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(Shangdu)

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Exorcising the Dragon

A Legend About the Building of the Mongolian Upper Capital (Shangdu)

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In the Altaistic world as well as in China proper, the Mongol-Yuan period is distinguished for its accomplishments in city building with the construction of twin capital cities under Qubilai Qa'an (Shizu 世祖, r. 1260–94), the dynastic founder. These cities were his summer capital in Kaipingfu 开平府, Inner Mongolia, known as Shangdu 上都 (Upper Capital); and the main capital near the former Jurchen-Jin capital Zhongdu 中都, known as Dadu 大都 (Great Capital). Now modern Beijing, the Turks called this great capital city Khan-baliq (city of the khans) and Marco Polo (1254–1323?) referred to it as Cam-baluc. Shangdu (S. T. Coleridge's Xanadu) was the first classic Tang dynasty-type walled city built in the grassland south of the Gobi desert with Sino-Mongolian features. Dadu, on the other hand, combined the grandeur and majesty of traditional Chinese imperial architecture with the Mongol *ordo* in an urban plan that laid the foundation for the Ming and Qing main capital Peking.¹

The two functioned as twin political centers of Mongol-Yuan rule and flourished until the empire's termination by the Chinese forces of Zhu Yuan-

1 For a general study of Shangdu, see Chen Gaohua 陈高华 and Shi Weimin 史卫民, *Yuan Shangdu* 元上都 (Changchun: Jilin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1988); and Minggad Š. Tungšig, *Yuvan ulus-un degedu neyislei Šangdu* (Koke Qot-a: Obor Monggol-un Arat-un Keblel-un Qoriy-a, 2001). Zhang Wenfang 张文芳 and Wang Dafang 王大方, *Zoujin Yuan Shangdu* 走进元上都 (Huhhot: Nei Menggu daxue chubanshe, 2005). See also n. 3 for additional bibliography. On Yuan Dadu, see Chen Gaohua, *Yuan Dadu* 元大都 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1982); and Wang Gang 王岗, *Yuan Dadu*, vol. 5 of *Beijing tongshi* 北京通史, edited by Cao Zixi 曹子西 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1994). For a brief account of these two capital cities in Chinese architectural history, see Nancy S. Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 147–60.

zhang 朱元璋 (Ming Taizu 明太祖, r.1368–98), who founded the Ming dynasty in the early fourteenth century.

Architectural and political grandeur aside, the legends surrounding the building of Shangdu and Dadu contributed significantly to enriching the power and mystique of these two cities. These legends were intimately associated with the brilliant urban planner Liu Bingzhong 刘秉忠 (1216–74), who was Qubilai's legend-laden Buddho-Daoist adviser then known as Monk Zicong 子聪; and the treacherous land-and-sea dragon in Chinese mythology. These elements combine to make a unique saga of myth-making in historical personality and urban development. In my recent study on the legends of the building of old Peking, I have already illuminated the story of Liu Bingzhong designing eleven outer-city wall-gates of Dadu to represent the “three-heads, six-arms and two-feet” body of the transformed Tantric Buddhist child deity Nazha 那吒 in order to invoke his miraculous prowess as guardian-protector to exorcise the sea dragon to mitigate drought and water shortages. As a result, Dadu became known as Nazha city 那吒城 in Chinese popular conception.²

Likewise, there was a similar legend attached to the building of Shangdu that has Liu Bingzhong suppressing a mysterious dragon before construction could begin on Qubilai's imperial city. Although Shangdu has received much attention from visitors and archaeologists since the nineteenth century, highlighted by the publication of the pioneering Japanese report *Jōto* 上都 in 1941, extensive historical and archaeological research by Chinese scholars was not undertaken until the 1970s, and more substantial publications have only appeared in recent years.³ In two of these studies on Shangdu, the

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- 2 On Liu Bingzhong's traditional biographies, see Liu's collected works *Cangchun ji* 藏春集 (*Siku quanshu* 四库全书 ed.), *juan* 6, appendix: Su Tianjue 苏天爵, *Guo (Yuan) chao mingchen shilue* 国(元)朝名臣事略 (*Congshu jicheng* 丛书集成 ed.; Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936, 7:87–89; and Song Lian 宋濂, et al., *Yuanshi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 157:3687–94. For modern studies, see, among others, Hok-lam Chan, “Liu Ping-chung (1216–74): A Buddhist-Taoist Statesman at the Court of Khubilai Khan,” *T'oung Pao* 53.1–3 (1967): 98–146; Yuan Ji 袁冀, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren Liu Bingzhong pingshu* 元太保藏春散人刘秉忠评述 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1974; and Hok-lam Chan, “Liu Ping-chung,” in Igor de Rachewiltz, et.al., eds., *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Mongol-Yuan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), pp. 245–69. On Liu Bingzhong's legends and those of his building the Nazha City of Dadu, see Hok-lam Chan, *Legends of the Building of Old Peking* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), chaps. 1, 2.
- 3 See Harada Yoshito 原田淑人 and Komai Kazuchika 驹井和爱, *Jōto: Manko Doronnōru ni okeru Gendai toshi no chōsa* 上都：蒙古ドロンノールに於ける元代都址の調査 (Tokyo: Tō'a kōko gakkai, 1941); Ishida Mikinosuke 石田幹之助, “Gen no Jōto ni

legend was briefly mentioned and primary sources were cited, but it was treated only as popular hearsay of little consequence. In this paper I present a comprehensive account and analysis of the legend to shed light on the folkloric legacies in the building of capital cities in the Sino-Mongolian Empire.⁴

Liu Bingzhong and Shangdu

In July 1251, Möngke (1209–59), eldest son of Tolui (1192–1232) who was the youngest son of the great Činggis Qan (r.1206–27), was elected as successor to the Mongol qa'anate in a *quriltai* (assembly) convoked in Central Asia. Soon afterward, Möngke delegated the administration of the conquered territories to his siblings and supporters. He put his youngest brother Qubilai, a powerful and ambitious prince who had been groomed by his sinicized mother Sorghag-tani-baki (?–1252) in her appanage at Zhen-ding 真定, Hebei, and was knowledgeable in Chinese affairs, in charge of the sedentary territories and population south of Mount Čila'un 赤老温山 in Inner Mongolia.⁵ Qubilai then established his headquarters in camps in Huanzhou 桓州, near the lush grasslands of Jinlianchuan 金莲川 on the Luan 滦 (present-day Shandian 闪电) River, and started organizing the administration of his fief in consultation with his advisers, mostly northern

tsuite” 元の上都のについて, in *Nihon Daigaku sōritsu shichijūshū kinen romanbun shū* 日本大学創立七十周年記念论文集 vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nihon Daigaku, 1960), pp. 271–319 (a revision of the author's essay published in *Jōto*, Appendix 2, pp. 25–50); Jia Zhoujie 贾洲杰, “Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao” 调查报告, *Wenwu* 文物 1977.5 (May), pp. 65–74; Ye Xinmin 叶新民, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu* 研究 (Huhhot: Nei Menggu daxue chubanshe, 1998); Ye Xinmin and Qimudedaoerji 齐木德道尔吉, eds., *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu wenji* 文集; idem, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian* 资料选编 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2003); and Wei Jian 魏坚, *Yuan Shangdu* (Beijing: dabaike quanshu chubanshe, 2008), 2 vols. For a summary of the research, see Yeh Xinmin, “Yuan Shangdu yanjiu zongshu” 综述, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 204–307; and Wei, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 10–18.

- 4 The dragon legend is first mentioned in Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 24–25, 118; and later in Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 23, 27, with citations of various sources.
- 5 See *Yuanshi* 3:44; 4:57. For a general historical background, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Politics of the Great Qan Mongke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 22–24, 47–48; Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 19–21, 22–24. See also *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6: *Alien Règime and Border States, 907–1368*, edited by Herbert Franke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 392, 396; 415, 417.

Chinese grandees and former scholar-officials of the former Liao and Jin states. The leader of this group was the Buddhist monk Zicong, better known by the name Liu Bingzhong, which was given to him by Qubilai in 1264 in honor of his service upon his return to secular life.⁶ His association with and service under Qubilai marked a turning point not only in his career and that of his close associates, but also in the fortunes of the Mongol qa'an and ruler of the Chinese empire.

A native of Xingtai 邢台, Xingzhou, Zicong (original name Liu Kan 侃, courtesy name Zhonghui 仲晦) was a descendent of a military bureaucratic family from Liaodong 辽东 whose ancestors had successfully served the Qidan Liao and Jurchen Jin régimes. A precocious child under the tutelage of his father, Liu Run 刘润 (?–1246), a learned musician and administrator, he was outstanding for his broad learning and talents, but the family suffered after the Mongol invasion. His father submitted to the Mongols in 1220 and was later appointed an administrator of Xing prefecture. As a result, at the age of twelve Kan was sent to the military commander's headquarters as a "hostage son" to ensure the family's allegiance. When his father retired in 1232, he was transferred to the Xingtai administration as a first-grade scribe. Four years later, tired of the routine, he left his post to live in Mount Wu'an 武安, Henan. Having briefly associated himself with the Daoists of the Quanzhen 全真 sect, he was recruited by Monk Xuzhao 虚照 (1196–1252), a Chan master of the Caodong 曹洞 school from Tianning Monastery 天宁寺, Hebei, and converted to Buddhism *ca.* 1238, at the age of twenty-two. He took the name Zicong and the appellation Changchun 藏春, hence he was known by these Buddhist names for the next twenty-six years.⁷

Zicong's fortune took a sharp turn when in early 1242 Monk Haiyun 海云 (1203–57), master of the famed Linji 临济 sect of Chan Buddhism, was invited by Qubilai, who had been courting support for his political ascendancy, to visit his princely quarters at Qaraqorum to confer on state and religious affairs. While passing through Xingtai, Haiyun met Zicong, and was so deeply impressed by his knowledge and personality that he took him along as his secretary. During the visit Zicong displayed erudition and wisdom. He was not only adept in Buddhism, but was also conversant with Confucianism, Daoism, state affairs, and pseudo sciences including astrol-

6 *Yuanshi* 4:57–58. See also Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, pp. 28–30; *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, pp. 414–16.

7 *Yuanshi* 157:3687–88. Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 113–22; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 245–47. See also Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 26–44.

ogy, mathematics, the calendar, geomancy, divination, and different schools of rituals. Qubilai was delighted by his resourcefulness and asked Zicong to stay to render service. Zicong consented but departed in late 1246 because of his father's death. However, sometime in 1249 he returned to Qaraqorum at the prince's summons. Immediately he submitted his famous "ten-thousand word memorial", outlining a detailed plan for consolidating Mongol rule in China through adoption of the "Han" methods of governance and employment of Chinese scholars and grandees in state service. Qubilai is said to have been convinced but was not in a position to implement these recommendations as he was not yet in power.⁸

During the next several years, as Qubilai steadily expanded power over his domain, Zicong performed various tasks that established the framework for Chinese-style government under Mongol rule. In 1251 he organized a corps of advisers, mostly ethnic Han subjects, drawn from capable scholars and grandees of north China with experience in government to serve the prince at his headquarters in Jinlianchuan. The first group included Zhang Wenqian 张文谦 (1217–83), Li Dehui 李德辉 (1218–80), Zhang Geng 张耕, Liu Su 刘肃 (1188–1263), and others. This also began his close association with the future summer capital Kaiping/Shangdu. In the following year, he and his colleagues administered a series of sweeping reforms in his native prefecture Xingtai, which was plagued by poor administration and poverty. The spectacular results demonstrated the efficacy of Han methods of government and thus strengthened the new policy. In late 1253, on Möngke's order, Qubilai commanded a punitive expedition against the Dali 大理 kingdom in Yunnan. He asked Zicong and several of his associates to accompany him as military advisers. Because they all entreated the prince to refrain from indiscriminate slaughter and to avoid repressive measures against the people, the kingdom surrendered several months later with little bloodshed.⁹

In April 1256, Zicong received an important assignment from Qubilai – drafting a plan for the construction of a capital city in his enfeoffed territories. In this pursuit he received much assistance from his junior associate Zhao Bingwen 赵秉温 (1159–1232), an experienced surveyor and

8 *Yuanshi* 157:3687–88. Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 117–22; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 248–50. See also Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 46–62. For Monk Haiyun's biography, see Y. H. Jan, "Hai'yun," in de Rachewiltz, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–42.

9 *Yuanshi* 157:3692–93. Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 124–26; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 250–52. Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 65–74.

architect, in selecting the site and mapping the construction plans. The site, said to be chosen through geomantic siting and field inspection, was a marshy area with lakes south of Longgang 龙岗 (Dragon's Ridge), east of Huanzhou and north of the Luan River, overlooking the lush Jinlianchuan in the south. Local herdsmen called it *Chao-naiman sume khotun* in Mongolian, meaning "one hundred and eight temples"; hence, it was known as Babailingmiao cheng 百八零庙城 in Chinese.¹⁰ As Qubilai was expanding his power over Huanzhou and adjacent sedentary territories, it was apparent that he needed a permanent walled city beside the Mongolian *ordo* to discharge his duties and accommodate his Chinese advisers and administrators. This particular site, lying between the pastoral regions of Mongolia and the agrarian territories of China, provided an ideal environ to both the Mongol princes and Chinese servants. It became a strategic operational base to assert his bid for ascendancy as ruler of China. Under the supervision of skilled architects such as Jia Juzhen 贾居贞 (1218–80) and the Jurchen Gao Xi 高觿 (?–1260), the basic architectural structure and principal buildings of the city – which was named after Kaipingfu – was completed in 1258, including the prominent Buddhist monasteries in the northern quadrants of the imperial-city. The ruins are located 20km northeast of Shangduhezhèn 上都河鎮 in Zhenglanqi 正藍旗 of Xilinguolemeng 錫林 郭勒盟 in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.¹¹

Late in 1258, Qubilai departed Kaiping on Möngke's order with a detachment to invade the Southern Song. Zicong and several of his colleagues again joined the expedition as military advisers. However, after they had crossed the Yangzi and reached Ezhou 鄂州 (Wuhan, Hubei), word came that Möngke had died (in August) in fighting during an offensive against the Song in Hezhou 合州 Sichuan. Qubilai hurriedly returned north with his confidants, leaving his forces behind. In April 1260, he convened a *quriltai* and won election as the Mongol qa'an, and thereby, emperor of China, in

10 *Yuanshi* 4:60; 5:92; 58:1350; 157:3693–94. See also Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 126–28; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 252–53. Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 76–78. For Zhao Bingwen's biographies, see Su Tianjue, *Zixi wengao* 滋溪文稿 (*Siku quanshu* ed.), 22:6a–9b; *Yuanshi* 150:3555. For details on the construction of Shangdu, see the references cited in nn. 1, 3.

11 For the biography of Jia Juzhen, see Su, *Guo (Yuan) chao mingchen shilue* 11:190–94; that of Gao Xi, see Yu Ji 虞集, *Daoyuan xuegu lu* 道园学古录 (*Sibu congkan* 四部丛刊 ed.), 17:6a–10b. For a survey of the ruins of Shangdu, see Harada/Komai, *Jōto*, pp. 19–38; Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao"; for a detailed evaluation, see Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, passim.

succession to Möngke.¹² Over the next two years, while upgrading the administrative apparatus in Kaiping, Qubilai concentrated his energy on dealing with his younger half brother Ariq Boke (?–1266) who had challenged his accession. This required that Qubilai spend much of his time in Yanjing 燕京, the former Jin capital Zhongdu, later the Mongol great capital to the south. In June 1263, Qubilai renamed Kaiping as Shangdu – henceforth also known as Shangjing 上京 – and elevated the administration of Kaipingfu into the Directorate-general of Shangdu Circuit 上都路都总管府. As a consequence of this change, Yanjing was renamed Zhongdu in the following year.¹³

Wang Yun 王恽 (1227–1304), an administrative consultant of the Central Secretariat 中书省 at Yanjing, who visited Kaiping in April 1261, hailed the new capital as the “Holy Ruler’s land of Dragon’s ascendance” (圣上龙飞之地), alluding to Qubilai’s accession in Kaiping. He gave this vivid description: “Longgang coils in the north; the Luan River passes by the south. The land is surrounded and protected by four hills; it is abundant in fine air.... There are wood in the hills, salt and fish in the water. Hundreds of commodities abound, and livestock thrive, providing plentiful food and facilities to the residents.”¹⁴ From this time onward until the new capital at Yanjing was renamed Dadu in 1272, Shangdu remained the administrative center of the Mongol government, and was regularly visited by Qubilai and his advisory corps and senior administrators. A number of important political and religious events took place there during these intervening years, and its important stature was not eclipsed until the founding of Dadu.

After Qubilai’s enthronement, Zicong occupied himself in the organization of the new government based on his earlier memorandum on the establishment of a Chinese-style bureaucratic administration, restoration of the traditional sinic rites, music and similar ceremonial features, and construction of the new capital city. He resided in Yanjing but made frequent

12 *Yuanshi* 3:52, 54. Cf. Chan, “Liu Ping-chung”, pp. 125–26; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 254–55. Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 82–85.

13 *Yuanshi* 4:63, 65; 5:92, 99; 58:1347, 1350. Cf. Chen, *Yuan Dadu*, chap. 2. For details of the administrative apparatus in Shangdu, see Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, chap. 3; Ye Xinmin, “Yuan Shangdu de guanshu” 上都的官署, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 55–79; Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 7: “Shangdu de xingzheng guanli” 上都的行政管理, pp. 62–73.

14 See Wang Yun, “Zhongtang shiji” (shang) 中堂事记 (上), in *Qiuqian xiansheng daquan wenji* 秋涧先生大全文集 (Sibu congkan ed.), 80:12a. Cf. Ja Jingyan 贾敬颜, *Wudai Song Jin Yuan ren bianjiang xingji shisanzhong shuzhenggao* 五代宋金元人边疆行纪十三种疏证稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), p. 327.

visits to and briefly stayed in Kaiping/Shangdu in the company of the qa'an. With Qubilai's strong endorsement he and his close colleagues devoted the next decade to these epochal tasks. In all these capacities, Zicong remained as the Qa'an's adviser in a monk's attire without an official title, and was referred to as Secretary Cong 聪书记, or by his Buddhist appellation as Cangchun *sanren* 散人. Then in September 1264, in recognition of his outstanding contributions, Qubilai granted him a lay man's name, Bingzhong, which means "to sustain loyalty" – and from then on he was formally known as Liu Bingzhong. The qa'an also awarded him the honorific title Taibao 太保 (Grand Protector), and appointed him a councilor of the Central Secretariat 参领中书.¹⁵ In early 1267, he was entrusted with the task to design and build the new grand capital at Yanjing, known as Dadu, which was basically completed in March 1272. However, he kept a low profile in political matters and shunned administrative duties in order to avoid confrontation with the powerful Mongol nobles and Central Asian Muslim officials. Sometime in 1268, amid the construction of the great capital city, he received permission to be relieved of his formal duties at the Secretariat, and engaged himself in other tasks. He collaborated with his colleagues in preparing a new set of rituals for the court ceremonies, in revising the calendar (known as *Shoushi* 授时历, completed in 1281 after his death), and engaged in recruiting talented people for governmental service in the absence of the competitive civil service examinations.¹⁶

In late 1271, Liu Bingzhong made his lasting contribution by submitting to court a recommendation to adopt the Chinese state title Da Yuan 大元, meaning "great great" in the classical context, which corresponded to *yeke* in the Mongolian state name "Yeke Mongghol ulus," for the Sino-Mongolian dynasty. The recommendation was accepted. On January 18, 1271 Qubilai decreed that Da Yuan replace the older Chinese title Da Chao 大朝, meaning "Great Dynasty," which had been in use since 1217 by the Mongolian régime.¹⁷ Thereafter, Liu retired to his private home in Nanping Hill 南屏山

15 *Yuanshi* 5:99; 157:3693.. Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 130–40; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 255–58. Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 85–98.

16 *Yuanshi* 157:3693–94. Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 139–40; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 248–61. Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 98–104. On the construction of Dadu, see Chen, *Yuan Dadu*, chap. 2. See also Chan, *Legends of the Building of Old Peking*, chap. 1.

17 *Yuanshi* 7:138; 157:3694. On Liu Bingzhong's recommendation for the adaption of the Chinese dynastic title Da Yuan and its significance, see Xiao Qiqing 萧启庆, "Shuo 'Da Chao': Yuanchao jianhao qian Menggu de Hanwen guohao" 说"大朝": 元朝建号前蒙古的汉文国号, *Hanxue yanjiu* 汉学研究 (Taipei), 3.1 (June 1985, pp. 23–40.

south of Shangdu, which earlier Qubilai had ordered built for him, revealing Liu's deep sentimental attachment to the summer capital. He was content with a simple, obscure life, absorbed himself in the *Book of Changes* and Daoist philosophy while studying and practicing Daoist magic rituals. He had erected in his house an altar dedicated to the Taiyi 太一 and Liuding 六丁 Daoist deities and the site was converted into the Taiyi Guangfu Wanshougong 太一广福万寿宫 (Grand One, Vast Prosperity, Myriad Longevity Palace) upon his death. Liu Bingzhong died in September 1274 at the age of fifty-eight, bequeathing a rich political legacy colored with myths and legends. In the following year Qubilai awarded him the posthumous rank Taifu 太傅 (Grand Tutor), with the accompanying investiture as Duke of the state of Zhao 赵国公 and the canonized name Wenzhen 文贞 (Cultured and Faithful). His extant collected works, entitled *Cangchun ji* 藏春集, in six *juan*, with five *juan* of poems and one *juan* of essays and biographical accounts, is included in the *Siku quanshu* collection.¹⁸

As Qubilai Qa'an's principal counselor, religious leader, and versatile scholar with extraordinary accomplishments, Liu Bingzhong was given a litany of lofty accolades and his biographers accorded him many stereotyped attributes suitable for distinguished historical personalities. As imperial adviser, he was hailed as the equal of outstanding statesmen such as the Duke of Zhou 周公 of the Zhou kingdom, Zhang Liang 张良 (?–190 B.C.) of the Han, Zhuge Liang 诸葛亮 (181–234) of the Shu 蜀 kingdom (221–63), and Fang Xuanling 房玄龄 (578–648), Du Ruhui 杜如晦 (585–630) of the Tang.¹⁹ As a celebrated Buddhist, he is compared to Monk Dao'an 道安 (312–85) of Eastern Jin 东晋 and Huilin 惠琳 of Liu Song 刘宋 kingdom (420–79); whereas his knowledge of mathematics and of the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* is compared to Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–77) of Song. His skill in poetry and talent in calligraphy is compared to Tang Xiu 汤休 of Liu Song and Zhao Feng 赵颢 of the Jurchen Jin. His ingenuity in leadership and in military strategy is compared to that of Wei Gao 韦皋 (746–806) of Tang, whereas his contentment to serve the state without caring for a noble

18 *Yuanshi* 157:3694. Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 139–43; de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 262–69. Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 108–116.

19 For such bibliographical accounts written by Liu Bingzhong's colleagues, see Liu's *Cangchun ji*, appendix (6), 15a–21b. The authors include Zhang Wenqian 张文谦 (1217–83), Yao Shu 姚枢 (1203–80), Tudan Gonglu 徒单公履 and Xu Shilong 徐世隆 (1206–85). Cf. Chan, "Liu Ping-chung", pp. 103–4; Yuan, *Yuan Taibao Zangchun sanren*, pp. 116–18.

title is compared to that of Li Mi 李密 (722–89), also of the Tang dynasty. In this setting, Liu Bingzhong becomes a figure of immensely varied talent.²⁰

In a similar vein, like many outstanding historical personalities, Liu Bingzhong also became the subject of legend-making in popular conception. His own pursuits as a Buddhist-Daoist, coupled with his role as a Confucian states-man, retiring at the height of his power to pursue intellectual interests, provided the germination for this process. His exceptional qualities as a perspicacious politician and versatile scholar have been attributed to his possession of occult powers, while the myths thus created have blurred his biographical profile and transformed him into a legendary figure. Eerie anecdotes mystifying his superior intellect and dramatic achievements were already emerging not long after his death. These culminated in bizarre legends surrounding his involvement in the building of Shangdu and Dadu, which further solidified his mythologization down to the Ming dynasty.²¹

Shangdu's Urban Plan

The walled city of Kaiping/Shangdu that Liu Bingzhong and his colleagues designed and built lay over a swath of marshy fields and lakes about 1,500–2,000 meters southeast of Longgang, in present-day Shangduhezhen of Zhenglanqi in Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (Fig. 1). The site was flanked by a set of hills from east to west with Longgang (also known as Mount Wolong 卧龙山 [Crouching Dragon]) at the center, which provided a natural northern frontier. To the northeast was Yuanshanzi 元山子 Hill, but the more famous was Hadengtai 哈登台 Hill to the northwest. It was later popularly known as “Tiefan’gan” 铁旛竿 (Iron Buddhist Flagpole) Hill, so named because a “Buddhist pennant” (*fan*; Sanskrit/Bali *patākā*) was displayed atop an iron pole there. All these hills were limestone quarry mines. A mound of limestone, about 35–45 meters wide and 8–10 meters high, known as *aobao* 敖包, was piled on each hilltop. About 6,000 to 8,000 meters south of the city was another line of hills containing limestone quarries and similarly crowned with limestone mounds. In between these hills was the lush grassland of Jinlianchuan, watered in the south by the Luan

20 Xu Shilong, “Ji Taibao Liugong wen” 祭太保刘公文, in *Cangchun ji*, appendix (6), 20a–21b. Cf. Chan, “Liu Ping-chung,” pp. 104–8.

21 For details, see Chan, *Legends of the Building of Old Peking*, chap. 2.

River. The famed Nanping Hill, some 12,000 meters south of the walled city, provided a natural southern boundary.²²

Shanghu's physical environ, its urban plan and architectural layout, were first sketched in an archaeological report issued by Harada Yoshito 原田淑人 and Komai Kazuchika 驹并和爱 in 1941, but the work has now been superseded by the field-research monograph published by Wei Jian 魏坚 of Jilin 吉林 University in 2008. The city was a classic triple-walled square city oriented 7 degrees west of due north. The walls enclosed the palace-city 宫城, imperial-city 皇城, and the outer-city 外城, with the imperial-city/palace-city lying southeast of the center typical of Chinese imperial urban plans by the mid-thirteenth century. (Fig. 2, *Shangdu*, I, p. 3).f)²³ The outer-city wall measured 2,220 meters on the west, north and south side, and 2,225 meters on the east, and was made of pounded earth. It was encircled by a 26–32 meters wide protective canal. Rising 3 to 6 meters high, the outer-city wall had four gates, two on the north face, and one each on the south and west face. The distance from the eastern and southern outer-city wall to that of the imperial-city was 815 and 820 meters respectively. The wall of the imperial-city measured 1,410, 1,415, and 1,400 meters respectively on the east, west and south face, but 1,395 meters on the north face. It had six gates, one each on the center of the north and south side, and two each on the east and west side corresponding to each other. North of the imperial-city's center, but included within it, was the palace-city. Roughly square, its walls measured 605 meters east to west and 542 meters north to south, with three gates, on the center of the east, west and south face respectively. They were all encircled by a drainage canal.²⁴

The palace-city showed the hallmarks of traditional Chinese urban planning. There were three main streets that ran from the east, west and south wall-gates and converged at a T shaped intersection in the center of the

22 See Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao," passim; Shen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 1–3, 23–25; Ye Xinmin, "Yuan Shangdu de dili huanjing yu lishi yuanke" 元上都的地理环境与历史沿革, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, chap. 1; Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 1; "Shangdu de ziran huanjing" 上都的自然环境, pp. 1–10; and Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 3–5, 19–23.

23 Harada/Komai, *Jōto*, Plates, pl. 1; Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 98–104; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 17 (Fig. 2), 19–23.

24 These measurements differed slightly in earlier reports, see Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao", pp. 65–70. I adopt the revised findings of Wei Jian based on his most recent archaeological work. See *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 19–23. For details of Shangdu's urban plan, see also Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 2: "Shangdu de xingjian he buju" 上都的兴建和布局, pp. 11–26.

city. Various official buildings, residential quarters and shops lined both sides of the streets, but most of the important buildings and *ordo* congregated in the north of the city where there were no wall-gates or cross streets. Wei Jian lists forty-three palaces, halls, pavilions, and religious buildings, some of them were identified from Yuan literary works but few of their traces remain. The main structural compound was Da'an Ge 大安閣 (Great Peace Pavilion), the Mongol ruler's audience hall corresponding to the Da Mingdian 大明殿 (Great Brilliance Hall) in Dadu. It was ordered to be built in late 1266 and completed in 1271.²⁵ Earlier archaeologists erroneously located Da'an Ge in the central complex straddling the north wall of the palace-city, which has now been verified as the site of Muqing Ge 穆清閣, a smaller but similar pavilion built later. Da'an Ge lay further south, at the center of a north-south axis that ran from the north wall to the T-shaped intersection of the three main streets from the south. Consisting of five parts, the main central hall was the largest (Fig. 3, *Shangdu*, I, p. 3.). Adjoining it were halls on the east and west, themselves joined by front rooms to the south. Together the structure resembled an inverted U, similar in plan to Hanyuan Hall 含元殿 of the Daming Palace 大明宮 complex of the Tang dynasty. Sometime after Qubilai, under the order of his successors, Muqing Ge was built north perpendicular to Da'an Ge as a complementary pavilion, with two wing halls and hundreds of rooms to accommodate the visiting dignitaries.²⁶

Literary evidence reveals that Da'an Ge was built under the supervision of Chinese craftsmen and painters, including Wang Zhenpeng 王振鵬, a Mongol court painter. According to Wang Shidian 王士点's *Bianji* 扁禁 (Names of Buildings in Forbidden Cities), a late Yuan work, beside Da'an Ge and Tongtian 通天 Ge, there were five main halls: Muqing, Shuijing 水晶, Hongxi 洪熙, Ruisi 睿思 and Qingning 清宁 dian. They were collectively known as "Interior Halls" (内殿) or "Great Interior" (大内) of the

25 See Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao," pp. 68–70; Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 98–104; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 21–22.

26 For details of Da'an Ge and Muqing Ge, see Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 100–7; Ye Xinmin, "Yuan Shangdu gongdian louge kao" 元上都宫殿楼阁考, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 26–30; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 50–54. On the earlier erroneous identification of Da'an Ge, see Harada/Komai, *Jōto*, pp. 30–33, Plates, p. 2; Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao," p. 69. On its correct location, see Chen/Shi, *op. cit.*, p. 106; and more fully, Li Yiyou 李逸友, "Yuan Shangdu Da'an Ge zhi kao" 元上都大安阁址考, rpt. in Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu wenji*, pp. 80–84. According to a recent archaeological finding, the pavilion was built over the site of the lake after it was dried. This verifies the description by Rashīd al-Dīn, see n. 30.

palace-city.²⁷ The collected works of poetry of the late Yuan court official Zhou Boqi 周伯琦 (1298–1369), *Jingguang ji* 近光集, provides fascinating vignettes about this palace complex in several laudatory verses. According to Zhou, Da'an Ge was rebuilt from Xichun Ge 熙春閣 of the Northern Song capital Bianliang 汴梁 (Dongjing 东京), which became the Southern Capital (Nanjing 南京) of the Jurchen Jin after vacating Zhongdu (Yanjing) in June 1214 under the Mongol invasion. The sturdily carved wooden structure of the pavilion survived the city's fall to the Jurchens. At the building of Kaiping, Qubilai ordered that remnants of Xichun Ge be transported to the new palace-city and rebuilt into Da'an Ge with further refinement.²⁸ A good description of Xichun Ge is Wang Yun's "Xichun Ge yizhi ji" 熙春閣遺制記. This clearly shows that the association of imperial Song architecture with later non-Han rulers' imperial capitals continued another century. The literary evidence from Yuan authors – such as city plans shown in Wang Yun's essay and Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348)'s "Ba Da'an Ge tu" 跋大安閣圖 – attest to an imperial Mongolian-sponsored strategy of legitimatizing their own building projects through the use of pre-existing Han architectural remains and urban plans.²⁹

Da'an Ge's construction was given attention in Rashīd al-Dīn's (1247–1318) description of Keming Fu (Kaiping) in *Jamī' al-Tawārīkh*, showing that the pavilion and adjacent palaces were built over a lake region and extensive drainage work was undertaken:

(The Qa'an) consulted the scholars and engineers as to where the foundations of another *qarshi* [palace] might be laid, and they all agreed that the most suitable site was a *na'ur* [lake] beside the town of Kemin-Fu in the middle of meadows. They decided to drain it. Now in that country there is a stone which they use instead of firewood; they collected a great quantity of this and also of charcoal. Then they filled the *na'ur*, and the spring which fed it, with pebbles and broken bricks and melted a quantity of tin and lead over it until it was firm. They raised it up to a

27 On Wang Zhenpeng's role in the supervision of the building of Da'an Ge, see Liang Qixiong 梁启雄, et al., "Zhejiang lu", *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe huikan* 中国营造学社彙刊, 1:2 (1930), p. 138. On Wang Shidian's list of Shangdu's pavilions, see *Jin Bian* (*Siku quanshu* ed.), 2:25a; 3:24b.

28 Zhao Boqi, *Jingguang ji* (*Siku quanshu* ed.), 1:20b–21a. For details, see Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 100–7.

29 Wang, *Qiuqian xiansheng daquan wenji* 38:6b–9a; Yu, *Daoyuan xuegu lu* 10:6a. Yu, however, erred in stating that Qubilai gave order to build Da'an Ge while he was a prince ruling over Kaipingfu, sometime before the construction of the new city.

man's height from the ground and built a platform on it. ... And on the platform they built a *qarshi* in the Khitayan style. The meadow they surrounded with a wall of marble, and between that wall and the *qarshi* they set a wooden barricade so that no one could enter or leave the meadow. ... They also built a smaller palace and *qarshi* in the center of the town and have constructed a road from the exterior *qarshi* to that interior one so that he can enter the *qarshi* by that private thoroughfare...³⁰

Zhou Boqi also named other architectural complexes, such as Shuijing, Yongxiang 咏香 and Hongxi Hall, which were within a short distance from Da'an Ge, and also Kuizhang Ge 奎章阁. The latter was an imperial study and painting gallery and a namesake existed in Dadu.³¹ There were also religious buildings in the southern part of the palace-city, including Basiba Dishu si 八思巴帝师寺 in the southwestern corner, which was constructed as a tribute to the Tibetan Imperial Preceptor 'P'ags-pa (1235–80). A mosque known as Huihui si 回回寺, and a church called Libai si 礼拜寺 were later built in the same area catering to Central Asian Muslims and Nestorian converts respectively.³²

The imperial-city was marked by two north to south streets on both sides of the palace-city, they were intersected by three east to west streets of the imperial-city in the southern section, and there was also a street extending from the south wall-gate of the palace-city to the end of the imperial-city. The imperial-city contained a variety of buildings, including government offices and residential quarters for the Shangdu administration, but the more famous were Buddhist monasteries and Daoist halls, reflecting the strong influence of these two religions.³³ The most famous Buddhist monasteries that can be easily identified from the ruins are Huayan si 华严寺 and Qianyuan si 乾元寺 in the northern quadrants. In designing these buildings Liu Bingzhong had followed the cardinal directions of the eight trigrams of the *Book of Changes* according to the "Diagram of the posterior Heavens"

30 John Andrew Boyle, *The Successors of Genghis Khan, Translated from the Persian of Rashid al-Din* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 276–77. Although Rashid al-Din did not identify Da'an Ge, it is quite clear that he was referring to the pavilion from his description. See Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 100–3; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 54–5.

31 Zhou, *Jingguang ji* 1:2a, 10b–11b, 17a, 18b, 21a, 21b, 22a; 2:1b–2b, 12b.

32 See Ye, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 185–86; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 61–62. On 'P'ags-pa, see L. Petech, "P'ags-pa," in de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 646–54.

33 See Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 110–14; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 19–21.

(先天图) ascribed to King Wen 文王 of Zhou. The two monasteries were built in the northeast and northwest quadrants of the city according to the direction of the trigrams *gen* 艮 and *qian* 乾 respectively, thus providing a symbolic architectural layout that traced its roots to Chinese classical antiquity. Another monastery, Kaiyuan si 开元寺, was found in the southwest corner of the city, but the date of its construction is uncertain.³⁴ There were several Daoist monuments, including a Laozi Gong 老子宫, on both the east and west side of Huayan si, and the Chongzhen Wanshou gong 崇真万寿宫 or Changchun gong 长春宫, built in 1277 in the southwestern corner of the city to promote Quanzhen 全真 Daoism. The ruins of a Confucius's temple, known as Xuansheng miao 宣圣庙 or Kongzi 孔子 miao, were found in the southeastern corner. It was known to have existed before 1261 to demonstrate Qubilai's patronage of Confucianism and Confucian scholars.³⁵

The outer-city, which occupied the area north and west of the walled imperial-city in an inverted L shape, was actually divided in half by a wall starting from and paralleling the north wall of the imperial-city and slanting toward but above the west wall-gate of the outer-city. The northern section, generally known as Yuyuan 御园 (Ruler's Garden) or Beiyuan 北苑 (Northern Park), was a huge game reserve spreading over beautiful lawns and groves. Wang Shidian mentioned Ruilinyuan 瑞林苑 (Auspicious Grove) among his list of parks; it may be a generic name for Beiyuan. The ruins of a compound built of stone intended for raising wild animals, falcons and birds, and planting exotic flora were found at the center of the park.³⁶ The western section was known in Yuan texts as Xinei 西内, meaning "West of the Great Interior"; a large Mongolian *ordo* known as Sira (meaning yellow) *ordo* 失刺斡耳朵 was located south of the wall separating the northern and western sections. It was Qubilai's main travelling court where meetings of large assemblies of Mongol princes, government officials and religious leaders feasted at exotic banquets and were entertained with music and dancers. The Yuan texts often mention a Zongmaodian 棕毛殿 (Palm-fiber Pavilion),

34 For details, see Harada/Komai, *Jōto*, pp. 61–65; Nogami Shunsei 野上俊静, "Gen no Jōto no Bukkyō" 元の上都の佛教, *Bukkyō shigaku* 佛教史学, 1:2 (1950): 1–5; Ishida, "Gen no Jōto", pp. 306–9; Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 195–202. See also Ye, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 177–87; Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 10: "Shangdu de zongjiao" 上都的宗教, pp. 110–13; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 57–64.

35 See Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 202–5; Ye, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 187–91; Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 10: "Shangdu de zongjiao," pp. 113–14; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 64–67.

36 See Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 114–15; Ye, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 70–71. On Ruilinyuan, see Wang Shidian, *Jin Bian* 1:20b.

which refers to the impermanent pavilion made of palm fiber inside the Sīra *ordo*, or was even a generic name for Qubilai's travelling court.³⁷ Most of the earlier writers had mistakenly placed Xinei outside the city of Shangdu, and one even inadvertently identified it with Bayir 伯亦斡 *ordo*, a huge Mongolian camp that included five pavilions: Longguang 龙光, Cide 慈德, Ciren 慈仁, Qinming 钦明, and Qingning dian. But recent archaeological investigation and textual research have corrected this, and as Xinei has been identified, we can now ascertain the location of the Bayir *ordo*, which was evidently situated in the area of Nanping Hill on the south bank of Shandian River.³⁸

Marco Polo's account of Shangdu where he visited in 1266/1267 shows that the outer-city walled area was a huge game reserve containing only Mongolian *ordo* and spreading across vast hunting parks with little or no permanent architecture. Polo writes that within the wall were

fountains and rivers of running water and very beautiful lawns and groves enough. The great Kaan keeps all sorts of not fierce wild beasts which can be named there, and in very great numbers, that is harts and bucks and roe-deer, to give to the gerfalcons to eat and to the falcons, which he keeps in mew in that place. ... He always goes himself to see them in mew at least once every week. The great Kaan often goes riding through this park which is surrounded with a wall and takes with him one tame leopard or more on the crupper of his horse, and when he wishes he lets it go and takes one of the aforesaid animals.

In the middle place of that park thus surrounded with a wall, where there is a most beautiful grove, the great Kaan has made for his dwelling a great palace or loggia which is all of canes, upon beautiful pillars gilded and varnished, and on top of each pillar is a great dragon all glided which winds the tail round the pillar and holds up the ceiling with the head, and stretches out the arms, that is one to the right hand for the support of the ceiling and the other in the same way to the left. ... The roof of this palace is also all of canes glided and varnished so well and so thickly that no water can hurt it. ... Moreover the great Kaan had made it so arranged that he might have it easily taken away and easily set up, ... for when it is

37 See Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 120–24; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 67–79.

38 On the mistaken identification of Xinei as Bayir *ordo*, see Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 124–25; Ye, “Yuan Shangdu gongdian louge kao”, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 30–32. On its repudiation, see Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 69–70.

raised and put together more than two hundred ropes of silk held it up in the manner of tents all round about.³⁹

The first part of the description aptly identifies the game reserve in the North Park, whereas the “cane palace”, which is the only edifice Marco Polo describes, is certainly the Zongmaodian, a pavilion made of palm fibers. In Qubilai’s time, no permanent architecture was built in the outer-city, but archaeological ruins show a large administrative and residential quarter in the lower southwestern section of the city – probably an official residence built for a powerful Mongol chief councilor in late Yuan.⁴⁰

Shangdu was ringed by four suburban districts collectively known as *guan xiang qu* 关厢区 in different sizes and distances from the square-shaped walled outer-city. Each was named after its respective location. In Chinese urban design, *guan* refers to specially designated areas outside city walls, while *xiang* were suburban residential wards with access to rural villages. According to this definition, only the districts in the east, south, and west qualified as *guan xiang* because the settlement in the north spread far outside the outer-city. East *guan* 东关 extended from the east wall-gate of the imperial-city toward the north-east, 1,300 meters wide from east to west, and 2,000 meters long from north to south. In the southern compound was a 900 meters long street lined with houses on both sides; to its north were courtyards, official buildings, residential quarters and storehouses. South *guan* 南关 lay south of the protective canal of the southern outer-city on the banks of Shandian River, 800 meters wide from north to south, and 1,500 meters long from north to south. Ruins of four different residential quarters, shops, inns, as well as a large administrative center with extensive buildings have been found. West *guan* 西关 extended from the west wall-gate of the outer-city toward the southwest, 1,300 meters wide from east to west, and 2,000 meters long from north to south until it reached the “Tiefan'gan” Canal (qu 渠) (see later). It was a business district with a concentration of official buildings, granaries, shops, stage lodges, and residential quarters. Finally, North *guan* 北关 was situated about 2,000 meters north of the outer-city on the slopes of Longgang, extending about 2,500 meters from east to west. It was the site of Mongolian army barracks and camps, and ruins of large-scale official buildings, granaries, storehouses have been found there, as well as remnants of what was the qa'an's travelling court. Altogether these suburban

39 Arthur C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, *Marco Polo: The Description of the World* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1938), pp. 185–86.

40 See Ishida, “Gen no Jōto”, pp. 315–19; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 69–70.

districts provided the needed facilities, material and manpower to maintain a vibrant summer capital.⁴¹

In sum, Shangdu was a walled city with two different primary functions, each corresponding to its role in Qubilai Qa'an's grand plan of Chinese imperial expansion over time. During its first decade, Qubilai intended Kaiping/Shangdu to be a Chinese-style imperial city – a showcase of Mongolian designs informed by the Chinese urban planning models. Da'an Ge, the great monasteries, and a Confucius's temple were erected between 1256 and 1267. With Dadu established as the great capital of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty, Shangdu played the role of a secondary capital where Qubilai and his successors made annual summer visits as a hunting park, a leisurely gathering place of Mongol princes, family members and clansmen, government officials and religious leaders, while major political decisions were made in Dadu. After a destructive fire in 1277, additional buildings were built in Shangdu. The city continued to expand and flourish to accommodate communal gathering, collective feasting, religious activities and cultural festivities, and it was the stage for some important political events during the qa'an's visit in the summer months. Such annual visits by the succeeding Mongol rulers from Dadu to Shangdu remained almost routine and they involved large-scale caravans with a following of major senior government officials and military personnel at enormous expense.⁴²

Shangdu nearly fell from favor when a mysterious fire gutted some of its buildings and houses in 1277 and alarmed officials recommended moving the capital elsewhere. Qubilai sought advice from the astrologer Tian Zhongliang 田忠良 (1243–1317). Tian cited the Uighur official Lian Xixian 廉希宪 (1247–75), who averred that Shangdu is “the Holy Ruler's ‘land of Dragon's ascendance’”, people regarded it as the foundation of the state” (圣上‘龙兴之地’,天下视为根本), and dispelled supernatural motives for

41 For a detailed account of Shangdu's *guan xiang* districts and respective functions, see Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 26–67.

42 For a detailed description of such annual visits and the travel routes between the two capitals, see Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, chaps. 2, 4, 5, 7; and Ye Xinmin, “Liangdu xunxingzhi yu Shangdu de gongting shenghuo” 两都巡幸与上都的宫廷生活; “Yuan Shangdu zhengzhi shilue” 元上都政治史略; and “Yuan Shangdu de zongjiao”, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 37–54; 80–125; 175–91. The latter provides a chronology of major events at Shangdu and dates of the annual visits of the Mongol rulers from Dadu to Shangdu from Qubilai Qa'an to Toghön Temür, see pp. 308–31, 322–42. See also Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 5: “Liangdu xunxing zhidu” 两都巡幸制度; and chap. 7: “Shangdu de zhengzhi shenghuo,” 上都的政治生活 pp. 43–54; 74–90.

the conflagration. Qubilai was persuaded and overruled the detractors.⁴³ The city was also subject to periodic flooding. In 1298, the famed hydraulic engineer Guo Shoujing 郭守敬 (1231–1316) proposed building a canal of 50 to 70 *bu* 步 (pace) wide with lock-gates along a path between two hills under the iron pole flying the Buddhist pennant to regulate the flow of water through the fields into the Luan River. It was subsequently completed, known as “Tiefan’gan” Canal, but unfortunately, in order to reduce construction costs, officials in charge shortened the width of the canal by one-third against Guo’s recommendation and a year later the canal broke its banks, causing great damage, and requiring further repairs.⁴⁴ Shangdu was regularly visited by Toghōn Temür but in January 1359 it was raided by a band of anti-Yuan Chinese Red Turban looters and its main halls and chambers were set afire. It was captured by the army of the new Ming government in July 1370.⁴⁵

Shangdu’s Dragon Legend

While Shangdu flourished as a summer retreat for the Mongol rulers and clansmen and was vividly depicted in an outpouring of laudatory prose and poetry from visiting Chinese officials and literati, it also figured in a popular legend of late Yuan times about the building of the city associated with the mythical dragon in Chinese folklore and the ingenious Buddho-Daoist planner Liu Bingzhong. Anecdotes concerning the dragon legend are found in commentaries to four poems written by different late-Yuan poets describing their visits to the city. These remarks include the belief that a dragon hibernated in the hills of Longgang, that Liu Bingzhong erected the “tiefan’gan”, an iron rod with a Buddhist pennant on Hedengtai Hill, to exorcise the dragon, that is, to evict it from the lake to make room for construction. A more comprehensive version of what was already a widespread popular legend

43 See Yuan Mingshan 元明善, “Pingchang zhengshi Lian Wenzhengwang shendaobei” 平章政事廉文正王神道碑, in Su Tianjue, ed., *Guochao (Yuan) wenlei* 国朝 (元) 文类 (*Siku congkan* ed.), 65:12b. For Lian’s biographies, see also *Yuanshi* 126:3085–96; and C. C. Hsiao, “Lien His-hsien,” in de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 480–99.

44 See Guo Shoujing’s biography in *Yuanshi* 164:3852. Cf. P. Y. Ho, “Kuo Shou-ching,” in de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, p. 298.

45 For details, see Chen/Shi, *Yuan Shangdu*, chap. 8; Ye Xinmin, “Huizong beizou yu Shangdu de bianqian” 惠宗北走上都的变迁, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 281–93. See also Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, chap. 11: “Yuanchao monian de Shangdu” 元朝末年的上都, pp. 118–32.

was given in a later Yuan-era literary miscellany. However, there are no Mongolian references to this predominantly Han Chinese popular belief.

These literary sources are presented as follows:

(1) Zhou Boqi: “Liqiuri shushi” 立秋日书事五首之三 (Narrating events on the first day of Autumn), no. 3 of five poems:

The iron pole casts a mark on the hilly shadow.	铁刹标山影
The golden pavement dazzles under the glowing sun.	金铺耀日华
The dragon swirls, autumn halts the rain.	龙迴秋歇雨
The swallows swoop, daily stirring up the sand.	燕落昼翻沙
Valiant cavalrymen change guards at the imperial park.	苑御调骁骑
Palace functionaries are renovating the imperial carriage.	宫官葺轸车
Who will exchange poems with me about the long poplar?	长杨谁共赋
I hear an earful of chilly reed whistle.	满耳沸寒笳

Poem’s Commentary

An iron pole with a Buddhist pennant was erected on West Hill in Shangjing. It was several tens of *zhang* tall. People believed that a dragon resided in the lake, thus they followed a Buddhist convention and built this to exorcise the creature.⁴⁶

Zhou Boqi, courtesy name Bowen 伯温, a native of Poyang 鄱阳, Raozhou 饶州 (present-day Poyang 波阳, Jiangsi), was a noted Confucian scholar-official, poet and connoisseur of calligraphy in the reign of Toghōn Temür. In 1336, after having served as a county registrar in Guangdong, he was appointed a compiler, then redactor in the Hanlin and National Historiography Academy 翰林国史院. In 1341, he became a lecturer of classics for the imperial house-hold at the Hall for the Diffusion of Literature 宣文阁, and served there as well as in the Directorate for Reverence of Literature 崇文监 in subsequent years. In 1351, he was promoted to the position of an auxiliary academician of the Hanlin Academy; and was appointed an investigating censor a year later. In 1355 he advanced to be the surveillance commissioner of Jiangdong 江东, then of Zhexi 浙西 (1356–62), and then as left-assistant director of the Jiangzhe 江浙 Regional Central Secretariat in 1363. He culminated his career as associate censor of the Censorate of the Jiangnan 江南 administrations (1364–67) at the end of the dynasty. Between 1340 and 1352 Zhou regularly visited Shangdu in the summer months as a

46 Zhou, *Jingguang ji* 2:8b.

member of the imperial entourage. His collected works of poetry, *Jinguang ji*, in three *juan*, with one *juan* of appendix entitled *Hucongshi* 扈从诗, which was exclusively devoted to his travel from Dadu to Shangdu in the company of Toghōn Temür in 1352, provides a valuable historical source for the last Yuan court and is available in the *Siku quanshu* and other collections. It is not certain in what year the above-mentioned poem on Shangdu was written.⁴⁷

(2) Yang Yunfu 杨允孚, *Luanjing zayong* 滦京杂咏 (Miscellaneous poetic musing on the Luan Capital), *juan shang* 卷上:

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| (i) The meadow under the iron rod flying the Buddhist pennant is like green grass. | 铁番[旛]干下草如茵 |
| The easterly wind blows mildly; it's spring in June. | 淡淡东风六月春 |
| How dare the tall willows greet only fleeting visitors. | 高柳岂敢供过客 |
| Beautiful flowers are waiting for people taking a stroll in the spring. | 好花留待蹋青人 |

Poem's Commentary

Here is the *ordo*; “people taking a stroll in the spring” refers to the palace servants.

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|--|---------|
| (ii) When the Holy Progenitor first visits
the walled city of his state founding, | 圣祖初临建国城 |
| Wind is soaring and lightning roars;
the hibernating dragon is frightened. | 风飞雷振蛰龙惊 |
| The moon emerges from the vast lake,
thousand hills are brightened. | 月生沧海千山白 |
| The sun rises from the Fusang tree,
myriad states are illuminated | 日出扶桑万国明 |

47 Zhou Boqi has a biography in *Yuanshi* 187:4296–97, based on his tomb-inscription (“Yuan gu zizhengdafa Jiangnanzhudao yushitai shiyushi Zhoufujun muming” 元故资政大夫江南诸道行御史台侍御史周府君墓铭) composed by Song Lian; see *Song Xueshi wenji* 宋学士文集 (*Sibu congkan* ed.), 64:11b–15a. For an appraisal of his poetic works as a historical source, see Ye Xinmin, “Yuanren yong Shangdu shi gaishu” 元人咏上都诗 概述, in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 273–76.

Poem's Commentary

In Shangjing's big hills, an old legend has it that a dragon resides there.⁴⁸

Yang Yunfu, courtesy name Heji 和吉, another late Yuan scholar-poet, was a native of Jishui 吉水, Jiangxi. We know little about his life except that he was a plain scholar who never received an official appointment, but had made several visits to Shangdu about which he wrote many poems. His *Luanjing zayong*, divided into two *juan*, contained one hundred and eight such poems. The first *juan* describes the scenery on his way to Shangdu and the palace institutions and court rituals at the summer capital. The second *juan* give vignettes of lives and customs of residents in Shangjing. The *Luanjing zayong* is available in several Qing collectanea.⁴⁹

(3) Wu Liangchen 伍良臣, "Shangjing":

Longgang's lovely scenes – always green upon green.	龙冈秀色常青青
Every year in May [the imperial entourage] comes to Shangjing.	年年五月来上京
Shangjing's city-walls and watch-towers sprawl over darkness.	上京城阙连幽暗
In the long summer and scorching sun comes a cool breeze.	长夏炎日凉风至
Flat desert and distant forts spread across ten thousand <i>li</i> .	平沙远塞旷万里
Carpeted carts and fur-made tents embrace the constellations of the stars.	瓊车毳幕罗群星
Seasonal tours of the princely groups pursue the strong and able	时巡王会骋雄俊
Controlling and pacifying the barren lands becalms the state and assures peace.	控抚荒朔绥邦宁
Brocaded saddles crowd together forming tens and thousands Of cavalymen.	锦鞍合沓千万骑
Precious stirrups are loudly tapped with brassy sounds.	宝镫铿戛声鸣钲
Camel's hump and horse's milk (** <i>zhong</i>) are gorgeous, exotic and unique.	驼峰马湩**美奇绝
Golden orchids and violet chrysanthemums are fragrant, clear Full.	金兰紫菊香清盈
Ruminating on bygone days of fights upon the battlefields,	缅怀昔日争战地
How can we say now they build the state's city walls?	岂谓今作邦畿城
The "iron pole" stands up so high; the water of the lake is drained;	铁竿屹立海水竭

48 Yang Yunfu, *Luanjing zayong* (*Zubuzuzhai congshu* 知不足斋丛书 ed., 1921 rpt), *juan shang*: 4a–4b.

49 For a biographical note, see Ye, "Yuanren yong Shangdu shi kaishu," in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, p. 276.

The crouching dragon flies away; the emptiness, dark upon dark. 卧龙飞去空冥冥

Poem's Commentary

There was a hill in Shangdu called Longgang, which lay north of the halls and watch-towers [of the walled city]. When the imperial carriages arrived, according to the annual custom, princes from the northern provinces all congregated there. The leaves of the golden orchids were as green as the pigment used by women to paint their eyebrows. The violet chrysanthemum was huge with the color of the basin. Those deep violet ones were lovely as they were charming and moist. They were all raised in Shangdu. In former times it was the site of Longgang. When Liu Taibao (i.e. Liu Bingzhong) administered the siting by divination and examined the land, the dragon vanished at night and the lake water was drained. Halls and chambers were built, and an iron pole with a Buddhist pennant was erected in the west of the watch-towers to exorcise the creature. **[The character] *zhong* is pronounced as *dong*, and refers to the horse's milk.⁵⁰

Wu Liangchen, courtesy name Yuncong 云从, was a native of Gao'an 高安, Jiangxi. Again we know little about his life other than that his father had served as chief administrator of Ruizhou 瑞州, which governed Gao'an, and Liangchen was once a senior clerk in the Linjiang 临江 county administration, Jiang-xi. It is not certain when and how often he visited Shangdu. The above-cited long poem, which gives a vivid description of Longgang, is the only work by him known to have survived through its incorporation into the Ming dynasty thesaurus *Yongle dadian*. 永乐大典.⁵¹

(4) Kong Qi 孔齐(?1318–60+), "Shangdu bishu" 上都避暑 (Spending Summer Holidays in Shangdu), in *Zhizheng zhiji* 至正直记 (Faithful Memoir of the Zhizheng Era):

According to our dynasty's tradition, in the fourth month of each year the sovereign visited Shangdu to spend summer holidays until the Double-ninth day (in the ninth month) and returned to Dadu. Probably at that time Liu Taibao made this proposal: firstly, Shangdu had plenty of horse dung (for fertilization); secondly, the visit would pronounce the sovereign's might over the desert region; and thirdly, the carriages and riders would make people aware (of the ruler's) diligence and labors. ... Shangdu was originally grassland; the ground was high and was extremely cold. It was

50 For this poem, see *Yongle dadian*, edited by Xie Jin 解缙, Yao Guangxiao 姚广孝, et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980 photolithographic ed.), *juan* 7702, 10a–10b.

51 For a biographical note, see Ye, "Yuanren yong Shangdu shi kaishu," in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu*, pp. 277–78.

about one thousand *li* from Dadu. Legend has it that when Liu Taibo moved (*sic.* for “built”?) the capital (Shangdu), because the area had a Dragon’s pond which could not be drained [for construction], he memorialized Shizu that they should borrow the land from the Dragon. This was agreed. That night at three strokes of the hour thunder roared, the Dragon had already flown away. The next day, an order was given to lay the foundation of the city wall with earth. It is still intact to this day.⁵²

According to the standard *Siku* bibliography, Kong Qi, courtesy name 行素, literary cognomen Jingzhai 静斋, was a native of Qufu 曲阜, Shandong, and was a descendant of Confucius, but he lived most of his life in the Zhejiang area. He completed his memoir at his residence in Siming 四明 (modern Ningpo) in 1360, providing a very important historical source for the late Yuan period, particularly of the Jiangnan region. But a recent study suggests that the author should be Kong Keqi 孔克齐 from the same lineage, and moreover that the work was probably completed later in 1365. In several of the Qing editions in circulation, the work is entitled *Jingzhai zhiji* 静斋直记, four *juan*, but the modern collated and punctuated edition follows the *Yueyatang congshu* 粤雅堂丛书 and restores the title to *Zhizheng zhiji*.⁵³

Dragon Legend Analyzed

In a nutshell, this legend about the building of Shangdu evolved around the miraculous story of the mythical dragon and his vacating his abode by the powerful suasion of the legendary Liu Bingzhong in order to pursue the construction of the city. We shall compare the information from the various episodes of the legend narrated in the late Yuan poems and literary miscellany against the historical background to lay the ground for a comprehensive investigation. The first two episodes make no mention of Liu Bingzhong, and the last two, while stressing Liu Bingzhong’s role, vary in content with regard to treatment of the dragon.

52 Kong Qi, *Zhizheng zhiji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 1:1–2.

53 See *Zhizheng zhiji* (1987 ed.), editorial preface. For details, see Ding Guofan 丁国范, “Jingzhai Zhizheng zhiji sanyi” “静斋至正直记”三议, *Yuanshi ji Beifang minzushi yanjiu jikan* 元史及北方民族史研究集刊 11 (Dec. 1987): 64–68. See also Yang Guoyi 杨国谊, “Kong Qi kao” 孔齐考, in *Neilu Yazhou lishi wenhua yanjiu* 陆亚洲历史文化研究 – *Han Rulin xiansheng jinian wenji* 韩儒林先生纪念文集, edited by Yuan History Research Institute, Nanjing University (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 354–67.

Zhou Boqi first reported the popular belief of the dragon residing in the lake in Shangdu by offering an explanation of the erection of the “tie-fan’gan,” an iron rod with a triangular Buddhist pennant, over the West Hill of the city. (The West Hill lay outside West *guan*, the western suburban district of Shangdu. But, as noted earlier, the iron pole was actually erected atop the Hadengtai Hill to the northwest.) The iron pole with Buddhist pennant was believed to invoke the power of Buddha/Bodhisattva to suppress the treacherous dragon in the lake. No explanation is offered here why the dragon needed to be subdued. Yang Yunfu’s first poem on Shangdu mentioned the famed “iron pole” as the signpost of a hill in Shangdu, but he made no allusion to the legend until the second poem when he declared that “when the Holy Progenitor first visits the walled city of his state founding, wind is soaring and lightning roars; the hibernating dragon is frightened.” Then he remarked in the commentary of the second poem that according to legend, a dragon had resided in the big hills of Shangjing, reiterating the old myth.

The last lines of Wu Liangchen’s poem on Shangjing: “The ‘iron pole’ stands up so high; the water of the lake is drained; the crouching dragon flies away; the emptiness, dark upon dark” together with the commentary give a fuller version of the legend. He pointed out specifically the legend’s association with Liu Bingzhong, alleging that when Liu administered the siting of Shangdu by divination and examined the land, the dragon, frightened by his intention, vanished at night and the lake water was drained. Halls, palaces and pavilions were built, and the iron rod flying the Buddhist pennant was erected in the west of the watch-towers to exorcise the creature.

This legend reemerged with a new twist in Kong Qi’s *Zhizheng zhiji* when, after explaining why Liu Bingzhong proposed to Qubilai Qa’an that he make visiting Shangdu during the summer months an annual custom, reported that when he sought to build the capital city, because there was the dragon’s pond which could not be used for construction, he memorialized the qa’an that they should borrow the land from the dragon. This was approved. That night at three strokes of the hour, thunder roared, the dragon had already flown away, and so the next day, an order was given to lay the foundation of the city wall with earth. In this episode, Liu Bingzhong is said to have consulted Qubilai before taking action, but no mention was made on how Liu Bingzhong managed to make the dragon vacate his residence. It appears to suggest that it was the invocation of Qubilai’s might and Liu’s plea that moved heaven, releasing the thunder and sending the dragon away.

Did Liu Bingzhong, a Buddhist monk adept in divination and urban planning, divine the hideout of the dragon in the hills and the lakes in his geomantic siting so that he could invoke Buddha/Bodhisattva's power by erecting an iron pole with the religious pennant to scare the creature away from the construction site? While some traditional and even modern authors treated the legend uncritically as if it was a factual event, it is hardly credible in view of the bizarre nature of the story, the discrepancy in different versions of the episodes, their late appearance in literary records, and the lack of corroborative historical evidence. A critical analysis of the supernatural elements in various anecdotal sources against the actual topographical conditions and construction of the walled city, the halls and palaces would shed light on the nature and significance of the legend.

The main source of the legend was evidently derived from the name of the site Longgang, meaning "dragon's ridge", which was so called because people believed that it was the residence of a dragon. They were probably inspired by the odd features of the topography of the hills north of the site of Shangdu, shaped like a dragon wandering down the hill into the walled outer-city and departing toward the east.⁵⁴ In traditional mythology, the dragon was a protean spiritual creature that lived and moved around at will inside the hills and lakes, emitted ether and generated vital force that controlled the living and the dead in its domain. It became the target of geomantic siting for locating auspicious spots in architectural designs and construction projects, such as the building of cities, houses, and graves.⁵⁵ However, the name Longgang already existed when Liu Bingzhong set out the construction of Shangdu; but whether because of the name Liu also believed that a dragon existed and had to handle the creature after he had administered the geomantic siting of the city is sheer speculation.

In this context, the myth of the dragon residing in Longgang apparently was much enhanced by the prominent events that had taken place in the

54 See Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao," pp. 71–72; Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 27–28.

55 On the dragon in Chinese mythology, see, briefly, E. T. C. Werner, *A Dictionary of Chinese Mythology* (1932; rpt., New York: The Julian Press, 1961), pp. 185–97; Liu Zhixiong 刘志雄 and Liu Jingrong 刘静荣, *Long yu Zhongguo wenhua* 龙与中国文化 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1992), pp. 227–69; Michael Loewe, "The Cult of the Dragon and the Invocation for Rain," in Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 142–59; Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual, and Theater* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 70–73; 164–68; and Chan, *Legends of the Building of Old Peking*, pp. 66–79; 308, n. 69.

newly built walled city, i.e., the accession of Qubilai as the Mongol qa'an and designation of the city, known as Kaiping, as the administrative center of the new government. Some contemporary literati, Chinese and Central Asians alike, heralded Kaiping as the "Holy Ruler's land of Dragon's ascendance", invoking the age-old sinitic mystique since the Qin 秦 and Han 汉 that edified the august sovereign as avatar of the legendary dragon to dramatize Qubilai's accession in the Chinese imperial tradition.⁵⁶ Although dragon mythology is alien to Mongol tribesmen, such a reference must have been welcome to Qubilai in his bid to win allegiance of the Chinese communities. At the same time, the myth must have helped the development of the dragon legend about the building of the new capital city.

The second source of the legend, closely related to the first, was the erection of the iron pole with the Buddhist pennant to enlist Buddha/Bodhisattva's dragon-quelling power, aimed at forcing the dragon to leave his alleged abode in the lake to allow city construction. The Buddhist pennant (*fan*) exhibits Buddha's power and virtue; it was displayed, *inter alia*, to mark the community of worshippers, to exorcise the demon, to recall the soul, send blessing to the distressed, and bring about salvation, and, as the legend in this case has it, the pennant was erected to suppress the dragon.⁵⁷ However, not all the anecdotes about the legend mention this episode. Zhou Boqi does not say who erected the iron pole. Wu Liangchen offers a more elaborate version, but gives conflicting information about whether Liu erected the flagpole with the Buddhist pennant to suppress the dragon before or after he had completed urban construction.

Nevertheless, the iron pole was a real historical object as there was a hill bearing this name recorded in the sources. An archaeological team surveying

56 See, for example, nn. 14, 43. The mythologization of the Chinese imperial rulers as avatar of the mythical dragon started with the First Qin emperor, Shihuang di 始皇帝 (r. 221–210 B. C.), and continued with the progenitor of the Han dynasty Gaozu 汉高祖 (r. 202–195 B. C.). The dragon was an imperial symbol of power from the Han dynasty onward. For a succinct reference, see, Liu/Liu, *Long yu Zhongguo wenhua*, chap. 5.

57 On the various meanings of the Buddhist *fan* (Sanskrit/Bali *patākā*) and its applications, see the the subject-entry in Shi Kaideng 释开灯, ed., *Zhonghua fojiao baike quanshu* 中华佛教百科全书 (Tainan xian, Taiwan: Zhonghua fojiao baikequanshu bianji weiyuanhui, 1994), vol. 8, pp. 5168–69. Key sources cited include: *Foshuo Zhang A'han jing* 佛说长阿含经, *Zhuan ji Baiyuan jing* 撰集百缘经, *Guanding jing* 灌顶经; *Foshuo yaoshi rulai benyuan jing* 佛说药师如来本愿经, *Shijia pu* 释迦谱, and others. see *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏经 [TSD], edited by Takakusu Junijiro 高楠顺次郎, et al., (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–32), no. 1, 4: 28a; no. 200, 7: 236b; no. 21, 11: 529c, 530b; no. 449; no. 2040, 50b: 79a.

the ruins of Shangdu identified Hadengtai Hill in the northwest of the walled city as the old Tiefan'gan Hill. Researchers have found on the western slope of the *aobao* (a mound of limestone rocks) atop Hadengtai Hill a white footing stone measuring 2.1m x 1.1m x 0.6 m with two round holes, which they believe is the foundation of the iron pole. They also located in the vicinity a rusted iron rod with a spike head measuring 20mm x 1.5 mm in good condition. It has been confirmed by chemical testing to be a Yuan-era artifact, and it could have been the iron rod erected on the foundation stone for raising the Buddhist banner. These new findings therefore shed light on the veracity of the story and the factual basis from which the legend originated.⁵⁸

Who would have given the order to erect such a pole, and what would have been its purpose so prominently overlooking Kaiping, if the legend does not actually describe historical actions? In all likelihood, since Liu Bingzhong designed the walled city, he must be held responsible for erecting such a religious flagpole on the hill. There could be two purposes for displaying the Buddhist pennant. Foremost, it would exhibit Buddha as pacifier of the demon and guardian-protector of the new settlement against all the devils and evil spirits, including the treacherous dragons if they did exist and cause havocs. There were indeed many stories in the sutras about Buddha and his agents combating and exorcising the evil land-and-sea dragons.⁵⁹ This must have particularly appealed to Liu Bingzhong, himself a learned Chan monk. He had given Buddhism a powerful presence in Shangdu, as evidenced by the building of prominent monasteries inside the city. In addition, the Buddhist pennant, as it served to recall the soul, showers blessing on the distressed and brings about salvation, made a potent call to

58 See Jia, "Yuan Shangdu tiaocha baogao," p. 71. On the test results of the Yuan-era iron pole found in Shangdu, see "Guanyu Yuandai tieqian de jianyan," 关于元代铁钎的检验, written by Committee for composition of *Zhongguo yejin shi* 中国冶金史 from the Beijing Iron and Steel Academy 北京钢铁学院, et al., rpt. in *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu wenji*, p. 374. For additional information on the "Iron Buddhist Flagpole", see Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, pp. 27–28; see also II, pl. 47 (1,2) for photos of the iron pole's footing stone. For an illustration of the flagpole's footing stone in traditional architecture, see Li Jie 李杰, et al., comp., *Yingzao fashi* 营造法式 (*Siku quanshu* ed.), 3: 5a–6b ("fan'ganjia" 旛竿颊).

59 A sample of these stories can be found, for example, in Jijiaye 吉迦夕 and Tan Yao 昙曜, transl., *Zabaozang jing* 杂宝藏经, in *TSD*, no. 192, 7 (91): 483: "Luohan zhiye duo qu elong ruhui yuan" 罗汉祇夕多驱恶龙入海缘; and in Zhiqian 支谦, *Longwang xiongdi jing* 龙王兄弟经; Zhu Fahu 竺法护, *Foshuo Hailongwang jing* 佛说海龙王经, and in Zhijing 义净, *Foshuo wei Hailongwang shuofa yin jing* 佛说为海龙王说法印经, in *TSD*, nos. 597, 598, 599. See Chan, *Legends of the Building of Old Peking*, p. 308, n. 70.

the Mongolian tribesmen who had been in constant warfare. Apparently it also made a powerful impression as it was flying over the hills overlooking the Mongolian *ordo* outside the walled city where religious and social festivities were often held. For example, according to the *Yuan History*, in August 1332, shortly before his death, the restored emperor Tuge Temür (r.1329–32) had ordered an elaborate Buddhist festival presided over by head monks to be held under the religious flagpole, attesting to its significance to the Mongolian community.⁶⁰ The erection of the Buddhist pennant therefore served a variety of purposes, and may not be exclusively confined to suppression of the dragon as the legends allege to be the main objective.

Related to this, but for a more utilitarian purpose, the Buddhist pennant may also serve as a signpost to mark the fountain-head of the torrents of mountain water rushing down the hills and draining the Jinlianchuan pastures into the Luan (Shandian) River. It was under the slope of this famous iron flagpole that the hydraulic engineer Guo Shoujing, as previously noted, responding to a court discussion on flood control in Shangdu, proposed in 1298 building a canal with lock-gates to channel the water through the fields into the Luan River to minimize flooding. It was subsequently completed, known as Tiefan'gan Canal, but because the officials in charge short-changed Guo's scheme by narrowing the width of the canal to reduce cost, water frequently overran its banks, causing considerable damage and requiring remedial work. In any case, the erection of the iron pole displaying the Buddhist banner had served a specific purpose, but somehow it inspired popular imagination and mingled with the legend about the eviction of the dragon to facilitate the construction of the city.

The final source of the legend specified that there was a dragon's pond in Shangdu, and, instead of reiterating the story of Liu Bingzhong's erection of the religious flagpole to suppress the dragon, introduced a more bizarre subplot of his borrowing land from the dragon after consultation with Qubilai Qaghan. Without specifying how this was accomplished, except that somehow after the decision was made, it reported that thunder roared and the dragon was frightened away; as a result, the pond was drained for construction. However incredible it seemed, the story reflected certain realities in the building of Shangdu. As much of the city was built over marshy fields, some of the major architecture, i.e., halls and palaces and official buildings were laid over a lake area. This was particular so in the construction of the Da'an Ge, the main hall in the palace-city with related buildings, which was built over the site of a lake. According to *Rashīd al-Dīn's* description cited

60 See *Yuanshi* 36:805, cited in Ye/Qimudedaoerji, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu ziliao xuanbian*, p. 117.

earlier, after the architects chose to build the main palace over the scenic *na'ur* [lake] near the walled palace-city of Kaiping, they decided to drain it. "They filled the *na'ur* with pebbles and broken bricks and melted a quantity of tin and lead over it until it was firm. They raised it up to a man's height from the ground and built a platform on it. ... And on the platform they built a *qarshi* [palace] in the Khitayan style." This is confirmed by contemporary Chinese accounts and recent archaeological reports.⁶¹ It appears that this arduous labor in the building of the Da'an Ge and adjacent buildings provided the factual basis of the legend of the dragon vacating his abode and the draining of the pond.

This dramatic legend of the building of Shangdu, therefore, drew upon a mixture of facts and fantasies against the backdrop of the topography of the region, the preponderance of Buddhism in the Sino-Mongolian context, and belief in the miraculous power of an extraordinary personality to overcome difficult tasks. It coalesced the old myth of the habitation of the dragon at the site of the city dominated by marshy fields and lakes, belief in Buddha / Bodhisattva as guardian-protector of the capital city among the religious devotees, and the ingenious Buddhio-Daoist planner Liu Bingzhong invoking divine power to evict the dragon from his lake residence. The legend was strengthened from all sides as the literati declared Shangdu the "Holy Ruler's land of Dragon's ascendance" enhancing Qubilai Qa'an's sinic imperial mystique, while popular belief about dragons combined with acclaim for Liu Bingzhong's ingenious workmanship in building the walled city over the marshy fields and lakes with sumptuous Buddhist monasteries and Mongolian *ordo* further embellished the myth.

All in all, the local belief in the protean dragon residing in Longgang was thus intimately blended into the myth of Liu Bingzhong as an extraordinary geomancer and urban planner in addition to his role as Qubilai's principal counselor through the building of the capital city. It provided a powerful component to the legend of his building the more famous Dadu and propelled him into a larger-than-life super-hero.⁶² Although it is not clear how the legend impacted the Mongol and Central Asian communities, it evidently bequeathed to Shangdu a colorful Chinese folkloric legacy that reflected the residents' adulation of their icon's contribution to urban

61 For supplementary information of Chinese sources on Rashīd al-Dīn's description of Shangdu, see Zhou Liangxiao 周良霄, trans., *Chengjiishihan de jichengzhe "Shiji" dierjuan* 成吉思汗的继承者《史集》第二卷 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1992), pp. 330–31.

62 As a point of reference, see Chan, *Legends of the Building of Old Peking*, chaps. 1, 2.

development beyond distinguishing itself as the second sinicized capital city of Qubilai Qa'an and his descendants of the Sino-Mongolian empire.



Fig. 1: Site of Yuan Shangdu (Wei, *Yuan Shangdu*, I, p. 3).

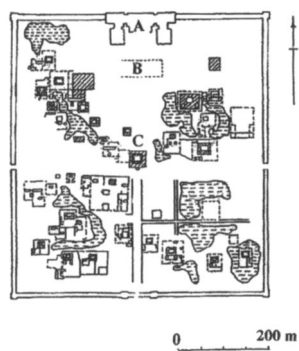


Fig. 2: Plan of Yuan Shangdu

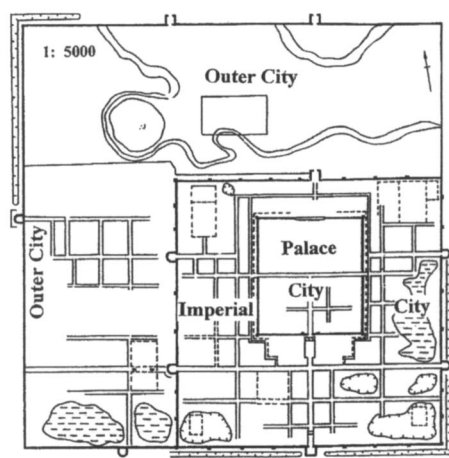


Fig. 3: Plan of Palace-city of Yuan Shangdu (Ye, *Yuan Shangdu yanjiu wenji*, p. 81).
A. Muqing Ge B. Site of Qing Lamaist temples C. Da'an Ge