

# *Research on the Combination of Sino-Tibetan Architecture from the Perspective of Multi-Cultural Integration*

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**Abstract:** There are Tibetan Buddhist architectures in Xinjiang, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai, Shanxi, Hebei, Beijing and other places. The Tibetan Buddhist architecture in these areas is based on the combination of Sino-Tibetan architectural forms, and blends the architectural styles of other ethnic minorities such as Mongolia and Hui, showing a variety of changes. This paper discusses the combination of Sino-Tibetan architecture in Tibet, other regions and western Inner Mongolia respectively, and compares the regional characteristics of different regions.

## **1. Introduction**

Sino-Tibetan architecture is an important part of Chinese architectural culture. It is the crystallization of the wisdom of skilled craftsmen, the witness of multi-culture and multi-ethnic integration, and the embodiment of the cultural integration strategy of the central government in successive dynasties. The temple on the grassland is an important part of Mongolian culture, and the unique nature of the grassland temple culture affects the grassland people's world outlook, life outlook and values. The in-depth analysis of Tibetan Buddhist architecture in Inner Mongolia is an important content of sorting out the national heritage, and is the historical mission of contemporary architectural history academic research.

## **2. “Sino-Tibetan Architecture” in Tibet**

Sino-Tibetan architecture is an important part of historical architecture in Tibet. The architecture of Sutra Hall in Tibet has gradually evolved along with historical changes, and has experienced the embryonic stage, the development stage, and the mature stage. Analyze the representative buildings of the three periods, in order to expounds the fusion mode of Sino-Tibetan architectural culture in Tibet.

### **2.1 Samye Monastery**

Samye Monastery was built in the 8th century during the Tubo Dynasty and is the first Tibetan

Buddhist monastery in the true sense of Tibet, so it has an important influence on Tibetan Buddhist monastery architecture and has been regarded as a “prototype” for a long time. At that time, the purpose of building religious buildings was to explain the structure of the universe to the people. Through the use of symbolism to imitate the religious world, to express Tibetan Buddhism's cognition of the vast universe. The overall temple building is arranged according to the “mandala” schema. The architectural style is a combination of Indian, Chinese and Tibetan: the first floor of the main hall is Tibetan, the second floor is Chinese, and the third floor is Indian.

## 2.2 Sakya Monastery

Since 1279, when the central Government of the Yuan Dynasty took over the administration of Tibet, Tibet was formally placed under the direct jurisdiction of the central Government. Since then, the Sakya Regime has governed Tibet for nearly a hundred years. Sakanam Temple was built in 1268, it was commissioned by Saban Benchin Shakya Sampo by Palsaba<sup>1</sup>. The system of “theocracy” leads to the temple as a material carrier to carry the dual functions of religion and politics, so Sakya Temple is both a religious building and a palace building. Its overall structure is a castle-like monastery, with a centralized and orderly layout, and the main hall of Sakya Monastery consists of a porch, a sutra hall, and several small lacan<sup>2</sup>. The architectural form is mainly the imitation of Chinese traditional architectural construction techniques.

## 2.3 Sera Monastery

At the end of the Ming Dynasty, the Gelug sect had not yet gained political dominance in Tibet. In the early Qing Dynasty, the cooperation between Mongolia and Tibet gradually deepened. Under the support of Gushi Khan, the Gelug sect defeated the hostile Kagyu sect and the feudal forces supporting the Kagyu sect. It established the local government of Tibet with the Fifth Dalai Lama as its leader, thus occupying a dominant position and becoming the largest faction in Tibet<sup>[1]</sup>. Gelug sect architecture went through three stages of development: “embryonic period”, “formative period” and “mature period”. In this process, the architectural form tends to be unified, gradually getting rid of the influence of the formalization of the temple architecture in the pre-grand period, and is no longer a concrete expression of the ideal world, but forms a “three-stage” architectural form, and eventually develops into a unified and iconic architectural type.

The Tsochin Main Hall of Sera Temple is a typical representative of the Gelug School's “three-stage” forming period. The space sequence is “porch - Buddha hall - Scripture Hall”. The building is five storeys high, and the top floor is decorated with a gold ceiling on the flat roof. The sutra hall is huge, with 102 columns. Compared with the sutra hall, the width of the Buddha hall is same as that, and the depth is much smaller, with only three column spacing. Analyzing the architectural form of Sera Monastery, it can be found that Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the Gelug school period were no longer use as Buddhist ashrams and the abode of Buddhas in the world only, but began to integrate the cultural consciousness of Tibetan people, pay attention to people's feelings, and become a college for monks to study sutras.

## 3. “Sino-Tibetan Architecture” in Other Areas

The development of Gelug sect in Tibet was repeatedly suppressed by other sects. Later, the Fifth Dalai Lama received military support from Gushi Khan, unified Tibetan areas, and became the center of political and religious power in Tibet. With the help of Gushi Khan, the Fifth Dalai Lama established diplomatic relations with the Qing government, and promoted the three-stage style to all parts of the country with the support of the Qing government<sup>[2]</sup>. The core culture spreads from the

inner region to the outer region, and in this process, the influence gradually decreases with the distance far away. According to this law, the Chinese style is weakening with the distance of geographical location, and at the same time, there are many complex Sino-Tibetan architecture appears. There are three types from the perspective of building components to analysis.

### 3.1 Roof of the Traditional Chinese Architecture

According to historical written account, when Princess Wencheng built the Jokhang Temple, she brought construction craftsmen and building materials from the Central Plains, and the Jokhang Temple was built in accordance with the architectural form of the Central Plains<sup>[3]</sup>. Although the Jokhang Temple no longer exists, the roof form that is hip-and-gable roof on the top is rooted in Tibet and has become an important feature of Tibetan Buddhist architecture. At the same time, there are many ethnic groups in the area where Tibetan Buddhism is disseminated, and there are many factions of Tibetan Buddhism itself. As the fifth facade of the building, the roof directly reflects diverse forms. It shows the flexibility and diversity of the combination of China and Tibet<sup>[4]</sup>.

The first floor of the Tsongkhapa Memorial Tower of Tar Temple<sup>4</sup> is Tibetan style, and there are three hip-and-gable roofs built on the flat roof of Tibetan style, which are lined up with extraordinary momentum and exquisite magnificence. The main hall of Shouan Temple in Labrang Temple is mainly Tibetan-style, with a large roof added in part. The middle of the main hall is raised, which can be lit and ventilated, and is covered with a gold roof. Du-gang Tower of Huiyuan Temple combines the construction technology of Chinese pavilion tower and Tibetan lama tower. The lower part is mainly Tibetan, and the upper part has three eaves. The eaves extend out of the wall and cover the whole building.

### 3.2 Brackets of the Traditional Chinese Architecture

Brackets are the most characteristic component of traditional Chinese architecture, which was introduced into Tibet and formed a unique Tibetan style after localization. The form of brackets is different from official architecture, creating a variety of practices, according to the location, there are three kinds of brackets, roof brackets, door brackets, wall brackets<sup>[5]</sup>. Take Tar Temple as an example, there are more than 1,000 courtyards in total, such as Great Jinwa Temple, Little Jinwa Temple, Flower Temple, Great Sutra Hall, nine halls, Dala Lang, Ruyi Pagoda, Taiping Pagoda, Bodhi Pagoda, and Gate Pagoda, etc., with a large scale, brackets can be seen everywhere as a decorative element. Among them, wall brackets is a creative initiative in Tibetan areas and highly expressive. It is also common in other Tibetan Buddhist buildings, such as Sera Temple and Labrang Temple.

## 4. “Sino-Tibetan Architecture” in Inner Mongolia

Inner Mongolia Zhaomiao architecture is a fusion of Tibetan architectural culture, traditional architectural culture and its own architectural culture<sup>[6]</sup>. However, the proportion of influences is different in different regions, the western region is more influenced by Tibetan architecture, and the eastern region is more influenced by Central Plains architecture. Next, we will focus on the temple architecture in Alxa region of western Inner Mongolia, and analyze the performance of the integration of Sino-Tibetan architectural culture in the western region.

Alashan region is located in the western end of Inner Mongolia, the region has three major temple systems, the South Temple (Guangzong Temple), the North temple (Gospel Temple), Yamen Temple (Yanfu Temple), the other temples are the temples of these three temples. In this section, the representative buildings of three monasteries are selected to study, in order to analyze the

characteristics of Sino-Tibetan combined architectural style in this region.

#### 4.1 The South Temple

The South Temple is located in the hinterland of Helan Mountain, ranking first among the three temple systems and eight temples in Alxa, and is the largest temple in the region. Now there are more than ten buildings, all of which were rebuilt in the 1980s. The South Temple is large in scale, and the buildings in the temple were not built at the same time, but after a long process of development and expansion, and finally formed the current scale. Through sorting out the historical evolution, it is found that not only the scale of the Zhaomiao Temple is gradually expanding, but also the Great Hall is constantly expanding and rebuilding.

Through the analysis of the construction history of the South Temple, it can be seen that when the Great Hall was built in 1747, at the first there were 49 units of the space, and after 1828, there were added to 81 units of the space. It can be inferred that the original small temple is Tibetan-style architecture, and the circle of cloisters around the periphery was built in the later stage, which is the secondary step of the Chinese architectural style. In addition, the architectural form of “three temples connected” is not original. The main hall porch is three rooms, the main building is two floors high, the plane is square, seven bays and seven depths, and the peripheral corridor is turned around. In order to highlight the core status and demonstrate the momentum, the architectural form of three longitudinal halls is created. There are three roofs here, respectively. The first roof is a Tibetan roof, set on the front porch, the second is a round ridge roof, set between the porch and the Du-gang formula, and the third is a hip-and-gable roof, set on the blowing of the Du-gang formula. Two small halls are added on both sides between the Du-gang blowing and round ridge roof, create a courtyard style space on the roof, In order to achieve the climax of momentum, the Du-gang blowing built into two floors, three bays, two depths, and a circle of cloisters around the periphery.

#### 4.2 The North Temple

North Temple is located in the north of Helan Mountain, the temple was built by the son of King Alashan, after converted to the sixth Panchen Dynasty, he built the temple in the ninth year of Qing Dynasty Jiaqing (1804). North Temple is the second largest temple in Alxa League. In the eleventh year of Qing Jiaqing (1806), the Qing Government gave the name “Gospel Temple”. In 1932, the 10th generation of Alxa Wang Dalizaya donated money to repair the Great Sutra Hall, and since then the architectural form of the Great Hall has not changed much.

The main structure of the North Temple is Tibetan-style, and the Chinese architectural elements are mainly reflected in the application of the hip-and-gable roof and the wooden sill wall. The porch space presents a “one” shape, seven bays and one depth, the end part are surrounded by walls, and the middle five units space have no external walls, presenting a facade form of “the middle of the void and the two sides of the entity”. The hall is two floors high, the plane is square, seven bays and seven depths. The Du-gang formula is three bays and three depths.

The main structure of the hall of Baiha Five Kings is the same as the Hall of Auspicious Tiannu. The main structure is a Chinese-style building, which is composed of two single buildings, arranged longitudinally before and after, and a Tibetan-style flat roof building is added at the front. From the perspective of construction, the whole building consists of three parts, the Tibetan flat roof building has two depths and three bays, the single building has one bay and one depth, and another single building has three bays and three depths. From the perspective of spatial organization, the spatial sequence is also composed of three parts, the porch is one depth, the hall space is two depths, and the hall space is three depths.

Through comparative analysis of the above three buildings, it can be seen that their combination of China and Tibet is completely different. However, from the perspective of spatial organization, it can be seen that the spatial pattern of the three vertical halls has a profound impact on Yamen Temple in both the construction period and the recent period of reconstruction and addition.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper mainly discusses the architectural style of Sino-Tibetan combination, and analyzes the characteristics of “Sino-Tibetan combination” in Tibet, other regions and western Inner Mongolia. Chinese architecture and Tibetan architecture are two different construction systems. In terms of structural framework, spatial organization and decorative components, they have formed their own complete construction logic. This paper analyzes the architectural style of the combination of China and Tibet from different aspects, paying attention to the regional characteristics and the imbalance of development between regions. The hall of the combination of China and Tibetan style presents different architectural forms in different regions. The new architectural form is often changed and reorganized by using the original architectural language, and adopts the appropriate local building materials and construction methods. According to the local needs, the internal and external space of the building is organized, and the typological image is related from the deep structure. Explore phenomena and essence, and restore the form of identity.

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