; they opened the way for the procession of the Maitreya cart with black cloth whips while the four others followed at the end of the procession. The procession started at the Main Assembly Hall, went out of the main gate and turned around the walled compound, stopping at each angle to read *sūtra*s.[131] According to Rong Xiang,

Fig. 3: Two details of a painting depicting the Mayidari Juu and the Maitreya procession. Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 128–129, 131.

129 *Nayicung* (Tib. gNas chung) lamas, also called *coyijin*, are oracle lamas possessed by fierce deities. They were theoretically forbidden in Qing period Mongolia. The *nayicung* lamas of Mayidari Juu came from the outside, they were said to be as strong as oxen, born in the ox year, and were called "divine officials" (*shenguan* 神官). They succeeded in this role from father to son. They were possessed by fierce protective deities (*sakiyulsun* – among them probably Pe har who is depicted on mural paintings). Their helmets, iron armours (weighing up to 20 kg), knives, and black whips were kept in the Nayicung Temple of Mayidari Juu (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 40. These objects have disappeared during the Cultural Revolution).

130 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009 I: 40.

131 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 127–130.

the Maitreya cart climbed the ramp at the south side of the gate and made the circumambulation on top of the walls.[132] In the early twentieth century, because of the degradation of the walls, there was not enough room for the cart; therefore, the procession was organized around the walls. It took about an hour to circumambulate the monastery, stopping at each corner to recite *sūtra*s. The cart was pulled by about twenty lamas by means of a yellow cloth called *yubu* 雨布 ("rain cloth") decorated with the Chinese gods of thunder, wind, and rain (references to agrarian fertility expected from the ritual, Fig. 3). Devotees came from the monastery's surroundings, but also from Ordos and Ulayancab,[133] and local Han Chinese attended the festival.[134] Pilgrims crawled under the cart to be blessed by the icon. On the same day, they especially came to drink the water of the 8-m deep well within Mayidari Juu.

On the seventh month a ritual to the "holy Buddhas and divine immortals" (*fosheng shenxianhui* 佛聖神仙會) was performed: Buddha, Laozi, and Guandi.[135] Such syncretic rituals are poorly documented for other Inner Mongol monasteries. Local Han Chinese who were devotees of Mayidari Juu seem to have identified Tibetan deities with Chinese gods: the statue of the Octagonal Temple[136] and the one of the White Stūpa of Baofengshan were both identified as being Laozi. In addition, Chinese deities were introduced, probably in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, in the western temple in front of the Liulidian and on the screen-wall.[137] Rites were also performed in the monastery to thank the spring

132 Rong Xiang 1979 [1957]: 226, oral memories of old Mongols.

133 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 117.

134 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 39.

135 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 39.

136 The Octagonal Temple was known in the late Qing as Laozi Temple, and housed a statue described as a man with a beard, wearing an eight-cornered hat and holding a dish with a silver rabbit or hare. The statue was stolen in 1928 by soldiers. Because of the "rabbit" and the importance of wealth deities in Mayidari Juu, it could be a statue of Vaiśravaṇa holding a mongoose (Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 119; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 41). Zhang Haibin, on the other hand, proposes that the pavilion housed a statue of Padmasambhava whose eight manifestations are depicted on its murals (2010: 29–30). Now, it enshrines a new statue of thousand-armed Mahāvajrabhairava embracing his consort.

137 This temple, now dedicated to the Eighteen *arhat*s, enshrined statues of the Buddhas of the Three Eras and Daoist deities: the Jade emperor (Yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝), the Three Emperors (Sanhuang 三皇), Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water (Sanguan 三官), immortals and 365 statues, including Wuji tianzun 無極天尊. The screen-wall in front of the Supreme Harmony Gate had niches with small statues of Guandi (to the south) and Caishen (to the north) (Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 119; 120; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 41, 57). Paintings on the doors of the Lokapāla Hall depicted Xuanzang's peregrination to the west.

that irrigates the fields.[138] Devotees went to the Ten Thousand-Buddha Hall to pray for protection and happiness, and to ask for a husband, a spouse, or a child.

In addition to the commemoration ritual for Jönggen Qatun and members of Altan Khan's family (on the third day of the New Year), a ritual commemorated the Mongols who had died on the battlefield during Chinggis Khan's wars (on the 15th day of the first month).[139] Thus, in the Qing period, Mayidari Juu not only kept its function as commemorative temple for Altan Khan's family, but also became a "ritualistic" monastery patroned by local Mongols and Han Chinese.

Theoretically, the descendants of Altan Khan were the owners of the monastery, but actually they mostly acted as donors.[140] During the Qianlong period, Lamajab, a descendant of Dayicing Ejei Tayiji, resided in Mayidari Juu. In 1756, Qianlong granted Lamajab the title *fuguogong* 輔國公 ("Duke Who Assists the Nation") and a first rank of *tayiji* to thank him for his contribution to imperial campaigns, but he later fell in disgrace and lost his function of ruler (*jasay*) and the four *sumu*s he ruled, though he could keep his rank. When in Mayidari Juu, he resided in the Duke's residence, north of the Liulidian.[141] He sponsored the construction of new temples. Five of his descendants inherited his title; the last one, who was granted the title *zhenguogong* 鎮國公 ("Duke Who Guards the Nation") by President Yuan Shikai in 1914, died in 1945.[142] Most of them were probably buried in the family cemetery of the Dukes. The cemetery has about twenty or thirty tombs, the oldest ones look like red *stūpa*s, and are supposed to contain cremated ashes.[143] A stele dated Guangxu 17 (1891) identifies the tomb of the fifth duke "Gong-ge-ba-le" 貢格巴勒; other steles were re-used to build nearby houses and a bridge.

3 Architectural questions

Wang Leiyi et al. give a precise description of the buildings which is repeated almost word for word by Zhang Haibin[144] who adds cross-sections, drawings, and layouts of the main extant buildings (Table 2).

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138 Other early twentieth century popular rituals are described in Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 89.

139 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 39, quoting Alateng Aoqier 1987.

140 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 44.

141 The Gongyefu, also called Wangyefu (King's residence) was a *siheyuan* 四合院 (North Chinese-style compound formed of four buildings around a courtyard).

142 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 42.

143 Described by Rong Xiang 1979 [1957]: 227; completed by Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 43; Yao Xu/Li Xiangjun 2012: 87.

144 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 48–57; Zhang Haibin 2010: 5–25.

Table 2: Date of the buildings

Building	Chinese name	Date of construction/ restoration	Functions	Main deity	Present state
Screen wall	Dazhaobi 大照壁	1849			Destroyed
Fortified wall with corner pavilion		Ming	Defensive		Preserved
Inside the wall					
Supreme Harmony Gate	Taihemen 泰和門	1606	Entrance gate	–	Pavilion rebuilt in 1984–1985
Lokapāla Hall	Tianwangdian 天王殿	Built or restored in 1835	Cult	4 *lokapālas*	Destroyed
Main Buddha Hall	Daxiongbaodian 大雄寶殿				Preserved
– Porch		Qing	Monks' assemblies		
– Assembly Hall	– Jingtang 經堂	Qing			
– Back Shrine	– Fodian, Houdian 佛殿	1570s–1600s	Cult	Maitreya	
White Horse Deity Temple/God of Wealth Temple	Baima Tianshenmiao 白馬天神廟/ Caishenmiao 財神廟	1808	Cult + standard of Altan Khan	Tshangs pa dkar po (Brahmā)	Destroyed
East temple: Avalokiteśvara Hall	Donglangmiao 東廊廟: Guanyindian 觀音殿	Qing	Cult	Avalokiteśvara	Preserved
West temple: Eighteen *Arhats* Temple	Xilangmiao 西廊廟: Luohantang 羅漢堂	Qing	Cult	Chinese deities, then 18 *arhats*	Preserved
Eastern *stūpa*			Cult	–	Destroyed
Western *stūpa*			Cult	–	Rebuilt/ restored in 1985
Glazed (Tile) Hall, Three Buddha Pavilion	Liulidian 琉璃殿/ Sanfoge 三佛閣	<1606	Cult	Buddhas of the Three Eras	Preserved

Table 2 (cont.)

Building	Chinese name	Date of construction/ restoration	Functions	Main deity	Present state
Duke/King's residence	Gongyefu 公爺府 (Wangyefu 王爺府)	Qing	Residence	–	Destroyed
Empress Temple/ Miraculous Stūpa Hall	Taihoumiao 太后廟/Lingtadian 靈塔殿	>1616 or 1625	Funerary temple	Jönggen Qatun	Preserved
Nayicung Süme (<gNas chung) (Pehar Temple)	Naiqiongmiao 乃瓊廟	Ming? Rebuilt in the Qing period?	Residence of the Mayidari Qutuytu, then Pe har Temple	Pe har	Preserved
Residence of the Qutuytu	Foyefu 佛爺府	Qing	Residence	–	Preserved
Western Ten Thousand Buddha Hall	Xi Wanfodian 西萬佛殿	1572?	Cult	10,000 Buddhas?	Preserved
Octagonal Temple/Laozi Temple	Bajiaomiao 八角廟/Laojunmiao 老君廟	Ming?	Cult	Vaiśravaṇa or Padmasambhava	Preserved
Dalai Temple	Dalaimiao 達賴廟	<1585? 1606?	Residence?	–	Preserved
Residence of the *janggi**	Zhanggaizhai 章蓋宅	Qing	Residence	–	Destroyed in 1928
Residence of a *tayiji**	(Laohu) Tayijifu (老虎)太吉府	Qing	Residence	–	Destroyed
Residence of a *tayiji*	Tayijifu 太吉府	Qing	Residence	–	Destroyed
Residence of Yunluoju**	Yunluojuzhai 雲騾駒宅	Qing	Residence	–	Destroyed
Residence of Yunfu***	Yunfuquanzhai 雲富全宅	Qing	Residence for lamas	–	Destroyed
	Dajiwadian 大吉瓦殿****		Administration , treasury, kitchen	–	Preserved

Table 2 (cont.)

Building	Chinese name	Date of construction/ restoration	Functions	Main deity	Present state
Outside the wall					
Eastern Ten Thousand Buddha Hall	Dong Wanfodian 東萬佛殿	Qing	Cult	Thousand Buddhas	Destroyed
Cemetery of Altan Khan's descendants, the Dukes	Gongyejiafen 公爺家坟	Qing?	Cemetery	–	Destroyed
Brick oven			Construction	–	Preserved
Stūpa of Baofengshan	Baofengshan Baita 寶豐山白塔		Cult	*Dharmapāla*	Destroyed, rebuilt
Stūpa Temple (20 km south)	Subogaizhao 蘇波蓋召	Qianlong	Cult	Placenta of the Fourth Dalai Lama	Destroyed

* It is unclear whether the *tayiji* and *janggi* (Ch. *zuoling*) were related to the family of the *fuguogong* (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 44, 57).
** Yunluoju was a lama of Mayidari Juu in the Republican period.
*** On Yun<Yöngsiyebü: Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 89–92.
**** The Dajiwadian was rebuilt after 1959 as lodgings for monks and kitchen, and now serves as the Heritage Management Office of the monastery (Meidaizhao Wenwu Guanlisuo 美岱召文物管理所). The two iron cauldrons of the kitchen, inscribed with the names of Mongol artisans, were put in front of the Liulidian (Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 144; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 57).

3.1 Different architectural styles

Although some authors compared the fortified wall of Mayidari Juu to that of Sa skya Monastery, it uses Chinese techniques: it is in rammed earth covered with roughly-cut stones piled up irregularly in the lower part, and with regular brickwork in the upper part.[145]

145 The walls are 5.30 m high, 5 m large at the base and 2 or 3 m at the top, with crenels and bastions (Jin Shen 1984: 6; Li Yiyou 1981: 145). About protection and restoration of the wall: Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 64–65.

The buildings inside the compound follow three architectural styles: most of them are typical Chinese buildings (*dian* 殿 – one-storied pavilions, *louge* 樓閣 – double or three-storied pavilions, octagonal buildings).[146] Height and roofing reflect architectural hierarchy, from simple *dian*s with *yingshan* 硬山 roofs to three-storied *louge*s with double-eaved *xieshan* 歇山 roofs (Liulidian). The Main Buddha Hall follows the "Sino-Tibetan style" of Kökeqota's main Buddha halls (Fig. 4).[147]

Two other temples were two-storied "Tibetan-style" buildings (built with Chinese techniques and materials): the now destroyed White Horse-Deity/Tshangs pa dkar po (Brahmā) Temple and the Nayicung (Pe har) Temple. According to archival documents, the White Horse-Deity Temple[148] was erected in 1808.

Fig. 4: Main Assembly Hall and Liulidian in the background and on the left, the small Tibetan-style Nayicung Temple

146 When the preserved buildings were restored between 1984 and 1987 and again in the 1990s and 2000s, walls in baked bricks in the lower part and adobe bricks (raw bricks) were replaced by baked brick walls.

147 Su Bai 1994; Charleux 2006: 246–247.

148 It had a rectangular layout with two wings, thick walls, square pillars, and tiled eaves above windows.

As for the Nayicung Temple,[149] Chinese scholars assert without solid references that it was built in 1606 as a residence for the Mayidari Qutuytu. Generally speaking, Tibetan architectural styles were introduced in Mongolia in the 1640s, and Tibetan-style buildings were common in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century, but I do not know any other early seventeenth-century Tibetan-style temple in Mongolia. Either the Nayicung Temple was built or rebuilt in Tibetan style in the Qing period, or it is the earliest Tibetan-style building of Mongolia.

3.2 Why do the buildings have different orientations?

When we look at the layout of the whole compound, it appears that the surrounding wall is not an exact square; walls have broken lines and have different lengths;[150] the corner towers have different surfaces, and the main buildings are on a line that is not parallel or perpendicular to the walls: they follow a south-south-west/north-north-west axis, differing from the orientation of the gate (Fig. 5).[151] Besides, the gate is not in the middle of the south wall but shifted to the west. Three other buildings open to the south, and five others have an intermediary orientation. A drawing published in 1983 shows monks' houses against the west, north, and east walls.[152]

Miao Runhua and Du Hua's plan minimizes or even erases the differences in orientation and the irregular lines of the walls.[153] Although Wang Leiyi et al. give precise measures of the orientation of each building in their text, the plan they publish is that of Jin Shen with only a few additions[154] which is a rough sketch that exaggerates the differences of the orientation. In my opinion, Zhang Haibin's architectural layout is much more reliable (Fig. 5).[155]

These different orientations and the location of the buildings around the central axis may be explained by different stages of construction;[156] the general

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149 This cubic temple has brick walls and round-based pillars, tiled eaves, black trapezoidal window framing, and an attic string decorated with brown rectangles. The second floor has a balcony and the flat roof is decorated with the Dharma wheel and banners.

150 The north wall is about 180 m, the south and east walls each 165 m and the west wall 195 m, i.e. a perimeter of 705 m (surface area: 35,000 m²).

151 Precise orientations are given by Zhang Haibin 2000: 134–135.

152 Cheng Xuguang/Liu Yibin 1983: 35.

153 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 237.

154 Jin Shen 1984a; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, II: fig. 5–1.

155 Zhang Haibin 2010: 6.

156 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 18, 58. Wu Jiayu/Ding Jinglei (2013) look for origins of the layout of Mayidari Juu in 1) the plan of the Ming capital Nanjing (with an "Inner City" and "Outer

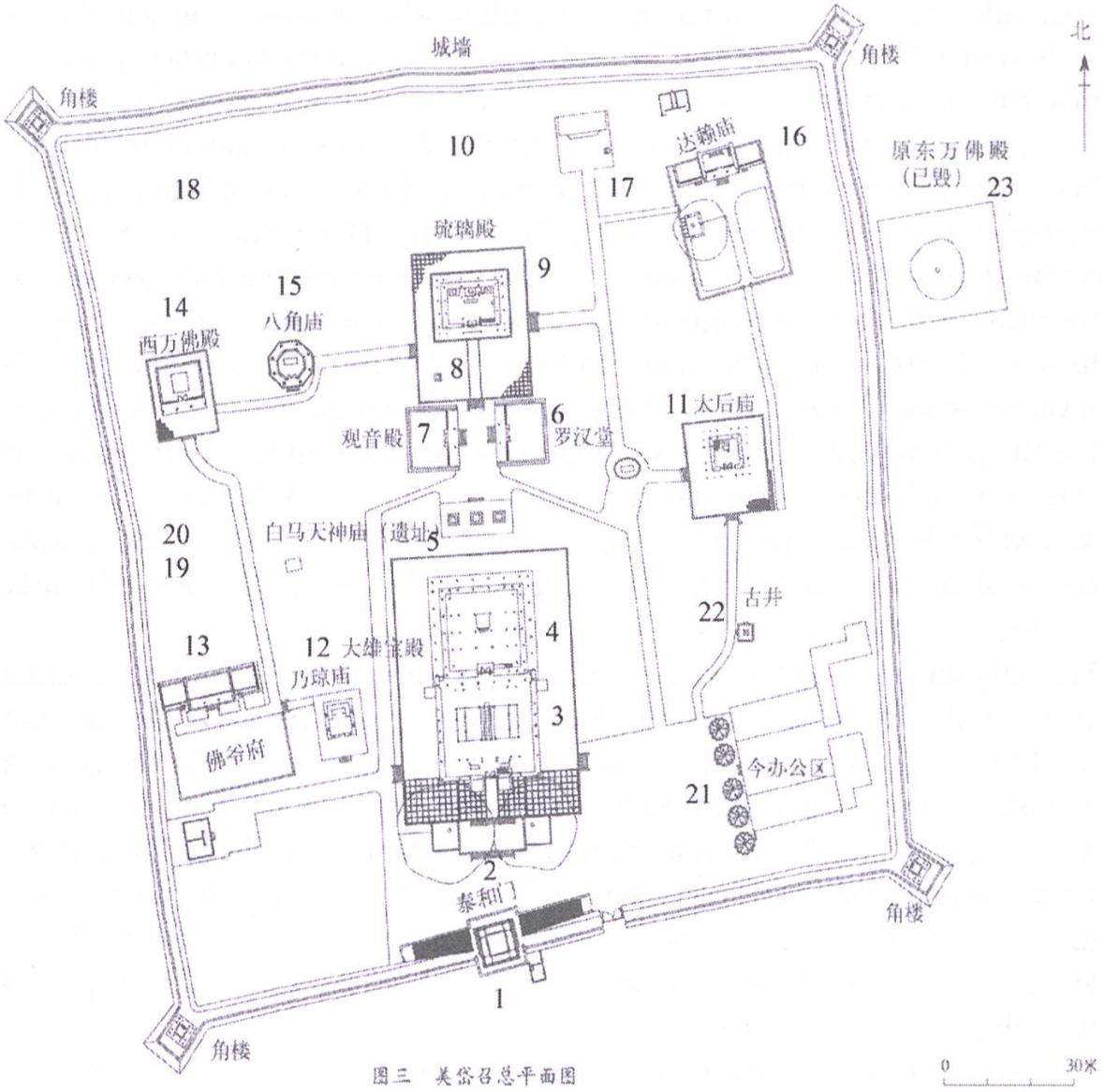

Fig. 5: Plan of the monastery, Zhang Haibin 2010, I: 6. 1. Supreme Harmony Gate, 2. Lokapāla Hall (ruined); Main Buddha Hall: 3. Assembly Hall and its 4. Back Shrine; 5. White Horse Deity Temple (ruined); 6. Avalokiteśvara Hall; 7. Eighteen *Arhat*s Temple; 8. Western *stūpa*; 9. Glazed (Tile) Hall (Three Buddha Pavilion); 10. Duke/King's residence; 11. Empress Temple (Miraculous Stūpa Hall); 12. Nayicung Temple; 13. Residence of the Qutuγtu; 14. Western Ten Thousand Buddha Hall; 15. Octagonal Temple (Laozi Temple); 16. Dalai Temple; 17. Residence of the *janggi*; 18. Residence of a *tayiji*; 19. Residence of Yunluoju; 20. Residence of Yunfu; 21. Dajiwadian; 22. Well; 23. Eastern Ten Thousand Buddha Hall.

City"); 2) in the "seven-hall plan of the Sanghārāma" (classical layout of Chinese monasteries – they propose equivalences between Bell and Drum Towers and Empress Temple and Nayicung Temple); and 3) in the *maṇḍala*-plan of bSam yas Monastery in Central Tibet. They do not consider the fact that the buildings of Mayidari Juu were erected at different periods, and do not even question why the White Horse-Deity Temple is in the centre of the complex.

orientation may have been changed according to geomantical considerations. Considering the general taste of Mongols for symmetry and geometrical patterns, this remains unexplained.

In addition, the White Horse-Deity Temple dedicated to Tshangs pa dkar po (Mo. Cayan Camba), said to be the "protector of horses and sheep against illnesses and ferocious beasts", was built in 1808 by a Mongol prince in the exact centre of the walled compound. Inside, there was a statue of Tshangs pa dkar po, the main protector of the monastery,[157] and a wooden flagpole that "must be the bannerpole displayed in the audience hall. The banner in front of Altan Khan's royal audience hall was the symbol of the political power of the Golden state of the Mongols".[158] Like Chinggis Khan, his descendants kept their own banner or standard (*tuy*): They were believed to embody the life spirit (*sülde*) of a chief warrior, which becomes a protective ancestor spirit. I think the presence of this main protector and of the banner in the exact center of the layout is not a coincidence.

The only buildings of the compound that can be dated with certainty are the Supreme Harmony Gate, the White Horse-Deity Temple, the Lokapāla Hall and the 10-m long screen wall. Their date of construction is known thanks to Qing dynasty archival documents (Table 2). The other buildings are roughly dated to the "Ming" or "Qing" periods according to their framework, the position of columns (Ming buildings have missing and shifted, out of line columns), the tiles, the *dougong*s, and the comparison with the temples of Kökeqota.[159] Four different kinds of Qing period tiles were found which could correspond to different phases of works.[160]

We can distinguish four different phases of construction:

1. First phase, 1550s–1560s: construction of one or several walls and palaces, audience hall (on the site of the Liulidian?);
2. Second phase, 1572–1606: Thousand-Buddha Hall (1572?), Back Shrine of the Main Buddha Hall (between 1570s–1600s), Liulidian (before 1606), Octagonal Temple. They follow a south-south-west/north-north-west axis and have Ming period characteristics.

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157 Tshangs pa dkar po (identified with Brahmā) may have been the personal protector of Altan Khan who had received from the Third Dalai Lama the title "Perfect Brahmā (Esrua) Great Mighty Cakravartin Khan" (*ETS*, fol. 34r, Elverskog 2003: 170).

158 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 121, 145. The standard was in the middle of the north wall.

159 Ming dynasty characteristics of Chinese architecture are detailed in Su Bai 1994.

160 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 37; II: 30–31, fig. 5–45 and 5–46.

3. Third phase, 1606-late Ming: Supreme Harmony Gate (1606),[161] Nayicung Temple (1606?), Empress Temple (after 1612 or 1625), and Dalai Temple. The great wall may have been rebuilt in 1606, which would explain its orientation – this is the opinion of Su Bai who believes the erection of the gate marks the end of the construction of the wall[162] (but most authors consider the wall to be older).[163]
4. Fourth phase, Qing dynasty: (re)construction of the Assembly Hall of the Main Buddha Hall (see below), White Horse-Deity Temple (1808), Lokapāla Hall (1835), screen wall (1849), Duke's residence, residence of the Qutuytu, five other residences and Eastern Ten Thousand-Buddha Hall. The orientation of these buildings is in accordance with the nearby older buildings.[164]

The highest building of the compound is the Liulidian (Glazed [Tile] Hall). Rong Xiang, followed by most authors,[165] has been the first to identify the Liulidian with the Nine-Pillar Hall or Nine-Bay Hall erected in 1565–1567, because the Liulidian is three-bay large and deep, which makes a total of nine bays – but "nine-bay hall" usually designates halls with nine bays in façade, not three by three bays.[166] Local people say that Altan Khan resided in the Kings/Duke's residence (Wangyefu or Gongyefu, behind the Liulidian), and gave audiences in the Liulidian.[167] In 1572, when Altan Khan built Kökeqota, the Liulidian would have been turned into a temple. These are mere hypotheses; the Liulidian was built

161 Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 60) believe it was built above the ruins of the former gate. But how could the work be done in one month as it is said in the 1606 inscription? The gate is a massive brickwork opened by a semicircular arch, topped by a two-storied pavilion (destroyed in 1969 to re-use the timber, and rebuilt in 1985 according to an old picture). Above the arch is a reproduction of the 1606 stone inscription.

162 Su Bai 1994: 55.

163 Some Chinese scholars believe that Altan erected a first rammed-earth wall at Mayidari Juu maybe as early as 1539, which was enlarged in 1547 (Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 33), or 1551, 1557 (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 60, 65), periodically collapsed and was repaired, heightened and enlarged, and eventually built with stones and bricks.

164 This chronology more or less fits with Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 61)'s dating.

165 Rong Xiang 1979 [1957]: 226; Li Yiyou 1981: 147; Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 26; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 17, 53–54; Zhang Haibin 2010: 3.

166 Charleux 2006: 181.

167 According to the sixteenth-century *Yunzhong chu jianglu* (*juan* 15), Altan Khan's residential quarters were located behind of his audience hall. Miao Runhua and Du Hua believe Altan Khan slept on the second floor of the Liulidian and the third floor contained archives. Old people also call this temple Taihou de Shuzhuanglou 太后的梳妆楼 (Toiletry Pavilion for the Empress).

in the Ming period,[168] but nothing indicates that it was built by Altan Khan as an audience hall. Its framework is decorated with Buddhist themes: it may have originally been a temple, erected before or at the same time as the Back Shrine. Similarly, buildings called Nine-Bay Hall stand at the back of the main Buddha Halls of Kökeqota; they serve as a temple, a residence for the abbot with reception rooms, or a library. The Liulidian may have been a model for the Central Temple of Erdeni Juu, founded in 1585–1586 by Abadai Khan in Qalqa Mongolia.[169]

The late Qing buildings do not easily fit inside the walled compound: the Lokapāla Temple stood only 3 m behind the gate, and the White Horse-Deity Temple was very close to the Back Shrine. The Residence of the Qutuytu may have been built because a new residence for visiting reincarnations was needed when the *labrang* of the Mayidari Qutuytu was turned into a temple to Nayicung/Pe har (after the departure of the Qutuytu).[170]

Some new hypotheses on the functions of the different buildings are found in recent publications: because of its appellation, the Dalai Temple is said to have been the residence of the Third Dalai Lama in 1586; it may have later served as the residence of the abbot.[171] Miao Runhua and Du Hua write without any refer-

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168 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009 I: 70. They note that the beams of the third floor are older than the other beams of the building, and may come from the ancient peristyle of the Ten Thousand-Buddha Hall: the third floor would have been restored in the Qing period (2009 I: 62–63). As for the roof, the glazed tiles would be posterior to Altan Khan's death and may date from the Qing period. Glazed tiles were cooked in the brick oven found near the monastery (2009 I: 53).

169 Biographies of Zanabazar assert that there "was no model to be found for comparison in the country of the Mongols when this Erdeni Juu was being constructed, and so he completed it on the plan taken from the temple [Juu] at Köke Qota" (*Köke qota-yin juu-aca mayay abcu*) (see the biography written in 1859, translated by Bawden 1961: 36–37). As shown by the inscription on a beam of the Central Temple (the lateral temples and the wall were built later), Abadai Khan employed Chinese artisans from Kökeqota. Yet he obviously did not copy the architecture of Yeke Juu. Bao Muping (2011: 129–146), who studied the temples of Kökeqota, found that it is the architecture of Mayidari Juu's Liulidian that most closely resembles to Erdeni Juu's Central Temple (a *louge* covered with glazed tiles). However, *Köke qota-yin juu-aca mayay abcu* can also be understood as "he took (as a model) the appearance of the Juu of Kökeqota," Juu here designating not a temple but a Jo bo statue, probably the main icon of Yeke Juu, modeled on the Jo bo Śākyamuni of the Lhasa's Jo khang. Erdeni Juu should not be translated as "Precious Temple" but as "Jo bo rin po che."

170 Jin Shen 1984a: 19. Li Yiyou (1981: 146) believes it was originally a Pe har Temple. When it was restored in the 1980s, a yellow paper with the Eight Trigrams was discovered pasted on a beam, a common Chinese carpenters' practice (Wang Leiyi/Yao Guixuan 2003: 78; Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 159–161). It housed a statue of White Pe har on his lion, and now enshrines statues of the Eight *dharmapāla*s on the first floor, and apartments of the Mayidari Qutuytu with a modern statue of him and a bed on the second floor.

171 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 163; Wang Leiyi et al. 2009 I: 56. According to a local tradition it was built by a lama of Mayidari Juu in the Republican period (Wang Leiyi et al. 2009 I: 56).

ence that the Octagonal Temple was a *liangting* 凉亭 (pleasure pavilion); later on, Macay Qatun turned it into a temple to Mañjuśrī, and monks used to meditate in its courtyard. A plaque above the entrance, inscribed "Qingliangting" 清凉亭 (a reference to Wutaishan 五台山, also known as Qingliangshan), was offered by donors in 1871. It would have been built according to a *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī according to the nine level (*jiupin* 九品) *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī's *daochang* 道場 (ritual area, abode).[172] These hypotheses would need references.

3.3 A new hypothesis on the construction of the Main Buddha Hall

The Main Buddha Hall (Mo. *yool coycin*), composed of a porch, an Assembly Hall 經堂 and a Back Shrine 佛殿 surrounded by a colonnade to allow circumambulation, belongs to a well identified architectural style of the Tümed region, as evidenced by the Chinese archeologist Su Bai (Fig. 4, Fig. 6).[173] Two small doors at the north-east and north-west of the Assembly Hall open for the exterior circumambulation of the Back Shrine. Compared to the other temples of Kökeqota,[174] the Back Shrine is much larger in proportions, highlighting the importance of the cult over monks' assemblies.[175] But based on their architectural survey, Wang Leiyi et al.[176] propose that the Back Shrine was originally an individual building, while the Assembly Hall and the porch were added during the Qing period, to make the temple eventually similar to other Tümed *yool coycin*s of the Ming period.[177] The

172 Miao Runhua/Du Hua 2008: 146–147.

173 Su Bai 1994: 57; Charleux 2006: 246–247, 253–254.

174 Main Buddha Hall and Nayicung Temple of Yeke Juu, Main Temple of Üsütü Juu, Western Temple of Siregetü Juu.

175 Assembly Hall: 22.54 × 22.51 m; Back Shrine: 21.93 × 21.88 m. See the description in Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 49–52.

176 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 60–61, repeated by Zhang Haibin 2010: 5–25.

177 Wang Leiyi et al. (2009 I: 60–61, 63–64) noticed that the three treasure vases decorating the middle of the three roofs are not on a line, which would mean that the three parts of the temple were not built at the same time; the dimensions of the bricks of the three buildings are different; small orifices were left in the lower brickwork of the Assembly Hall and the porch and iron rivets and nails reinforce the structure, while the Back Shrine has none of these; the frameworks of the Back Shrine and the Assembly Hall are different (including their decoration); the architecture of the Back Shrine can be compared with the Liulidian; the junction between the Assembly Hall and the Back Shrine is different from that of Yeke Juu's Main Temple and looks as if the Assembly Hall is a later addition; the entrance door of the Back Shrine is typical of that of a large independent building; at last, the paintings of the beams, ceiling and *zaojing* of the Assembly Hall have Qing period characteristics.

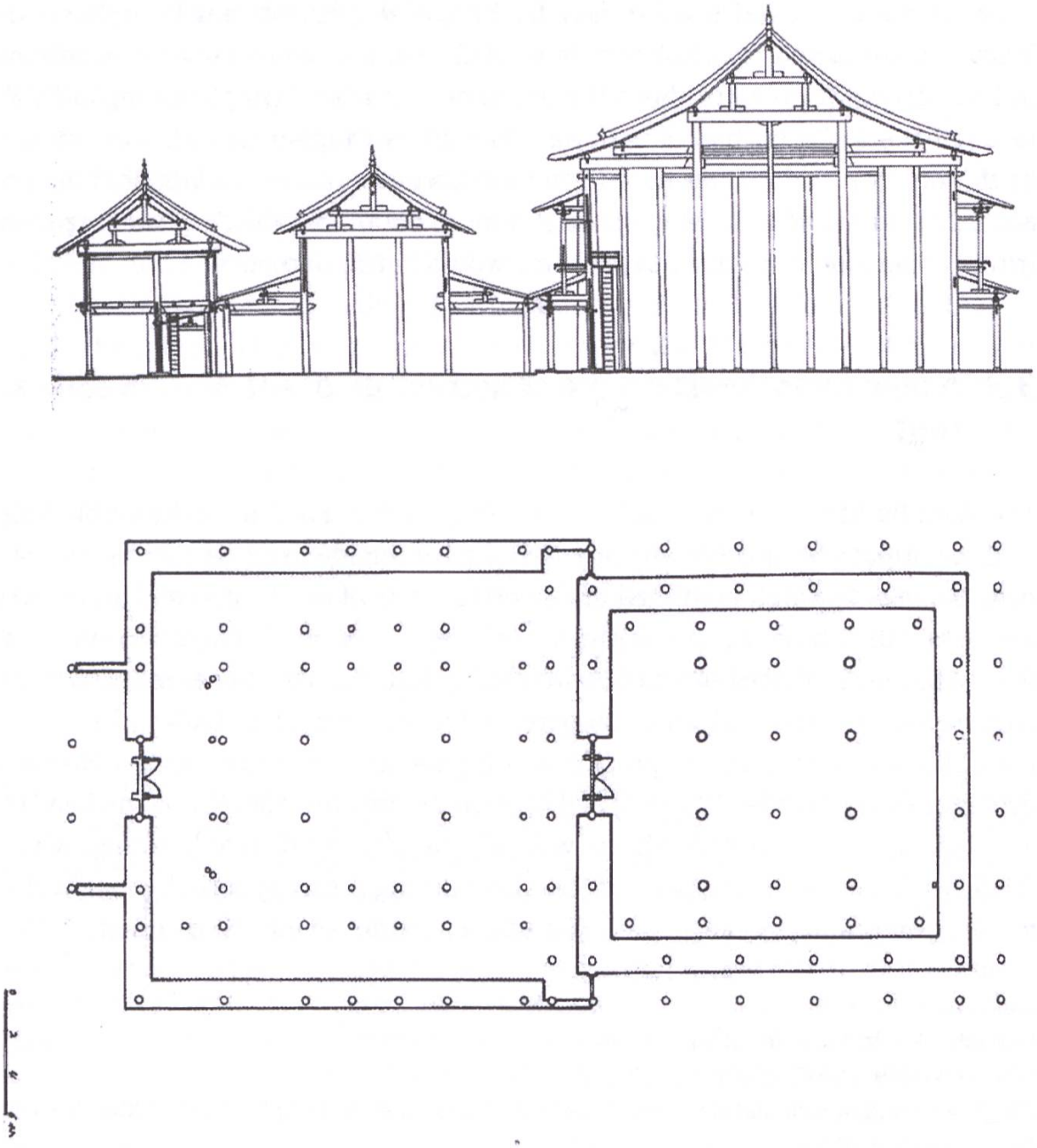

Fig. 6: Cross section and layout of the Main Buddha Hall (Assembly Hall and Back Shrine). Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, II: 15.

(Back) Shrine would have been built in the early Wanli period (1572 – ca. 1580)[178] and finished before 1606 during the great wave of religious construction corresponding to the travels of the Third Dalai Lama in Mongolia and, after his death, the recognition of the Fourth Dalai Lama in Altan Khan's family. Because it has Qing period characteristics (framework, paintings of the beams, and ceilings, es-

178 1575 (construction of "Fuhuacheng") according to Miao Runhua/Du Hua (2008) and Zhang Haibin (2010: 3); 1580s–1606 according to Wang Leiyi et al. (2009, I: 78).

Fig. 7: Depiction of lay people: from left to right, three laymen in Ming costume attending *arhat*s (panels of the Back Shrine); an official in Qing costume (lower right corner, west wall, Assembly Hall). Zhang Haibin 2010: 193, 194, 21.

pecially the depiction of officials in Qing costume; Fig. 7), the Assembly Hall and the porch would have been added in the early Qing. This hypothesis is convincing, but I think it does not exclude that the temple was initially composed, like the *yool coycin*s of Kökeqota, of a porch, an Assembly Hall, and a Back Shrine: at Mayidari Juu, the Assembly Hall and the porch could have been destroyed and rebuilt in the Qing period.

4 The mural paintings

With Zhang Haibin's excellent reproductions, it is the first time Mayidari Juu's paintings are reproduced in their integrality, along with many details and precise identifications (though he failed to identify all the scenes of the Third Dalai Lama's life; Table 3).[179] Wang Leiyi et al.'s previous survey is not focused on iconography but on dating and styles.[180]

179 See Zhang Haibin 2010: 31–33.

180 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 68–84. Their conclusions are repeated in Wang Leiyi/Li Caixia 2012. Because of strong flashes, the colours of the paintings in Wang Leiyi et al.'s book are too vivid; besides, iconographical identifications are often approximate. Zhang Haibin is much more precise in his iconographical identifications. In both books, sketches of the walls localizing the different scenes would have made their presentation clearer. For a synthetic article introducing recent conclusions about these paintings see Yin Fujun 2012.

Table 3: Iconography of the mural paintings (After Zhang Haibin's summary tables (2010: 83–84) and reproductions.)

Location	Topic	Date
Main Buddha Hall, Assembly Hall		
E, W walls	16 *arhat*s following Guanxiu's model	1983
N wall	Parts of the old painting have subsisted: Śākyamuni and disciples, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitāyus, Sino-Tibetan architecture (lCags po ri)	Qing
S wall	Saḍhbuja Mahākāla, Caturbhuja Mahākāla, dPal ldan lha mo, Vaiśravaṇa, Yama, Beg tse	1983
Panels of the skylight, W	– Tsongkhapa and an assembly of monks in a temple with three Chinese roofs, three officials in Qing dynasty costume, Vajrabhairava – Monks worshiping an apparition of Mañjuśrī in a courtyard, Tibetan-style temple and courtyard with teaching monks, Śākyamuni in a cloud followed by a servant holding a banner, yellow-hat lama teaching disciples – Tsongkhapa and seven grey-skin half-naked ascetics (5 sitting on a tiger skin; 1 riding a tiger, 1 riding another ascetic), around a white temple	Qing
Panels, N	– Śākyamuni in a temple with 3 *stūpas* on the roof, Nāgārjuna Buddha, Tibetan-style and Chinese-style temples and monks – Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Sitātapatrā, White and Green Tārā, Marīci on a cart pulled by pigs, Tibetan-style temples and monks praying in front of a spring – Śākyamuni and a seated *bodhisattva* (Maitreya?) in a Chinese hall with sutras, located in a courtyard with a *stūpa*, Tibetan-style temples and monks, two-armed Avalokiteśvara, monks with (a statue? of) Maitreya, Śākyamuni – Bhaiṣajyaguru, Śākyamuni, Amitābha, Mañjuśrī, Amitāyus, monks, Tibetan-style temple with a praying man dressed in white – Tsongkhapa and 2 disciples	Qing
Panels, E	– 2 Tibetan-style temples, teaching monks, Śākyamuni, apparition of a black two-armed *dharmapāla* (Mahākāla?) in a cloud, Maitreya ? – Tibetan-style temple, Vajrapāṇi, dPal ldan lha mo, Siṃhamukha, Beg tse, black wealth deity in a red robe with golden patterns, holding a *kapala* and a *cintāmaṇi*, temples and monks – *Dharmapāla*s: Pañjara Mahākāla, two-armed black deity (Mahākāla?) holding a trident and a sword, Saḍhbuja	Qing

Table 3 (cont.)

Location	Topic	Date
	Mahākāla, Tsongkhapa, four-headed four-*armed* black deity (Mahākāla?) holding a trident, White Mahākāla, Yama and consort, two armed black deity holding a chopper, red Yama, Brahmāṇarūpadhara Mahākāla, Vaiśravaṇa – White Mahākāla, Vaiśravaṇa; two-handed black Mahākāla, Yama	
Ceiling and *zaojing*	– *Maṇḍala*s of Guhyasamāja, Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Saṃvara, Amitāyus, Vajrabhairava, Ācala, Akṣobhya – Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Vajrapāṇi, four-armed Avalokiteśvara, Amitāyus, Hayagrīva, Sitātapatrā, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Green and White Tārā, Mañjuśrī inside circles	Qing, 18th century?
Main Buddha Hall, Back Shrine		
N wall main part (7 m high)	Śākyamuni in *bhūmisparśamudrā* and 2 disciples – surrounded by scenes of Tsongkhapa's life, Buddhas, masters and deities: Vajradhara (above Śākyamuni), Ācala, Amitāyus, Mañjuśrī, White Saṃvara, Atiśa, Mañjuśrī riding his lion, Maitreya, four-armed Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Mi la ras pa . . .	18th century?
Lower part (2 m high)	4 *lokapāla*s, 2 *arhat*s (Hva shang and Dharmatrāta)	
E wall main part (7 m high)	Tsongkhapa and 8 disciples – surrounded by scenes of his life: traveling to different monasteries to receive training from different masters, his visions of Mañjuśrī, 35 Buddhas of confession, Maitreya and other *bodhisattva*s; teachings, meditations, restorations of temples, foundation of dGa' ldan, rituals, invitation by the ambassador from the Ming court . . ., Buddhas, deities and masters: Śākyamuni, Vajrapāṇi, Yama in *yab yum* with his consort, Saḍhbuja Mahākāla, *yi dam*s, praying goddesses, red-hat and yellow-hat masters . . .	18th century?
Lower part (2 m high)	Pañjara, Caturbhuja and Saḍhbuja Mahākāla, Yama and his consort, dPal ldan lha mo, goddess on a deer	
W wall main part (7 m high)	The Third (?) Dalai Lama and two main disciples – surrounded by scenes of his life (not precisely identified): teachings, meditations, apparitions of Buddhas, blessings; Buddhas, deities and masters: Śākyamuni, Vajrapāṇi, Brahmāṇarūpadhara Mahākāla, Saḍhbuja Mahākāla, Green Tārā, four-armed and thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, a *garuḍa* holding a snake; temples and *stupa*s, communities of monks, laymen. It may include stories about previous Dalai Lamas (Zhang Haibin 2010: 89).	18th century?

Table 3 (cont.)

Location	Topic	Date
Lower part (2 m high)	"The Altan Khan Family Portrait"	
S wall upper central part	Siṃhanāda Avalokiteśvara, 2 of the 12 bsTan ma bcu gnyis, 2 of the 8 generals of Vaiśravaṇa, White Lha mo	1572–ca. 1580?
Upper left and right	White Lha mo – 12 bsTan ma bcu gnyis and 5 sisters of longevity Tshe ring mched lnga belonging to her retinue; Padmasambhava, Vajradhara, Siṃhanāda Avalokiteśvara; a *bodhisattva* holds a book and a sword Vaiśravaṇa on his white lion – his retinue of 8 generals, Vajrabhairava and his consort in *yab yum*, Guhyasamāja (?), Saṃvara and his consort in *yab yum*, Vajrapāṇi	18th century?
Lower part (2 m high)	Female deity holding a *kapala* and two flags and riding a bull, He la 'bar ma, *bodhisattva*, and various forms of Vaiśravaṇa holding a rat/mongoose: yellow Kubera, with an elephant head; three-eyed black, ityphallic, with a snake around the neck and holding a *kapala*, female form (Vasudhara)	18th century?
2nd level door (south side)	Prajñāpāramitā, Vajra-Vidarana, Sarasvatī, Green and White Tārā, Sitātapatrā, Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Marīcī	Wanli period (1572–ca. 1580) (laymen with Ming cloths and hats)
Panels, lowest level	84 *mahāsiddha*s, *bodhisattva*s, Śākyamuni and 2 disciples, Buddhas, 16 *arhat*s, Amitāyus, Buddhas, *bodhisattva*s, Vajradhara	
Panels, intermediate level	Yellow-hat and red-hat lamas, sitting and standing Buddhas and *bodhisattva*s (including Maitreya), 16 arhats, Śākyamuni and 2 disciples, a *dharmapāla*, Vajrasattva, *mahāsiddha*s, Nāgārjuna	
Ceiling and *zaojing*	– Amitāyus – *Maṇḍala*s of Kālacakra, Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Padma ḍākinī, Ma gcig lab sgron, Saṃvara, Vairocana, Padmasambhava, Vajrapāṇi, Kṛṣna Krodha ḍākinī, Hevajra, Vajrasattva, four-armed Avalokiteśvara, Vajrabhairava, Vajrayoginī, Śākyamuni, Hayagrīva, Ratnaprabhasabhava, Amitāyus . . . – 8 Buddhas in a Chinese-style temple – Amitāyus in red lotuses – 6 Buddhas of the Past – Consecration formulas in Lañtsa script	
Beams	Dragons, *vajra*s and double *vajra*s and *dhāraṇī*s	

Table 3 (cont.)

Location	Topic	Date
Liulidian 1st floor		
S wall	Pañjara Mahākāla, yellow Vaiśravaṇa, Saḍhbuja Mahākāla, Caturbhuja Mahākāla, black Vaiśravaṇa	Around 1572–1575?
E wall	Atiśa, Third Dalai Lama, Four-armed Vajrapāṇi, Ācala – Tsongkhapa, Saṃvara and his consort and 2 blue deities	
N wall	18 *arhat*s	
W wall	Hayagrīva, Vajrapāṇi, Sa skya paṇḍita, Padmasambhava – Amitāyus, Mi la ras pa, Ma gcig lab sgron, Vajrabhairava	
Ceiling	Lotuses with Amitāyus, smaller lotuses and Lañtsa letters in the petals	
Liulidian 2nd floor		
W wall	White Buddha holding an *amṛita* vase (Amitābha?) surrounded by 4 smaller Buddhas – *yi dam* (Cakrasaṃvara and consort?), Sitātapatrā surrounded by 4 female deities sitting in lotus posture and holding various attributes; a female *bodhisattva* holding a small temple surrounded by a female *bodhisattva* holding a bell and a snare, and 4 dancing deities holding a flower	17th–18th century, covering an earlier painting
N wall	Śākyamuni and his 2 disciples surrounded by standing Maitreya and Mañjuśrī – 28 Buddhas (damaged part)	
E wall	Bhaiṣajyaguru and 2 *bodhisattva*s: Sūryaprabha and Candraprabha – Hayagrīva, Green Tārā, Vaiśravaṇa on his lion, White Lha mo 7 Buddhas of the past, *bodhisattva*s	
Empress Temple		
S wall	4 *lokapāla*s – 5 goddesses of offerings, 8 treasures	Ming
W wall	9 of the 18 *arhat*s, 4 of the 8 *bodhisattva*s – 35 Buddhas of confession, Buddhas, *bodhisattva*s, yellow and red-hat masters	Ming
N wall	Buddhas of the Three Times and their 2 disciples – Padmasambhava, four-armed Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, red and yellow-hat lamas	Ming
E wall	9 of the 18 *arhat*s, 4 of the 8 *bodhisattva*s – 35 Buddhas of confession, Buddhas, *bodhisattva*s, yellow and red-hat masters	Ming
Ceiling	Amitāyus in lotuses	

Table 3 (cont.)

Location	Topic	Date
Octagonal Temple		
SE wall	Tshangs pa dkar po – his 2 emanations, his warrior deity and dog, Padmasambhava, 18 Buddhas, 2 men in fighting posture, 2 monkeys	Ming
E wall	Shākya seng ge, rDo rje gro lod – 18 Buddhas	
NE wall	Padma 'byung gnas, Padma rgyal po – 18 Buddhas	
N wall	Rainbow – dPal ldan lha mo, Ratnaprabhasabhava, four-armed Avalokiteśvara, Vaiśravaṇa, white elephant, bowl with jewels	
NO wall	bLo ldan mchog sred, U-rgyan rdo rje 'chang – 18 Buddhas	
O wall	Seng ge sgra sgrog, Nyi ma 'od zer – 18 Buddhas	
SO wall	Pe har on his elephant – 2 of his emanations, mGar ba nag po, Rahū, Padmasambhava, 17 Buddhas	

Paintings of the Ming period are found on the first floor of the Liulidian; the ceiling, octagonal *zaojing* 藻井 (caisson) and panels between the beams of the Back Shrine; the upper central part of the south wall of the Back Shrine; the Empress Temple, and the Octagonal Temple (Fig. 8, Fig. 9). Wang Leiyi et al. distinguish different phases in the Ming period,[181] while Zhang Haibin is more prudent and distinguishes different styles without dating, stressing differences of colouring[182] as well and many late Ming characteristics of clouds, robes, body shapes, and so on.[183] For instance, some small lay figures (officials and soldiers) on the panels of the Back Shrine have Ming period robes and hats (Fig. 7).

181 1) The paintings of the first floor of the Liulidian would correspond to the earliest phase. The painting is flat, with limited colouring, the background is green and blue, with clouds around the red mandorlas, and no landscape is depicted. By comparing them to other paintings of Mayidari Juu and of Yeke Juu, Wang Leiyi et al. think they may have been painted in 1572 when Altan Khan asked the Ming court to send artisans and monks. 2) The ceiling, *zaojing*, and panels of the Back Shrine have the most refined paintings of Mayidari Juu, with a rich palette of colours (predominance of red, yellow, blue, and green), depictions of trees and mountains, and *maṇḍala*s. They would date from the first ten years of the Wanli period (1572–1682). Two figures were repainted in the Qing period. The style of the paintings of the upper central part of the south wall is close to that of the ceiling and panels, with a dark background and vivid colours.

182 The deep blue and red of the Ming paintings contrast with the predominance of green, lighter blue, and white of Qing paintings.

183 Zhang Haibin 2010: 34.

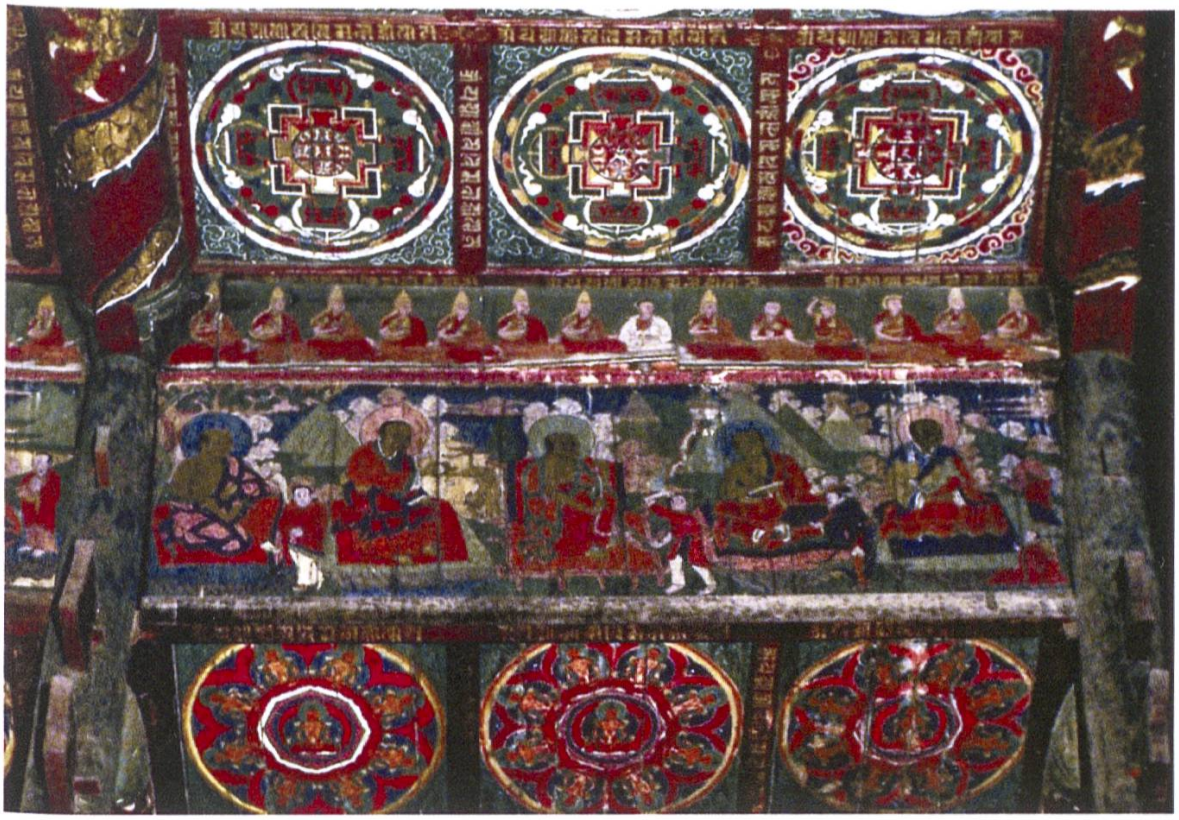

Fig. 8: Example of Ming period painting (*maṇḍala*s and *arhat*s) on the beams, panels and ceiling of the Back Shrine of the Main Buddha Hall. Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, II: 36.

Because of their style and the presence of "red-hat" masters[184] and of the Eighty-four *mahāsiddha*s (first floor of the Liulidian and the ceiling, *zaojing* and panels of the Back Shrine), Wang Leiyi et al. believe that these paintings belong to the Karma-Kagyu (bKa' brgyud) tradition: the Ming court (and perhaps Eastern Tibetan monasteries) would have sent Karma-Kagyu monks, or painters influenced by Karma-Kagyu styles. I rather subscribe to the proposal of Zhang Haibin who identifies the so-called red-hat lamas in *maṇḍala*s of the ceiling of the Back Shrine as Padmasambhava surrounded by his eight manifestations (while Tsongkhapa and other Gelukpa masters are depicted on the panels). On the first floor of the Liulidian, the depiction of Padmasambhava, Atiśa, Milarepa (Mi la ras pa), and Sakya Pandita (Sa skya paṇḍita)[185] parallels that of Tsongkhapa and the Third Dalai Lama, and the whole iconographical programme could well have been ordered by Gelukpa masters. In addition, these styles are different from late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth Eastern Tibetan styles.

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184 Mongols, like Chinese, commonly call "yellow(-hat)s" the Gelukpa monks, as opposed to the "red(-hat)s", clerics belonging to the other schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

185 These masters of the "old (or red) schools" are also venerated by the Gelukpas.

Fig. 9: Example of Ming period paintings in the Back Shrine of the Main Buddha Hall (panel), in the Empress Temple, and on the first floor (East wall) of the Liulidian (Zhang Haibin 2010: 149, 207, 301, 262).

Because of their style and of the date of these temples, the paintings of the Empress Temple and the Octagonal Temple are dated "late Ming dynasty" and show a strong Chinese influence, especially in the depiction of landscape and vegetation,[186] as well as the white background. I would add that the paintings of Pe har and deities linked to him (Rahū, mGar ba nag po, Tshangs pa dkar po) in the Octagonal Temple (Fig. 10) would be the earliest preserved depictions of Pe har in Mongolia, anterior to the Pe har cycle of Yeke Juu's Nayicung Temple.[187]

The paintings of the ceiling and panels of the Assembly Hall (Main Buddha Hall),[188] the four walls of the Back Shrine (except a part of the south wall), and the second floor of the Liulidian[189] have Qing dynasty characteristics, such as

186 Cheng Xuguang/Liu Yibin 1983: 38.

187 The cult of Pe har is attested in the monastery built by Altan Khan at Cabciyal near the Kukunor Lake in the 1570s. See Charleux, forthcoming.

188 The walls were repainted in 1983 except for portions of the north wall.

189 The paintings of the second floor of the Liulidian were painted around the eighteenth century, covering older paintings. They are fine paintings with a strong Chinese influence.

Fig. 10: Particular deities depicted at Mayidari Juu: Pehar, Tsangpa Karpo, Rahū, rDo rje gro lod Padmasambhava (Octagonal Temple), White Lha mo (second floor of the Liulidian), and the deity of Altan Khan's standard (?) (Back Shrine, "The Altan Khan's family"). Zhang Haibin 2010: 297, 298, 291, 279, 101.

officials in Qing robe (Fig. 7),[190] and Cürüke's hat in "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" (Fig. 13). The dominance of green and blue colours and the landscape are typical of the Qing period (Fig. 11).

The 9.4-m high walls of the Back Shrine were obviously repainted during the Qing period. They depict in their main part Śākyamuni (north wall) and two yellow-hat lamas: Tsongkhapa (east wall) and the (Third?) Dalai Lama (west wall) on Sumeru-thrones, surrounded by scenes of their life, where Maitreya appears many times. The identification of the Third Dalai Lama is based on a comparison with a sixteenth-century *thang ka* depicting scenes of his life;[191] and the depiction of "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" fits with this identification because of the role of the Third Dalai Lama in the conversion of the Tümeds. In one scene, he is shown crossing mountains and taming monsters, which may well be a hint

190 See the western panel of the Assembly Hall and the scene of the life of the Third Dalai Lama in the Back Shrine.

191 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, 2009 I: 74.

Fig. 11: Examples of Qing period paintings on the second floor of the Liulidian (west wall, Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, II: 67), on the walls of the Back Shrine (lower register of the south wall: yellow Kubera with an elephant head and Vasudhara; upper register of the west wall: Third Dalai Lama's travel to Mongolia, Zhang Haibin 2010: 113, 91).

to his Mongolian journey, because in his Tibetan biography such scenes are described on his way (Fig. 11).[192]

Why was the Back Shrine repainted? The paintings were not so old but may have been damaged when Ligdan Khan occupied the monastery, and such a high wall necessitates scaffoldings, many experimented painters and substantial funding. Li Qinpu stresses that many re-paintings of murals in Tibet are not motivated by the fact that they are damaged but because of the will of a new patron.[193] But Wang Leiyi et al. found a specific motivation for repainting: In the second half of the seventeenth or in the eighteenth century, new paintings would have been made over the older layer to change the iconographic programme which

192 I thank Kollmar-Paulenz for having stressed this. See the photograph in Zhang Haibin 2010: 93.

193 Li Qinpu 2012: 90.

depicted red-hat lamas. With the Gelukpas' rise to power and dominant position in Mongolia during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama, paintings of Karma-Kagyu masters became outplaced. While the beams and panels were too high to be clearly visible, it appeared necessary to change the wall paintings that may have represented red-hat masters. A part of the old painting was left on the south wall (delimitated by a black frame to isolate them from the later decoration; Fig. 12), perhaps because it was partly hidden by the balcony or by a *thang ka*;[194] in addition the deities they depict do not represent a problem for Gelukpas.[195]

However, nothing allows us to suppose that the old paintings represented Karma-Kagyu masters and the deities they favoured, and in that case, why were the paintings of red-had masters in the Liulidian, the Empress Temple and the Octagonal Temple not covered by new, Gelukpa paintings? Besides, on the south wall, the second layer of painting reproduces the same iconography in a different style (Fig. 12). I would rather subscribe to Zhang Haibin's hypothesis, according to which the iconography of the old paintings of the four walls was the same as the new ones. One of his arguments is that the Cabciyal Monastery of Amdo, built from 1574 to 1577, housed statues of the Buddhas of the Three Eras, Tsongkhapa, and the Third Dalai Lama.[196] Similarly, before 1606, the Back Shrine of Mayidari Juu may have housed statues of Śākyamuni or the Buddhas of the Three Eras, Tsongkhapa, and the Third Dalai Lama corresponding to the mural décor.[197] I would add that considering the importance of Maitreya and his festival for the Gelukpas, paintings of Tsongkhapa and a Dalai Lama are an appropriate décor around the new statue of Maitreya installed in 1606. The Back Shrine would since the beginning have been decorated in a Gelukpa context. Restoration and repainting may have begun in the Kangxi period, when Mongols were encouraged to build and restore monasteries – Kangxi resided in Mayidari Juu in 1687 and sponsored construction and restoration of the monasteries of Kökeqota – , and were continued in the Qianlong period under the patronage of Lamajab and may have ended in the first years of the nineteenth century.[198]

As in Chinese popular paintings, Chinese numbers and characters were put at certain places to indicate colours, notably on the south wall of the Back Shrine of the Main Assembly Hall (similar characters were observed on the murals of

194 An inner balcony was perhaps added to contemplate the Maitreya statue and partially hid the old paintings. The staircase (leading to a door opening on the outer balcony) was rebuilt after the second layer of painting.

195 Wang Leiyi et al. 2009, I: 77–78.

196 Zhang Haibin 2010: 35, quoting the biography of the Third Dalai Lama.

197 As seen before, Jin Feng believes it enshrined the funerary *stūpa* of Altan Khan.

198 Zhang Haibin 2010: 35.

Fig. 12: Vaiśravaṇa and his mounted warriors. South wall of the Back Shrine showing the first (in the black frame, Ming period, upper left) and second (Qing period) layers of paintings. Zhang Haibin 2010: 111, 114.

Yeke Juu): the artisans were mostly Chinese, sent by the Ming court (up to 1593 the Mongols asked the Ming for artisans), or coming from nearby Shanxi province.[199] Tibetan painters from Amdo may also have contributed to the murals. Whatever their nationality or school affiliation, painters followed a religious – and here, certainly Gelukpa – master's orders though they may have had some freedom in depicting the background, especially landscapes. The iconography of the Buddhas, masters, and deities is entirely Tibetan, except from a typically Chinese depiction of Śākyamuni in the Assembly Hall.

Wang Leiyi et al. are mostly preoccupied with dating and understanding why the walls were repainted, and do not discuss their iconography. I would add that the iconographical choices show preoccupations for accumulation of wealth (deities linked to Vaiśravaṇa),[200] protection of the royal power (see the ancient role of Vaiśravaṇa in Central Asian ideology of power), of monastic communities (Pe har), but also flocks and herds (Tshangs pa dkar po), as well as long life (Tshe ring mched lnga, Five Sisters of Longevity). The Pe har cycle (Pe har and his four manifestations, known as the Five Kings) and associated deities such as mGar ba nag po and Rahū links Mayidari Juu with the other Tümed monasteries, where they were main protectors and oracle deities (Fig. 10).[201]

The general decoration follows Gelukpa iconography with a few originalities, but depictions of Padmasambhava are found in the Main Buddha Hall (*maṇḍala*s on the ceiling of the Back Shrine) and in the Octagonal Temple (eight manifestations plus three other depictions), along with those of Rahū, mGar ba nag po, and manifestations of Pe har. These are first and foremost Nyingmapa (rNying ma pa) figures. If the hypothesis of a Karma-Kagyu tradition at Mayidari Juu is not tenable, can the monastery have had a connection with the Nyingmapas?[202] Sayang Secen writes that the Mayidari Qutuytu had been recognized as an incarnation of Byams pa rgya mtsho, disciple of Padmasambhava.[203] As seen above, he may also be the reincarnation of bSod nams ye shes dbang po, an important Gelukpa personality. Kollmar-Paulenz stresses that if "the Mayidari Qutugtu was believed to be the reincarnation of Panchen bSod nams grags pa, a former teacher of the 3rd Dalai Lama, what better compensation can one wish for the 4th Dalai Lama?"[204]

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199 Chinese artists decorated many Tümed temples: Charleux 2010b.

200 Monasteries were used to store gold, silver, brocades, furs etc. accumulated by princes. See Serruys 1975: 227.

201 Charleux, forthcoming.

202 Charleux 1999. The Chinese scholars do not seem to have raised this question.

203 *Erdeni-yin tobci*, ed. Haenisch 1955: 523–524, VIII, fol. 1r.

204 Email, May 2, 2013.

But if he was a Nyingmapa cleric, why would the Gelukpas have sent to Mongolia a Nyingmapa as a compensation for the departure of the Fourth Dalai Lama to Lhasa? Possibly, although he was recognized as the reincarnation of a Nyingmapa master, he could have been trained in a Tibetan Gelukpa monastery and become a Gelukpa novice, or may have become a Gelukpa monk when in Mongolia.[205] For Kollmar-Paulenz, he may have been considered as a Gelukpa authority, perhaps as early as 1606 or later; and, although his Nyingmapa background was duly noted,[206] he and his following reincarnations certainly continued to be considered as Gelukpa authorities during the Qing period. However, as I show below, "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" obviously depicts him in his "red" denomination.

In my opinion, Maidari Juu was a Gelukpa monastery that may have also valorized Nyingmapa teachings in the 1570s–1600, when the Octagonal Temple and the Back Shrine were built and decorated, due to the original school affiliation of the Mayidari Qutuytu. Before the Qing period, the "red" schools of Tibetan Buddhism were present among the Mongols, though less active in proselytism than the Gelukpas, and the latter took over the ancient "red" heritage of Mongolian Buddhism. In the Qing period, especially from the eighteenth century on, all Mongolian monasteries save a few exceptions had to declare themselves as Gelukpas.

4.1 "The Altan Khan Family Portrait"

"The Altan Khan Family Portrait" (Alatanhan jiazu gongyang renxiang 阿拉坦汗家族供養人像, also known as "Painting of Mongol Nobles Worshipping Buddha": Menggu guizu lifotu 蒙古貴族禮佛圖)[207] in the Back Shrine (lower part of the west wall, starting at 1.1 m from the ground), depicts nine main characters and fifty-three smaller ones (including two deities: Beg tse and a warrior deity). No

205 As emphasized by Kollmar-Paulenz, if "one looks closely at the previous incarnations of many Gelukpa masters (and vice versa also) one finds many rNying ma, bKa' brgyud, Sa skya etc., or Jo nang pa and other minor school affiliations." Also, incarnation "lineages often show a remarkable amalgam of personages with different school affiliations" (email, October 4th, 2013). The Mongolian Jebcündamba Qutuytu Zanabazar who belonged to the Gelukpas was recognized as the reincarnation of the famous Jo nang pa master Tāranātha (1575–1634?).

206 Although Tibetan schools differ by their orientations (preference for certain texts, rituals, practices, pantheons) and way of life, and were politically opposed, they mostly share the same dogma, traditions and corpus of texts. Nyingmapa monks were commonly trained in Gelukpa monasteries and vice versa.

207 Jin Shen 1984b, 1984c; Cheng Xuguang/Liu Yibin 1984; 33–34; Yin Fujun 2012.

inscription allows us to identify them, but all authors agree that the central character of the right side on Tsongkhapa's throne – the largest of the whole painting, 1.2 m high, and the only one facing the viewer – is Jönggen Qatun. In an article I wrote in 1999, I showed that her general attitude, yellow robe, attributes, and the two much smaller monks bending toward her allow us to say that she is depicted as a Buddha or a *bodhisattva*. As for the other characters, Jin Shen's interpretation is the most convincing[208]: Cürüke bends in a respectful attitude towards Jönggen Qatun on the right panel (Fig. 13); Macay Qatun worships the Mayidari Qutuytu on the left panel. But Macay looks much younger than Jönggen, while she was actually five years older. This is why Cheng Xuguang and others proposed that both parts would depict young Jönggen in a summer landscape, and old Jönggen in a winter lansdscape: the woman of the left panel would be Jönggen Qatun at a young age facing Altan Khan (Fig. 14).[209] However, the main male character of the left panel is obviously a lama dressed in a red gown. Also, Altan Khan was more than fifty years older than Macay. The bearded monk with long hair wearing a red robe can certainly be identified as the Mayidari Qutuytu, here viewed as the reincarnation of Padmasambhava's disciple.

Fig. 13: Details of the painting of "The Altan Khan's family". On the right: Cürüke. Zhang Haibin 2010: 101.

208 The two first comprehensive studies of the painting, Cheng Xuguang/Liu Yibin's (1983), and Jin Shen's (1984c), disagree on the identification of the other characters.

209 Li Yiyou 1981; Cheng Xuguang/Liu Yibin 1984: 180; Cheng Xuguang 2007: 46.

Fig. 14: Macay Qatun facing the Mayidari Qutuytu, detail of the painting of "The Altan Khan's family". Zhang Haibin 2010: 78.

Other characters include men and women praying with rosaries, sitting in *padmāsana*, monks, and musicians (Fig. 13). Buddhist attributes (Eight Auspicious Symbols, piles of jewels, rosaries) are superimposed to ancient symbols of power in the Inner Asian world (arrows, falcon, drinking from and offering of cups).[210]

Between Jönggen Qatun and the man bending towards her is a warrior deity sitting on a chair (Fig. 10, no. 6). He wears a helmet and an armour, and holds

210 See Charleux 2010a.

a lance in his left hand and a bow in his right; eight flags are attached to his back. He has been identified by art historians as 1) the Chinese form of Vaiśravaṇa (Ch. Pishamen Tianwang 毘沙門天王)[211] – but the bow is not his usual attribute; 2) Altan Khan's warrior deity emanating from Tshangs pa dkar po[212]; 3) a *nayicung* lama.[213] He could also be rDo rje grags ldan, the most important deity of Pe har's retinue who takes possession of the gNas chung oracle. Another possible identification that has not been proposed is the deity of Altan Khan's standard (*sülde tengri*) or a deified representation of Altan Khan himself.

Jin Feng, who proposes that the Back Shrine housed Altan Khan's funerary *stūpa* in 1587, gives a new identification and understanding of the whole painting, based on the *Law Code* of Altan Khan and a stone inscription about Boyda Cayan Lama[214]: it would have been made in 1587 to honour Altan Khan's *stūpa*, and depicts the main characters present at his first burial: Jönggen Qatun and her son Budasiri on the right (worshiping Altan Khan's *stūpa*); and on the left, Macay Qatun facing Boyda Cayan Lama[215] (who actually was a red-hat lama, probably a Kagyüpa), with her first husband Ba-ha-na-ji (Dayicing Ejei) behind her.[216] The other characters would imitate the worshipping attitude of the main ones.[217] Jin Feng concludes that since Jönggen Qatun was an Oyirad, and Budasiri had been made chief of the Oyirad by Altan Khan, the groups of four (four musicians, four men below "Budasiri") in the painting would refer to the Four Oyirad. The right part of the painting would reflect the rank and status of the Oyirad among the Tümed state, and the rivalry between "traditional" and new (Oyirad) factions. Since I had no access to Jin Feng's book, I cannot seriously assess his hypothesis which, at a first glance, seems extremely difficult to endorse.

When was "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" painted? Zhang Haibin proposes that it was first painted in the end of the Ming dynasty (some time before or after 1644) and repainted in the Qing period. Miao Runhua argues that it has Qing

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211 Jin Shen 1983: 177.

212 Zhang Haibin 2010: 33.

213 Jin Feng 2011.

214 This stone inscription was found in 1980 in Da'erzha 達爾札 Village, in the Tümed Left Banner.

215 Boyda Cayan Lama Rasijamso (d. 1627) was a famous hermit who trained many disciples in caves of the Qarayuna mountains.

216 Jin Feng (2011) summarized by Yin Fujun (2012: 66).

217 Jin Feng proposes to identify in the right portion of the painting: Budasiri's former wife, four great *dianqi* 佃齊 (Mo. *diyanci*, hermit?) of Kökeqota below Budasiri, a *nayicung* lama (the "warrior god"); and in the left part: Macay Qatun's daughter, Ayusi Güüsi . . . (2011, summarized by Yin Fujun 2012: 66).

dynasty characteristics.[218] Wang Leiyi et al. add that the painting cannot have been sponsored by clerics or by the Qing court, and proposed that Lamajab who was a Buddhist devotee had this painting made to commemorate his ancestors in the 1750s.

I would add that Mongol nobles' portraits were usually commemorative portraits made after their death.[219] It is unlikely that the two rival princesses were depicted together on the same painting during their lifetime, even separated by the Sumeru-throne. The painting would therefore be later than 1625. Both Zhang Haibin's and Wang Leiyi et al.'s hypotheses are tenable, and do not exclude that "The Altan Khan Family Portrait" was painted over an earlier painting of more or less the same topic, painted after 1625 when Jönggen Qatun became the main worshiped ancestor.[220] Indeed, this unique painting shows a variety of costumes, hats, and hairstyles anterior to the uniformization of the Mongol costume during the Qing dynasty: it may cover an older painting of Altan Khan's descendants.[221] Details in the costumes (for instance, the absence of a belt for some men, while some women have one (Fig. 13)) and the iconography (the different forms of Kubera in the Back Shrine) remain unexplained. These peculiarities point to typical Mongol characteristics that are not seen anymore in later monasteries built after the Tibetanization and uniformization of the eighteenth century.

5 Conclusion

Mayidari Juu is an exceptionally well-preserved monastery in Mongolia, remarkable for its fortified wall and early palatial story; its ancient murals depicting unusual deities and complex *maṇḍala*s; its "Altan Khan Family Portrait"; and its archives that document Sino-Mongol relations, in particular rituals and religious syncretism. The Empress Temple's funerary *stūpa* is the only Mongol *stūpa* that

218 He gives the example of Mongols smoking pipes – Mongols started to smoke tobacco in the eighteenth century. However, Zhang Haibin stressed that the Tümeds, as they were in close contact with Han Chinese in the Ming period, may have started to smoke tobacco in the first half of the seventeenth century (2010: 35).

219 Charleux 2010a.

220 For Jin Shen, the lower part of the four walls has one more layer of painting than the upper part, and the style (especially landscape, faces, less brilliant colours) is different; it would have been repainted on a new coating but respecting the original programme. Wang Leiyi et al., on the contrary, think that the style is homogeneous with the rest of the walls.

221 Scholars who have studied the painting compared the costumes, headdresses, and hats with that of Ordos Mongols of the late Qing-early twentieth century, but it seems to me that this variety of costumes and hat shows a pre-Qing context (see Charleux 1999).

was open and documented. In the Qing dynasty, Mayidari Juu was simultaneously a shrine to commemorate Altan Khan's family and Altan Khan's conversion to Buddhism as well as a monastery that held rituals for the prosperity of farmers: Altan Khan, together with the Jade Emperor, Guandi, and (a deity identified to) Laozi blessed the Tümeds and the increasing Chinese population.

Although the two comprehensive studies reviewed here formulate new hypotheses about the dating of buildings (Wang Leiyi et al.), dating, iconography, and authors of paintings (Zhang Haibin), many unsolved questions remain, especially about the identity of the members of Altan Khan's family buried in the monastery and depicted in painting, the context of the painting of "The Altan Khan Family Portrait", the problem of orientation and alignment of the temples, and the iconographical peculiarities. In my opinion, Zhang Haibin's discussions and hypotheses (in particular that of an iconographical programme decided by Gelukpa masters) are more solidly grounded than other authors'.[222] Both books fill a gap in "Mayidari Juu's studies" and appear as complementary, though none of them closes the debates. We hope they will attract the attention of historians of Tibetan art and of Mongol Buddhism.

But is Mayidari Juu as unique in the fields of history, Buddhist art, and burial practices, as Chinese historians claim? Divergent interpretations and controversies on dating, identifications, etc. tend to hide more global considerations about the nature of this monastery. In my opinion, Mayidari Juu can be compared with other contemporary commemorative/ancestors'/family temples of the Chinggisid family. The Chinggisid emperors and kings were commemorated through the cult of their material relics in yurt-temples all over Mongolia. These generally enshrined a statue and/or painting of the Khan, his standard, statues of his generals, "relics" (personal objects) such as saddles, bows and arrows, harnesses that all embodied the Khan's spirit (*sülde*, usually translated as "vital energy"). These *sülde* supports protected the state and helped to defeat its enemies; their possession and the ability to perform rites for them gave legitimacy and authority to the living ruler. In addition, paintings of Khans often showed them with their Qatun.[223] After the massive conversion of the Mongols to Buddhism in the late sixteenth/seventeenth century, some of these temples were maintained, though influenced by Buddhist iconography and rituals (Eight White Tents of Chinggis Khan in Ordos, shrine of Qutuytai Secen Qung Tayiji and Sayang Secen in the Ordos, of Qasar in the Urad), while others were founded or

222 But the price of this first publication of the complete murals may dissuade potential readers to purchase it (800 ¥, 317 pages).

223 Charleux 2010a: 240–243, fig. 13, 14, 15.

integrated within Buddhist monasteries of which we have three contemporary examples:

- Mayidari Juu, with the Princess' *stūpa*; the ashes and relics (including bows and arrows) found in the pedestal of the Maitreya statue; the (lost) scrolls depicting Jönggen Qatun; "The Altan Khan Family Portrait"; Altan Khan's standard; and the nearby cemetery, is the best example of the Buddhicisation of the cult of deceased Mongol rulers. Paintings have replaced statues of ancestors, *stūpa*s embody their presence, and Buddhist rituals replaced commemoration by descendants.[224]
- Yeke Juu (or Vang-un Γool-un Juu) of Ordos, located less than 100 km from Mayidari Juu, also became a main Chinggisid family monastery.[225] During the Ming and Qing periods it preserved twelve funerary *stūpa*s of the *jinong*s[226] of Ordos: Bošoytu Jinong, founder of the monastery and his ancestors, including Dayan Khan,[227] as well as their bows and arrows, saddles, and harnesses. The Eight White Tents enshrining the relics of Chinggis Khan also camped near or inside the monastery before being moved to other places of Ordos. The monastery was plundered and burned to the ground by the Japanese Army in 1941 and the relics of the Ordos princes disappeared.
- The third example is Erdeni Juu, built on the model of Altan Khan's foundations. Its square-shaped *stūpa*-tombs of Abadai Khan and Γombodorji in front of the Central Temple recall the configuration of the Liulidian.[228] Abadai's large *ger* preserving his throne, weapons, and statues of "fierce heroes" ("the fellow-champions of Abadai") was worshipped there before being moved to Da Küriye ("Urga") by the First Jebcündamba Qutuytu.[229] A series of three paintings of Abadai Khan, his wife and his family receiving the homage of monks and laymen, along with his standard, horse, and weapons, decorated a wall.[230] The black standard of Chinggis Khan was kept in Barayun Küriye, at about 20 km southeast of Erdeni Juu.

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224 There also existed a portrait of Altan Khan with his standard, seen by Žamcarano in 1910 at Saraci (reference in Charleux 2010a: 229, n. 55).

225 Charleux 2006: CD-ROM [41].

226 Title of the deputy of the Great Khaan, governing the Right Wing of the Eastern Mongols.

227 They were kept in the *Śarīra Temple* (Šaril-un Duγang), a two-storied temple with 9 bays in façade. Dayan Khan's *stūpa* was the largest one (7 *chi* high, in gold and silver).

228 A Tibetan-style *stūpa* located north-east of the compound, outside the wall, is said to be the funerary *stūpa* of Γombodorji's wife.

229 Pozdneev 1971 [1892]: 60–61.

230 See Charleux 2010a: 226–227, fig. 9.

After the death of their founder, these three monasteries became funerary shrines to worship Chinggisid ancestors.[231] Their paintings depict ancestors as Buddhist devotees praying to Buddha, and at the same time as deified ancestors worshipped by their descendants. They certainly served as commemorative and votive paintings for their descendants.

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