

A Brave Manchu Officer Fights the Rebels

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Abstract: This paper is a follow-up to previous communications which investigated the Qianlong emperor's project of having the battles of his wars and the portraits of his brave officers painted for a Hall of Fame on the palace grounds. It turned out to be a collaboration between Jesuit missionaries, Chinese court painters, and the Manchu emperor himself. Further three life-size portraits have come to light, which all show Manchu officers and which are accompanied by Manchu eulogies composed by the highest court officials.

The paper falls under the general theme of the conference because it focuses on a rarely treated field of Altaic Studies (art), adds mosaic stones to our knowledge of the military history of the 18th century and offers historical documents - true-to-life portraits of three Manchu nationals of the same period.

Keywords: painting - China, portraits – China, wars - China - 18th century, Jesuit artists - Qing court

Özet: Bu makale Qianlong imparatorunun savařlarını ve cesur subaylarının portrelerini saray duvarına yaptırma suretiyle bir onur listesi oluřturma projesini ele alan önceki çalıřmalarının devamıdır. Bu proje Cizvit misyonerleri, Çin saray sanatçıları ve Mançu imparatorunu bir araya getiren bir çalıřma olmuřtur. Yüksek rütbeli memurlar tarafından oluřturulmuř gelmiř geçmiř bütün Mançu subayları ile onlara yazılmıř övgüleri gösteren insan boyutunda üç yeni portre gün yüzüne çıkarılmıřtır.

Bu makale, döneme ait tarihi belgeler -yukarıda bahsi geçen üç portre- sunmasıyla, 18.yüzyılın askerî tarihi ile ilgili bilgi vermesiyle ve az çalıřılan bir konu olan Altay sanatını esas almasıyla bu konferansın genel temasını içermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Çin resmi, Çin portreleri, Çin savařları, 18.yüzyıl, Cizvit sanatçıları, Qing sarayı

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During the last 25 years a number of contributions documented the formerly neglected genre of European-Chinese portrait painting instigated by the Qianlong emperor in order to promote and glorify his Ten Great Military Exploits. Research on this huge project of 280 lifesize portraits allows a better understanding of this major publicity effort to extoll the strength and bravery of the military of the multi-ethnic Chinese-Manchu Empire.

- Portraits of meritorious officers, accompanied by Manchu eulogies. *Altaica Berolinensia*. The concept of sovereignty in the Altaic world. PIAC 34.1991. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1993 (Asiatische Forschungen 126.), 307–330.
- New material on the portraits of meritorious officers of the Qianlong campaigns. *Historical and linguistic interaction between Inner-Asia and Europe*. Szeged 1997 (Studia uralo-altaica 39), 401–423.
- *Portraits of valour. Imperial bannermen portraits from a European collection*. Hong Kong: Sotheby's 2012. 109 p.
- The meritorious officers revisited: The portrait of Cemcukjab. *Unknown treasures of the Altaic world in libraries, archives and museums*. 53rd Annual Meeting of the PIAC, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts RAS, St. Petersburg, July 25–30, 2010. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag 2013, 170–176.
- Zu einigen Porträts der Qianlong-Ära in China. *Münchener Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 15.2014, 127–161.
- Die ehemalige Sammlung von Porträts verdienter Offiziere der Feldzüge des Qianlong-Kaisers (China, 18. Jahrhundert). *Baessler-Archiv* 61.2013/14, 125–166; 63.2016, 111-150.

The result of these studies is a complete list of the heroes painted by imperial command including the identification of many of the foreign names. The officers demonstrated their bravery in campaigns against the Western Territories (xiyu 西域), Jinchuan 金川, Taiwan and the Gurkhas; the portraits were realized in two series each, arranged according to ranks. The first received bilingual eulogies composed by the emperor himself; the lower ranks were praised by high court officials. All pictures were created in three versions: the first and original portraits (half-size) were done in oil

by the Jesuit painters at court¹ and by their school. These were finished at the end of the respective campaign and mounted along with the battle scenes in the newly erected hall of fame on the palace ground, the Ziguangge 紫光閣. The next step were handscrolls providing Chinese eulogies and officers demonstrating some kind of interaction – looking at each other, pointing something out, ready to dash forward etc., that apparently have something to do with the respective campaign. As so far only fragments are known this is not clear. The emperor apparently liked variety, and having hundreds of heroes just looking at him was maybe too enervating. The last step were lifesize hanging scrolls with the Chinese and Manchu eulogies mounted above the figures, housed in a special area, the *Shitang* 詩堂.

These pictures are valuable historical documents because they show genuine likenesses of the respective people not the prevailing idealized portraits. Although they occupy an important place in the history of Western-Chinese artistic influence, they are more remarkable from the historical, anthropological and ethnographic point of view than as outstanding pieces of art.

The Manchu eulogies are particularly relevant – they provide in many cases the most correct form of personal names many of which are not of Chinese origin, as well as original Manchu poems. We do not know which version – the Chinese or the Manchu – was created first. They are not direct translations: the difference between the languages and the prosody required different expressions. Giovanni Stary devoted papers to

¹ The Jesuit painters were primarily: Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), Jean-Denis Attiret (1702–1768), Ignaz Sichelbarth (1708–1780) und Giuseppe Panzi (1734–before 1812). Cf. Beurdeley, Cécile and Michel: *Castiglione, peintre Jésuite a la cour de Chine*. Paris: Bibliothèque des arts 1971. 202 p.; Bernard, Henri: *Le frère Attiret au service de K'ien-long (1739–1768)*. Sa première biographie écrite par le P. Amiot, rééditée avec notes explicatives et commentaires historiques. *Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore* III, 4. 1943, 30–82, 435–474; Zettl, Erich: *Ignaz Sichelbarth (1708–1780). Missionar, Maler und Mandarin am Kaiserhof in Peking. Leben, Werk, Bilder*. Konstanz: Hochschule 2011. 111 p., incl. col. ills.; H. Walravens, Marion Steinicke: *Miszellen zu Giuseppe Panzi (1734-vor 1812), Jesuitenkünstler am Hof des Qianlong-Kaisers*. *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* NS 27.2014, 52–68.

this issue.² The presentation of the poems in the *Shitang* does not contain any hint to the prosodic scheme; in the case of Manchu only the alliteration serves as a marker.

Many of the heroes were awarded honorary titles, usually ending in *baturu* (hero, from mong. *bayatur*), with a Mongol, sometimes a Tibetan word as a qualifier.

The main portrait artists among the Jesuits were Jean-Denis Attiret (†1768) and Giuseppe Panzi (he came to Peking in 1773) but there is evidence that Ignaz Sichelbarth (†1780) was also strongly involved in the project.

The responsible managers of the hanging scroll manufacture - it was really an early form of an assembly line - were Chinese court painters. This is obvious by comparing the faces, naturalistic, in perspective, with shadows with the often awkward positioning of the persons and the lack of anatomical correctness. The faces of the lifesize representations were completed by Jesuits painters while the bodies, clothing and paraphernalia were added by court painters. For this reason the editors of the catalogue of the imperial art collection *Shiqu baoji* 石渠寶笈 did not include these portraits.

The Berlin Museum of Asian Art acquired a portrait of Baktambu, «Supreme Commander of the Troops of Zhaotong in Yunnan» in 1964 (inv. OAS 1964-4): *Yôn nan-i jao tung-ni uheri kadalara da Baktambu*.

This is the eulogy, composed in spring of the red monkey year [1776] of the era *Supported by Heaven* by Yu Minzhong and Liang Guozhi, by imperial command:

Silin dacungga kôwaran-i gabsihiyan-i janggin ci
 silime sonjofi coohai bade unggihe
 siranduhai afame dailame yabuha turgunde
 sirame aisilame kadalara da de wesibuhe.

² Stary, Giovanni: Linguistic and cultural limits of Manchu poetry in comparison with Chinese. *Altai Hakpo. Journal of the Altaic Society of Korea* 17.2007, 85–92; Stary, Giovanni: Fundamental principles of Manchu poetry. *Proceedings of the International Conference on China Border Area Studies*. Taipei 1985, 187–221.

hahôrame Genggete-i babe afara de.
 hachiyame miyoocalame gabtaśaha.
 hacinggai argai forgośome gamara jakade.
 haksan Uyetu ba be afara baha:

Abkai wehiyehe fulgiyan bonio aniyai niyengniyeri amban loi min jung. amban Liyang guwe j'i hese be dahame gingguleme maktacun araha:

前鋒叅領
 簡列行陳
 屢戰折衝
 洵授協鎮
 搃庚額特
 鎗箭並發
 料膝心精
 得烏夜突
 乾隆丙申春臣于敏中臣梁國治奉敕恭贊

He was selected by the commander of a garrison of elite soldiers, sent to the front and fought continually to punish robbers he was therefore promoted to colonel.

He took strategical places, pushed the troops to attack Gengete and gave gunfire. As he varied his methods of combat he managed to conquer Uyetu, located on a steep cliff.

(Translated from the Manchu version.)

As to his career, here is the gist of what the official collection of Qing biographies *Guoshi liezhuan* 15/2a-3a says:

Baktambu was a Manchu from the Sunggiya Clan of the Plain Blue Banner. In 1730 he received the hereditary title *tuwaśara hafan* (8th rank). In 1760 he was appointed commander of the auxiliary troops (副軍參領) and sent to Kashgar. In 1770 he selected elite soldiers and led them to Yunnan, in his capacity as colonel. In 1772, when the governor of Sichuan, Guilin 桂林, marched towards Jinchuan to pacify the „Gold River Country“ he gave troops to Baktambu who proceeded by fighting his

way from Lama Temple³ to the district of Gosung⁴ 郭松路. In winter of 1773 he led large numbers of troops to conquer Layo⁵ 拉約 and reached Z'erdan sem⁶ 策爾丹色木 that was mountainous and perilous. Baktambu pushed forward and defeated the enemies who gave up their fortified towers and fled. In 1774 he attacked Gengete, occupied important strategical points and destroyed large numbers of enemies after distributing all available weapons. When the report of this reached the emperor he rejoiced and promoted Baktambu to *fujian* 副將 (rank 2B) and afterwards to colonel of the brigade (*xie* 協 *fujian*) of Shanyong in Zhili. In 1774 he attacked Mugu⁷ 穆谷, in 1775 Marbang⁸ 馬爾邦 and was victorious in all heavy battles. Jinchuan was pacified. When portraits were painted for the Ziguangge, Baktambu was included in the second batch of meritorious officers. In 1777 he was awarded a peacock feather, and in 1783 he was appointed Supreme Commander of the troops of Zhaotong in Yunnan. Later on he reached the rank of Mongol Lieutenant-general *Menggu dutong* 蒙古都統 (rank 1B) and afterwards enjoyed the emperor's favour. He died in 1797. Baktambu's later career is here only hinted at as it is not relevant in the study of the portrait.

The picture:

Baktambu's face is shown in frontal view. His face is symmetrical and appears a bit drawn. He has a high forehead, his nose is straight and long, the lips are covered by a trimmed mustache, and there is a thin goatee. His eyebrows are curved; both ears are shown. He wears the official cap with a rose-coloured knob. The upper part of his body is covered by a coat of mail which is continued by a similar piece for the lower part of the body. It is mainly hidden by a brown robe. A blue underrobe extends to the knees and is also visible at the neck, under the collar. A sword is fixed to the belt in the back. Baktambu is about to load a

³ Place name.

⁴ Place near Kaya.

⁵ Place with seven fortifications, near Jailung.

⁶ Place with a lama temple, appr. halfway between Sengge zung and Da u.

⁷ Fort between Marbang and Gara'i.

⁸ Place in Burakdi country.

bullet, from a cylindrical bullet container, into the frontloader standing in front of him. His belt is equipped to accommodate at least 9 such containers. On his right he carries a powder flask on his belt while a powder horn (serving as a funnel?) is fixed to his breast. The position of his feet, in brown leather boots with white soles, indicates a slight turn of his body to the right.

Two things are striking: The eulogy by the court officials dated 1776 already names Baktambu as the Supreme Commander of the Zhaotong troops, an appointment which according to the Guoshi liezhuan was made only in 1783! Is this a mistake of the biographers? That would be difficult to believe as they quote the text of the eulogy verbatim. As was pointed out in previous contributions, the manufacture of the hanging scrolls was not done immediately after the end of a campaign – it often took several years, and therefore it is not impossible that the scrolls were finalized in 1783. While the eulogy itself remained untouched the title of the honoured officer was probably brought up to date, especially as he was still active and occupied a prominent position.

The faces in the other known portraits are realistic and show shadows. Baktambu's face looks rather bland and demonstrates a more traditional Chinese style. Why is it so different? We do not know. But as the Museum communicated that the scroll was restored in China quite some time ago (30 years?) one could speculate that the difference is due to this restoration. Restorers at that time probably had no experience whatsoever with Jesuit painting, and maybe mistook shadowing for the effect of dust and dirt and removed it.

The oil portrait of general Mingliyang may serve as an example of the usual appearance of faces done by the Jesuits.

Baktambu's portrait proves to be a valuable and interesting historical document.

Captions:

1 Portrait of the Qianlong Emperor, by Giuseppe Panzi, S.J. (undated, not signed.) Quoted from: *China. The three emperors*. London: Royal Academy of Art 2005, pl. 6.



2 Portrait of general Mingliyang. 1776. Oil on paper. (Priv. coll.)
Example of the 1st stage of the portrait project.



3 Portrait of the officer Daktana, a brave officer of the campaign against the Western Regions, with Chinese eulogy. (After 1760.) (Museum of Asian Art, Berlin)

Example of a hand scroll – the 2nd phase of the portrait project.



4 Lifesize portrait of Yanjimboo, a brave officer of the Taiwan campaign. Hanging scroll. (Ca. 1792/93.) (Náprstek Museum, Prague.)

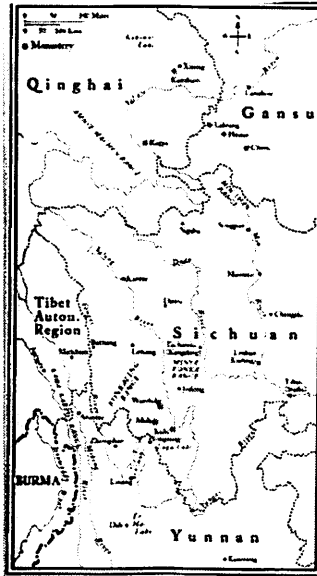
Example of the 3rd stage of the portrait project.



5 Lifesize portrait of Baktambu (died 1797). 1783? (Museum of Asian Art, Berlin.) Note the uncommon execution of the face.



6 Sketch map of South China. Jinchuan is situated to the Northeast of Tatsienlu (Kangding).



7 Sketch map of the combat area in Jinchuan (drawn by Erich Haenisch according to the military reports on the campaign (*bodogon-i bithe*). (Source: Sven Hedin: *Southern Tibet*. Vol. IX,4. Stockholm 1922, pl. 1.)