

Chinese ancient architecture and its special features

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Abstract

Architecture means that the “art and science of designing and superintending the erection of buildings and similar structures”. This was originated probably quite excited to utter but ordinary since Neolithic era surrounding 10 000 B.C when the humans have stopped their intertwine with the caves. Chinese architecture goes to origin of the Chinese civilization. Strong evidence testifying to the fact that the Chinese have always enjoyed an indigenous system of construction that has retained its principal characteristics from prehistoric times to the present day. My primary objective of the research article is to explain the impact of The Qin and Han, The Sui (581–618) and Tang, The Song (960–1279) and Yuan, The Ming (1368–1644) and Qing Chinese dynasties for the development of Chinese architecture and formation of its unique and special features. My secondary objective to show how the Chinese architecture and its special features impact for the architecture of Korea, Japan and countries like Tibet, Laos, Vietnam and etc. textual written sources for this research for collecting data. Chinese architecture is of balancing on articulation and bilateral. Another especial feature of the Chinese architecture is typically planned to make a number of columns in structure and there are bays produced in odd numbers included main bay. Important concept associate with their architectural construction is that, "Nature and Man in One". Usage of the fengshui guidelines and environmental friendly concepts can be considered as some of special techniques used in Chinese architecture. After the advent of the Buddhism to China, they had made new tradition called misalaneous Chinese art with the influence of Indian tradition to Chinese local tradition. Stupa Style, Mandala, statues Bodhisatva and the Buddha constructed base on Buddhist tradition. So my final conclusion is that Chinese ancient arts and architecture developed its special features with the evolution of time the associate with different dynasties traditions and cultures latterly highly influenced by Buddhist tradition.

Keywords: fengshui, indigenous, mandala, stupa, unique

Introduction

Architecture ^[1] means that the “art and science of designing and superintending the erection of buildings and similar structures”. (Collins English Dictionary, 2014) According to the view of Military and Associate terms Dictionary in 2005 has mention that the architecture is a framework or structure that portrays relationships among all the elements of the subject force, system, or activity. This was originated about as long as the humans were originated, probably quite excited to utter but ordinary since Neolithic era surrounding 10 000 B.C when the humans have stopped their intertwine with the caves. (Nutshell, 2016) with relating to above factors, it is clear that the Architecture is visible and appear part of the construction or the design and the designer. Architecture always depending on Art and Culture of the society.

China is the most powerful and the largest population in the world. That has a huge back history which goes to the Neolithic period c. 8500 - c. 2070 BC. Accordance with the father of the Chinese architecture ^[2], *a pictorial history of Chinese architecture* edited by Wilma Fairbank told that the Chinese architecture goes to origin of the Chinese civilization.

“The architecture of China is as old as Chinese civilization. From every source of information-literary, graphic, exemplary-there is strong evidence testifying to the fact that the Chinese have always enjoyed an indigenous system of construction that has retained its principal characteristics from prehistoric times to the present day. Over the vast area from Chinese Turkistan to Japan, from Manchuria to the northern half of French Indochina, the same system of construction is prevalent; and this was the area of Chinese cultural influence. That this system of construction could perpetuate itself for more than four thousand years over such a vast territory and still remain a living architecture, retaining its principal characteristics in spite of repeated foreign invasions-military, intellectual, and spiritual-is a phenomenon comparable only to the continuity of the civilization of which it is an integral part”.(Liang Sicheng, 1984) Chinese architecture has developed in several period gradually, at the very beginning they had used mud and clay to build up the houses. Theirs developments periods are:

- **Neolithic Period (Pre-1600 BC)**
There were two types of buildings, which were surrounded by a deeply dug moat. One was circular buildings with conical roofs, which were built above ground; and the other type was square buildings with pyramidal roofs, which were semi-subterranean.
- **The Shang Dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BC)**
This time was to take a shape as rectilinear buildings set up on rammed-earth foundations and massive earthen walls surrounding urban centers.

¹ Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, (2014), 12th Edition, HarperCollins

² He known as the father of Modern Chinese architecture, and the founder of the various architecture departments in China in 1928 and 1946. He was the representative of the United nation Headquarters in USA. Modern history on Chinese architecture is the first book of he authored.

- **The Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BC)**
There also were many architectural features and this is the time of the defensive walls as well as Mourning halls, tombs, and altars also became ordinary. They had used bricks and roof tiles for the creations.
- **The Qin and Han Dynasties (221 BC – 220 AD)**
In this era, they had perfected to the timber buildings and the creators had mastered to firing tiles and stones to make huge palace for the empires. Splendid paintings, silks, and ceramics are the things which used as a part of the Buildings.
- **The Three Kingdoms Period (220–280) and the Six Dynasties (220–589)**
During this period Chinese Buddhist buildings were created. Ex. Pagoda and so-on.
- **The Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) Dynasties**
This was the golden architectural era of the china. Bricks were very popular material for the creation and greatest canals also being created. As also this is the very grand and lavish era in China
- **The Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) Dynasties**
In this time was the period of Tibetan Buddhist temples and Islamic mosques had built. The architectural arts of Tibetan Buddhism and Islam greatly influenced the nation during this time.
- **The Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) Dynasties**
Last two dynasties are the zenith of the ancient Chinese architecture, bricks production were increased. All the official buildings were glazed tiles than others of quality and quantity.
Chinese Architecture, is very much wide a rounding 18 ancient cities boarded to Tibet, Laos, Vietnam and etc. It was mostly influenced by the Korean and Japanese architecture. Chinese origination is from Neolithic and early antiquity, there were largest rivers which ended by Bohai and Hongzhou bays. (Sean Gallagher, 2020) Yellow river was the largest river in the Asia. There were indigenous people and they had cultivated Millet and Rice in North and South. Historical evidences are very much clear that there were three cultures very small but they were well organized as themselves. They are:
 - Hongshan culture (4700-2900 BC)
 - Yangshao culture (5000-3000 BC)
 - Longshan culture (3000-2000 BC)

Particular feature of the Chinese architecture is of balancing on articulation and bilateral. These kind of architectures could be able to see everywhere in China, especially from palace complexes to humble farm houses. (Local beings houses) Another especial feature of the Chinese architecture is typically planned to make a number of columns in structure and there are bays produced in odd numbers included main bay. (Ronald G, 2006) Chinese architecture has other very important meaning in theirs system of gardens with related to the nature that is "Nature and Man in One" They had used two essential elements (Cui, Huaizu,

and Qingqing Hu 2015) to represent their mystical power ^[3] which related to the nature in their gardens as follows:

- Hill Stone (To represent pursuit of immortality)
- Hill Water (To represent emptiness and existence)

The Chinese architecture has used enclose (open) system to erection of the buildings taking up the entire property. It could be classified as two major parts: They are:

- Courtyard ^[4]
- Sky well ^[5]

Probably Chinese architecture has especial features of the architecture, few of them are: Wooden Construction is the most used material by ancient Chinese people to create their buildings. Low Rise mean is multi stories buildings, hose buildings are very rear in china and mostly used to make Pagodas, Temples, great walls and military strong holds. Auspicious Colors are Yellow, Red and Green. Yellow is the Royal color, Red is the luckiest color and green or wealth, growth and harmony. Symmetrical Layouts also one of the important feature in Chinese architecture. Because they have used rules for the making of the palaces, temples and so-on as follows: the main buildings would stand on the north-south axis, and then the secondary buildings were usually located on two sides in east-west pairs. Chinese gardens forsook symmetry, and put more emphasis on being in accordance with nature. Geographical Variations too, this meant the people in China have used to construct the houses depending on climate changes in there. South Facing is well famous structure in ancient china. Most ancient Chinese architectural structures faced southwards for warmth and light. Not only that the houses were built in accordance with fengshui guidelines, which were probably based on architectural experience. Great Consistency can be seen in the Chinese constructions. Craftsmen's dedication to traditions in style were highly appreciated. China is the greatest country in the Far East Asia which has the greatest architectural traditions too. After the advent of the Buddhism to China, they had made new tradition called misalanious Chinese art with the influence of Indian tradition to Chinese local tradition. Indian architecture has come to China crossing the Middle Asia and the ruins which could be able to find in there cities 'Botan, kuca, and Tun which quite similar to Chinese preliminary architectural features. There are many of attractive and wonderful temples, pagodas and statues belong to fourth century B.C and eight century B.C. Chinese style of caves and pagodas were mostly influenced by the Indian tradition. As a result of that there were two kinds of traditions in Chinese pagoda. They are:

- Stupa Style (came from influence of India)
- Mandala (with the misalanious influence and theirs own tradition with stairs)

Another Budddhist Chinese architectural element is statue, bronze Bodhisatva and Buddha statues found in fifth century B.C most similar to the Middle Asian period

³ The mountain belongs to yang (static beauty) and the water belongs to yin³ (dynamic wonder)

⁴ Courtyard is the major feature of the Chinese architecture, exemplify siheyuan is a historical type of residence that was commonly found throughout China, most famously in Beijing and rural Shanxi.

⁵ Courtyard is the usage of the northern part and sky well has been used in southern part which can be seen a small space offered from the roof.

(tradition). Large number of rock Buddha statues also could be able to see from Yunkhan area chronologically 460-480 B.C which have been made by big crowd of architects in there. In Yunkhan, there were very few statues related to local tradition, but later they had succeeded to mix those traditions (Indian and Middle Asian) with Chinese traditions. And also they made new type depending on their own style showing newly features. Especially, they have used little smiling at the faces with very big veils. And also they have tried to express spirituality through the Buddha and Bodhisatva statues.

According to matters are given shows that the eight century is the entirely Chinese traditions influenced to Buddhism and they also have influenced but the Buddhism. As exemplified Working Bodhisatta statue which kept in Bostan Museum and cave in Fanshi named Tring/ Lung/ Shan etc. Then unfortunately the Chinese tradition of architecture was decline in 755-763 B.C due to internal struggle and wars. Having finishing all the problems in that time, Chinese architecture was influenced by Tantric Buddhism and they had used to make Dhyani Buddha statues and so on.

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