

On Chinese Architecture

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A THESIS

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

From the four-thousand-year obsession with timber structures to the radical fascination of steel and glass in recent decades, in a Westerner's eye, Chinese architecture evolves either too slow or too fast. The current construction boom may seem parallel to Mao's Great Leap Forward in late 1950s, when the entire nation was taking radical action for socialist industrialization; this time, it is capitalist modernization. A polarized situation surfaces as some architects are willing to align with the government and drastically transform their architecture to keep up with the movement, while others are urging for an effort to connect the past and the present, so that traditions can continue to evolve along with technological advancement. Theories of modern Chinese architecture have birthed mainly from this debate.

The struggle with modernization began almost a century ago. After the fall of the Imperial Qing in 1911, foreign architects and local designers with Western academic backgrounds introduced formalism, functionalism, modernism, and traditionalism into the siheyuans (traditional courtyard houses) and imperial palaces of the capital city. The quest for a consciously "modern Chinese" architecture began. In the 1950s, China underwent a huge phase of reshaping along with the ascendancy of communism. The communist government adopted Soviet models to make Beijing a paradigm for social realism. They brought down ancient infrastructures and historical buildings to make way for monuments, worker apartments, and public squares. They advocated the idea of "national form and socialist content" to derive a new architecture.

From the 1980s on, Beijing and the entire nation began to enjoy the first-ever continuous twenty-five years of uninterrupted time on urban and social development since the turning of the twentieth century. Under the open-door economic reform, the authorities began to transform Beijing into a cosmopolitan city. The capital city was to perform not only as a showcase for political stability, but also to express the national image, values, and beliefs. They attempted to retain the tradition of Chinese order on one hand, and to welcome capitalist commodities and foreign technologies on the other. Citizens remain proud of their four-thousand-year heritage but are also overwhelmed by materialistic luxury from the economic boom. To the authorities, erasure of Beijing's physical past becomes legitimate under the reconstruction of selected heritage buildings and a rapid urban development.

Contemporary architecture in Beijing represents the chaotic phenomenon of today's China. Bounded by its ghosted city wall, the rapidly changing capital epitomizes the conflict between the old and new. Pressures upon the shoulders of the local architects remain strong: political and economic constraints, legacies of the past, ambition to catch up with the world, and the urge of self-rediscovery in the globalized stage. What is the reality behind the ambition to catch up with the developed world? Is the desire to become modern and at the same time maintain their traditions only a *curl-de-sac* that leads to nowhere?

This thesis is a quest to reevaluate the evolution of Chinese architecture from the classical Chinese curved-roof buildings to modern designs. In the making of modern Chinese architecture, a number of ideologies arise, along with political makeovers and societal developments, aiming to re-present past glories, to reflect present national achievements, and to reveal the dream of a utopian future. However, real living always comes second to political ideals on how the society should look and what they should head toward. The concern for humanity remains a nominal criterion after politics and economy in most of the construction projects.

This thesis focuses on a two-and-a-half-month journey in northern China. The journey is recorded in the form of a travelogue, which provides the narrative core of the thesis. In addition, the thesis includes academic research on Chinese architecture, embodied in four essays, to investigate its evolution, understand its relationship to the past, acknowledge its current dilemma, and search for the components that make up its identity for the twenty-first century. This thesis aims to give a sense of Chinese architectural development, both in theory and in practice, as well as including a collection of critical remarks on how the authorities manipulate architectural expressions and direct its development. The first two essays deal with urban symbolism in Beijing that the authorities have created to redefine the past and to construct an image of a bright future. Architects are only required to carry out duties, like civil servants, to realize governmental plans. The other two aim to make a contribution to the history of cultural fusion between China and the West, and the evolution of architectural theories that led to the current phenomenon, respectively. The former traces the evolutionary path of Chinese architecture and the latter compiles the concepts of Chinese architecture from the study of Chinese architecture to the realization of the buildings.

My journey begins with an exploration of ancient architecture in the provinces of Shanxi and Hebei, following the footsteps of architectural scholar Liang Sicheng. Liang and his team documented and studied 2,783 ancient buildings across the nation and wrote the first complete history on Chinese architecture. He then attempted to derive the principles of modern Chinese architecture from traditional essences. The Shanxi-Hebei experience enriched my knowledge in traditional Chinese architecture and showed me what had tempted the Chinese architects not to give up their traditions, despite a strong desire to move toward modernization.

My experience in Beijing, on the other hand, provided me the opportunity to understand the dilemma of Chinese architects of the twentieth century as they faced political pressures, economic restrictions, tense construction schedules, collective ideologies, and historical legacies. Their works play a crucial role of linking the contemporary with the traditional past, and unfolding possibilities to develop modern Chinese architecture. The quest for Chinese identity in architecture in the past few generations has imposed a complex layering of the urban structure of the city, which makes the capital a showcase for architectural ideologies of different eras.

In the current rapid "Manhattanization", Beijing has become an experimental ground for foreign futuristic ideas, as well as an open-air museum of imperial and socialist glories. The identity of the city is completely shaped by authorities and developers under a blindfold desire to pursue a global representation of modernization. Local architects receive little chance, time, and freedom to find their own path, make their own architecture, and develop their own profession. Societal criticisms remain scarce and creativity is limited by self-censorship. Yet, like their predecessors in the 1930s and 1950s, contemporary architects do not give up. Many of them still search for new design possibilities within the influences of traditions to innovations, and from local philosophies to Western ideologies. Although the pace of construction remains unbelievably fast in China, the development of local architecture struggles to find ways to evolve and express its societal significance. The maturity of the architectural profession remains an aspect that is unachievable through overnight transformations and one-time planning.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank first and foremost my supervisor Professor Robert Jan van Pelt for his valuable suggestions and much needed encouragement. Robert has guided me through the entire process, and made me believe in both myself and my work. I would also like to thank my committee members Professor Donald McKay and Ryszard Sliwka, who aid me to consolidate my thoughts in composing the concluding statement.

My editors, Heather Hepplewhite and Andrea Schwam, deserve credit for their extensive revisions on my original writing.

I would also like to thank Professor Alfred Peng of Tsinghua University for his images and articles.

Finally, I must express my deep gratitude to my external reader Fred Thompson. His great knowledge on the subject and precious comments on my thesis made me believe that this work is just the beginning for me to understand my own culture.

Dedication

To my father and mother.

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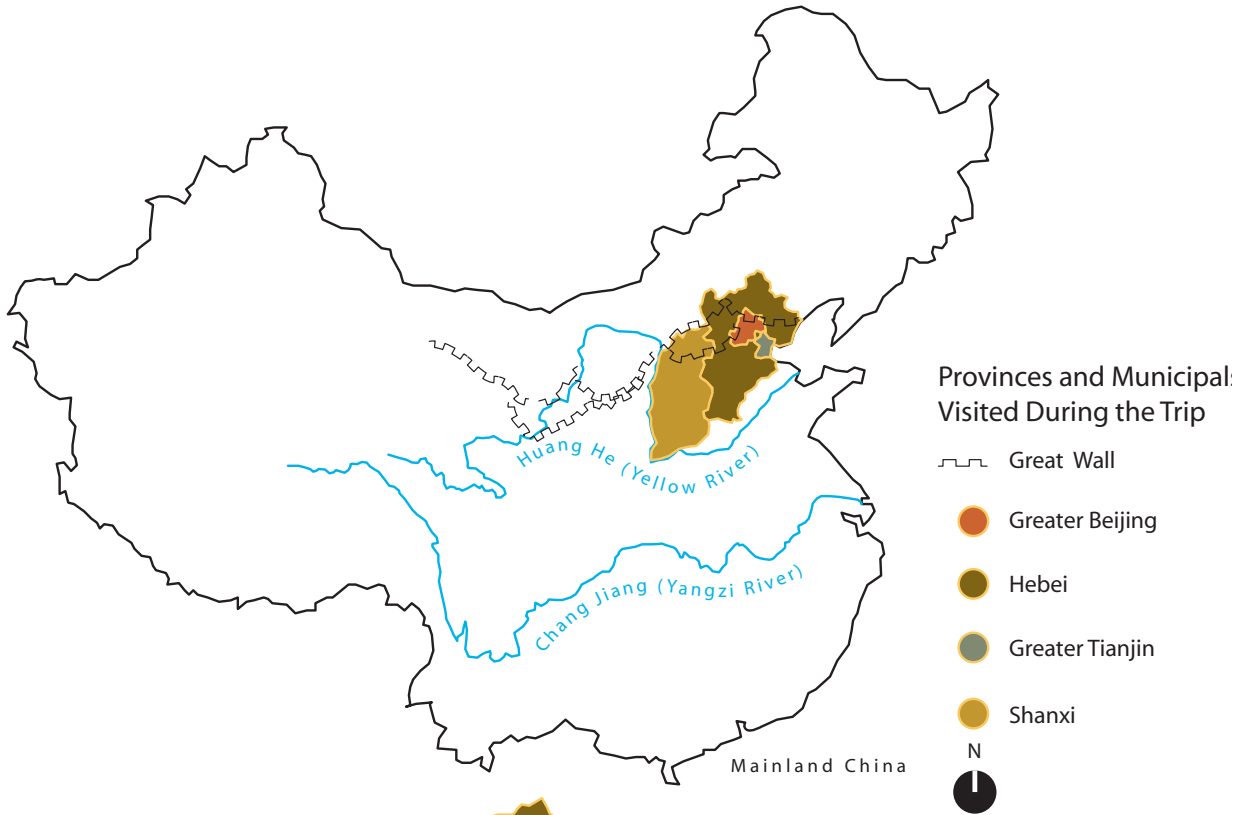


Fig. 1.1 Map of China.

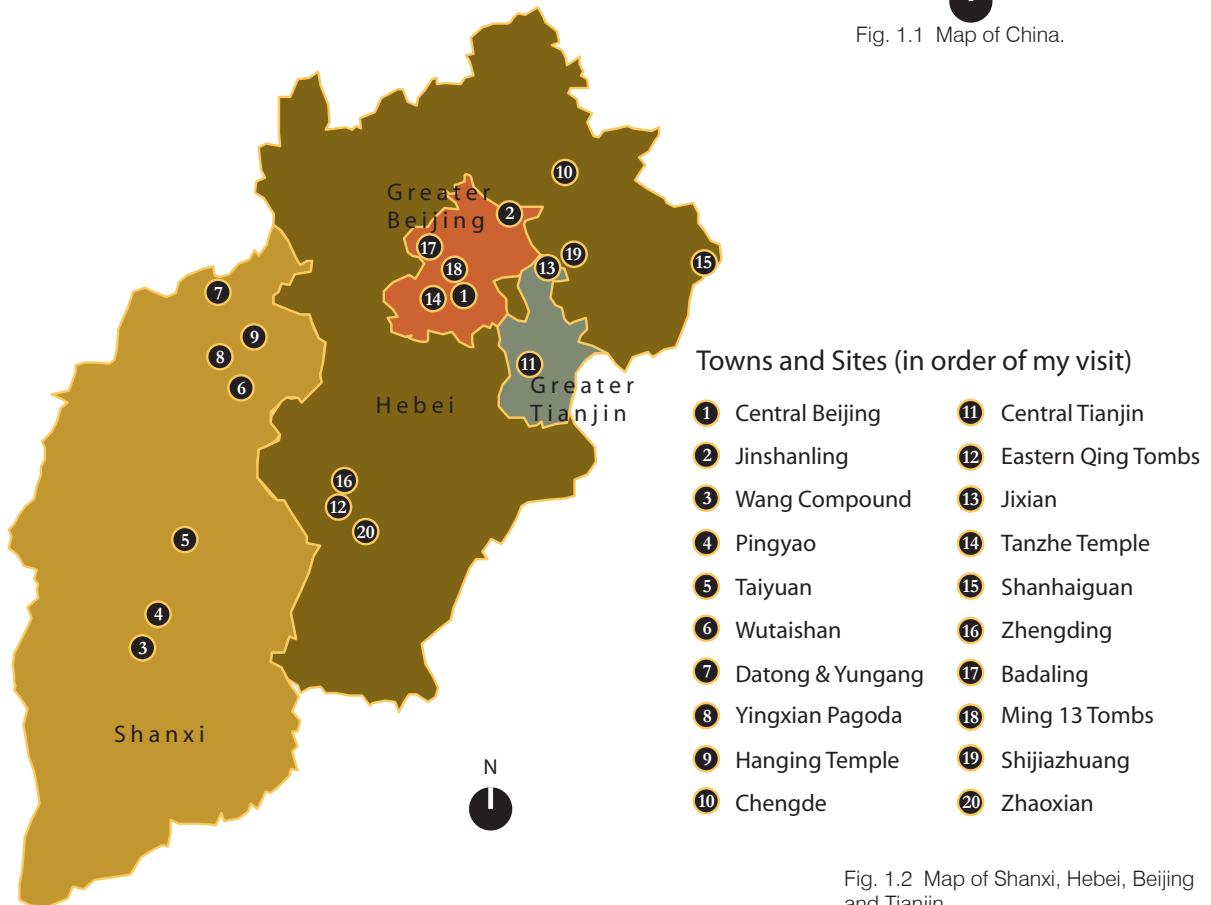


Fig. 1.2 Map of Shanxi, Hebei, Beijing and Tianjin.

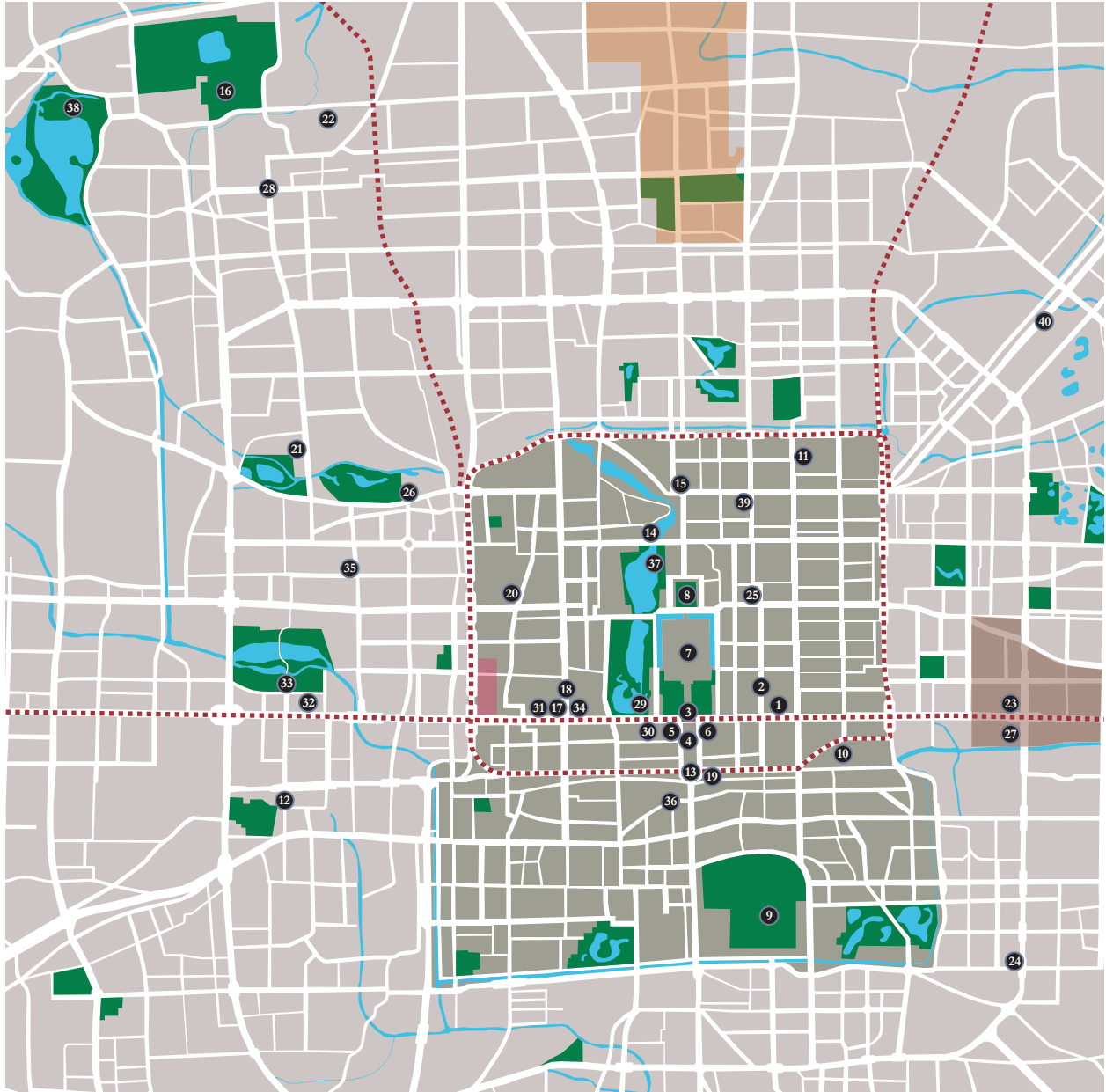


Fig. 1.3 Map of Beijing.

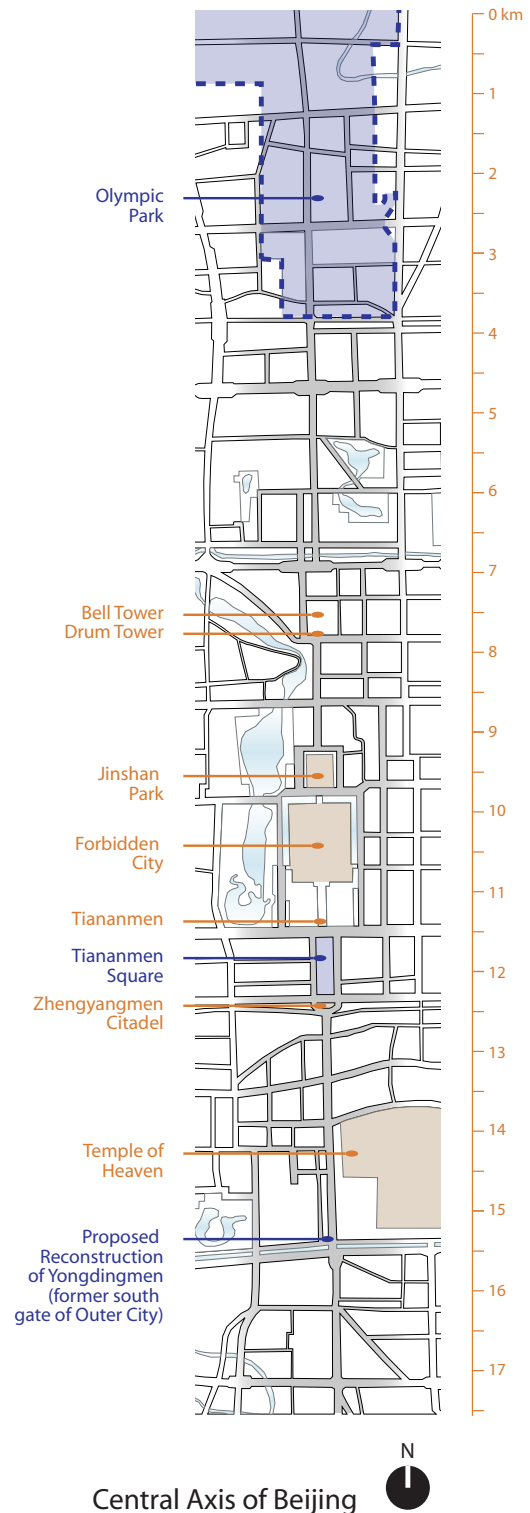
Beijing

- Central Beijing (former enclosed area of the city wall)
- Proposed Olympic Park
- Proposed Central Business District
- Financial Street
- ⋯⋯ Subway Lines as of 2004



Sites Visited During My Stay

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ① Oriental Plaza | ②① National Library |
| ② Wangfujing Shopping Street | ②② Tsinghua University |
| ③ Tiananmen | ②③ China World Trade Centre |
| ④ Tiananmen Square | ②④ Pangjiayuan Market |
| ⑤ Great Hall of the People | ②⑤ National Art Gallery |
| ⑥ National Museum | ②⑥ Beijing Exhibition Centre |
| ⑦ Forbidden City | ②⑦ Jianwai SOHO |
| ⑧ Jinshan Park | ②⑧ Zhongguancun Tech. Park |
| ⑨ Temple of Heaven | ②⑨ Zhongnanhai Government Headquarters |
| ⑩ Beijing Railway Station | ③⑩ National Theatre |
| ⑪ Yonghe Gong | ③⑪ Ethnic Cultural Centre |
| ⑫ Beijing West Railway Station | ③⑫ Military Museum |
| ⑬ Qianmen (Zhengyangmen) | ③⑬ Millennium Monument |
| ⑭ Lotus Pond Cafe Area | ③⑭ Book Building |
| ⑮ Drum Tower | ③⑮ Architecture Bookstore |
| ⑯ Yuanming Yuan | ③⑯ Dashanlan |
| ⑰ Bank of China | ③⑰ Behai Park |
| ⑱ Xidan Shopping Street | ③⑱ Yiheyuan |
| ⑲ Urban Planning Museum | ③⑲ Juer Hutong |
| ⑳ White Pagoda | ③⑳ Airport Expressway |



Central Axis of Beijing

Fig. 1.4 Central Axis of Beijing.



1. Nikon FM2 + 50mm and AF Nikkor 28-200mm.

2. SONY MD Walkman.

3. 5 x 7 in. Notebook.

4. Ticket of the Forbidden City, Beijing.

5. Ticket of the Temple of Heaven.

6. Broudehoux, Anne-Marie. **The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing.** New York: Routledge, 2004.

7. **China.** Footscray, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2002.

8. Liang, Sicheng. **A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture.** Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., Ltd., 2001.

9. Beijing Subway Ticket.

10. Beijing Subway Ticket.

11. Portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi printed at the back of the official map of the Forbidden City.

12. Ticket of Yonghe Lamasery, Beijing.

13. Postcard of the Forbidden City.

14. Tickets of the Great Wall.

15. Postcard of the Jinshanling Great Wall.

16. Frank Dom, Tourist Map of Peking, 1936.

Room 6443

In my 2.5 m by 4.0 m single room, there is a single bed and a wooden bedside counter, and on the counter a huge pile of books. The books were purchased from either the store at the vestibule of the National Library or the gigantic Book Building on West Changan Avenue. In the pile, there is only one book I brought with me from Toronto: the Lonely Planet Guidebook on China. It provides me with information on accommodation and orientation during my excursions in search of traditional Chinese architecture.

On the wall next to the bed I put up a replica of a 1936 map of Beiping (now Beijing) that I have purchased from the Pangjiayuan antique market. The original was made by Western traveler Frank Dorn. Dozens of ink-illustrated attractions make up the travel scene of the Chinese capital seventy years ago. At that time, the mighty city wall was still intact, as well as the pailous, city gates, moats, traditional theatres, old markets, and undisrupted hutong neighbourhoods. At that time, the single modern touch was the railway system that partly ran along, and partly penetrated through the city wall, terminating at the Qianmen (Front Gate) Railway Station.

At the end of the bed stand a wooden desk and a 24-inch television with a few channels. After dinner, I sometimes watch the news or historical programming. I particularly enjoy a documentary series on archaeological discoveries in China. It tells me, for example, that the skull of the Peking-Man (600,000 years ago), unearthed at Zhoukoudian in the 1920s, was stolen from the American-funded Union Medical College at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1937. Rumours suggested it might be in Japan, the United States, or hidden in the backyard of a former professor's home, which is now the site of an apartment building. I have also learned that a 2000-year-old female corpse is preserved extremely well in the Mawangdui Tomb at the city of Changsha. Hair, skin tissues, internal organs, and nails are all intact and the muscles are even elastic!

Hostel room 6443 at the fourth basement level of the luxurious Oriental Plaza is my haven in the notable, yet unfamiliar Beijing. Each morning, I get half a minute in the elevator to guess the weather before catching the first glimpse of sunlight. Each night, I spend at least half an

hour writing down my experiences and reviewing some of my acquisitions of the day. The Eastern Morning Hostel (what an ironic name!) is perfectly situated at the Wangfujing shopping district, within ten minutes of walking distance from the Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Such central location strengthens my emotional connection to the cultural and historical heart of the city.

Oriental Plaza, the gigantic commercial complex above my hostel, is a US \$2 billion project completed in 1999. Largely owned by the Hong Kong magnate Li Ka-shing, the mall occupies 880,000 square metres of floor area and a building footprint almost half the size of the Forbidden City. The five-star Shangri-La Hotel, several office towers, exclusive boutiques carrying international brand names, high-end supermarkets, and a cinema showing Hollywood and Hong Kong films define the mall as a cosmopolitan asylum for the middle and upper class. I have little money, and therefore nothing in Oriental Plaza benefits my stay in Beijing except for the food court in the basement, where vendors serve food from different regions of China. And then, of course, there is KFC, Mac Donald's, Star Bucks and Blenz Coffee.

Everyday, I carry a plastic tag in my pocket with the number 6443. Each time I come back, one of the two hostel staff members open the room door for me after checking the tag. The tag in my pocket makes me feel secure. Room 6443 is my Beijing home. The Oriental Plaza reminds me of Hong Kong.

Fig. 1.5 Central section of the Oriental Plaza and the East Changan Avenue.



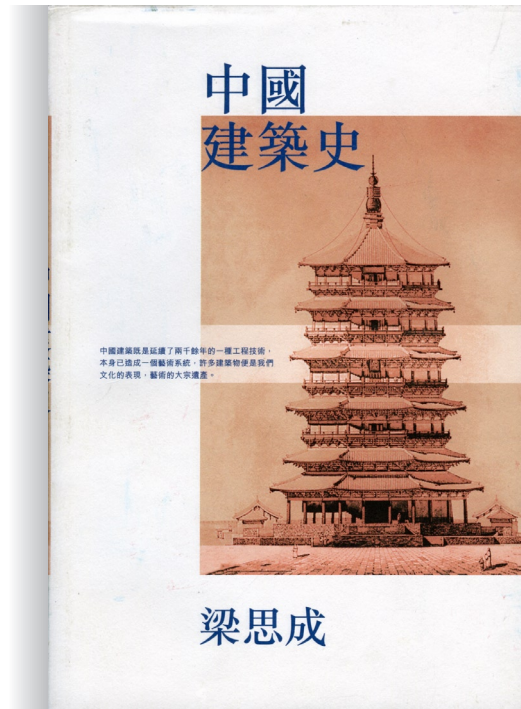


Fig. 1.6 Liang Sicheng, *History of Chinese Architecture*, reprinted in 2002.

The History of Chinese Architecture

My trip to Beijing began, in a certain sense, in Hong Kong. On a sunny day in February 2001, I was ambling in the Commercial Bookstore at Causeway Bay. The recently republished *History of Chinese Architecture* by Liang Sicheng captured my eyes. I had no knowledge of who Liang was and knew nothing about Chinese architecture. I bought the book and read it in a few days.

Published in 1943, Liang's book was the first complete account of the history of Chinese architecture. Liang was the leading figure in the preservation of heritage buildings and he was the pioneer of architectural education in China. He was educated in the University of Pennsylvania during 1920s. Since his return from the US in the late 1920s until his death in 1972 during the Cultural Revolution, Liang founded two schools of architecture, led the Institute of Study on Chinese Architecture, promoted public and political awareness of architectural preservation, and attempted to derive a Chinese modernism. In the 1930s, together with a small group of scholars that included his wife Lin Huiyin, Liang traveled across China in search of historical structures at a time when the nation was shadowed by the upcoming Japanese invasion. Liang's book represented the fervour of the first generation of Chinese architects

educated in the West. The team's studies had unfolded the quest of modern Chinese architecture containing traditional quintessence; during the Cultural Revolution, no one cared about architecture and scholarship. Liang died in 1972, the year that he was persecuted by the Red Guards. He only posthumously regained honour after the political reforms of Deng Xiaoping's China.

Liang's book stimulated my interest in Chinese architecture. In seeking for a broader perspective, I performed some online research on Liang and a few other renowned twentieth-century Chinese architects. Their endeavour to search for new Chinese architecture encourages me to take on a similar quest in the more diverse twenty-first century. Chinese architectural tradition must find a way to evolve in order to regain the required energy and flexibility to express the contemporary society.



Fig. 1.7 David Beckham in the Adidas advertisement billboard at Wangfujing.

2004.10.17. A Commercial Greeting

At 21:30, I arrived at the Capital International Airport of Beijing. I hopped onto an airport shuttle for the Wangfujing district. The bus sped through the Airport Expressway and the ring road system. Along the way, I came across dozens of dazzling advertisement billboards. More than half were promoting real estate developments: condominiums, modern villas, and Western townhouses. All the condominiums had identical aluminium-framed windows and colourful cladding and metallic roof trellises. Villas were depicted as deluxe glass houses or North American brick dwellings situated in exotic Alpine environments.

I passed by the Chaoyang District and saw a set of vertical advertisement banners attached to street lamps, and posters at bus shelters publicized the first-ever Chinese Architectural Biennale held about a month earlier. Portraits of famous international architects such as Zaha Hadid were all over the streets of the Chaoyang District, the area of the new Central Business District, and many middle or upper-class residential developments. I had read several articles criticizing the new big-name projects, such as Rem Koolhaas's CCTV Tower and Paul Andreu's National Theatre, as mere expensive and pretty objects. I personally have no distaste about the ambitious design schemes. Instead, I like how the new constructions have brought up enormous public debates, something rarely seen in China. Yet, I also understand the domestic concerns about the issues of overspending and the lack of opportunities for local architects. Perhaps the trip can provide me with further insights on the local contemporary architectural events.

The shuttle stopped at the eastern edge of the Wangfujing shopping district. Wangfujing had risen in the mid 1990s when the municipal government closed off part of the Wangfujing Avenue to create a pedestrian promenade. Investors from Hong Kong dominated the developments, building gigantic shopping centres with brand-name stores and multicultural eateries. They transformed the original traditional market and theatre districts into the most popular shopping area of Beijing.

Carrying my backpack and camera bag, I strolled through a section of the Wangfujing Avenue and passed by a row of glowing shop windows and brand signage. I passed by a huge billboard of David Beckham, in his white Real Madrid jersey to advertise Adidas sportswear. As I turned my back to Beckham, I reached the entrance vestibule of the East Morning Hostel, a check-in counter on my right and a descending elevator at the end.

2004.10.18. Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City

In the summery morning, I walked west for ten minutes along the Changan Avenue to the Tiananmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace, "*men*" means "gate" in Chinese). The gate consists of a platform and a traditional palace structure on top. The walls are red.; the flags are red; the lanterns are red; the circular national emblem below the gigantic roof is also red. Several pairs of tourists stood on the gate platform, where Chairman Mao declared the birth of Communist China. Tiananmen has witnessed uncounted historical incidents throughout the twentieth century. The elevation of the gate reminded me of photographs of the May 4th Movement of 1919, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1960s, and the June 4th Incident of 1989. On the cold, hard stone pavement below the gate blood stains have faded, foot prints have been obliterated, but memories of the incidents remains its impact.

A Chinese couple in their fifties approached me. They asked me to change film for their point-and-shoot camera and to take a picture of them posing in front of Mao's portrait hanging above the gate opening. The current version of Mao's portrait, sandwiched between the banners that proclaim "Long Live the People's Republic of China" and "Long Live the Unification of People in the World", dates from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Mao died in 1976, but his portrait remains, and has become a symbol of Communist China. The couple told me they were from the province of Anhui, about 1,800 km southeast of the capital.

"This is our first time to visit Beijing," they added. "Certainly, we wanted to come at least once in our lifetime."

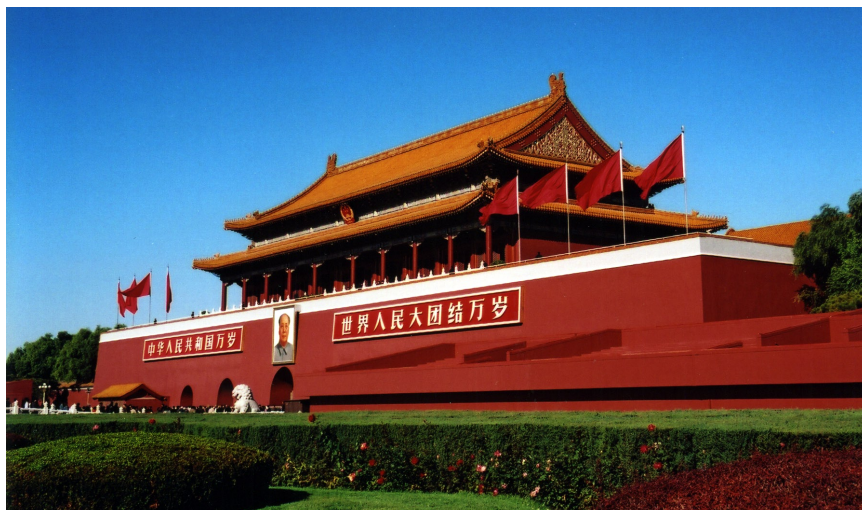


Fig. 1.8 Tiananmen as seen from the north side of the Changan Avenue.

I crossed Changan Avenue through one of the pedestrian tunnels near the gate. Surrounded by two groups of tourists, I reached Tiananmen Square. It was gigantic. Tourists and guides, souvenir photo booths and kite salesmen filled the stone pavement. Security guards in green uniforms were stationed at regular intervals.

Before the Mao Mausoleum—a large cube in the middle of the square—stands a large white marble stele: the Monument of the People's Heroes. About the same height of the Tiananmen gate structure across the street, the monument appears like a solo candle on a vast cake surface. My online research tells me that several architects have been involved in the design of the monument: Lin Huiyin was responsible for the bas-relief on the base and Liang Sicheng acted as a general design consultant. The monument was constructed in the mid 1950s, as well as was the square itself. From 1913 when the Republican government demolished the Thousand Step Passageway, the former imperial pavement and the flanking buildings, to 1959 when the Communists completed the making of the 500 m by 860 m Tiananmen Square, this space in front of Tiananmen has gone through as least five or six alterations.

To the west of the monument stands the Socialist-style Great Hall of the People, and to the east, the National Museum. In front of the museum, an electronic countdown machine anticipates the 2008 Olympics. The flickering red timer, to the precision of seconds, reminded me of another countdown machine at the same spot I had seen on television news many years ago. Back then, it was dedicated to the reunification of Hong Kong and the mainland in 1997. The anticipations of both were fairly alike.

I crossed Changan Avenue once again through the same tunnel, walked over an imperial marble bridge, and entered the central opening of Tiananmen. After the Tiananmen, a tree-lined passageway led me to a similar gate structure, the Duanmen (Gate of Rightfulness). The Forbidden City disclosed itself after I passed through the Duanmen. I saw the Wumen (Gate of Median), the adjacent watch towers, and a defensive wall stretched in a U-shape in plan, protecting the southern approach of the palace complex. From the Wumen to the Xuenwumen (Gate of the Divine Might), I discovered many courtyards and palace



Fig. 1.9 The Mao Mausoleum.



Fig. 1.10 The Monument of the People's Heroes.



Fig. 1.11 The Great Hall of the People.



Fig. 1.12 The National Museum.

halls filling the 960 m (north–south) by 760 m (east–west) enclosure.

I stepped into the first court. About the size of a soccer field, it had in its middle a waterway and five prominent marble bridges. Hundreds of visitors crowded onto the bridges for shooting photos. I chose to cross on the central bridge, where in imperial days only the emperor was allowed to set foot. The next court contained the three great throne halls: the Taihe, Zhonghe, and Baohe. The Taihe Hall (Hall of Supreme Harmony) is the largest structure in the Forbidden City.

The Taihe Hall, the gigantic double-gabled timber structure with a monumental roof of golden tiles, remains one of the most popular Chinese icons. Thanks to Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*, the image of the hall is extremely well-known in the West. A 7 m high podium finished in white marble supports the three great halls, on which the balustrades and steps are carved with bas-relief. Under the midday sun, the golden tiles of the Taihe Hall and adjacent buildings sparkle. Scattering weeds from cracks and joints between tiles reveal the palace's venerable age. I do not have a huge passion for palace architecture; perhaps the image of the imperial halls is too well-known, to a degree that it becomes a gaudy symbol of Chineseness.

After the outer courtyards and imperial halls, the northern half of the Forbidden City is a maze of self-contained courtyard complexes. Long stretches of exterior corridors, flanked by prolonged, red plaster walls form a network of laneways connecting the 800 or so buildings and the legendary 9,999 rooms. A number of circular bronze vessels line the red walls and are found within residential quarters. When filled with water, these vessels serve as fire-safety instruments. The trade-off for the flexibility of timber framing was its combustible weakness. Even the *Taihe* Hall had once been burnt down and later rebuilt.

After a long corridor, I reached the Qianqing Palace, one of the many royal complexes in the maze-like network. The Qianqing complex contains the inner throne room of Emperor Kangxi, and has been famous ever since his death in 1722. Emperor Kangxi was the most powerful emperor in the Qing era. According to historical accounts, his inner throne room at Qianqing Palace was always packed with advisors and generals day and night. Today, the entire throne room is decorated partly with real artefacts and partly with replicas of destroyed or stolen pieces.



Fig. 1.13 The admission ticket of the Forbidden City. At its back shows an advertisement of Nestlé food products.

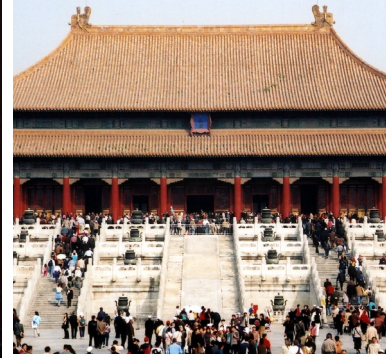


Fig. 1.14 The Taihe Hall (Hall of Supreme Harmony).

Fig. 1.15 An internal street at the residential quarter of the Forbidden City.

I squeezed into the crowd at the fenced opening to have a glimpse of the interior. Hanging at the central beam, a large calligraphy panel by Kangxi proclaims "Overt and Just". Kangxi is one of the Chinese emperors I admire the most. His learning habit made him one of the most knowledgeable Chinese rulers in history. His teachers varied from traditional Confucian masters, calligraphy experts, and famous painters to Western scientists and mathematicians. His intelligence and knowledge made him one of the most successful rulers in Chinese history. In his sixty-one-year reign, the Imperial Qing had risen to its peak in military power and wealth. His grandson Qianlong took the benefit and became the most ambitious builder when he came to power.

I drifted through the royal gardens at the north end and exited the palaces through the Gate of the Divine Might. I climbed the manmade Jin Hill north of the Forbidden City for a bird-eye view of the palaces. The Jin Hill (Mount of Views) was made with earth dug out from the making of the moat network. It serves not only as a vantage point, but also as a symbolic protection of the north. Fengshui proposes the concept of "shielding the north and opening to the south".

On the way up, I encountered a tree marked the suicidal place for the last Ming Emperor Songjing. He hung himself on that tree when rebels snapped open the gates of Beijing. The rebels were later defeated by the Manchurians, called to help by a Ming general. Once in Beijing, the Manchurians refused to re-establish the Ming Dynasty, and established the Qing Dynasty.

I reached one of the five pavilions at the peak of the hill. The



Fig. 1.16 Typical roof decorations made of yellow glazed tiles on the imperial palaces.



Fig. 1.17 The throne room at Qianqing Palace.

clearness of the morning sun was gone. The smog generated from the coal power plants at the western suburbs blanketed the layering of golden roofs and red walls of the palaces with a shade of dull blue. Despite the blurriness, the *shi* of the Forbidden City remained powerful. "*Shi*" means the atmosphere and impact that a group of elements as a whole create. *Shi* becomes powerful when ten thousand soldiers march on a vast plain, or a dozen mountain peaks dominate a view, or a hundred houses form a spectacular architectural complex. *Shi* requires spectators to look from afar in order to sense it. Chinese architecture emphasizes axial planning and building groupings because ancient emperors loved the quality of *shi*. Apart from *shi*, they also loved *xing*. "*Xing*" means the form or appearance. *Xing* requires spectators to get close to the building, and the early builders enhanced *xing* with delicate decorations and by building contours highlighted by the horizontal lines of the multi-tiered roof and its curve gesture. A successful Chinese building should express both *shi* and *xing* together.

I descended the hill and walked along the moat on the east side of the Forbidden City. Before I reached the Wumen again, I noticed a girl sketching a multi-storey guard tower of the palace's fortress. She used a 2B pencil. One by one, flying eaves, ornate ridge, golden tiles, and delicate wooden screens appeared on the page of her sketchbook. I should have carried a sketchbook also.

Here I am, at room 6443, writing down my first day of my Beijing experience while sitting on the bed, since the 24-inch television takes up two thirds of the desk's space.

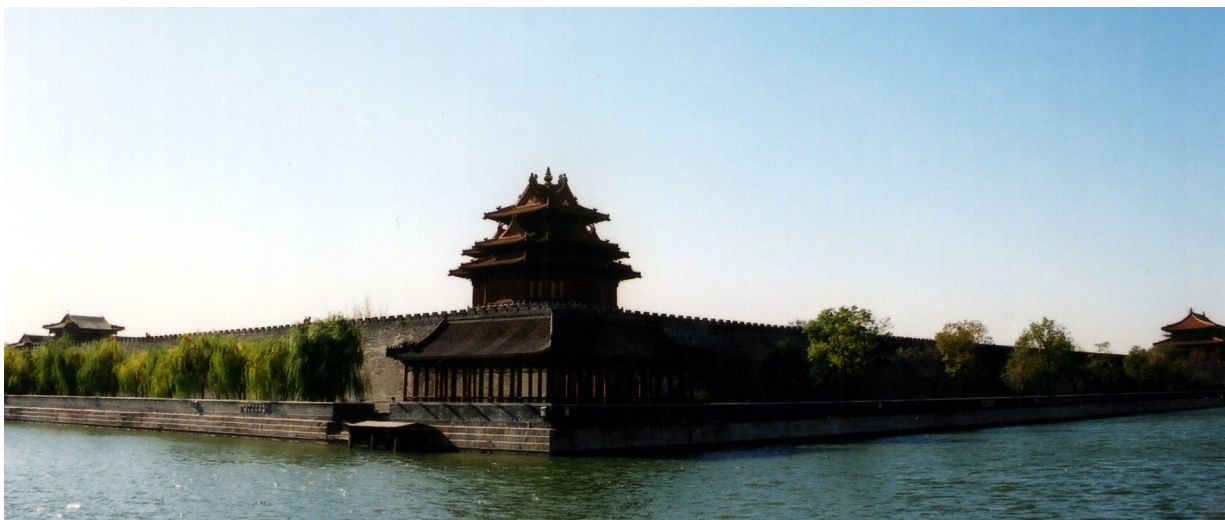


Fig. 1.18 The Imperial Ancestral Shrine.



Fig. 1.19 Sculpture at the Imperial Ancestral Shrine..

Fig. 1.20 The moat and the guard tower at the northeast corner of the Forbidden City.



2004.10.19. Great Wall

I was among the ten passengers—two Americans, one Italian, four Chinese Canadians, and two Hong Kong backpackers—in a hostel van heading to Jinshanling (Golden Mountain Pass). My guidebook recommended the trek of the Great Wall from Jinshanling to Simatai (Platform of Sima), and to leave the common Badaling section for the tourist in haste. After negotiating the morning traffic of the ring roads, our van headed northeast for two and a half hours before arriving at the village of Jinshanling. More than half a dozen villagers gathered around our van to sell us T-shirts or offer their services as a guide. A young woman in red followed me for five minutes, trying to persuade me to take her as a guide. She gave up at last.

We took a narrow path along a mountain creek. A herd of goats and a shepherd emerged behind a turn, walking back to the village. I took several pictures of the goats. The shepherd carried a wooden stick, staying at the back of the herd and whistling along the way.

A hand-written sign saying "Graet Wall" was pinned on a tree. We followed the direction of the misspelled sign for another five minutes. The Great Wall revealed itself on a hillside behind a group of tree branches. We chose a modest slope and ascended to the Jinshanling watchtower. The watchtower had gone through renovations since this section was opened for international tourists in recent years. Many campers and young visitors prefer Jinshanling to the crowded and finely "decorated" sections closer to Beijing. Today, the Jinshanling-Simatai experience is considered as more "genuine" than other parts of the Great Wall. Most parts of this section remain untouched; only the first few watchtowers at either entry points have been restored.

The Great Wall—first built in detached sections by several warlords during the Warrior Period (475 – 221 BC)—was unified under the reign of the First Qin Emperor (221 to 206. BC). When Ming emperors drove off the Mongols in AD 1368, they began to restore and extend the Great Wall to its current scale during the 276 years of their rule. There are many tear-shedding poems and songs about the Great Wall from all periods in history. The folklore *Meng Jiang* tells the tragic story of Miss Jiang and her husband Fan in the Qin era. On their wedding night Fan was sent to the north as a Great Wall builder. In search for



Fig. 1.21 The goats at Jinshanling.



Fig. 1.22 A watchtower near Jinshanling.



Fig. 1.23 A section of the wall without much renovation.

Fan, Jiang walked all the way to the Great Wall, and discovered that Fan had died. Jiang cried for three days at the Great Wall. Her grief made parts of the wall collapse, and revealed a pile of corpses at the wall foundation. Carefully searching the pile, Jiang found the body of her husband.

The Great Wall represented the northern boundary of ancient China, separating the Han Chinese and their fertile Middle Kingdom from northern nomadic groups (some were tribes forced out of China during the prehistorical eras). It was a means to protect, separate, and control. Similar purport was taken in the building of city walls, ward walls, and residential walls. Walls were the basic organizational element in Chinese architecture and urban planning.

I began my journey on the Great Wall trekking due east. Every few hundred metres, there arose a watchtower. After the tenth watchtower, no trace of modern restoration could be seen. I soon lost track of the other tourists of my group and became a solo walker. The wall ran along the ridge of the Yan Mountains. Whenever I ascended, it was a cruel climb of semi-ruined steps with rises over 30 cm. When the wall went downwards, I descended at a steep angle on the stony surface. The scenery of Yan Mountains and the Great Wall was rewarding though.

By about 13:00, I sat on a pile of crumble stones atop a watchtower. I drank some water and ate several biscuits. Touching the 10 cm x 20 cm x 40 cm grey bricks, I wondered how many bricks it had taken to complete the wall, which stretches over 5,600km from east to west.

The massive brick construction proved time after time inadequate to protect any dynasty from danger. Nevertheless, it had an important function: it gave traditional Chinese a consolidation of their Confucian self-inward and egocentric beliefs. It defined the outer limits of the law. Within the walls there were restrictions and within these restrictions there was no individuality. Citizens learned to be afraid of breaking the restrictions and penetrating the wall.

For most of the time, I was around 5 m to 10 m above ground. At two occasions, I was required to climb down the wall and to walk on the ground and then to climb back up again, since those parts of the wall were in too poor shape. I passed by a sign stating the entry of the Simatai section at about the twentieth watchtower. I became exhausted. At the thirty-fourth watchtower, a suspended bridge spanned a gorge where the

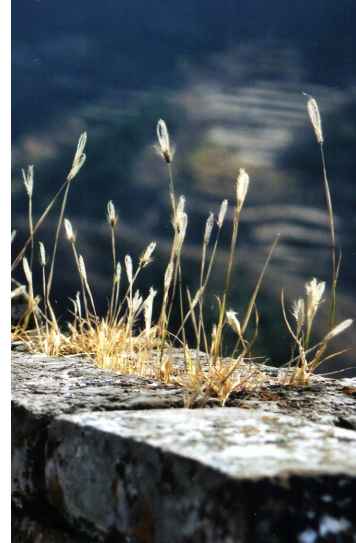


Fig. 1.24 The bricks are roughly 10 x 20 x 40cm in size.



Fig. 1.25 A watchtower as seen from its previous watchtower.

wall was cut off. The bridge marked the finish line for me.

Once I reached the opposite end of the bridge, crowds of tourists broke the silence of the Yan Mountains. At the Simatai watchtower, they gathered souvenirs and photos. Hardly any would make the effort of the six-hour exhausting trek. I exited the wall at the watchtower and rested a little in front of the stele that inscribed a famous saying of Mao: 'One who never sets foot on the Great Wall can never be a hero'. There the van awaited me.

I was starving when the van returned to Beijing. I arrived at the hostel around 19:30 and I rushed out to a guidebook-recommended roast-duck restaurant. Hidden in an old hutong neighbourhood, the restaurant was a modified courtyard complex. It turned out to be a hotspot for both locals and foreigners. I waited for forty-five minutes for a table and rewarded myself for the day of exercise with one roast Peking duck, a dish of bean sprouts, sweet sauce, green onion, and a bottle of beer.



Fig. 1.26 The admission ticket of the Great Wall at Simatai.

Fig. 1.27 The Great Wall at the Simatai area.



2004.10.20. Temple of Heaven and the Beijing Railway Station

My feet were aching in the morning, but I left room 6443 to visit more sites. According to my plan, the first few days were to be dedicated to the standard attractions. I would follow this with a trip to the province of Shanxi in search for ancient Chinese architecture. Toward the end of the trip, I would collect research materials in libraries, and go bookstore-hopping.

It was another sunny morning. At every major street intersection, hundreds of bikers and pedestrians jammed the cross lines. One pedestrian traffic patroller stood at each cross-line to direct the traffic with a whistle and a red flag. I walked south from Tiananmen Square for half an hour before reaching the south gate of the *Tiantan* (Temple of Heaven) Park. Dozens of street vendors crowded the parking lot, selling fruits, daily products, and cheap clothing. I wound through the noisy crowds and dashed into the park.

Sunlight turned mild, and noise disappeared at the tree-shaded pathways. On either side stood old cypresses. Birds glided in circles between branches. Groups of elder citizens occupied almost all paved spaces in the park area. They practiced exercise, aerobics, line dance, Tango, Dunhuang dance, tai-chi, martial arts, and sword dance. Each group played different musical rhythms. The former spiritual pathway for the emperor to reach the altars has now become a space for collective sport and entertainment.

The first altar I encountered was the Earthly Altar. This huge altar was enclosed by a single-storey wall and was square in plan. A set of three cascading, circular podiums finished with white marble provided the central worshipping spot. Beautiful ornaments on the balustrades are similar to those in the Forbidden City. In fact, Tiantan was designed and built at the same time as the Ming palaces. Atop the highest podium, a tour guide was standing on the slightly protruded Heavenly Heart Stone, where emperors once prayed for good weather. She talked a bit about the history of Tiantan and led her group of Japanese tourists to the next altar. I stepped onto the stone and turned 360 degrees to glance at the surroundings. Apartment blocks could be seen beyond the wall.

I left the Earthly Altar at its north, passed by a group of people playing badminton, and reached the next altar in sequence: the House of Heavenly



Fig. 1.28 Elderly practicing sword-dancing on the former ritual pathway.



Fig. 1.29 The triple podium of the Earthly Altar.



Fig. 1.30 The main structure of the House of Heavenly Lord.

Lord. The wall enclosure was circular in shape topped with a roof of blue glazed tiles, and was known as the Echo Wall. A single-storey circular building with a cone-shape roof sits at the back. Two houses flanked the sides of the courtyard. The complex served mainly as the storage of worshipping equipment and the emperor's change room.

I strolled north again. The final altar was the famous Annual Hall of Prayers. It reminded me of the cover of my box of Chinese marbles I got when I was five. On a circular triple podium, the circular triple-gabled structure seemed like a cone pointing to the sky. As a Chinese architectural icon, this circular structure shares equal importance with the Great Wall and Tiananmen. The Annual Hall of Prayers is often considered the gem of Chinese architecture. I have to agree with this comment if believing harmony and delicacy to be the standards of ideal Chinese architecture. The overall proportion, the matching colours, the wooden decorations, and most importantly, the workmanship of the carpentry suggest that traditional Chinese architecture had already reached its peak in the 1420s. As *Lonely Planet* describes, this perfect example of Ming architecture also appears in uncounted tourist brochures and as a brand name for various products, from Tiger Balm to plumbing fixtures.

I went up the marble stairs to the fenced main door. Under the blue glazed tiles and between the red wooden door panels, I peeked into the hall. The structure is actually exposed. Twelve columns stand at the perimeter to hold the first level. Twelve slightly taller columns in the interior support the second level. Four taller columns in the middle hold up the upper level and the roof structure. Beams are painted in a sharp tone of green, as well as the ceiling panels. A small dome, painted in gold, crowns the central and highest point of the ceiling. The dragon relief at the centre of the dome indicates that this was the hall for the emperor and heaven alone.

Other than the magnificent craftsmanship, this building also presents the tradition of symbolic numbering. The height of the structure is 9 zhangs and 9 chis (1 zhang equals to 3.7m and 1 chi equals to 0.37 m, the building is about 37 m tall), a symbolic measurement to express top limit. The perimeter is 30 zhangs (the days of a month). There are four inner columns (seasons of the year), 12 interior columns (months of a



Fig. 1.31 The admission ticket of the Temple of Heaven. An advertisement of an anti-sweat medicine occupies the back of the ticket.

year) and 12 exterior columns (shichens of a day, 1 shichen equals 2 hours). The tradition of symbolic numbering survived to the Maoist years. I've read an article by architect Zou Denong about the limit of architectural language. He mentions that some architects were required by regional authorities to design buildings that express political slogans. An exhibition hall at Changsha is meant to express "the dawn of the red sun". Some authorities even used the height of political leaders for design measurement. In the 1950s, the Hangzhou authorities urged their architects to put 1,949 seats in the city hall to commemorate the year of Communist revolution. From the 1950s to 1970s, political expressions in architecture created a great pain for the Chinese architects.

The custom of heaven worship began in the Shang Dynasty (1600 to 1028 BC). The first Qin Emperor (221 to 206 BC) developed it into a demonstration of political accomplishment after he unified the entire nation of China. From Qin on, five holy mountains became destinations of worship: Taishan in the east, Hengshan in the south, Huashan in the west, another Hengshan in the north, and Songshan in the centre. Emperor Yongle of Ming (reigning AD 1403 to 1424) constructed the Tiantan in his new capital and invented new rituals for heaven worship. Henceforth, the Tiantan Park, with an area three times the size of the Forbidden City, became the venue of the emperor and of heaven, a special zone in Beijing forbidden to the rest of the nation.

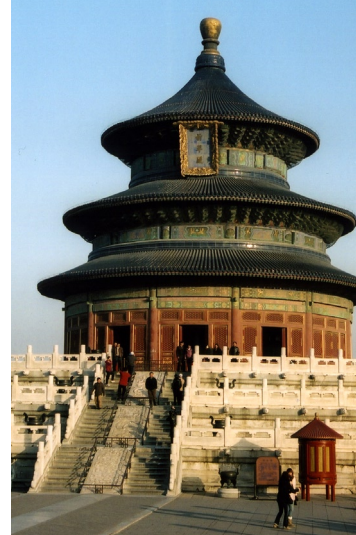


Fig. 1.32 The Annual Hall of Prayers.



Fig. 1.33 Every structural members of the Annual Hall of Prayers is painted with colourful patterns.

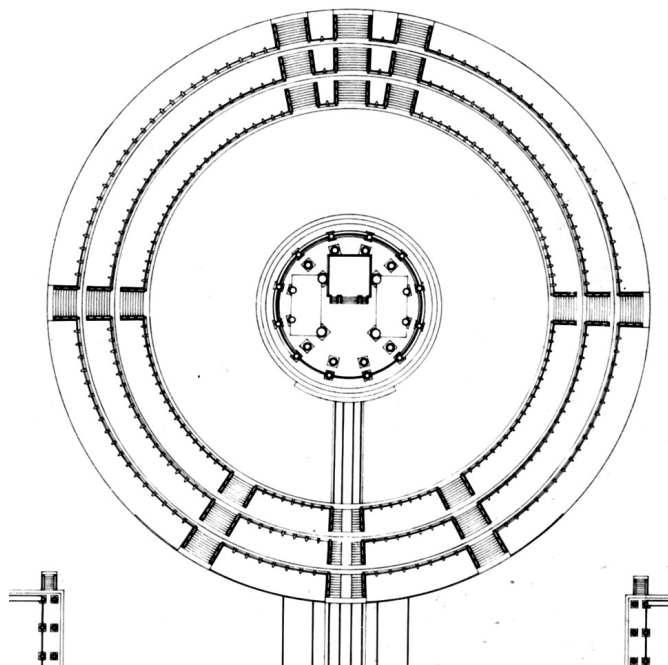


Fig. 1.34 Plan of the central area of the Annual Hall of Prayers.

I took a bus from Tiantan to the Beijing Railway Station. A huge crowd of awaiting passengers, hostel salesmen, taxi drivers, travellers, street vendors, security guards, and illegal train-ticket salesmen stationed at the entrance square. Several private coach drivers held signs of destinations and claimed that their buses would be quicker than trains. I didn't believe them, but I knew they struggled hard for a living.

The station served well to represent its era. The tall, glazed atrium, the Beaux-art stone masonry façade, and the Chinese roofs that crown the two clock towers provoke a sense of nostalgia to a 1950s' China. Two main ticket halls and a central atrium form the basis of the street front. Architect Yang Tingbao, a graduate from the University of Pennsylvania in the 1920s, unlike many designers at his era, refused to use the overwhelming Chinese big roof. Appointed the president of the Architectural Society of China, and elected vice chair of the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) for two consecutive terms, Yang was a leading architect in China for more than fifty years. The commission to design the Beijing Railway Station was a great honour: it was later included as one of the Ten Grand Projects to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Communist China in 1959. Yang died in 1982.

I moved through the crowds and entered the ticket hall on the left. I queued for ten minutes and bought a ticket of a "hard sleeper" to the town of Jiexiu, Shanxi, for the next night. Apparently there are four standards of seating options for long-distance train rides: soft-sleeper, hard-sleeper, soft-seat and hard-seat. Four soft-sleepers make up one first-class compartment and six less-fancy hard-sleepers make up a second-class compartment. The soft-sleepers usually cost double that of the hard-sleepers. Similar rules apply for the seat options. The trip to Jiexiu would be about ten hours.

I got back to my room 6443 after dining at a local eatery in a *hutong* district. I put everything back into my backpack to prepare for my departure the next afternoon. According to my travel plans, the first site I will visit in the province of Shanxi is the Wang Compound near Jiexiu. From a domestic online travel forum, I have obtained enough information on how to get there. Although larger, the Wang Compound is lesser in fame than the Qiu Compound nearby. The Qiu Compound was the filming place for Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern*.

2004.10.21. Yonghegong and Beijing West Railway Station

The entry tunnel at the basement level of the Oriental Plaza is flanked with advertising light-boxes. I was about to have my first ride on the Beijing subway. The subway station Dongdan is clean and the staff is efficient. The Beijing subway was built in the 1960s, in a time of great national hardship. Three lines operate at the moment, and half a dozen more are under way, to be completed by 2008. The two basic lines are the east–west route that runs underneath the majestic Changan Avenue, and the loop-line that runs in proximity to the route of the demolished city walls of the Inner City. A number of stations (and street names) are named with the names of the former city gates. My destination this morning was the station Yonghegong, the famous Tibetan Lamasery to the northeast of the Forbidden City. The subway train was clean but very crowded. On the window, a label in black marker stated: "the train has been washed for October 21, 2004". I believe the SARS incident last year has brought some new habits to the Beijingers. Public hygiene is always an issue for Chinese cities. I suppose after the SARS outbreak of 2003 they take the issue more seriously. The Yonghegong station seems to me less commercialized—at least there are no advertising light boxes. I followed a sign of the lamasery and exited the station.

I bought a package of incenses outside the temple and headed into the largest Buddhist temple in the capital. Yonghegong is unique because of its cultural richness of the four people in the Qing Dynasty: the Hans, Manchurians, Mongols, and Tibetans. The buildings are arranged in the Han fashion, with a hierarchy from the smallest to largest. Colourful flags and white banners depict the Manchurian and Mongolian nomadic cultures. The last two main halls are by and large Tibetan: shallow golden roofs, red walls, a large hall for group lama prayers, skylights above the main Buddha statues, and Tangka frescos on the side walls.

The temple was packed with worshippers at every corner. The small pack of incenses only allowed me to offer in the series of main halls along the main axis. The final main hall was spectacular, rising about five storeys from the ground, richly decorated and colourfully painted. At the mid level, a pair of flying arch bridges span from either side to the side halls. Such splendour is derived from the ancient Han palaces. The interior is very much Tibetan. Several stone steles are erected in front of the hall in recognition of donors. The side halls adjacent to the final main hall



Fig. 1.35 Two types of Beijing subway tickets, a plain one (top) and the one with a sponsor (bottom).

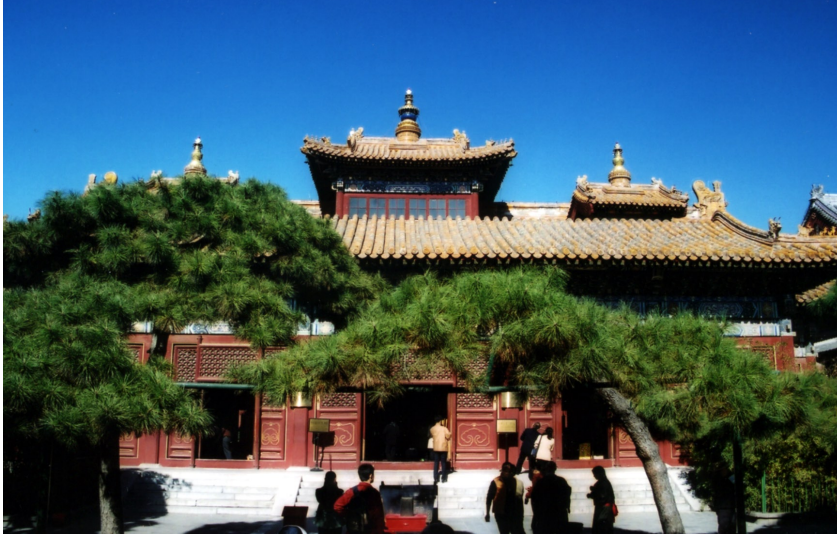


Fig. 1.36 The second-last hall in the Yonghe Gong complex. The building shows a clear fusion of Tibetan and Han Chinese cultures.

host an exhibition of photographs and artefacts of Tibetan Buddhism in China. Photographs of the most recent generations of the Dala Lamas and Banchen Lamas are also shown, although all photos of the fourteenth Dala Lama (the present one) date from before 1959, the year he fled Lhasa for India.

After I prayed for good fortune at the final main hall, I headed back to the Wangfujing area. I dropped by an Islamic Xinjiang eatery for a roast lamb leg and pita for lunch. Xinjiang eateries are very common in Beijing and are famous for their affordable prices, and for their roasted lamb meat.

Fig. 1.37 The final hall of the Yonghe Gong.



To avoid missing the train, I flagged down a taxi in Wangfujing and went for the Beijing West Railway Station. The station is about 20 storeys high and around 760 m in length, prominently located along the south side of East Lianhuachi Road. Two giant steel trusses span out from the building to the clock towers along the sidewalk. At the centre of the building, an enormous archway (52 m x 45 m) punches through the mass. Three sets of traditional big-roof pavilions rest on the roof, two at the side corners and the largest one at the centre above the archway.

Completed in 1996, the West Railway Station generated two major controversies: the high construction cost and the non-functional traditionalist ornaments. Labelled as the largest train station in Asia and fourth largest in the world, the gigantic project cost around 7 billion RMB (US \$87 million). Yet the result is quite disappointing. The city invested millions of RMB in the past few years into improving the space planning. Major alterations include a reorganization of entrances and circulations and removal of certain vacant commercial zones. The non-functional pavilion in the middle is generally considered a ridiculous gesture aimed to suit the taste of the mayor. The 50 m tall pavilion required an additional 1,800 tons of steel structure and a cost of 80 million RMB. To make matters worse, there isn't even direct vertical access to the pavilion because it is situated above the arch opening. Architect Zhang Kaiji estimated that the 80 million RMB could sponsor two hundred thousand rural kids for school. Most architects define it as a project of "big grandeur and little efficiency".

I suppose the current authorities have learned an important lesson from the West Railway Station. Recently, they have insisted on cutting back the budgets of various construction projects, including cancelling the proposed mobile rooftop of Herzog and de Meuron's National Olympic Stadium.

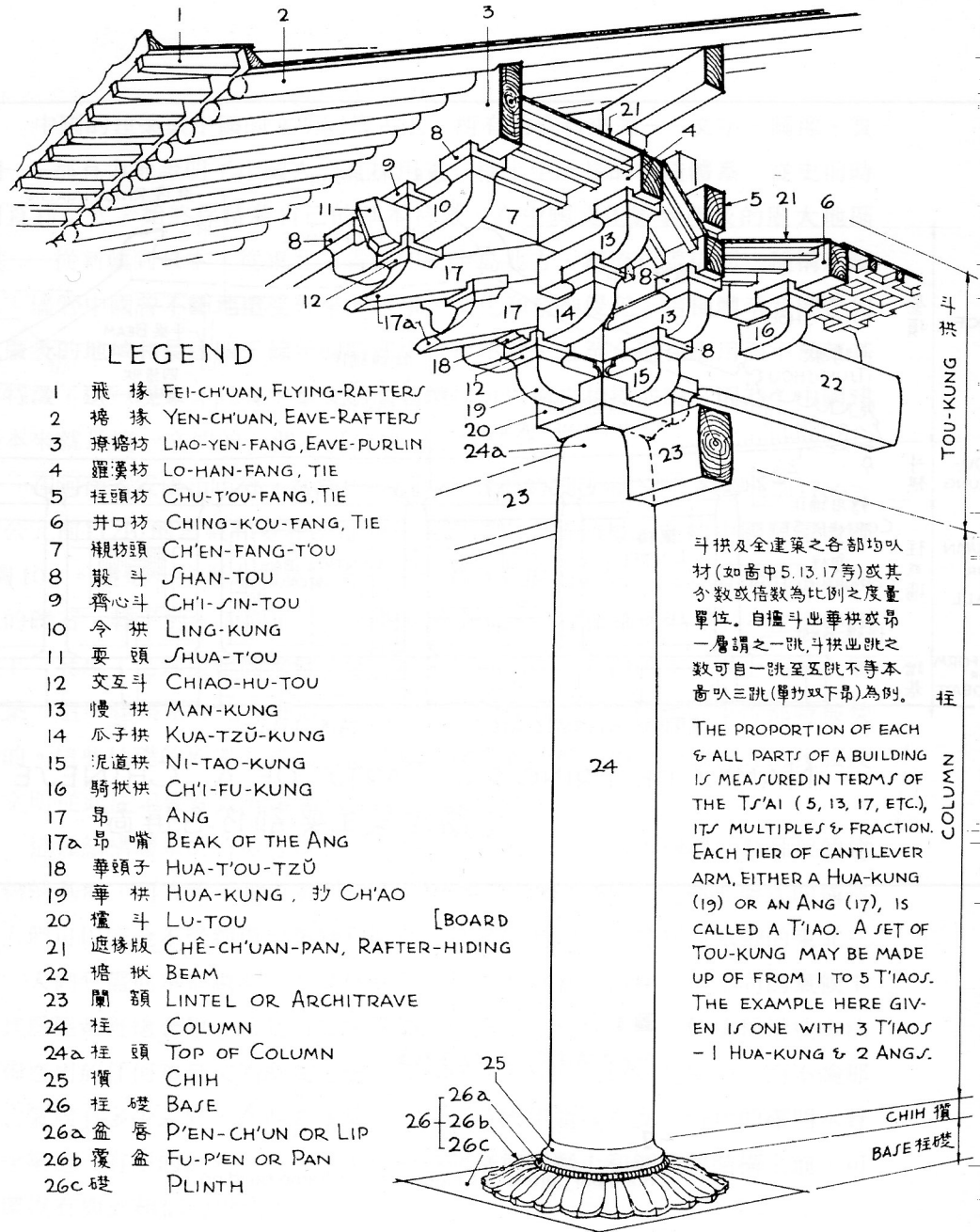
From the 50 m wide Lianhuachi Road, my taxi drove up an asphalt ramp to the departure entrance. A dusty glass canopy sheltered the entrance. After a security bag-check, I entered the lobby and proceeded to the crowded designated waiting area. The entire station was packed with people. I found a seat beside a local couple. They were busy finishing up a bowl of instant noodles. A large projection screen at the centre front showed pop-music videos and commercials. No one was really watching it. After



Fig. 1.38 Beijing West Railway Station exemplifies the Chinese post-modernist movement in the early 1990s.

about fifteen minutes, I grabbed my backpack and queued for boarding. Not everyone behaved themselves, and the ticket checkers had a hard time keeping aggressive passengers disciplined. Once on board, I wound my way through the crowds and their enormous pieces of luggage, and settled myself at the assigned sleeper-seat.

I am actually impressed by the train. It left the station on time and provides clean sheets at each sleeper. My sleeper is the top one out of three and, interestingly, is the cheapest. There is no door for my second-class compartment. I am actually happy with this arrangement. Having the compartment open to the corridor makes me feel more secure. Without the absence of the door, the train looks exactly the same to the overnight trains I had taken in Europe last year. I think I will get some rest now on the upper-sleeper before the train arrives in Jiexiu tomorrow morning at 06:00. Although the time is still early, I am already exhausted.



中國建築之“ORDER”. 斗拱, 檐柱, 柱礎 THE CHINESE “ORDER”

Fig. 2.1 Liang Sicheng, The Chinese Order.

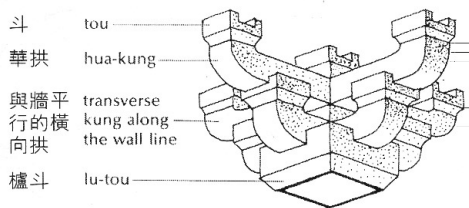


Fig 2.2 Liang Sicheng, The dougong bracket (tou-kung).

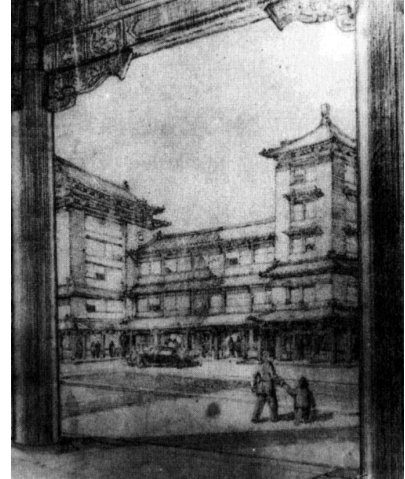
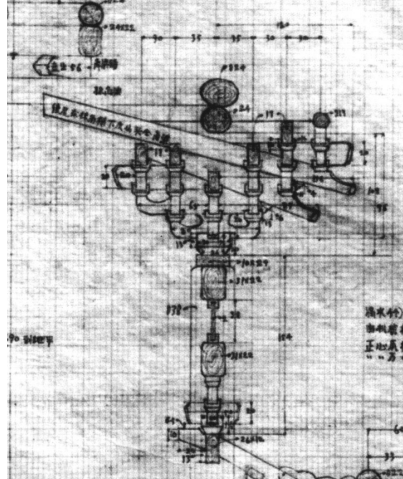
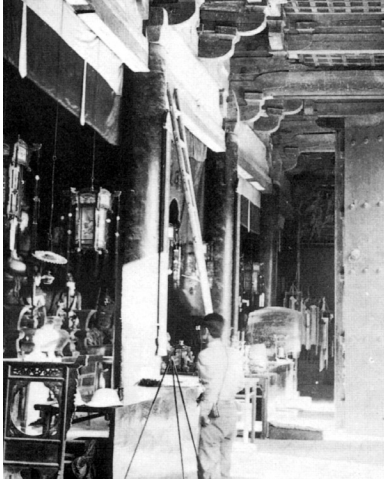


Fig. 2.3 Liang Sicheng, Liang Sicheng at Foguang Temple in 1937.

Fig. 2.4 Liang Sicheng, measure document of Qufu's Confucian Temple by the Institute of Studies on Chinese Architecture in 1935.

Fig. 2.5 Liang Sicheng, illustration of an Imaginary Building in 1954.

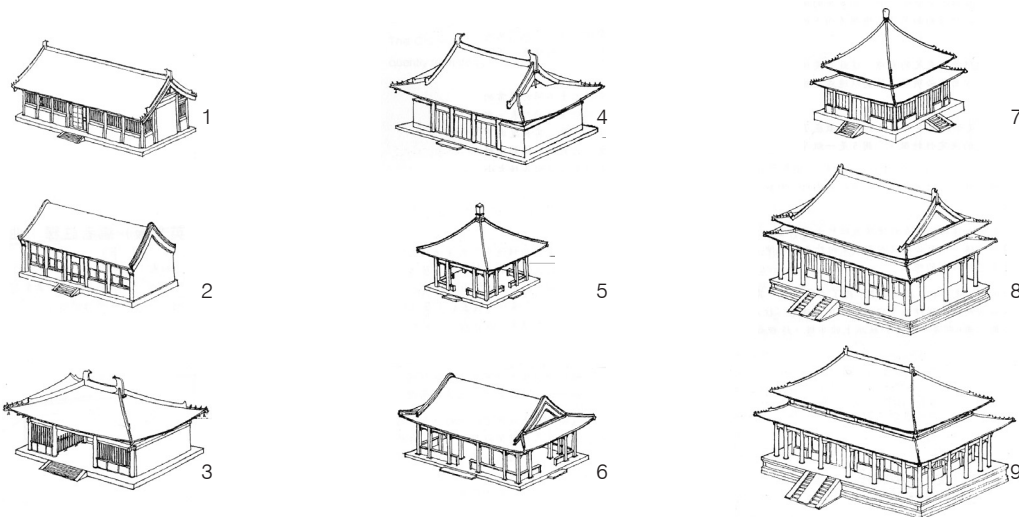
Liang Sicheng (1901 - 1972) and Chinese Architecture

Major Accomplishments:

1. Writes of the first complete history of Chinese architecture.
2. Translates the ancient architectural manuals Ying Zao Fa Shi (1103 A.D.) and Gong Cheng Fa Ze Li (1734 A.D.) into modern Chinese.
3. Leads the Institution of Studies on Chinese Architecture to discover and document 2,783 historical buildings across the nation.
4. Establishes the school of architecture in Northeast University and Tsinghua University.
5. Advocates awareness of the preservation of heritage architecture.
6. Attempts to derive modern Chinese architecture from traditional essences.

Fig. 2.6 Liang Sicheng, five types of Chinese roofs:

- 1 overhanging gable roof
- 2 flush gable roof
- 3 hip roof
- 4,6 gable-and-hip roofs
- 5 pyramidal roof
- 7-9 double-eaved versions of 5, 6, and 3 respectively





1. Ticket of Civic Tower, Pingyao.
2. Ticket of Wang Compound.
3. Ticket of Yungang Grottoes.
4. Ticket of Guanyin Hall, Puling Temple, Chengde.
5. Ticket of Fogong Wooden Pagoda.
6. **Dizhuan Bodhisattva's Teachings, Wutaishan.**
7. Tickets of temples on Wutaishan.
8. Buddhist Bracelet, Puling Temple, Chengde.
9. Ticket of the Wall of Nine Dragons, Datong.
10. Map of sacred Wutaishan.
11. Foguang Temple. Relics Press, 1984.
12. Fogong Wooden Pagoda.
13. Li, Jianping. **Shanxi Ancient Architecture.** Taiyuan: Shanxi Technological Press, 2003.
14. **Yungang Grottoes.**
15. Tibetan Saffron, Chengde.
16. Tickets of temples in Chengde.
17. Postcard of Fogong Wooden Pagoda.
18. Shanxi Folk Papercuts.

2004.10.22. Wang Compound

The Province of Shanxi is known as the cradle of ancient Chinese architecture. Shanxi contains more than 70% of surviving pre-Yuan structures (AD pre-1271) in China. The remote and mountainous terrain provides a great barrier for modernization and, hence, destruction. Ironically, it also hosts the largest coal exploitation industry in China. Pollutants from coal mines and fuel burning provide a big threat to the fragile timber structures and stone sculptures of the historical buildings. In the 1930s, architectural scholar Liang Sicheng and his team made several trips to the province in search of a surviving Tang (AD 618 to 907) structure. Their dream came true in June 1937 at Wutaishan (Mount of Five Platforms). They discovered, measured, and documented uncounted historical buildings along their way. I aimed to follow Liang's trail, although a number of his discoveries no longer exist today.

I arrived at the town of Jiexiu at around 06:30. I stepped out of the crowded station and went into a hotel across the street to check my luggage. The hotel staff refused my request. I tried another hotel, and their staffs were willing to take my bag for free. My plan was to leave the backpack, go visit the Wang Compound, return to get the bag, and proceed to the town of Pingyao where I would stay for the night. I carried my camera bag and a bottle of water and went back to the parking lot in front of the station. I had a bite to eat at a street vendor—2 RMB for a dozen meat dumplings. I then waved down public bus number 11 to go to the Wang Compound at Zhengxin village.

My knowledge of the compound originates from a presentation hosted by a Wang classmate in the graduate elective given by Robert Jan van Pelt on Collective Memory. That presentation triggered an interest in Chinese vernacular architecture. There are many different types of vernacular dwellings in China. Apart from the Han people, there are 56 main ethnic groups in China. Each group possesses a different lifestyle, lives in a distinct natural setting, and develops a unique vernacular architecture. The Wang Compound shows an example of a northern self-contained settlement of a big Han family. Different than settlements at other areas, the ones on the Loess Plain (plains of yellow earth in the central region of the Yellow River, mainly at the provinces of Shaanxi

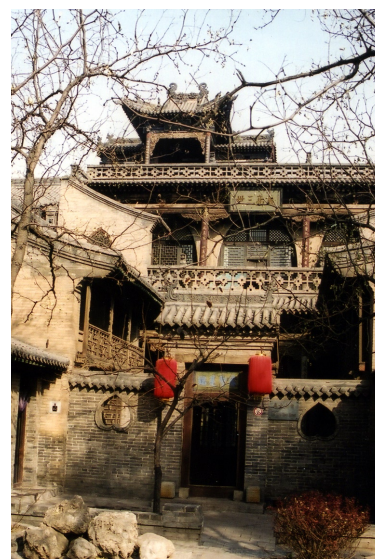


Fig. 3.1 A courtyard complex in the Wang Compound.



Fig. 3.2 A stairway leads up to a watch tower in the Wang Compound.



Fig. 3.3 The entrance of a courtyard complex at the entry passageway of the Wang Compound.

and Shanxi) preserve the culture of cave dwellings. The wealthy Wang Compound is made up of both courtyard complexes and cave dwellings. Some of its masonry houses contain arch-like facades that mimic cave openings.

I passed by some poor and polluted rural areas in the 40-minute bus ride. Black smoke from burning charcoal enveloped every village. Charcoal dust turned my nails black and my face oily, even while in the bus.

I saw villages that were carved out of the yellow earth. The yellow earth of this area is famous for its softness. Therefore, cave dwellings provide the iconic architecture of this region. Many of them contain brick facades and window openings at the front. Double- or triple-level cave dwellings are rare, but exist at higher earth cliffs. Many complexes I passed were a combination of cave dwellings and brick houses, with a courtyard in the middle. Some had no free-standing house, but possessed a brick wall enclosure in front.

The Wang Compound sat on the hilltop of Zhengxin village. Until 1949, it was home to a wealthy Wang family for seven hundred years. Every inhabitant was either born a Wang or had married into the Wang family. After 1949, the government redistributed the compound to hundreds of local rural families. Henceforth, the compound was no longer inhabited by the Wangs. A few years ago, two parts of the former compound, the Gaojiaya and Hongmenbao, which consist of roughly 120 courtyard complexes, were turned into an open-air museum. From then on, the tourist agency presented the Wang Compound as the "Domestic Forbidden City".

Fig. 3.4 A "street" in the Wang Compound.





Fig. 3.5 "Domestic Forbidden City - Wang Compound", the admission ticket of the site.

The fortress of the compound was well-preserved. I bought a ticket and entered the east gate, which led me to a quiet, internal laneway. The microcosm of the enclosed compound epitomises a walled city like the old Beijing, in which *siheyuan* complexes are connected by a system of *hutongs*. A *siheyuan* literally means a quadrangle courtyard complex, which is a common dwelling module in Northern China. For a rich family, they may own a complex that contains several courtyards. A *hutong* is a laneway that connects the entrances of different siheyuans. The system of *hutong* is irregular and sometimes even chaotic. The Mongols brought this *hutong* culture to Beijing when they occupied the city in the thirteenth century, something that traditional Chinese could have considered distasteful as they believed the grid was the most ideal street system.

Here, the complex of each family member is linked by an internal laneway. At the entrance laneway, doorways into three different courtyard complexes are marked with a pair of red lanterns. I loitered in one of the courtyards. Many complexes were interconnected inside. I drifted from one to another and was amazed by the uniqueness of each despite the similarity in planning layout. Exterior decorations were never the same.



Fig. 3.6 A row of chimneys as seen on the compound wall.

Fig. 3.7 A small shrine on a brick wall dedicated to the local God of Earth in the Wang Compound.





Fig. 3.8 The entrance of a cave dwelling near the Wang Compound.

Fig. 3.9 A cave-dwelling like facade of a courtyard complex in the Wang Compound.



Fig. 3.10 Another cave-dwelling like facade of a courtyard complex. Screen details and decorations differentiate one courtyard complex from another.

Facade treatment could be varied by sizes of windows, associations to cave dwellings, existence of a frontal colonnade, and the material used. Barrel vaults are common as a reference to cave dwellings. Carvings of mythical semblances are everywhere, on wooden screens, brick relief, roof-tile caps, stone railings and chimney surfaces.

I crossed a bridge from Gaojiaya to enter Hongmenbao at the other side of a gorge that bisects the compound. Then I walked up one of the guard towers. What a sea of blue roof tiles! At the highest point of the hillside stands the ancestral Wang shrine and worship halls. I strolled to the shrines and found several life-size statues of the Wang progenitors and several gods of fortune. It appeared that those clay figures were contemporary products, created after tourism was introduced.

The grouping of the complexes and the inner laneways of this "Domestic Forbidden City" reminded me of the maze-like living quarters

of the real Forbidden City. At Beijing, long corridors flanked with high red walls are the only means to connect different palaces. The red walls signify secrecy and isolation. Here, courtyard complexes of related families are mainly interconnected to form larger complexes. In each individual courtyard, I found it impossible to see all four elevations of a building. In fact, the grouping system made me feel as if the entire compound were made of only one gigantic interconnected building. The building is a network—not an object with four sides. The façades facing the courtyards are mainly made of doors, wooden screens, and windows. Walls seem to serve only for space definition. Like the Forbidden City, ornate decorations are used extensively. I encountered a delicate shrine of the Earthly God at Hongmenbao, on a brick partition that separates two courtyards. It is a shrine, a wall, and also a unique decoration.

I ran up a petite stairway to the fortress wall, and from there noticed that also the adjacent village was full of cave dwellings where each family stocked their harvested corn in their front courtyards. A group of locals were busy moving carts of bricks and stones on the dusty village paths. My eyes followed their way to the west side of the Wang Compound, where villagers were constructing a new bulwark and a gate the same size and style as the one I was standing on. Whether they were rebuilding a destructed portion of the Wang Compound or erecting a new tourist trap, I did not know. The peaceful Wang Compound would certainly be like a hen that lays golden eggs in a few years' time.

Fig. 3.11 A bird-eye view of the Hongmenbao as seen from the top of its defensive wall.





Fig. 3.12 The cave-dwelling village adjacent to the Wang Compound. Today, roughly forty million Chinese live in various types of cave-dwellings or earth-sheltered housing.

The intercity coach dropped me off at a highway crossroad several kilometres west of Pingyao. A motor-tricycle driver came to the rescue and took me into the ancient walled city. We passed by the new town of Pingyao along the way—identical brick apartments, concrete building blocks, a vibrant market place, and a down-to-earth train station. Nuts, oranges, spices, vegetables, and snacks were sold along the main thoroughfare. We stopped at the prominent Ming city gate. An auto-barrier prevented most automobiles entering the UNESCO World



Fig. 3.13 The Ming-Qing Street at the old town of Pingyao with the multi-storey Civic Tower at the back.

Heritage town, including my motor-tricycle. I picked up my backpack and walked into the town centre. Several drivers of tricycle carts approached me but I preferred to walk.

Out of the 500 walled cities in China that survived until 1949, the walled city of Pingyao is one of only four that escaped Communist metamorphosing power. The town survived the years of modernization only because the area was too poor and remote for development. UNESCO included Pingyao on their World Heritage List in 1997. From then on, this Ming walled city has become a magnet for international tourism. Recently, the town has been changing faster than ever. My guidebook states that "it seems weekly that another historic structure is being reopened as a guesthouse or museum (or both in one case)!"¹

I have chosen a guesthouse at the Ming-Qing Street recommended by the guidebook for its traditional setting. It is as nostalgic as it can be: a traditional-style restaurant occupies its street façade and two courtyard complexes at the back, one for staff and the other for guests. The complex was probably built in the Qing Dynasty. My room is on the second level at the back, taking half the space of the former main bed chamber. The semi-outdoor corridor has a great view to the courtyard and the surrounding ancient roof tops. The bathroom is a bit shabby but the bed is great—a traditional wooden frame, cotton mattress and blanket, and a linen bed curtain.

After an hour nap, I walked out onto the Ming-Qing Street and strolled around the surrounding area. Blue tiled roofs, grey brick façades, red lanterns, and shop signage filled both sides of the street. Buildings of great historical importance, such as the Confucian Temple, the former municipal court, and the homes of several ancient bankers (Pingyao was a financial centre in Northern China during the Ming era) had been converted into museums. In addition, guesthouses, bars, internet cafes, convenient stores, and souvenir shops mushroomed within the city wall.

I climbed up the town's tallest structure—the triple-gabled 19 m Civil Tower in the town centre. It was a unique Ming structure that once served as a bell-tower and a watch-tower. On the three roof tiers, blue and yellow glazed tiles carried the Chinese characters of fortune and happiness. The bird-eye view of Pingyao revealed a great example



Fig. 3.14 A traditional window opens to the Ming-Qing Street at old Pingyao.



Fig. 3.15 The city wall of old Pingyao.

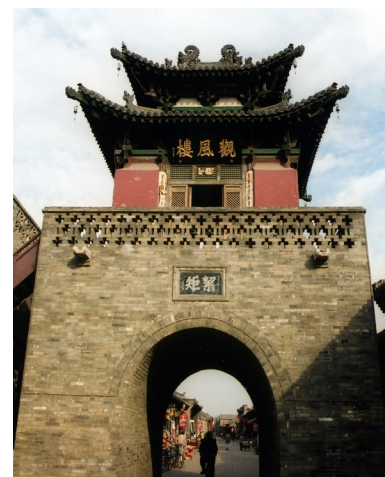


Fig. 3.16 A gate tower in old Pingyao.

of a traditional Chinese city: a square enclosure with gates on each side and a grid street system. Beyond the city walls stood a number of smokestacks and concrete apartments. I watched the town turn into a sheer silhouette of flying eaves against the evening twilight before going down the tower.

I had dinner at a local restaurant. Sitting on the old-style bench, and dining on a wooden table under a delicate lantern made me feel like I was acting in a classical martial arts movie. I ordered some local seasoned beef and stir-fry mushrooms.

2004.10.23. Shuanglin Temple

At 08:00 I hired a motor-tricycle at the west city gate of Pingyao and headed west to the Shuanglin Buddhist Temple 6 km to the southwest. A red cover, made from various nylon bags sheltered me from the chill of morning wind. I peeked through the tiny opening at the edge of the cover and saw the Pingyao Train Station in the distance. Noises of street vendors and honking traffic announced the new town of Pingyao. We passed it, and then the motor-tricycle drove onto the shoulder of the highway. A pungent odour of coal minerals invaded my cabin as we passed the hills of coalfields on my right. Five minutes passed. We turned left onto a country road. A refreshing smell of nature replaced the awful charcoal, and remained strong all the way until I reached the temple gate.

The Shuanglin Temple is renowned for its extensive collection of precious clay statues. More than 2,000 life-size or larger statues of Buddha and other traditional divinities fill up the ten or so temple halls. The oldest ones date back to the Northern Song Dynasty (AD 960 to 1127). According to an ancient stele on site, the temple was first built in the Northern Wei Dynasty (AD 535 to 557) and went through a series of alterations as time went. The temple has seen a large increase of tourism after being listed on the World Heritage List along with ancient Pingyao.

I liked the four 10 foot statues of the Heavenly Guards the best. Two on either side, the clay statues have been guarding the first temple hall for hundreds of years. Each guard is carved with distinct facial expressions and body gestures, and equipped with different weapons and armour. Faint colours are still visible on their bodies. The entire temple was packed with



Fig. 3.17-3.20 Statues of the four Heavenly Guards at the Shuanglin Temple near Pingyao.

young sculpture students making model studies of the ancient figures. Inside each hall, a protective fence prevents visitors getting too close to the fragile statues. Modern lighting was not installed due to their possible damage to the statues' colours. Under dim light from the tiny electrical torches of the students, I glanced at all the statues and the interior. The exterior frescos and exposed timber structures revealed traces of damage made by the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution. It was a miracle that the statues inside survived those bloody years. Regional guards and archaeological officials are to most, responsible for holding back the revolutionaries in the summer of 1967.

I walked up the defensive wall before leaving. The line of windbreakers along the pathways, the vast fields of farmland, and scattered farmsteads reveal a great setting that contrasts the coalfields along the highway. The driver saw me coming out, and started the engine of my hired motor-tricycle. He took me back to the west gate of old Pingyao. I returned to the guesthouse, picked up my backpack, enjoyed a bowl of Shanxi cat-ears (a type of noodle) and off I went to the Pingyao railway station in the new town. From there, I took a coach to the city of Taiyuan, the provincial capital of Shanxi.

Taiyuan is an ancient city, but nothing above ground will convey its age. Uncounted shopping centres and entertainment shops concentrate around the May 4th Square. I checked into one of the budgeted hotels recommended by the guidebook near the main railway station. I did some laundry and went online for a while at the hotel. Then I began to plan for the upcoming tour of Wutaishan (Mount of Five Platforms), the most famous Buddhist sacred mountain in China.



Fig. 3.21 Sculpture students gathered in front of the entrance hall at the Shuanglin Temple.



Fig. 3.22 A stupa of a lamasery at Taihuai, Wutaishan. The Puzading Temple is uphill on the right.

2004.10.24. Taihuai

A six-hour bus ride took me from central Taiyuan to the mountainous area in the northeast. The bus stopped at the newly constructed stone gate of Wutaishan. At the gate, each visitor was asked to pay the entrance fee of the mountains. Two lamas sitting beside me got a 90% discount since they had pilgrim identification cards. The bus entered the village of Taihuai from the south after winding along a series of hills.

Wutaishan is the legendary meditation site for the Wenshu Bodhisattva. Hundreds of monasteries of Tibetan and Han Buddhism have been built on the mountains since the flourish of Buddhism in China. Taihuai is a village at the central valley in Wutaishan. It has been serving as the base for pilgrims since the first monastery was built in the area. Both in and around Taihuai, temples and monasteries mushroom on hilltops or hillsides like chalets on the Swiss Alps. Many are accessible only by a single flight of steep stairs. Sandwiched between two heavily wooded mountains at east and west, Taihuai is accessible only from the south and north. The only road in the village connects the two entries and bisects the settlement, cutting it into two halves. Buddhist souvenir shops, vegetarian restaurants, and guesthouses fill up the street façades with two rows of single-storey buildings. Several pedestrian pathways stream out from the main road onto the adjacent hillsides, forming a market space for vendors and religious shop owners in between the main road and the monasteries at mid level.

My bus arrived at a parking lot in Taihuai. I walked out the lot onto the main road that runs north–south. On the west side of the road and behind

a row of low-rise buildings, there stands the ten-storey stupa finished in white plaster. This famous symbol of Taihuai was largely covered with bamboo scaffolding as extensive restoration was under way. I walked south along the main road and checked into a guesthouse recommended by my guidebook. It seemed I was the only customer in the two-storey guesthouse when I first stepped in; lights were shut off in corridors and the lobby. I put down my backpack and rested a little in my room. It was 15:00.

Once I stepped out of the guesthouse, I walked to the western hillside and inspected the shops that sold Buddhist beads, bracelets, prayer instruments, and statues. Then I walked to the small Guangren Lamasery. I went into a courtyard full of small colourful flags, yellow prayer screens, and bronze prayer wheels. A middle-aged lama, robed in red and yellow gowns, was knelt down at the worship pavilion with his face toward the Grand Buddha Hall. I watched him as he held a ritual bell, chanted prayers, and burned incense. Two young lamas stood adjacent to the pavilion, holding their yellow scarves and praying along.

I walked uphill behind Guangren and reached the Puzading Temple near the hilltop. Two single-storey, white stupas, one on each side, marked the temple entrance. From there, I was rewarded with a nice view of the village after climbing its steep entrance staircase. Puzading was a large complex. I enjoyed lingering through its courtyards and altars. I had a glimpse of the Guangzhong Temple on my way downhill.

I picked a decent vegetarian restaurant called One Bright Lamp for dinner. I ordered a common Chinese vegetarian dish called Luohan



Fig. 3.23 A temple entrance tower at Taihuai.



Fig. 3.24 The village of Taihuai as seen from the Puzading Temple.

(assorted mushrooms and tofu) and stir-fried Wutai mushrooms. They were surprisingly delicious.

I went to take a shower when I got back to the guesthouse. There is only two hours of hot-water supply everyday—20:00 to 22:00. I didn't want to miss it. I decided that I had better go to bed early since tomorrow will be a long, full day of temple-hopping.

2005.10.25. Foguang Temple

Early in the morning, I hired a taxi for the Foguang Temple outside Taihuai. The taxi drove south, passed by the mountain checkpoint and turned into a narrow earth path. The earth path led us to the farming village Doucun. Villagers were everywhere moving stalks of harvested corn, hay, and yams with donkey wagons. Cows were ploughing the fields. Farmers were working alongside them with primitive tools. After a five-minute bumpy car ride in the area of Doucun, I arrived at the gate of the Foguang Temple.

Situated on a hillside, the temple site was divided into three main courtyards. I went in the gate and reached the lowest courtyard. "No smoking" signs were everywhere. On my left was the single-storey Wenshu Hall dating back to AD 1137. The hall on the right is destroyed. In the intermediate courtyard, monastic dwellings flank the two sides and at the end, a row of cave dwellings punch into the back earth. Approximately two storeys above the cave dwellings, a piece of land is levelled into a platform, three sides bounded by cliffs. The Main Hall arises in the centre of the platform, behind a row of ancient pines.

After a brief glance of the Wenshu Hall, a man in his late forties led me into the central cave opening at the back retaining wall of the intermediate courtyard. From there, a passageway brought us to the top platform. We walked up a steep flight of stairs that penetrated through the roof of the cave chamber and advanced to the Main Hall level.

The Foguang Main Hall was the most important architectural discovery of Liang Sicheng and his wife Lin Huiyin. A two-day pony ride led the Liangs and two assistants to the temple in June 1937—their fourth trip to Shanxi. They examined the structure and details of the hall and determined that it was older than any other surviving building in China. Lin confirmed

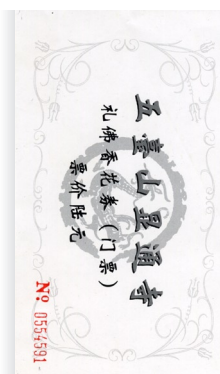
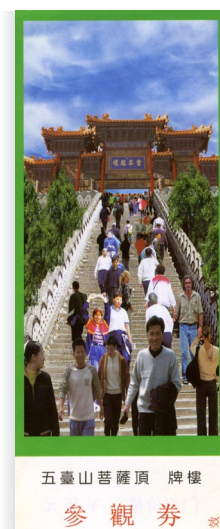


Fig. 3.25-3.27 Admission tickets of various temples in Wutaishan: (top to bottom) Puzading Temple, Foguang Temple and Xiantong Temple.

their assumption when she found faint ink writing at the bottom of the main beam beneath a coat of lacquer. The text recorded the erection date of the building—the 11th year of the Dazhong period of the Tang Dynasty (AD 857). It also listed the name of the donor, Ms. Ning Gongyu, and named the regional officials and two eunuchs to whom Ms. Ning wanted to pay special thanks. It was the most exciting day ever in the Liangs' researching years. In the evening, they celebrated with a feast of all of their remaining food: biscuits, milk, canned food, and sardines. Their discovery proved that China had at least one structure from the Tang era (now confirmed four). They returned to Taihuai and visited two other towns nearby when they learned about the Incident of Lugou Bridge, which triggered the Japanese invasion.

The guard unlocked the door of the Main Hall. I went into the roughly 36 m by 18 m rectangular structure. Most structural elements were exposed. Unlike later structures such as the Forbidden City, the posts and beams at Foguang were bold, large, and unfinished. Every beam, column, and *dougong* (bracket) was more masculine and less pretentious than those in the Beijing palaces. Perforated wooden panels covered the spaces between the beams like ceiling panels. Tang frescos appeared at several occasions, mainly fading, which is why the doors were always kept locked, the guard explained. Some frescos were neat, but could not compare to the thirty Tang statues. These man-sized Louhans (immortalized monks) are placed against the two sidewalls. In the centre, the main altar takes up almost the entire length of the temple. It consists of three clay Buddhas, each with a height of about 6 m, and four slightly smaller statues of Bodhisattvas. The three Buddhas signify the past,



Fig. 3.28 The cave-dwelling like chambers of the intermediate level and the Foguang Main (East) Hall on the upper level.



Fig. 3.29 The Main (East) Hall of the Foguang Temple, Wutaishan.

present, and future.

Tourists seldom make the effort to visit Foguang, because it is so remote. That's why the temple is not included in the *Lonely Planet Guidebook on China*. Pilgrims hardly visit the Foguang, because incense-burning is prohibited to protect the ancient timber structure. Left largely alone, Foguang is the main sanctuary of Chinese architecture. Unlike the Ming and Qing palaces, Tang buildings maintain a sense of purity as there is hardly any ornament to interrupt the exposed structural members. With these exposed structural members, Foguang is a perfect place to study Liang's theory on the structural language of Chinese architecture. In *History of Chinese Architecture*, he indicates the fundamental components of the Chinese structural order: the ridge, beam, *dougong* (bracket), and column. With these fundamental components, the basic module of timber frame is formed. The structural skeleton created by the modules allowed ancient builders to obtain flexibility in the design of wall enclosures and movable partitions. Furthermore, diversity of building form is made by the freedom of grouping the modules. As for connection, a system of timber joinery with interlocking mortises and tenons was used; thus not a single nail was required. Instead of the European triangular truss, the Chinese chose to develop a system based on the positioning of purlins. The relative positioning of purlins varied from project to project and allowed the ancient builders to make roofs in any required curvature. Structural flexibility, I find, is the key of ancient Chinese architecture.

The exterior—its faded wooden signage, aged timber components, foot-smoothened foundation platform, and the row of ancient pines provoke an equal sense of antiquity and boldness. From ancient frescos,

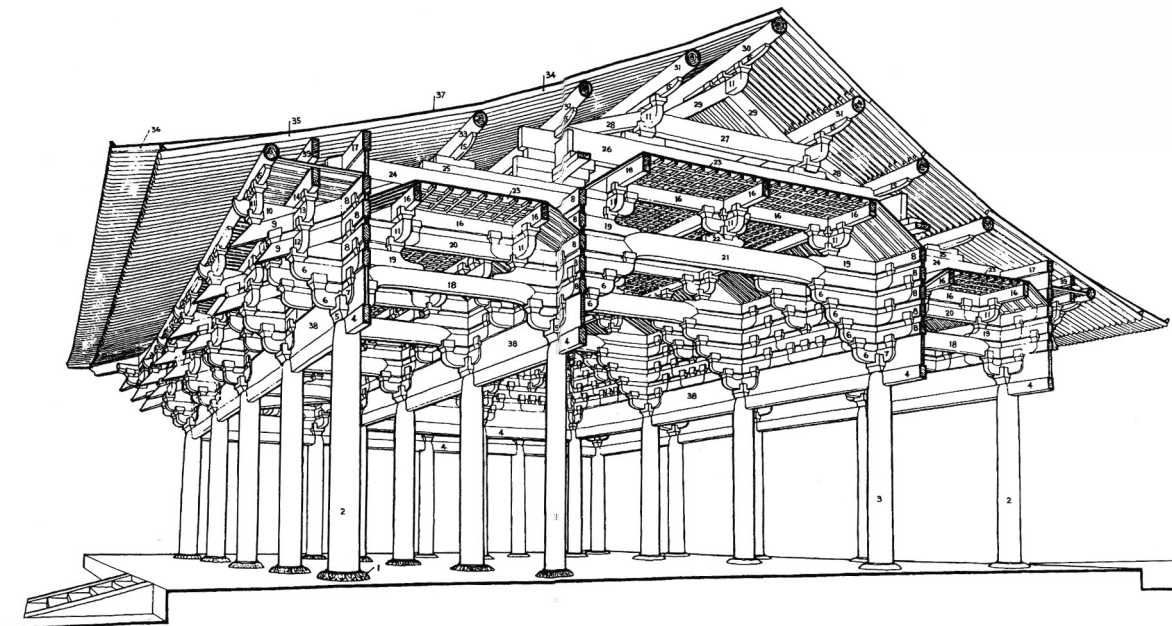
Fig. 3.30 The Chief Priest Tower adjacent to the Main (East) Hall of the Foguang Temple, Wutaishan.



literature, paintings, and clay models used in the construction process, scholars suggest that a typical Tang building contains exaggerated eave overhang, large dougongs, and bold timber columns. Foguang is a perfect illustration of the typical Tang building form. The ridge on the roof is treated with the shape of bird-tails, a special detailing common in early Chinese architecture.

A few metres southeast from the Main Hall arises a two-storey-high stupa. The locals called it the Chief Priest Tower. The white masonry structure is built in a triple-gable form, decorated with allegorical

Fig. 3.31 Liu Dunzhen, structural isometric drawing of the Main Hall at Foguang Temple.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Plinth | 19. Semi-camel's-hump-shaped support |
| 2. Eave column | 20. Plain tiebeam |
| 3. Interior or hypostyle column | 21. Four-rafter exposed tiebeam |
| 4. Architrave or connecting beam, lintel, girder | 22. Camel's-hump-shaped support |
| 5. Capital block | 23. Lattice ceiling |
| 6. Transverse bracket arm | 24. Rough tiebeam |
| 7. Longitudinal bracket arm | 25. Wood support above rough tiebeam |
| 8. Tiebeam or axial tiebeam | 26. Four-rafter rough tiebeam placed above ceiling |
| 9. Down-pointing cantilever | 27. Crossbeam |
| 10. Wooden member parallel to and on topmost transversal bracket arm, intersecting eave purlin, with front end exposed | 28. Side brace connecting crossbeam with purlin |
| 11. Longitudinal braceket arm of intermediate length | 29. Inverted V-shaped brace |
| 12. Longitudinal bracket arm of shortest length | 30. Ridge purlin |
| 13. Longitudinal bracket arm of longest length | 31. Upper purlin |
| 14. Luohan tiebeam | 32. Intermediate purlin |
| 15. Wooden support between longitudinal bracket arm and eave purlin | 33. Lower purlin |
| 16. Paneled ceiling tiebeam | 34. Rafter |
| 17. Wooden member on which the main beam rests | 35. Eave rafter |
| 18. Exposed tiebeam | 36. Flying rafter or cantilever eave rafter |
| | 37. Roof board |
| | 38. Board onto which bracket sets adhere |
| | 39. Ox-spine tiebeam |

lotus patterns. The tower, I learnt from the guard, actually predated the Main Hall about 60 years. It was the mausoleum of a famous priest who ministered at a temple built earlier at the same site.

After Foguang, I requested that the taxi drop me off at Nanshan Monastery near Taihuai. At Nanshan, a guide led me through the complex and told me tales of the complex. Nanshan was built in the Yuan Dynasty I learned, and many important people such as Empress Cixi of Qing and Chairman Mao had come over for prayers or visits. The complex is divided into three levels along a hillside. We reached the top-most level, a neat viewing platform with magnificently carved balustrades. The guide pointed to various mountain peaks in the surroundings introducing them as the "five platforms" of Wutaishan (Mount of Five Platforms). On my way down from Nanshan, I came across two young lamas in their traditional red robes. As I got closer, I realized they were taking a video of the mountain scenery with a brand new digital video-recorder.

I returned to Taihuai and loitered through three more monastery complexes until dusk. The last one was the Xiantong Monastery, the largest in the village. The Beamless Hall in Xiantong was atypical—a fine white masonry structure with a vaulted structure instead of post and beam. Inside the hall, worshipping altars and a bronze model of a Buddhist pagoda fill the different vaulted chambers. The bronze model is at least two storeys high. Probably donated by a wealthy man, it serves as a tribute to symbolize the accomplishment of the temple as pagodas were often built to represent the power and the social contributions of a temple or a priest.



Fig. 3.32 A pavilion in the main courtyard of the Xiantong Temple, Taihuai.

Fig. 3.33 The Bronze Hall at the Xiantong Temple, Taihuai.



Finished in gold colour, the Bronze Hall is the highlight of Xiantong. It is a small sanctuary for Wenshu Bodhisattva. About 6 m x 6 m in plan, its interior walls are filled with hundreds of palm-sized Buddha statues, each in its individual niche. A man-sized statue of Wenshu occupies the middle. An elder monk in a grey robe was cleaning the head of the statue by stepping on a stool. At one point, he seemed to be losing his balance. I urged him to be careful. He cautiously stepped down and thanked me for the warning. I did not fully understand his mandarin with his Shanxi accent. He blessed my health and happiness and told me some philosophies of Wenshu Bodhisattva. Surprisingly, he kept on talking to me and turned to advise me on life philosophies after a while. He told me not to worry too much about difficulties in my life. He said I had to trust myself in the future and never worry about things that I can't control, especially on work and family. I smiled back to him in gratitude. His words triggered many thoughts. Perhaps I was really troubled with some hidden worries and these were shown on my face.

In the evening, I dined at One Bright Lamp again and ordered the Wutai mushrooms one more time. I liked them very much. As I left the restaurant, a server grabbed my shoulder and gave me a pocket sized booklet of Dizhuan Bodhisattva's teachings. I guessed she thought I was a Buddhist pilgrim.

I came back to the room and just finished packing. Tomorrow I will leave Taihuai and head north to the city of Datong, the second largest city in Shanxi.

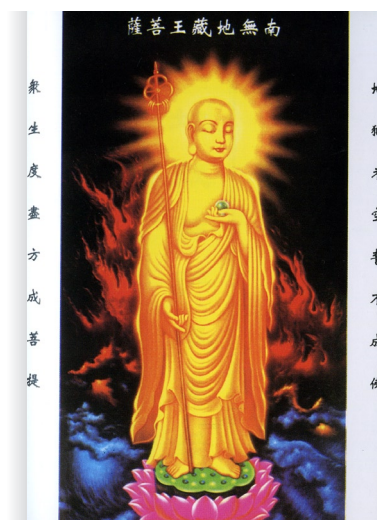


Fig. 3.34 An illustration in the booklet *Dizhuan Bodhisattva's Teachings*.



Fig. 3.35 An ornate timber hall at Xiantong Temple, Taihuai.

2004.10.26. Datong

In the morning, I took the 07:00 coach to Datong. The bus exited Taihuai through the northern hillside. I watched the peaks light up from dim orange to bright yellow under the eastern sun. Five minutes had passed. Taihuai became a sheer coat of haze sunken in the embrace of the glowing Wutai Mountains. The bus wound through the Wutaishan and entered the Loess Plains after an hour of turns and downhill travel. Industrial and mining towns were scattered on the plain.

After another hour, the bus stopped at an industrial town to pick up passengers. At the town's far corner, I saw the silhouette of a traditional pagoda above layers of factory rooftops. The pagoda seemed extremely out of place under the smog and dust. I could barely see its contour against the yellowish-grey sky. The surrounding plain reminded me of a desert. Were we already at the Maowusu Desert that connects Shanxi and the Autonomic Region of Inner Mongolia?

I made it to Datong in five and a half hours. Datong is an industrial city famous for car manufacturing. Many Chinese automobile companies or joint venture businesses such as Volkswagen have factories in or around Datong. Car-parts stores and service shops lined the main streets. We passed by the main commercial district with its shopping centres and fashion boutiques. The bus stopped at the terminal near the main railway station. I walked to the square in front of the railway station and checked into a budget hotel across the street.

Datong has a long history. The North Wei emperors of the Xianbei tribe (AD 386 to 534) selected Datong as their capital to rule Northern China. Although Datong lost the capital status after the fall of the North Wei emperors, the city remained a regional focus near the northern border of China. Just like Taiyuan, almost nothing ancient remained with the city, except two temples from the Liao Dynasty (AD 947 to 1125), the Wall of Nine Dragons, and an ancient drum tower.

I hopped on a bus and went to the Huayuan Temple at the town centre. The famous temple is divided into two parts: the upper and the lower. I picked the upper part to visit. The surroundings were depressing as modern development had squeezed the temple complex into an enclave at a crowded commercial area. A small sign at the main shopping street led me to a laneway of the temple entrance. The Upper Huayuan Temple contains the



Fig. 3.36 Taihuai (the misty spot in the valley) and the Wutaishan in the morning.

eleventh century Grand Hall—the biggest Buddhist hall in China. The hall maintains some Tang features like the Foguang Temple at Wutaishan, but the scale of the structural members is reduced. The sense of purity was maintained, as nothing was as ornate as the Ming and Qing structures in Beijing.

I was exhausted today, perhaps from the earlier bus ride. For dinner, I got some buns from a street vendor, and headed back to the hotel.

2004.10.27. Fogongsi Wooden Pagoda and Hanging Temple

In September 1933, Liang Sicheng, Liu Dunzhen, Lin Huiyin, and Mo Zhongjiang came to Shanxi for the first time. After exploring the temples at Datong and the nearby Yungang Buddhist Grottoes, they decided to check out the Fogongsi Wooden Pagoda at Yingxian which was pretty much unknown at the time. They managed their way to the remote Yingxian on the Loess Plain after days of crude travel in the wilderness. The trip proved worthwhile. They found the magnificent pagoda—a structure which dates back to AD 1038 in the Liao Dynasty—probably the tallest and oldest wooden tower in the world. They measured and documented the 900-year-old pagoda piece by piece. Mo Zhongjiang remembered that day:

We dared to measure the structure level by level, column by column, beam by beam, and bracket by bracket. We went over several thousand structural members, but the spire remained unreachable. The wind was strong even when we stood at the highest gable roof, but in order to finish the task, we got to grab onto the 900-year-old iron chain with bare hands and climb up the remaining ten metres in mid air. It was a terrifying task, but Mr. Liang insisted to climb up and hang ourselves 67m above ground. We followed him bravely and finally got the mission done.

Wherever we arrived at, we would quickly divide up the drawing tasks. With a pencil and a measuring tape, we were unbelievably efficient. Back then, going from site to site meant miles of hiking. Thus we got to finish all the tasks before leaving. Mr. Liang was brilliant in beam-climbing. He taught us the technique, so we could



Fig. 3.37 Dougong brackets of the Fogong Temple Wooden Pagoda, Yingxian.



Fig. 3.38 Magnetic admission card for the Fogong Temple Wooden Pagoda.

easily get up there to measure and document. Such complex structure as the Fogongsi Wooden Pagoda, we made it in a week of time. ²

In the morning, I hopped onto a coach at the bus terminal for Yingxian. When I got into the bus, I realized it was the same bus I took yesterday from Taihuai to Datong. I recognized the Mickey Mouse clock above the driver seat. I was almost certain that the pagoda silhouette I passed by yesterday would be my destination today. Two hours of bus ride brought me back to the dusty industrial town and the silhouette stood prominently behind layers of metal chimneys. The driver dropped me off at a gas station nearby. The gas station was sheltered with a triple-gable red roof with "flying corners" to express "Chineseness". The driver of a red motor-tricycle approached me and took me into town to the pagoda gate.

I walked through a courtyard flanked with souvenir shops and reached the ticket office, bought a ticket, and entered the courtyard where the Fogong Temple once stood. The temple was destroyed but its pagoda remained. It was hard to believe that the pagoda had been standing



Fig. 3.39 The gas station across the highway from Yingxian.

Fig. 3.40 The Fogong Temple Wooden Pagoda, Yingxian.

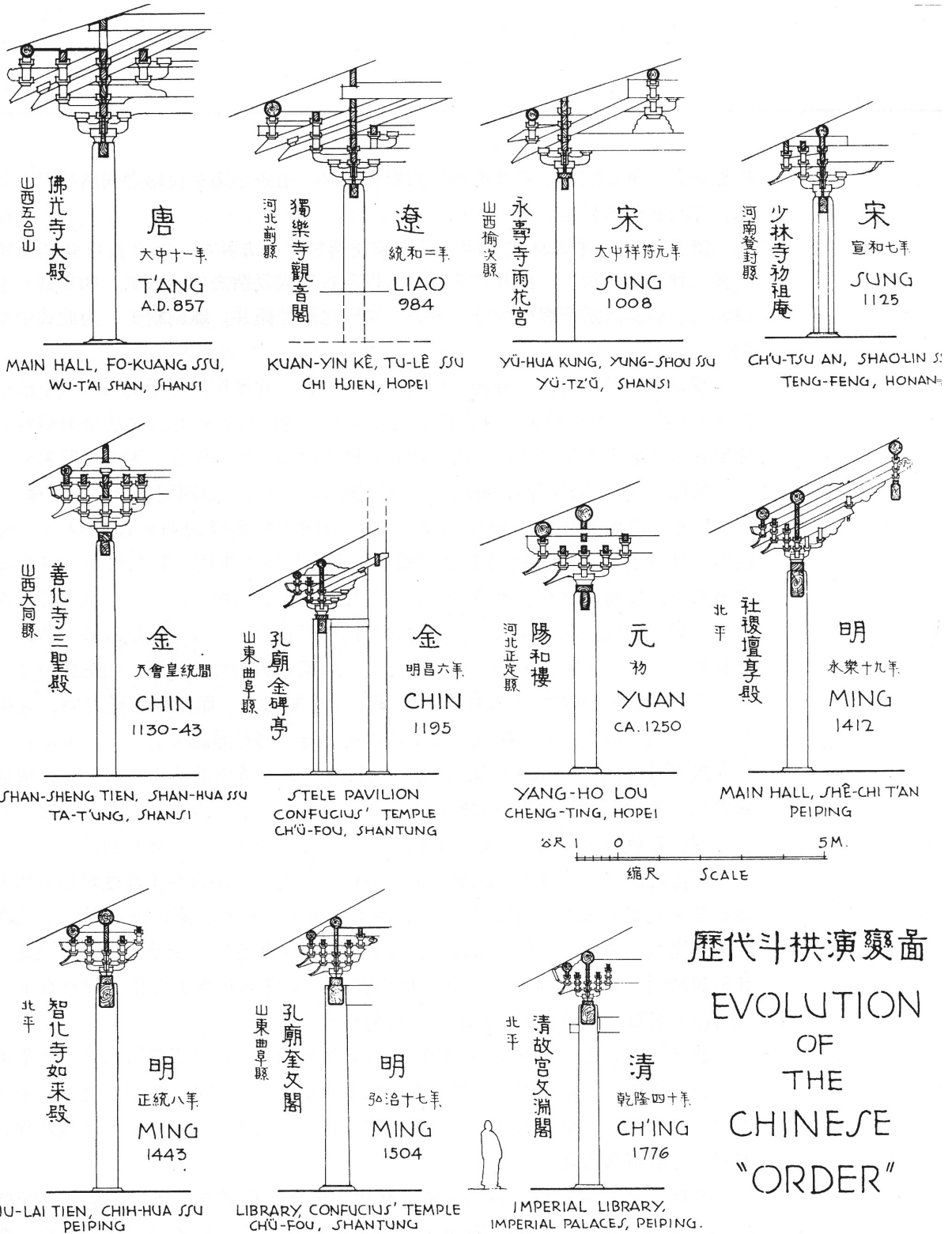
for 966 years and had withstood several earthquakes and uncounted thunderstorms. I was also surprised because I recognized the pagoda immediately. An elevation drawing of this pagoda appeared on the cover of Liang Sicheng's *History of Chinese Architecture*, the book that had triggered this Odyssey. The pagoda appears to have five levels when looking from the outside, yet in the interior, there are actually nine levels including the concealed floors.

I stepped up the stone podium and entered the pagoda. A large clay Buddha (around 10m high) occupied the middle of the ground floor. I ascended the stairs beside the statue to the upper levels. At every main level there was either one or a group of clay statues for worshipping. I noticed that the size of floor plate decreased as I went up. Liang suggested that the decreased size of the floor plate imposed a structural difficulty. The ancient anonymous architects used more than fifty types of dougongs (brackets) to solve the problem.

In *History of Chinese Architecture*, Liang explains the importance and the principle of a dougong. Although a dougong may seem complicated, the fundamental concept is quite simple. A dougong is consisted of "dous" (holders) and "gongs" (arms). These "dous" and "gongs" form a distribution system that transfers the load from a roof system, a ceiling, or an overhang component down to a column or a bearing wall. I also learned that the height of the "gong" was used as the basic measure unit to proportion the sizes of the other structural members. Dougong is a module for solving load problems, yet its grouping arrangement and size vary from different required load situations. The ancient builders had total freedom to invent a system during construction. That is why Fogong Pagoda has more than fifty different types of dougongs.

The freedom of early Chinese builders reminded me of John Ruskin's description of Gothic architecture in *The Stones of Venice*. Ruskin states that "...as in Gothic work, there is perpetual change both in design and execution, the workman must have been altogether set free."³ He continues to indicate that the freedom in Gothic construction is "not from mere love of change, but from practical necessities."⁴ This freedom of Gothic workmen during the construction parallels to the on-site dougong inventions of the Chinese builders.

I climbed to the top level and walked out on the viewing balcony.



歷代斗拱演變圖
EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE "ORDER"

Fig 3.41 Liang Sicheng, The size of Dougong decreased as technological skills became more advance towards the Qing Dynasty.

I saw that shops flanked the axial tourist street in front of the pagoda. Obviously the authorities envisioned a large flow of visitors. The remoteness of the town, however, is an obstacle for Yingxian to boost its tourism. Though, it is perhaps better for the preservation of the pagoda.

I inspected the ceiling structure at the top level—the perforated wooden panels tilted up from the octagonal walls and converged to a tip in the centre. Then I returned to the Chinese-style gas station. Once again, a van driver approached me and asked where I intended to go. I said, "Hunyuan" and he said, "Great!" We waited for a while at the gas station for a few more passengers before departing.

After a brief lunch break at Hunyuan, I hired another taxi to visit the renowned Hanging Temple at Hengshan (Mount of Eternity). Hengshan is considered one of the five sacred mountains for heaven worshipping. On Hengshan, both Taoist and Buddhist temples were built for pilgrims, and the emperors came to worship the heavens.

Standing in mid air against a rock cliff, the Hengshan Hanging Temple is a striking timber building. Its intriguing image imprinted a strong interest in me when I first saw a photo of the temple in a travel magazine. Back then, I did not know where the temple was located; I was only eleven years old.

The temple was strategically constructed against a concave-shaped cliff facing the main pinnacle of the mountains. Due to its east-facing orientation, by the time I arrived the entire temple was swathed in



Fig. 3.42 Mid-air passageways of the Hanging Temple, Hengshan.

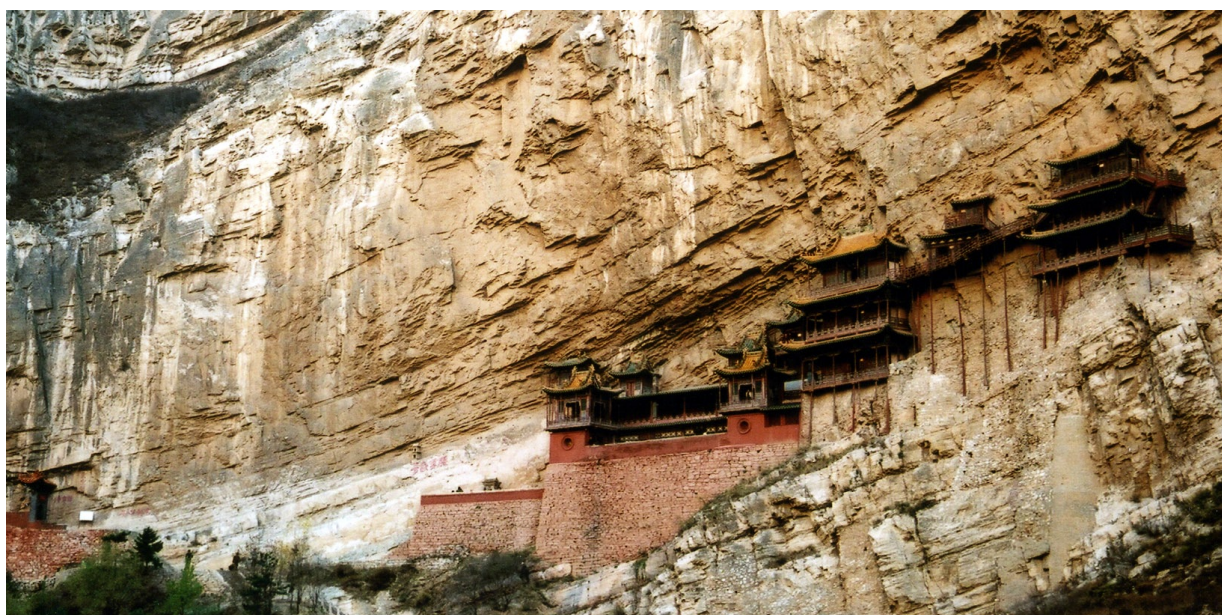


Fig. 3.43 The Hanging Temple, Hengshan.

shadow. The temple consists of three groups of buildings, like ornaments adhered onto the rocky cliff and interconnected by suspended bridges. As I stepped up the steps to approach the temple entrance, I realized the structure was basically supported by timber girders punched into the cliff. The red legs underneath are mere additional reinforcement and a device for visual comfort.

The entrance courtyard is a walled platform on the cliff. Visitors are restricted to walk in a designated direction because of the narrowness of the bridges and the cliff-side passageways. The first building is comprised of cabins for monks. I checked out several and walked over to the second building—the three-storey high worship hall. In the Hall of Three Divinities I saw the statues of Lao Tzu, Buddha, and Confucius. This temple was in fact dedicated to all three main Chinese religions. Clay statues of various mythical divinities are also found in neighbouring rooms. The third building is situated at a higher position from ground. Standing at its top level, I saw the main peak of Hengshan turning yellow under the late afternoon sun. It was an exciting experience standing in mid air against a cliff, although I chose not to look down below the wooden planks of the passageways.

By 17:30, I was back in Hunyuan. There I caught the last bus returning to Datong. Near the hotel, I bought two Chinese pears and went for dinner at a local restaurant across the street. After dinner, I came back to pack. Tomorrow, I leave Datong in the evening by train.

Fig. 3.44 The Hanging Temple, Hengshan.



2004.10.28. Yungang Buddhist Grottoes

Getting to the Yungang Buddhist Grottoes proved easy. I got into one of the local vans in front of my hotel and off I went to the UNESCO site. I was dropped off along a dusty highway after half an hour's journey. The myriad of stone grottoes were already visible behind the low-rise houses of the town of Yungang. Next to the highway was a dried-up ravine where once a river had tumbled. Today there were sewers in front of Yungang (Cloud Ridge). An array of monstrous coal mining factories and coalfields occupied the land across the sewers. Their smoke stacks emitted black particles into the air. This is certainly not the same environment when the Northern Wei emperors deliberately chose the site in the fifth century.

I spent only five minutes walking through the town of Yungang and reached the gate of the grotto museum. The site stretches over one kilometre on a roughly 10-storey high cliff. I bought a pocket sized brochure at the ticket office and began my tour of the precious art treasures.

There are 252 grottoes and over 50,000 statues altogether. Construction began AD 460 under the Northern Wei Dynasty. At that time, Northern China was ruled by the nomadic tribe of Xianbei. The Xianbei remains to modern historians a mysterious group of people. Most believe the Xianbei originated from a mountainous area around Mount Xianbei in northeast China. The tribe arose when Jin China was troubled with severe internal power struggles. After the Xianbei conquered much of the Yellow River region, their leader became the new ruler of China and forced their own people to assimilate with the Hans. They adopted the Han language, political system, religion, architecture, and everything they had had envied before they had broken through the Great Wall. Their first action task was to construct the Yungang Buddhist Grottoes—an attempt to raise their cultural status through religion. The grottoes became both a political and religious symbol. The policy of assimilation achieved great success. In a few generations, no one in China considered himself/herself a Xianbei anymore.

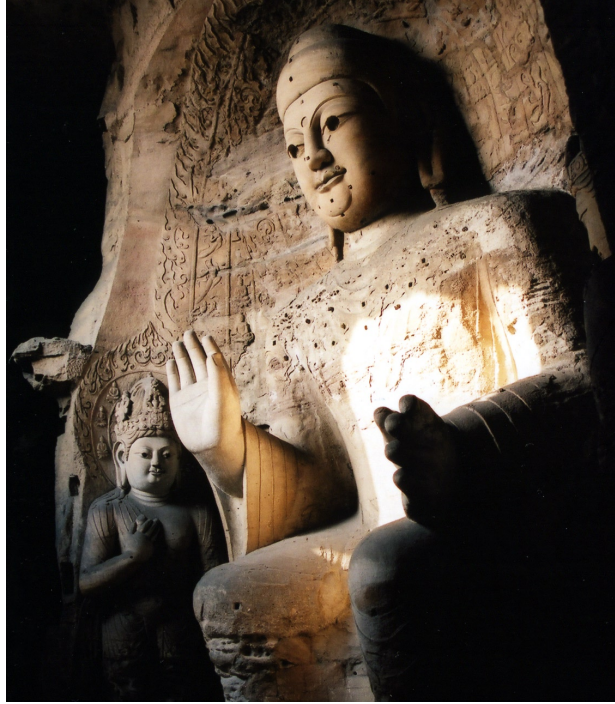
I began my tour at grotto no. 1, the easternmost cave. Against the rocky cliff, a seated Buddha about 1 m in height emerges within a small and shallow grotto. The facial and body details of the statue are no longer recognizable. A sign beside the statue suggests that grotto no. 1 is one



Fig. 3.45 Demon-head column capitals of the wooden temple facade at Grotto #5.



Fig. 3.46 On the ceiling of a cave vestibule, ancient artists included a celestial messenger playing an ancient musical instrument as decoration.



of the oldest grottos on the site. I passed the badly damaged grotto no. 2 and reached grotto no. 3. I walked through its vestibule and entered the main cave. It hosts a 10 m high, standing Buddha that is sculpted from the cliff. The Buddha is accompanied by two smaller Bodhisattvas. A shaft of sunlight penetrated through a skylight onto a pile of khatas (Tibetan silk scarves of prayers) left by earlier pilgrims at the feet of the Buddha. Dust particles glimmered and the eyeballs of the statues sparkled under the sunlight. The eyeballs are made of black crystals.

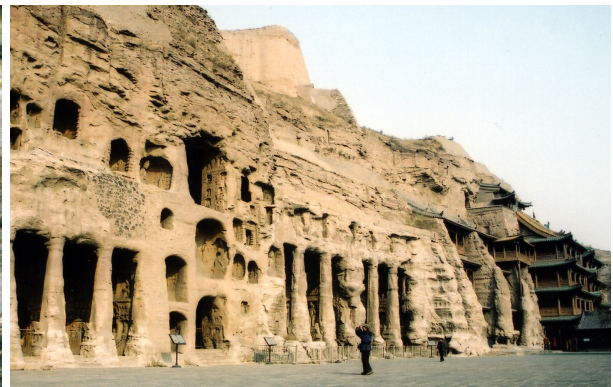
Fig. 3.47 (top left) The Buddha statue in the cave of grotto #3.

Fig. 3.48 The exposed Buddha statue at grotto #20.

Grottoes no. 4 and no. 5 contain some of the best-preserved frescos and lively small statues, in addition to a 17 m tall giant Buddha. Two ancient wooden temple fronts shelter the two grottoes from the exterior. Different demon heads are carved as column capitals of the multi-storey shelters. Four female celestial messengers who spread chromatic blossoms in the

Fig. 3.49 A fresco on the underside of an archway at grotto #5 depicts four female celestial messengers.

Fig. 3.50 Overview of the Yungang Stone Grottoes from about grotto #12 to the wooden temple structures of grotto #5 on the right.



sky are depicted at the underside of the main archway in grotto no. 5. Other depictions of celestial messengers playing ancient Chinese musical instruments are to be found in a few adjacent grottoes, revealing the imagery of the Chinese Buddhist paradise.

In many grottoes, semi-outdoor vestibules are constructed behind colonnades, suggesting a possibility of Hellenistic influence from the other end of the Silk Road. Many scholars considered the Yungang Grottoes a proof of cultural exchange between the Han Chinese, Tibetans, Mongolians, Indians, and Persians. Such influences shaped the sculptures. Grotto making was an ancient practice of Buddhist Indians. They constructed grottoes mainly for meditation in hot and humid summers. The Chinese adopted this practice and developed a type of rock temple. After a thousand years of neglect, the Yungang Grottoes were rediscovered in the early twentieth century. Architectural scholars such as Ito Chuta and Liang Sicheng came to study the architectural depictions in frescos, sculptures, and the grotto construction.

I stood on an adjacent rock platform to get a closer look at the iconic, exposed Buddha at grotto no. 20. The seated Buddha sits against the cliff surface and faces the coal-mining facilities across the river. The rumble of a coal transport train made me turn my head. In a few seconds, the freight carts filled up the entire horizon. I turned my head back to the Buddha and noticed the coat of black dust on his body. Signs of acidic corrosion appeared on his merciful face and on his lap, reflecting the evil fate he might have in the near future. A red khata tied on his mutilated finger caught my attention as it swayed in the air. I finished the tour of the grottoes with the image of the corroding Buddha in my mind.

Fig. 3.51 The worker houses in the town of Yungang and the coal freight carts at the back.





2004.10.29. Chengde Summer Palaces

A night train from Datong took me to Beijing. There, I failed to get a train ticket from Beijing to my next destination, Chengde. The station staff advised me to take a coach from Sihui Bus Terminal instead. I made the 08:00 bus. The trip took six hours.

Chengde was a mountain resort town of the Qing emperors 360 km northeast of the capital. Began as a hunting ground for imperial aristocrats, Chengde arose after Emperor Kangxi constructed an enormous summer palace and garden. He walled off a 5.64km² piece of land, roughly the size of eight Forbidden Cities, and thus created the largest imperial resort in the world—the Bizhushanzhuang. He commissioned 36 architectural and landscape foci. His grandson Qianlong expanded the programme to 72 and completed the resort with 120 building complexes. Qianlong also constructed a series of large Tibetan lamaseries outside the resort walls.

After checking in at a budget hotel close to the imperial resort, I arrived at Bizhushanzhuang, two hours before dusk. The autumn willows, ancient pines, peaceful mounts, vast grasslands, splendid Suzhou gardens, and the ornate royal pavilions reflected the taste of Emperors Kangxi and Qianlong. Like his nomadic ancestors, Kangxi loved to hunt. The grassland inside the resort was of an imperial hunting ground. On the other hand, Kangxi was an admirer of Han cultures, in particular literature, calligraphy, and painting. The ideal home of a Chinese scholar, the Suzhou garden, and the ideal landscape depicted in a typical Chinese painting, the willow-lined waterfront and distant mountains formed the



Fig. 3.53 Reflection of a dike at the Chengde Summer Palaces.

basis for the seventeenth-century design.

A series of lakes and canals occupy the central area. Pathways along the water bodies connect all the points of interest in the park. I followed a stone path to reach the main palace complex. The Hall of Frugality and Placidity was the location where Emperor Kangxi dealt with official affairs. In comparison to the Forbidden City, the Chengde palaces are far more casual. Here, there aren't any three-layered podiums, golden roof tiles, or white marble balustrades. The post-and-beam timber structures are left simple and unpainted. A grid of ancient pines sprouts from octagonal planters in the courtyard spaces, sheltering the pavers from the afternoon sun. Outdoor corridors covered with tiled roofs and railed in with wooden screens define the yard spaces into different quarters. I had a pleasant stroll at the palace courts. The overall atmosphere is nothing like imperial Beijing; instead, it expressed some qualities of the sacred Wutaishan.

After the palaces, I walked on the willow-lined pathway to the lakeshore again. The lake is dissected into different sizes and shapes by the two manmade islands and the connecting dikes. A great amount of water-lilies did not withstand the freezing temperature of the season, and lay half-dead along the shoreline. The restful water mirrored a picture made of relaxing pedestrians, arch bridges, flying eaves, ancient trees, and gentle slopes—like a freestyle landscape ink and water painting of the misty and tranquil scenery in Southern China. A number of lakeside buildings proved to be imitations of real landmarks in the south, such as the Golden

Mount Hall (modelled from a temple in Zhenjiang) and Misty Rain Hall (modelled from a hall in Jiaxin), just to name a couple.

North of the lakes is a vast piece of grassland, like the Mongolian plains. Several Mongolian yurts are set up. The former imperial hunting yurts have now been turned into a two-star hotel complex. East of the yurts stands a miniature of Hangzhou's Pagoda of Six Harmonies and the Buddhist Temple of Eternal Blessing. A series of hills and plateaus stand west to the yurts. Although I had no time to explore the hills, I learned from an information panel that those hills are dotted with an array of pavilions and private reading chambers.

I walked back to the park entrance along the opposite side of the lake. At a pavilion-bridge structure across a canal, I rested upon the railing for several minutes, and watched the distant hills losing their details to a sheer coat of silhouettes. The sun waned fast in the north here. I exited the south gate at around 18:00. All the stores and restaurants opposite the entrance square had already switched on their neon lights. I had a quick bite at one of the Muslim restaurant close by, and returned to the hotel.

I am sure that I'll sleep well tonight. Yesterday I could hardly shut my eyes on the train. The ticket I got was the cheapest type—the hard seat, and that's no joke! The seat was hard.

Fig. 3.52 A courtyard in the main palace complex at the Chengde Summer Palace.





Fig. 3.54-3.56 Buddhist temples at Chengde (left to right): Puning Temple, Putuozongcheng Lamasery and Xumifushou Temple.

2004.10.30. Temples of Chengde

In the eighteenth century, more than a dozen Buddhist temples were built outside the walls of Bizhushanzhuang. Most of them were dedicated to Tibetan Buddhism, the official religion of the Qing emperors. Emperor Qianlong commissioned experts from southern China to work on the summer palaces, and experts from western China (Tibet, Qinghai, and Sichuan) to design and construct the lamaseries. He also invited great lamas, such as the Banchan Lama (second most powerful Tibetan lama after Dala Lama) to come and give Buddhist teachings. All these temples and the Bizhushanzhuang are now included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Out of the eight remaining imperial temples in Chengde, only the Puning Temple is still in use for religious purposes. I started the day early since I planned to leave Chengde at 14:00. I arrived at the gate of Puning at 08:00 sharp. At the first hall, traces of Han Chinese are obvious: big tiled roofs, flying eaves, wooden screens, timber structures, marble balustrades, etc. As I went deeper, buildings began to carry evidence of Tibetan features; Tibetan wheels of prayers are the main features in the courtyards.

A flight of stone steps against a large, red retaining wall led me onto an elevated courtyard. Several flat-roof masonry buildings, finished with red and white plaster, stand in the courtyard and also on the back hill. At the centre of the courtyard, a roughly 10-storey high Guanyin Hall dominates the building group. Six sets of gable roofs and the golden ornaments at the top suggested a blending of Han and Tibetan

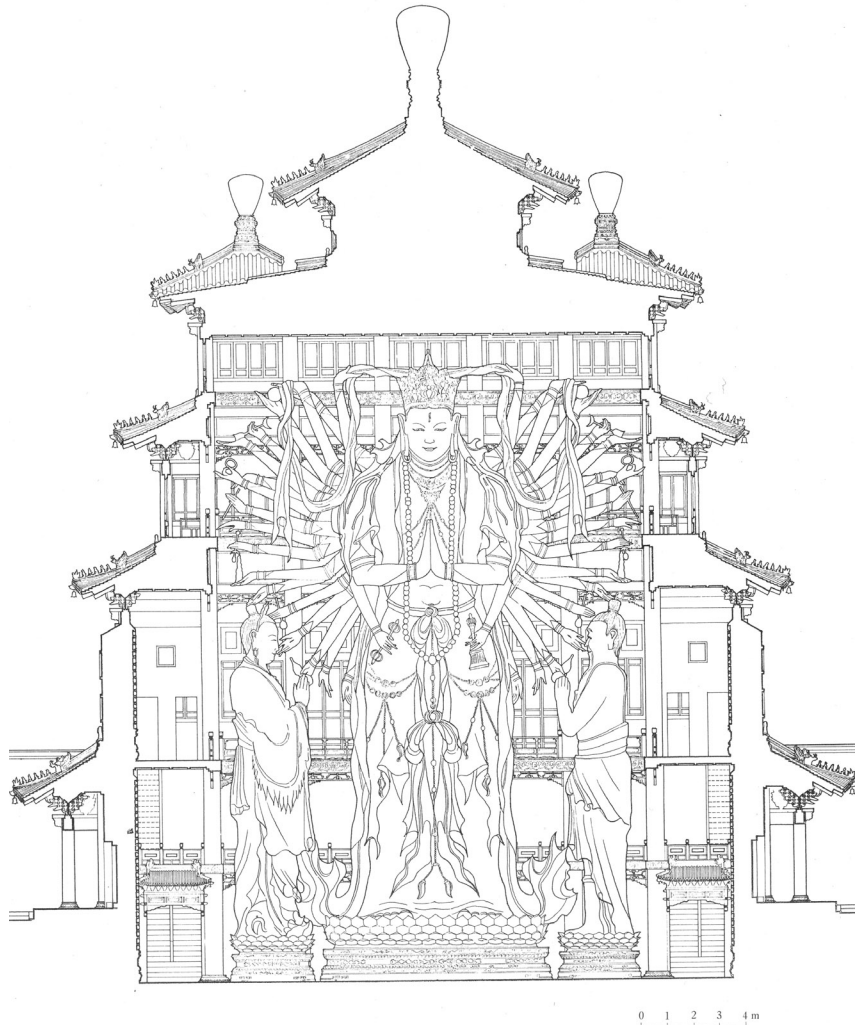


Fig. 3.57 The wooden Guanyin statue at Puning Temple.

Fig. 3.58 Section of the Guanyin Hall at Puning Temple.

architecture. I entered the hall and was immediately overwhelmed by what Lonely Planet has described as "heart-arresting golden statue": the 23 m wooden Guanyin Bodhisattva.⁵ I rented an electrical torch from a monk, and went up to the second and third levels to examine the wonderful wooden statue. The Bodhisattva is in the form of the Guanyin with "a thousand arms" (in reality, this statue contains about fifty arms), a style that had originated in the south to represent the power of Guanyin. Each hand either performs a specific meditation posture, or holds a unique instrument to signify a specific supernatural power.

Behind the Guanyin Hall rises a rocky hill, on top of which are numerous white stupas and Tibetan flat-roof altars. On the peak, two lamas burned incenses at a metal incense holder. Hundreds or even thousands of metal pad locks are attached onto the chain railings that lead up to the peak.

Each lock represents one pilgrim's prayer for affinity. The Chinese believe that there is a force of affinity hidden within any human relationship—an invisible power that pulls two people together: husband and wife, father and son, a pair of friends, etc. When the force of affinity is strong, even strangers can become lovers. If the force drifts away, a parting between the two persons becomes inescapable.

West of Puning, a five minute taxi ride brought me to the Putuozongcheng Lamasery. This vigorous temple is a miniature of Lhasa's Potala Palace. Again built by the chauvinist Qianlong, the temple is an expensive architectural extravaganza to celebrate his 60th birthday in front of regional chieftains of the Islamic region of Xinjiang and the Buddhist regions of Tibet and Mongolia. The main building of Putuozongcheng is like a massive apartment block, in the colours of red and white. Although the Putuozongcheng is only one third the size of the real Potala, and could never match its splendour, it nonetheless reflects the Chinese desire of possessing all known splendours in the nation.

The nearby Xumifushou Temple mimics a famous temple in Shigatse. The eight copper dragons on the roof ridges are stunning features to express royal majesty. Xumifushou is about the same size and style as the Putuozongcheng—a block of masonry and earth in red and white.

The last temple I visited before heading back to Beijing was the Pule Temple. At Pule, the most significant building is the circular main hall, a structure imitating the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. Instead of blue glazed tiles, the roofs of the Pule are all gold in colour. I got the feeling that the Temple of Heaven had dyed its hair here.

I got to the railway station before 14:00. I took the 14:30 train back to the Beijing Railway Station. In the four-and-a-half hour train ride, I took out the admission tickets of the temples and the imperial summer resort. As one of the few most important tourist towns in Northern China, the tourist agency has designed a unified set of beautiful admission tickets for the Chengde attractions. A post-card photo of the attraction and a silver border make up the ticket front. On the back, a short paragraph in Chinese and English described the history of the site. These well-made tickets contrast their simpler counterparts from the Wutaishan temples. The level of printing quality of the Chengde tickets matches the ones from Beijing, but without the colourful advertisements on the back. I then



Fig. 3.59 "Locks of affinity" along a metal railing at the back mount of Puning Temple.



Fig. 3.60 One of the entrance halls at Putuozongcheng Lamasery.



Fig. 3.61 A colourful corner eave detail of the Pule Temple.



walked for fifteen minutes to reach my old friend—the Eastern Morning Hostel.

I received again room 6443. Once again it is my home in Beijing. I have put the book on Shanxi architecture that I bought at Wutaishan, the brochure of the Yungang Grottoes, and the *Lonely Planet Guidebook on China* on the bedside counter.

Fig 3.62-3.64 Fancy admission tickets of the Buddhist temples at Chengde (top to bottom): Putuo Zongcheng Lamasery, Xumifushou Temple and Pule Temple.



Fig. 4.1 The Tiananmen Gate as seen from the Tiananmen Square.

Reconstruction of Memories

One of the odd things about the arrival of the era of the modern nation-state was that for a state to prove it was modern, it helped if it could also prove it was ancient. A nation that wanted to show it was up to date and deserved a place among the company of modern states needed, among other things, to produce a past.¹ Timothy Mitchell

National memories evolve with new collective fantasy behind the conscious of the citizens while the government attempts to reconstruct or invent new memories to consolidate its power and boost national morale. The process of memory construction: selecting a moment, modifying the details, and educating the citizens often involve manipulation of historical architecture, namely the tagging of national relics that can enhance patriotic emotions. Today, if a tourist first meets his guide in China, it is not uncommon to hear the guide say, 'we Chinese possess an uninterrupted 4000 years of history.' The notion of China being one of the most prosperous ancient civilizations in the world helps the modern Chinese to feel proud of their identity, while the turmoil of the 20th century China, especially the struggles against colonial powers and the Japanese invaders, further provoke a sense of internal bonding among fellow citizens. Both ancient and modern memories are significant in building the new China.

The treatment of the past has never been the same throughout the last century. The concept to reevaluate the past arose during the reformation years after the May 4th Movement in 1919, and was further

radicalized into forced amnesia in the Mao's years, when the Chinese swam in the emotions of cultural rebirth and nation building. 'To every high school student of our time, the wheel of our history began only from the moment the Tiananmen Square was flooded with red flags,⁷² a Red Guard confessed his remorse of tearing down the Beijing city wall. Uncounted old buildings and artefacts were damaged or destroyed as the nation underwent the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, an extreme revolutionist period of power struggle and social unrest from 1966 to 1976.

In the Post-Mao period, Deng Xiaoping brought open-market economic reforms to replace the Maoist radical socialist policy, and the government turned its attitude towards the past with the aim of rebuilding a more culturally sophisticated image and strong internal unity following the social unrest of the Cultural Revolution, during which millions of people were persecuted, including a great number of intellectuals. The government began to reconstruct and fill in the memory gaps, and to promote nationalistic fervour along with substantial economic recovery. While the open market brought new ideas into the nation that might stir up discontent towards the autocratic government, the manipulation of collective memories as a device helped the government to unite the population under a common identity. Memories of selective incidents were widely published, advertised, and educated. Sites and buildings that evoked vivid emotions (nostalgia, pride, grief, and anger) were chosen for extensive restoration and tourist development. For scholars, authors, and filmmakers, the manipulation of collective memories helps to maintain a balance of regional culture within global influences, whereas for the government, the opportunity of memory reconstruction is the basis to obtain public support:

Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them so that, however convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess.³ Maurice Halbwachs

Anne-Marie Broudehoux, in the *Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, emphasizes that the Chinese government's rediscovery of certain memories is nonetheless a means to re-establish its legitimacy

upon its citizens: "Facing a major legitimacy crisis in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, the Chinese state traded its socialist rhetoric for a more fundamental call for nationalism, reinforced by re-invocation of national humiliations at the hands of foreign nations and repeated warning about the duplicitous and predatory West."⁴

Upon close examination of the treatment of Yuanmingyuan, the mighty Qing summer palace sacked by the Anglo-French troops during the Opium Wars, the modern value of historical architecture is revealed; for even a single piece of debris is a valuable witness of the past that can provoke modern emotions and foster nationalism, as in the case of Ground Zero at New York. Tiananmen—the only architecture that appears on the national emblem along with the stars, the stalls of wheat, and the mechanical wheel that altogether represent Communist China, exemplify the evolution of memories of historical architecture in relation to political regime and social mentality transformations.



Fig. 4.2 Tangdai and Shen Yuan, *Elevated Region of Fangfu*, leaf from the *Forty Scenes of the Garden of Perfect Brightness*, 1744, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.

The Reconstruction of Yuanmingyuan

Never did I see a more enchanting spot either in reality or in picture. From here we were pulled across the ice to the other side in sledges with yellow ropes; there we visited five temples in beauty equalling those of Peking but far surpassing them with respect to their site, being constructed in terraces on the hillside, as well as by their natural and artificial rockeries and the free view across

the water. The beautiful buildings on the other bank and the entire region furnished a picture whose beauty cannot be adequately described. From the highest temples we had a wide view of the city of Peking and this enchanting place... All the picturesqueness so much admired in Chinese paintings was relished here in the highest degree. One was completely transported by the beauty.⁵ Issac Titsingh (a Dutch ambassador depicted the Yuanmingyuan after an extensive tour of the summer palace and the gardens in January 1795)

Yuanmingyuan, the Garden of Perfection and Brightness, is an iconic site at Beijing's northwest suburb. Referred by people as the "Garden of All Gardens", the manmade paradise is currently better known as a symbol that tells the history of the nation's hundred-year humiliation by foreign powers after the garden was looted and sacked in 1860 by Anglo-French troops. As the plaque standing beside the romantic marble ruins of the Western Mansions indicates, the ruins of Yuanmingyuan, along with a number of unfair treaties signed by the late Qing emperors with western ambassadors, are a shame to the entire nation that no Chinese should ever forget. According to Alois Riegl's *The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin*, monumentality can be either intentional or unintentional, or any object possesses "age value".⁶ The ruins of Yuanmingyuan is an unintentional monument, having the ability to commemorate a national trauma, while the memory it evokes is intentionally intensified by films, literature, and political propaganda.

The story of Yuanmingyuan, for many people, was ended at the moment when the paradise fell and was sacked under foreign hands. Thus, only few knew and cared about what happened to the garden after it fell. After 1860, the Qing government did actually renovate part of the garden to its former glory, but the condition did not last long before the second blow by the War of the Eight-Nation Allied Powers, when even diplomats and missionaries had joined their troops in looting the garden. After the fall of the Imperial Qing, Yuanmingyuan became a nominal property of Puyi, the last emperor, but in reality, the garden was no more than a prey for greedy officials and former eunuchs to hunt for valuables. Any remaining treasures, rocks, and building materials were taken and relocated elsewhere, and a portion of the land was granted to the adjacent Tsinghua University. "Beside shipments of solid materials in large quantities, there was petty stealing committed by former eunuchs, ex-bannermen, and local residents too numerous to count.

Beijing residents in the 1920s witnessed that stone carving, bronze inscriptions, Taihu rocks, bricks, tiles, and numerous other building materials were carted away from the Yuanmingyuan almost on a daily basis."⁷ From 1937 to 1945 during the Japanese invasion, starving peasants began to occupy the garden of ruins: they flattened the hills for cultivation and converted the lakes into fish ponds. After the Communist takeover, the government succeeded in taking back much of the land of Yuanmingyuan under requisition, but the relocation of farming communities could not be realized, and the situation worsened during the famine years of early 1960s. The ten years of Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 almost completely erased the ruins of Yuanmingyuan from the site as "about 800 meters of broken walls were taken away, 1000 trees were cut down, and no less than 528 carts of stone materials were removed."⁸ About fifteen work units and 270 families formed appropriately twenty different villages within the garden boundaries during that time.⁹ It was not until the intellectual symposium held in Beijing in 1980 to mark the 120th anniversary of the fall of Yuanmingyuan that the government finally proclaimed the ruins as national "key relics" for state protection. By 1984, landscape restoration began and in June 1988, part of Yuanmingyuan was officially opened to public visitors. However, the reconstruction process was limited in scale as "by the late 1990s, 140 of the 350 hectares of the park remained closed off from public access, awaiting the evacuation of residents and industries which still occupied the land."¹⁰

The issue of reconstructing Yuanmingyuan had arisen since Premier Zhou Enlai brought up the government's desire to foster patriotism among citizens during the period of the Korean War. The plan never became realized, mainly because of the lack of funding, until the years of market economic reform under Deng Xiaoping. Under rapid globalization, the mayors of Beijing—especially Chen Xitong, who reigned from mid 1980s to mid 1990s—decided to build a capital along with revivals of Chinese values and traditions. Yuanmingyuan served well as a device for historical imaginations and narrations to strengthen their international image as an ancient culture and to boost domestic patriotism in the competitive age of

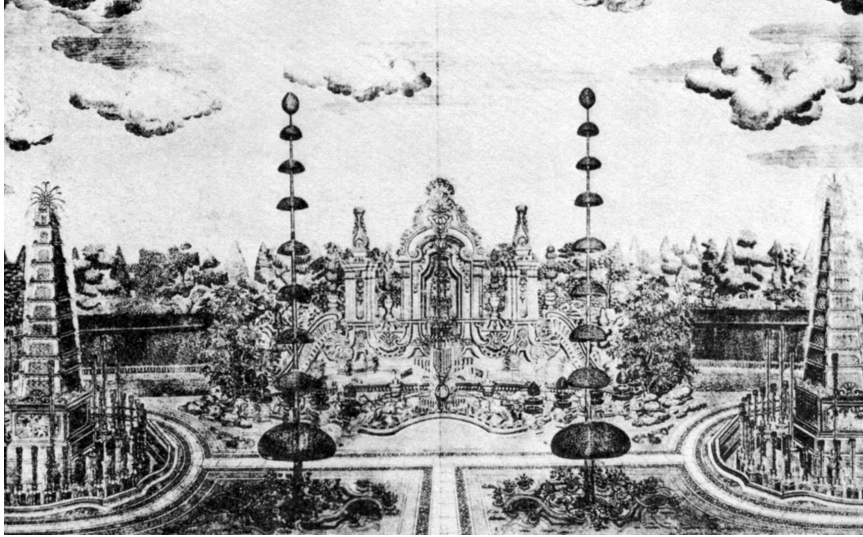


Fig. 4.3 Illustration of Dashuifa Xiyanglou (Big Fountain of the Western Mansions) in 1886.



Fig. 4.4 Ruins of the Dashuifa (Big Fountain of the Western Mansions) in the early 20th century.



Fig. 4.5 Ruins of the Dashuifa in 2004.

globalization. Today, the debate continues as work is being done to partially reconstruct the site. There have been a number of public opinion forums in newspapers, magazines, and on websites, reflecting that half of the public do not support the reconstruction; they express satisfaction with the existing condition and see any future work as a pure waste of resources and funding:

I would like to say that the rehabilitation work is completely unnecessary in the next 50 to 100 years. As is known, the scale of Yuanmingyuan, as an imperial park, is impressive and immense. It would be hard to design and rehabilitate it to its original state. Moreover, it is nearly impossible to guarantee the sufficient water source for the three lakes in the park.¹¹ Yang Xiaochuan (an employee with Huachuan Industry Co. Ltd. in Chengdu)

The coming years will see a great influx of people arriving in Beijing. The Chinese visitors to Yuanmingyuan should not seethe with rage, nor should the Western visitors run and hide in shame from the past. I believe that all visitors to Yuanmingyuan, be they from China or other countries, can learn an important lesson about history and culture. If the park were rebuilt such lessons would be greatly diminished if not lost entirely.¹² Chris Robyn (marketing manager of Cypress Book Co.)

However, there are also a large number of locals agree to the reconstruction, claiming that a good device to recreate a cultural jewel piece and revive a moment of history that is crucial to the entire nation:

The reason why I suggest revamping the ancient-style gardens that covered 98 percent of Yuanmingyuan is because I have never believed the point of view that to preserve the "humiliation ground" is to preserve the memory of history. We have to face a reality, which is, the present Yuanmingyuan is not the one burnt down by Anglo-French

Fig. 4.6 The 140th anniversary ceremony of the fall of Yuanmingyuan in 2000.

Fig. 4.7 Chinese President Jiang Jemin and top officials came to Yuanmingyuan to plant trees on April 2, 1994. Jiang stated, '...today we restore the ruins and make the site green, so that both our fellow citizens and our foreign friends can witness our development.'



troops in 1860. ...The White House of the United States was also once burnt by the British. I propose to retain the ruins of Western-style buildings covering eight hectares while rebuilding other places.¹³ Wang Daocheng (professor of Renmin University of China)

In my opinion, Yuanmingyuan should be rebuilt. Rebuilding the park does not mean forgetting the humiliating past; rather, the effort would focus on the future development of Chinese nation. China is no longer the helpless weak country that was trampled and manipulated by Western powers... We cannot rewrite the history, but we have the boundless ability to create a much better society in the future. We should leave the past to the museums and rebuild the imperial gardens in an effort to recur the profound culture of Chinese nation.¹⁴ Wang Jie (a student major in English at Sichuan Normal University)

While the debate may go on for another twenty years on paper, to the 1500 inhabitants who still dwell within the park boundaries nowadays, it is an entirely different story. Since most of them have been living in the park for two to three generations, Yuanmingyuan is not a mere national icon or a historical monument, but a mundane, real home. The memories of the local park residents seem to possess little value when being compared with the collective memory of the entire nation. Thus the sacrifice and even erasure of this minority's past is by no means causing the government concern or to hesitate, as long as they can relocate the inhabitants elsewhere without trouble or resistance. While some residents see their ultimate removal as a result of "no luck and no choice", some do see it as an act for a noble cause, "Personal interest should not stand in the way of the common good,"¹⁵ stated by a young boat attendant who has resided in the park since birth. She continues to condemn the "real reason" for many residents to refuse leaving: the rental revenue generated from their houses in Yuanmingyuan, which to her is undoubtedly a selfish act. Another dilemma of the reconstruction is the cost. The Yuanmingyuan preservation bureau has always been lacking funding. While they struggle to maintain the preservation of the ruins and run a simple museum, in the 1980s and 1990s, they were forced to rent out some of the park spaces for a children's playground quite similar to a mini-Disneyland, and for luxury housing development. The removal of such facilities and termination of contracts create further difficulties for the



Fig. 4.8 The second of the four posters in the Patriotic Education Propaganda Set, designed by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League, to commemorate the “50th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People’s Struggle against Japan and the Victory of the International Struggle against Fascism”. This poster titles “How can we forget”, with the ruins of Yuanmingyuan’s Western Mansions in the centre, and four small images depict the Opium War, the Unfair Treaties, the War of the Eight Allied Nations and the Nanjing Massacre. A question in the middle states “Why the descendants of the dragon became sick men of the East, and subjects to endless bullying and humiliation?” The last statement concludes with “...the hundred years of humiliation have told us that when you are going backwards, you would end up under attack.”

reconstruction plan, as well as the relocation of park residents.

After mentioning the unfair treaties signed by Imperial Qing with numerous European powers, the introduction plaque beside the Western Mansions continues with:

During the last seventy years, under the leadership of the Party, we have fought for fairness and independence. At last in 1949, New China was established. We must never forget our history; it will be the guide to our future. Let us remember the past, remember the pain, remember history, and pull our hearts together to build China, spread the love of our country to make it strong, and build a new nation with Chinese characteristics.¹⁶

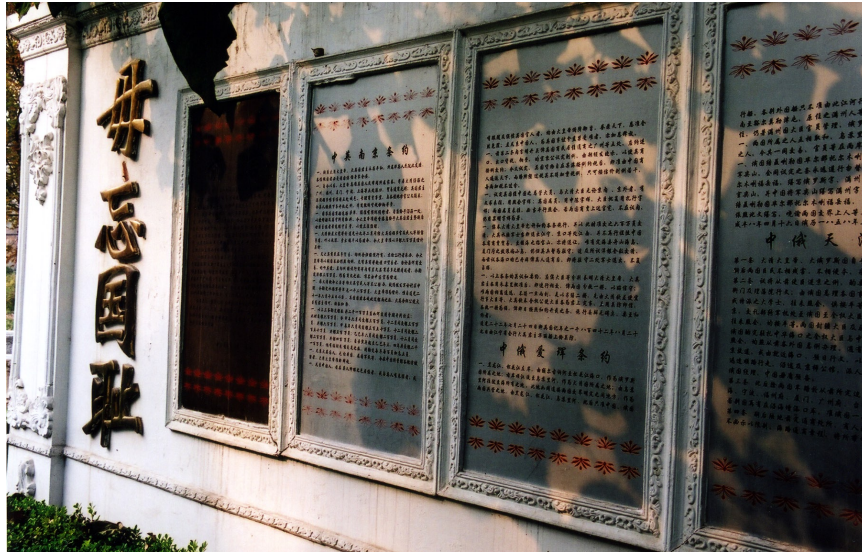


Fig. 4.9 The plaque of "Wu Wang Guo Qi" (Never Forget National Disgrace).

In a matter of perception, the Yuanmingyuan is a venue of memories and amnesia, of ephemera and permanence, of death and rebirth.

The Redefinition of Tiananmen

No matter the ruins or a preserved historical building, the monumentality of architecture continues to evolve with transformations of the nation. Although a monument is intended to preserve a historical moment for eternity, a monument never stays the same; instead, it constantly evolves with political and social changes of a nation. Wu Hung, in *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture*, introduces the legendary Nine Tripods from the Xia Dynasty as the first Chinese monuments.¹⁷ Originally as a set of bronze sacrificial instruments, the Nine Tripods were made out of metals from nine



Fig. 4.10 The Monument of the People's Heroes in the Tiananmen Square. The monument was built in the late 1950s by the Communist government.

different zones in China to be used for celestial rituals of the imperial court. Soon, the Tripods were perceived as a symbol of power of the Xia leaders to rule over the nine zones— per se, a unified China. After the fall of Xia, the Shang rulers possessed the Tripods, and saw them as the symbol of their power. After the Shang, then came the Zhou to inherit the symbolic bronze set. No one knows what happened to the Tripods after the fall of Zhou, but the value of the immortalized Tripods transcended down history through idioms to symbolize power, and then to one's creditability and authority. We hold onto the past even though the past keeps changing, both at the physical and conceptual levels. Architecture records history, and as history runs through traumatic moments, the value of architecture is altered accordingly to reflect social and political norms of particular periods. In the case of Yuanmingyuan, it has transformed from an amusement palace of the Qing royal family to piles of debris, to homes of mundane people, and then to a national symbol of patriotism and decolonization. Often the values reflected in architectural pieces are simply propaganda of a political regime, but behind the surface there are always unintentional ethics mingled within that may not necessary reflect the desires of the government, but rather collective memories of social dramas experienced by the masses. Tiananmen, being the centre of the Chinese capital for the last 600 years, is cast as the symbol of the modern China, reflecting both favoured and unwanted memories of the current regime.

Tiananmen, or the "Gate of Heavenly Peace", has ironically witnessed dozens of unmerciful moments of Chinese history over the past hundred years. Built by the Ming Yongle Emperor in 1420, Tiananmen (originally called *Chengtianmen*, or the "Gate of Heavenly Inheritance") was the main gate of the Imperial City in which the mighty Forbidden City stood. After the Manchurian Qing entered China, Emperor Shenzhi ordered the gate be renovated, and renamed it Tiananmen. Tiananmen is a three-hole city gate topped with a splendid, big-roof palace structure, located in the middle of the central axis of Beijing. Before the fall of Qing Dynasty in 1911, the gate served as the entrance to the imperial world. Today, Tiananmen's imperial memories are dwarfed by the traumatic moments in the 20th



Fig. 4.11 The May 4th Protest in front of the Tiananmen, 1919.

century—the moments that unfolded the new epoch of the nation. With the overwhelming involvement of the Communist party to immortalize the gate's historical values as the symbol of revolutionist China, the spirit of Tiananmen goes far beyond its original function and identity.

On May 4, 1919, a crucial demonstration was held in front of Tiananmen that marked one of the most vivid memories of Beijing. Originated as a student protest to condemn foreign imperialism in colonizing parts of China—especially against the Treaty of Versailles in which the world powers decided to grant the former German colony at the province of Shandong, the birth place of Confucius, to Japan—the demonstration evolved into a nationwide movement crying for political, cultural, and social reforms to modernize the weak nation. The image of the 3000 university students protesting with banners and posters in front of the gate became the symbol of revolution against an ignorant past, a corrupted government, and imperialism of foreign powers. After the protest, almost all colleges and universities underwent radical reforms in their curricula, and over 400 new journals on culture and politics were found. In the *New Youth Magazine*, a leading modernist publication founded by several foreign educated young men, manifested their ideology in late 1919 on the identity of a new China:

We advocate mass movement and social reconstruction, cutting off relations completely with past and present political parties...

We believe that politics, ethics, science, the arts, religion, and education should all meet practical needs in the achievement



Fig. 4.12 *New Youth Magazine* vol. 6 no.5.



Fig. 4.13 Anti-Japanese Demonstration in the Tiananmen Square, June 10 1925.

of progress for present and future social life. We have to give up the useless and irrelevant elements of traditional literature and ethics, because we want to create those needed for the progress of the new era and new society. We believe that it is requisite for the progress of our present society to uphold natural science and pragmatic philosophy and to abolish superstition and fantasy...¹⁸

From then on, the Tiananmen became a venue for public gatherings and protests, among which several anti-Japanese demonstrations took place in mid 1930s, making Tiananmen a symbol for Chinese nationalism. After the Communist takeover, Mao chose the balcony of Tiananmen to announce the founding of the new People's Republic of China in 1949, in front of hundreds of thousands of citizens gathered below. The meaning of the structure was greatly redefined into the



Fig. 4.14 The Tiananmen at night. On the gate the banners say "Long live the People's Republic of China" and "Long live the people of the world".

basis of the making of Communist China.

In the 1950s, the Communists consolidated the modern connotation of Tiananmen by placing the structure's image on the national emblem and by constructing a gigantic public square in front of the structure. On September 20, 1950, Mao announced the features of the newly designed national emblem: the national flag, a stall of wheat, a mechanical wheel, and Tiananmen¹⁹ to symbolize the birth of a people-governed China under political liberation from the May 4th Movement and the socialist revolution founded by the alliance of workers and farmers. The design process of the new logo began as early as July 10, 1949, under the three basic guiding principles: national dignity, Chineseness, and the Communist ideology. The Institute of Architectural Studies at Tsinghua University was one of the two major participants in the competition, in which architectural scholar Liang Sicheng participated as a design consultant and his wife Lin Huiyin as leader of the design team. Liang argued the use of Tiananmen was too literal for a national emblem, and suggested using something more abstract to express Chinese spirit, while the other team, the State Academy of Arts, strongly supported the use of Tiananmen. The party decided to go with the Gate and urged the two teams to submit design drafts by mid June, 1950. At Tsinghua, Lin asked Zhu Changzhong, one of the team members, to study the documentation drawings of the gate in the archive of the former Institute of Research on Chinese Architecture and prepare an illustration. Zhu admired the grandness and the perfect proportion of the front elevation of Tiananmen and proposed to use the elevation with shadings and an embossed effect instead of a tourist-perspective illustration. Liang and Lin supported Zhu's proposal and the entire team came to agreement on using a gold colour for the image of Tiananmen and red for the background, to commemorate Tiananmen as the cradle for Chinese revolution under the red sky of endeavours and bloodshed that was involved. On June 20, 1950 their design was approved by the party as the final selection over the Academy's design, with a perspective image of Tiananmen with light rays radiating from behind it. Thus, Tiananmen officially became a feature of the national emblem slightly prior to the first national anniversary in 1950.



Fig. 4.15 Mao declared the Communist takeover on October 1st, 1949, on the balcony of the Tiananmen.

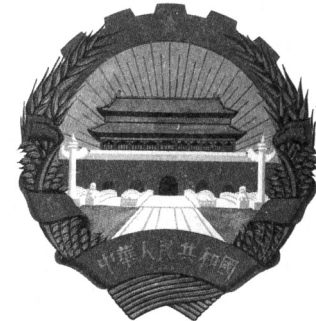


Fig. 4.16 The design of the national emblem from the State Academy of Arts.



Fig. 4.17 The final design of the national emblem by Lin Huiyin's Tsinghua team.

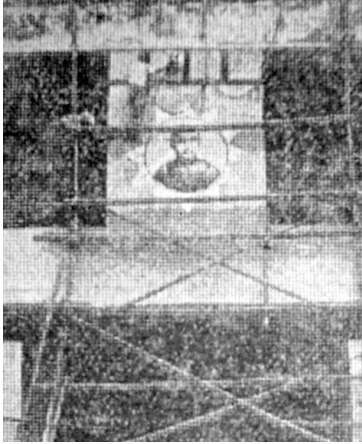


Fig. 4.18. (further left) Sun Yat-sen's portrait was hung on the Tiananmen in 1929, two years after his death.



Fig. 4.19 Chiang Kai-shek's portrait on the Tiananmen was hung on the gate in 1945 after the end of the Second World War.



Fig. 4.20 (further left) Mao's portrait was hung on the Tiananmen during the announcement of the Communist takeover in 1949.



Fig. 4.21 Mao's portrait splashed with paint, May 23 1989.



Fig. 4.22 Mao's portrait in 2004.

The reinforcement of Tiananmen as a national symbol protruded to a greater extent when Mao's government decided to construct the enormous Tiananmen Square in front of the gate for political gatherings and parades. The construction involved a huge phase of demolition of old neighbourhoods, and took its final appearance in late 1959, when the adjacent Great Hall of People and the National Museum were completed to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Communist China. Yet, the story of Tiananmen did not stop here; it began to enter the stage of political worship of Chairman Mao. The Gate's new value came to surface when a large portrait of Mao was put above the main opening of Tiananmen during the Cultural Revolution, as millions of Red Guards from every corner of the nation came to take part in political gatherings. Tiananmen, above the sea of little red books and waves of political posters and banners, was transformed into an altar piece for the cult of Mao.



Fig. 4.23-4.25 The Changan Avenue that passes in front of the Tiananmen Gate serves as the designated venue for political events.

Top to bottom:
The 'Grand Artistic Army' in the 1955 National Day parade on the Changan Avenue.

Deng Xiaoping reviewing the army on October 1st (National Day) in 1984 on the Changan Avenue.

Jeff Widener, The Associated Press, A worker stopping the official tanks on the Changan Avenue to proceed for the Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

Fig. 4.26 National Day celebration in Tiananmen Square, October 1st, 1952.



Fig. 4.27 Red Guards on the Tiananmen Square during the Cultural Revolution.

Brief Timeline of Tiananmen

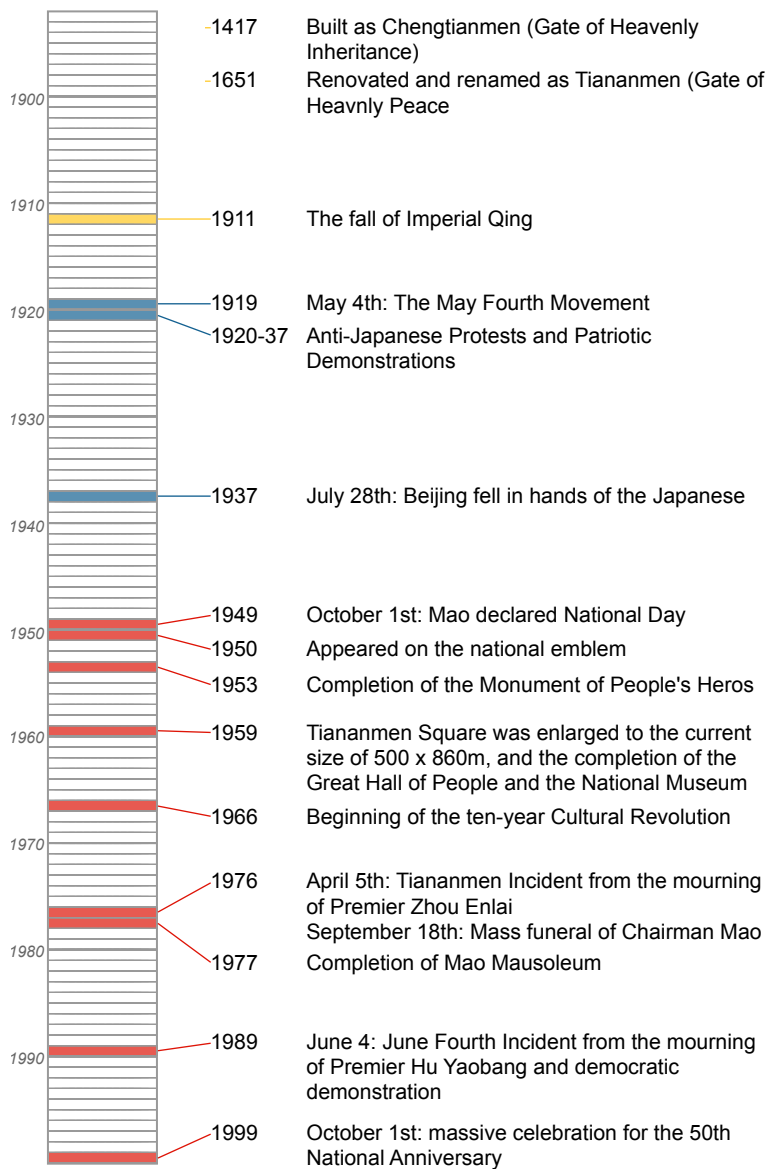


Fig. 4.28 Mass funeral of Mao in Tiananmen Square on September 18th, 1976.



Fig. 4.29 Students packed the Tiananmen Square and erected the Goddess of Democracy under the backdrop of Tiananmen in May 1989.

Fig. 4.30 Brief Timeline of the Tiananmen.

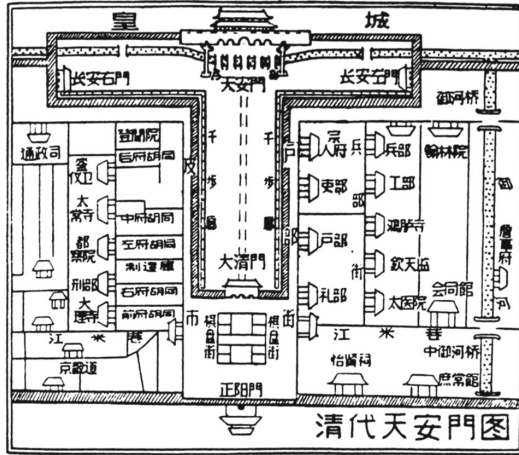


Fig. 4.31 Tiananmen Square in the Qing Dynasty: flanked by governmental buildings at both sides, and at the centre the Passage of a Thousand Steps occupied the space between the Tiananmen and the market north of the Zhengyangmen (Front Gate).

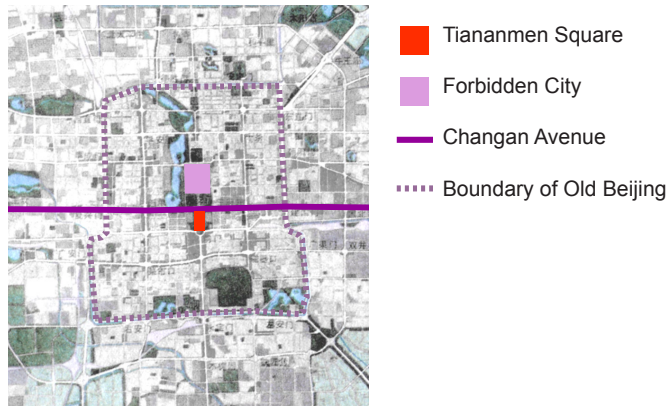


Fig. 4.32 The Tiananmen Square locates at the centre of the city.



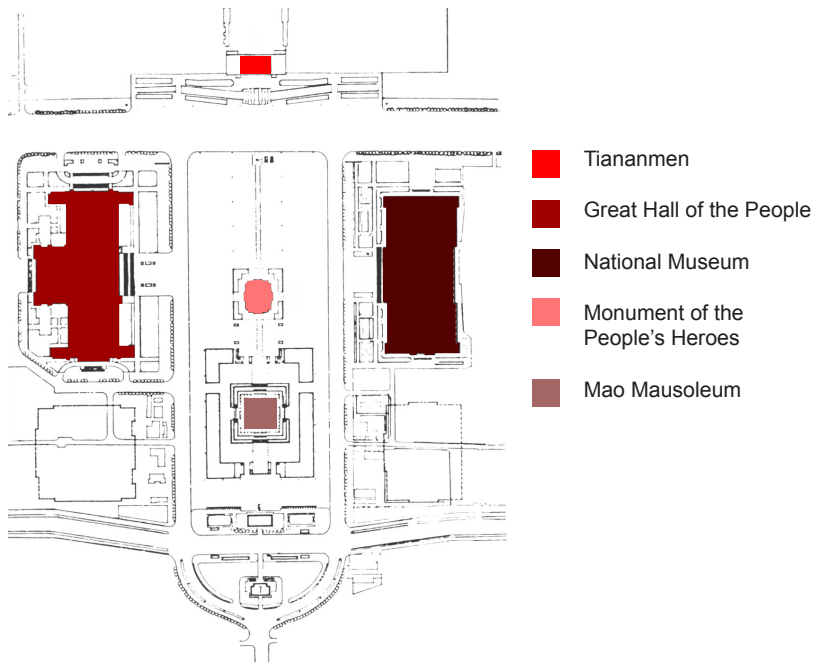


Fig. 4.33 The Tiananmen Square locates at the centre of the city.



Fig. 4.34 Tiananmen Square in 1976.

In January 1976, the beloved Premier Zhou Enlai passed away. Thousands of students and locals packed the Tiananmen Square mourning for the death of Zhou, and transformed the Monument of People's Heroes into a sea of flowers. While Mao was lying on his sickbed, the party controllers (the Gang of Four) deliberately stopped the mourning activity by force, arrested dozens of participants and dispelled the remainder away from the heart of the capital. This was known as "the Tiananmen Incident".²⁰ Thirteen years later in late April of 1989, university students once again packed the Tiananmen Square in greater number—this time to mourn for the death of the former Premier Hu Yaobang, who had earlier supported students in democratic demonstrations, and who was later ousted by Deng Xiaoping in 1986. The mourning turned into a massive demonstration against the authoritarianism of the Communist government in May, as tens of thousands of students and locals occupied the square and held hunger strike and protests. They erected a statue of the Goddess of Democracy (modelled after the Statue of Liberty) against the backdrop of Tiananmen, and the ancient gate was once again under the spotlight. Deng and other high officials saw the protest as a nightmare, especially when Soviet Union's President Mikhail Gorbachev came to hold a diplomatic visit. The incident came to a sudden end before dawn at June 4th when the Communist government ordered the Chinese Liberation Army to march into the capital and dispel the crowds to reinforce order. The entering of troops and tanks soon turned into a fire crash-down in which many were injured and killed. Chai Ling, one of the student leaders from the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, mentioned on May 28, 1989 that the step to follow after hunger strike and silent protest would be bloodshed: "...only when the square is awash with blood will the people of China open their eyes. Only then will they really be united. But how can I explain any of this to my fellow students?"²¹ The meaning of Tiananmen was altered once again, away from the making of the Communist regime towards the complicated symbol of modern China, comprised of both political and social memories.

Today, the Tiananmen Square is the most guarded tourist attraction in China, especially as June 4th approaches each year. "How public space was used became a matter of urgent concern as city and federal



Fig. 4.35 Citizens crowded in the Tiananmen Square and the Monument of the People's Heroes to mourn over the death of Premier Zhou Enlai.



Fig. 4.36 The mourning of Premier Hu Yaobang in April 1989 at the Tiananmen Square that led to the June 4th Incident.

authorities, invoking national security, tried to limit access to certain public spaces in the city and restrict their uses."²² The Tiananmen holds complex identities after the June 4th Incident in 1989, beyond the expectation of the government and its official definition of the structure that is embossed on the national logo. The Gate, nonetheless, performs a magnificent role on its own to shape the identity of modern China, which to certain extent parallels to the site of Ground Zero at New York City, where the American government first established a monument of market economy (the World Trade Towers) and then a site for mourning and celebrations of America.

Conclusion

Whether it is the Ground Zero, the Yuanmingyuan, or the Tiananmen, intact or destroyed, moments of history continuously leave marks on architecture. Quite often, it is both the responsibility of the government and the society to reconstruct a set of memories in making the nation. The making of a nation requires nationalism, unity, and a common identity, and architectural structures that have witnessed intense moments in history will always be targets of reconstruction and redefinition. It is through this reconstruction and redefinition of the past that a nation strengthens itself and evolves towards the future.



Fig. 4.37 Shen Yaoyi, Cultural Revolution poster, 1968.

Fig. 4.38 Statue of the Goddess of Democracy in Tiananmen Square, May 30 to June 3 1989.



1. Ticket of Beijing Urban Planning Museum.
2. Postcards of Hutongs.
3. Ticket of Yuanming Yuan.
4. Lin, Huiyan.
Lin Huiyan's Lectures on Architecture.
Xian: Shaanxi Teaching University Press, 2004.
5. Wang, Jun.
Tale of the City.
Beijing: Joint Publishing, 2003.
6. Yang, Yongseng.
Tour of Ancient Chinese Architecture.
Beijing: China Architecture and Building Press, 2003.
7. Wang, Bin & Xu, Xiushan.
Beijing's Streets.
Beijing: Author Press, 2004.
8. **Ancient Route of Tea and Horse.**
Xian: Shaanxi Teaching University Press, 2003.
9. Library Card, Beijing.
10. Lin, Mo.
Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyan and Me.
Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2004.
11. Ticket of National Museum.
12. Ticket of Dule Temple, Jixian.
13. Ticket of Tanzhe Temple.
14. Bull skin prop of Silhouette Show, Pangjiayuan Market.
15. Map and ticket of Eastern Qing Tombs.

2004.10.30. Wangfujing Bookstore

I slept until 14:00 today. The nine-day journey to Shanxi and Chengde was exhausting. Everything had gone well according to the schedule I had planned in Toronto, but I was very tired after it. I went to Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch, bought several Chinese pears at a fruit vendor nearby, and spent most of the day at the Wangfujing Bookstore, several shops over from the Eastern Morning Hostel.

The six-storey bookstore appeared like a department store. I lingered between different departments for the entire afternoon and picked up three books in the architecture and art sections. The first one was Wang Jun's *Chengji (Tale of the City)*. The author was a journalist, and researches the life of architectural scholar Liang Sicheng. Wang used the city of Beijing to describe the various successes and failures of Liang during his years as the vice-president of the Urban Planning Office. Wang also included essays on the demolition of the city walls and the pailous, and the construction of the Tiananmen Square and worker-unit apartments to complete the biography of Beijing from 1949 to the death of Liang Sicheng in 1972.

I also purchased a book on the early Qing artist Badashanren, the famous pioneer of free-style Chinese painting. The last book I bought was Yang Yongseng's *Journey of Ancient Chinese Architecture*. Yang's book included descriptions and photographs of the famous surviving ancient architecture of each province. I thought it might be useful to determine excursions over the upcoming few weeks.

Prosaically, for dinner I bought a combo from MacDonald's for around 20 RMB and returned to room 6443. After a shower, I read a bit of *Chengji*.



2004.11.01. National Museum and the City Walls

In the morning, I went to the National Museum at the Tiananmen Square. The museum was built in 1959 as one of the Ten Grand Projects to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Communist China. A set of stairs and a grand colonnade comprise the entrance façade. The colonnade has two rows of columns, each with 12 square columns that rise 30 m above ground to support a crown strip. The crown strip supports a large Communist sign, featuring a golden star and several red flags. The visual relationship between the museum and the Great Hall of the People directly across the square is obvious as the neo-classical Great Hall also contains a 12-column colonnade. The horizontal reveals and the yellow glazed bricks near the roof-line of the museum give a slight touch of traditional Chinese imperial architecture.

The courtyard behind the colonnade hosts the ticket booth and the main entrances into the museum. In the three-storey building, I had a brief tour of the artefacts, which date from the Xia (twenty-first century to sixteenth century BC) to the Qing (AD 1636 to 1911) Dynasties.

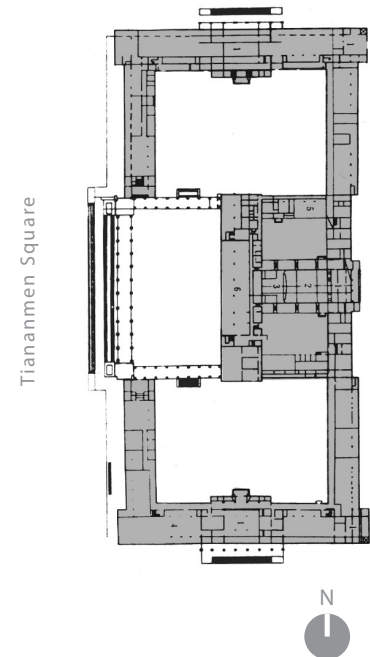


Fig. 5.1 Building plan of the National Museum.

Fig. 5.2 A countdown machine for the 2008 Beijing Olympics stands in front of the entrance of the National Museum.

Fig. 5.3 A clay model of a housing complex from the Han Dynasty.



Fig. 5.4 The Zhengyang gate tower, the Front Gate subway station and the East Qianmen Road. The former city wall of the Inner City was torn down in 1960s to make way for the subway system.

Among the items displayed, the clay model of a building complex intrigued me the most. It belongs to the West Han Dynasty (206 to 8 BC). I think the model is roughly 1:25 or 1:30 in scale. It depicts a walled courtyard complex that contains four main houses, four small cabins, four corner guard towers, and a gate tower. Ancient Chinese architects used clay models as a design device and a guiding instrument in the construction process. The finding of the ancient models (usually in tombs) helps modern historians to understand early Chinese architecture that could not survive to the modern age.

I walked out of the museum at about noon and headed to the southern part of Tiananmen Square, where the *Qianmen* (Front Gate) stood. It is amazing how I have missed the two enormous gate structures during my first visit to the square, when I restricted myself to the north side of the Mao Mausoleum.

The *Qianmen* or *Zhengyangmen* (Gate of Median Sun) consists of a gate tower and an archery citadel in front. A fortress wall called *yongcheng* originally connected the two structures to form an enclosed area of about the size of a soccer field attached to the main city wall. The *yongcheng* was torn down in 1915 for road extension and the massive city wall in the 1960s for subway construction. The two conceited Ming structures now stand between the Tiananmen Square and a lawn area. Two symmetrical roads from the sides of the square blend around the gate structures and converge into *Qianmen Avenue* to the south.

I stood at the south side of the citadel. Across the street to the southeast arose a colonial stone masonry building with a clock-tower. It was the

former Qianmen Railway Station built in 1900, now turned into a shopping arcade. Its stone masonry façade is "decorated" with neon signs of Mac Donald's, a local bank, a telecommunication shop, and a local fast-food chain store. I walked to the Mac Donald's, bought a drink, and sat by the window to look at the citadel. Cited in Wang Jun's *Chengji*, Su Xiaokang, the author of *The Last Ancient Capital* (1987) remembers:

As a young student, I felt so attached to the ancient cultural city of Peking. Until one early-winter evening, I finally arrived at the Qianmen Railway Station. While I followed the crowd to exit the station under the dusky street lamps, the majestic Zhengyangmen and the heroic city walls suddenly came into vision. For a moment, I could sense the authenticity of history. Henceforth, a vigorous seed is planted in my heart. Even I am facing the power of maelstroms of the real world, the tiny seed continues to sprout and thrive, leading me into the panoptic palace of history studying.⁶

Sixty years ago, Beijing was a well-preserved medieval city, with 22 km of city walls, 44 city gates, citadel and corner guard towers. The Zhengyangmen and its archery citadel are two of the four survivors from the radical demolition period during the 1950s and 1960s. Had not Premier Zhou Enlai insisted on keeping the pair of structures, they would have certainly befallen as sacrifices offered for the blindfold urbanization, at a time when the mass could easily be turned into a force of destruction.

Su Xiaokang continues:

Under the dusky twilight, the citizens of Beijing came from all directions to dissect the dying dragon with all kinds of metal tools. Every single dragon scale – the ancient bricks – were pulled out and moved away by all means of transportation: trucks, motor-tricycles, horse wagons, hand-carts, bikes, etc. for the construction of bomb-proof compartments across the city. Under the highest order of "dig deeper", the city wall became the most obvious victim. Beijingers all became insane demolition workers. Under the cruel atmosphere, a common desire of destruction soaked all souls into a race of brutality and apathy, without acknowledging that we were actually piercing into the flesh and artery of Beijing and our beloved culture.

...back then, I was just a high-school student and was also fond of the demolishing fad, acting as hardcore as the adults. I had no idea there was such a person as Liang Sicheng in this world. At that time, I could not imagine our city walls would be worth more than a rural earth mound in the countryside.⁷



Fig. 5.5 The former Front Gate Railway Station.

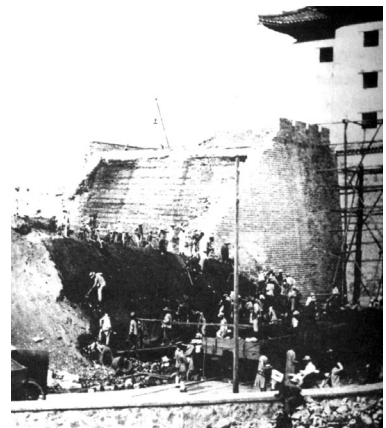


Fig. 5.6 The Republic Chinese government torn down the Yongcheng of the Zhengyangmen in 1915 for road construction.

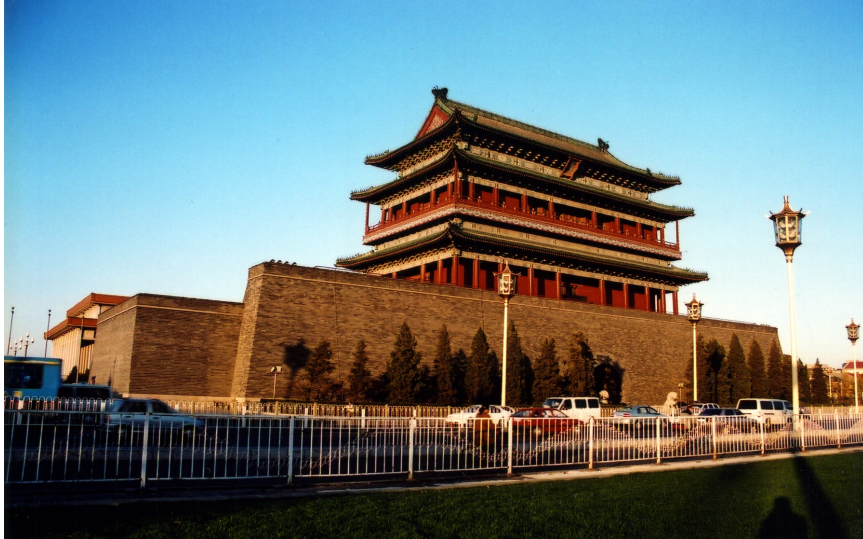


Fig. 5.7 The Zhengyangmen (Qianmen) gate tower.

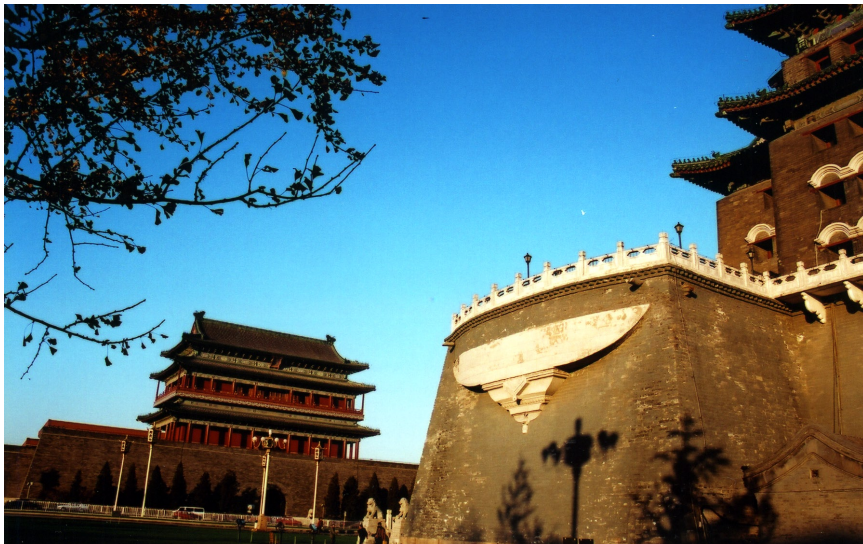


Fig. 5.8 The surviving Zhengyangmen gate tower and its citadel.



Fig. 5.9 The Zhengyangmen gate tower, the citadel and the Yongcheng in early 1915.

Architectural scholar Liang Sicheng tried hard to preserve the city walls and other heritage buildings in Beijing. He persuaded the leaders to transform the walls into an elevated park system. He also proposed to construct the new political and economic centre outside the old city in order to minimize damage to the ancient buildings. Liang was a tragic hero. None of his attempts claimed success. He even argued that "Mao does not know architecture!"

I walked south from the Qianmen and went through the Qianmen Wu Pailou (a grand timber gateway). The reconstruction of the pailou done in post-and-beam structure was erected by the government in 2001 for tourist promotion. I walked a little further south and turned east into the Xianyukou (Fresh Fish Mouth) street market. Along a narrow *hutong*, street vendors were selling fruits, produce, seafood, meat, nuts, snacks, etc. The Xianyukou market had been around for hundreds of years. In the Qing era, it served as the main market for the Han Chinese living in the Outer City (south of Qianmen) while the Manchurians usually stayed inside the Inner City. I bought a few apples on the way back.



Fig. 5.10 The citadel of Zhengyangmen.



Fig. 5.11 The citadel of Zhengyangmen and a lawn marks the south end of the Tiananmen Square.

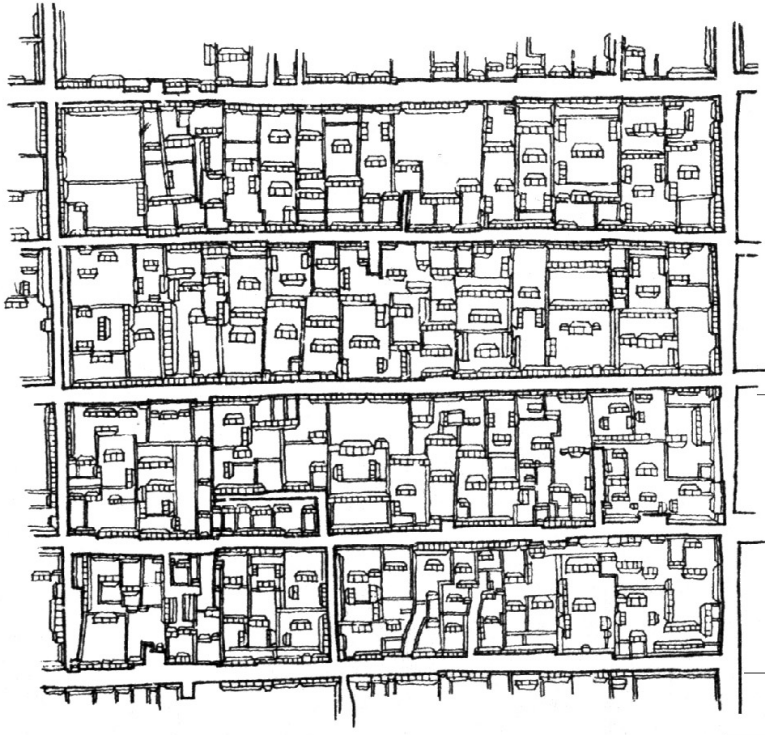


Fig. 5.12 A partial copy of the Qianlong's Capital Diagram - a plan diagram of Beijing made during the mid 18th century.

2004.11.02. Hutong Communities near the Drum Tower

According to official statistics, Beijing contained more than 7,000 *hutongs* in 1949. The number decreased to 3,900 in the 1980s, and for the recent year or two as modernization picked up its pace, Beijing's *hutongs* have been disappearing at an annual rate of 600. *Hutongs* are laneways flanked by traditional siheyuan (quadrangle courtyard houses). They have been the basic urban fabric in ancient Beijing since Kublai Kahn built the capital in the thirteenth century. In 1949, over 90% of Beijingers still lived in *hutong* communities.

At around 10:00, I took a bus to the *hutong* area near the ancient Drum Tower. Many guidebooks and Websites recommended the area as a well-preserved *hutong* community. Many siheyuan, especially the ones along the shores of Qianhai (Front Lake) and Houhai (Back Lake), have been gentrified into cafes, bars, eateries, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Bicycle sedans were busy carrying foreign tourists in and out of the old *hutongs*. The drivers tend to tell the foreigners stories about the past and take them to pass by residences of historical celebrities.

The former Lotus Market at Qianhai no longer sells water-lilies; instead, it has become a concentration of pubs and cafes. At the cafe area, I was approached by several sedan drivers. I ignored them and walked into a

quiet *hutong* slightly away from the tourist action and chose a driver who was willing to offer me a student discount for the tour.

I sat on the sedan and he began riding his bike to pull me around the neighbourhood.

"As far as I am concerned, *hutongs* and *siheyuans*," he told me, "are products from the feudal imperial eras. They're expressions of the hierarchical bureaucracy, not a voice of the mass."

"Is the situation entirely different today than the past?" I asked.

"Not really. I feel today is about the same as a hundred years ago, especially as it concerns the contrast between the rich and the poor. You see those renovated *siheyuans*," he pointed to one grand complex along the lake, "those are all owned by wealthy authorities. When our government first took control of the city, they took many well-preserved complexes for both government and private usage. They didn't have the money to build large modern buildings back then. Even if they had the money, I guess they would prefer the beautiful gardened *siheyuans*."

We passed by the residences of several famous writers and politicians of the early twentieth century such as Song Qianing (the wife of President Sun Yatsen). We also went through a public park where the elderly were playing Chinese chess and card games. The driver was energetic at the beginning, but gradually he slowed his pedalling and put greater effort into telling me about the history of *hutongs*.

After the one-hour sedan tour, I lost myself in the labyrinth of *hutongs*. I wandered away from the tourist district and entered an area that was more casual and vernacular. Locals were busy with their daily business: women hanging garments and blankets at front doors or socializing among neighbours under tree shades where chairs and couches were set up as designated meeting spots; men playing Chinese chess and poker, or teasing each other's dogs or domesticated birds; old ladies sewing clothes, or carrying baskets of seeds, herbs, and fruits to dry under the sun. Whenever I lifted my camera, the locals tended to stop what they were doing and stare at me. I came across several complexes pinned with signs saying "not open for public" or "this is not a museum". At intersections of *hutongs*, there were usually electrical poles and bundles of cables connecting to small transformers. Carts of charcoals were often left at street corners for indoor heating.



Fig. 5.13 Vendors selling fresh produce along the side of a hutong.



Fig. 5.14 Inhabitants in the neighbourhood love to socialize on the hutong.



Fig. 5.15 Chess and card games are among the most popular activities on the hutongs.

I walked into a neighbourhood just west of the Drum Tower. The *hutongs* in this area were neat, shaded with old trees on both sides. There were some I encountered earlier piled with garbage and newspapers at dead ends. Many exterior walls of the *siheyuan*s were popular spots for posters, banners, and blackboards of community news. Cars were parked at one side, but the most common vehicles were bicycles, especially the ones with attached carts. Traces of the Cultural Revolution were still obvious: partially destructed stone steles, broken door bolts, and damaged decorations that once revealed the social status of the inhabited family. Community centres, clinics, and elementary schools, and most importantly, public washrooms dotted the area.

I remember what the sedan driver told me:

After the Communist takeover, the government took all the properties and redistributed them to everyone. Yet, since there were too many people poured into the capital from the countryside, each *siheyuan* soon became an overcrowded mansion housing 10 to 12 families. The lucky ones got a former bedroom or living room, while unlucky ones would end up staying in a servant chamber or in a storage room. Many people owned a space no more than a few square metres large, and none of them have private kitchens or washrooms. They accepted the conditions during our nation's hard time, even though water leakages and the risk of structure failures haunted them every night as many of these timber structures were hundreds of years old.

I returned to room 6443 after a full day of walking. Now I am happy to do some reading on my bed before I go to sleep.

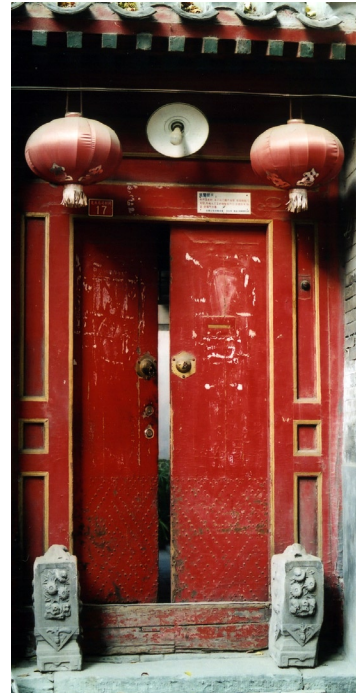


Fig. 5.16 A traditional entrance setting of a *siheyuan*.



Fig. 5.17 A pair of stone steles at the entrance told the social status of the family in the imperial times. Most of these ornaments were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

Fig. 5.18 A *hutong* scene in late afternoon.



Fig. 5.19 Bicycles serve as the main means of transportation for hutong inhabitants.



Fig. 5.20 Most inhabitants dry their clothes outside their homes.



Fig. 5.21 A blackboard is used for community news and notices.

2004.11.03. Yuanmingyuan

I entered the Yuanmingyuan Ruins Park from the east entrance near the campus of Tsinghua University. I followed a tree-lined pathway and walked toward the ruins of the Xiyanglous (Western Mansions). Fields of weeds and debris immediately came in vision after three minutes of walk. The Xiyanglous consist of several building complexes completed in the eighteenth century under Emperor Qianlong. According to the reconstructed models on site, each complex was distinct. The area seemed like Frederick II's palace park at Potsdam, only Qianlong's buildings were already in ruins. Baroque is the common design language here, despite minor additions and modifications that were made by the Italian designers to create a sense of "Chineseness". Western fountains and a pumping system were the main features at the Xiyanglous, and the French engineers had done a great job in order to impress Qianlong. Not only were the Chinese impressed, but also European diplomats. They called Yuanmingyuan the Versailles in the East. In fact, the gardens and the complexes of Xiyanglou were only the peripheral components of Yuanmingyuan, and occupied about one tenth of the site's area.

Today Yuanmingyuan is a symbol of national shame. It is remembered not for its former grandeur, but for its shameful ending. None of the marvellous gardens or complexes survived the looting and burning of the Anglo-French troops during the Second Opium War in 1860. The "burning down the Yuanmingyuan" is a staple of history in textbooks. The ruined marble arches and columns piling on bare ground against the blue sky

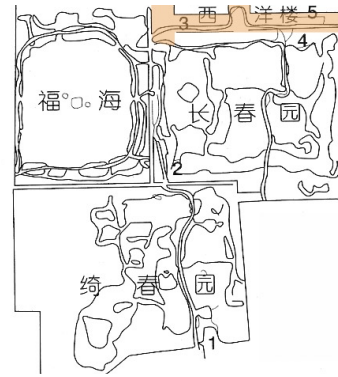


Fig. 5.22 Plan diagram of the Yuanmingyuan at the back of the admission ticket. The coloured part indicates the area of the Xiyanglous.



Fig. 5.23 The ruins of the one of the Western Mansions.

becomes an iconic image for both tourist postcards and patriotic posters. The park is a memorial to account for the destruction of paradise, the ashamed imperial Qing, and the notoriety of imperialists Lord Elgin and General John—the two British responsible for the evil actions. Deploring records of Beijingers at downtown seeing the far-reaching black smoke from their own imperial gardens is too striking to be forgotten.

The rise and fall of the Yuanmingyuan paralleled the glory and downfall of the imperial Qing. Yuanmingyuan was known as the "paradise of 10,000 gardens" and the name itself means the "Gardens of Perfection and Brightness", composed by emperor Kangxi. Kangxi gave the garden to his fourth son, his successor, Emperor Yongzheng. Yongzheng began the making of the gardens, but it was under his son Qianlong's reign that Yuanmingyuan's glory rose to its peak. The central feature of Yuanmingyuan was the palaces of the Nine Continents surrounding the man-made Fuhai (Sea of Fortunes). Nine complexes in different settings were designed to depict the Chinese mythical world. Qianlong also commissioned European Jesuit architects, artists and engineers to build the Xiyanglous and a limestone maze for exotic amusement. The Yuanmingyuan fell as the victim of the corrupted imperial Qing and the aggression of the Western empires 100 years after the time of Qianlong.

After the Xiyanglous, I walked along a pathway lined with display boards listing out the most crucial national treasures "brought" overseas by foreigners during the Opium Wars and the War of the Eight Allied Expedition (Britain, France, United States, Japan, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Austria). The treasures range from paintings, calligraphy scrolls, vases, armour, jewellery, pottery, and ceramics. The boards also indicate where these items are located present-day; hotspots include the Chateau de Fontainebleau, the British Museum, and several American and Japanese museums. It is also a known fact that the pillage of Yuanmingyuan had opened up the source of Chinese antiques into the international market. Indeed, that was the reason the ruins of Yuanmingyuan had been looted numerous times even in early twentieth century by local warlords.

Parallel to the path of display boards and across from another ruined Xiyanglou, I reached a small museum. In the three single-storey houses, models and drawings of the original gardens and palaces, artefacts unearthed in the site, and further descriptions of the lost treasures are

displayed. The lack of funding of the Yuanmingyuan administration is obvious as the museum really requires more light fixtures and a better display area for the magnificent models and drawings. Beside the museum's entrance, a metal plaque is erected listing all the unfair treaties signed by the Qing government with the foreign powers in the nineteenth century. The first one was the Nanjing Treaty of 1847 when Qing was forced to relinquish possession of Hong Kong to the British. Embossed in gold, the plaque is titled as a grave reminder for the locals: "*wu wang guo chi*" (never forget national disgrace), simple and straight.

I strolled into the central area where the Chinese palaces and gardens once stood. Some of the landscape has been reconstructed in the past twenty years as the complicated water system and rolling hills were transformed into fish ponds and farmlands during the Japanese invasion and the Cultural Revolution. When the gardens were still intact, mythical landscape was the main theme; for instance, the islands in the lake were meant to depict the mythical Fenglai islands in the "Eastern Sea". Perfect mirrored images of willows and water-lilies on the southern Fuhai provoke an imagery of the undamaged Yuanmingyuan. Many parts of the Fuhai and Houhu (Back Lake) are still under reconstruction today. The authorities wall off a number of areas to separate visitors from the remaining inhabitants whose ancestors built their homes in the park after the fall of Qing.

There have been discussions between the authorities and scholars about the reconstruction of the Yuanmingyuan. The main aim of the reconstruction is to revive the glory of the past, thus boosting national pride. The majority of architects and historians, however, criticize the suggestion as an inappropriate way to treat history. Furthermore, scholars have pointed out that no modern contractors are capable to reconstruct the traditional park structures exactly the same as the originals; the required carpentry techniques are lost. Also, the reconstruction of the terrain and the 140 park structures altogether will cost the government a large sum of money. I am not a supporter of the reconstruction either. To me, a journey winding through the ruins of Yuanmingyuan is the most ideal way to understand the park and its history. Yet, there are a number of ways to improve the Yuanmingyuan experience, such as building a more promising museum or displaying architectural models for every destroyed structure (right now, they have models at various locations in the park).



Fig. 5.24 A reconstructed water pavilion.

I exited the park at the south gate after another hour of turns and bends. Another hour's journey on bus brought me back to the thriving Wangfujing district.

2004.11.04. Bank of China and Today's Siheyuans

Many local architectural critics consider I. M. Pei the most successful architect of Chinese origin. Except for his ultimate return to China, Pei chose to stay in the United States after graduation. I remember seeing him in an interview clip when I was an elementary student in Hong Kong. He talked about his obstacles to return to China. He talked about his childhood in Suzhou and Hong Kong. He talked about geometry and spaces. He talked about the projects of the Xiangshan Hotel (Beijing) and the Bank of China (Hong Kong). He was a talkative old man with a large pair of glasses.

I walked along the West Changan Avenue for fifteen minutes from Tiananmen to the Xidan district. Xidan Avenue is another vibrant shopping street, like a mirror image of the Wangfujing at Dongdan (east of Tiananmen). At the northwest corner of Changan and Xidan, I arrived at the Bank of China Headquarters, completed in 2001. The geometrical emphasis on circles and triangles, a familiar language of glass canopies, and the stone cladding of the building shows resemblance to the Bank of China in Hong Kong, revealing that Pei is responsible for this project. Conformed to the height restriction of the old city regulations, the building is 15 storeys high. A glass dome canopies above the main entrance right at the corner of the street intersection.

I entered the atrium lobby. The atrium is a massive volume, somewhat 10 storeys in height with a huge glass canopy on top that reminded me of the entrance hall at the Louvre. Stone walls punched with square windows of offices flank the two sides of the atrium. The side facing the street is entirely glazed, while the back opens to the mezzanine of elevators. A few circular doorways dot along the stone walls, making an obvious connection to the moon gates in Chinese gardens. A female security guard in her mid 20s stood beside the security counter holding a walky-talky in hand. I went over and asked if I could take pictures, and she politely said no.

"How do you like working in this building?" I asked.

"It's nice. Everyone who works here is happy about the environment," she said.

I continued to chat with her in the lobby, and I asked her about the current transformation of Beijing.

"Well," she sighed, "the insane real-estate market really bothers me."

"I've seen lots of new condominiums around the city, isn't it nice to have more options nowadays?"

"Not for me," she explained, "I would say not for the majority. You see those new condos, they're nice but they aren't for us. I guess only one third of those units are currently owned by locals. The rest are either houses of wealthy businessmen from Shanghai or Hong Kong, or foreign employees."

"If you have the money, would you like to own such a modern unit?"

"Ha!" she laughed, "if I have the money, I would rather own a siheyuan. But now, any siheyuan within the Fifth Ring Road can easily cost over a million RMB."

"Siheyuan—what do you like about them?"

"I love its spacious and comfortable qualities," she replied, "the fresh air, the courtyard, the vegetation... I would put some money to renovate the complex, have a nice bathroom and kitchen. I would plant some flowers in the courtyard and perhaps put a table there for outdoor dining...."

A message from her walky-talky ended our conversation. Before she disappeared behind the two bamboo planters on her way to the mezzanine level, I walked out of the building.



Fig. 5.25 The Bank of China at night.

Fig. 5.26 The main entrance of the Bank of China.



I had lunch in a noodle eatery at Xidan. I was happy about the previous chat. She told me some first-hand comments about Beijing. Renovating a siheyuan becomes a trend for wealthy locals nowadays. One million RMB (some may cost several millions depending on the size of the complex) for a siheyuan doesn't surprised me at all, given how much space a complex takes up. Prior to my departure from Canada, I had checked out Beijing's short-term rentals online. Many new condos or international apartments were asking for over US \$500 per month. The average monthly salary of Beijingers is 3,764 RMB (US \$430).

The pace of the real estate market goes far beyond the reach of personal income; most dwellers of the central Beijing area are either living in tiny and crowded siheyuan cabins or planning to move out of their family homes. Take the South Lougu Hutong (one of the *hutongs* I visited two days prior, near the Drum Tower) for instance. In 1996 18% of its inhabitants lived in cabins smaller than 4 m² and 33.7% lived in cabins with an area between 4 m² to 6m². Moreover, the authorities are more than willing to sell the land to big developers to build new neighbourhoods in lightning speed. This poses another problem for the development of Beijing. I personally believe that many of the old *hutongs* possess great value to the city, not only because of their heritage importance and unique urban fabric, but because they also support a diverse community life within. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs denounces the shortcoming for new urban neighbourhoods built in one phase. "If a city area has only new buildings, the enterprises that can exist there are automatically limited to those that can support the high costs of new construction."⁸ That perfectly reflects the case of Beijing; as many inhabitants in city centre are forced to relocate somewhere out of the area because they can no longer afford to live downtown after urban renewal. I hope that the authorities will realize the value of the *hutong* neighbourhoods in the city, not only as a few tourist concentrations, but also for a diverse urban development. "...a good mingling of the old buildings must remain, and in remaining they will have become something more than mere decay from the past or evidence of previous failure. They will have become the shelter which is necessary, and valuable to the district, for many varieties of middling-, low- and no-yield diversity... the economic value of old buildings

| Region | House Type | Building Area (m ²) | Usage Area (m ²) | Floor Area (m ²) | Price (RMB) |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 前门 (Qianmen) | 二居 (2 bedrooms) | 60 | - | - | 3.1 million |
| 北湖胡同 (Beihu Hutong) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 241 | - | - | 3.7 million |
| 前门 (Qianmen) | 三层 (3 floors) | 168 | - | - | 3.1 million |
| 东四 (Dongsi) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 70 | - | - | 0.58 million |
| 交道口 (Jiaodaokou) | 院子 (Courtyard) | 105 | - | - | 200,000 |
| 西四八条 (Xisi Batiestiao) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 107 | - | - | 100,000 |
| 北新桥 (Beixinqiao) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 50 | - | - | 100,000 |
| 东四 (Dongsi) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 87 | - | - | 100,000 |
| 东四 (Dongsi) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 228 | - | - | 400,000 (150,000) |
| 东四 (Dongsi) | 院落 (Courtyard) | 160 | - | - | 500,000 (120,000) |

Fig. 5.27 A list of real estate advertisement of siheyuan complexes. In this list, the price of a siheyuan ranges from 0.58m RMB to 3.7m RMB depending on the house size, lot size and the location.

is irreplaceable at will. It is created by time. This economic requisite for diversity is a requisite that vital city neighbourhoods can only inherit, and then sustain over the years." ⁹ Time is the most important reference point here, but the Chinese seems to be more interested in building the capital overnight.

After lunch, I wandered around Xidan for a short while. I didn't have much interest for the department stores, although many of them had adopted the Hong Kong shopping culture.

I reached the neighbourhood west of the Forbidden City at around 14:00. At the entrance of a traditional siheyuan, I peeked into the courtyard behind the shoulders of a Western female tourist. A lady inhabitant came out from a wooden shed (the self-erected kitchen in the courtyard), with a dish of stir-fried vegetables in hand. The foreign tourist left all at once. I stayed and asked for her permission to take some pictures of the courtyard for academic purposes. She said there's nothing special about her home but did not refuse me. I went through the threshold and entered the centre of the courtyard. I couldn't tell the original shape and size of the courtyard. Masonry cabins and wooden sheds that house the additional inhabitants who came after 1949 restrict the courtyard into a tiny, irregular open space. An old tree stands in the middle of the courtyard where another lady was doing laundry with a bucket of water. Inhabitants piled up all kinds of vegetables: green onions, peppers, herbs, domestic mushrooms, cabbages, radishes, and bak-choi at various corners in the courtyard, along with bicycles, carts, and miscellaneous belongings. The wooden doors into the flanking cabins are small. Most windows of the cabins are blocked off by cloths, posters, or newspaper.

I peeked into a half-opened door and saw a double bed and a charcoal stove. The room was not much bigger than the bed. Although standing at a far corner, I could still hear the noises from the lady cooking with her iron wok. I figured that during dinner time the courtyard could be quite lively. Just by looking at the house façades, I could not tell the age of the original building complex. Things are spontaneously constructed with little consideration on design aesthetics. Cabins built in various periods concede the original Qing buildings, except the inner structures and perhaps the roof tiles. Such continual building is common for most Chinese architecture.

Some scholars refer to Chinese dwellings as a type of "living architecture" because of their continuous transformations.

I understand why some siheyuan dwellers are annoyed by tourists trespassing into their courtyards. Visitors, including myself, satisfy our curiosity by entering into someone else's daily routine, only a few steps from their private bedrooms. The issue of public and private is ambiguous in all of these "crowded courtyards", where a single complex is shared by a mixture of 10 to 12 different families. The original siheyuans in the imperial time were very self-inward and there was hardly any street-life in the *hutongs*. Yet in today's siheyuan, relationships among different families are intimate. Most spaces are commonly shared, including the *hutongs* outside. "Close neighbours are better than far relatives" is a common saying of the Chinese, and best describes the modern *hutong* situation.

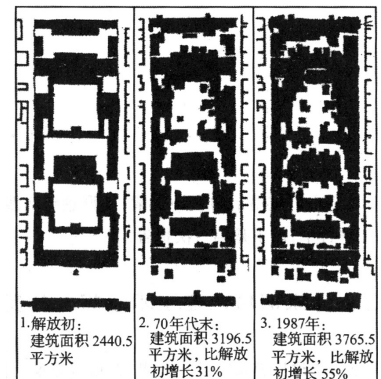


Fig. 5.28 The Decline of the courtyard in a siheyuan:

1950s: 2440.5 sq. m of built area
1970s: 3196.5 sq. m of built area
1987: 3765.5 sq. m of built area

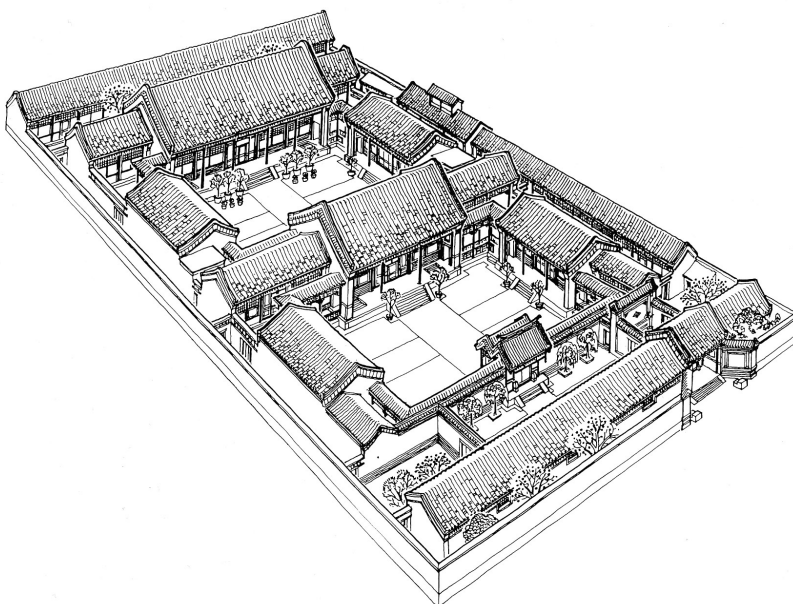


Fig. 5.29 Isometric of a typical traditional siheyuan.



Fig. 5.30-5.33 The courtyard of a siheyuan west of the Forbidden City: (top left) entrance corridor, (top right) both the corridor and the courtyard are shared among the various inhabited families, (bottom left) a woman doing laundry at the courtyard, (bottom right) the kitchen shed.



Fig. 5.34 The Beijing Urban Planning Museum introduces a sense of modernity at the south side of the Tiananmen Square.

2004.11.05. Urban Planning Museum and the White Pagoda

II had already noticed the Urban Planning Museum four days ago when I sat at the window of the MacDonald's across from Zhengyangmen (Front Gate) citadel. The contemporary look of the museum made a strong imprint in my mind. Today, I spared the entire morning to visit the museum.

Right next to the former colonial Qianmen Railway Station, the Urban Planning Museum takes a completely contemporary design approach. The four-storey building manifests its existence with large, glazed curtains and green, bronze louvers. Without a big Chinese roof and a single drip of red paint, the museum emerges as a metallic rectangular box diagonally across from the Zhengyangmen citadel and the Tiananmen Square.

I took out my notebook and camera, checked my bag at the ticket booth (a separate cubic structure just off the sidewalk), and entered the main museum lobby. I turned right to have a glimpse at the temporary exhibition area. The staff were busy putting up display boards on the walls. It seemed like a show on various proposals of the old city renewal was about to take place. I went through the lobby again and ascended to the fourth level. I decided to go from the top down. Exposed concrete walls flank the four-storey escalator atrium. A bronze model of ancient Beijing is hung vertically (north upwards) in between the third and fourth floors.

On the fourth floor, I arrived just in time to watch the short films at the auditorium. The first film, *Imperishable Beijing*, was a computer

Fig. 5.35 The admission ticket of the Beijing Urban Planning Museum. Three real estate developers show their support to the grand opening of the new museum at the back of the ticket.



Address: Qian men Dong Da Jie #20, Chong wen men district, Beijing
Tel: 67024559 67017074
Opening time: 9:00am---16:30pm from Tuesday to Sunday
(Tickets will NOT be sold after 16:00 pm)



video presentation of the history of Beijing as a capital city, from the Yan Kingdom in the Spring-Autumn Period (770 to 476 BC), through the Jin Dynasty (AD 1115 to 1234), to the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty (AD 1271 to 1368), to the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368 to 1644), and to the Manchurian Qing Dynasty (AD 1636 to 1911). The film focused on the urban layout during different dynasties and Beijing's prominent 8-km north-south axis, which originated from the Yuan era and extended in the Ming era into today's version, linking the Drum Tower in the north through the Forbidden City, Tiananmen, and Zhengyangmen to the Tiantan Park in the south.

The second film required me to put on a pair of coated goggles. The show recounted the current major projects under construction that are all meant to be completed before 2008, such as the bird-nest National Stadium and the bubble-box Aquatic Centre in the Olympic Park, the controversial giant egg National Theatre, the twisted gate CCTV Headquarters, the Central Business District (CBD), the Financial Street, the new airport extension, the Zhongguancun technological park, the new Xidan Book Building, and the Xizhimen Transportation Hub. All projects involve internationally renowned architects such as Norman Foster, Rem Koolhaas, and Herzog and de Meuron.

After the shows, I had a brief look at the displays of master planning case studies including strategies of New York City, Tokyo, London, Paris, and Moscow. An adjacent showcase introduces the exploitation and consumption of water and electricity resources of Beijing, and future visions on environmental protection. Then, I walked into a 1:1 futuristic model flat. Organic geometry with fibreglass, textile, and stainless steel make up the furniture. A black double bed is blanketed under a soft purple light shone from a slit on the wall. Two books on contemporary architectural projects rest on the fibreglass counter: *Commune by the Great Wall* and Riken Yamamoto's *Jianwai SOHO*. Before I descended to the third level, I came across a section dedicated to the Olympic stadiums and its master planning. I really like the physical models of the Olympic stadiums. They are presented well as spectacular objects under the ceiling spotlights. The steel-nest National Stadium and the box of blue-bubbles Aquatic Centre signify the idea of "structure equals façade". The use of ETFE air pockets as cladding materials provides an organic characteristic

to the two buildings. Innovative approaches are also used for the National Gymnasium, Laoshan Velodrome, and National Shooting Range.

I came across several online articles criticizing the design proposal of Herzog and de Meuron's National Stadium. Many Chinese architects and scholars attack the issues of over-budgeting and the wasteful use of steel. The official budget is 3 billion RMB, but right now, the cost of the project is roughly 3.8 billion RMB instead. The use of structural steel for Herzog and de Meuron's proposal is 500 kg/m² (a total of 50,000 tons), in comparison to the 30 kg/m² for the Olympic stadium in Sydney. According to American engineer Liu Shijun and Bao Yukun of Tsinghua University, the latest building technology requires only 200 kg/m² of structural steel for the proposed stadium, and the 800 m-circumference stadium would need appropriately 120 structural columns. However, Herzog and de Meuron's "bird nest" structure will take about 8,000 structural columns and braces. The retractable rooftop is also a concern. The rooftop covers an area of 258,000 m², and weights roughly 1,700 tons. After fierce discussion on the issue in August 2004, the authorities decided to do away with the proposed rooftop, cutting out 0.3 billion RMB of the cost.

I walked into a large double-height chamber on the third floor where a huge model of the city of Beijing sits atop of a giant, lighted aerial photograph. An audio presentation provides the basic facts about the city. I went up the mezzanine level to have a bird-eye investigation of the model. Both the axial planning and the ring road arrangement are clearly

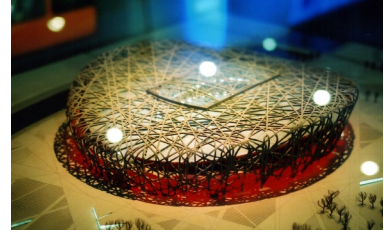


Fig. 5.36 Model of the National Stadium.

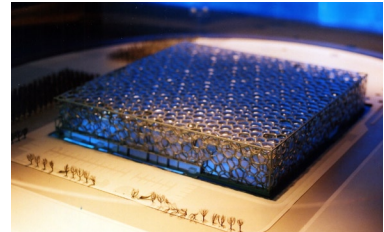


Fig. 5.37 Model of the Aquatic Centre.

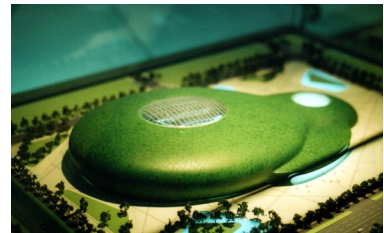


Fig. 5.38 Model of the National Gymnasium.

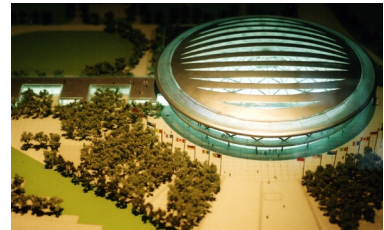


Fig. 5.39 Model of the Laoshan Velodrome.



Fig. 5.40 Model of the National Shooting Range.

Fig. 5.41 The Olympic Park in the model of Beijing.

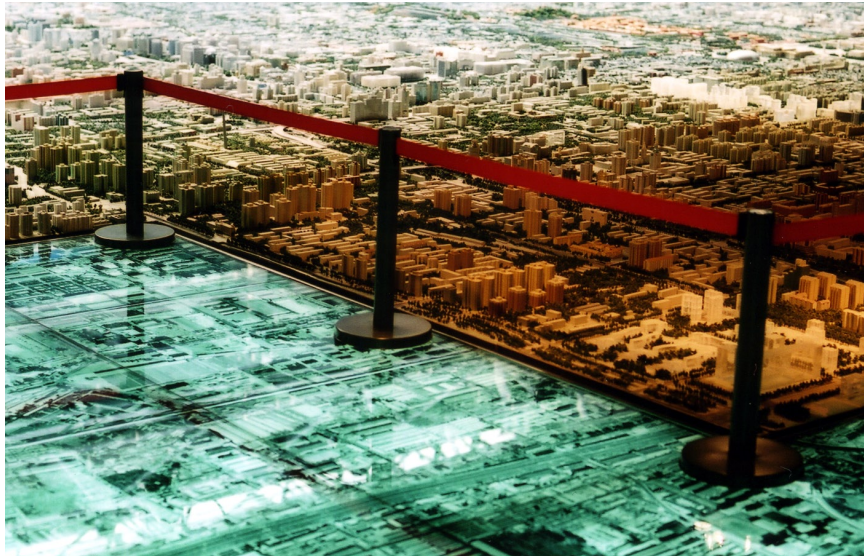


Fig. 5.42 The model of Beijing and the gigantic lighted aerial photo.



Fig. 5.43 The model of the Central Business District.

shown. At the space directly beside the escalator atrium I saw two physical models: the 399 hectare CBD and the Financial Street. Rem Koolhaas's CCTV Tower dominates the CBD, where many office towers are under way to be completed in the next few years. The Financial Street, near the western edge of central Beijing, is the locus of financial institutions. The street will contain over 3 million square metres of office space when all the proposed buildings are completed. One third of the exhibition space on this floor is dedicated to local architectural heritage and archaeological findings. An extensive presentation reveals the evolution of siheyuans. Well preserved steles, stone lions, door bolts, door handles, etc. are on display. Several panels on urban renewal projects of various Beijing districts are also pinned up in this section.

The second floor did not interest me much. The exposition ground is basically a series of rooms around the central atrium to display the features and exploitable potential of each municipal district. Each room contains colourful panels, physical models, video shows, historical photos, or master plans. It seemed to me a colourful business fair to attract real-estate developers. After strolling through the rooms, I exited the museum.

In the afternoon, I visited the Miaoying Temple and its Baita (White Pagoda). Old *hutongs* and small, lively eateries surround the temple. A small bazaar, a few cheap guesthouses, and traditional barber shops flank the *hutongs* beside the temple. I first had a quick visit at the iconic Baita. Vibrant flags of prayers are hung in between trees and the pagoda in a square courtyard. The Baita, a white stupa at around 50 m in height, has been standing for 600 years since the Yuan Dynasty.

I wandered into the adjacent *hutongs*. The shabbiness of the area reminded me of the display panels I saw in the Urban Planning Museum. The Baita neighbourhood is one of the proposed sites for urban renewal. Some proposals suggest transforming the street in front of the Baita into a pedestrian promenade or creating a public square in front of the temple entrance. The adjacent neighbourhoods will for certain undergo a series of reconstruction, replacing the ancient homes with modern housing. In fact, several sites have already begun their reconstruction, filling the area with construction noises. The bazaar beside the temple lines the *hutong* with market stalls and discoloured parasols. The Baita maintains itself as the visual dominance in the area above the parasols and metal scaffoldings.

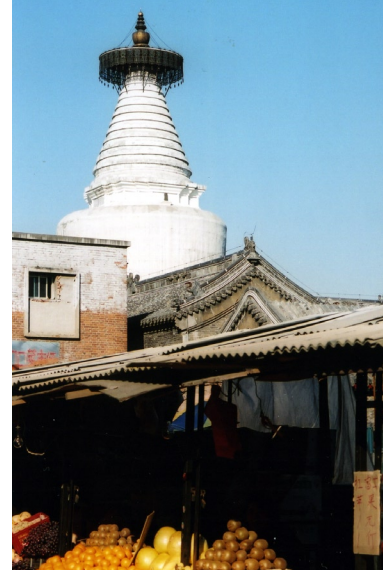


Fig. 5.44 The White Pagoda and the nearby street market.



Fig. 5.55 The White Pagoda and an adjacent construction site.

Fig. 5.56 The "Communist apartment" - the worker unit apartment near the White Pagoda.

as the primary concern in their urban proposals.

A concrete apartment, eight storeys high, arises at the northwest corner behind the temple. I arrived at its gate, where a security guard and several old ladies were chatting. I read from Wang Jun's *Chengji* that this apartment was one of the first worker-unit apartments in Beijing. Behind the brick façade and large square windows an ephemeral utopian dream of communal dining had once been experimented under great anticipation. The dream failed to continue after the national economy could no longer support the movement in late 1960. Wang wrote:

In 1959, at the northwest corner of the Baita, a gigantic "common unit apartment" emerged from ground. It was also known as the "apartment of communism".

In this eight-storey apartment, there wasn't a single private kitchen. If you want to eat, you got to go to the common dining hall. In this hotel-like apartment, what differentiated it from a real guesthouse was its grand communal concept – having forty families cramped on each floor.

While visiting the apartment today (2002), I saw a number of self-constructed cooking spaces in the dark corridors. All light fixtures in the corridors were operated by movement sensors. An amusing scene of communal feet-pounding would emerge at the instance when the lights come back on.¹⁰

Mao's public praise of a worker-unit apartment at a village in Hebei during his visit in August 1958 led to the flourish of worker-unit communities across the nation. Within months, all Chinese rural areas were swamped with the trend. The cities soon followed. By July 1960, about 77% of the urban population participated in the movement. It gradually turned into political distress when whoever failed to attend the communal meals would end up as a target for discrimination. The movement stopped in late 1960 after nationwide economic collapse and famine.

From its appearance, I could not tell the difference between this worker-unit apartment and any regular apartment. At the gate, signs were put up against the metal bars, revealing the inhabited organizations: a dance school and a steel factory. I tried to get in but the security guard rejected my request. More than half of the units contain private air conditioners, and most units have either large windows or glass-enclosed balconies. After taking several photos, I walked to the other end of the Miaoying Temple and passed by its backdoor to the main street again.

2004.11.06 Tianjin

A double-level train, clean and fast, took me to the former colonial city of Tianjin in an hour and fifteen minutes. Two sisters from Guangzhou sat across from me and talked with me in Cantonese for a while. They came all the way from the southern city by train.

The Tianjin Station is somewhat chaotic, especially at the entrance square. I had a quick lunch at MacDonald's and walked across an iron bridge to the adjacent French Quarter. Many Western mansions have been torn down in recent years. The surviving buildings are mainly monumental buildings and neo-classical in style. A number of old Western buildings along my way to the downtown district are under demolition. At several occasions, the character "ca" (demolish) is painted on the walls. I remember seeing many photos of Beijing siheyuans with the "ca" on their walls a year or two ago. Interestingly, I haven't seen any yet in Beijing. Most likely, those siheyuans in the photos have already been torn down.

A vibrant shopping street marks the centre of the commercial district. The street is similar to Beijing's Wangfujing Avenue and Shanghai's Nanjing Road. I strolled for a while and reached the famous antique market. An American man was bargaining with several local antique dealers on a pile of "antiques". I joined the group of spectators to watch the dealers and the American exchanging numbers on a calculator. After a period of fierce bargaining, they finally agreed on a price. The dealers wrapped the pieces with newspaper and plastic bags. When they came to



Fig. 5.57 The Chinese character "ca" (demolish) appears on the wall of an Western-style mansion in downtown Tianjin.



Fig. 5.58 Tianjin was a semi-colonized city at the turning of the twentieth century. Large amount of Western buildings still survive to present days.



Fig. 5.59 The liveliest shopping street - the xx Street. Buildings on the xx Street present a fusion of Chinese and Western cultures into the unique Tianjin identity.

the foot-long, ornate porcelain cabbage, they carelessly chipped a tiny bit off. A female dealer quickly picked up a bottle of white-glue behind her and tried to fix it. The American stopped her and once again they returned to a new battle of bargaining.

I walked back to the shopping street. Buildings along the street were mainly masonry, neo-classical, or early twentieth-century modernist. It was hard to tell whether they are newly built or from the colonial period. New buildings around the area are designed in a more or less nostalgic fashion. I read for a while at a bookstore and lingered through the old town, again to return to the railway station. Tianjin did not interest me. I took the return train at 15:30 back to Beijing.

From Beijing Railway Station, I took the subway to the Sihui Bus Terminal to check if there was any bus going to the town of Jixian, the town closest to the Eastern Qing Tombs that appears on my map of northern China. I found it in the bus schedule on the wall and have decided to head out to Jixian early tomorrow morning.

2004.11.07. Eastern Qing Tombs

I decided to find my own way after failing to get a local tourist agency that could provide me with transportation. I called up two companies and both said there would not be anything arranged for the tombs during the off season. I turned up at the Sihui Bus Terminal and hopped onto a bus for the town of Jixian (50 km southeast of the tombs).

I arrived at Jixian at around 11:00. A driver of a motor-tricycle approached me and was very eager to take me to a street intersection where buses going in the tombs' direction normally pass by. I ended up hiring him and his exposed wagon after a ten-minute wait on the street. Riding on an exposed wagon for forty-five minutes in a chilly winter morning was not the best option, but it gave me the opportunity to slowly pass through some rural areas in the Yan Mountains.

Sitting at the back of the cart in freezing temperature was not relaxing. The wind blew straight into my face and body. The driver was tall and bold, somewhat a typical Yanbei (northeast) masculine man, with deep wrinkles and tough hands. A pair of worn-out leather shoes and a wool jacket protected him well against the chilly wind. He advised me to sit with my back against his back. Henceforth, my freezing body and face gradually recovered.

We passed by a few poor farming communities. Slogans of the single-child policy and the national outlook of modernization appear on walls of many village homes. Heaps of straw, fresh produce, and corn are piled up at each home entrance, alongside a farming cow tied to a wooden post. Herds after herds of sheep passed along the highway, searching for limited shrubs and grass beside a filthy creek. I saw several apple and pear orchards as we began to enter the Yan Mountains. The driver told me the area is famous for the Chinese pears, better than the ones from Tianjin. Twenty minutes of going uphill and downhill led us deep into the Yan Mountains and we arrived at the westernmost tomb of the Eastern Qing Tombs.

Five out of nine Qing emperors are buried here at a mountain valley in County Junhua, roughly 125 km northeast of Beijing. The remaining four emperors built their tombs at the Western Qing Tombs in Yixian, about 140 km west of Beijing. The UNESCO includes both sites in the World Heritage List. Henceforth, tourism picks up despite their remote

locations. The Eastern Qing Tombs contain fifteen tomb complexes, housing the resting places for five emperors and a number of queens and royal members. The tombs occupy a huge valley, enclosed on three sides with mountains and the south with red walls and a 60 m wide fire-barrier zone.

I first reached Dingling, the resting place of Emperor Xianfeng, who ruled China during the time Yuanmingyuan was burned down by the Anglo-French troops. Like other Qing tombs, Dingling is divided into three sections: the entrance vestibule, the ceremonial space, and the mausoleum, all along the central axis. Before the gate, various pairs of marble statues flank the long stretch of stone pavement known as the "spiritual pathway". For powerful emperors, the spiritual pathway can stretch over 10 km of distance and can contain various features such as bridges crossing over canals, ornate gates, towers, and a large group of statues. At Dingling, a small canal and a set of short stone bridges mark the entrance of Xianfeng's tomb. The below-average scale and degree of ornament of his tomb reflects that Xianfeng was no powerful emperor.

Inside a set of red walls, a courtyard and three timber halls make up the ceremonial quarter. The middle, main Buddhist hall once served for prayer and rituals. Behind the main hall stands another set of gates and walls, separating the yin and the yang worlds, yin for the spirits and yang for living beings. The mausoleum of Xianfeng rises behind the walls. Unfortunately, the gates were shut off for visitors. I left for another complex without delay.

Hopping on the wagon again, the driver took me to the next tomb, a dual complex for Queen Cian and Cixi, the wives of Xianfeng. Cixi outlived Xianfeng over four decades and took control of China as the dowager empress while her son remained as a puppet on the throne. Cixi was a corrupt and conservative tyrant, and a leading figure to be blamed for the collapse of the Qing. Cian and Cixi's tombs stand side-by-side in exactly the same layout. A narrow canal separates the two. After a series of marble bridges, I walked into the ceremonial spaces of Cixi's tomb. In the left Buddhist hall, Cixi commissioned expert artisans to construct an interior embossed fully with real gold carvings of religious stories, at a time when the government was hungry for resources to modernize its military.

The yin world of Cixi's tomb was opened. After the red walls and



Fig. 5.60 The water channel that divides the tombs of Queen Cixi and Cian.



Fig. 5.61 A series of stone bridges that lead to the entrance of Cixi's tomb.



Fig. 5.62 The main Buddhist ceremonial hall at Cixi's tomb.



Fig. 5.63 The grand entrance courtyard at Emperor Qianlong's tomb. The building at the front-left shelters a large stone stele that describes the glory of the emperor.



Fig. 5.64 The main courtyard of the Yin World at Qianlong's tomb. The self-standing stone gate represents the official entry into the world of the dead, while the stone counter stands in midway between the gate and the mausoleum.



Fig. 5.65 The underground palace of Qianlong's Yuling Tomb.

Fig. 5.66 The mirror wall at the back courtyard behind the mausoleum. A stairway at either side of the wall lead people up to the balcony of the masualeum.

gate, a set of symbolic white marble gate stands roughly 20 m from the red ceremonial halls to mark the arrival of the world of spirits. In the middle of the yin world courtyard between the marble gate and the mausoleum building, a marble counter stands across the courtyard and on top, five marble containers form a stone altar. The mausoleum looks like a city gate tower, and the structure serves as the access point for the "underground palace" and the upper viewing platform. I walked up the viewing platform and had a look at the earth mound behind that covered the crypt. The stone underground palace is quite empty, thanks to the warlord plunderers in the 1920s and the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution.

A typical imperial tomb complex depicts well the distinction between the use of timber and stone in traditional Chinese architecture. Ancient Chinese used timber to construct most of their buildings, not just because of freedom of skeleton framing and the ease of transporting and obtaining, but also the sensational comfort that originated from the material. Wood is warm and comfortable to look at. Stone, however, is cold and hard. Ancient Chinese associated wood with life (the yang world) and stone with death (the yin world). Hence, timber becomes the major building material, while stone was considered the designated material for funeral structures.

The driver drove me to the next tomb to the east—the Yuling of Emperor Qianlong. Qianlong's craftsmen and artisans spent 57 years constructing the enormous complex. The courtyard before the entrance is about the size of a soccer field. Within a timber pavilion, a giant stele on top of a stone turtle accounts for the emperor's glories. Inside the complex, the three Buddhist halls are similar to the ones of Cixi's, only without the golden relief. I entered the yin world of Yuling, passed by the marble gates and counter, and went into a new, moon-shaped courtyard behind the mausoleum. Glazed tiles cover much of the middle of the back wall that retains the earth of the burial mount. I ascended the stairs to reach the viewing platform to have a look at the burial mount. Mature pine trees cover most of the huge burial mount. I descended to the "underground palace" below the mausoleum structure. Again, the tomb had been despoiled by troops of warlords in the 1920s. Traces of dynamite bombing exist at areas around the doorways. Damaged solid marble doors rest beside the openings where they once guarded. The "underground palace" contains a series of barrel-vaulted rooms, while the back chamber encloses the coffins

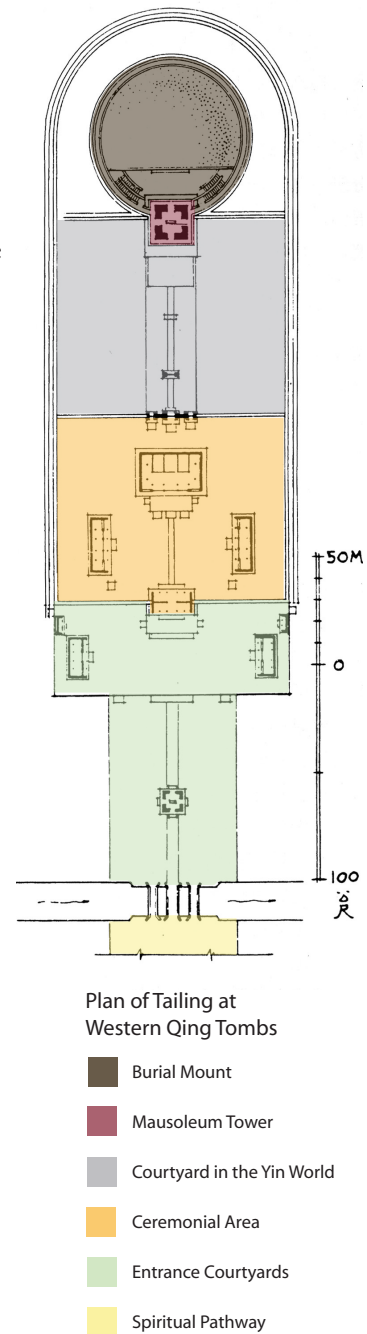


Fig. 5.67 Tailing, the tomb of Emperor Yongzheng (father of Qianlong and son of Kangxi). The setting of Tailing is typical to most of the royal tombs built in the Qing Dynasty.



Fig. 5.68 A stone pailou in midway of the spiritual pathway of the Xiaoling.



Fig. 5.69 A row of stone statues along each side of the spiritual pathway welcome visitors of the Xiaoling.



Fig. 5.70 The 6km spiritual pathway ends at the gate of Xiaoling, the central complex of the Eastern Qing Tombs.

of the emperor and several of his wives. All the treasures have been taken by the warlords, except the unmovable marble walls that are filled with carved animal figures and traditional motifs.

Xiaoling was the last tomb I saw today. It belongs to the Emperor Shunzhi, the first ruler of Qing China and the first tomb builder at the site. His tomb and the 6 km long and 12 m wide spiritual pathway provide the central axis for the entire site. Tombs of his descendants, like Kangxi and Qianlong, fan out from his complex accordingly. Its spiritual path forms the main entrance pathway into the entire Eastern Qing Tombs, along which are about a dozen large marble statues of generals, advisors, elephants, horses, camels, and qilins (mythical giraffes). We drove through the pailous (grand gate structures) and the main gate of the site before heading back. If I had had another hour, I would for certain have visited the Jingling of Emperor Kangxi, just a complex east of Xiaoling.

We passed by a village near the south perimeter of the site. The village is the former settlement of the tomb keepers. The remaining inhabitants today are mainly restaurant owners, farmers, and tourism-related workers. In history, a number of affluent towns or even cities emerged as the base for tomb keepers. At Maoling of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, five thousand tomb keepers were ordered to maintain the tomb, and the city of Maoling was constructed southeast of the tomb to house the 277,000 officials, wealthy men, and generals who deliberately moved there to accompany the dead emperor.

The driver took me back to Jixian without delay. I gave him some extra money on top of the agreed price for the endurance of missing his lunch. He dropped me off at the Jixian Bus Terminal at about 17:15, when the last bus to Beijing was just about to depart.

Back at room 6443, I am totally exhausted. However, I am planning to return to Jixian again tomorrow. My mission there has yet to be completed.

2004.11.08. Dule Temple

I took the same bus to Jixian from Beijing's Sihui Bus Terminal. The only reason to revisit the remote town was to check out its Dule Temple, a structure built in the Liao Dynasty (AD 947 to 1125) and extensively studied by scholars such as Liang Sicheng in the twentieth century.

Liang came to the Dule Temple in 1932 after he saw the temples' unique features in some tourist photos. He asked his younger brother, Liang Sida, to accompany him for the expedition. They found that the Dule Temple was built in AD 984 during the Liao Dynasty. Before Liang and his team discovered the Foguang Temple at Wutaishan, the Dule Temple was the oldest surviving timber structure in China. Liang was delighted to see a complex only 77 years after the fall of Tang. The complex provided him a great example to study the architectural manual *Ying Zao Fa Shi*, written in 1103 of the Song Dynasty. Dule contains features of both the Tang and Song Dynasties, displaying clear traces of evolution between the two periods.

I got off the bus at a street intersection near the temple. I entered the complex through its Shanmen, or the Mountain Gate (a common name to all temple entrance halls, as early temples were often built on mountains). Within the Dule complex, both the Shanmen and the Guanyin Hall are aged over a thousand of years. Both the bold structure and the fishtail detail of the ridge present the great features of a Tang building. The Guanyin Hall is about 23 m in height, the tallest landmark in town. The three interior levels of the hall provide a series of worshipping spaces dedicated to the Guanyin Bodhisattva. At the ground altar stands the tallest clay Guanyin statue in China, overseeing the town through the balcony windows 16 m above ground. At her forehead, ten smaller heads were later added to depict the wide knowledge and deep wisdom of the goddess. Faint green, blue, yellow, and red paints are still visible on the statue, and also on the richly carved railings of the balcony. Huge frescos were painted on the walls of the ground floor, depicting various heavenly divinities and immortal Luohans.

Behind the Guanyin Hall, a Ming pavilion contains a bronze statue of a general. Beside the Guanyin Hall there are several siheyuans built in the Qing Dynasty, serving as the living quarter of the monks. Fruits and vegetable are planted below a set of wooden trellises. One



Fig. 5.70 The exposed structure of the Shanmen of Dule Temple.

siheyuan was built by Emperor Qianlong. Today, the siheyuan becomes an exhibition area of several of the emperor's calligraphies. Stone steles dating from the Tang Dynasty to the Republican period in the early twentieth century cluster in front of the Guanyin Hall to account for major incidents around the temple.

After viewing the temple, I drifted over to the recently developed tourist district nearby. Traditionalist buildings sprout along the street that connects the Dule Temple to the reconstructed gate tower. Beside the gate, a huge construction site of a shopping plaza is well under way. After I grabbed a bite at an eatery close to the bus terminal, I got on a coach and headed back to Beijing.

Fig. 5.71 The interior dougong brackets of the Guanyin Hall.

Fig. 5.72 The interior of the Guanyin Hall looking up from the ground level.

Fig. 5.73 The huge clay statue of Guanyin.



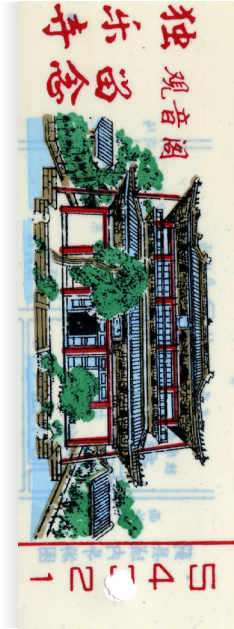


Fig. 5.74 The simple admission ticket of the Dule Temple.

Fig. 5.75 The Guanyin Hall of the Dule Temple.

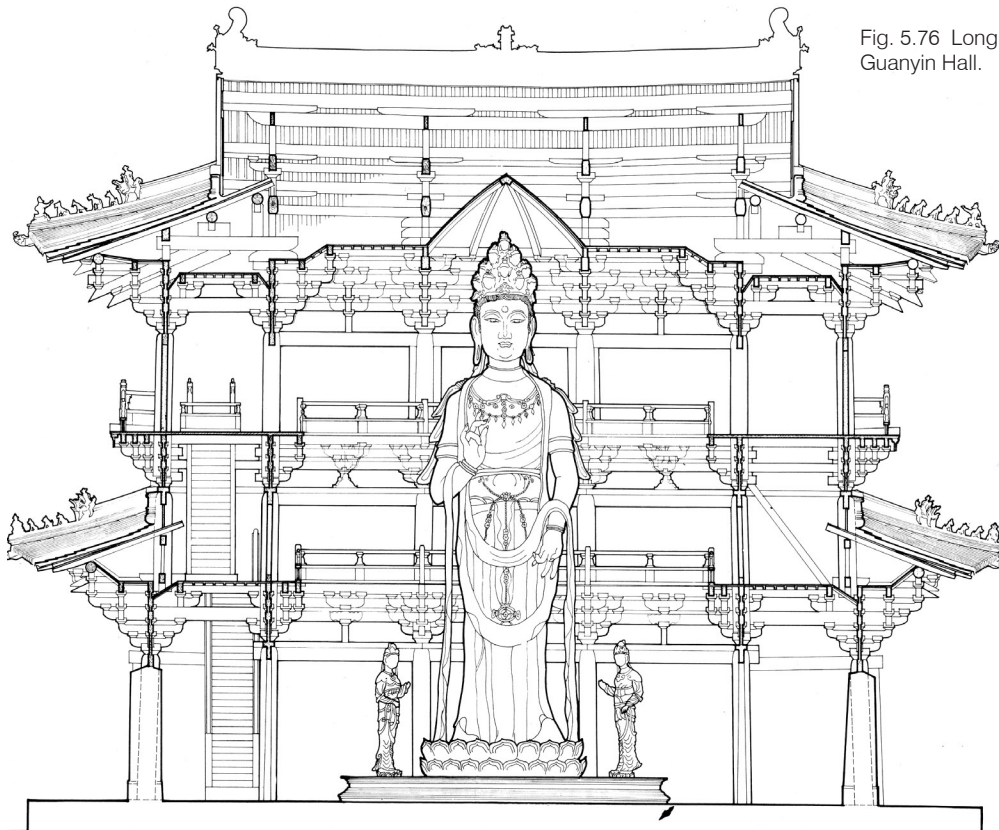


Fig. 5.76 Longitudinal section of the Guanyin Hall.

2004.11.09. Beijing National Library

Cold winds from Siberia swept through the Chinese capital before dawn. On such a chilly morning, I chose to go somewhere indoors and took a bus to the National Library in the Haidian District. An approximately one-hour bus ride took me to the Baishijiao stop. I stopped by Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch. I ordered a grilled wings combo and a Chinese bean and egg soup, both only available in China. I walked northwest for ten minutes before an enormous building appeared across the street. Cladded with white bricks, the library building is comprised of two wings, the frontal six-storey public library and at the back, the eighteen-storey book storage. Green-tiled Chinese roofs cover all the outer walls. Five renowned senior architects—Yang Tingbao, Dai Nianci, Zhang Bo, Wu Liangyong, and Huang Yuanqiang—collaborated in early 1980s to put forward the design proposal.

I stored my camera bag at the coat-check cabin in front of the entrance and turned to the registration office to obtain a library card. My Hong Kong identification proved useful again. I got a year-long reading card instead of the day pass which foreigners can only obtain. Inside the entrance vestibule, there was a bookstore to my right running a sale of 12% off. At the end of the vestibule, a flight of stairs led me up to the lobby on the second floor where the checkout counters and computer catalogues were located. I went to a computer and took a brief look at the floor plans and available materials. I found there were several computer rooms on the second floor, magazines on the third, and reference books of architecture and construction on the fifth.

The lights at the lobby and in the corridors were dim, especially for today's foggy afternoon. I followed a corridor that surrounded an outdoor courtyard to the computer rooms. Several reference rooms situate along the way, including a rare book room, a room for governmental documents, and a large reference room of mixed subjects including history, culture, and sociology. I went into one of the computer rooms and swiped my library card to obtain a station. The rate was 2 RMB per hour; compared to 10 RMB at the hostel, it was marvellous. I sent some e-mails and typed up some materials for one of my electives.

I took an elevator up to the fifth floor. The fifth floor houses the books on technology and construction. I swiped my card again at the entrance to

get in and searched for the architecture shelves. The collection is quite convincing, with about six to eight shelves of books on architecture. I picked out several books, including Lin Huiyin's *Lecture on Architecture*, *Modern Chinese Architecture* by Tsinghua University Press, and a biography of architect Liang Sicheng. I picked a seat in the room and spent the day reading the materials.

Before leaving the building, I lingered in the bookstore on the ground floor and bought a book on ancient Chinese architecture and the travel book *Cha Ma Gu Dao (Ancient Route of Tea and Horses From Yunnan to Central China)*.

I got back to the Eastern Morning Hostel after an hour's bus ride. I went to the internet room and e-mailed Professor Peng of Tsinghua University to confirm our meeting on the 11th.

2004.11.10. National Library

I went to the National Library again, and ended up spending most of my time in the computer room again. I checked out their database of periodicals online and discovered that there is a complete collection of architectural essays from the past ten years. I loaded a bunch of PDF-formatted articles on architectural theories onto my flash disk. It took me the entire afternoon to get used to the system and screen through reading a few dozen articles.



Fig. 5.77 The National Library in the Haidian District.

2004.11.11. Tsinghua University

I had made arrangements through e-mail to meet with Professor Alfred Peng at Tsinghua University for an interview regarding issues of modern Chinese architecture and its future identity. Peng was born in China in 1943, educated in Taiwan, and obtained his master's degree at the University of Illinois. In 1980, Peng began lecturing at the school of architecture at the University of Waterloo. In 1985, Peng returned to China and established the first-ever, Sino-foreign, joint-venture, architectural firm Dadi (The Land) with Macklin Hancock and Karl Stevens. Other than Dadi, Peng also devotes his energy to the school of architecture at Tsinghua University and has become the first professor giving architecture class in the English language. According to his course notes, he primarily advocates regionalism and a form complement between Western and Chinese concepts. He strongly distastes a number of the latest mega projects in Beijing, such as the National Theatre and the Olympics Stadium. He sees them as mere empty formalistic objects, visual stimulations, and totally impractical and over-budgeted designs. He advocates Chinese architects to gain a deeper understanding of ancient and contemporary China in order to build up self-confidence. He also believes a fusion of tradition and contemporary technology is the method to rebirth the Chinese cultural heritage. Furthermore, he urges architects to focus on the development of residential designs because there will be a continuous demand for residential projects in China for the coming decade. As to the authorities, he pushes for a raise of design fees since, according to Peng, China has the lowest rate (1.5% to 3%) among the nations in the world. He opposes any interruption from the authorities as he believes it is a pure waste and disrespect to the architectural profession. "The most ideal architecture does not require rules and even an architect. The 'second best' architecture does require an architect, yet only the one who is not used by the authorities as a pure draftsman."

In the morning, I failed to get a hold of him by phone as he had advised me to do so. I decided to go no matter what. I purchased a cassette tape at an audio electronics store in the Oriental Plaza and took my tape recorder with me. An hour-long bus ride took me again to the Haidian District. I got off at the west gate of Tsinghua, just one stop before the Yuanmingyuan. I walked along the ring road beside a canal. The water surface was just about to freeze. Groups of students passed by me riding

on bicycles. I checked my watch: twenty minutes until the appointment. Having a rough idea of the location of the school of architecture, I decided to have a brief tour of the campus.

I turned left into the old core of the campus: the Tsinghuayuan. A number of Western-style buildings dominated the perimeter of a vast lawn. In the central far side, a Palladian ceremonial hall arises, containing a dome and a portico. American architect Henry K. Murphy was responsible for the design of a number of Western buildings on the campus during the 1920s. Several other buildings also reflect colonial influences or a subtle mixture of Chinese and Western features.

A walk due east through a series of concrete buildings and tree-lined pathways led me to another group of buildings: a dozen professional schools that flank a wide paved promenade. Grids of flower beds, rows of street lamps, lines of trees, and huge parcels of green lawns occupy the central area of the promenade. The institutional buildings are mainly cubic in shape, but made of distinct materials and design features. Each of them, however, contains a giant gate vestibule at the façade and a central courtyard. At the northern end of the promenade where I walked from stands a monumental, Soviet Communist building from the 1960s. The school of architecture building and its concrete gate vestibule appear on the east side of the promenade.

I entered the building and went straight to the second floor where Peng told me to. Peng was not in his office. I wandered around the second floor to check out some displays of student works and projects, done by the Tsinghua Architectural Institute or the professors. Tsinghua's works range from museums, community centres, and urban master planning, to residential developments. The famous Juer Hutong project by Professor Wu Liangyong is also on display. I went down to the lobby: on my left, a number of displays of information about professors, and on my right, a bronze bust on a marble pedestal of Liang Sicheng, the founder of the school. I waited for over an hour and gave up.

I walked south along the promenade and exited the campus at its east gate. I passed by a technological park of Tsinghua and took a bus at the Wudaokou area back to the Eastern Morning Hostel.

2004.11.12. The CBD and Beijing World Trade Centre

The basic planning of Beijing reflects traditional Chinese ideology of symmetry. I remember seeing the plan of the ancient Tang capital of Changan in Liang Sicheng's *History of Chinese Architecture*. The Tang planners put the imperial city in the central north position and located the main road from the central gate of the imperial city at the southern city gate to bisect Changan. Each half of the city contained one large market area, creating a mirror image centred at the main road. As for modern Beijing, its central axis goes from the Temple of Heaven in the south, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City in the centre, to the future Olympic Park in the north. Modern Beijing contains four commercial areas, two on each side of the central axis. The Wangfujing Shopping District mirrors the Xidan Shopping Street, while the CBD in the east matches with the Financial Street in the west to form a dual



Jianguo Road
(Changan Avenue
Extension)

Changan Avenue

Third Ring Road



Fig. 5.78-5.79 Many new buildings are under construction in the CBD area.

Fig. 5.80 The CBD area in the city model at the Beijing Urban Planning Museum.

downtown. Some experts worry that the dual commercial areas will result in fierce competition. I imagine if both the CBD and the Financial Street develop successfully, the Changan Avenue and the subway line that runs below will be overloaded with traffic, given the Changan Avenue also passes by Xidan, Tiananmen Square, Wangfujing, and the giant Oriental Plaza. That may create a major concern for the authorities since there is really no room for another arterial road across the capital.

In the morning, I went east from the Oriental Plaza along East Changan Avenue to the World Trade Centre at the Chaoyang District. The World Trade Centre is the most established business building in the area, known as the future's CBD—the Central Business District. The CBD situates between the second and third Ring Roads, close to the Airport Expressway and near the district of foreign embassies. In a few years' time, the CBD will become a diverse commercial area filled with both national and international enterprises. Most buildings in the CBD, including the proposed CCTV Tower, are meant to be completed before 2008.

I entered the mall below the World Trade Centre. It appears similar to Wangfujing's Oriental Plaza with all the high-end European boutiques. I had a dish of curry rice at its food-court and walked out to the street. The streets were full of dust, bumps, and unpaved spots. It is hard to imagine the area as a forest of skyscrapers in 2008, as seen in the model at the Urban Planning Museum.

I walked north along the third Ring Road (the eastern edge of CBD) into the heart of the Chaoyang District. Chaoyang is now a concentration of high-end condominiums and international apartments. I passed by the renowned Sanlitun embassy area and its bar streets. Not too many people were around at this time of day. Compared Chaoyang to some other parts of Beijing, such as the Baita area, this area is obviously more up-scale, although its apartments may seem too dense in grouping according to the Western standard. Population overcrowding remains a major issue for Chinese municipal authorities.

What the Communist Chinese have been using to control population interflow between cities is the system of *wukou*, namely "local unit".

Wukou restricts citizens moving from cities to cities without the government's approval, and the single-child policy stipulates that only

the first child of a family can obtain an official *wukou*. Benefits, working permit, taxation rate, and government charges vary according to the *wukou* of different regions. For instance, if one has a *wukou* of Shanghai, one has to pay a higher income tax and car-licence fee, but can enjoy more benefits such as unrestricted childbirth. It is very difficult to obtain a *wukou* for cities like Shanghai or Beijing.

I walked passed the highly guarded embassy district and then decided to take a bus to the National Library.

I got to the library in the late afternoon and went straight to the computer room to search for more electronic articles. This time, I focused on the project of Juer Hutong by architect Wu Liangyong. The project involves an organic renewal experiment of an old neighbourhood in Beijing. Wu designed a compound of a new siheyuan prototype to replace the worn-out ancient units.

I returned to room 6443 after the library closing time of 17:30.

2004.11.13. Pangjiayuan

I have read from guidebooks and websites that Pangjiayuan is the best antique market in Beijing. Although 95% of the antiques are replicas, there are nonetheless uncounted types of handicrafts and cultural products that are well worth the energy bargaining for.

I took a bus to the intersection across from the World Trade Centre and switched to another that ran south to Pangjiayuan. A grey wall enclosure separates the market from the street, except the north and east entrances. Pangjiayuan is huge and I didn't think I could finish it in a day. Some vendors were stationed outside the entrances and approached people with vases, paintings, and animal skins. I assume they were trying to avoid the market renting fee.

Six zones occupy the market. The central part below a steel-truss canopy belongs to vendors that sell all kinds of art objects, fake antiques, and clothing of minority groups. The second contains a row of shops at a two-level complex selling paintings and gemstones. The third zone includes several aisles of single-storey row-shops for souvenir products. The fourth occupies an open space where over a hundred vendors spread their antique

items on the paved ground. The fifth are consists of a lane of vendors that sell second-hand books. A two-storey complex for large sculptures and furniture makes up the sixth and final zone.

I strolled through the central zone aisle by aisle. This area contains merchandise from all over China: jade from Xinjiang, textiles of minorities from the provinces of Guizhou and Sichuan, jewellery from Tibet, hats from Inner Mongolia, porcelain from the southern provinces, bronze statues, metal replicas of artefacts, military accessories and paintings. Beijingers, Chinese tourists, foreigners, children, elderly, monks, and lamas hunt in this area for personal gifts and souvenirs. I bought a few souvenirs for friends and a military bag for myself. People at the hostel told me bargaining price could go down to only 20% of the original price, but my bargaining skills got me as far as 50% off.

I strolled around the open area of antiques. I couldn't tell whether the antiques were fake or real. Vendors spread ancient coins, pottery, metal containers, and even broken pieces of a certain porcelain on a piece of white plastic wrap or a cloth. At around 14:00, I drifted out the east entrance to buy a charcoal-baked yam. It tasted warm and sweet.

I returned to a vendor at the central area and bought a piece of translucent bull skin cut in the shape of an ancient lamp. The vendor said it was a prop of a *piyingqi* (skin silhouette show). I had watched a *piyingqi* in Wuzhen near Suzhou in 2003. Under a white light, the *piyingqi* master controlled the skin figures, twisting their arms and legs to cast shadows onto a translucent screen in front. The silhouette appeared colourful and lively.

I left Panjiayuan at around 17:00 and went to the food-court at the Oriental Plaza for dinner.



Fig. 5.81 The image of Mao becomes a popular symbol for souvenir.



Fig. 5.82 Even Buddhist monks come to shop at the market.



Fig. 5.83 Antique vendors spread their merchandise in front of the second-hand book stalls.



Fig. 5.84 The Tanzhe Temple occupies a hillside in the west suburb of Beijing.

2004.11.14. Tanzhe Temple

It was already 14:00 when I stood at the bus stop near Beijing's westernmost subway station Pinguoyuan (Apple Orchard) waiting for a bus to the Tanzhe Temple. Tanzhe Temple is a large temple complex at the western outskirts. Beside me stood two female university students from Rome, carrying an Italian version of *Lonely Planet*. We waited for twenty minutes until a young local approached. He, a taxi driver, encouraged us to hire him as a driver. We haggled a while, agreed on a price and hopped into his taxi for the sake of saving time. I sat in front and the driver began to chat with me. He told me Beijing has been changing crazily in recent years, while living standards have improved but life for the average citizen remains tough.

"Poor citizens like me, our lives depends on luck. Those new condominiums cost around 5,000 RMB per square metre but for most of us our average monthly salary is around 3,000 RMB, and for professionals, 8,000 RMB perhaps. How can we buy a flat in Beijing? So even the society has improved, I still live in my same old apartment flat with my wife and kids," he sighed.

He then commented on the Beijing Olympics of 2008: "Opportunities are there at 2008, but they're not for us. They're chances for wealthy officials to make more money. I really hope that Beijing can learn a lesson from Athens and avoid some aftermath problems. At least I don't want to see dramatic widening between the poor and the rich."

I asked him whether he wanted to move to another city. "Another city," the driver replied, "not for now, maybe when I retire. Beijing is good for earning money compared to many other Chinese cities. I hope to find a place in suburban Beijing, where the air is cleaner and the flats are larger. Central Beijing is too crowded, expensive, and polluted. The pollution has improved significantly though, I admit. Before 1999, there were several spots in the city that I would avoid going simply because of the acidic smell in the air. Now the situation improves because factories and the power plants have been relocated somewhere else."

"Where?" I asked.

"Right here," he pointed to a few smokestacks slightly to our west. Pingguoyuan's coal combustion power plants have become a main source of Beijing's air pollution.

We passed by the power plants. Three sky-reaching smokestacks protrude above a group of small chimneys. The smoke emission cut the sky into three halves: a layer of brown sandwiched between two shades of blue. Two giant boilers stand right beside the sidewalk.

Air pollution has always been a big concern for Chinese cities. According to a report from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1999, Beijing ranked third in the world for urban air pollution. Over the past two weeks, I have experienced at least seven to eight smoggy days, and within that two quite intolerable days, when I could see hardly very much in front of me. The Chinese love to describe gorgeous scenery with "*shan ming shui xiu*" (clear mountains and clean water). Yet *shan ming shui xiu* becomes very rare in central and Eastern China nowadays. Authorities have promised to make central Beijing a clean city to host the 2008 Olympics. By then, probably the peripheral countryside will become the victim of the Green Olympics Movement as polluting industries and power plants are being relocated out of Beijing to its suburbs. The pollution issue in Greater Beijing stills exists, but it's just that people in central downtown will not be able to sense it. Another old Chinese saying describes the irony well: *yan er dao ling*" (cover the ears when stealing the bronze bell). When stealing a bronze bell, a thief believes if his covers his ears, his action will be perfectly silent because he himself cannot hear a single sound.

We arrived at the Tanzhe Temple after driving by a satellite town and

several rural settlements. Renowned as a 1,700-year-old complex, the temple has gone through series of reconstruction throughout history. Several trees in the main courtyard date back to the Tang Dynasty (around 1,200 years ago), but the structures were mainly reconstructed during the Ming and Qing eras, with one or two exceptions from the Yuan Dynasty (AD1271 to 1368). The entire complex cascades along a hillside, on which monk housings, worship halls, and priest stupas stand on various levels according to hierarchy of functions. I parted with the Italian students and went alone to the curvy pathway behind the main halls. The pathway winds up the hill behind the golden roofs of the main halls to a higher level of hermit cabins.

At the top level stands a simple small cabin in which a daughter of Kublai Kahn practised Buddhism in the thirteenth century. I descended to the main courtyard and walked to the subsidiary halls. At a side-courtyard, several bronze bells rest on the pavement for visitors to take photos. A hall in the courtyard houses the ancient ceremonial platform where former monks received marks on their bald heads as they advanced through their studies.

I wanted to stay longer but time was running out. I exited the temple and walked alone, downhill along a paved pathway. There was no signage and I only hoped that the path could lead me to a bus stop or a village at the mountain foot. My luck proved positive. The path led me to an asphalt parking lot where a shabby suburban bus parked in the middle. Beyond the lot, vast farmlands extend further down the valley, which, according to the earlier taxi driver, all belonged to the temple during the imperial era. About 10 to 12 worshippers and travellers sat in the bus. I couldn't find the Italian students and figured they might have hired a taxi at the temple gate already. I managed to take a few more pictures of the mini stone pagodas next to the lot before the bus driver finished his last cigarette. The pagodas are the burial places for ancient priests.

After I came back from Tanzhe Temple, I went to check my e-mail at the internet room in the Eastern Morning Hostel. Professor Peng e-mailed me again and set up another meeting with me on the 17th. Hopefully, it can work out this time.



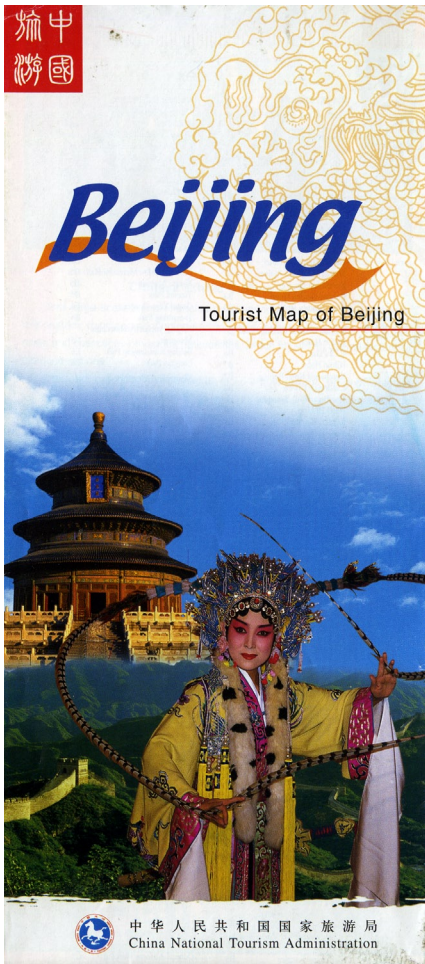
Fig. 5.85 A curve pathway that winds behind the main halls of the temple complex.



Fig. 5.86 The herit chamber at the back mount that Kublai Kahn's daughter dwelled in during her Buddhist learning.



Fig. 5.87 Detail carvings can be found throughout the complex.



Beijing Tourist

Modernization... breaks up the solidarity of the groups in which they originally figured as cultural elements, and brings the people liberated from traditional attachments into the modern world where, as tourists, they may attempt to discover or reconstruct a cultural heritage or a social identity.¹

-Dean MacCannell

In *The Tourist*, Dean MacCannell states, "sightseeing is a ritual performed to the differentiations of society."² The tourist, a pilgrim in the modern world, travels to chase after the long-lost authenticity of the pre-modern culture, and to satisfy the desire of escape and nostalgia of the Golden Past. It is the tourist, the modern man, who invents heritage from an objective and ideal view of the past, and it is heritage that derives the basis for forming a nation's identity. In China, a venue of intense heritage and rapid modernization, global tourism promotes

Fig. 6.1 China National Tourism Administration, Tourist Map of Beijing.

Fig. 6.2 Charcoal heating is still common in old Beijing neighbourhoods.

Fig. 6.3 Birdseye view of siheyuan complexes near the Wangfujing shopping area. Old neighbourhoods take up about 40 km² area of the 62.5 km² old Beijing. Statistics from 1990 showed a figure of roughly 1.75 million of Beijingers are living in the old neighbourhoods, where living conditions are often poor.

Fig. 6.4 View to the Tiananmen Square from the balcony of Tiananmen in a smoggy day. Air pollution from auto emission and the coal powerplants in the suburb cause a major issue of air pollution in Beijing.

the need to reconstruct heritage while rapid modernization enhances new spatial making to accommodate novel commodities, lifestyle and social beliefs. In a communist state, both the developments of heritage and of modernization are regarded as devices to unite the collective, and to advertise national accomplishment. Instead of reflecting the contemporary values of the individuals, these devices represent a series of preset realities in yielding to the enhancement of national pride and a projected image of the ideal future. From 1840s to 1970s, civil wars, foreign invasions, political persecutions and power struggles led China into an age of turmoil. In counter to this dark memory, the current Chinese society develops a strong sense of becoming: a will to rapidly change, gain wealth and modernize. In order to show their effort on the modernization achievement to the awaiting citizens, the authorities build a semi-delusional reality in urban China, making model cities according to postcard images. They manipulate the collective desire for change to support their own ambition of building a new nation. Architecture in this sense becomes a political tool for each official to leave his mark on his soil. This semi-delusional reality is well portrayed in the Chinese capital, Beijing, where old memories and new ideals collide to support the sense of becoming and the forming of a new national identity, and where forming images is powerful in attempting to stage a mature form of Chinese modernization, especially since the city won the bid for 2008 Olympic Games.

As a Beijing tourist, I was invited to participate in one of the most common cultural experiences; to see both the old and new China from a world perspective. That particular China was ancient and traditional, cultural and glamorous, colourful and prosperous, modern and novel, complete and efficient, far from mundane, domestic and real. As a mere spectator, I ran from one front stage to another most of the time. Contemporary skyscrapers, ancient temples, and imperial palaces flanked a number of tree-lined boulevards. Western cafes, Taiwanese bubble tea shops, and local food vendors dotted within the renovated hutong neighbourhoods where foreigners paid 180 RMB (\$30 CAD) for a 45-minute sedan ride; the Omega-sponsored plastic countdown machine erected in front of the mighty colonnade of the communist National Museum; Beijing, to me, was a city of eternity, commodities, and desire.

As a Chinese living in the diaspora, born in Hong Kong and educated in Canada, I reserved a distinct objective to see Beijing apart from the common tourist perspective. Having the notion of self-discovery in mind, I deliberately evaluated Beijing in terms of successes and flaws in Chinese modernization, the aura of my native countrymen, and any long-term visions of societal and urban development. Throughout the trip, I was constantly playing the role of a "nanfangren", a southern Chinese, or simply "nanqingren", a young fellow. This causal identity concealed many of the differences between common Beijing residents and me, despite any cultural and social distinctions. In fact, the capital city is a vibrant venue for citizens across the nation to come to work and to study. Being a "nanfangren" (from the province of Guangdong in general instead of the former British colony, Hong Kong) minimized the gap between the locals and me, allowing me to stay within the invisible national wall. This identity of mine became the platform to interact with the locals and the means to enter numerous "back stages" in the capital, beyond the world where foreigners tended to linger. These back stages represented a fallen-behind condition of some locals who had been struggling to keep up with the pace of national modernization, and held a contrasting image against the front spectacles along the main avenues and at the city centre. These back stages provided a counter presentation, allowing me to formulate a balanced reality of the Beijing phenomenon.

As an architectural student, I was astonished by the determination of China in building its capital. As the largest construction site in the contemporary world, Beijing is a dream place for foreign well-known architects to realize their futuristic ideas; the Chinese are desperate to search for a modern identity and are willing to pursue things that others have not yet attempted. The construction boom of Beijing ignited in the 1980s when the authorities determined to sell the image of a cultural, political, and economic metropolis instead of the socialist and industrial setting that once blanketed the city, to attract foreign investors and tourists, and to boost national pride and unity after the devastating Cultural Revolution. By the late 1980s to mid 1990s, the campaign "to revive the ancient capital" ³ encouraged the emergence of uncounted "fake antiques" ⁴ and classical revival buildings both inside

and outside the old city. In 2001, as Beijing was granted the host city for the 2008 Olympics, another massive phase of construction began, this time led by enormous and iconic projects and world-renowned architects. While the city underwent a number of construction booms, the reconstruction and preservation of heritage sites and structures also enjoyed a fruitful rebound after the 10-year cultural catastrophe in the 1960s and 1970s, very much due to their market and political values. The coexistence of establishing heritage and a lightning modernization has made Beijing an interesting phenomenon: a double-skin system of stages in expressing its identity and speculation of a glorious future. In many cases, living aspects of individual groups of Beijingers are sacrificed, yielding to the making of these double-stage sets. Many homes and businesses in the old city have been relocated to make way for new developments, while urban developments and renewals of old neighbourhoods produce new condominiums which most locals can hardly afford. The imbalanced development in certain urban areas and the passion of political propaganda in selling the image of a "New Beijing" ⁵ altogether provoke the blame of "Chinese Potemkinism" from a number of foreign and local scholars. To scholars, what comprises the magnificent spatial transformations and urban development of Beijing is mere spectacles and delusions to conceal the immaturity and disorders of Beijing's evolving society and to foster the success and legitimacy of the ruling authorities. Thus, the urban development has become a strategic move on the chessboard to protect the "king".

The creation of a front stage in a Communist society may trace its roots to Prince Potemkin of Crimea in Russia, during the time of Catherine the Great. Potemkin villages, as the Saxon envoy Georg von Helbig and several of Potemkin's foes claimed, were settlements "composed of facades – painted screens on pasteboards – that were moved along the river and seen by the Empress five or six times" during a royal trip by boat along the Dnieper River at Crimea to examine the accomplishment of the province.⁶ Although he himself did not participate in the trip, Helbig also described that "thousands of peasants had been torn from their homes inside Russia and driven along the river bank at night with their flocks to be ready for the arrival of the Empress next morning—1,000 villages had been depopulated and many died of hunger

during the resulting famine. The foreigners simply saw the same peasants everyday."⁷ In fact, there was no evidence that the Prince Potemkin had performed such a powerful magic show, and it seemed that Helbig and Potemkin's foes were exaggerating and distorting the situation. "Potemkin village" became a historical term referred to the creation of delusion with political purposes from the beginning of 19th century onward, although it "itself is one of history's biggest shams".⁸ According to witnesses and historical accounts, the reality was that "Potemkin beautified and ornamented everything that he could. He was a political impresario who understood the power of presentation and enjoyed the aspect of 'play' in politics, which was entirely self-conscious and deliberate... He ordered palaces to be 'repaired' and 'repainted' to build up 'the large street where the Empress will pass' with good houses and shops. This order to improve some existing building is the nearest the thousands of documents in Potemkin's archives yield as evidence of cosmetic presentation."⁹

The idea of "political spectacle" was manipulated by Soviet Russia in early 20th century to express the powerful accomplishment of the Party, especially during the era of Stalin. Maoist China adopted the concept and developed a set of political propaganda in areas of social education and urban construction. "In China, Potemkinism also became a central part of communist rule. It was in part through a combination of coercive capabilities, an elaborate propaganda apparatus, political theatre combining force and persuasion, and manipulative patriotic appeals that the Party managed to remain China's sole rule for over half a century."¹⁰ In Beijing, with respect to national identity, architects can't seem to find breathing space in the issues of cultural and national awareness. With the mindset of staging the traditional and yet modernized city, Beijing finds itself in the dead *hutong* of cultural imitation, political restraint, and urban makeup. Under such circumstances, Beijing becomes a city of mere spectacles, where the government hires architects to create landmarks and restore monuments, and normal citizens dwell somewhere in the shadows between. Modern Beijing has been trapped within a series of delusions and realities.

In the pursuit of modernization, Potemkinism is used to express the

future, or the ideal situation that the Chinese are aiming to create. Thus gigantic futuristic buildings designed by world-famous architects become evidential spectacles while the social reality has been forced to draw closer to the ideals. Apart from political Potemkinism, the ideal city of "Chineseness" and "Golden traditions" has also played a major role in the creation of modern Beijing. What makes the situation more complicated are the issues of dramatic social transformations, the separation between the rich and the poor, and the blindfold pursuit of a luxurious lifestyle. The real Beijing seems to be lying somewhere in the middle of all these phenomena. Under the calumny of Potemkinism, Beijing emerges as a city of spectacles and delusions. Yet, beneath the coat of delusions, there seems to be an energy driving the society to catch up with the ideal that reaches beyond the desire of the government. It is the energy that creates opportunities, patriotism, hopes, and future of the Chinese capital. It is this energy, the motivation towards success and a sense of becoming that the Chinese inherited from their defeating past century that fuels the modernization movement in China. It is this energy that pushes the Chinese to continue to search for a new identity, despite the enormous monetary costs, human efforts, and foreign criticisms. It is this energy that allows the fanatical phase of construction to take place in Beijing and elsewhere in the nation.

As the capital of a modernizing state, Beijing's status as the stage for national identity and political accomplishments is unavoidable. In many cases, such as the redevelopment of the Changan Avenue and a number of tourist areas in Beijing, the main focus is to recreate a glorious Chinese setting or a traditional past that is as authentic as possible or, to be more precise, to create an ideal environment that can attract global tourism and enhance national awareness. Such economic and political concerns can easily cause architecture to fall into the trap of the creation of kitsch works.

This is the professional architecture of the genius *commercialii* of tourism and entertainment which, contrary to the demanding and highly sophisticated constructs of Proust's literature, offers – for a good price – to alleviate the pain of atopy and anomy of contemporary life in as-if settings, simulacra of places, facades, masks of environments offering the illusion of participation in their internal activities.¹¹

-Alexander Tzonis

Tzonis' comment on the Romantic regionalism of the early 20th century,

such as the National Exposition, parallels the Potemkinism of Beijing, despite the garish World Park or the politically charged Changan Avenue. The approach is nonetheless aimed to satisfy mostly the authorities and the economically privileged, as well as being a political showcase for foreigners. The question for architects in Beijing is how to work around the constraints of Potemkinism and sublimate the energy of the societal sense of becoming to develop a critical vision on how to create architecture and urban landscape that reflect the reality of Chinese modernization, and improve the living for individuals. This is a dual process which consists of the establishment of a critical level of self-consciousness in the society and the advancement of the Communist government such that instead of presenting their glory by building a Potemkin village, they are trying to construct a more convincing society under their feet—a society that express great political accomplishment by producing good citizens and an attractive urban environment. Such ideologies require more trust in and freedom for the architectural profession. A frustrated, by apt comment made by architectural scholar Liang Sicheng in 1951 when most of his proposals of building the new Beijing were rejected by the Party sums it up: "Chairman Mao can guide politics and economics, but he just doesn't know architecture, thus he cannot guide us on architecture."¹²

While Mao knew little about architecture, Liang himself certainly did not know politics well enough to convince the Party when he vice-chaired the planning bureau of Beijing, thus most of his urban proposals were rejected. It may sound harsh to request architects to learn politics on top of their profession, yet politics still maintains as a key communication device in today's China if one wants to be a successful architect. In Beijing, the authorities directed ten years of Chinese Classical Revival from mid-1980s to mid-1990s and another decade of foreign futuristic designs thereafter. Under such bureaucratic culture, local architects have very limited freedom and space to find their own paths. While even the local architects can hardly predict what type of buildings will dominate Beijing's skyline for the next ten years, citizens, on the other hand, will always be the last people to know.

Attraction One: The Time Machine

Sponsored by Omega, the countdown machine, in precision to the seconds, stands outside the National Museum at Tiananmen Square to signify the Chinese anticipation towards the opening of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Prior to the visit of the International Olympic Commission inspection team in February 2001, the Chinese capital had gone through a huge phase of beautification. "According to official figures, a total surface area of 26 million square metres was covered with a fresh coat of paint."¹³ Grass was dyed green at Tiananmen Square, undesirable individuals such as homeless and mentally-ill patients were sent off from streets, a group of taxi drivers were given training on English conversation, heating at certain office areas were turned off to reduce air pollution, and some construction work was stopped to avoid noises, just to name a few. The "front stage" of Beijing was carefully touched up by both the authority and the citizens for the four-day visit of the seventeen IOC members. Then on July 13, 2001, the IOC announced that Beijing had won the bid for their first-ever-in-China Olympic Games. On the same night, thousands of locals gathered at Tiananmen Square, waving national flags and singing patriotic songs under the firework celebration prepared by the government.

Fig. 6.5 The Olympics Countdown Machine in front of the National Museum.



Attraction Two: The Back of Changan Avenue

Changan Avenue is the most important east-west thoroughfare in the Chinese Capital. Changan (Xian), the historical capital of the Han and Tang Dynasties, is today a mid-sized tourist city in the province of Shaanxi. The myth of historical Changan symbolizes a collective dream of a supreme prosperous capital with prestigious international admiration, a regression to the time of Tang and Han when China was the most powerful nation in the East. Changan Avenue in Beijing connects some of the most important parts of the city, with its centre passing in front of Tiananmen. The avenue has been widened several times since the Communist takeover, for the purposes of both traffic and political parades. It is the route of urban highlights that runs through the Central Business District, the Wangfujing Shopping District, the Tiananmen Square, the Zhongnanhai government headquarters, the new National Theatre, the Military Museum, the Millennium Monument, and numerous government buildings. What seems interesting about Changan Avenue is the contrast between its row of monumental buildings and the neighbourhoods behind. The mundane, sometimes even run-down, residential neighbourhoods behind the frontal buildings have no exception to any other old *hutong* in the city. They are filled with old siheyuans in which ten to twelve families share the once-a-single-family courtyard house.

Fig. 6.6 One of the many back laneways behind the Changan Avenue.



Attraction Three: The Citizen

Since the 1990s, Beijing authorities began to invent sets of carefully worded slogans and idealized urban images throughout the city to educate the locals of proper citizenry qualities. Such slogans appeared in banners, posters, billboards, and then later on TV commercials and radio channels. The propaganda campaign attempted to reform undesirable habits that local Chinese have carried for centuries by spitting, pushing, and implanting good virtues in them, including concepts of preserving nature, respecting others, obeying traffic regulations, protecting artefacts, etc. Among the varieties printed on posters in every neighbourhood, the slogan "Be a Civilized Man, Build a Civilized City" is the most commonly used. The text is usually accompanied by a photo of an ideal urban setting (sometimes even of a foreign city), that depicts urban order and tidiness. In order to produce a great tourist city, no citizen in Beijing can avoid taking part in the show that expresses Chinese politeness and determination of the government to educate her citizens in meeting the modern standard, and more importantly, this prevents the city from losing face by the misbehaviour of an individual.

Fig. 6.7 In the cartoon, the slogan states "A Civilized Patrol Requires Civilized Supervision". The person with the flag here is depicted as a bus-stop patrol rudely urging passengers to get onto the bus. In the green header, the statement reads "Let's Make Beijing Prettier, Propaganda for City Beautification and Bad Habit Corrections."



Attraction Four: The Countryside

In the bid for the 2008 Olympics, Beijing promised to pump 12 billion USD to improve its environment: an 80% shift to clean energy, 70% green coverage in suburban areas, a daily 2.68 million tons of grey water treatment, water reuse ratio is up to 40% to 50%, three more daily garbage treatment centres, etc. An official report stated that Beijing spent 1.76 billion USD on environmental improvement in 2004, and the carbon dioxide in air has been reduced by 54% since 1998. The government promised to convert all buses to environmentally friendly vehicles and maintain a tight control on auto emissions on the road. Many auto pathways have been beautified with islands of vegetation and roadside trees. Unwanted items were displaced, including heavy industries that originally dominated several areas in the city, to somewhere off the map of central Beijing. For the "Blue Sky Project" in 1999 to beautify the city for the fiftieth anniversary of the nation, miandis, a type of cheap taxi, became the first victims as they were accused of being the source of 10% of vehicle emissions. Instead of being destroyed, all 20,000 miandis were sent to the province of Hubei, where the shoddy vehicles seemed to be more "appropriate". As central Beijing became the stage of international focus, peripheral countryside and neighbouring provinces would become the ill-treated back stage, receiving unwanted props from the capital.

Fig. 6.8 The green banner says "Create a national clean neighbourhood and welcome the green olympics."



Attraction Five: The Monument

Pailous were major elements in ancient Beijing. Qingmen Wu Pailou, in front of the Qianmen citadel, was one of the most crucial pailous as it (and the moat and stone bridges) marked the southern entrance into the Inner City. In 1950s, the Party took down most of the pailous including the Qianmen Wu Pailou, for traffic safety reason. However, many pailous were re-erected in the last two decades to reconstruct traditional backdrops and align with the Traditional Revival Campaign of the early 1990s. A new Qianmen Wu Pailou emerged. Yet, not too many people realize that the original pailou actually had six columns instead of two, and stood at least 20 m north of the new version. A new proposal is set to redevelop the Qianmen area into a tourist promenade: reconstructing the moat, stone bridges, and a "true" replica of the Qianmen Wu Pailou at the original spot where scholars suggested it be. Everything is meant to be completed by 2008. Renowned scholar Liang Sicheng once urged the Communist party not to destroy the city wall and the pailous of Beijing in the 1950s, while I. M. Pei once said that if the city walls and pailous were still intact, Beijing could probably enter the UNESCO World Heritage List as a single entity. Today, Beijing finally turns its eye to the value of its heritage in architecture, only when the missing parts prove their monetary value as tourist attractions, and only when they, the authentic monuments of the city, are all gone.

Fig. 6.9 The Qianmen Wu Pailou in front of the Qianmen (Zhengyangmen) citadel.



Attraction Six: The World

In Jia Zhangke's movie *The World*, the underside of Chinese modernization is clearly reflected in the story of a female dancer, Zhao, staged at the World Park located on the outskirts of Beijing. With 114 acres of land and scale-down replicas of world-renowned landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower and Giza pyramids, the World Park exhibits the problematic issue of fakery, kitsch, and artificiality of modern Beijing. The shabby backstage contrasts with the nightly extravaganza and fireworks, while putting forward a parallel to local Beijingers in relation to their staging city. Jia himself mentioned, "The World Park is glamorous on the surface, but the basis of it is really inward oriented, and can be seen almost as a perfect miniature of a Chinese society. The staffs in the theme park provide luxury visual pleasure for visitors, yet they are only part of the backdrop, or only the resource to generate luxury for others. There are many people sacrificed themselves in the process of modernization, but they hardly obtain an admission ticket to enjoy the pleasure modernization brings to the society, just like the workers who build the airport usually do not have the wealth to enjoy plane flight."

Fig. 6.10. A movie scene from Jia Zhangke's *The World*.





1. Ticket of Anti-Japanese War Museum, Yuanping.

2. Yang, Xin.
Reading the Hutong.
Beijing: Economy Daily Press, 2001.

3. Ticket of Temples in Zhengding.

4. Ticket of Fragrant Hill Park, Beijing.

5. Wang, Jianjun.
Landscape of West China.
Beijing: China Travel & Tourism Press.

6. Lou Xinxi.
Twenty Essays on Ancient Chinese Architecture.
Beijing: Joint Publishing, 2004.

7. von Boehm, Gero.
Conversations with I. M. Pei.
Shanghai: Prestel Verlag, 2000.

8. **Map of Reconstructed Changan.**
Chinese Cultural Geography, vol 12. 2004.

9. Peng, Alfred.
Emergency Aid for the Grand National Theater.
Hong Kong: Asian Weekly 2004.07.04.

10. Sketch of a hutong east of Wangfujing.

11. Stamps of Chinese Pagodas.

12. Ticket of Shanhaiguan.

2004.11.15. National Library

Today, I continued my search of electronic articles at the online periodical database in the National Library. This time, I got a large amount of articles about the evolution of ancient Chinese architecture, the reevaluation of traditional architecture in the modern age, and the development of architecture that carries a Chinese identity.

After the library, I went to the bookstore at the vestibule again. This time, I bought two books on Chinese history and one on the development of Beijing.



Fig. 7.1 The Lugou Bridge.

2004.11.16. Lugou Bridge (Marco polo Bridge)

Early in the morning, I took a bus from Changan Avenue to the monstrous Beijing West Railway Station. I got off at the station and walked south along its west side, passed by the Lianhuachi Park, and arrived at the Liuliqiao (Six Mile Bridge) Long-Distance Bus Terminal. Groups of awaiting passengers relaxed themselves along the road curb in front of the terminal. I wound through their luggage on the sidewalk and reached a bus shelter behind the terminal. I hopped on bus no.339 and headed toward the southwest suburb.

The bus plodded away from the city centre, the third, fourth, and fifth ring roads and then from the factories and farmlands in the countryside. After twenty minutes on the road, I got off at the Anti-Japanese War Memorial Sculpture Garden. The garden contains art pieces that commemorate the July 7th Incident in 1937 at the nearby Lugou Bridge that triggered the Japanese invasion. Across the street from the sculpture garden, rises the city wall of ancient Yuanping, the first town



Fig. 7.2 A bronze plaque indicates the damage on the city wall of Yuanping.



Fig. 7.3 Stone drums along the city wall telling a detail story of the Anti-Japanese War.

attacked by the Japanese. Bullet holes and bombing damages on the brick surface become contemporary showpieces with bronze plaques alongside. Along the wall, two rows of waist-height stone drums lie parallel under the wall's shadow, inscribed with historical incidents of the Anti-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945. I read a few of them and walked toward the end of the city wall where the Lugou Bridge is situated.

Lugou Bridge, a place that every Chinese remembers, has been famous for its scenery in the imperial times. For 500 years, the 500 mini stone lions on the balustrade of the bridge welcomed outsiders to enter the imperial capital. After 1937, however, no one remembers its beauty and historical value as an artefact from the Jin Dynasty (AD 1115 to 1234). Nowadays for tourists, these creatures take up only a tiny bit of interest beneath the overwhelming political memories.

I obtained an entrance ticket to the bridge and walked on the north side of the ancient stone bridge, preventing myself from stepping onto the purposely maintained original pavement at the centre. I was surprised to see the 400 m wide Lugou River dried up and filled with grass and weeds. Several white tourist boats with cheesy swan heads lay spontaneously in the grass channel. A modern steel bridge spans across the river north of the Lugou Bridge, carrying both train and car traffic. Local pedestrians and bikers still use the ancient Lugou Bridge free of charge.

A dozen tourist booths concentrate at the other end of the bridge. I turned back to the side of the walled town of Yuanping and entered its gate. The ancient buildings within are all destroyed or demolished. Along both sides of the main thoroughfare, numerous traditionalist houses emerge in recent years along with tourism. In the town centre, I arrived at the landmark of Yuanping, the Anti-Japanese Memorial Museum of Chinese People. The single-storey concrete block clad with large stone slats serves also as a memorial to the deaths in the 1937 incident.

I left my bag at the security chamber and entered its front courtyard. A large group of high-school students scattered in the courtyard. I entered the museum after a flight of steps up to the podium. The wall opposite the entrance in the lobby contains a 10 ft-high sculpture made of abstract bronze slats. It represents the pain and grief of the



Fig. 7.4 About five hundreds small stone lions guard the sides of the Lugou Bridge.



Chinese people during the war, as far as I can guess. Almost every room in the museum was filled with the teenage students, except the octagonal mourning hall where the eight marble walls record the names of the national heroes sacrificed in the incident. An abstract altar occupies the centre of the hall and atop lay several bunches of carnation flowers.

The other four rooms in the museum display photos, diagrams, and artefacts of the war: how the invasion began, how twenty million Chinese were slaughtered, and how the war was fought. A life-sized model of a scene depicts Japanese scientists experimenting toxic and bio-chemical weapons with a Chinese woman. At last, I entered the small theatre at the centre. Teenage students packed the entire space. A brief audio and lighting show on a fixed-site model of the Lugou Bridge area describes what has happened during the night and dawn of July 7th 1937.

Despite the dark atmosphere of the subject, the entire museum was full of laughter from the students. Unlike the adult visitors, the students had fewer burdens of painful memories and saw the visit a mere field trip for their history class. One interesting thing worth noting: there are only Chinese and Japanese captions to all the displays. The museum concluded my visit of Lugou Bridge. I took an express bus to the Qianman area, picked up a few apples and returned to the underground Eastern Morning Hostel.

Fig. 7.5 Admission ticket of the Memorial Hall of the War of Resistance Against Japan. The museum also promotes its customer services at the ticket back, that include meals, gift shops, accommodation and shuttle services.



Fig. 7.6 The bold facade of the Anti-Japanese Memorial Museum of Chinese People.

2004.11.17. Tsinghua University

This was my second attempt to meet with Professor Peng. Instead of taking a bus to the west gate of the campus, I chose to arrive at the east gate of Tsinghua. At 14:00, I went straight to the second floor of the school of architecture. Instead being greeted by Professor Peng, a student approached me and told me that Peng had left for an urgent meeting. Professor Peng left me three data CDs. Despite the disappointment, I borrowed the CDs and went to a nearby digital printing centre to have the data copied to a set of new disks. Then, I returned the originals to the student at his office.

I decided to check out the bookstore on campus, which might carry several architectural books published by Tsinghua University Press I've been looking for. The staff at the information booth suggested two locations. I followed her advice and arrived at the north gate where a small bookstore attaches to the security kiosk. I could not find the books I wanted. The small bookstore carries only a few architectural books published in recent months.

I walked south through the enormous red-brick buildings of mathematics and science faculties, and passed by the Victorian houses of the chemistry department. I went across a bridge and strolled south along a tree-lined pathway. A couple took pictures in front of a traditionalist garden as I strolled by the man-made pond and the clusters of Taihu rocks. A traditional pavilion stands at the opposite side of the pond. I made my way through a series of quiet laneways until I realized I had entered a *hutong* of private homes by mistake.

At last I made my way to the second bookstore inside a shopping arcade. Again I failed to find what I wanted, and thus left the Tsinghua campus all at once.

I took a bus to the National Library nearby. In the computer lab, I had a brief look at the data Professor Peng had given me. The disks include several articles written by Peng that criticise the new National Theatre and the Olympic Stadium, as well as images of these projects.

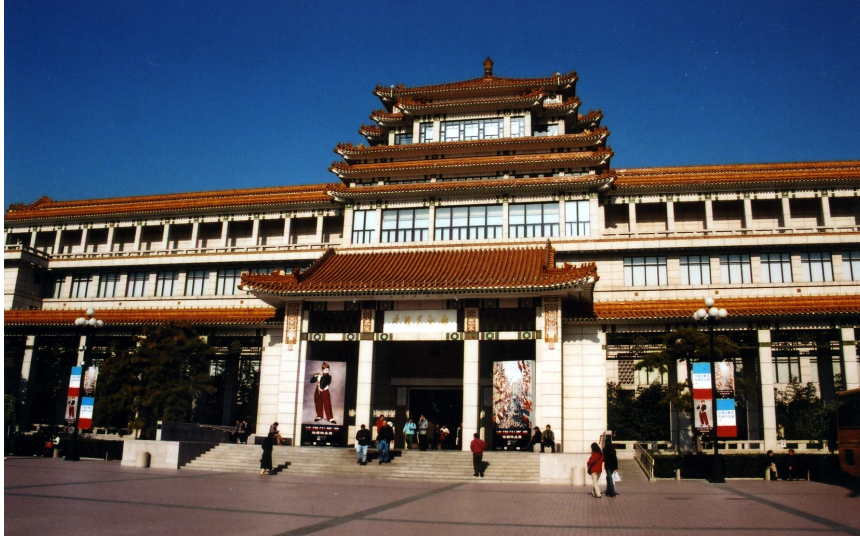


Fig. 7.7 The front entrance of the National Art Gallery.

2004.11.18. National Art Gallery and Beijing Exhibition Centre

I have passed by the National Art Gallery on many occasions by bus. The building appears less aggressive compared to the enormous Socialist National Museum at Tiananmen Square. Set back at a paved lot in an old commercial area north of the Wangfujing District, the gallery building is considered the only well-designed traditionalist building in the 1960s. Two basic colours comprise the exterior: off-white tiled walls and orange-tiled roofs. A multi-gabled tower stands in the middle roughly three storeys above the rest of the building. A two-storey-high gate structure marks the prominent entrance.

Today, I decided to visit the gallery in the morning. Only ten minutes on the bus took me from the Eastern Morning Hostel to the gallery entrance. On every street lamp in the neighbourhood a tri-colour flag was hung to promote the French Impressionist exhibition at the gallery. According to the entrance billboard, the French exhibition is supported by the Musee d'Orsay in Paris and will last until the end of this weekend. A huge poster hung above the gallery gate publicizes the event with Manet's Flute Player.

The entire ground floor is dedicated to the exhibition of the French Festival. Paintings by Monet, Manet, Renoir, Pissarro, Degas, and Cezanne are among the people's favourites. In the middle of a dark exhibition hall, French design merchandise such as fashion, kitchen utensils, and furniture fill the space in the form of an art installation. Several black linens hung from the ceiling provide perfect dividers for the exhibited items.

Since I have already seen the French paintings in Paris, I didn't stay for long and went upstairs to see the permanent collection. Two rooms situate at the stair landing, one for folk paper cut and the other for vernacular ceramics. Paper cut is a special folk art in northern China. Paper cut artists (mainly old ladies) cut out patterns, text, or figures from red papers. They would then stick the paper cuts against windows as decorations during Chinese New Year.

The second level exhibits mainly Chinese paintings and calligraphy. Surprisingly, I could find nothing too well-known here other than the enormous figure paintings by Zhang Xiaohu. Zhang's paintings depict poor citizens in the early twentieth century in actual human size. His skills incorporate Western drawing techniques and traditional Chinese brush paintings.

After the National Gallery, I took a bus to the Beijing Exposition Centre (formerly Russian Exposition Centre) near the National Library. The building captures my attention every time I pass by it on my way to the library. Designed by Russian architect Sergei Andreyev in 1954, the centre presents typical Soviet architecture from the Stalinist period. The centre originally served to exhibit industrial and agricultural products from Russia during the 1950s. An 87 m spire supports a large red star at its peak, marking the central focus of the building, like a bell tower of a church. Three double-storey archways open up the entrance threshold. Ornate carvings fill up the roofline. The Russians insisted architecture should express "socialist meanings and nationalist form". Most scholars of today believe the import of Soviet architecture contributed greatly to the revival of traditionalist Chinese architecture in the 1950s and 1960s. I think the Soviet architects provided strong encouragement to local Chinese who were eager to find their own design path.

When I reached the sidewalk outside the entrance courtyard, the gate was locked. The staff closed off the centre to prepare the coming exhibitions. Dozens of inflated balloons and a plastic archway turned the entrance courtyard into a colourful, but cheesy stage set. A dozen large, vertical advertisement panels are placed at the neo-classical display niches that fan out from the building's left and right. Each advertisement board is sandwiched between a pair of Greek columns, above which a classical



arch and a stone-carved Communist symbol form a cap. I took a few pictures and walked over to the National Library after passing by the gates of the city zoo.

At the library, I headed to the third floor and checked out the magazine room. There aren't many choices of architectural magazine available. I strolled into the Hong Kong–Taiwan room to browse through their collection. The rest of the third floor hosts literature of foreign languages: English, French, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, German, etc.

I dropped by the bookstore at the entrance vestibule. This time, I bought a biography of Liang Sicheng and Liu Huiyin.

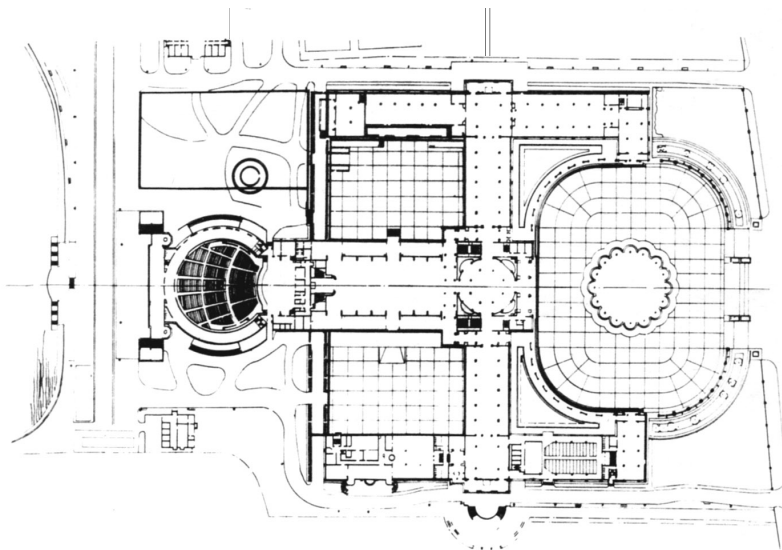


Fig. 7.8 Neo-classical niches occupy both sides of the main entrance hall of the Beijing Exhibition Centre.

Fig. 7.9 The 87m spire of the entrance hall of the Beijing Exhibition Centre.

Fig. 7.10 Plan of the Beijing Exhibition Centre (entrance opens to the right): a showcase of Soviet architecture in China.

2004.11.19. The First Pass Under Heaven

It has been a while since I last ventured outside the city. I decided to visit the three towns along the Bohai coastline today. During the three hours of train ride to the northeast, I imagined what the seaside resorts would look like in China. I arrived at Beidaihe at around 11:00. The Beidaihe Railway Station stands as a huge, white concrete building. The surrounding stark atmosphere and the empty public square in front make the station seem even larger. This is certainly not the ideal season to enjoy sunshine and the beach.

The station situates nowhere close to the seashore. I hopped onto a ramshackle bus labelled "*haibin*" (the coast). Several kilometres of distance turned out to be a ride of many minutes. The bus crawled on the newly paved road with a rumbling noise. It was the slowest bus I had ever taken. Eight out of ten passengers on board were villagers homed between the station and the resort area.

It was easy to tell when I had reached the resort. The environment presents a big contrast: from the poor and shabby village homes to the sumptuous villas along the systematic tree-lined streets. The villas appear like pastiches from the West. Walls of luxurious villa complex line the street along the seashore, nothing else. It is commonly believed that many of these villas are owned by high ranking Party officials, keeping in mind that Beidaihe is only 300 km from the capital.

I was one of two passengers to get off at the last stop: at the resort town centre about five minutes' walking distance from the sea. Pedestrians



Fig. 7.11 Xinhua News Agency, Deng Xiaoping and family at the beach of Beidaihe in 1987.

were scarce and hardly any shops opened their doors. I didn't mind at all if I was the only sea-seeker, but in fact, a group of well-dressed local tourists were already amusing themselves on the obtrusive rocks close to the shore. That clusters of rocks, the Tiger Rocks, serves as a popular spot to watch the sunrise. I didn't have the fervour to take off my shoes and put my feet into the freezing water. After a moment of refreshment from the ocean wind, I left the beach and returned to the bus stop at the town centre. I got on a bus heading to Qinhuangdao, a town named after Qin Shi Huang Di (First Qin Emperor) erected a stele to glorify his achievement in third century BC.

An half-hour bus journey east took me to Qinhuangdao, a modern industrial town loaded with factories, apartments, and shopping centres. The bus passed by a busy commercial street of lively retail shops. The town is a transportation hub between Beijing and the northeast provinces. In fact, the entire area, defined by the towns of Beidaihe, Qinhuangdao, and Shanhaiguan, is commonly known as the threshold northeast of the capital. Qinhuangdao lies in the middle within a half-hour bus ride from either town. Time ran late for me as I spent too much time on the buses. I switched buses to go straight for Shanhaiguan, the highlight of the day's trip.

Shanhaiguan simply means the Pass of Mountain and Sea. During long weekends and statutory holidays, the small and relatively poor industrial town will be livened up by flocks of Chinese tourists. Within the tourist zone of the ancient Great Wall pass, extensive construction is well under way: repaving the entire area with stone pavers, adding modern public washrooms, opening new eateries, and establishing new information booths. I entered the area and purchased a ticket for the pass. The pass and its plague "*Tian xia di yi guan*" (First Pass under Heaven) stands right behind the ticket booth. This easternmost pass of the Great Wall is actually not the end. The real end of the Great Wall lies several kilometres south of Shanhaiguan at the coastline, where a pile of crumbled stones and bricks lay on a beach.

I walked through the main gate and toured around the fortress area. Not much is left except a series of defensive walls. A water pond, several channels of waterways, and clusters of souvenir stalls occupy the central area of the fortress. Most vendors were busy playing poker games amongst themselves. I ascended the gate tower and walked a bit on the Great Wall.

Single-storey factories made of bricks and sheet metals dominate the townscape. Shanhaiguan seems the least wealthy among the three towns. I descended the wall and walked back to the main road. Spanned across the road, a huge banner hung at one of the ancient gateway proclaims "*shu zheng chi, jiang tuan jie, qiu fa zhan*" (Establish good virtues, emphasize unity, and welcome development!).

I reached the train station at Shanhaiguan shortly after. A train from the northeast city of Shenyang took me back to Beijing.



Fig. 7.12 The First Pass under Heaven at Shanhaiguan.



Fig. 7.13 The slogan states: "establish good virtues, emphasize unity and welcome development!"

2004.11.20. Pangjiayuan

Today I first went to the Pangjiayuan market in the morning. My target was the alley of books. Interestingly enough, many vendors actually sell brand new books, with prices as low as one third the official prices, and can go lower depending on your negotiation skills. Vendors display second-hand magazines, both local and foreign, in a large single pile and sell 10 for 5 RMB. Books on art, history, and travel seem to be the favourites of the locals. Vendors allow customers to flip through the books before purchasing, unlike in the official bookstores, where large picture books are often wrapped with plastic. A few stalls also sell old stamps, nostalgic posters, and ancient books. Nostalgic posters include a wide range of propaganda posters of the Party from the 1950s on. Ancient books are common too, yet it requires a bit of luck and technique to tell whether they are authentic or not. I bought a replica of an old map of Beijing, hand drawn in the 1930s by a European traveller. I decided to tape it on the wall in my hostel room. I also picked up a photo book on the Sanxingdui archaeological site in Sichuan (where bronze statues and tools from 3000 BC were unearthed) and an illustration book depicting scenes of Beijing *hutongs*.

The weather turned bad in the afternoon. I returned to room 6443 early in the evening and did some reading on the bed. Now, I will check my e-mail at the internet room.

2004.11.21. Jianwai SOHO

The Jianwai SOHO is a new attempt for the Chinese. The idea of grouping a large number of small home offices together in a high-end contemporary estate of condominiums was realized under Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto. The site locates across the Changan Avenue from the Beijing World Trade Centre, and marks the southern border of the ambitious CBD project. Although all the apartments are identical in shape and appearance, the height and orientation vary to provide maximum sunlight for all units. The project is still under construction, but about half of the towers (roughly a dozen) have been completed. Some are even already inhabited.

I came to the Jianwai SOHO to take some photos. The forest of white towers, ranging from 10 to 30 storeys high, came into vision from a long distance. The project, I learned from online articles, has attracted young couples and junior businessmen to pursue a contemporary lifestyle that parallels the urban environment of Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Seoul. They love the cleanness of the white concrete and the transparency of the full-height glazing. In fact, the square-shaped, full-height window, to me, is one of the best features of the project, just like a loft building found anywhere in Western cities. It expresses urbanity and open-mindedness of modern citizens—a real breakthrough from the four-sided, enclosed siheyuans.

The bottom three levels of the towers are used as retail space, promoting a metropolitan lifestyle that is relatively new to Beijing. I believe that once the CBD area is fully developed in the next ten years, all the retail spaces at SOHO and the World Trade Centre may not even be enough for lunch-time shoppers. But for now, they will have to wait until at least 2008.

I did not check out the parking levels below, but wandered around the outdoor spaces between the towers. I like the project and the young spirit it creates for Beijing. Beijing needs some catalyst to enhance a boarder range of lifestyles for the educated and well-paid, young professionals, and it certainly can sustain one. The project encourages young individuals to establish their business too. Yet, I have also heard that the cost of the units is way above what the average person can afford. If so, perhaps the project may fail to imply its concept to the general



Fig. 7.14 Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto took great care with orientation of the towers at Jianwai SOHO to maximize the amount of sunlight each unit receives.



Fig. 7.15 More than half of the towers are completed at Jianwai SOHO.

public, but it remains as an urban spectacle and a trendy toy for the already-wealthy business professionals.

After SOHO, I took a bus to the Zhongguancun at the Haidian District, between the National Library and the Tsinghua and Peking University campuses. Zhongguancun Technological District is a major development under the mayor's agenda. At the Urban Planning Museum, the firm on Beijing's major projects includes Zhongguancun as one of the city's major developments, in parallel with the CBD, Olympic Park, and the National Theatre. The Zhongguancun contains over a dozen massive contemporary buildings that house technological firms. The buildings are mainly under construction right now, but a few have already opened for business.

I get off the bus at the major intersection of Zhongguancun. Almost all buildings contain a shopping arcade at the bottom levels or in the basement, and the offices in the upper levels. One building really captured my eye. It consists of two pieces of organic towers, like two slices of bread stuck together. The two main surfaces are covered with glazing and the "bread edges" are clad with some sort of light-coloured metal. Although the interior is not fully finished, the impact of its visual appearance sets a common tone for the district. Another interesting building made up of two glazed, triangular prisms forms another futuristic building in the area.

I entered the shopping arcade of one complex. The interior space was somewhat disappointing. Material and finishes seem to maintain a low standard of construction throughout. It reminded me the comment: most contemporary buildings in China are mere beautiful shells. The Chinese authorities and developers spend money to hire foreign architects to do design schemes, but leave the interior work to low-budget contractors. Quite often, the contractors are asked to rush the construction day and night to minimize the expense. The authorities and developers simply do not approach architecture with a professional attitude. This is one of the main reasons for the immaturity of Chinese architecture despite the volume of construction taking place today.

I left Zhongguancun and returned to room 6443. The cold night discouraged me from staying outside any longer.



Fig. 7.16 Most of the futuristic buildings at Zhongguancun are close to completion.

Fig. 7.17 One of the most unique buildings in Zhongguancun.

2004.11.22. National Library

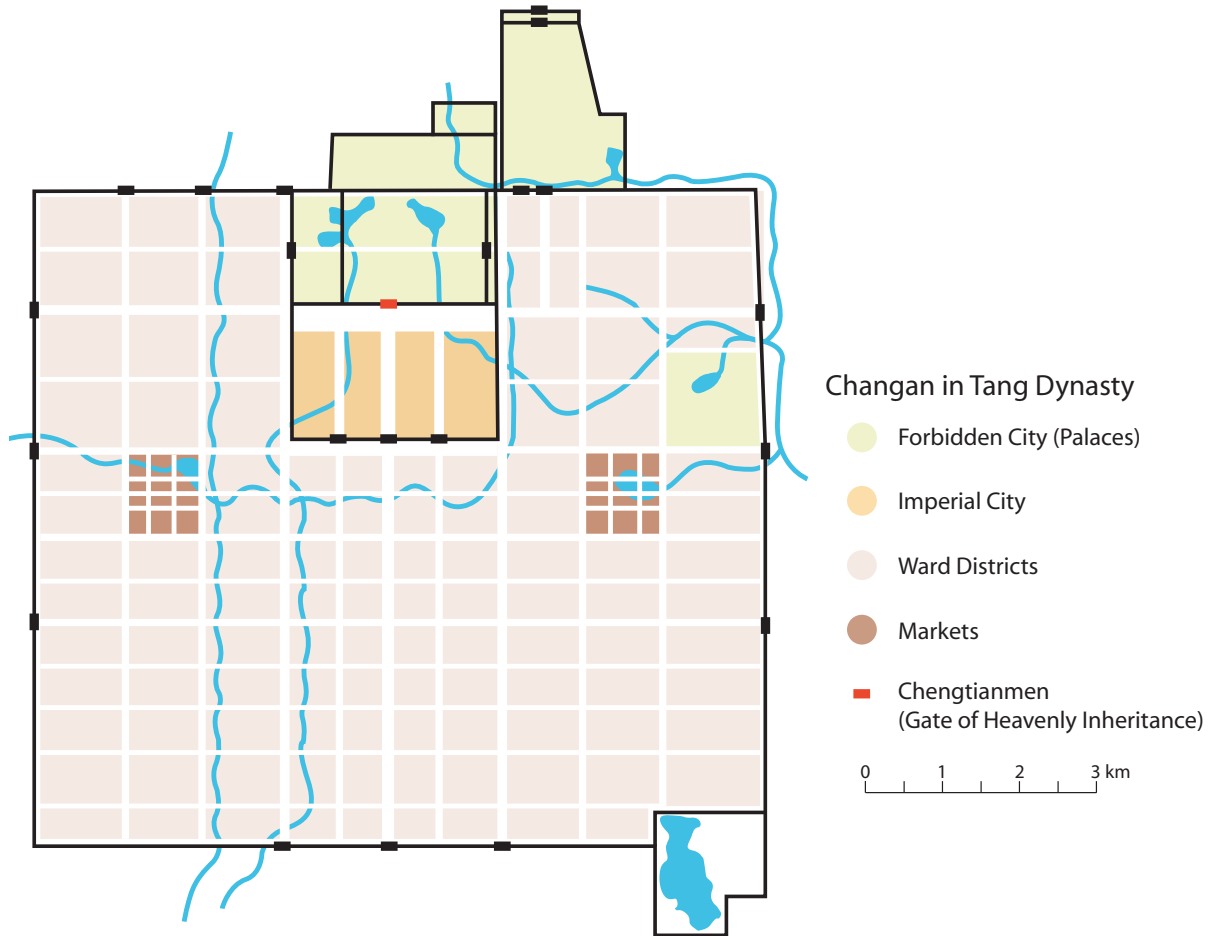
Today was another library day. I stayed mainly on the fifth floor to study the book *Modern Chinese Housings 1840–2000*, published by Tsinghua University Press. It starts off with the First Opium War in 1840 to 1842—the beginning of incoming influences from the West. Modern living concepts were either imported directly from Western prototypes or developed through the transformation of traditional houses in adaptation to the new needs. The emergence of dwellings built by developers for mixed families became the seed for modern, Chinese urban dwellings.

I was captivated by the book. It tells me the evolution story of how Chinese residential architecture had transformed its fundamentals in its approach to the modern world. From the 1900s to 1937, modern housing was imported into China along with colonization of the coastal areas. The variety of techniques and concepts reached its peak. Common housing was developed for factory workers. It was an era of traditional *hutongs*, mixed family housing, Western townhouses, villas, and Russian or Japanese houses. After 1937, the Japanese invasion basically terminated the development. People would take whatever they could find in the wilderness or the ruins to construct simple shelters.

I left the library at 17:00, lingered in the bookstore at the vestibule a little, and returned to the Eastern Morning Hostel by bus.

2004.11.23. West Changan Avenue

Changan Avenue serves as the most important east-west thoroughfare in Beijing. In the 1910s, the Republican government first constructed the avenue after the fall of the Imperial Qing. The Republican Changan Avenue broke through the tradition of the imperial north-south axis and marked an east-west axis that punched through a series of city walls and connected a number of districts, such as the old Tiananmen Square and the former Wangfujing foreign-shopping area. In the 1950s, the Communists widened the avenue for the purposes of traffic and political parades. It was, and still is, the designated path for military parades and National Day ceremonies. Ancient Changan (now Xian), the City of Eternal Peace, was the capital city of the Han and Tang Dynasties. Tang Changan, built in AD 583, with an



area of 84.2 km², remains the largest walled city ever constructed in the history of mankind (Rome in AD 300: 13.68 km², and Baghdad in AD 800: 30.44 km²). In Tang Changan, the avenue that ran east-west in front of *Chengtianmen* (Gate of Heavenly Inheritance, which happened to be the former name of Beijing's Tiananmen) maintained a width of 450 m and stretched 3 km in length. It basically served as the ancient Tiananmen Square where the Tang government paraded its army after battle victory. To some extent, today's Beijing presents a mirror image of the ancient Changan.

The Changan Avenue in Beijing, on the other hand, displays the evolution of official architecture of twentieth-century China. Along the avenue stand the Tiananmen gate tower of the imperial Qing, the Great Hall of the People, the National Museum, the traditionalist Ethnic Cultural Centre, the Soviet-style Military Museum, a series of traditionalist revival government headquarters built in the 1980s

Fig. 7.18 Reconstructed plan of the ancient Tang Changan. Changan (9.7km x 8.6km), the capital of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), was the ideal city of the imperial emperors. Its urban design was meant to follow the ideal planning that reflected the capital of heaven. The Tang Dynasty marked the peak of feudalist China and the city is renowned for its grandeur, as well as its absolute control on people in enclosed wards. The ancient Changan housed a population of 1.8 million, including 0.2 million foreign students and migrated population.

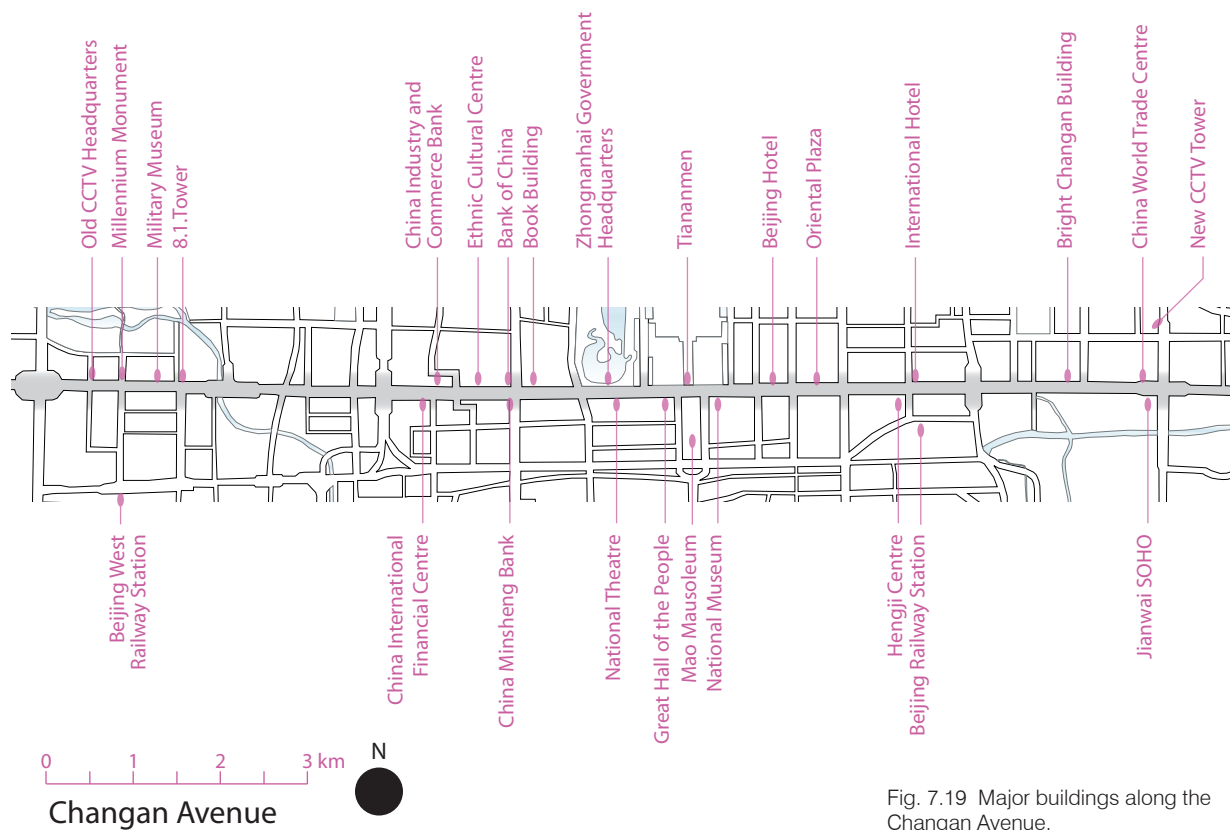


Fig. 7.19 Major buildings along the Changan Avenue.

and 1990s, the sun-dial-like Millennium Monument of 2000, Pei's Bank of China, the Oriental Plaza, and the new National Theatre.

Today, it proclaims itself the Communist Royal Mile that records several governmental attempts to derive the official Chinese architecture.

Four armed soldiers, two undercover security guards, a pair of stone lions, three huge banners, a prominent traditional gate, and two sides of majestic red walls create a prestigious image of the main entrance of Zhongnanhai, the headquarters of the Chinese government. On the left wall, the banner proclaims "Long lives the great Communist Party!" On the right, another banner states "Long live the victorious Maoism!" Inside the entrance on the mirror wall (a self-standing partition facing the entrance that creates a vestibule), the third banner in traditional xing brushstroke writes "Work for the People!" Zhongnanhai once belonged to part of the Qing Imperial garden series just steps west of the Forbidden City. The Mao government took the complex in 1949 and transformed it into the central government headquarters.



Ethnic Cultural Centre
Completion Date: 1959
institutional



Great Hall of the People
Completion Date: 1959
parliament building



Hengji Centre
Completion Date: 1997
commercial, hotel



New CCTV Tower
Completion Date: 2008
broadcasting station



China Industrial and Commercial Bank
Completion Date: 1998



National Theatre
Completion Date: 2006
theatre



Oriental Plaza
Completion Date: 1999
commercial, hotel, office, residential



Jianwai SOHO
9 towers completed
residential, office, commercial



8.1 Building
Completion Date: 1999
military



Zhongnanhai Complex
Completion Date: Qing Dynasty
now: government headquarters



Beijing Hotel (Phase 1)
Completion Date: 1917
hotel



China World Trade Centre
Completion Date: 1990
commercial, hotel, office, residential



Military Museum
Completion Date: 1959
museum



Book Building
Completion Date: 1998
commercial, office



National Museum
Completion Date: 1959
museum



Bright Changan Building
Completion Date: 1996
commercial, theatre



Millennium Monument
Completion Date: 1998
Cultural Monument



Bank of China
Completion Date: 2000
office



Mao Mausoleum
Completion Date: 1977
memorial



Beijing Railway Station
Completion Date: 1959
transportation



Old CCTV Tower
Completion Date: 1986
media



China Minsheng Bank
Completion Date: recent
office



Tiananmen Gate Tower
Completion Date: 1420
the main gate into Inner City



International Hotel
Completion Date: 1988
hotel



Fig. 7.20 The widest section of the Changan Avenue passes between Tiananmen and Tiananmen Square.



Fig. 7.21 The entrance of Zhongnanhai Government Headquarters.



Fig. 7.22 The side of Great Hall of the People that faces the Tiananmen Square.

I passed by the entrance of Zhongnanhai on my way to explore the West Changan Avenue. At the entrance, I scrupled for a moment before taking a few pictures. No movements were made by the guards as I released the shutter.

I crossed the Changan Avenue to the Great Hall of the People. The Great Hall of the People hosts the Chinese parliament building. Along with the National Museum, Beijing Railway Station, Worker's Stadium, Military Museum, Ethnic Cultural Centre, Diaoyutai State Guest House, Ethnic Hotel, National Agricultural Exhibition Centre, and Overseas Chinese Hotel, the government completed the construction of the Great Hall of the People within a year's time to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Communist China. The government named these constructions the Ten Grand Projects. The Great Hall of the People expresses a Socialist neo-classical design language with touches of traditional Chinese motifs. Twelve massive stone columns compose the front colonnade that faces the Tiananmen Square, while 10 at the back face the future National Theatre. Despite the overall Western neoclassical approach, the roof overhang and the window sills carry a sense of Chineseness. The orange roof edges express an association to roofs of the imperial palaces across the street. Motifs under window sills reveal a simplified version of Chinese wooden railings.

Adjacent to the Great Hall of the People and across the Changan Avenue from the Zhongnanhai, a gigantic dome made of steel, titanium, and glass emerges from the ground. I stood at the truck entrance to investigate the construction site. Tourists from Tiananmen enjoy taking pictures of this futuristic building, and local pedestrians tend to peek in to check the construction progress as they walk. Both the locals and the media have nicknamed this novel National Theatre "the egg".

This monstrous dome, the new National Theatre, will house four concert halls and a large lobby atrium. This project reserved the top spot for the local architectural debates. The criticisms have yet to cool down since Andreu won the competition, especially after the collapse of Andreu's Charles-de-Gaulle Airport extension in Paris earlier this year. Rational arguments include the disregard of contextual environment and local traditions, the unconvincing fire safety and structural systems, the incongruous scale, and the over-budget problem. Less rational arguments

involve the urge to use local designers no matter what, the fengshui considerations, and superstitious thoughts after the Paris tragedy. Professor Alfred Peng of Tsinghua University wrote several articles to criticize Andreu's project. He worries that the 50 thousand tons of water that surrounds the "egg" may cause a risk of explosion if water leaks into the electrical system of the back stages. In addition, the surround-pool creates a major problem for evacuation. In Andreu's design, the audience has to evacuate underneath the water pool before reaching the outside. The "water-egg" design also causes inconvenient everyday use: trucks will have to go through an underground tunnel in order to load the stage equipment into the building.

I watched the workers who scattered on dome surface. They appeared like ants crawling on a cake. The huge earth basin in front of the dome apparently should be the proposed reflecting pool. Future visitors will be required to enter a prominent tunnel underneath the pool in order to enter the building.

A 10-minutes walk further west brought me to the Xidan area where the Bank of China is located. I had a brief lunch break at Xidan and continued walking west along the Changan Avenue.

The traditionalist Ethnic Cultural Centre appeared as the next monumental structure came to sight. The centre, built in 1959 as one of the Ten Grand Projects, serves as an exhibition centre. It consists of a three-storey main hall and two exhibition wings, a colonnade entrance, and a 13-storey-high tower crowned with a green Chinese roof. The entire building is clad with white glazed bricks. A number of details, such as the concrete, reveals that replaced the dougong brackets, were treated as modern representations of traditional elements.

Fig. 7.23 The construction site of the National Theatre.

Fig. 7.24 Construction workers dotted all over the surface of the dome.





Fig. 7.25 The Ethnic Cultural Centre at the north side of the Changan Avenue.



Fig. 7.26 The Soviet style Military Museum reminds Beijingers the years of close relationship between Stalinist Russia and Communist China in the 1950s.



Fig. 7.27 The gigantic Millennium Monument north of the Beijing West Railway Station.

A further twenty minutes' walk took me to another Ten Grand Project—the Revolution Military Museum. Soviet architect Sergei Andreyev, the architect of the Beijing Exhibition Centre, designed this building in 1959. It represents the time when China saw Soviet Russia as the mentor of modernization. The military museum consists of a tower structure in the middle and two exhibition wings on the sides. Andreyev designed the building in Soviet neo-classical style, with a slight touch of local influence at a few detailings. The cascade side wings enhance a monumental effect while the cone-shaped spire in the middle holds a circular-framed golden star.

One block west of the military museum I came cross the Millennium Monument. On a huge piece of cascade pavement, the monument stands at the north end of a fenced-off square that covers an entire city block. A gigantic spire emerges out from the tilted "sundial" and points toward the south. The authorities have hung a huge banner labelled "2004" above the street directly south of the monumental square. There were only two visitors at the Millennium Monument. Perhaps not too many people are willing to pay the several RMB admission fee. Behind the "2004" banner, I saw the mighty backdrop of the Beijing West Railway Station behind the hazy traffic. The station and the monument form an axis of monstrous structures in west Beijing. I walked toward the monument along the sidewalk (avoiding the admission fee). The sundial-like monument actually serves as a cultural centre. Right now, the centre hosts two exhibitions: modern Russian paintings and ancient artefact preservations.

I was exhausted from the walking, so I took the subway back to the Oriental Plaza for dinner.



Fig. 7.28 The "2004" banner south of the Millennium Monument.

2004.11.24. National Library

I went to the National Library to continue with *Modern Chinese Housings*.

Today I read through the part covering 1949 to 1978, which are basically the Maoist years. This was the era of radical social moments, heavy industries, and standardized housing. Housing served for the benefit of industrial production. The government informed the architects to make buildings based on the standardized requirements, low budgets, and Chinese living habits, while aesthetic values yielded as secondary. Designs had to be as practical as they could be. At the end, there became simply no design, only cheap and handily constructed housing. The government distributed apartment units to all citizens, and controlled all of the construction investment across the nation.

In 1953, the Chinese adopted the Russian idea of the industrialization of housing. The idea supported standardization, mass production, and concentration of workers. The government constructed new communities of brick and concrete apartments in all Chinese cities. They reduced the size of each unit to half the Soviet standard to suit the Chinese needs. Influenced by the Russians, Communist Chinese regarded modernism a capitalist hobby rather than a practical solution. The Chinese followed the Russian ideas of Socialist Realism and modified the standards according to local climate, economy, and needs.

By the mid 1950s, the government gained ownership of over 90% of the housing investments. From 1958 to 1965, the housing issue was put aside as the National economy declined. Worker-unit apartments emerged in 1958 in collaboration with the "Great Leap Forward"—the movement that involved the entire population to boost the production of heavy industry, primarily steel. Heavy industries increased 49% from 1958 to 1960, and urban population boosted 10.4 million annually. The movement led to a sharp decline in agriculture and eventually resulted in the nationwide famine. The government promoted housing with minimal spending. The slogan "*si bu yong*" (four avoids) emerged to advocate avoiding the use of steel, concrete, bricks, and timber for building materials because of their cost. Instead, they used only local materials and simple construction methods to build non-equipped, unsafe, inconvenient, flimsy, and small shelters. At the end, this housing was considered useless. In 1965, Mao further encouraged a design revolution

to support the blindfold downgrade of the housing standard. Cheap housing flourished in every Chinese city. The situation did not improve until 1973.

I left the library at 17:00. In the old *hutong* east of the Oriental Plaza and found a nice little eatery with Shandong dishes.



Fig. 7.29 An apartment building, probably built in the 1960s, near the Beijing West Railway Station.

2004.11.25. National Library

Today I finished the book *Modern Chinese Housing*. The last third of the book talks about the housing development from 1979 to 2000.

The recent two decades of housing development in China rocketed in parallel with economic reforms. In 1978, the government advocated the liberation of thinking and pragmatism of societal development. In the 1980s and 1990s, the GNP increased at an average of 10% per year. The government began to sell units and allow the emergence of the real estate market. Living area per person increased from 3.6 m² to 6 m² by the mid 1980s. Living environment improved and rapidly modernized. By 1986, the government experimented with satellite towns and modern neighbourhoods. They finally turned to individual living as the main design focus.

In the early 1990s, real estate became over heated, creating a bubble phenomenon. The government gained control of the situation by the mid 1990s. They encouraged the real-estate market to grow and support the economy, and aimed to stop the housing distribution by 1999. The real-estate market improved living standard, yet also widened the gap between

the rich and poor. Architectural concerns, urban planning, property maintenance, community creation, and lifestyle concepts became both new directions and advertisement strategies for developers.

As compared to the making of national architecture, Chinese housing has gone along a very different evolution path. While the national architecture along Changan Avenue shows the evolution of ideologies in the search of new Chinese architecture, the houses that dot across Beijing reveal the capabilities and limits of both the socialist and capitalist beliefs. The disadvantages of socialist housing are of course its singularity and political control. If the module fails, everyone suffers. Its political control, on the other hand, makes it possible to house a large group of population within a short period of time and in standardized conditions. However, history shows us that pure socialist housing can hardly maintain a continuous development because of fluctuating political conditions. An absolute capitalist option, in contrast, provides freedom and options for citizens to choose how they want to live as it enhances competition and a continuous advancement of living qualities, but the game is not fair for everyone and the gap between the rich and poor remains as a hidden trouble in capitalist societies. A mixed strategy suits best the modern Chinese society. The Chinese must find the balance point and derive their own housing strategy, instead of searching for model answers from abroad. When the Chinese first adopted the Russian apartments in the 1950s, they made no adjustment on the design except shrinking the unit size. Later, they found out that the locations of windows and public corridors did not suit well with the Chinese living habits. Today, developers make duplicates of Western villa communities in various Chinese suburbs. This approach triggers criticism from architects and scholars all over the nation. Scholars argue that the Chinese have all kinds of housing modules on the market, but not a single one can reflect the development of their own living culture.

I left the library and took a bus to the Xidan shopping district. Across the street from Pei's Bank of China stands the massive Book Building at the north side of Changan Avenue. This is the largest bookstore in the capital city, awaiting Rem Koolhaas' façade redevelopment and building extension. By 2008, along the West Changan Avenue another novel architectural will rise as an urban spectacle. In fact, the existing

Book Building only dates back to 1998. Despite its enormous retail spaces (30,000m² in the first to fourth floor, the top four levels are offices), the customer capacity has already reached its limit.

I was quite overwhelmed by the size of both the book collection and the building itself. The staff categorizes the books, CDs, magazines, and DVDs according to subject and language. On the fourth level, I found the architecture section. I lingered in the area for quite a while. At the end, I picked up two volumes of Liang Sicheng's Full Collection and Liu Dunzhen's History of Ancient Chinese Architecture. By the time I walked out the magnificent bookstore, it was already 20:00. I went back to Oriental Plaza's food-court for dinner and finished my day at a convenient store near my hostel for bottle water and daily products.



Fig. 7.30 Many contemporary condominiums are built in the Chaoyang District near the future CBD area.



Fig. 7.31 Advertisement of new condominiums on a scaffolding of a construction site. Many international corporations, in this case the Walmart, manage to collaborate with local developers to develop a new lifestyle for Beijingers.

2004.11.26. Xiangshan Park

I consider the trip to the suburban Xiangshan (Fragrant Hill) Park an invigorating asset to my Beijing stay. For the locals, a stroll in the Xiangshan exemplifies a pleasant moment in the nature: fresh air, vivid maple leaves, horticultural displays, ancient trees, awesome blossoms, idyllic landscape... you name it.

An-hour-long bus ride took me to the city zoo, and forty-five more minutes and I arrived at the parking lot at the foot of the Xiangshan. Spontaneous vendors line the perimeter of the lot and flank the sides of the street that runs uphill to the park entrance. Souvenirs such as laminated maple leaves, stained wooden trinkets, and cheap antique replicas dominate the business flow, along with several local eateries and food stalls. I raced by the delicious kebabs, roasted chestnuts, baked yams, and colourful candles and got to the park entrance as fast as I could.

The park was quite crowded despite that most of the autumn leaves had already fallen. I fumbled my way toward the Biyun Temple (the temple closed at 15:30 in winter), a famous Buddhist temple in the days when Xiangshan was a leisure ground for the Qing imperial court, other than the Yuanming Yuan and Yiheyuan summer palaces nearby. A long flight of exterior steps led me up to this peculiar tower-cluster, known as the Jingang Pagodas. The series of mini pagodas in Indian style sprout up on the vigorous two-storey platform. One-storey-high stupas with scrupulous stone relief anchor the perimeter of the platform. The five or six 10 m pagodas in the middle seem like a group of Christmas trees made of stone and plaster. Each pyramidal pagoda possesses thirteen levels to symbolize the mythic layers of the Chinese heaven. The affluent surrounding scenery heartened me to spend several idle minutes on the platform, just to observe and feel.

After the temple, I lingered around the park without a destination in mind. Half an hour passed before I found myself reposed on a rock surrounded by a large pond where dying water-lilies covered half the surface. Uncounted pairs of young couples sat on the rocks around the pond and murmured words of love into each other's ears. A few were taking photos with their photographic cellular phones. A couple even climbed up the man-made rock mount beside the pond. They pleaded with the security guard to take a picture of them before kicking them out.



Fig. 7.32-7.34 The pagoda cluster on the back mount of the Biyun Temple. It consists of a large stone podium (bottom), stone stupas at the perimeter (top right) and a series of pyramidal pagodas in the centre (top left).

I walked to the west side of the main entrance and reached a slope of pine trees. Behind the trees, a long white wall circumscribes a series of buildings three to four storeys high. The buildings contain huge balconies on each floor. They are residential wings of the famous Xiangshan Hotel. I turned to the other side of the slope and reached a bridge and a white archway. Diamond-shaped translucent openings and other simplified traditional elements on the gate express the architect's intention to make architecture with Chinese essences. The Xiangshan Hotel was designed by I. M. Pei in 1979 and completed in the early 1980s. This was Pei's first work in China. He mingled elements from gardens of Suzhou (his hometown) and dwellings of southern China into modern design concepts. Without an ostentatious roof, shiny glazed tiles, and over-supported timber brackets, the building nonetheless expresses Chineseness. The uses of geometrical decorations, wall units, and courtyards provide a profound sense of Chinese tradition.

I pushed through the revolving door and entered the lobby, which is covered with a huge glass canopy—a space that imitates a semi-public entrance courtyard of a traditional complex. After walking through a moon gate (a circular opening in a self-standing wall a few metres beyond the lobby entrance), I arrived at a large atrium dotted with indoor ponds, planters, and rock clusters. The three-storey-high atrium is bounded on three sides by walls, each with two rows of openings. Each opening consists of a series of diamond-shaped small holes made by a screen of cross-braces. On the concrete floor, shallow water ponds and Taihu stone clusters delimit pedestrian circulation zones. Pei also put potted flowers, shrubs, and tall palm trees at the atrium's perimeter. At the back of the atrium stands the hotel restaurant and beyond, the exterior courtyard surrounded by huge reflecting pools.

Living wings occupy both sides of the atrium. Each room, I learned from books, contains at least one opening or balcony out to the exterior courtyard. I ascended to the second level to have a bird-eye view of the lobby through one of the openings. I could not find a chance to slip into a guest room. The sky had already turned purple as I exited the lobby. The Xianshan Hotel concluded my day tour of the Fragrant Hill. Before reaching the bus station, I purchased two skewers of lamb kebabs and a baked yam. They were excellent on such a winter evening.



Fig. 7.35 The front entrance of the Xiangshan Hotel.



Fig. 7.36 The lobby of the Xiangshan Hotel: a circular moon gate.

Fig. 7.37 The lobby of the Xiangshan Hotel: the central atrium that imitates a traditional Suzhou garden.

2004.11.27 Pangjiayuan

Today I shopped a bit at Pangjiayuan market for souvenirs and bought a suitcase at a store close to my hostel. I wasn't feeling too well in the afternoon and stayed in my room, 6443, for the rest of the day.



Fig. 7.38 Two children putting marks on the wall of a village home near the entrance of Linji Temple in Zhengding.

2004.11.28 Zhengding

Zhengding is the home for magnificent pagodas. In many cases, the ancient skyscrapers emulate the lifespan of the temple complexes and survived well after the timber halls were burned into ashes. It was amazing to see several of these religious icons clustered within the core of a mid-sized town a three-hour train ride from Beijing. Liang Sicheng, Liu Huiyin, and Mo Zhongjiang came to Zhengding in 1933 and studied most of the ancient structures in town, including the ones destroyed in the 1950s. Just as the ancient buildings in Shanxi, they measured the site and structures and documented them in drawings.

After two hours on the train from Beijing and an hour on the bus from Shijiazhuang (the provincial capital of Hebei), I arrived at a busy intersection of Zhengding. Beside me stood the remains of the Kaiyuan Temple. I got into the site and found the first pagoda of the day—the Xumi Pagoda. The brick masonry pagoda was a Ming (AD 1368 to 1644) replica of the Dayan Pagoda at Changan (now Xian) in the Tang Dynasty (AD 618 to 907). The masculine and minimal form of Ximu was unique compared to the ornate timber towers used in its period. The nine-level brick pagoda might not be as valuable as the opposite two-storey bell tower. The little post-and-beam structure was probably built in late Tang Dynasty. It held a ridge detailed with fishtails, exaggerating eaves, and a bold proportion, drawing similarities to the Foguang Temple at Wutaishan.

The nearby Chenling Pagoda of the Linji Temple also had nine levels.

The disparity between the two was obvious. The Chenling Pagoda from the Jin Dynasty (AD 1115 to 1234) was delicate and ornate. Other than the detail carvings on the masonry structure that mimicked a timber frame, the base podium was embellished as a giant lotus in blossom. According to a plaque on site, the Linji Temple was a religious headquarters for Zen Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty, when Priest Yuyuan, one of the most renowned Zen progenitors, spread the sectarian Linji Zen Buddhism across Northern China, Korea, and eventually Japan. The temple became a pilgrim site for devout Japanese visitors from then on. Hundreds of palm-sized wind bells, common for both Chinese and Japanese temples, were hung at the ends of timber rafters at each level.

I stood aghast at the peculiar Hua Pagoda of the Guangwui Temple. The white masonry tower was built in the Jin Dynasty, exemplifying the cultural fusion of Chinese and Indian influences. Divided into three levels, the bottom two are octagonal in plan with imitations from a common Chinese timber pagoda. The upper level, the spire, emerges as a plaster stupa. Stacked figures of elephants, demons, and qilins cover up the stupa surface. Each has its own pedestal shaped in the form of a lotus pedal. The stupa epitomizes a traditional tower from India and complements the lower, Han Chinese pagoda base. Chinese roof tiles and traditional dougongs are represented in brick carvings between levels. Traces of red paint are still noticeable on the lotus pedestals and dougong ornaments, imposing a sense of timber quality. Above the stupa, the pinnacle reverts back from the exotic image to a domestic rooftop carved with tiles and dougongs.

The Hua Pagoda stands as a great proof of cultural fusion in Chinese architecture. In fact, as singular as it may seem, traditional Chinese architecture nonetheless has been developed among foreign influences, especially during the Han and Tang Dynasties when trading and travelling thrived along the Silk Road. Influences from Indian Buddhism were by far the most obvious; yet, artefacts and historical accounts show that other Western cultures also played their roles to influence the shaping of Chinese culture. The Longman Buddhist Grottoes at Luoyang provides great evidence of early cultural interflow between China and the West. At the Binyangzhong Cave, a Greek Ionic column was carved against the cliff to support a Chinese-style roof. The cave dates back to AD 515. Also, according to historical accounts, Nestorianism entered China in AD 635



Fig. 7.39 Admission ticket of the Linji Temple.

Fig. 7.40 The Hua Pagoda in 1930s.





Fig. 7.41 The Tang bell tower in the Kaiyuan Temple. The extensive overhang of the eaves is a typical feature of a Tang building.



Fig. 7.42 The Xumi Pagoda in the Kaiyuan Temple (further left).



Fig. 7.43 The Chenling Pagoda in the Linji Temple.



Fig. 7.44 The Hua Pagoda in the Guangwui Temple (further left).



Fig. 7.45 The Lingxiao Pagoda in the Tianling Temple.

during the Tang Dynasty, when Islam and Judaism also flourished in the capital Changan. The priests of different religions built temples more or less in Chinese style or in a cultural-fusion style. Indeed, history tells us that Chinese culture rises to its peaks whenever it accepts foreign influences and can successfully integrate them into its own tradition.

Looking through a tiny window from the top level of the 41 m Lingxiao Pagoda at the Tianling Temple, the entire town of Zhengding was under my feet. Ten minutes of walking brought me from the Guangwui Temple to this Jin reconstruction of a destroyed Tang structure. The three other pagodas were all visible from my position, in addition to the clusters of ubiquitous concrete apartments, worker bungalows, and scattered farmlands. The locals called the Lingxiao Pagoda the Wooden Tower because of its extensive use of timber, despite its exterior brick cladding. With a borrowed flashlight, I carefully examined the interior dougongs on my way down.

The last temple I visited in Zhengding was the largest – the Longxian Temple has survived since the Northern Song Dynasty (960 – 1127 A.D.). The first courtyard in the complex was the site of a destroyed Dajueliushi Hall, where the stone foundation remained above ground. A pile of grey roof tiles with names of modern donors were stacked beside the impending reconstruction site. A tree-lined pathway led me to the second hall, the thousand year old Moli Hall and its entrance threshold structure, the Moon Entry. Liang Sicheng estimated that the Moli Hall was built in the Northern Song Dynasty. His prediction proved accurate when an inscribed date was found mid twentieth century, stating the year AD 1052 as the completion date. The design of its roof layout was unique and appeared only at the

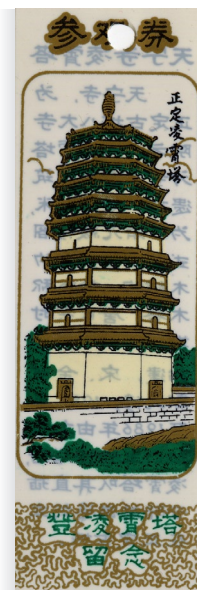


Fig. 7.46 Admission ticket of the Tianling Temple.



Fig. 7.47 The Moli (Sakyamuni) Hall of the Longxing Temple.

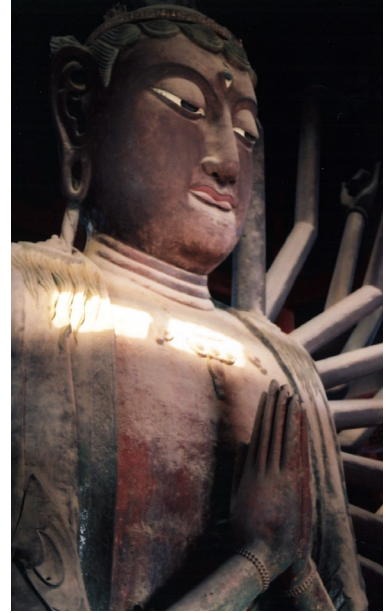
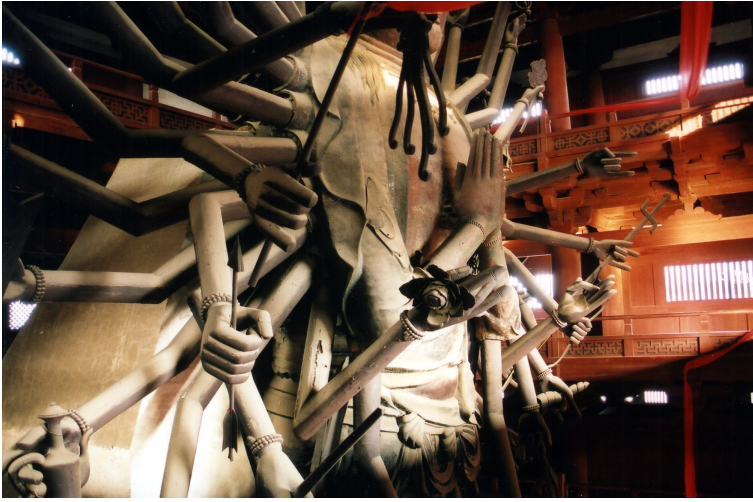


Fig. 7.48-7.49 The bronze Guanyin statue in the Foxiang Hall of the Longxing Temple is the largest in China.



Fig. 7.50 The Foxiang Hall that houses the Song Dynasty Guanyin was reconstructed in 1940s under the supervision of Liang Sicheng.



Fig. 7.51 The view of the main temple courtyard from the balcony of the Foxiang Hall.

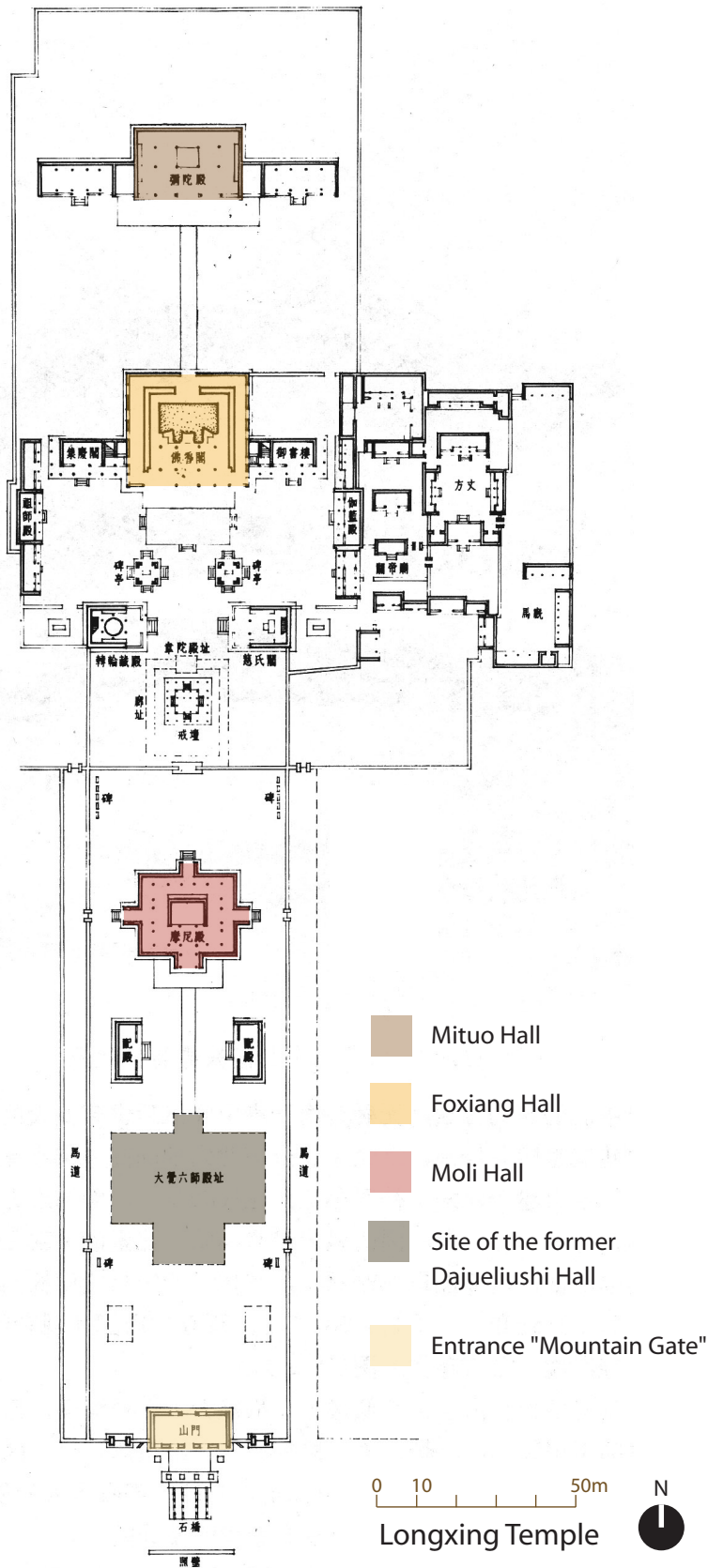


Fig. 7.52 The Guanyin and the white elephant at the back door of the Moli Hall of the Longxing Temple.



Fig. 7.53 A group of monks waiting for their daily practice at the entrance of the Foxiang Hall.

Fig. 7.54 Plan of the Longxing Temple complex.

guard towers of the Forbidden City and in Song paintings. I strolled through the hall and exited at its back door, where the famous, suspended, life-size Guanyin was located. The white statue sat in a peaceful posture on one of the green and brown clay tree branches. A white elephant also settled itself on one of the branches.

Another huge courtyard flanked by two double-storey halls led me to the entrance of the splendid multi-level Foxiang Hall. White smoke from burning incenses permeated the entrance area where devout worshippers and elderly monks were practicing rituals and prayers. I wound through the crowd and entered the hall. Another Guanyin statue stood at the main altar. This time, however, the bronze statue was 24 m high. The Song statue contained over forty arms, each holding a symbolic instrument, just like the one at Chengde. Despite the coat of dust and dim natural lighting, the faint colours on the thousand-year-old statue were still noticeable. The hall itself was a splendid structure with a pair of symmetrical flying bridges at the sides to connect with the secondary towers from the top balcony.

I passed by the renowned ancient Kuai tree behind the hall and reached the Mituo Hall, the final structure along the main axis. It stood behind layers of claw-like shrubs at the most placid area of the complex. I loitered in the Mituo area for several minutes by myself. By the time I exited the temple, it was getting late. I had no choice but to hop in a taxi to the railway station at Shijiazhuang in order to catch the 18:00 train to Beijing.



Fig. 7.55 The final courtyard in the Longxing Temple as seen from the interior of the Lituo Hall.

2004.11.29. National Library

Today I spent most of the day at the National Library and collected some articles regarding the recent projects of Beijing. Famous architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid, Norman Foster, Paul Andreu, Steven Holl, and Herzog and de Meuron are all leaving their marks on the Chinese capital. Many articles argue Beijing has become another experimental ground—just like Shanghai—for foreign architects to make buildings that could never be built elsewhere in the world. These buildings are too expensive, too impractical, too large, too "cool", but not too Chinese. In fact, the comment "experimental ground" was first made by an article in *BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)* online back in March of 2004. *BBC* quoted Zaha Hadid saying, "They want to have more extreme buildings, or buildings which will put them on the map. There's the will and the desire to make something quite unique and different. I think this is aided by the Olympics. It's a brave new world where it's possible to maybe test ideas and develop ideas which in some other places may not be possible."¹¹

In my opinion, these well-known architects and their "experimental projects" have several major achievements. They have established public awareness on architectural construction, introduced high-level design concepts and international standards of practice, helped to promote the new China in international media and magazines, and most important of all, they have opened up debates among local architects and scholars. Many believe the lack of discussion forums is the main weakness of the Chinese architectural industry. Architects tend to keep quiet on issues, and regarding each other's projects. The problem of modern Chinese architecture is not the price tag of the design, but the confusion on whether this is what they want or not. Only a more sophisticated discussion forum among the professionals, politicians, and citizens can gradually resolve the confusion in time. The big-name projects are "big" enough to stir up controversial debates and it would be an added help if the well-established designers could help raise the level of professionalism of the Chinese building industry when doing joint-venture projects. The disadvantage, of course, is the price the nation has to pay. Obviously, this would not be a long-term strategy.

After the library, I headed for the Book Building again. This time, I bought a few books on history and traveling in China. I returned to room 6443 at about 20:30.

Set in the countryside outside Beijing, Yung-he Chang set out to make a biodegradable house, with a wooden frame and ramped earth walls.

"The house can deteriorate, can disintegrate and can to some extent disappear back into nature," he said.

It is a world away from Beijing's futuristic new look, showy projects designed by foreign architects and built to last.

The new Olympic stadium has variously been described as a "vision of some post-Blade Runner city" and a bird's nest.



“ They want to have more extreme buildings, or buildings which will put them on the map ”

Zaha Hadid, architect

The arena enclosed in its twisting concrete hoops is the work of a Swiss team, Pierre de Meuron and Jacques Herzog, who were responsible for the transformation of London's Tate Modern.

Extreme

Even more extraordinary is the new state television station by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. It seems to defy gravity with its intersecting Z-shaped towers which frame a huge empty hole. It has been christened the twisted doughnut.

"They want to have more extreme buildings, or buildings which will put them on the map," Zaha Hadid said of the Chinese leadership.

An Iraqi-born architect who is based in Britain, she is a superstar of the architecture world.

She is also designing a project for Beijing, a one-million square metre residential and office complex, and she says working in the Chinese capital is unlike anywhere else.



"There's the will and the desire to make something quite unique and different. I think this is aided by the Olympics. It's a brave new world where it's possible to maybe test ideas and develop ideas which in some other places may not be possible."

The Chinese Communist Party has always valued architecture

"The scale is different here," she said.

And the quest for modernity has already begun - work on the state opera house is underway.

Designed by French architect Paul Andreu, locals call this dome-like structure the Egg.

In the shadow of the building, 80 year-old Mrs Kang does her washing.

She lives in a courtyard house surrounded by narrow alleys. It's a leftover of old Beijing, which will be bulldozed to make way for a highway circling the opera house.

For her, the new architecture is another instance of China's rulers imposing their will on the masses.

"What's it got to do with us?" Mrs Kang says. "After they've finished building it, they're going to kick us out. I'd never go

Fig. 7.56 Part of the BBC online news article "Beijing's Building Revolution", by Lousia Kim, 2004.03.09.

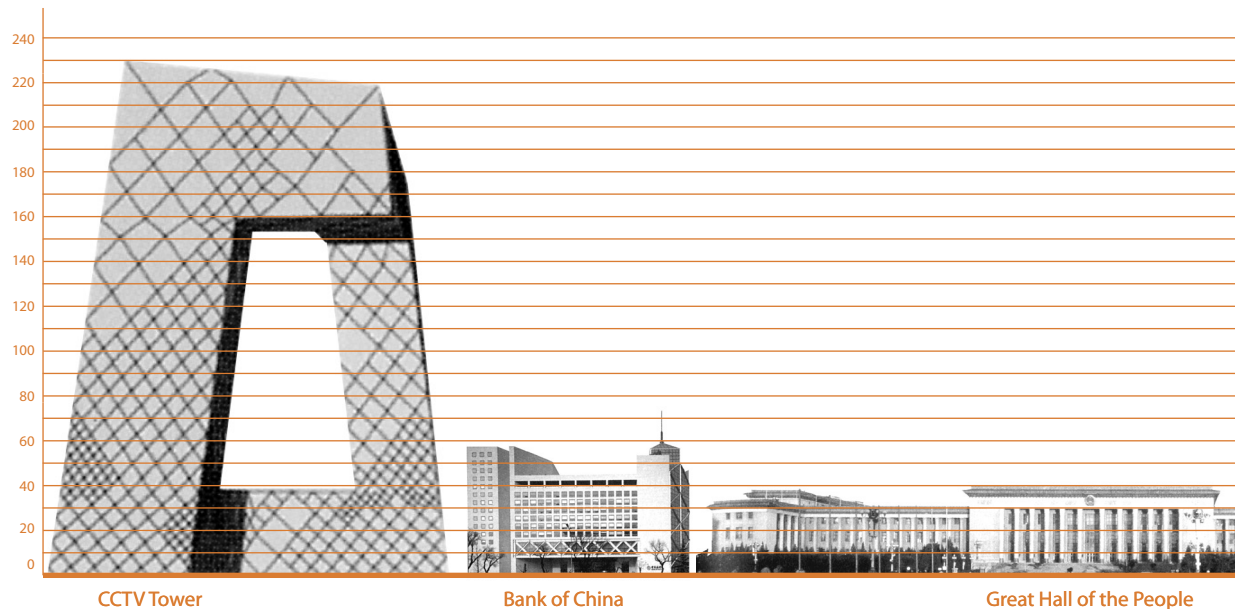
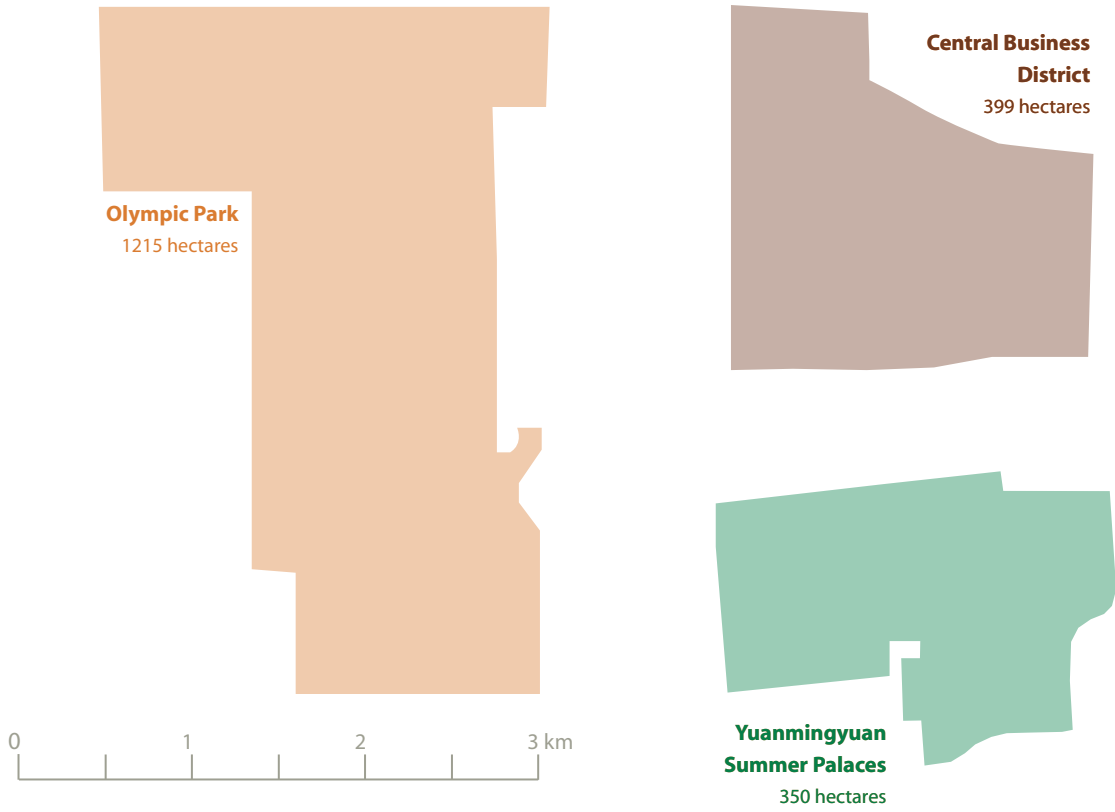
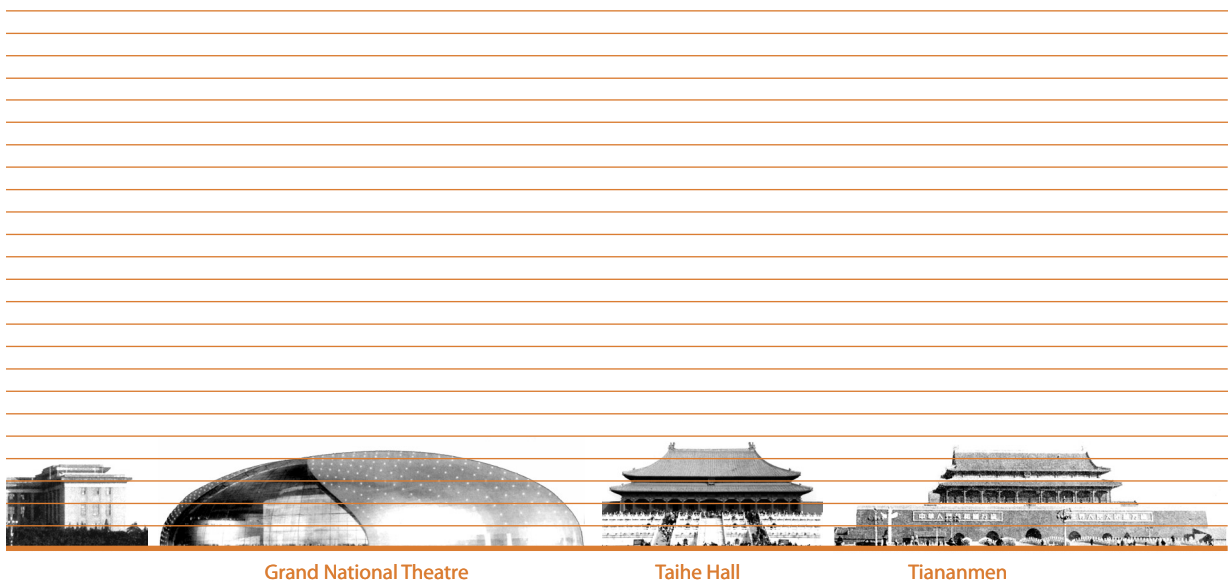




Fig. 7.57 A comparison of architectural sites in Beijing.

Fig. 7.58 A height comparison of significant buildings in Beijing.



Cultural Fusion and Clash

Prologue

Zheng He, a high-ranked eunuch of Ming Emperor Yongle, is known as the last great explorer in Chinese history. With more than sixty gigantic ships 150 m long and 60 m wide, and 200 small boats for landing and emergency, Zheng He and his 27,550 men sailed out to the Indian Ocean seven times between 1405 and 1433, and reached more than thirty nations from Indonesia to the Red Sea and the east coast of Africa, claiming regional dominance of the entire Indian Ocean, developing trade, and bringing back tributes and commodities such as gemstones, spices, medicines, gold, corals, and even giraffes.¹

This was also the time when Emperor Yongle brought Chinese architecture to its climax. He constructed his version of Beijing upon the ruins of the former Mongolian capital, including the Temple of Heaven, the Forbidden City, and the Great Wall. With no interest of creating a new culture, Yongle's ambition ceased; he felt satisfaction in redeeming the legitimacy and the glory of the Han culture after the nation had undergone 97 years of devastations and suppressions under the Mongolian rule. Chinese civilization, along with architecture, rose to its peak as Emperor Yongle proclaimed its regional power on the global stage once again after the mighty Han and Tang Dynasties, but this time for only half a century.

After Zheng's seventh journey, Emperor Suenzhong (Yongle's grandson) and his conservative officials banned any further sailing and closed off the borders of China, making it a self-contained medieval nation. Suenzhong saw interaction with the outside world as excessive and a waste of resources.² It was the year 1433 that Chinese civilization began to lose its energy and react passively to the outside world, entering a phase of gradual deterioration that lasted over 400 years.

"Walk to the world, align our tracks to the contemporaries" is a common official slogan used in all sorts of media products and political propaganda in recent years. Communist China wants to be modern and global. The desire is undoubtedly a sign of confidence in stepping out of the wound of the traumas of the twentieth century, leaving behind the hundred years of xenophobia and admitting that to think globally is a booster for making a better nation. The loosening of its self-contained mentality and the emergence as a global player of economy and politics is a chicken-and-egg syndrome, for the once highly self-esteemed Middle Kingdom.

Partly as a reaction to the aggressive missionary movements of the Westerners and partly influenced by the conservative Confucian beliefs, imperial governments in most of the Ming and Qing eras cocooned China in a pot of rituals, moralities, and social restrictions. Thus, when the Chinese were forced to open their eyes toward modernity in 1860 after 400 years of cultural imprisonment and stalemate, it was understandably shocking, especially due to a series of shameful military defeats.

Tang Dynasty (AD 618 to 907)

If we look closely at classical Chinese architecture, we may be surprised to discover that bits and pieces of foreign influences have comprised a great portion of what seems to be a singular system of traditions. Interactions with Central Asia and India along the Silk Road during the Han and Tang Dynasties were big wheels for the development of domestic culture. Chinese architecture benefited a great



Fig. 8.1 Built by a non-Han emperor in the fifth century, the Yungang Buddhist Grottoes present a number of early Chinese architectural elements. This column at Grotto #2 depicts a multi-storey building, including an early form of dougong brackets.

Fig. 8.2 Indian paradisaical motifs incorporate with Han Chinese architectural features to occupy the entrance of a grotto at Yungang.

Fig. 8.3 Slight touches of Western Classical architecture, such as the colonnade treatment at certain grotto vestibules in Yungang, suggest early interactions between the East and the West.



歷代佛塔型類演變圖

各圖非用同一縮尺 NOT DRAWN TO SAME SCALE
 附畫人像以示塔約略大小 HUMAN FIGURE INDICATES APPROXIMATE SCALE
 各畫地平線位表示在紀年尺中相當之年代

EVOLUTION OF TYPES OF THE BUDDHIST PAGODA

POSITION OF GROUND-LINE INDICATES DATE IN RELATION TO CHRONOLOGICAL SCALE.

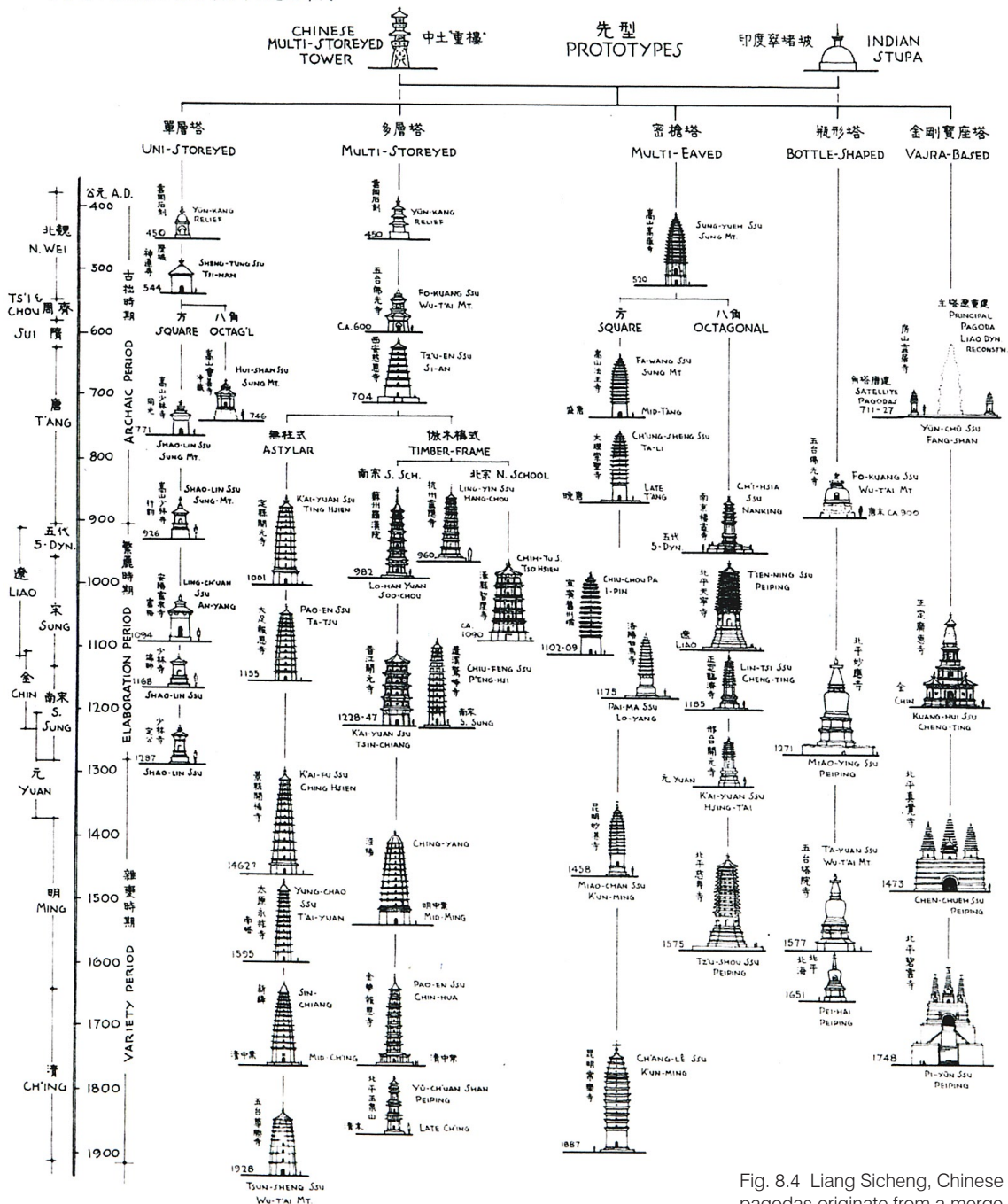


Fig. 8.4 Liang Sicheng, Chinese pagodas originate from a merge of local multi-storey towers and Indian stupas. In many occasions, local architects minimized the influence of the Indian stupa to form only the pinnacle of a pagoda. In some cases, the form of the Indian stupa remained as the basis of the entire structure.



deal from the adoption of a number of newly arrived cultures. During the Tang era in particular, religions such as Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Islam had all rooted themselves in Chinese soil. Islamic temples flourished at a number of Chinese cities since this time, although the population of worshippers remained small in comparison with that of Buddhists, Taoists, and Confucians. Their temples depicted an early form of cultural fusion.

Fig. 8.5 (top left) This 11th century Wooden Pagoda at Yingxian contains a Han Chinese tower and a pinnacle that imitates an Indian stupa.

Fig. 8.6 A more Indian looking type of pagoda, the White Pagoda in Jixian.

The most significant culture that integrated into the mainstream was undoubtedly Indian Buddhism. Since its first arrival in the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism flourished in China, despite several interruptions from emperors who had grown paranoid about the power of this foreign religion. From Eastern Han to Tang, stone grottoes, stupas, and temples from India all became novel inspirations to enrich local design traditions. Chinese Buddhist grottoes and pagodas were fruitful cultural fusions, leading toward the high time of Chinese architecture in the mid Tang Dynasty.

Fig. 8.7 The 13th century Hua Pagoda at Zhengding presents a rare equal mixture of both Indian and Chinese cultures. The top part of the pagoda contain carvings of Indian elephants and water lilies while the bottom part is dominated by Han Chinese features.

Although the cultural fusion in the Tang Dynasty seemed successful, most people neglected to see that the core of the Han culture, the conservative Confucian beliefs and their restrictions on psychological freedom and creativity had hardly changed. This lack of change should perhaps be read as a success of transferring outside influences into Chineseness under the unchanged boundaries. It encouraged only a singular integration instead of diverse developments. The Buddhist belief in a sense became a supplementary feature to enhance the Han culture. Although it turned out to be limiting, the Tang period was nonetheless the most unrestricted era



of cultural interflow between the East and the West. Its effect was a remarkable factor in building the Chinese tradition, only its influence fell short before the fortress of the Confucianism:

When society becomes too different from what it had been in the past and from the conditions in which these traditions had arisen, it will no longer find within itself the elements necessary to reconstruct, consolidate and repair these traditions. Society will then be obligated to adopt new values, that is, to rely on other traditions that are more closely in tune with present-day needs and tendencies. But it is within the framework of these old notions and under the pretext of traditional ideas, that a new order of values would become slowly elaborated.³ Maurice Halbwachs

Western Missionaries in the Ming and Qing eras (1582 to 1911)

From 1433 to 1860, China was entirely passive in interactions with the outside world. During the latter period of the Ming and the early Qing periods, a number of Jesuits and missionaries from the West became the directors of cultural interflow. Along with Christian beliefs, they also brought Western technologies, art, and science into China to gain the attention of the locals. Despite the temptation of these Western innovations for both peasants and rulers, the Chinese saw them only as novel instruments of living, rather than a form of sophisticated culture.

Ricci Matthien (Italian) was among the most successful Jesuits in the 17th century who suggested the blending of Western science, art, and technology with Christianity for gaining local respect. He arrived at China in 1582 and established a church in Beijing in 1605 in the model of a Confucian school, and taught blended lessons of Christian morality and scientific knowledge in the style of traditional Chinese lectures. "Right here we should not establish any church or temple, but a lecture school, just like what some of their famous Confucian masters are doing."⁴ His lecture schools were built in the style of traditional Chinese architecture, but without an outer wall and gate. The use of local traditions as a veil to conceal religious purpose was common before the Opium Wars in the mid 19th century.

Emperor Qianlong's Yuanmingyuan Summer Palace was the most fruitful example of "cultural harmony under a Chinese skin" during this era. In 1747, Qianlong ordered P. Michael Benoist (French), Denis Attiret Jean (French), and F. Giuseppe Castiglione (Italian) to design



Fig. 8.8 The cultural blended pavilion (reconstructed) at the centre of the Western maze (Migong) in Yuanmingyuan, showing both Baroque and Han Chinese architectural elements.

and build a portion of his summer palaces in Baroque style. Instead of real European Baroque, the Jesuits incorporated Western styles with Chinese architectural features such as Chinese roof tiles, eave details, and hexagonal pavilions to form a blended architectural style.

Chinese officials and scholars accepted the foreign technologies the foreigners brought, but remained reluctant to accept the Christian beliefs. As the conflict of interest between the two parties arose on the level of politics, rituals, and social beliefs in mid eighteenth century, things shifted dramatically. Western missionaries began to criticize Chinese culture back in their home nations, while the xenophobia of the Chinese towards Westerners grew as the religious actions of the foreigners became more aggressive. The mutual hatred and cultural misunderstandings led to the eruption of the Opium Wars (1840s and 1860s) and the Boxer Rebellion (1900). In the nineteenth century, the missionaries expanded their schools into numerous cities across the nation after the Chinese emperor was forced to sign unfair treaties with the Western forces, allowing freedom on trading and for the Christian missionary in a number of cities. In many cases, these Christian schools ended up in land disputes with the locals, which further deepened the local hatred toward the outsiders.

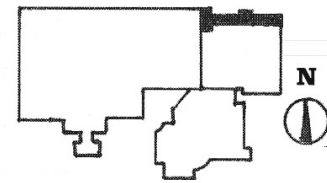


Fig. 8.9 Darken area in the footprint of Yuanmingyuan shows the area of Xiyanglou (Western Mansions) . The Western palaces provided exotic pleasure for Emperor Qianlong.

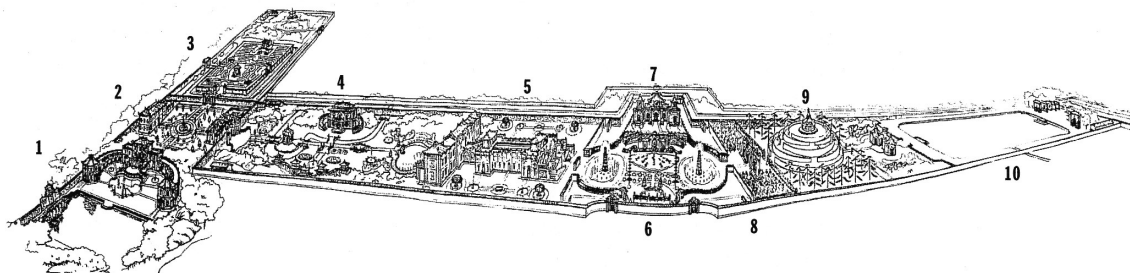


Fig. 8.10 Overview of the Xiyanglou (Western Mansions):

1. Xieqi Qu (tower gate)
2. Huayuan Men (gate)
3. Migong (maze)
4. Fangwai Guan (hall)
5. Haiyan Tang (hall)
6. Dashuifa (fountain)
7. Yuanying Guan (hall)
8. Triumphal Arch
9. Xianfa Shan (mount)
10. Fanghe (water system)

Establishment of Universities in the 1900s to 1920s

At the turn of the twentieth century, Protestant missionaries from America and England also arrived with the Roman Catholics to establish universities and colleges. They all believed that higher education could transform the locals in accepting Christian beliefs. This aim lined up with the Qing government after the Boxer Rebellion when the Chinese officials had seen the danger of the radical public. In 1900, the Boxer rebel group, a secret cult based on the hatred towards foreigner cultures, attacked foreigner establishments and embassies, as well as objects that symbolized modernization, such as railroads and electrical wires, in Beijing and cities across Northern China.⁵ Their action led to the War between China and the Eight Allied Nations, which included Britain, France, Russia, Austria, Germany, US, Japan and Italy.

From 1900 to the mid 1930s, Christian universities and colleges were found in a number of Chinese cities. Their architecture stood out as the first influential design projects in China. Western architects such as Henry K. Murphy (American) and Harry Hussey (Canadian) were hired to derive a suitable type of architecture for China.

In 1923, Archbishop Celso Constantini suggested the use of domestic Chinese architecture and art to express the localization of Christianity.⁶ Belgian artist and missionary Dom Adelbert Gresnight also commented that "Chinese architecture is an expression of the local thinking and feelings that contain domestic dreams, history and traditions. Similar to other cultures, the Chinese also have their cultural uniqueness and goals, and their architecture is no inferior to their literature to communicate such spirit."⁷ For the universities, he promoted the statement "nor let it be said the Chinese architecture does not lend itself to building of our churches, but a blending of both."⁸

Murphy took the concept and designed a number of universities in Nanjing and Beijing, while Hussey designed the Union Medical College at Beijing, also in a traditional style. Murphy, a great admirer of Chinese palaces, spent over twenty years in China experimenting the use of modern materials to express traditional forms, and in fewer occasions, a more Westernized approach was used. In his



Fig. 8.11 Exterior corridor of the Union Medical College, designed by Harry Hussey in traditional Chinese style.



Fig. 8.12 Design sketch of the Warner Gymnasium, Yenching (Yanjing) University, designed by Henry Murphy in traditional Chinese style.

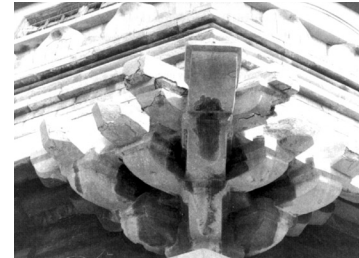


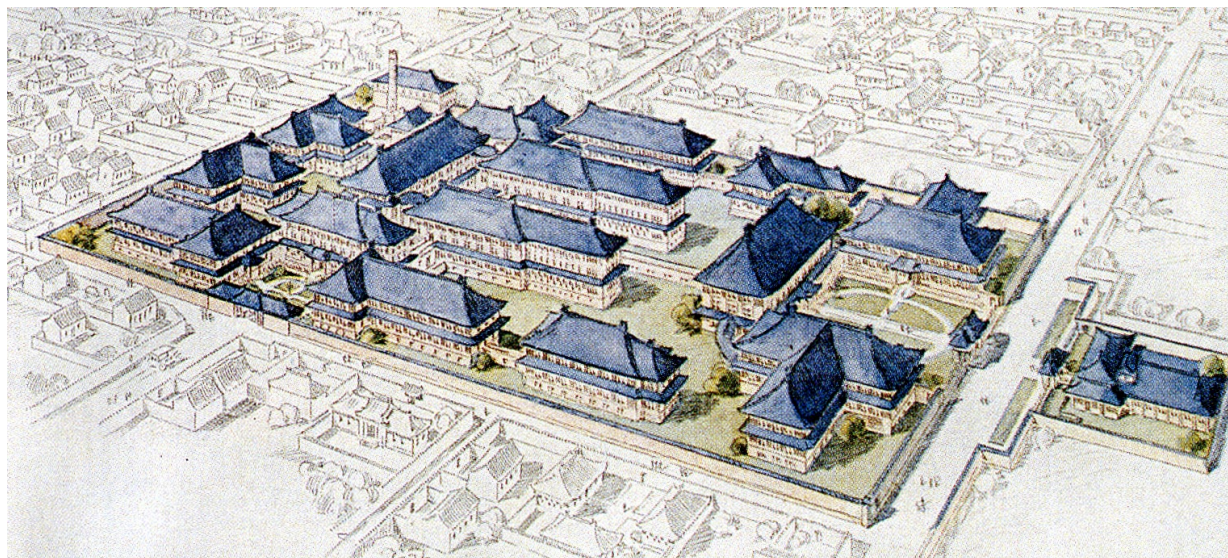
Fig. 8.13 A concrete dougong on one of Murphy's university buildings.

latter period, he immersed himself in the creation of a modern Chinese palace style, making traditional elements such as the *dougong* brackets with concrete and the large Chinese roof with a modern structure. Both Murphy and Hussey were crucial pioneers in the making of modern Chinese architecture. Their method of merging ancient palace style and modern technology created the first wave of traditional revival in the twentieth century.

The Chinese Architectural Pioneers (1920s to 1949)

If the twenty years of the mid 1900s to 1920s was the period for Western architects with special interests in Oriental culture, then the ten years from the mid 1920s to 1937 before the Japanese invasion was an experimental era for a group of young Chinese architects, who

Fig. 8.14 Design sketch of the Union Medical College, designed by Harry Hussey.



themselves were cultural-fusion entities with both traditional Chinese and Western educational backgrounds. Almost all of these young masters were cultural elites from traditional scholarly families or circles of modernist poets and artists. To these young intellectuals, the missionary universities and colleges became the stepping stones for professional education in the West.

Tsinghua College in Beijing (which later became Tsinghua University), found in 1911, was a common platform for Chinese students to pursue professional architectural training in American universities. Chen Zhi, Liang Sicheng, Yang Tingbao, and Tong Jun were among the most famous students who graduated from Tsinghua College in 1920s, and then they pursued their architectural studies at the University of Pennsylvania under the famous Beaux-Arts professor Paul Cret. Not only did they become some of Cret's most favourite students and win a number of competitions and scholarships in America, but they were also the founders of the most well-known architecture schools in China. Along with Liang's wife Lin Huiyin (who obtained a bachelor at Penn and then a masters at Yale), Fan Wenzhao (another graduate from Penn), Liu Dunzhen (a graduate from the Tokyo Institute of Technology), and Lu Yanzhi (a graduate from Cornell), these young graduates were considered the pillars of modern Chinese architecture. Within the group, there was a clear split of interest: either to study ancient Chinese architecture and then generate new opportunities from traditional essences or to introduce international modernist approaches into the ancient nation.

Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyin, and Liu Dunzhen were the leading figures in the research field of ancient Chinese architecture. Lin attended high school at London when her father was a consulate in Britain and became fascinated with the profession of architecture. She returned to Beijing and inspired Liang Sicheng, the son of her father's friend Liang Qichao, to study architecture in the West. Both Liang and Lin went to America together to study architecture. Liang obtained both his bachelor and master's degree in architecture at Penn in 1927, while Lin Huiyin received her degree in Fine Arts with high honours (Penn did not accept females in the architecture program during that time). Liang then turned to the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and



Fig. 8.15 The Tsinghua Ceremonial Hall designed by Henry Murphy.

Sciences to do research in Chinese architecture, while Lin went to Yale for a master's degree in stage design.

After their return to China, the newly married couple first established the school of architecture at Northeast University in Shenyang at Manchuria, and then the school of architecture at Tsinghua University in Beijing just before the Japanese invasion of the Manchuria in 1931. Liang was later invited to be the director of site research at the newly formed *Ying Zao Xue She* (Institute for Research on Chinese Architecture). Liu Dunzhen came later as the director of document research. Liang, Lin, Liu, and several of their assistants traveled across 15 provinces. They discovered, documented, and analyzed over two thousand surviving ancient structures and archaeological sites. The discovery of the Foguang Temple in 1937 by Liang and Lin proved to be the most significant find of the Institute. It was the only known Tang structure that had survived to the modern age at the time. The finding countered the statement of Ito Chuta, proclaiming that if one had to study buildings in Tang style, Japan was the only place to go.

During the war, the couple researched a number of buildings and dwellings in the southwest provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan. Liu Dunzhen went to Nanjing and became the founder of the school of architecture at the National Central University, along with Tong Jun and Yang Tingbao. Liang and Lin returned to Beijing in 1947 and continued



Fig. 8.16 The eaves and the corner dougong of the Foguang Temple Main Hall, Wutaishan.

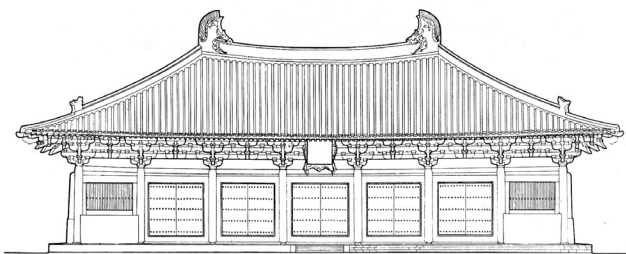


Fig. 8.17 The front elevation of the Main Hall of the Foguang Temple, Wutaishan.

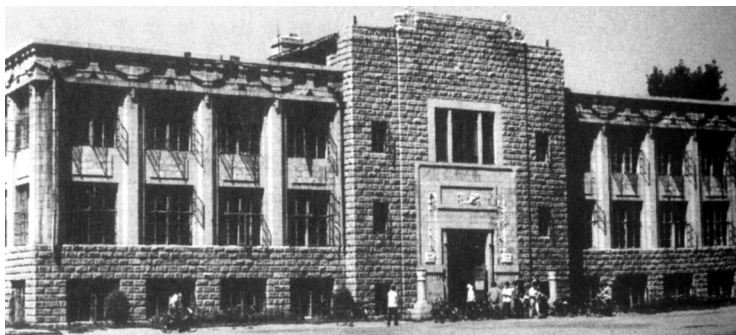


Fig. 8.18 A residence at the Jilin University (1931), Changchun, designed by Liang Sicheng and Chen Zhi. Knowledge in both Beaux-Arts architecture and traditional Chinese architecture provided Liang the basis in the search of a new path for modern Chinese architecture.

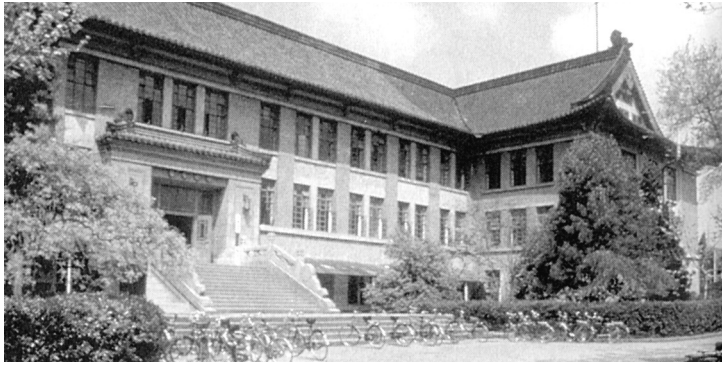


Fig. 8.19 Nanjing University Southeast Building (1955), designed by Yang Tianbao. In his career, Yang had experimented with different attempts in the making of modern Chinese architecture, including traditionalist and modernist design approaches.

to direct the school of architecture in Tsinghua University, after Liang lectured in Yale for a year and received his Doctorate of Honours at Princeton. Both Tsinghua and National Central University became the bases to generate the second generation of Chinese architects.

The fellow classmates of the Liangs at Penn such as Yang Tingbao, Tong Jun, and Chen Zhi took a more practical approach in becoming the first generation of modernist masters in the nation. Yang was the most highly regarded among the group. He worked for almost sixty years, from the railway station at Shenyang in 1927 to the new Beijing National Library in 1987. He was the leading professor at National Central University (now Southeast University) for up to four decades. Yang was appointed as the president of the Architectural Society of China, and elected vice chair of the UIA (Union Internationale des Architectes) for two consecutive terms. Yang had been involved in a number of international conferences on architecture during his life-long career, and thus was significantly well known in the outside world.

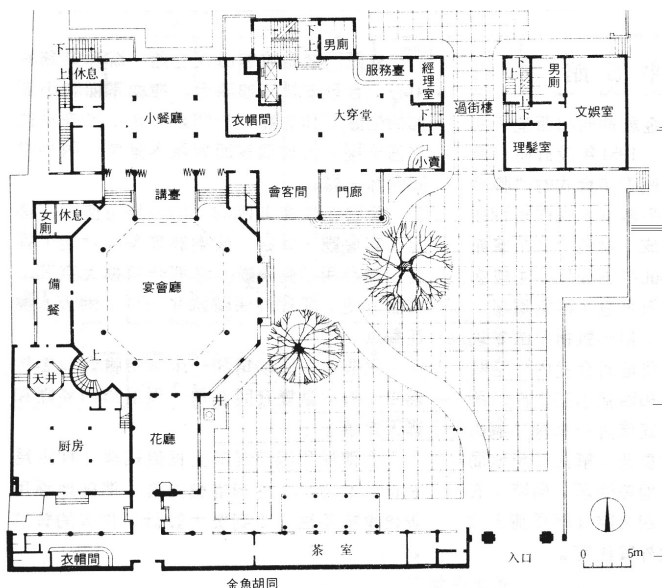


Fig. 8.20 Front entrance of Peace Hotel in Beijing, an 1951 modernist design by architect Yang Tianbao.

Fig. 8.21 Ground plan of Yang Tianbao's Peace Hotel in Beijing.

Louis Kahn once referred to Yang as the "Chinese genius".⁹ Although Yang was a modernist architect, he also had great knowledge on traditional Chinese architecture, mainly from his travels and the heritage restoration works in the 1930s, which included the Temple of Heaven.

A close friend and co-worker of Yang at Southeast University was Tong Jun. After receiving a bachelor and master's degree at Penn, Tong worked in America for two years. He then returned to China and became a professor first at Northeast University with Liang Sicheng, and established the firm Allied Architects in Shanghai with Chen Zhi and Zhao Shen (both graduates from Penn) designing modernist buildings. He was one of the most famous scholars on classical Chinese gardens. Tong joined the faculty at National Central University (now Southeast University) in 1944 and became a key professor there for four decades. One of his accomplishments was to translate and publish up-to-date architectural news from the West, despite having not set foot outside China since his student years. He published his final book during his late seventies, and lavished praise on the *Centre Pompidou* of Paris, showing his openness despite going through the decade of suppression during the Cultural Revolution.

Chen Zhi was another active member of modernist architecture in China. He collaborated with Tong Jun and Zhao Shen to form the Allied Architects in Shanghai and became a leading architect in Shanghai ever after. From 1938 to 1944, Chen was a professor at Hangchow University, which later merged with Huang Zhoxin's St. John's University to form Tongji University School of Architecture. Huang was a graduate from the Architectural Association in London and then Harvard University under the direction of Walter Gropius. Thus, Tongji developed a sense of Bauhaus design, apart from the Beaux-Arts atmosphere at Tsinghua and Southeast.



Fig. 8.22 Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic government (1934), Nanjing, designed by Tong Jun and Zhao Shen.

Chinese Architecture After 1949

The idea of blending traditional forms and modern techniques returned to the design scene after the Communist takeover. "Socialist content and national style"¹⁰ and attitude of "utility, economy, and, if conditions allow, beauty"¹¹ were the two official promoted directions for the construction industry of the 1950s. Liang Sicheng at the time was the Vice-President of the Beijing City Planning Commission. He advocated both preserving historical buildings and making a comfortable living environment for Beijingers. In this vein, planner Charlie Cheng and Liang put forward a proposal of constructing the new political core beyond the city wall of Beijing to the west, and left the old city for cultural and residential purposes.¹² Their proposal was rejected by the Party, taking the opposite opinion of the Russian experts, who leaned toward a centralized political zone and urban development that could reveal industrial prosperity.¹³ Huge areas of historical neighbourhoods, great numbers of monuments, and almost the entire city wall were demolished to make way for the new Beijing to develop.

Other than the Liang-Cheng Proposal and uncounted battles on the preservation of heritage buildings, Liang believed the study of traditional architecture could provide him a basis from which to derive modern Chinese architecture. He recommended a flexible development and continuation of Chinese architecture: "To inherit our design culture should be a process of knowing, analysing, criticizing, inheriting, reforming, and manipulating."¹⁴ After a series of visits to Moscow and meetings with Soviet experts, Liang's ideology was further

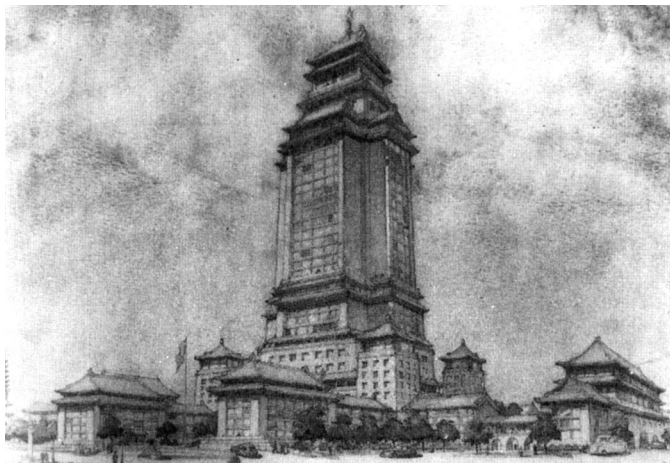


Fig. 8.23 Liang Sicheng's illustration of an imaginary skyscraper in 1954.



consolidated by the Russian concept of the nationalist style, yet Liang failed to clearly present a solution that reflected such ideology. While he tried to stay away from mere formalism, he could not resist admitting that the main features of Chinese architecture were the big roof and the structural language. He put forward an ambiguous ideal: "First, no matter the size and height, we can still manipulate traditional form and language to deal with the design. Second, the national form should be derived from the parti of architectural grouping and the general contour of the building, while the elevations, proportion and rhythm of doors and windows and decorative patterns are merely secondary...."¹⁵

Meanwhile, Russian architects including Sergei Andreyev, were sent to China to present their form of solution, building structures in a number of cities such as the Military Museum and the Beijing Exposition Hall in Beijing. Their use of literal symbols, monumentality, formalism, and classical revival motivated the Chinese to move toward their own traditionalist revival.

Uncounted local architects were influenced by both Liang and the Russians' analysis and came up with the "big-roof" style, which—no matter high-rise or low-rise, institutional or commercial building—always contained an enormous traditional roof. At first, they were supported by the Party's principle of "socialist content and national style". Later however, their movement was condemned by the Party as involving too much over spending, and Liang became the focus of attack on the movement of "anti-formalism, anti-reactionism, and anti-waste". He was considered to be the pioneer to start the traditionalist "big-roof"



Fig. 8.24-8.25 Sergei Andreyev's Military Museum (top left) and Beijing Exposition Centre (top) demonstrated the Russian solution of "National form with Socialist meanings". Both traditionalism and the use of political symbols were encouraged.

movement, although he himself constantly stood against "buildings wearing a Western suit and a Chinese skullcap".¹⁶

The reception of foreign ideas was completely shut off during the extreme leftist period in the 1960s. The group of local pioneers were either suppressed or persecuted during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 on both their Westernized background and traditional knowledge. Liang Sicheng, Huang Zhoxin (the founder of St. Paul's University school of architecture), and Liu Dunzhen died during the period, while the others were dismissed from their faculty positions. It was not until Deng Xiaoping came to power and brought the open-door policy that their status and reputation were restored. From 1979, foreign influences started to re-emerge, this time with American Chinese architect I. M. Pei as the pioneer, and with a group of design firms from America, Canada, and Europe to follow.

Chinese Architecture and the Market Economy (1979 to 1990s)

"If Mr. Pei really returned home after graduation, and stayed in China, it would be enough of a fortune if he could survive the decades of



Fig. 8.26 The Friendship Hotel was built in 1955. The 260,000 sq. m building contains a 1200-seat auditorium, a 1000-seat dining hall and 1900 guest rooms. The 7-storey building is considered one of the masterpiece of "big roof" projects. It contains Chinese roofs, pavilions, podiums, and traditional motifs for decorations.



Fig. 8.27 The Ethnic Cultural Centre was considered the most successful traditionalist architecture in 1950s. It was included as one of the Ten Grand Projects that celebrated the Tenth Anniversary of Communist China. The building contains an 1150-seat auditorium, a library of 6,000,000 volumes, a 2000 sq. m exhibition space, a dozen of activity rooms, and a 700 seat cafeteria. The 13-storey building presents a harmonious fusion of modernist and traditional elements, and marked the peak of the second classical revival in China after the endeavours of Murphy and Hussey in the 1920s.

turmoil. The question of whether he would become world-famous was entirely out of the picture here. The unreturned Pei was a fortune for himself, China, America and the world."¹⁷ Unlike a number of Chinese students studying in America during early twentieth century who proudly returned home to practice and to teach, Pei chose to stay in the United States because of the political conditions in China. In 1948, when Liang Sicheng met Pei in New York during the design conference for the UN headquarters, Liang urged Pei to return China and help him with his faculty work. Pei refused because he could no longer obtain a Chinese passport.

In 1978, Pei was invited to China as the architect to design the Fragrant Hill (*Xiangshan*) Hotel in Beijing, four years after his second, and six years after his first visit in 1972 as a member of a cultural exchange tour organized by the American Institute of Architects, since departing for America in 1935. Pei's approach to the Fragrant Hill Hotel was nonetheless a familiar one: to create modern Chinese architecture from traditional essences. "Far from being a revival, or even a reference to the architecture of the past, the design of Fragrant Hill was based on a rigorous distillation of what Pei felt were the best elements of a continuing tradition in Chinese architecture, one that had been stalled but not stopped by nearly a century of political upheaval and warfare. His real aim in the design was to pick up that lost thread of continuity and use it in the weaving of an architectural aesthetic for contemporary China."¹⁸

Pei refused to build a high-rise in central Beijing and chose the site of the former imperial gardens in the northwest suburb of the capital. His hotel is now a three-to five-storey complex, in which the layout, the gardens, and the courtyards were derived from design traditions of Suzhou, Pei's birthplace. The project is a personal-identity marker and childhood recollection piece for Pei, reflecting a passion common to many Chinese living in the diaspora who are eager to search for a continuation of their past. Pei's client was not simply the Party, but also himself and his fellow countrymen.

As the open-door policy further anchored its ground toward the end of 1980s, modern architecture with less cultural linkage began to flourish in Shanghai, Beijing, and other large cities across the nation,

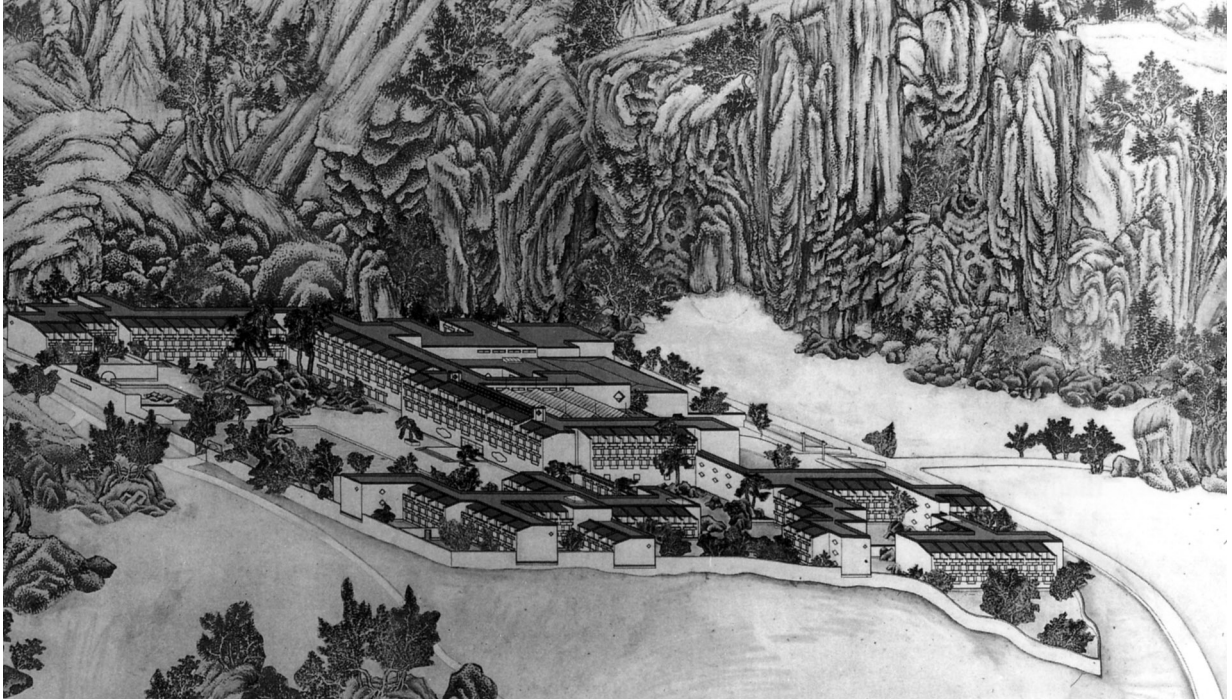


Fig. 8.28 Pei collaged an image of the Xiangshan Hotel into a traditional Chinese landscape drawing.

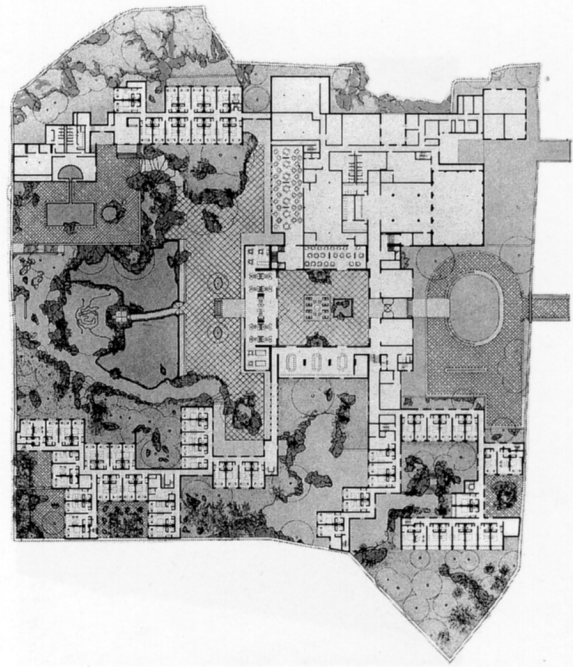


Fig. 8.29 Plan of Fragrant Hill Hotel.

Fig. 8.30 Plan of a traditional Suzhou complex.

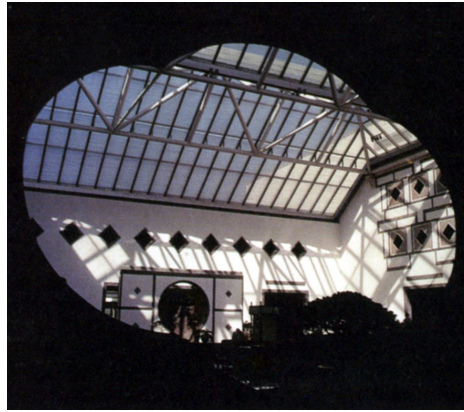


Fig. 8.31 (further left) One of the diamond screens at the second level looking out to the lobby at the Fragrant Hill Hotel.

Fig. 8.32 One of the windows at the ground lobby of the Fragrant Hill Hotel with reference to a traditional opening in a Suzhou garden complex.

mainly for attracting foreign, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese investors to establish businesses in China. Foreign design companies were allowed to set up satellite firms in China to do joint-venture projects with local practices. Despite the fact that openness had brought in a breath of fresh air for the design industry after the devastating 1960s and 1970s, political constraint never ceased to maintain its hidden control over the development of Chinese architecture, especially in Beijing.

From the mid 1980s to mid 1990s, ten years of traditional revival again took place in Beijing, under the mayor's encouragement to "revive the ancient capital".¹⁹ Buildings of Chinese features mushroomed across the city, without much change from the attempts of the 1910s and 1950s, apart from the advancement of technology and building materials. It was a political attempt to build a tourist city with reconstructed Chinese elements that did not necessarily reflect contemporary living.

While most public buildings were built in post-modernist style, most high-end residences were designed in completely foreign styles. Pure imitations of Western villa communities dominated suburban



Fig. 8.33 The China World Trade Centre in Beijing, designed by Robert Sobel / Emery Roth & Sons, Ltd., and completed in 1990, was the most important mix use commercial complex in early 1990s to welcome the arrival of capitalist economy in the capital.



real-estate developments in Beijing, Shanghai, and numerous cities in the province of Guangdong, with communities modelled from North America or Europe. "In 1998, *China Daily* reported that Beijing had a stock of 21,000 units of residential property especially designed for overseas buyers either quality apartments or single family houses."²⁰ The advertisement of the Beijing Dragon Villas in 1994 stated: "Leaving the crowded and noisy city, just twenty minutes' drive, you can get to the Beijing Dragon Villas: the beautiful American-Canadian style residents, with fresh air, broad lawns and the beauty of the nature. You are sure to be satisfactory to enjoy the leisure of life..."; "just like Beverly Hills of California"; "just like Richmond of Vancouver"; "just like Bayview Hill of Toronto"; and "just like Long Island of New York".²¹ Designed by a Canadian architect, the Dragon villas were basically Georgian brick houses with classical portico and large double garage. The concept of a "westernized" lifestyle and living environment becomes the best selling point in the public, for the newly emerged middle class to chase after personal luxury. Architecture in this case is turned into a mere reaction to the desires of the wealthy class.

In the old city of Beijing where *hutongs* and *siheyuans* still dominated much of the neighbourhood, Wu Liangyong contributed his solution of blending traditions and modernity in the Juer Hutong project as an attempt to organically renew the deteriorating old

Fig. 8.34 The Beijing West Railway Station, completed in 1995, represents the peak of the third classical revival in China. Contemporary building technology is merged with traditionalist features. The impracticality of the traditional pavilions on the roof unfolds a fierce debate in the local architectural forum. The station was the last project commissioned by mayor Chen Xiantong before he came down from power.

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Fig. 8.35 The advertisement of Beijing Dragon Villas in *China Daily*, April 1994.



Fig. 8.36 Computer generated image of a villa unit at Xiaotangshan Villas, Beijing. The project is a collaboration from Toronto's B+H Architects and Japan's TAM Landscape Design. A modern Western approach for high-end residential designs is very common in Beijing and Shanghai.



Fig. 8.37 Computer generated image of a villa unit at Bishuizhuangyuan (Ivy Garden), Beijing. The project is a collaboration from Zeidler Partnership Architects and Japan's TAM Landscape Design.

neighbourhoods. As a student of Yang Tingbao, a faculty assistant of Liang Sicheng, and a working assistant of Eliel Saarinen, Wu believed that along with the progression of the society, tradition was crucial. His attempt in the project of Juer Hutong was considered a great success both nationally and internationally,²² in providing a continuation for traditional and regionalist dwellings.

After studies on dwellings from different parts of China, Wu chose a type of "living architecture" in the *Suzhou* area as a design basis for its flexibility on multiple arrangements. Wu's method of organic renewal of the Juer Hutong included:

... rediscovering the urban fabric of the Old City; establishing a new courtyard house prototype characterized by a series of courtyards with a system of internal access inspired by the 'back alley' or 'middle corridor' of the typical vernacular housing clusters in Suzhou; working out a standard courtyard house unit that achieves an ideal balance of sunshine, ventilation, lighting, and other environmental conditions on the one hand, and an intense use of land on the other; and developing an alley-like system of access between courtyard units that recalls the age-old system of courtyards and hutong.²³

To him, the essence of Chinese architecture was the flow of semi-exterior/private spaces that ran between cabins or units. Wu

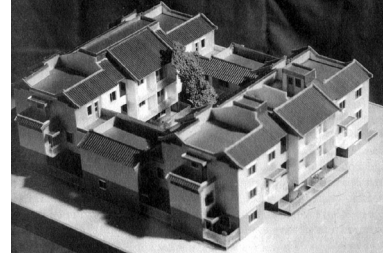


Fig. 8.38 Study model of the new courtyard prototype.



Fig. 8.39 Semi-private courtyard of Wu Liangyong's Juer Hutong project.

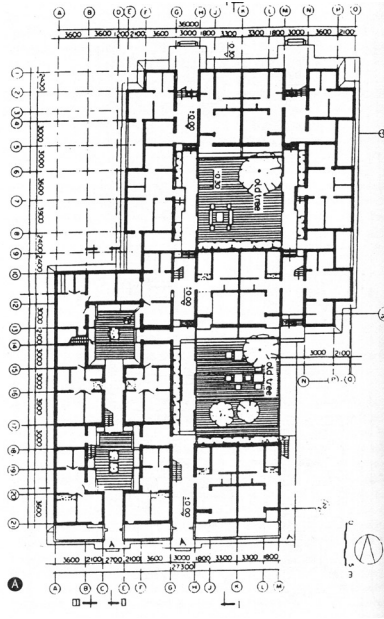


Fig. 8.40 (further left) Plan of Juer Hutong Phase One.

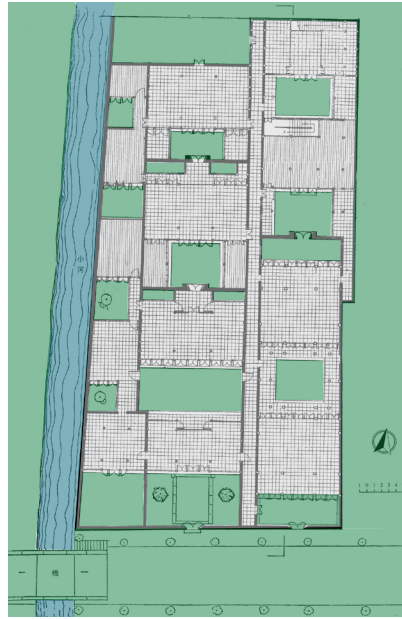


Fig. 8.41 Plan of a traditional Suzhou complex.

incorporated Western design techniques and construction methods, and Chinese concepts of the interconnected courtyards and a sense of community into the project.

Chinese Architecture for Tomorrow (2000 to Present)

From the late 1990s on, as Beijing obtained confidence on the global stage and foreign investors and architects began to pour into the Chinese market, the seam between East and West, and the difference between traditions and modernity all became marginal. Modern architecture served both foreign investors and local entrepreneurs. Modern

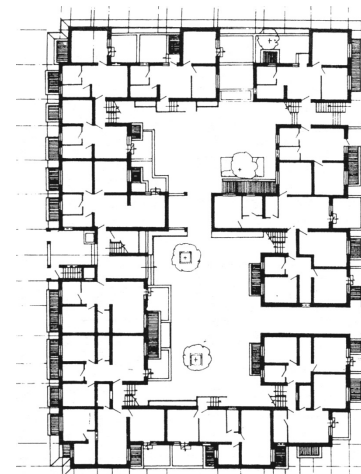


Fig. 8.42-8.44 Architectural drawings of the Juer Hutong Project Phase Two Court C: first floor plan, north elevation and south elevation.

architecture gradually becomes an instrument revealing the degree of political openness and the Chinese vision of the foreseeable future.

Paul Andreu's win at the National Theatre design competition was a blow to traditionalist architects in China, who saw the glass blob as a radical revolution that clashed with the local context of Beijing bearing absolutely no harmony—the number one quality that ancient Chinese architecture was meant to build upon. Some scholars saw the coming of a futuristic building at the heart of Beijing (right next to the Great Hall of People) as a positive catalyst for the making of new culture. "Different style creates distinct meaning, and when China builds the National Theatre under such innovative style, this is a message to reveals: we have not cease to progress in front of history, because we are doing something innovative, facing our future, and expressing our contemporary spirit."²⁴

Many others saw it as an unreasonable experiment on the Chinese soil. The project became a controversial topic of argument since Andreu won the national competition. Alfred Peng, an experienced Chinese-Canadian architect and a professor of Tsinghua University, urged the Party to stop the construction after the collapse of the Paris Airport designed by Andreu. Peng saw Andreu's design as experimental artwork lacking both cultural and safety consideration.²⁵ After listing parallel negative comments from *Architectural Review* and I.M. Pei, Peng's comment: "I oppose Andreu's scheme, not because he is French, but because the design is too pathetic, too dangerous, and too wasteful!"²⁶ Is Andreu's National Theatre a milestone of creating new tradition for Chinese architecture or is it a temporary sidetrack against the unified and long-lasting Chinese design tradition? It has certainly opened up fierce debates in China – a major contribution to the development of the critical judgement of the local profession.

As we have seen, the tradition of Chinese architecture evolves and changes over time along with outside influences. Tradition has always been flexible toward accepting foreign influences and the local culture grows from a healthy process of selection, filtering, blending, and adjusting the imported ideas. Under both the cultural defensive tendency and the egocentric perception of the Middle



Fig. 8.45 Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Nanjing Jinling Hotel Phase II.

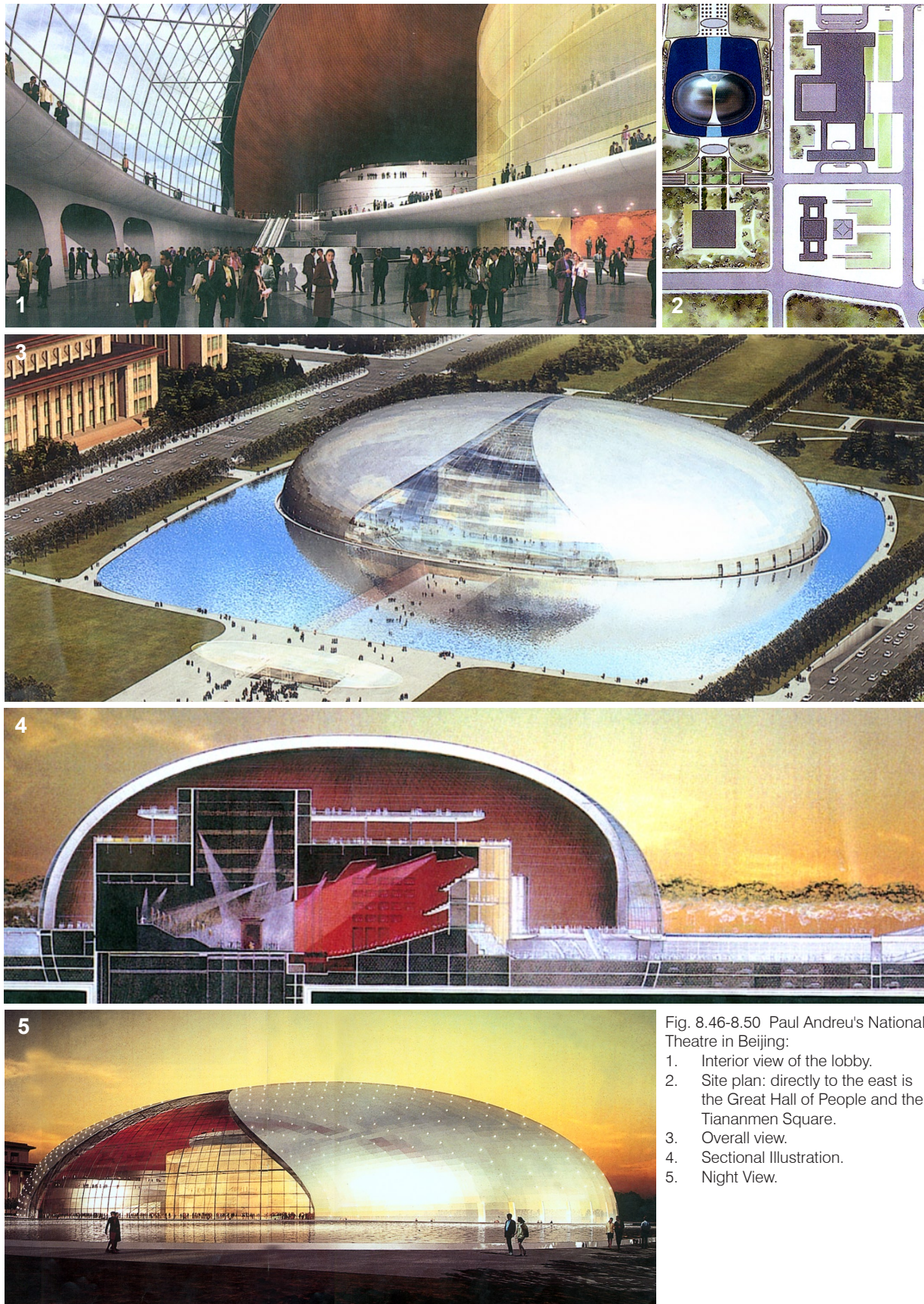


Fig. 8.46-8.50 Paul Andreu's National Theatre in Beijing:

1. Interior view of the lobby.
2. Site plan: directly to the east is the Great Hall of People and the Tiananmen Square.
3. Overall view.
4. Sectional Illustration.
5. Night View.

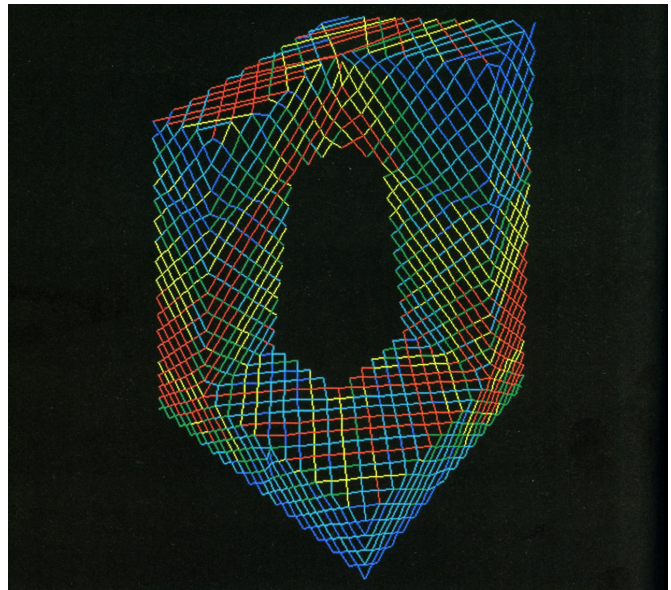
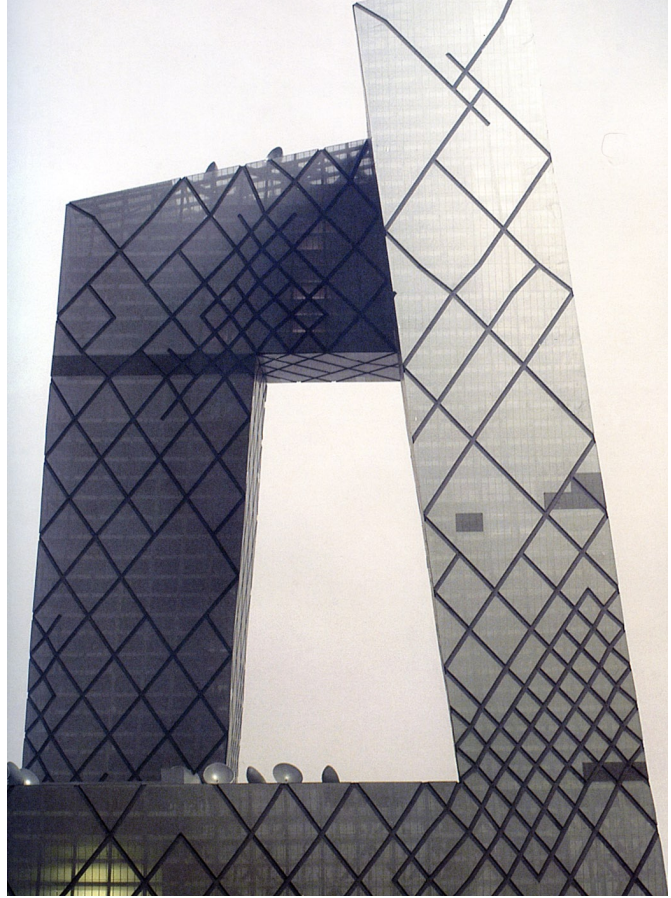
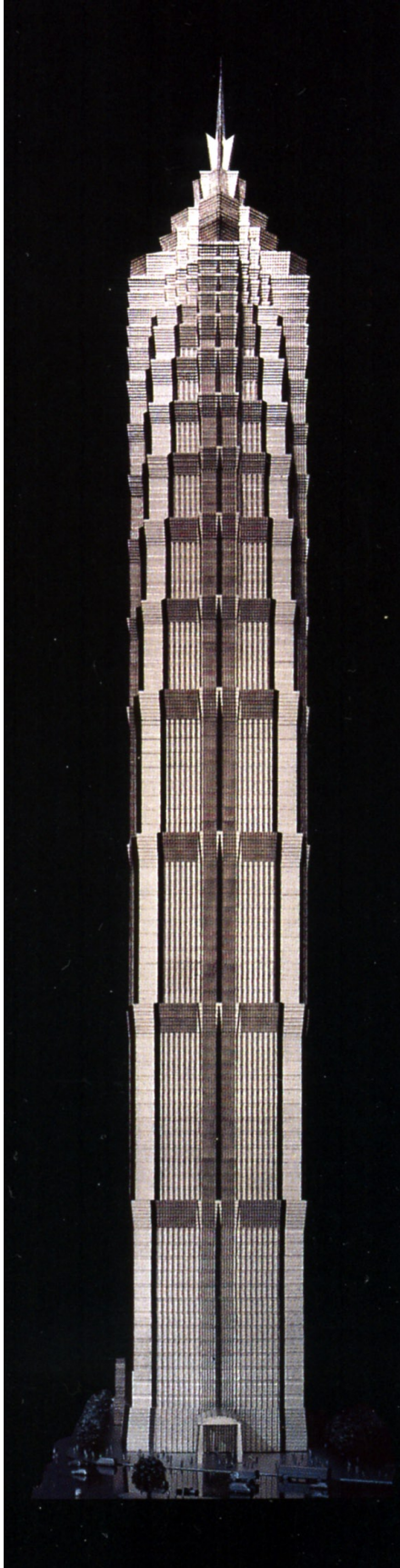


Fig. 8.52-8.53 OMA's CCTV in Beijing:
1. Exterior view of the main building.
2. Structural diagram showing locations of different stresses.

Fig. 8.51 SOM takes the Chinese pagoda as a reference to design Shanghai's Jin Mao Tower.

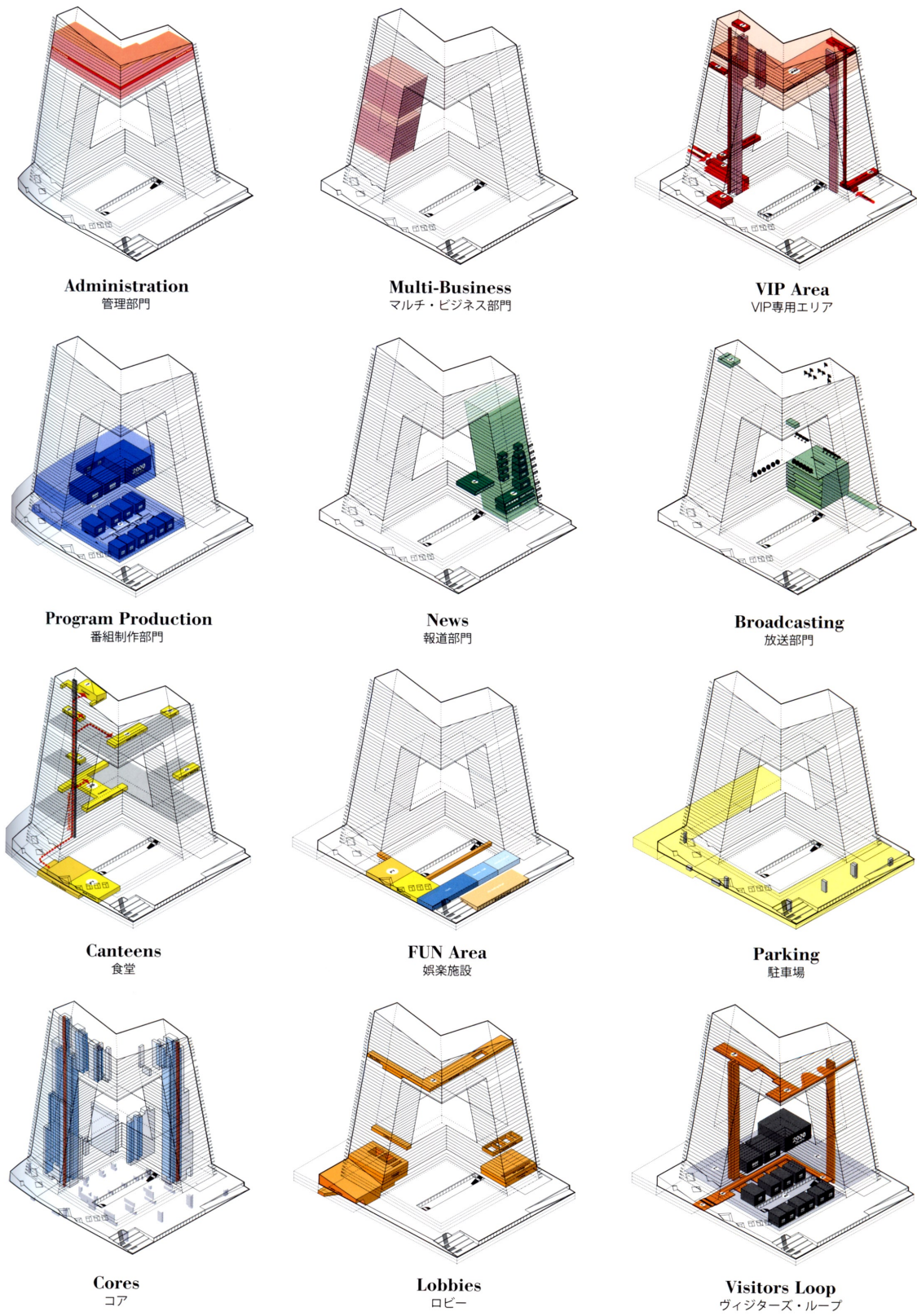


Fig. 8.54 OMA's CCTV in Beijing: Architectural analyses.

Kingdom, legitimate fusion in the past was controllable assimilation or "Hanization".

In the modern days, however, after China was forced to accept its inferior status on the global stage after several centuries of self-deception and imprisonment, the Chinese regained the ambition to absorb foreign knowledge and ideas. Under the endeavour of the first generation of Western-educated architects and scholars, Chinese architecture gained a new starting point for development. Yet, the journey proved harsh during the chaotic twentieth century, in which China suffered great losses of both energy and human resources.

The contemporary era once again ignites the fire of cultural fusions and clashes when modernism is reintroduced from the West. However, under the banner of rapid economic growth, local architects tend to fall short of fully understanding what modernism and tradition are all about, but make mere replicas of either. With the lack of discussion on a sophisticated level, modern Chinese architecture rarely reaches a satisfying result, opens up innovative directions, and evolves into a novel culture.

Few, if any, followed the model of Yang Tingbao, who in mid-century had honed his architecture into what amounted to a reflective personal style: mindful of the cultural requirements flowing around him, he nevertheless focused on his own development as a modern architect and realized that neither traditional nor modernist forms of expression, about which he was more deeply informed than most, were ends in themselves. Consequently, design thinking often became unbalanced, conceived almost entirely according to the circumstantial aspects of a project and to the virtual exclusion of any internal disciplinary demands.²⁷

Finale: the Hong Kong Case

Hong Kong, a hybrid metropolis that maintains a free ground for capitalist economy and cultural interactions with foreigners, has been known as the dream of prosperity that many mainland Chinese have in mind. From every December to February of the following year, buildings that face the Victoria Harbour of Hong Kong would

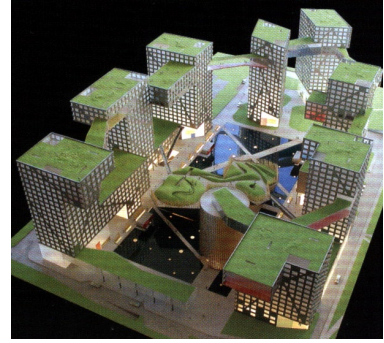


Fig. 8.55 Steven Holl's Looped Hybrid Building in Beijing.



Fig. 8.56 Herzog & de Meuron's National Stadium and Sasaki Associates' Olympic masterplan in Beijing.

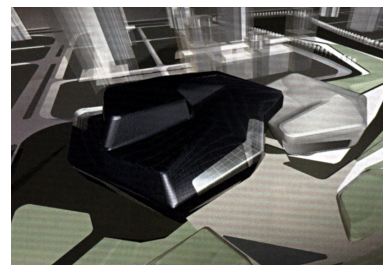


Fig. 8.57 Zaha Hadid's Guangzhou Opera House.



be dressed up with eye-catching light decorations to celebrate first Christmas and then Chinese New Year. Hong Kong is the venue where traditionalists, revolutionists, communists, capitalists, economists, artists, technologists, Chinese, and foreigners come to meet. Hong Kong maintains a healthy capitalist economy, a high standard of living and education, and a good mixture of Chinese and foreign cultural influences. Hong Kong is ranked sixth for the most expensive city in the world in 2005,²⁸ possesses Asian's second largest market capitalization, enjoys Asian's second largest foreign direct-investment inflows, contains 1,096 listed companies and 293 bank and deposit taking companies, maintains the world's largest cargo trading infrastructure, and with has a gross domestic product (GDP) of US \$162.8 billion.²⁹ Its shopping, business, popular, and social cultures have been influencing the mainland since the 1980s. Hong Kong is inarguably a convincing destination for many Chinese cities, even for Beijing to take as a mentor to develop its new Central Business District. The architecture in Hong Kong represents an identity created and maintained by the purpose of capitalist living, despite the lifestyle itself being semi-Westernized and semi-Chinese. Yet, authority in Beijing may find one thing obviously missing in the identity of Hong Kong: Socialist beliefs. Is Hong Kong really the quintessential Chinese city? Perhaps not even Chinese officials can provide a concrete answer.

Fig. 8.58 Victoria Harbour of Hong Kong : the skyline is consisted of projects by both local and foreign architects. Projects by foreign architects in this photo include Cesar Pelli's International Finance Centre near the right, the tallest building in the city. Norman Foster's Hong Kong Bank occupies the central spot in this photo. I. M. Pei Bank of China stands out with its triangular geometric patterns and on its right with green decorative lights is the Cheung Kong Centre, also a work of Pelli.



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2004.11.30. National Library

Today was another research day in the library's computer room. My target was researching essays on traditional siheyuyans. The concept of quadrangle courtyard housing dominates various streams of domestic dwellings in China. The garden complexes of Suzhou, walled complex of Yuannan, cave dwellings of the Loess Plains, Beijing Siheyuans, etc are all alternations of the ideal courtyard. The advantages of a courtyard include its spacious and environmental qualities, but, it also requires a relatively large piece of land for a single complex.

Even in modern Chinese architecture, courtyards play a crucial role in design. There are some architects still trying to derive a prototype of modern Chinese houses but the majority has concluded that no fixed form of the module would fit the diversity of modern Chinese cities; Wu Liangyong's Juer Hutong project can only be applied in the setting of old Beijing; I. M. Pei's Xiangshan Hotel fits well at the former imperial gardens.

Toward the end of the day, I looked online for an architecture bookstore in Beijing. I found one called Beixi, located south of the Soviet-style Beijing Exhibition Centre. I took a bus to the nearby area, and found the bookstore at an old apartment neighbourhood, probably developed in the 1960s. It was already evening and there were no street lamps once I entered the internal neighbourhood. The store is situated in a small shed near the neighbourhood gate. I was disappointed to find that Beixi was actually the Hong Kong-based bookstore Page One. Page One is a dealer of foreign literature and design books. I wouldn't be able to get what I need from Beixi. The staff at Beixi advised me to try the state-run architecture bookstore nearby. I followed her instructions and headed west for fifteen minutes.

At last, I reached the architecture branch of the Xinhua Bookstore (state organization). The store had all the newly published local architecture books. Two thirds of the store was dedicated to practical information like building codes, pumping codes, or electrical codes. In the design and theory sections I picked up several books including Wu Liangyong's *Architectural Theories* and Wu Huangjia's *Traditions and Innovations*. I left the store when it closed at 19:00.

2004.12.01. National Library

At the library I searched for online articles on traditional architecture. I didn't have time to finish, but I saved them onto my USB flash disk.

2004.12.02. National Library

Today, I continued my work with articles on traditional architecture. I came across several essays talking about the influences of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. In fact, Chinese architecture had never got a strong sense of religious influences throughout history, unlike Christian architecture in the West. Chinese temples basically followed the prototypes of imperial palaces set by the emperors. Confucianism imposed rules of hierarchy and the conservative sense onto the architectural development.

A few articles wrote about the principles of fengshui, the ancient philosophies regarding the creation of an ideal living environment. It was composed of practical theories dealing with building orientation, air circulation, spatial designs, and sun angle, and superstitious concepts as well. An article argues that fengshui could be read as a form of modern science involving magnetic fields and movement of electrons. It made me feel like I was reading a chapter of science fiction.

2004.12.03. National Library

Today, I saved a bunch of articles onto my flash disk on the contemporary meaning of Chinese architecture. A number of them persuade modern designers not to give up the soul of Chinese architecture. The authors argue that modern architecture in China should maintain a unique national essence that has been transcended down from traditions.

After researching, I went to the Book Building and strolled for a while. I bought several books including one on the twentieth-century architecture of Beijing, one on vernacular dwellings, and one on a redevelopment project of a *hutong* neighbourhood.

2004.12.04. Dashanlan

I just finished a magnificent cup of biluochun tea in room 6443. I bought 300 grams of the tea leaves at a traditional shop in the Dashanlan shopping street this morning.

Dashanlan, a long-established street market since the late Ming Dynasty, is a nostalgic shopping street nowadays. The Dashanlan is a long *hutong*, filled with traditional shops, eateries, and spontaneous vendors all year round. In recent years, the invasion of global tourism has altered the business nature dramatically. A number of old shops were turned into attractions, and more were transformed into souvenir shops. Despite the tourist aspect, the traditional shopping street maintains its former glamour with its high flow of customers pursuing traditional merchandise such as tea leaves, Chinese medicine, Tibetan jewellery, domestic snacks, and local metal wares, housed in its refurbished historical buildings.

Dashanlan is located only a stone's throw away from the Tiananmen Square, south of the Qianmen citadel and pailou.

I entered Dashanlan this morning from its prominent entrance at Qianmen Avenue. I found the hundred-year-old tea leaf store Zhangyiyuan and bought 300 grams of biluochun. Out of a large glass container, a staff member scooped out an approximate amount of leaves with his gloved hands and weighed them on an electronic scale. Then he put my tea leaves in a small iron container. After Zhangyiyuan, I went over to the 150-year-old Tongrentong Chinese pharmacy to have a glance. A pair of old stone qilins (mythical representation of giraffes) guarded the two-storey heritage



Fig. 9.1 Dashanlan and the nearby Xianyuokou market street remain prosperous despite the emergence of modern shopping districts at Xidan and Wangfujing.



Fig. 9.2-9.3 The entrance of the Dashanlan near the Zhengyangmen.



Fig. 9.4 The historical Tongrentang Chinese pharmacy becomes a famous tourist attraction today.

building, each with its own protective fence. The interior seemed like it had gone through several phases of renovations in the last decade.

I stopped by a street vendor and get a squid kebab and a "Chinese hamburger". The "Chinese hamburger" was a circular egg omelette stuffed with green onions, pork meat and some local sauce. I finished my delicious meal and began to take pictures of the flanking buildings along the shopping street. I chose a two-storey building fronted with white plaster walls and a balcony for photo-shooting. The building contained obvious representation of both Chinese and Western influences.

An old lady approached me and told me the building was considered precious architecture in the neighbourhood. She, an inhabitant of the white building (inside which is a two-storey courtyard apartment), said that a many buildings in Dashanlan were actually reconstructions from recent decades, but the white building was an authentic Qing building. She continued to comment that Dashanlan had changed a lot since she moved over from the Drum Tower neighbourhood. What bothers her right now is the increase of strangers around, as both souvenir shops and cheap guesthouses have mushroomed along the shopping street at an exponential rate. One thing she likes about the change of Dashanlan area is the grand opening of the KFC located at the Qianmen Avenue. She loves the Chinese egg-bean soup that the fast-food chain offers. The Chinese egg-bean soup is a successful invention by KFC China to suit the local market. Chinese green beans, egg, carrot pieces, parsley, and Chinese mushrooms are the main ingredients.

Globalization provides new options for the Chinese citizens, while international companies such as the fast-food chains alter themselves to suit the local taste. This concept is referred to in modern architecture as refined, with a regionalist touch. Regionalist architecture should avoid being a direct replica of traditional forms. It should be read as an international language to express a local meaning. It is a redefinition, an alteration, or even a revolution of the previous tradition. The key is the continuous mentality of the revaluation process. Tradition can go through a bottle-neck situation only if people are willing to reevaluate and transform it. Take the Wang Compound at Shanxi, for example: from the original man-made caves at the Loess Plain, the ancient Chinese derived the cave dwellings, and from the cave dwellings, the Wang constructed a complicated settlement of collective



Fig. 9.5 The home of the old lady whom I spoke to at Dashanlan.



Fig. 9.6 The Chinese style bean and egg soup at KFC.

living. Regionalism is the making of a new tradition with contemporary representation, and it benefits the global culture by providing more options to enhance more cultural fusion between nations.

I hopped onto a bus to the National Library at the bus stop across from the Qianmen citadel. At the library, I collected online articles on Chinese regionalism. Scholar Wu Liangyong advocates a deeper study on general regionalism: contextual aspects including town planning, local culture, natural terrain, history, and climate, but not just vernacular building types. Many others support the concept of regionalism and argue that it is the future for Chinese architecture. They encourage local architects to devote more energy into regionalist studies.



Fig. 9.7 The White Pagoda on the Jade Islet marks the highest point of the Behai Park.

2004.12.05. Behai Park

In the early afternoon, I entered the Behai Park through its east entrance, just a few minutes' walk northwest from the Forbidden City. Just within the entrance, a traditional bridge led me to the Jade Islet of Behai (North Lake), above which stood the iconic 36 m high White Pagoda and its temple complex.

Behai Park was an imperial garden just outside the Forbidden City. Behai is one of the lakes within the city wall, along with Qianhai and Houhai further north.

I walked up the stairs to the temple. The Temple contained a small Buddhist shrine. Behind the shrine was a steep stairway that led to the White Pagoda, a white-wash Indian stupa. I grabbed onto the railing and ascended the stairs carefully. This White Pagoda looked identical to the Baita in terms of size and shape, and was probably completed at around the same time. I paid an extra 1 RMB to walk up the stupa platform. The view down to the city was gorgeous, about the same as if I stood from the Jinshan, north of the Forbidden City.

I went down along another side of the temple mount. A lake-side pathway led me to pass by several traditional building complexes and the dock of tourist boats going across the Behai to the north shore. The dock was closed for the winter season. I went back across the bridge and walked

Fig. 9.8 The gate entrance into the lakeside pathway on the Jade Islet.





Fig. 9.9 The Wall of the Nine Dragons is the most popular attraction in the Beihai Park.

north along the shoreline. Willow trees at the waterfront shaded my wall all along, but I would rather have had myself exposed to the sunlight during such a winter afternoon.

Across the lake at the opposite side from the Jade Islet, I visited the renowned Wall of the Nine Dragons. This wall of glazed tiles illustrates nine dragons of different colours and gestures catching one dragon ball in the middle. This wall was very similar to the one at Datong. The wall was part of the enclosure of an imperial complex that no longer stands today. Although it is alone, it has attracted hundreds of visitors per day, especially local tourists who hold a special passion for dragons.

I exited the park at its north gate. Across the street, I picked a café to sit down in at the Lotus Market area in the Qianhai tourist area. After a cup of coffee, I began to write down the experiences of the day.

Now I will head to get something for dinner and then go back to room 6443 to do some more reading tonight.



Fig. 9.10 Locals transform many of the traditional siheyuan in the Qinghai area into trendy cafes and bars.



Fig. 9.11 Juyongguan is a Great Wall pass closest to Beijing.

2004.12.06. The Thirteen Ming Tombs

At 08:00, I hopped onto a long-distance bus at the Tiananmen Square to join a full day tour organized by the Beijing Public Transit Company. The bus would first take me to two sections of the Great Wall and then to the Thirteen Ming Tombs. The day trip was offered at an excellent rate of 50 RMB. The first stop was Juyongguan (a pass) of the Great Wall, about a half-hour bus ride from central Beijing. Juyongguan situates at a gorge in between two cliffs. The pass served as the north gate of the capital city in imperial times. What are left today are the brick masonry gate structures, the Great Wall on both sides, and a richly carved Buddhist platform. The gate structures are bold and prominent, similar to the First Pass under Heaven at Shanhaiguan, except a bit smaller. Inside the fortress stands a small shrine dedicated to Guanyu, the god of warriors and loyalty. I walked

Fig. 9.12 The 9.5m tall Cloud Platform at Juyongguan once supported three pagodas, which were destroyed when the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty was replaced by the Ming. A temple was then built atop and was again destroyed when Qing Dynasty came to replace the Ming.

Fig. 9.13 Bas-relief of the Heavenly Guards at the underside of the Cloud Platform.





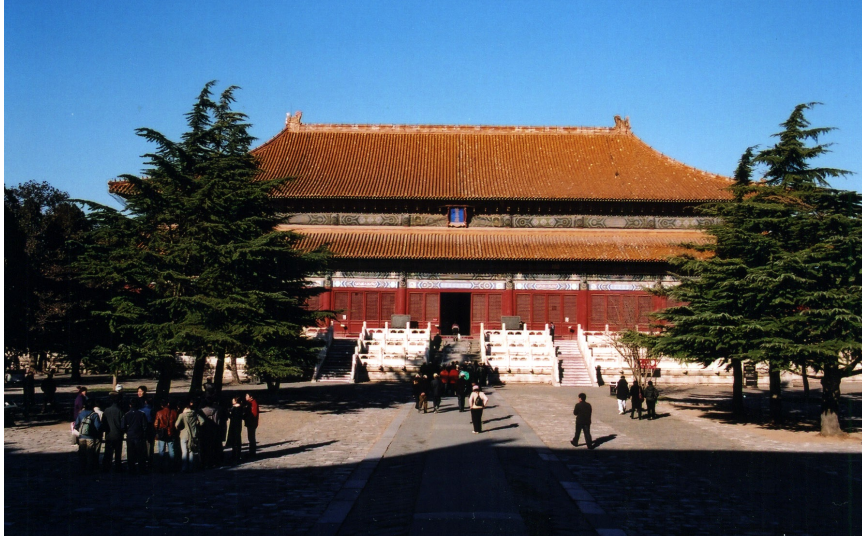
Fig. 9.14 The admission ticket of the Great Wall at Badaling contains a postal souvenir sheet and a post card.

a small portion of the Great Wall and turned to the stone Buddhist platform. The platform is actually an archway, like a half-sized Arch of Triumph in Paris. On top of the platform once stood a Buddhist shrine. On the underside of the platform gate, text and figures are carved on the stone masonry. The four Heavenly Guards were the most eye-catching, each carrying his own unique weapon. Texts of Han Chinese, Mongolian, West Xia, and Tibetan were inscribed to express Buddhist beliefs and the history of this site.

Another hour's bus ride took me to the Badaling Great Wall. The Badaling has been the hottest spot for Great Wall tourism since the time of Nixon's visit. This was the first section opened for foreigners. The base around the parking lot was very well established, with restaurants, cafés, new public washrooms, and souvenir stalls. I wound through the vendors at the ramp ascending to the wall, and reached the Badaling Watch Tower. Nothing about the tower was significantly different from Jinshanling and Simatai, except that Badaling is far closer to Beijing, and much renovated, quite crowded, and much more established. The mountains in this area were a little less impressive than the ones in Jinshanling. I walked a little and returned to the bus.

The Thirteen Ming Tombs were the real destination of the day for me since I had already had a wonderful Great Wall experience two months prior. Like the Eastern Qing Tombs, the Thirteen Ming Tombs have been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. But unlike the Qing tombs, the Ming tombs are located a lot closer to Beijing, and thus are more popular for tourists. Out of the 16 Ming emperors, 13 were buried here, and out of the 13, two are commonly visited by tourists.

I first went to the Changling of Emperor Yongle, the mighty builder of Beijing. The tomb's main ceremonial halls are open, but not



its underground palace. I entered the Great Hall of Changling. It is the largest timber hall in China. The main columns are made of trunks of the Sichuan Nanmu trees aged over one thousand years. These ancient Sichuan Nanmus became extinct during the Ming Dynasty because of the intense construction work. Nothing of this size could be found across China when the Qing Emperor Kangxi renovated the Taihe Hall at the Forbidden City. The Great Hall of Changling presents the fundamental drawback of traditional Chinese architecture; that is, the over-reliance on timber resources. To a certain extent, construction in ancient China contributes to

Fig. 9.15 A bronze statue of Ming Emperor Yongle in the Great Hall of Changling.

Fig. 9.16 The Great Hall of Changling.

Fig. 9.17 The ancient Sichuan Nanmu columns in the Great Hall of Changling.



the deforestation of many areas in the nation.

Every single piece of timber: beams, columns, and dougongs in the hall were enormous and bold. Not a single drip of paint was used to cover the magnificent wooden pieces, except the ceiling panels, which were covered by vivid green and golden patterns. A bronze statue of Emperor Yongle sat in the middle of the rectangular hall. It was probably made for tourist purposes. Several artefacts about the emperor were displayed in glass boxes along the back wall. The space, to me, seemed like an ancient forest. The sky was covered by the shades of green on the ceiling and I was surrounded by gigantic ancient tree trunks.

There was not much to see in Changling after the Great Hall. My bus took me to the other of the two most popular tomb complexes—the Dingling. The Dingling belongs to the Ming Emperor Wanli, one of the laziest emperors in Chinese history. Wanli was famous with his 23-year absence for court meetings. He cocooned himself in the Forbidden City with luxurious toys and concubines for most of his 47-year reign.

Today, Dingling's underground palace was open to public. I walked in the entrance courtyard and had a glance at the ceremonial halls. At the back, a straight path lined with tall cypress trees led me to the mausoleum tower. On the tower, a blank stele was erected to recognize Wanli's lack of contribution to the Dynasty. The empty stele was a common practice for unpopular emperors. A flight of stairs within a modern shelter connected the underground palace to the surface. I followed the concrete stairs and walked down about five storeys below grade. The interior of the underground palace was divided into a series of barrel-vaulted chambers organized in a symmetrical fashion along the central axis. Large vases, stone chairs, and other ceramic containers remained in the middle chamber. The side chambers were all empty, and the artefacts had been transferred to museums or to private owners. The coffins of the emperor and several of his wives were laid at the back chamber, under a dim, white light. The space was damp and cool. I did not stay for long, and left without forgetting to check out the detail motifs carved on the wall in the vestibule room.

The visit of Dingling concluded my day tour. The bus took me back to Tiananmen Square. The lights of the majestic red gate had already lit up, with the portrait of Mao glowing in the centre.

2004.12.07. Yiheyuan

I caught a bus from the Qianmen bus stop for the popular, new imperial summer palace, know as the Yiheyuan. The Yiheyuan, another UNESCO site in the city other than the Forbidden City and Tiantan, was built in the eighteenth century by Emperor Qianlong and then rebuilt in the late nineteenth century by Empress Dowager Cixi. Cixi, the widow of Emperor Xianfeng, took control of the imperial court from the death of Xianfeng in 1861 until her own death in 1908. The female tyrant squandered the last wealth of the empire for her own luxurious living, including the reconstruction of Yiheyuan.

The bus stopped at the parking lot in front of the site. From the information plaque at the entrance, I learned that Yiheyuan is 290 hectares in size. Emperor Qianlong built the marvellous Qingyiyuan on this site, just west of his famous Yuanmingyuan. In 1860, the British destroyed both Yuanmingyuan and Qingyiyuan. Empress Dowager Cixi spent 20 millions taels (1 tael equals roughly 40 grams, thus 800 tonnes) of silver to rebuild Qingyiyuan and renamed it Yiheyuan. The money had been intended to

Yiheyuan Summer Palace

- Suzhou Street
- Wanshou Mount Buddhist Temple
- Marble Boat
- Renshou Halls
- Deheyuan
- Changlang

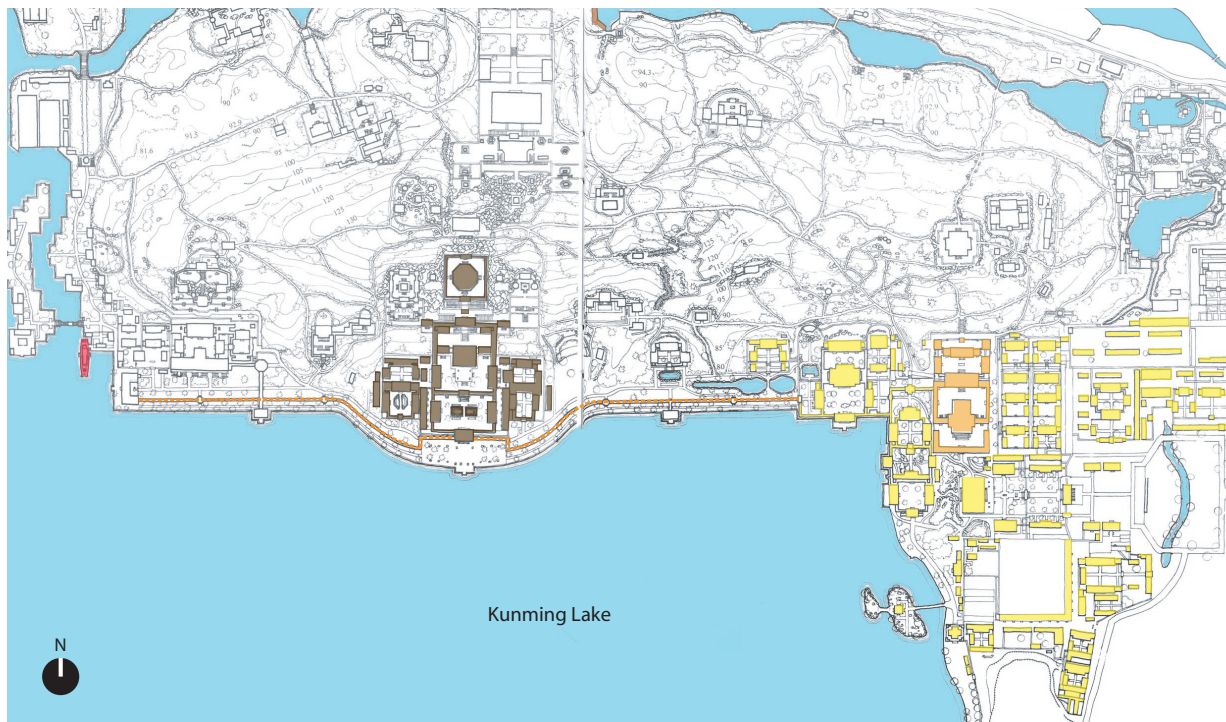


Fig. 9.18 Plan of Yiheyuan Summer Palace.

modernize the navy. Yiheyuan contains a palace complex, a mount, and a lake. The Renshou Halls near the entrance served as the official royal court and residence. The Wanshou mount was the site for temples, and thus took care of the spiritual aspect of royal life. Buildings along the Kunming Lake comprised the entertainment quarters.

I began my visit at the quieter Deheyuan in the Renshou building groups. Deheyuan was a private entertainment complex for the empress. The main buildings in the complex are the 21 m theatre hall and the single-storey audience hall. The main theatre hall presents several belongings of the empress, including royal furniture, a mechanical clock, and the first-ever-imported automobile in China. Through a side hall, I entered the back courtyard of the complex.

The back of the main theatre hall reveals itself as a prominent stage for Chinese operas. The 17 m wide stage stands about a metre above ground, and below the 21 m timber tower. It opens 180 degrees to the audience. The side buildings that once served as the seating areas for the hedonistic guests of the empress now function as galleries of royal ceramics and photographs. Inside the single-storey audience chamber across from the stage stands a yellow daybed where Cixi cocooned herself inside a quilt of precious silk, had a pipe of opium, and watched the performance. The courtyard space between Cixi's viewing chamber and the stage served mainly as additional audience space. Inside her viewing chamber, some of the finest wood carvings provide magnificent space dividers to separate the central viewing area and the more private side rooms.

Through a series of courtyards and gates I walked from the Deheyuan to the shoreline of Kunming Lake—the central body of water that occupies two thirds of the park area. The famous covered passageway, Changlang, curves over 700 m along the shoreline. Cixi ordered artists to paint historical and mythical scenes on every single beam within the Changlang structure. About every hundred metres, a small octagonal pavilion forms a resting point. I ended the Changlang at its western exit and followed a group of tourists to the renowned Marble Boat, another luxurious feature in the park. The two-level dining boat emerges from water at about ten metres away from the shoreline. Made of marble and stone, the dining boat mimics the form of a life-size Western steamship,

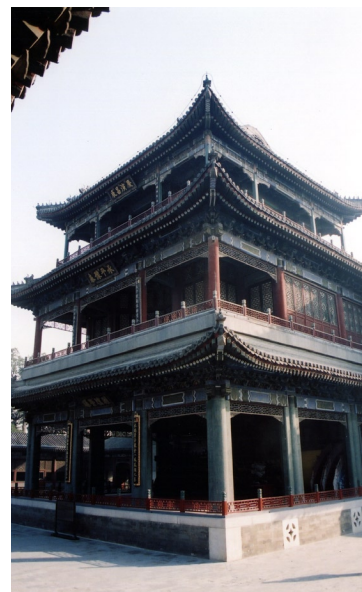


Fig. 9.19 The lowest level of the main hall of Deheyuan serves as the stage for traditional Chinese operas.



Fig. 9.20-9.21 Changlang (Long Corridor) in the Yiheyuan.



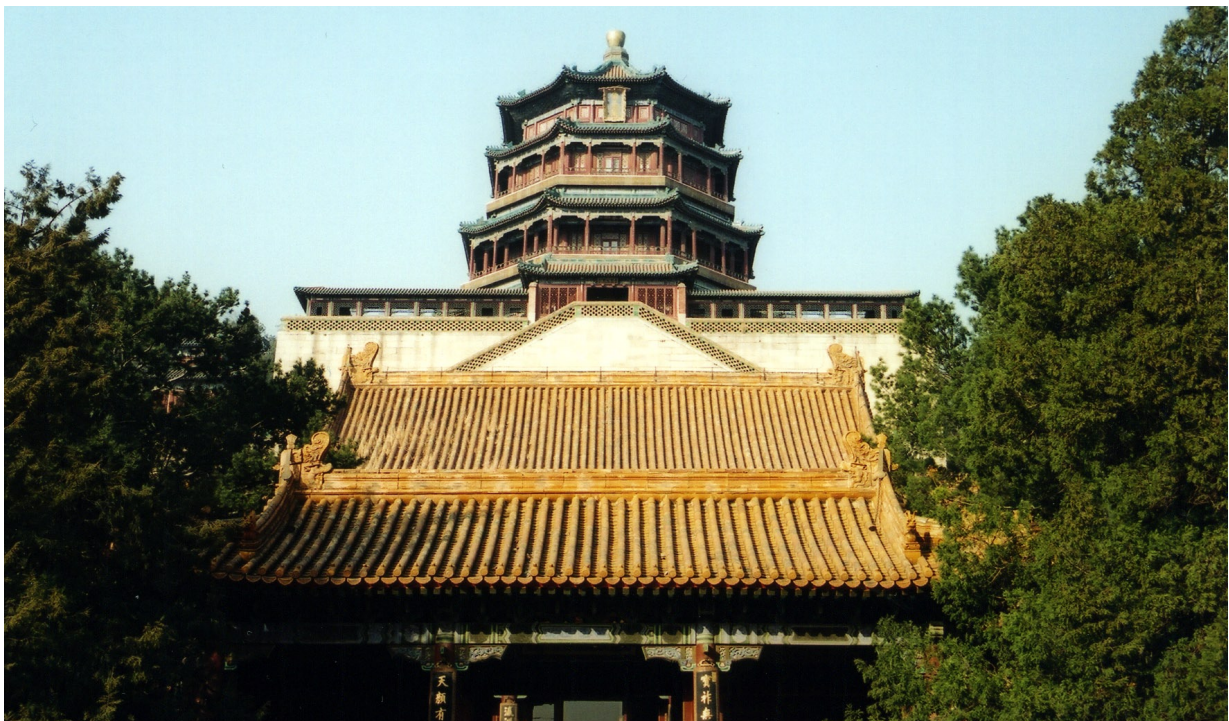
Fig. 9.22 Colourful paintings on architectural members became a trend for all imperial buildings during the Ming and Qing periods. On the left shows the whirling flower motifs, a common decorative painting on structural members.

with a wheel on each side and ornate marble balustrades and columns. From the description of a tourist guide beside me, I learned that Cixi made this dining boat with the money that was meant for the navy; imperial Qing got an unmovable boat instead of several battle steamships. I turned back to Changlang and exited at its centre at the Wanshou Mount.

The complex of the Foxiang Temple basically covers the entire hill front, including a large retaining wall and two flights of staircases. I entered the temple at its lowest gate and ascended the mount via the sheltered stairways. The wooden stairways contain ornate beam paintings and colourful columns and railings, similar to the Changlang. Close to the hilltop stands the Foxiang Tower, inside which a bronze statue of Guanyin occupies the main altar. At the back of the tower I went further uphill to the Tibetan shrine. The shrine was a two-storey box clad with yellow and green glazed bricks and topped with mini stupas. Inside the shrine several statues of Buddha form the altar for imperial worship. I descended the hill at the back. The back slope of Wanshou is occupied by a Tibetan lamasery. I strolled through the lamasery and arrived at Suzhou Street at the bottom.

Suzhou Street seems interesting from a distance. In the past, it functioned as an epitome of a Suzhou commercial scene: a theme park

Fig. 9.23 The Foxiang Temple at the Wanshou Mount.



for the royal family to enjoy "mundane shopping" while eunuchs and maids acted as shopkeepers. A central water body provides the Suzhou Street the main evidence of a water town in southern China. Two stone bridges connect the shoreline paths into a loop. The original shops varied from eateries, pharmacies, and tea shops to fabric stores. Today, souvenir stores load the Suzhou Street, turning it into more or less, a tourist trap.

Before exiting the Yiheyuan again, I stopped by a Chinese garden complex called Qiquyuan (Garden of Novelty and Amusement). The former resort complex contains bridges and corridors that zigzag above a large water pond, cutting the water into small pools. This Southern Chinese remains as a favourite garden setting for the Chinese. I rested on one of the pond-side benches at a covered corridor, but not for long; the sun sank behind the single-storey timber buildings. The entire Yiheyuan was blanketed under a shade of bluish grey. I left the park after Qiquyuan. An hour-and-a-half-long bus ride took me back to the Eastern Morning Hostel.

Touring the Yiheyuan (or the Forbidden City), to me, feels like a glance of different traditional cultural icons: the golden roofs, golden dragon motifs, red painted columns, beams decorated with Chinese paintings, and ornate marble balustrades. With the help of today's commercial art, magazine photos, postcards, tourist brochures, television shows—and most important of all, universal imitations at parks, Chinatown, shopping centres, and restaurants, these icons become kitsch that represent Chineseness. They form an overwhelming cultural module that spreads all over the world along with globalization. In reality, the module represents a stale culture that has stopped progression since the fall of imperial China in 1911. If culture requires continuous progression, and dragons and curved roofs have become a kitsch that symbolizes the past, what can be done to form the Chinese avant-garde? Timing is always the key for cultural development. In the hustling modernization, there is not yet time for the domestic culture to mature. Instead, a second version of Chinese kitsch has already emerged in response to the demand of the rising wealthy class; that is, a combination of replicas of different cultures around the globe. Emperor Qianlong of the eighteenth century enjoyed building his Baroque palaces at Yuanming Yuan and Tibetan temples at Chengde, wealthy Chinese businessmen of the twenty-first century love to buy Western villas in suburban China. Within 15 minutes of walking distance, the businessman

can leave his Canadian brick-house, stroll through a French, an Italian, and an English garden to reach his American-style gym house. These villa communities (mainly concentrated in suburb Beijing and Shanghai) require little design process and promote a kitschy representation of the modern Chinese society. They form an instant culture to represent a new China that does not require time and energy to obtain, like a pack of instant noodles. We know that instant noodles is not healthy and can never replace real noodles, yet most of us consume them because they are quick to cook and their flavourings guarantee to taste like real meat.



Fig. 9.24 Cixi's marble dining boat.



Fig. 9.25 Water is the main element in the Suzhou Street.

2004.12.08. National Library

It is interesting to acknowledge the importance of the missionary in the development of modern architecture in China. The Union Medical College across the street from the Eastern Morning Hostel, completed in the early 1920s, is the pioneer of traditionalist revival architecture. Surprisingly enough, the architect of the project was Harry Hussen, a Canadian who first practiced in Chicago and then in Beijing. Hussey was commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation in New York to design the medical college as part of the Oriental Education Commission under the adviser Frederick T. Gates, a Baptist minister, and Professor Ernest D. Burton of the University of Chicago.

I passed by the medical college again, approaching to the bus stop heading for the National Library. The green tiled roofs, eave treatment and the courtyard setting made a good imitation of a traditional Chinese palace complex. As I walked closer, some features looked strange such as the proportion of the windows and the small roofs at certain corners. Hussey was passionate about incorporating traditional Chinese forms and Western function and technology.

At the library, I picked up a book on the influence of the missionary during the late and early twentieth century on the development of modern Chinese architecture—*A Study on Christian University Architecture of China*. The main focus of the book lays in how missionary work in China evolved from small churches to large university establishments, and how these universities led to the development of some of the earliest modern Chinese architecture. Numerous western-funded organizations promoted Christianity along with science and education. At the beginning, they thought science could attract the Chinese to come to their lectures, and later they believed that only a higher education level could make the Orientals have a better understanding of Christianity. To minimize cultural conflicts, they deliberately chose to adopt domestic architectural styles to construct their campuses, or some form of a fusion of architecture. The great demand of education in China welcomed the Western efforts of establishing colleges and universities at major cities such as Peking (Beijing), Nanjing, Shanghai, and Tianjin.

The reading reminded me of the Tsinghua campus I had visited the other day. The Tsinghuayuan (the oldest quarter of the campus) was full

of neo-classical buildings. A number of the Tsinghua buildings were designed by American architect Henry Murphy. Murphy was also involved in a number of campuses such as the Yanjing University and the Nanjing University. He loved Chinese palace architecture, and believed that modern Chinese architecture should maintain the traditional forms while incorporating Western technology. Murphy was the leading figure for the first traditional revival of Chinese architecture.

After returning to room 6443, I did some planning for another excursion—perhaps this would be the last one. I'm planning to go to Shijiazhuang and its surroundings. I have passed by this provincial capital of Hebei when I went to Zhengding. This time, I plan to go to the Zhaozhou Bridge in the region and check out Shijiazhuang's provincial museum.

2004.12.09. National Library

Today's weather was not convincing, so I decided to stay indoors at the National Library. In the computer room, I collected more online articles on the making of modern Chinese architecture. These might perhaps help me to derive the conclusion of my journey in search of the future of Chinese architecture. What is modern Chinese architecture?—a question asked by four generations of scholars and designers, foreign and domestic, may not be relevant to continue dominating the design discussion forum. Dozens of articles were talking about where the soul of Chinese architecture is, but only a few actually discussed contemporary projects. How can modern Chinese architects develop their values if no one, including themselves, talk about their works?

I came to China in search of a future for traditional architecture and the essence of Chinese design concepts. The Chinese are proud of their unbroken history and tradition. Yet, in some cases, the long-inherited culture and memories have imposed a great restriction upon the shoulders of designers, just as when a Confucian master tells his students that the Golden Past of the Zhou Dynasty is the ideal and we should always follow it and work under its module. However, a number of scholars also point out that the tradition of Chinese architecture is a form of medieval, pre-

modern techniques that can never reflect the contemporary era. Can the medieval tradition regain its life and spirit in the modern-day time? Is it just a matter of choosing to inherit either the physical form or the conceptual essence?

Some scholars look at Chinese architecture as a kind of political expression of the nation. To them, to define Chinese architecture will be the biggest task for local architects because a nation requires a set of national representation as well as parameters. Chinese architecture, in their point of view, should reflect the glory of and enhance patriotism toward the mother nation. Not only new architecture, but even archaeological sites and ancient monuments are useful devices for public education. Chinese architecture is a type of national architecture; whether it contains shadows of the past does not really lie under their considerations.

A few scholars suggest Chinese architects should liberate themselves from both the political and cultural restrictions, and focus on pragmatic issues like improving living conditions or creating a better lifestyle. New breakthroughs require leaving things behind, and they believe it's time to leave the burdens behind. This sounds like a path that the Chinese architectural industry should steer toward. First they must improve the profession, and then turn back for the fundamental question when both the skills and thinking of the local designers are more developed.

One thing interesting about the articles was that most of them were written by university professors or scholars, and hardly any are practising architects. I think the local design field has to put an effort into eliminating the separation between scholarly theoretical discussions and real-life practices.

Before returning to room 6443, I went to the Book Building and bought several more books, including the *History of Modern Chinese Architecture* by an architect / professor named Zou Denong. Books in China are so tempting because of their low prices compared to Canada and Hong Kong. So far, I have spent about a quarter of my RMB on books, a third on accommodation, and the rest on transportation, admission prices, and meals. I told myself today at the bookstore it would be the last time for book shopping. I have to be careful with the budget and also the weight of my luggage!

Theoretical Study on Chinese Architecture

For the past five thousand years, architecture in China was considered a mere device for practical living. Scholars from the past put great effort into studying paintings, sculptures, literature, and history, but they did not study architecture. Whatever was written on architecture remained anonymous. Only a few ancient architectural discourses survive to the present day. Architecture in the pre-modern era was taught as a hereditary knowledge, handed from generation to generation of craftsmen. Theoretical study on Chinese architecture only emerged in 1919 when an ancient text, *Ying Zao Fa Shi (The Handbook of Architectural Planning and Construction)*, written in AD 1103, was discovered. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, a number of Western and Japanese scholars began the first detail research on Chinese architecture and published several influential works. Their works and the discovered ancient manual formed the basis for the local pioneer scholars to write the first complete history of Chinese architecture.

Study on Chinese architecture continued during the harshest years of twentieth-century China. Throughout this time, architectural theories matured around the anxieties raised by self-rediscovery and rapid modernization. Current architectural theories emerged from a debate between advocates of modernism and historicism, or traditionalism and regionalism. Today, architectural discourse in China remains limited. To understand the current constraints and achievement of the contemporary Chinese architectural scholarship we must sketch its evolution over four generations.

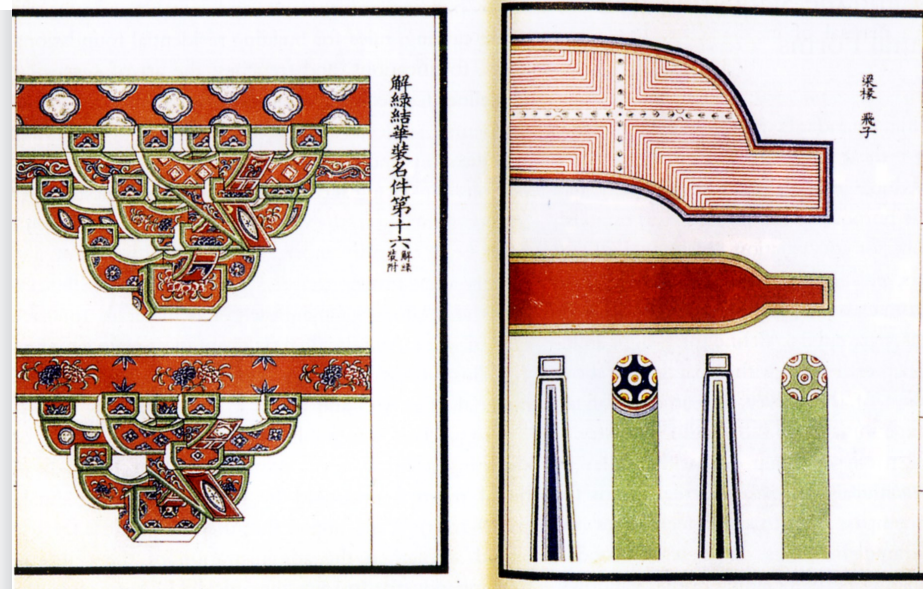


Fig. 10.1 Illustration from the *Ying Zao Fa Shi*, published in 1103, reissued in 1145.

The Ancient Manuals

Written by Li Jie in AD 1103 during the North Song Dynasty, *Ying Zao Fa Shi* is a handbook on architecture written at a time when Chinese buildings had already fully developed their forms and styles during the Tang Dynasty (AD 618 to 907). Under the orders of Emperor Huizhong, Li Jie (? To AD 1110), who was the head of the imperial construction department spent three years collecting ancient theories and techniques, the opinions of his contemporary craftsmen, and his own experiences in the field to write the manual.

In the preface, Li quotes from the ancient literature *Zhou Yi (Book on Changes)* and *Li (Book on Rituals)*, both written during the West Zhou Dynasty (1027 BC to BC 770), to explain the purpose of architecture: buildings shelter humanity from the wind and rain and express the prosperity of a peaceful era. He introduced the history of architects with references to "Gonggong" (the master builder under the legendary Shen Emperor at around BC 2000) and "Zhang Zuo Da Zhang" (the chief architect of the West Han Dynasty (206 BC to AD 8)). He also explained the complexity of an architect's role. Architects not only had to plan a capital city and a royal palace; prepare tools such as a compass, T-square, level-ruler, and charcoal-string; or design architectural details, but also had to gather construction workers. He saw the lack of a standardized measuring unit and thorough knowledge on every construction aspect

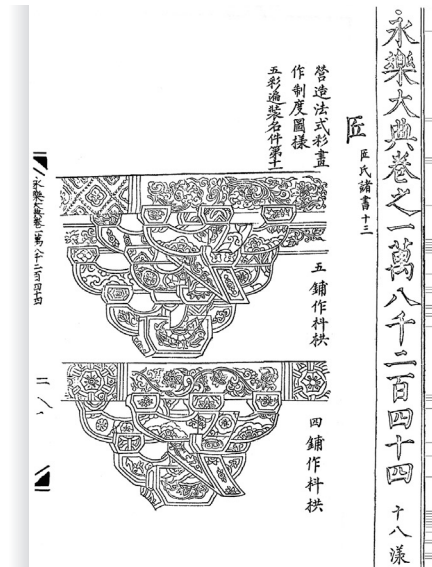


Fig. 10.2 A page of the Ying Zao Fa Shi, reissued in the Yongle Encyclopedia in the fifteenth century during the Ming Dynasty.

as the main weaknesses of his contemporaries. His manual became a standard of construction and architectural principles.

Li's manual contains thirty-four chapters of diagrams and information on site work, structural systems, material properties, construction methods, and decoration details. Li proposes the dimension of the dougong (Chinese bracket) as the measure unit of construction and advocates the flexibility of timber framing.

First issued in AD 1103, and then in AD 1145 in the South Song Dynasty, a Song edition and several Ming and Qing copies have survived to modern days in either the Forbidden City or the hands of private collectors. The book remained, however, largely unknown until 1919, when scholar Zhu Qiling found a Qing hand copy and published it in the same year. Another scholar, Tao Shang, published a recreated Song version in 1925 after a loose page of the Song edition was discovered in the Forbidden City. From then on, *Ying Zhao Fa Shi* has been regarded as the fundamental book on architecture in China, and has served as a major reference for the study of the evolution of Chinese architecture.

Another manual on Chinese architecture, of less fame, is the *Gong Cheng Zuo Fa Ze Li* (*Construction Methods and Samples*) issued in AD 1734. This manual was written under Emperor Yongzheng by the Construction Department of the imperial Qing government. The

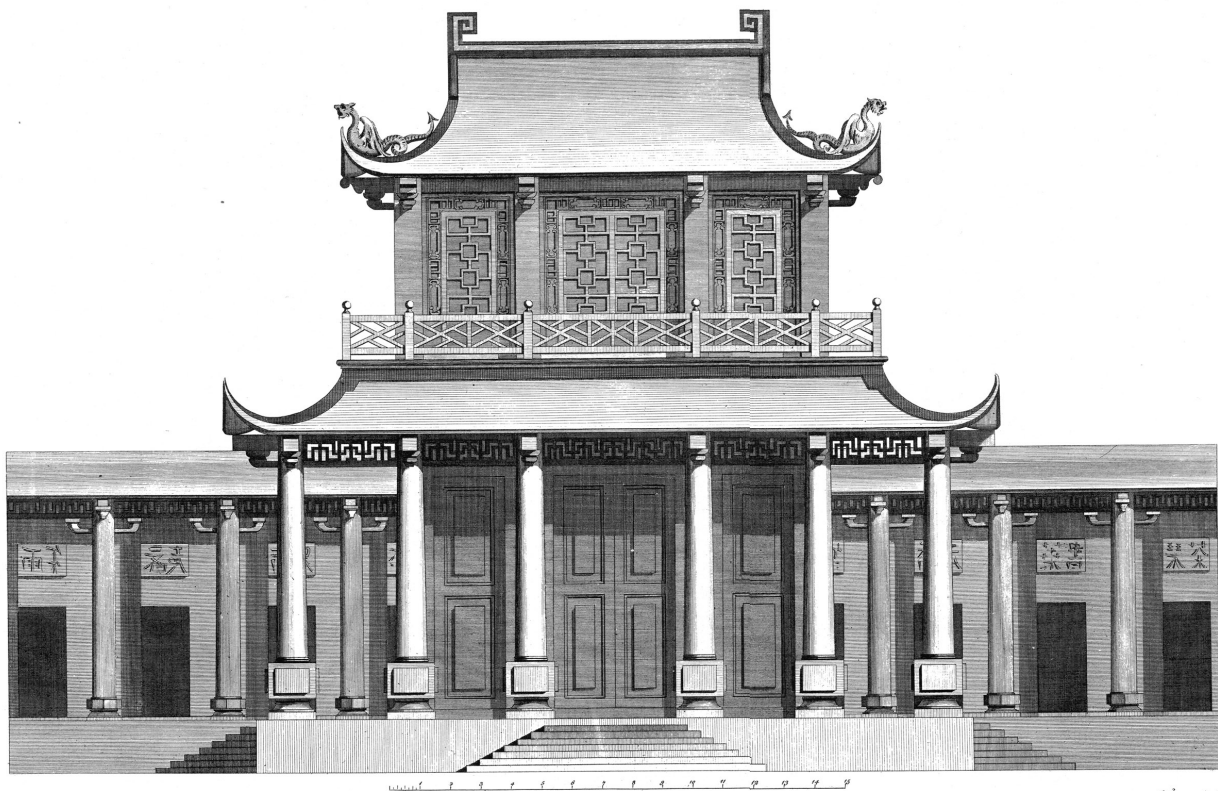
entire book consists of seventy-four chapters on building types, dougong types, building details, and cost estimation. Since *Gong Cheng Zuo Fa Ze Li* is a collection of samples with standardized dimensions and techniques, it is considered today to be merely a record of rules. This manual reflects the decline of architecture during the Qing Dynasty. In this period, invention and creativity was largely discouraged. Yet, the Qing manual still provides a reference for modern historians to study the surviving Ming and Qing architecture. It also serves as a tool to decode its predecessor, *Ying Zao Fa Shi*.

Foreign Pioneers:

About the same time as the *Gong Cheng Zuo Fa Ze Li* appeared, Scottish architect Sir William Chambers (1723 to 1796) published *Design of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines and Utensils* in 1757.

With the contemptuous perspective common to Westerners at that time, Chambers introduced Chinese architecture to Western readers as an "inferior taste" and "toys" of "oddity, prettiness, or neatness of workmanship". He comments on Chinese buildings as being "neither

Fig. 10.3 William Chambers, front elevation of a Chinese temple in Canton.



remarkable for magnitude or richness of materials: yet there is a singularity in their manner, a justness in their proportion, a simplicity, and sometimes even beauty, in their form, which recommend them to our notice."¹ Chambers claimed first-hand expertise on the basis of a brief stay in the seaport city of Canton (now Guangzhou). Chambers believed that he had seen enough to understand Chinese architecture. He assumed that all buildings in China resembled those of Canton. Chambers illustrates examples of Chinese architecture from his visits of temples and pavilions at Canton, and from paintings and vases. Despite the limited resources, Chambers' book includes elevations and plans of several "Chinese buildings", yet provided little accuracy on proportions, materials, and measurements. His book remains one of the first Western studies on Chinese architecture and culture.

During the nineteenth century, various Western scholars began to write the history of architecture. The previous contemptuous attitude towards Chinese architecture remained strong, and by the nineteenth century, scholars had not included Chinese architecture into their historical discourses of world architecture. Despite the fact that James Fergusson did not include Chinese architecture in his *History of Architecture*, published in 1885, he wrote an earlier piece, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, nine years previous, in which half of Book IX was dedicated to Chinese architecture. Before Fergusson, only a few essays had been published in the West that dealt with Chinese architecture, such as E. Ashworth's work in 1853, J. Lamprey's essay in *R.I.B.A. Transactions* vol. xvii in 1866, and W. Simpson's essay in the same journal. In Fergusson's forty-page description on Chinese architecture, he shows a common perception Western scholars had of Chinese architecture at that time. "...in China, where the constructional arrangements are often of a very complicated nature which do not seem to have been regulated by natural laws, to evolve a plan from them is an almost impossible task."² Chinese architecture, to Fergusson, remained complicated, singular, and even peculiar. For instance, he saw the structure of the Temple of Heaven peculiar because he could never imagine how timber, "materials which lend themselves only to rectangular structures"³, could form a convincing structure for a circular building. Similar unjust comments also appear when Fergusson

mentioned that "nine tenths of the bridges in China are, and consequently narrow and unstable" because he thought most bridges were constructed with small arches on the horizontal-bracket principle.⁴ Today, evidence tells us that China maintained a wide range of surviving stone and timber bridges from the ancient times, none of which are considered unstable. Out of a difference of cultural perspective, Fergusson commented that China had no monumental buildings that could match the grandness of the Egyptian pyramids. But, he did not realize that the ancient Chinese had never been interested in building enormous structures that could stand forever. Except for the Great Wall that served for defence purposes, the Chinese basically considered massive construction a squander of resources and labour that made no practical improvement to the society. The Chinese expressed monumentality in literature, and in some cases, in imperial tombs underground. All in all, out of cultural divergence, Western scholars in the nineteenth century saw the Chinese as inferior and uninteresting.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a number of Western scholars came to China to study domestic art and architecture. With cameras, these scholars began to document ancient Chinese art, buildings, towns, and archaeological sites. Some devoted great effort to comprehend the local history and culture, and explored remote sites away from the coastal areas, investigating unaltered ancient buildings.

The first Westerner to publish a detailed work on the history of Chinese architecture was Ernst Boerschmann (1873 to 1949) from the Berlin University of Technology. He visited twelve provinces in the first decade of the twentieth century to document ancient buildings and

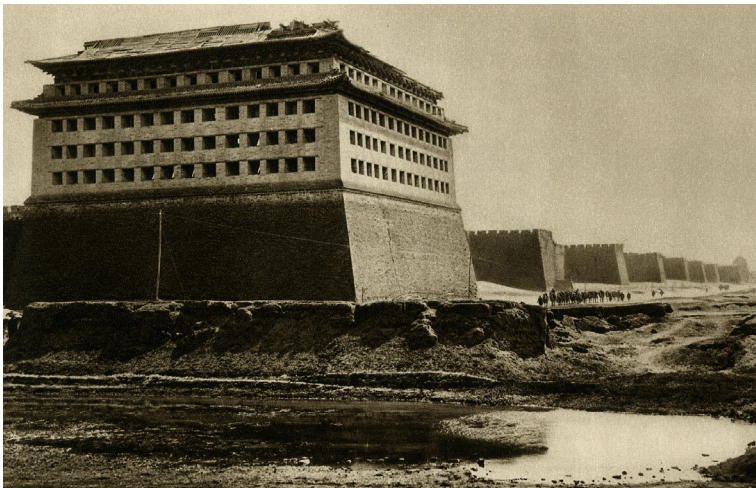


Fig. 10.4 Boerschmann, the city wall of Peking, 1923.

towns. As an architect, Boerschmann produced architectural drawings, structural diagrams, and detailed illustrations of building complexes he visited. He published the two volumes of *Chinesische Architektur* in 1925, two years after the publication of a teaser: *Baukunst & Landschaft in China*, a book with only 14 pages of text, but 288 full-page photographs. In *Chinesische Architektur*, Boerschmann categorized Chinese architecture into twenty architectural types, such as city walls, gates, masonry structures, pavilions, relief, pailous, pagodas, and others. Boerschmann also included a few coloured images from the *Ying Zao Fa Shi*, but he did not include the text of the ancient manual. His photo collection in the book presents the first systematic photo survey of Chinese architecture and today, they mark the lasting value of Boerschmann's work; the text, however, has been superseded by new research.

Five years after Boerschmann published the *Chinesische Architektur*, another great work was published by Osvald Siren, an art and philosophical historian at the University of Stockholm. From the 1920s to 1940s, Siren published a number of works on Chinese sculpture, art, and architecture. In 1930, he published an extensive four-volume masterpiece, *History of Early Chinese Art*, and the last volume was dedicated to Chinese architecture. In the introductory

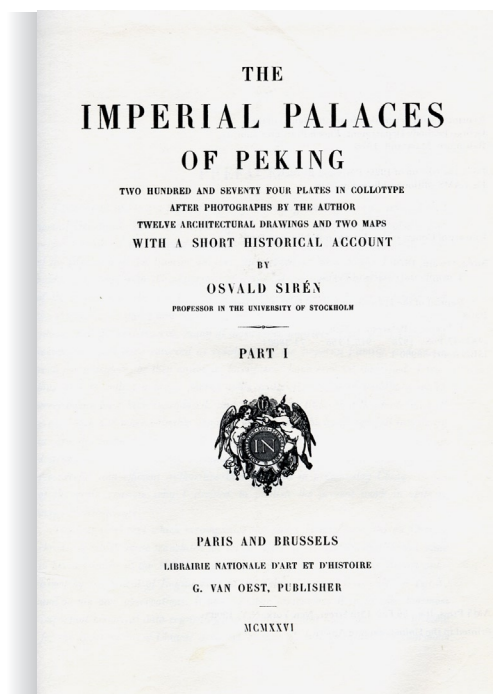


Fig. 10.5 Osvald Siren's *Imperial Palaces of Peking*, published in 1924.

remarks, he states, "Chinese architecture is an attempt to co-ordinate with nature, an expression of the 'life-impetus' and the movement of Yin and Yang, a device to present symbolic meanings, and an icon to enhance comparative uniformity, which altogether contain little connections with Western aesthetic point of view."⁵ Other than the limited options of surviving buildings, he allocated great efforts for studies of tombs, stone grottoes, pagodas, descriptions in local chronicles, and ancient clay models to illustrate his discourses.

In the chapter of Historical Evolution, Siren includes several structural drawings produced by Japanese scholars such as Tadashi Sekino, and information on Japanese temples and pagodas to depict the buildings in Tang and Song China, at a time when many Japanese buildings and cities were erected according to Chinese examples, or by builders from the mainland. Because of his lack of technical knowledge and understanding of the local history, Siren's history of Chinese architecture remained brief and incomplete. He ends the book attempting to explain the downfall of Chinese architecture: "this architecture was logical and purposeful, and it remained a living art as long as the original principles of construction were maintained. But once they were encroached upon by purely decorative tendencies,^a its vital nerve was severed, and its further possibilities of growth were destroyed."⁶ Other works published by Siren include *The Imperial Palaces of Peking* (1924), *Chinese Sculpture* (1925), *The Forbidden City* (1926), *Chinese Painting* (1930), and *Chinese Gardens* (1949).

Siren comments on Ming and Qing buildings to illustrate the decline of the Chinese structure, saying that a number of architectural elements have evolved into mere decorations along with advancement of technology.

Other than Western scholars, Japanese historians were among the first people to study Chinese architecture. Japanese scholars held a more prestigious position in understanding the subject and seeing the subtle architectural differences of different historical eras because of their close relationship with China. After extensive exploration in China from 1902 to 1914, Professor Ito Chuta (1867 –to1954) from the Tokyo Imperial University, published his research on Chinese architecture in his 1925

Chinese Architectural History, and two more works followed in 1929 and 1941. Ito was an influential figure in Japan, believing modern designs should be developed upon traditional roots.

In *Chinese Architectural History*, Ito criticizes the studies by a number of Western scholars as "naïve" and "incomplete". He denounces British scholar James Fergusson's ignorance on the subject, whose work *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* described China as a nation that contains no philosophy, literature, or art while Chinese architecture contained no artistic values but remained as an unreasonable and naïve industry. Ito also discredits Banister Fletcher, another British scholar who, in *A History of Architecture*, refers to Chinese architecture as an art without history, changes, and variations. Ito suggests "to study the massive China, no matter arts or history, Japanese should be the most suitable people. Since ancient times, Japan has had close relationship with China, thus Japanese can understand China far better than Europeans and Americans. First, the writing characters are the same, thus we can grab the meaning of ancient Chinese literature without difficulties. Second, Japanese have their Asian look so that exploring the inlands of China is certainly more convenient..."⁷ This statement proved to become a strong encouragement for nationalist Chinese scholars later to compete with the Japanese in their studies.

Ito points out that during the Han Dynasty (206 BC to AD 220) and especially during the Tang Dynasty (AD 618 to 907), when China was flexible enough to absorb outside influences, Chinese architecture had evolved to its peak. The Tang capital city Changan emerged as the centre of global cultures, allowing foreign religions such as Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, etc to coexist with Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. He condemns the classical-reviving Ming Dynasty as a period of anti-creativity, and proclaims the early Qing Dynasty as the twilight of Chinese culture. "Chinese architecture in the twentieth century is a cultural legacy from its 5,000 years of history, something hard to diminish all at once, but would never belong to the contemporary era... A person has no hundred years of age, and art has no 10,000 years of lifespan either. If Chinese art fails to construct new opportunities for survival, it can

never regain its ancient level of grandeur."⁸ In the second part of the book, Ito presents his examples in five chapters: the Prehistoric (? to 1122 BC), the Zhou Dynasty (1122 BC to 256 BC), the Qin Dynasty (256 BC to 207 BC), the Han Dynasty (207 BC to AD 221), and the Period of Three Kingdoms to the Sui Dynasty (AD 221 to 618). His research of projects stops right before the Tang Dynasty, thus his materials do not cover any surviving building in China.

Sekino Tadashi (1868 to 1935), another scholar from the Tokyo Imperial University, had also published several works on Chinese art and architecture. Sekino began his research on Buddhist relics and archaeological sites in China, and published *Buddhist Relics of China* in 1925 after visiting a number of Buddhist temples and stone grottoes. He then published *Architecture and Art of China* in 1938 and *Chinese Cultural Relics* in 1939. In *Architecture and Art of China*, Sekino compiled over thirty essays on different ancient buildings, art pieces, and travelogues. He includes document drawings of several Chinese and Japanese buildings to explain the basic structural concept of Chinese architecture. Yet, his book hardly reflects the history of Chinese architecture, since his information was restricted by the number of buildings he had visited.

Along with publications on the subject, Western architects also began the first classical revival in China in the 1910s and 1920s, attempting to merge traditional forms and new technologies to construct modern buildings.

Domestic Pioneers:

After the foreign pioneers had compiled a foundation of studies, Chinese scholars in the 1930s began to take over the work and successfully wrote the first brief, but complete history of Chinese architecture. A number of returned graduates from Western universities formed the first generation of architectural scholars and practitioners in China. The most well-known researchers were the married couple Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin. What had inspired both of them to research Chinese architecture as their life-long career was the newly reprinted copy of *Ying Zao Fa Shi* sent to them by Liang's father from China during their years at the University of Pennsylvania. "A thousand years ago to have a masterpiece like this...

what a glory to the culture of our race"⁹, commented Liang's father, Qichao, in a letter.

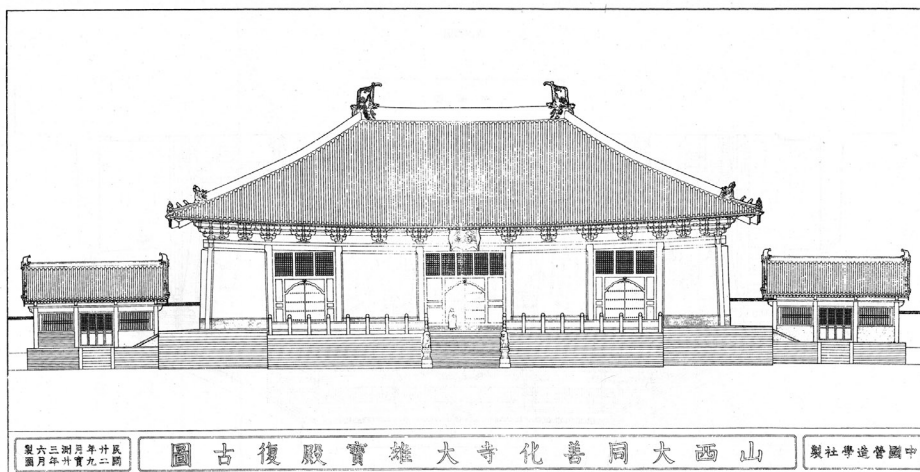
The version of *Ying Zao Fa Shi* that Liang received was published by scholar Tao Shang in 1925 after a loose page of the Song version had been found in the former imperial storage. Tao took the text from the Qing copy that had been rediscovered at Jiangnan Library in Nanjing by scholar Zhu Qiling in 1919 and the Song page as the layout reference. He redrew a series of diagrams in Song style to be included in his version. In 1931, Liang and Lin were invited to join the *Ying Zao Xue Se* (Institute for Research on Chinese Architecture), founded by Zhu Qiling, to begin their life-long careers as researchers of Chinese architecture.

The best way to introduce Liang and Lin's passion for their research work is to quote their invention, the "architecturesque". Published in the *Institute Bulletin* vol. 3 in 1932, Liang and Lin described an abstract way of seeing architecture after visiting a couple of unknown historical buildings at the outskirts of Beijing:

Within the beauty of these buildings, there arises a sensation beyond both poetic and picturesque feelings in an architect's eye, and that is the pleasure of "architecturesque"...

No matter on any grand city gate, or in the soul of any ruins, there is always an invisible whisper, or even singing, about the unbelievable transformations in time, from touching love stories to bloody killings of warfare. Certainly they provide us a poetic and picturesque sensation. Yet, an architect should declare right away, that within such sensation there is something else beyond poetry and

Fig. 10.6 Institution of Research on Chinese Architecture, front elevation of Xianhua Temple in Datong, *Institute Bulletin* vol 4 no. 3-4, 1933.



picture... Within the subconscious mind, we can even see the glory of the construction and the grief of the collapse of the building. Accidentally, we may catch a tiny piece in our eyes, only a single piece, of detailed carved debris created by an anonymous builder, then what should we call this immediate sensation if we don't have a term like "architecturesque"? We may still have to temporarily come up with a novel term for explanation, right?¹⁰

Under the supervision of Liang, the Institute for Research on Chinese Architecture published their field findings and studies in the *Institute Bulletin* from 1931 to 1937. The journal became an influential publication in Chinese architecture. Boerschmann of Berlin was impressed by the work of the Institute and joined it in 1932 after sending in an essay on Chinese pagodas. Other than the journal, Liang and his team also published *Qing Se Ying Zao Ze Li (Construction Manual of the Qing Style)* in 1934, a book to analyze and decode the *Gong Cheng Zuo Fa Ze Li (Construction Methods and Samples)*, after extensive research of surviving buildings and interactions with elderly builders, and later *Notes on Ying Zao Fa Shi* in 1983, eleven years after Liang's death. The work of the Institute was interrupted by the Japanese invasion, and the bulletin ceased publication in 1937.

Written in his retreat years at a village in southwest China during the Anti-Japanese War, edited by his wife Lin Huiyin and published in 1944, Liang's *History of Chinese Architecture* is the first complete account on the subject. With brilliant knowledge on the two ancient architectural manuals and materials from the Institute, Liang uses structural principles as the language to unfold the evolution of Chinese architecture from the pre-historical era to the modern period. In his introductory chapter, he lists the major physical properties of Chinese architecture: the timber material, the frame structure, the dougong as key measure unit and the curve roof form, and the major conceptual properties: the disregard on permanent existence, the restrictions of morality, the emphasis on layout and planning resulting from rituals and hierarchy, and the tradition of the master-disciple relationship of craftsmen. He also makes brief comments on the two ancient building manuals. The chapters followed were written according to different historical periods, accompanied by a number of document drawings and photographs of surviving examples. The book became Liang's basic teaching materials for his lectures at Yale from

1946 to 1947, and at Tsinghua University in the following decades.

After seven years of suspension, the *Institute Bulletin* was reissued in 1944. Liang wrote the article "Why Study Chinese Architecture?" in the journal to reinsure their standpoint as historians as well as architects:

Today, it is fortunate that our nation has developed a sense of self-consciousness on our own culture. The acts of collecting evidences and examining our past become the spirit of modern study. Discovering new possibilities from traditional blood becomes today's effort to develop our future...

How to balance the reception of new technologies and materials with our Chinese concepts and meanings, sprouting new branches from the old trunk, is the real modern challenge...

According to a conscious point of view, the palace-style neo-traditional architecture is not appropriate to express modern science and artistic visions. Its emergence is based on admiration of the exterior form of Chinese architecture. Many architects want to maintain the splendid glazed tiled roofs while designing with a plan and structure of a Western building...

In order to obtain the essence of Chinese architecture, we must improve knowledge on structural systems and planning layout. The structural connections and interactions of members should always be organic and flexible. The form, decorations, screens and panels are mere by-products.¹¹

After the Communist takeover in 1949, Liang spent most of his efforts on the preservation of historical buildings and the invention of a national architectural style. He advocated the studies of traditional architecture to enhance new inspirations for modern Chinese architecture. Published in 1954, the conclusion of a speech at the Central Scientific Conference states his intention clearly:

We should study our native architectural heritage, understand its language and features, and then manipulate them flexibly during design process...

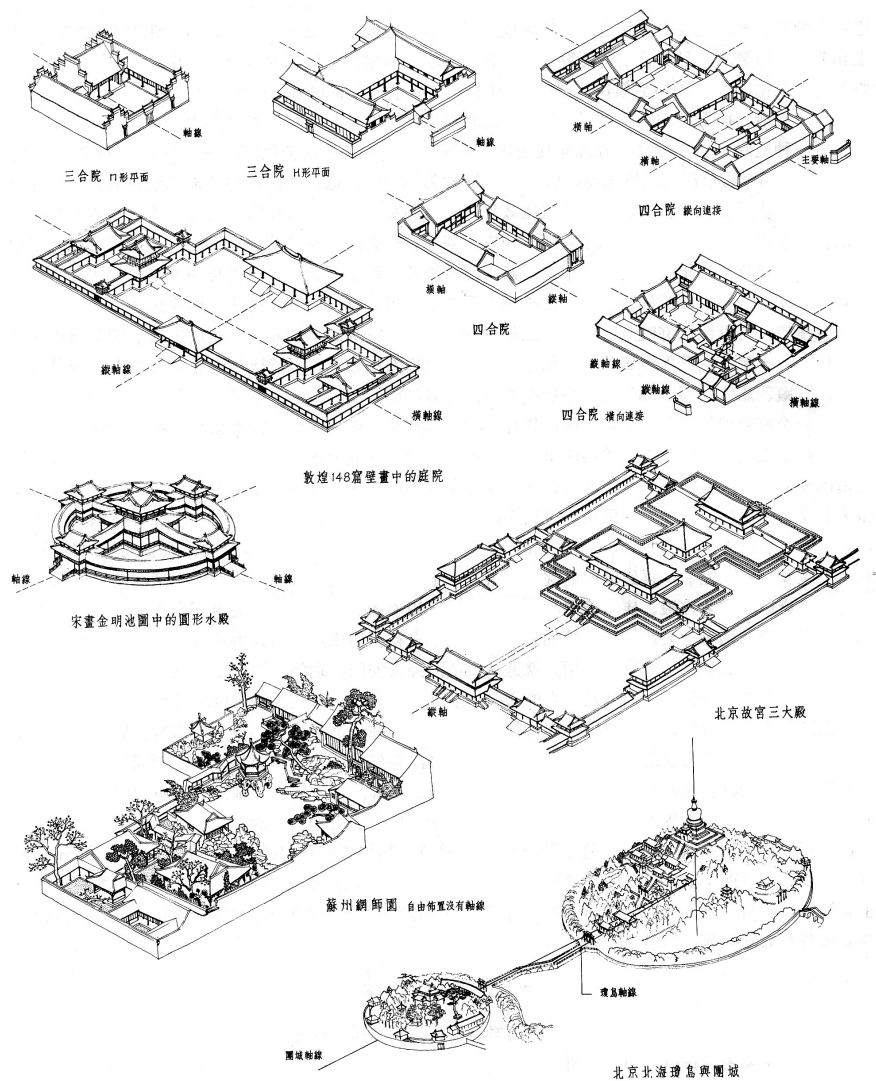
The new Chinese architecture should be derived from real experience, and should undergo a lengthy period of time. The length of this period is determined by our knowledge on architecture – the art that reflects our epoch, while this knowledge is based on our level of sophistication on thinking.

First, no matter the size and height, we can still manipulate traditional form and language to deal with designs. Second, the national form can be derived from the parti of architectural grouping and the general idea of the building, while the elevations, proportion and rhythm of doors and windows and decorative patterns are secondary...

I hope people can admit that architecture is an art, but not mere engineering. We architects hope that people can care about architecture, understand it, supervise it, and criticize it, just like how we deal with literature, theatre arts, music, painting and sculpture.¹²

Liu Dunzhen, the director of document research at the Institute for Research on Chinese Architecture, had also published a number of articles on traditional architecture in the *Institute Bulletin*. From 1959 to 1965, Liu worked as the chief editor on the *History of Ancient*

Fig. 10.7 Liu Dunzhen, composition of Chinese architecture.

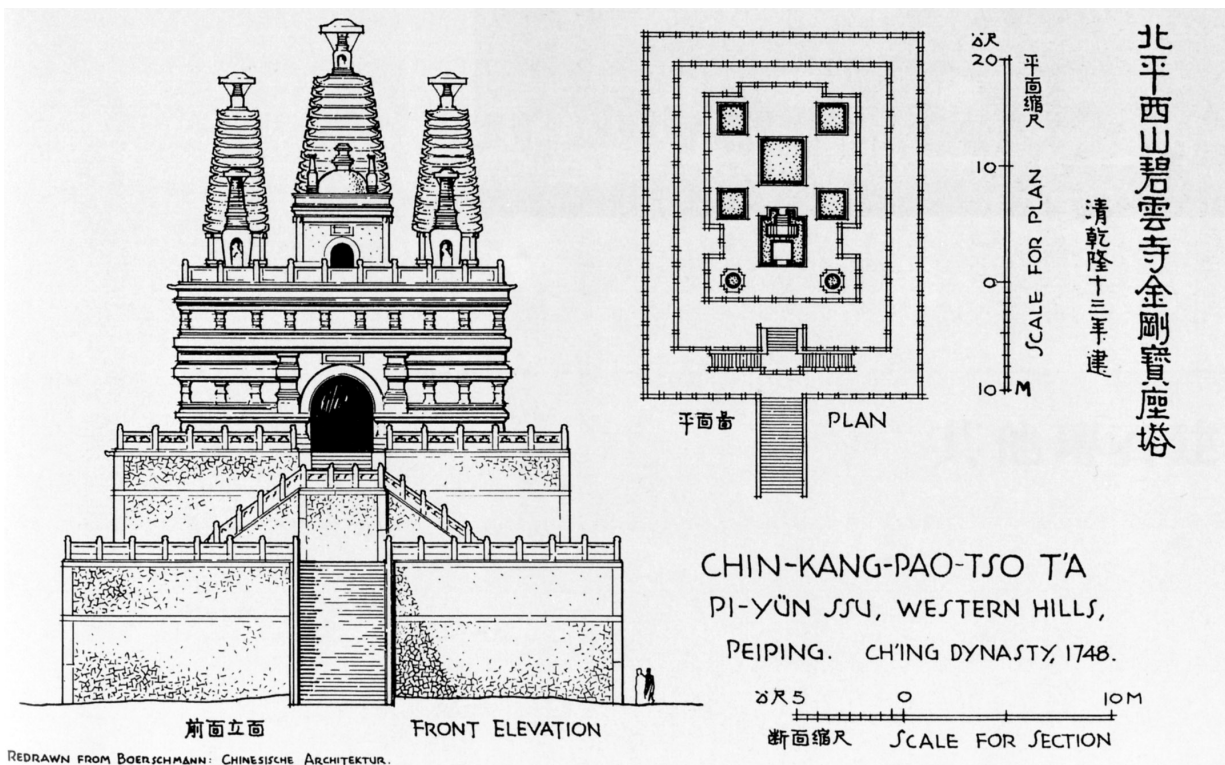




Boerschmann's photos and Liang Sicheng's drawings created the basis of knowledge on Chinese architecture for Western historians in the mid twentieth century.

Fig. 10.8 Boerschmann, Si Shan Pi yun sze (West Mount Biyun Temple).

Fig. 10.9 Liang Sicheng, Pi-yun ssu: plan and elevation (West Mount Biyun Temple).



REDRAWN FROM BOERSCHMANN: CHINESISCHE ARCHITEKTUR.

Chinese Architecture with a team comprised of the National Institute of Architectural Science and experts from various universities and governmental departments. Liang was involved in the editing process as well. The materials were organized in chronological order of historical periods and included a wide range of document drawings of archaeological sites and surviving buildings and quotations from historical accounts. Liu's book served well as a report on the study of Chinese architecture just before the spark of the Cultural Revolution.

Liang, Lin, and Liu, as well as a number of Western-educated Chinese architects such as Yang Tingbao, Tong Jun, and Chen Zhi were also the founders of architectural education in China. Their students later formed the second and third generations of designers and scholars.

Western Historians

In the West, the research on the history of Chinese architecture continued to develop in the mid century. Research reports from Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen created a great impact on a number of Western scholars. Andrew Boyd's *Chinese Architecture and Town Planning* and Alexander Soper's and Lawrence Sickman's *The Art and Architecture of China* emerged in the 1960s as the most crucial Western publications on the subject after Siren and Boerschmann. Boyd's "a very small book on a very large subject" provides an overview of the evolution of building structures and city planning in China from 1500 BC to AD 1911 with a large amount of photographs and drawings from the Liang's and Liu's *Institute Bulletin*. Yet, as scholar Ronald G. Knapp later mentions in his *China's Old Dwellings*, Boyd has done a poor job in acknowledging the source of these photographs and drawings: "...this book sadly and carelessly did not clearly acknowledge the origins as the work of specific Chinese architects and architectural historians. Because of this negligence, many of the photographs and drawings in Boyd's book subsequently were credited in other publications to Boyd rather than to the Chinese researchers who had produced them. Boyd's generously illustrated volume became in time a standard reference in the West on the subject of Chinese architecture."¹³

Soper, on the other hand, has paid a special tribute to Japanese Professor Mizuno Seiichi of Kyoto University, Professor Sekino Masaru

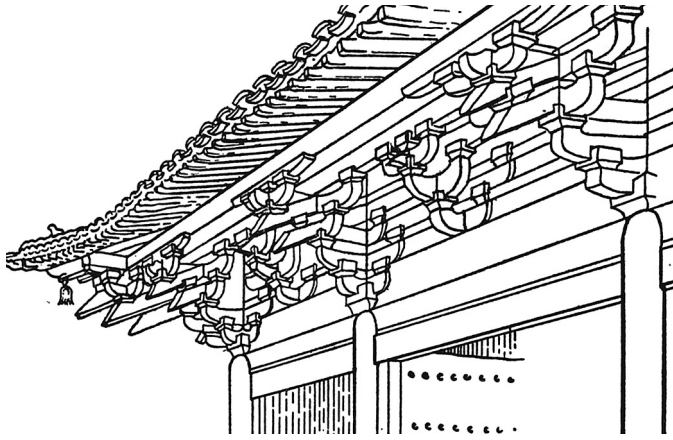


Fig. 10.10 Soper's illustration of the exterior eaves of the Foguang Temple.

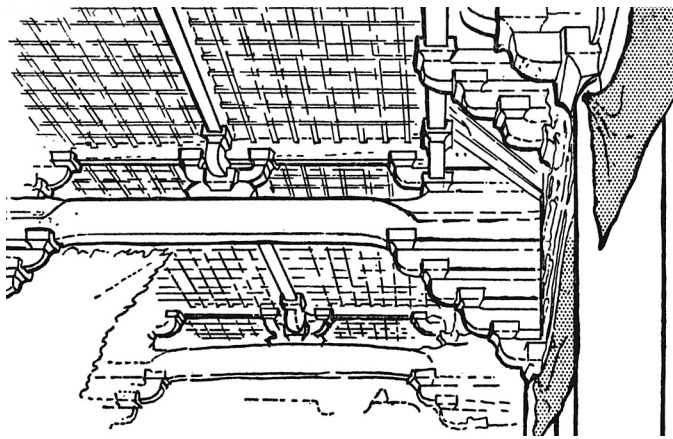


Fig. 10.11 Soper's illustration of the interior of the Foguang Temple.

of Tokyo University, and Liang Sicheng for the photographs and drawings he included in *The Art and Architecture of China*. In the foreword, Soper declares himself a continuing admirer of Liang, and states the significance of Liang's Institute of Research on Chinese Architecture as the source of inspiration for his interest: "My first interest in early Chinese architecture was stimulated by the work carried out in the 1930s in little-known areas of the North by the energetic and adventurous members of the Society (later Institute) for Research on Chinese Architecture. As the footnotes in Part Two reveal, much of my knowledge of the major surviving monuments was derived from the thorough and learned reports published by the Society's Bulletin as late as 1944."¹⁴ Unfortunately, after the Communist takeover, scholarly contacts between China and the West were interrupted. Soper's photographs and drawings were basically obtained from the pre-1949 period. In seven chapters, Soper gives a complete overview of the development of Chinese architecture

organized by dynasties. Soper's book includes some great Japanese examples of comparisons between Tang and Song Chinese architecture. Since information of pre-Tang architecture was scarce, Soper admits that his information for the earlier periods is "sparse, vague, and conflicting to such a degree that it is dangerous to use them for more than basic generalizations."¹⁵

In 1972, Michele Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, the keeper of Musee Guimet of Paris on Asian art, published *Living Architecture: Chinese*. In the opening chapter, she gives clear insights on the principle philosophy of the Chinese built world:

Architectural space is like a series of closed worlds, of complete independent, progressively smaller units – from the town to the private house – which repeat on a reduced scale the forms of the larger... This concept matches on the moral and social plane the supreme importance of balanced overlapping relationships between individual and family, human order and cosmic order. This interplay of relationships strengthens the independent family cells, just as the symbolic organization of space harmonizes the architectural units... In China the arrangement of space has always been governed by laws. Architecture has always been an art guided and controlled by the state, aimed not only at organizing the environment but also at providing a frame for the social system.¹⁶

Serstevens goes on with examples of town planning, imperial palaces and temples, religious and funerary architecture, and houses and gardens. The basic principle that "Chinese architectural concepts are indissolubly linked with a social order at once real and ideal, with a structured vision of the universe and with a certain scale values" echoes throughout the book.¹⁷ Her book, however, remains brief in description of the structural system and includes only a limited amount of examples. The chapter "Houses and Gardens" provides the basic principles of an ancient Han Chinese dwelling but does not include any other variation of housing in China. In comparison, Boyd's *Chinese Architecture and Town Planning* contains illustrations of at least five or six different types of Chinese houses, although his explanations remain short.

In 1989, Lawrence G. Liu published *Chinese Architecture*, a great volume with colour photos and architectural drawings, especially the extensive collection of site plans that show complete complex layouts. Lawrence Liu focuses on how Chinese architecture expresses humanity through its basic design principles: "The humanistic approach of Chinese

architecture might be an inspiration to contemporary architecture. Our experience proves that whenever China had cultural relations with other cultures, its culture was enriched and the country flourished. I finally believe that the study of classical Chinese architecture at this critical time will be both beneficial to Chinese and Western architecture for the creation of a humane architecture and environment."¹⁸

With his extensive examples, "the meanings and symbolism of the art of Chinese architecture is examined, focusing on the cultural, philosophical and religious influence and life-style of the people."¹⁹

Interesting enough, Liu only touches briefly on imperial architecture in the last chapter.

From Boerschmann and Siren of the 1930s to Serstevens and Liu in the 1970s and 1980s, a more neutral attitude toward Chinese architecture gradually established. Revisions and additions in the different editions of *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture* from 1901 to 1987 is the best device to reflect the attitude shift away from the former Eurocentric mindset. In 1901, Fletcher included Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Saracenic architecture in part two of the fourth edition and named it the "Non-Historical Styles", keeping them "apart from the Historical Styles with which they are but little connected, as they cannot be said to form part of the evolution of Western Architecture. Nevertheless, a history of architecture as a whole is bound to take account of these Eastern styles, whose interrelationships and individual characteristics are of no little interest."²⁰ In the introduction, Fletcher presents his little understanding in the subject by the following statement:

The architecture of China is a faithful index of her civilisation, for both have been practically stationary through many centuries... The Chinese revelled in the beauty of nature and had little feeling for architectural design, which they hold subservient merely to human needs. Chinese architecture, though subject to Buddhist and Mahometan influence on the influence in the religious side, held its own as an indigenous style, and so the forms of today reproduce, with little change or no distinction between sacred and secular architecture, and temples, tombs, public buildings, and private houses, whether great or small, all follow the same plan.²¹

Oriental scholars such as Ito Chuta discredited his effort as "naïve" and "incomplete". This "part two" remained untouched through the

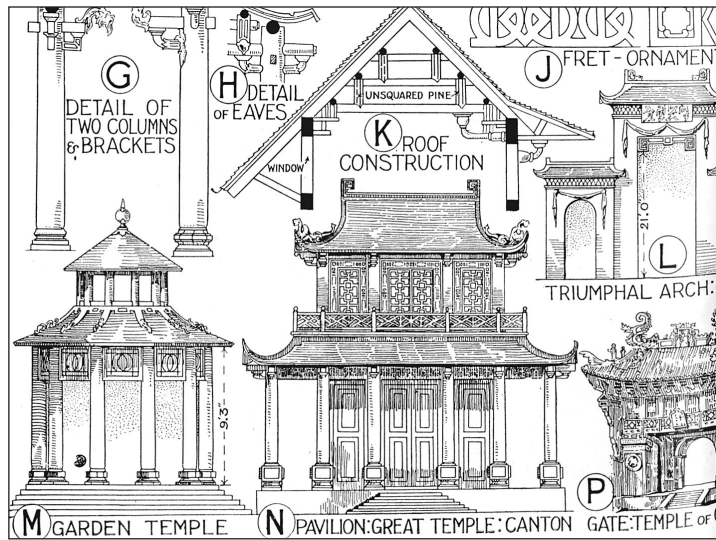
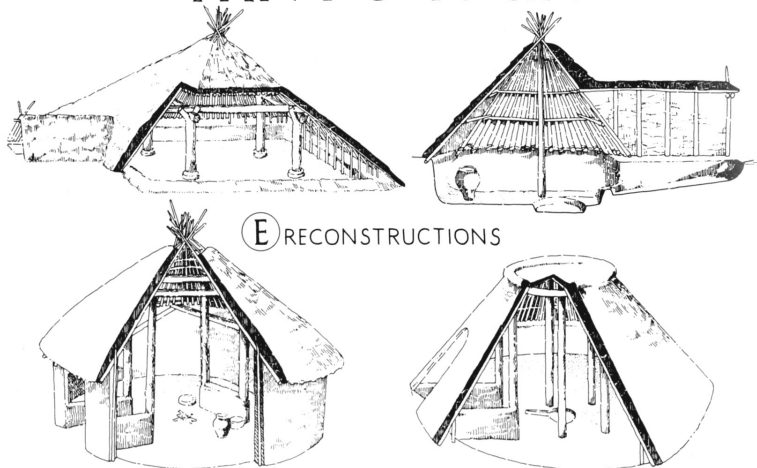


Fig. 10.12 Illustrations of Chinese architecture in the Ninth Edition (1931) of *Banister Fletcher's History of Architecture*. Note that the "pavilion" of the "Great Temple" in Canton is a mere reproduction of William Chambers' illustration drawn in 1757.

YANG-SHAO HOUSES 1 PAN-P'O-TS'UN



An obvious improvement on depth and accuracy on the subject of Chinese architecture appears in the Nineteenth Edition (1987) of *Banister Fletcher's History of Architecture*, including a chapter on prehistorical architecture, one on traditional Chinese architecture, one on colonial architecture in the 19th century, and one on twentieth century architecture.

Fig 10.13 Yang-shao Houses (4000 BC) in the chapter of prehistorical structures.

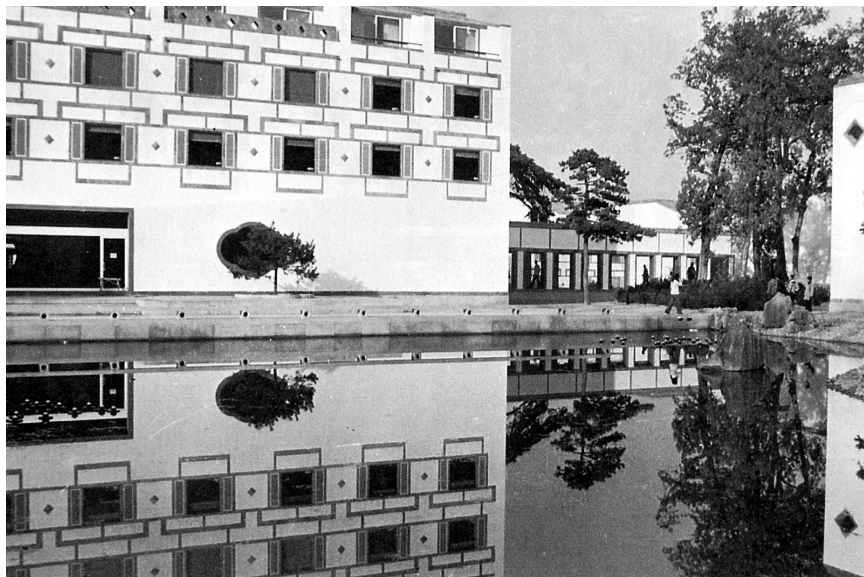


Fig. 10.14 Xiangshan Hotel, Beijing (1982), in the chapter of twentieth century Chinese architecture.

editions which followed, and finally in the Seventeenth Edition (1961), Professor R. A. Cordingley expanded the explanation and renamed the part to "Architecture in the East". In the eighteenth edition (1975), James Palmes added new but brief chapters on Eastern architecture and reclassified the entire volume into a straight run of forty chapters in chronological order.

In the nineteenth edition (1987), John Musgrove and his team decided to extend the international coverage again. They divided Chinese architecture into four time periods, taking up three individual chapters and part of the chapter on Early Asian Cultures, out of the forty-seven chapters in the book. In "Part Four: The Architecture of the Pre-colonial Cultures outside Europe", the book provides a brief summary of the history and characteristics of Chinese architecture in imperial times. The chapter includes a number of photographs such as the Foguang Temple, the Temple of Heaven, and the Potala Palace, and brief notes on the ancient manual *Yin Zao Fa Shi*. The China chapter in "Part Six: The Architecture of the Colonial and Post-colonial Periods outside Europe" presents examples of Chinese buildings in the nineteenth century, which were hybrid products of Western and local influences, primarily the ones designed by Western designers in the semi-colonial cities along the coast. In "Part Seven: The Architecture of the Twentieth Century", photographs and descriptions of both traditionalist and modernist buildings from the pre-1949 period are included, followed by a very brief text on the development from 1949 to the 1980s. The names of Yang Tingbao and Liang Sicheng are also mentioned as the crucial figures, along with several other first-generation Chinese architects. A page is dedicated to photographs of the Communist projects such as the Great Hall of the People and the Mao Mausoleum. The chapter concludes with Pei's Fragrant Hill Hotel and a few other hotel projects built in Beijing during the early 1980s.

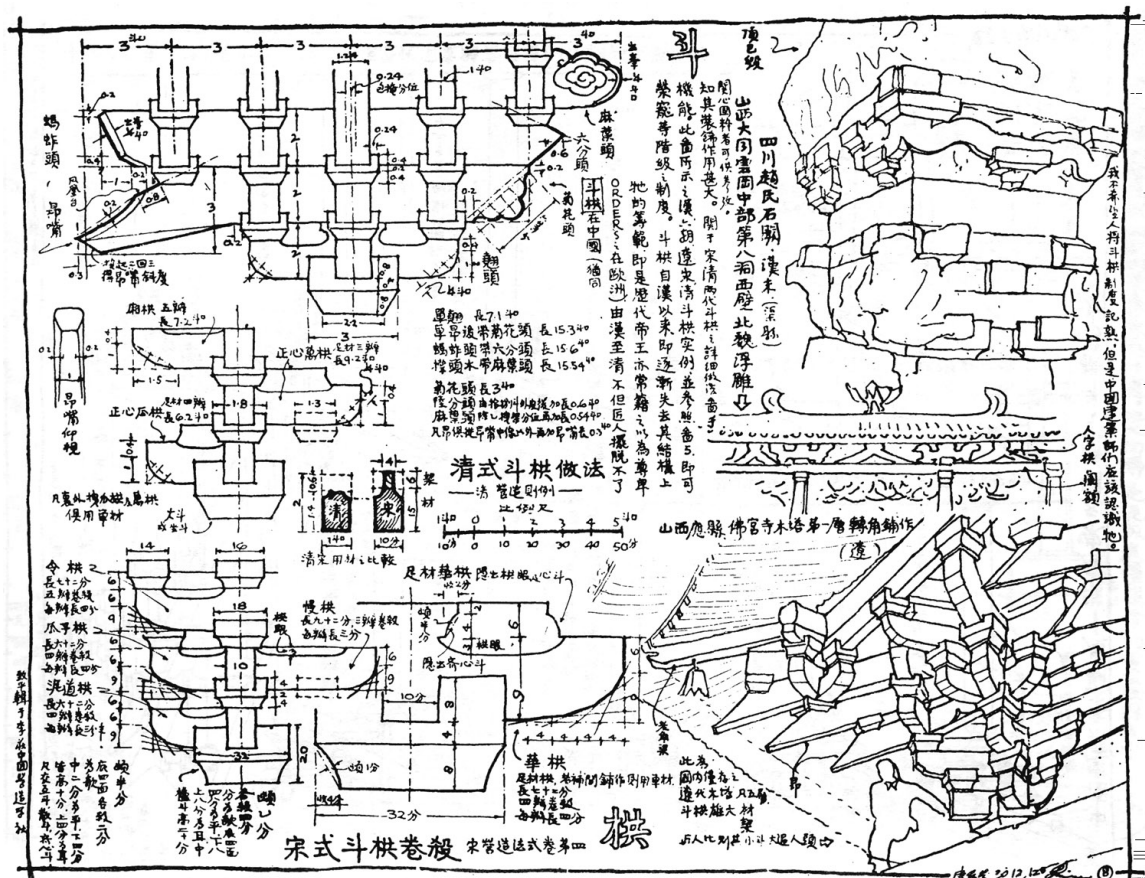
In 2002, Nancy S. Steinhardt of the University of Pennsylvania and a number of Chinese scholars including Liang Sicheng's student Fu Xinian, Guo Daiheng of Tsinghua University, Liu Xujie and Pan Guxi of Southeast University, Qiao Yun of the China Architectural Industry Publishing House, and Sun Dazhang of the Institute of Architectural History put together a magnificent English volume titled *Chinese*

Architecture, and had it published by Yale University Press. This book contains chapters of detailed explanations on architecture from different historical periods. Each chapter is further organized by elements such as city layout, imperial palaces, tombs, Buddhist architecture, pagodas, major architectural features, and construction developments of the era, respectively. The authors also provide a large selection of architectural drawings made by Liang and Liu's institute, and sets of new, colour photographs. *Chinese Architecture* is among the most comprehensive English publication produced on the subject in recent years. This book includes research work of the Institute and the second generation of domestic historians, as well as materials from the major Western publications in the twentieth century.

The Second-Generation Historians in China

In China, the study of traditional Chinese architecture flourished from 1945 to the recent years. However, during the ten-year Cultural Revolution, scholars were forced to stop their research, and many of

Fig. 10.15 Liu Zhiping, study drawing of traditional Dougong Bracket, 1930.



their research materials were destroyed by the Red Guards. As Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen established research academies at both Tsinghua University (Beijing) and Southeast University (Nanjing), a number of their students became crucial architectural historians to carry on their work in greater detail.

Liu Zhiping, a first-generation graduate from Liang and Lin's school of architecture at Northeast University in the 1930s, was a well-known scholar and one of the greatest assistants of Liang and Liu Dunzhen, first in the Institute for Research on Chinese Architecture and later during the writing of the *History of Ancient Chinese Architecture*. Written in the 1940s and 1950s, Liu Zhiping's *Typologies and Structures of Chinese Architecture* concluded the works of the Institute in a systematic way. His Beaux-Arts background from the teachings of Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyin, Tong Jun, and Chen Zhi (all graduates of University of Pennsylvania under Professor Paul Cret²²) allowed him to focus on studying every detail of a traditional building, although he himself discouraged any sort of formalism or classical revival in modern designs. Liu Zhiping's book intended to fill in the gaps of information for published photographs on Chinese architecture that lacked any appropriate explanations: "to prevent readers of knowing the results without seeing the reasons, and entering the danger of formalism."²³ This book provides a systematic categorization on Chinese architecture according to functions, types, and structures. In the conclusion, he points out that the formularization and the use of excessive ornaments during the Qing era had led to the downfall of Chinese architecture, as the structural members then lose their fundamental meanings. His notion paralleled Ito Chuta and Osvald Siren's earlier comments. He further warned that modern Chinese architects would need brave reforms to prevent a fallback from the contemporary, since architecture should stay ahead of the current cultural trend whenever possible.²⁴

Xiao Mo, a student of Liang at Tsinghua in the late 1950s, was an expert on Dunhuang art and architecture. Dunhuang, an important town at the entry of the Silk Road in western China, was the hub of culture and trade from the Han era to the Yuan time (206 BC to AD 1368). It was through Dunhuang that foreign cultures entered China.



Fig. 10.16 Fresco *Buddhist Temple in the Paradise* on the south wall of Grotto 172 at Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes.



Fig. 10.17 Xiao Mo, line drawing of the fresco *Buddhist Temple in the Paradise* on the south wall of Grotto 172 at Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes.

Dunhuang is today famous for its Buddhist stone grottoes, at which 546 caves, 50,000 square metres of murals, 2,000 painted sculptures, and five timber grotto façades are preserved. Xiao, recommended by Liang, worked at the Dunhuang Cultural Relic Research Institution from 1963 to 1978, to study the nearly 10,000 architectural paintings at the grottoes that depict city walls, Buddhist temples, pagodas, palaces, houses, que

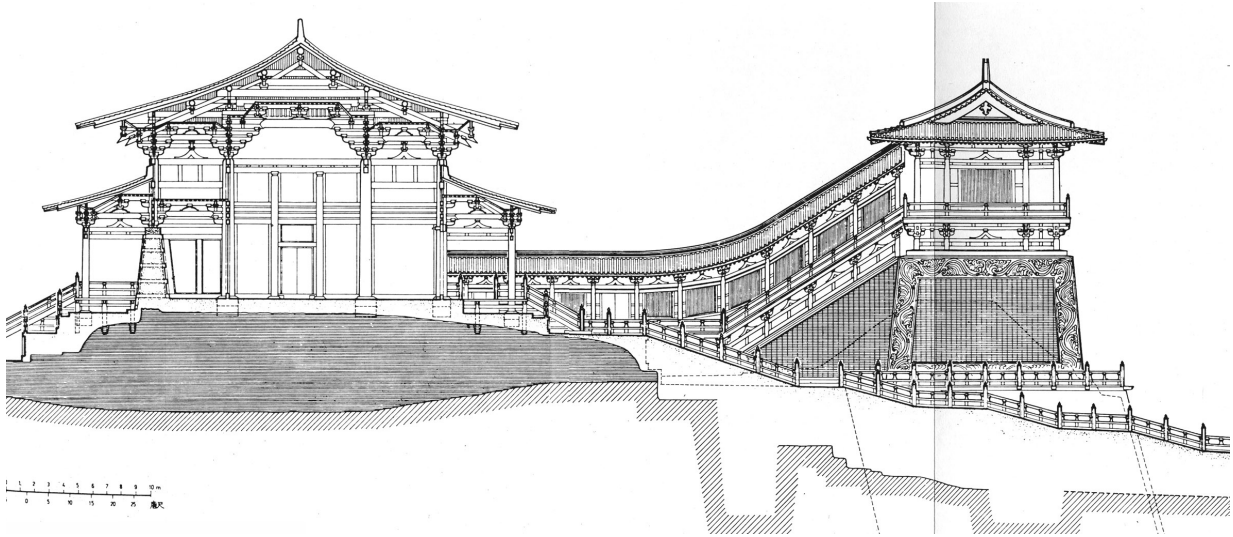


Fig. 10.18 Fu Xinian, reconstructed sectional drawing of the Xianyuan Hall of the imperial Tang at Changan, first published in *Wen Wu Magazine* issue 7, 1973.

(dual towers), prisons, tombs, high terraces, vaulted buildings, thatched cottages, bridges, construction sites, and architectural details. Many murals also illustrated earlier versions of existing complexes, such as the original version of the Foguang Temple at the Wutai Mountains where Liang Sicheng's team had discovered a surviving Tang Hall in 1937. Xiao started writing the *Architectural Research of Dunhuang Grottoes* in 1978 and finished it four years later. After an analysis on the grottoes spaces, Xiao categorized his research of murals under different building types. His analysis became one of the best references to study pre-Tang and Tang buildings that not longer survive.

Fu Xinian, another student of Liang Sicheng at Tsinghua, was an architectural scholar who specialized in remodelling destroyed buildings from evidence in historical accounts and ruins in archaeological sites. Fu assisted Liang in a number of research projects at Tsinghua and worked for Liu Dunzhen when Liu composed the *History of Ancient Chinese Architecture* in the 1960s. In the 1950s, both Liang and Liu felt that the surviving buildings could hardly reveal the real glory of the Tang and earlier periods. Thus they encouraged Fu Xinian to remodel structures of various archaeological sites. Working under the supervision of Liu Zhiping, Fu remodelled the Tang palaces at the ancient capital of Changan. Based on detailed investigation on site, studies on historical accounts, the Dunhuang murals, the *Ying Zao Fa Shi*, and surviving buildings, Fu was able to estimate both the exterior and the interior of the Tang palaces. With the idea of using dougong or a column as a proportion unit introduced in the *Ying*

Traditionalists

From the 1980s onwards, Chinese traditionalist scholars have turned away from field research, and endeavoured to study ancient philosophies, aiming to enrich the general cultural understanding of the local architects. Concepts from Taoism, Confucianism, and the book *Zhou Yi* are studied in detail, and various ideologies are being sourced to derive and prove architectural theories.

"A dwelling is an intersection of Yin and Yang, and a model for human ethics."²⁵ Architectural scholar Li Xiankui indicates that the philosophy of Chinese architecture is based on the relationships of both nature and the society. Li further introduces two fundamental principles of Chinese philosophies: the "spirit of humanity" and the "fusion of heaven and man". From a Confucian point of view, any form of building should reveal the ethics and love of a family; so the planning and grouping of cabins and courtyards should accommodate the hierarchy and the relationship among family members. Decorations should contain an educational function, reminding dwellers of good virtues. From the point of view of *Zhou Yi*, the "fusion of heaven and man" is the ideal relationship between man and nature. It suggests an ideal coexistence of humans and the environment, and is enhanced the development of Fengshui.

Zhou Yi (The Book of Changes), an extremely influential ancient literature written in the Western Zhou Dynasty (BC 1027 to 770), explains that every element, force, or change in the universe is bounded under the principle of polarized and interchanging Ying and Yang. A balance of Ying and Yang is the key to achieve harmony, prosperity and beauty. While a few scholars propose a balancing approach of architectural materials, many others give more attention to the ideology of "fusion of heaven and man".

Scholar Wen Weihua writes:

The concept of a Chinese courtyard house is to create a symbol of the universe within daily life. Connections between open spaces and courtyards are based on the circulation, extension and unification of the spirit "Ci". The relationship between indoor and outdoor is a mutual permeable experience, thus dwellers can feel the linkage to the heaven... As the ancient Chinese invent big roofs to shelter from rain and wind, they were upset about the loss of direct connection to

the heaven. Thus, they began to create features on the roofs to recreate the lost relationship... The rising eave corners lead one's sightline up to the sky... The sky-well is certainly a product of the "fusion of heaven and man" as it expresses a high respect of the heaven and divinity.²⁶

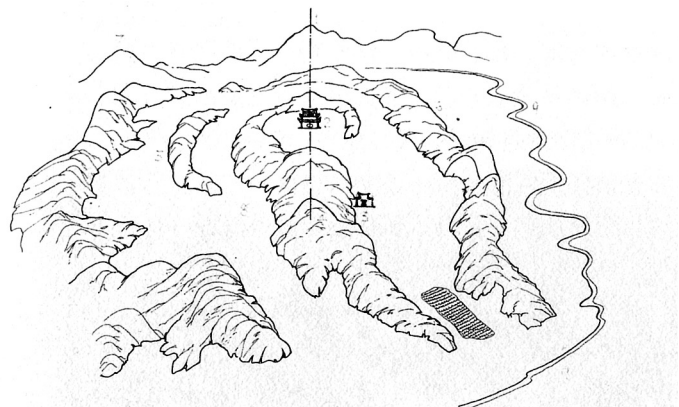
Quite a number of scholars stress parallel opinions about Chinese architecture and conclude that modern architects should take these ancient philosophies into consideration.

However, some scholars hold a countering tone when speaking of Chinese philosophies. For instance, Lao Yanqing clearly states: "From investigation on Chinese philosophy, we understand that 'fusion of heaven and man' is a spiritual and inner connection of human and nature... Yet the reality is we have walls to enclose ourselves away from nature... on one hand, we put walls to separate ourselves from nature, on the other hand, we create a manmade nature within to balance our psyche, putting a pond of water, a few trees, and then peeking through windows and doors to admire this 'nature'."²⁷

Apart from the "fusion of heaven and man", *Zhou Yi* also derived the philosophies of Fengshui—the environmental beliefs of ancient Chinese with principles on space planning, site orientating, and furniture arrangement. Scholars Gang Yu and Gang Liang, suggest that Fengshui is a mode of modern science. "The ancient Fengshui is aiming at nature: a sustainable manipulation and modification of nature, to achieve a harmonious state between man and nature."²⁸ After describing a series of associations with modern physics, the Gangs proclaim that Fengshui is a form of science, not superstition.²⁹ The vision of the Gangs certainly does not satisfy all scholars in the field.

Fig. 10.20 A diagram of a site with perfect fengshui.

Fig. 10.21 A fengshui diagram of the Zhuge Village in Zhejiang Province. The ancient Zhuge families chose this site, since according to the fengshui principles, this site can enhance prosperity and fortune to dwellers.



Rao Hong, an architect practicing in the province of Guangdong, condemns the Fengshui masters as mere deceivers and enemies of architects. She argues that with the "coat" of modern science, Fengshui works well with clients to restrict the freedom of architects. She explains that Fengshui has been a semi-scientific and semi-superstitious device in the old society to promote ancient morals and traditional social needs. She encourages architects and clients to clearly realize the negative effects of Fengshui and use a modern, scientific angle to understand architecture.

With thirty spokes and an axle, and void within, a vehicle becomes useable; with a mould and some clay, and void within, a bowl becomes useable; with doors and windows, and void within, a cabin becomes useable."³⁰ Lao Tzu

Other than the *Zhou Yi* and Confucian ideologies, scholars love to dig into the fundamental Taoist beliefs to explain Chinese architecture. Zhang Weigang from the Tibet Nationalities Institute argues, "the essence of a city is the void – the public spaces – the most recognizable, remarkable, energetic and glamorous locus... The void in a building is similar to the empty spaces of a Chinese painting, in which spectators can use their imagination to create a perfect picture in their mind."³¹ Zhang encourages modern architects to pay more attention on the quotation of Lao Tzu, and on treatments of exterior spaces and interior circulation spaces. Scholars Pan Fanyong and Zhang Minlong further suggest, "a design with thorough understanding of the spirit of nothingness is the key for a city... If buildings are the 'solids', then what relates closest to humanity should be the system of voids. That is the spirit of the city."³²

At the same time that the architectural scholars began to study Chinese philosophies in late 1980s, the third classical revival of Chinese architecture was well under way. Scholar Liu Su, in his article "Critical Analysis on the Three Classical Revivals of Chinese Architecture of the 20th Century" he proclaims the three reasons for the third classical revival, spanning from the mid 1980s to the present.³³ Other than the economic culture of tourism and the ideology of certain political leaders, the main reason for the trend is the influence of "Contextualism" of post-modernism and the deepening of studies on traditional theories.

In the mid 1990s, as the mayor of Beijing, Chen Xiantong, encouraged the "revival of the ancient capital", many architects brought up the concept of "contextualism" to support traditionalist design approaches. In the mid 1990s, Chen Xiantong openly supported the use of traditionalist pavilions on the rooftops of highrises: "Use big hats to replace rolling dice are perhaps inevitable. Hope that architects can put more effort in transforming the overwhelming repetition of 'tofu pieces'". Such that, it is the fortune for our capital, and it is the luck for our national style."³⁴ Architectural scholar Zhang Bo later suggested, "first, the pavilion has to have inner functions and technical needs. Second, the traditional details can be simplified... Third, the traditional forms are perhaps better than 'tofu pieces and rolling dices'. The unified traditional look in our historical capital can create an unified force, better than the bare 'tofu pieces'"³⁵ Certainly the deliberate cultural awareness after the destructive Cultural Revolution and the rapid globalization have also contributed to the making of the traditionalist movement in the last two decades.

From Studies on Traditional Dwellings to Theories on Regional Architecture

In 1957, architectural historian Liu Dunzhen published *Introduction to Chinese Dwellings*. His book was the first piece of literature to illustrate

Fig. 10.22-10.23 Modern buildings with traditionalist roofs built in the 1990s: China Customs (bottom) and Zhongyu Century Hotel (bottom left).



Chinese vernacular architecture. During the Japanese invasion, he traveled across southwest China to research local dwellings at mountain villages and rural communities. After he formed a research unit in the Nanjing College of Engineering in 1953, more systematic surveys were carried out by his team. In his book, Liu Dunzhen presents a brief historical summary of the evolution of different types of Chinese dwellings from Neolithic times to the Qing Dynasty. According to layout plans and building forms, Liu organized Chinese residences into nine categories.

As an assistant of Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen, Liu Zhiping developed great interests in ancient architecture and in particular, in vernacular housings. During the Anti-Japanese War when the Institute of Research on Chinese Architecture was moved to a village in southwest China, Liu Zhiping travelled extensively in the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi to study local dwellings. From the 1940s to 1950s, he wrote a great deal on vernacular architecture, including Chinese Islamic Architecture and the masterpiece *Brief History of Chinese Residential Architecture*. Unfortunately, because of political, economic, and social reasons, both works were not published right away. Finally, when conditions allowed, *Chinese Islamic Architecture* was published in 1985 and the *Brief History of Chinese Residential Architecture* in 1989, over thirty

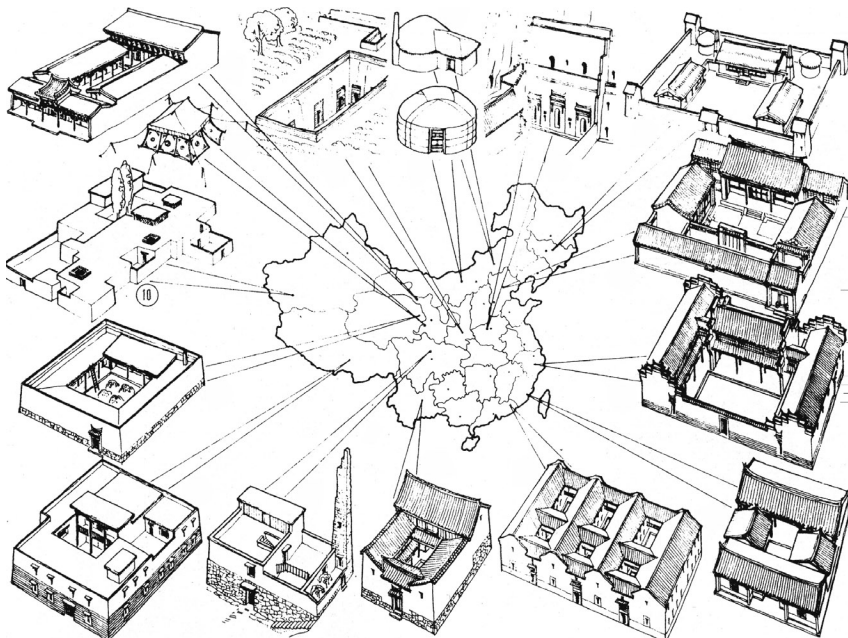


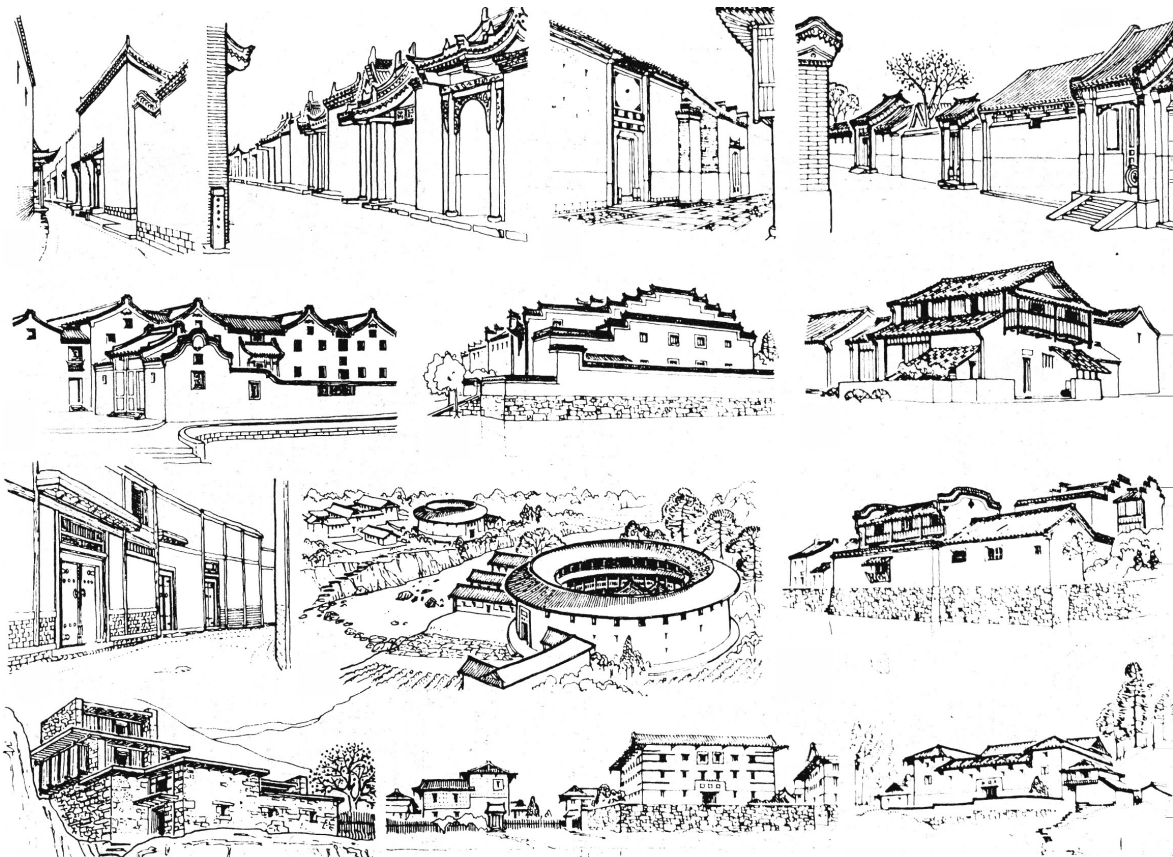
Fig. 10.24 Liu Zhiping, vernacular Chinese architecture.

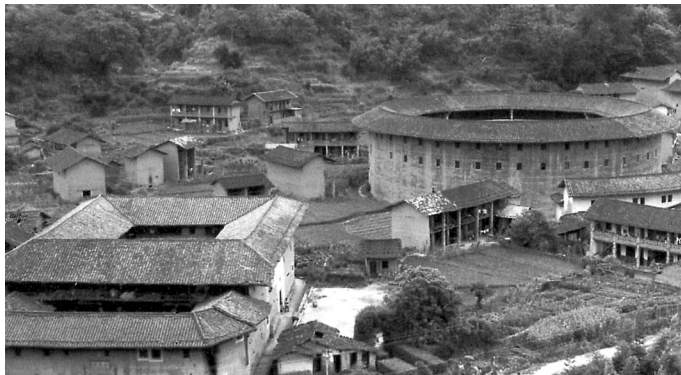
years after the manuscripts had been completed.

The *Brief History of Chinese Residential Architecture* is considered the second pioneer piece of literature on the subject after the work by Liu Dunzhen. Liu Zhiping dedicates the last two chapters precisely to the morphology of the dwellings in the province of Sichuan and Yunnan. Although all of Liu Zhiping's photos and sketches were lost or destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, the 1989 edition contains new images and drawings prepared by one of his students, Wang Qiming, as Liu Zhiping was lying on his sick bed at the time. Wang himself also published books on Chinese vernacular architecture and was involved in a CCTV (China Central Television) programme documenting dwellings of different ethnicities across the nation. His latest publication *Picture Book of Chinese Dwellings* provides a pictorial introduction to Chinese vernacular architecture with extensive colour photographs and isometric drawings.

Spending over thirty years on extensive travel, Ronald Knapp from the State University of New York at New Paltz took on the spirit of Western scholarship to study and survey the transformation of the

Fig. 10.25 Liu Zhiping, exterior view of vernacular Chinese dwellings.





Ronald Knapp visited some of the most striking vernacular dwellings in China, for instance, the earth fortresses of the Hakka people in Fujian.

Fig. 10.26-10.27 The Zhenchenglou, Yongding County, Fujian (top left and middle).

Fig. 10.28 Dwelling units of Chengqilou, Yongding County, Fujian.

Fig. 10.29 A village of Hakka fortresses, Nanjing County, Fujian.

dwelling culture in China. His *China's Old Dwellings* states:

China, a nation of fifty-six nationalities living in disparate natural landscapes with widely varying climatic conditions, is certainly more varied in its housing patterns than is the single nation United States or even multinational Europe. China's folk architectural forms, even as they portray common elements, clearly reveal the broad range of solutions that humans are capable of in providing basic shelter and creating homes for their families.

This book attempts to understand environmental 'design' in rural China from an architectural, geographical, historical, and broad cultural perspective. It makes an effort to merge Chinese and western traditions of scholarship in pursuit of the study of a dominant and important component of Chinese material culture, folk architecture. China's position as a hearth area for cultural traditions that subsequently were disseminated to Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia, moreover, underscores the value of this

study in explaining and evaluating building traditions that involve nearly a quarter of the population of the world.³⁶

Extensive research on Chinese vernacular architecture in the recent two decades has encouraged the concept of "regionalism" in architectural designs. The urge for regionalism echoes the cry for "national architecture" in the 1950s. It stresses a counter-statement to rapid globalization and modern standardization, and pays tribute to the legacy of the semi-colonial era, a psyche of self-inwardness as scholar Xu Qianlin explains:

After our nation opens its door for over a hundred years, the Chinese nation and culture has experienced and felt a shameful suppression and prejudice, a form of pressurized globalization. With a series of unfair colonial treatments, internal turmoil, external struggles, and a "Leftist naïve syndrome" during the Cold War and a set of nihilistic utopian social beliefs, Chinese culture and China have gone through so many years without real integration into the development of global actions; instead, our nation has been sucked in a awful chain reaction of "pressurized" feelings and self-imprisonment.³⁷

Xu further suggests that regionalism and globalization can actually co-exist and nurture each other, since what globalization really talks about is not a singular set of modules for all regions, but a pluralistic cultural process.

Many scholars and designers maintain high regard for the development of regional architecture. They believe that architecture should reflect the all-in-one values of their nation, their region, and their society. "Within the fifty years of development in Chinese architecture, there is always a hidden continuation of design endeavour, expressing a culture not without limits but having a splendid future, that is, Chinese regional architecture."³⁸ Regionalism is very much similar to contextualism, except the periphery boundary is often hard to define in regionalism, while the limits of contextualism is always specific. There are two theories of regionalist architecture going followed in China: the concepts for either the entire nation as a region in Asia, or for a particular locality in the nation with domestic culture, geography, traditions, lifestyle, etc.

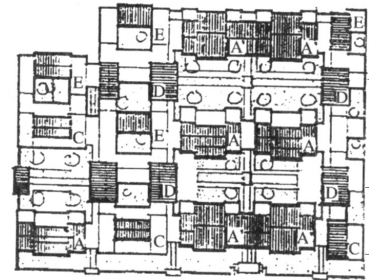
Under the development and transformation of globalization, the internationalization of modern architecture, the simulation of design styles and forms, and the tension and fusion in

architectural culture, we have to derive new ideas to pursue for our own architectural uniqueness. We should merge the advancement of modern technology and regional properties to develop a spiritual realization, an innovative interacting investigation and a successful application.³⁹ Qi Kang

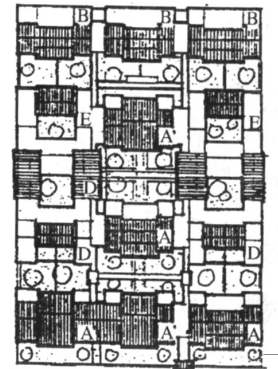
Ling Shide, an architectural scholar from Xiamen, proposes a method to tackle regional architecture, namely the "hidden association": "The 'hidden association' includes two aspects: deep understanding of spiritual qualities of the regional design culture and the abstract and symbolic representation of form, structure and spatial arrangement... The 'hidden association' is a way to organize and improve beyond the existing regional architecture. With deeper study on 'hidden association', we should be able to walk toward a more opened and innovative regional architecture."⁴⁰

Renowned architectural and planning scholar Wu Liangyong recommends a fusion of international and regional concepts—that is, a transcultural study and design thinking.⁴¹ After a series of investigations in southern China in the 1980s, Wu used the grouping concept of a courtyard settlement to design his famous Juer Hutong project in Beijing. The project required a higher-density and more modern courtyard houses to replace an area of deteriorating old siheyuans. Wu took his concept of merging modern science and environmental concepts with the southern Chinese architectural tradition to make the "organic" renewal of the old Beijing. As for the study of regional architecture, he suggests a multi-aspect study on social, urban, cultural, and design factors of a place, and merges the studies with creativity and the contemporary rhythm of the region. The key is the development and evolution, but not the past traditions. His theory presents a broadened vision of regionalism that is well-suited for modern China.

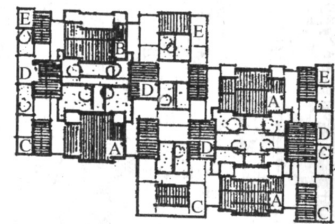
What Wu's beliefs are based on is the Greek architectural scholars Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre's theory of "Critical Regionalism".⁴² The key to their theory is the method of being "critical": "that is self-examining, self-questioning, but not only is confrontational with regard to the world but to itself"⁴³. They refer to their theory with the Kantian concept of being critical: "a baring, exposing and evaluation of the implicit presuppositions of an



Horizontal Study



Vertical Study



Asymmetrical Study

Fig. 10.30-10.32 Wu Liangyong, plan studies of a new siheyuan prototype,

argument, or a way of thinking."⁴⁴ Wu's studies also make reference to philosopher Paul Ricoeur's "universal civilization and national culture", which states that the world culture is comprised of rooted culture and universal civilization: "There is the paradox: how to become modern and return to the sources; how to revive the old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization."⁴⁵

Wu concludes:

1. Chinese architecture should focus on regionalism instead of nationalism: we should expand our research on regionalism on studies of traditional planning of cities, towns and villages to gather the sense of genius loci and also to incorporate our studies with real design process.
2. Be critical and evolutionary to vision regionalism: we should see the shortcomings of regional architecture, thus regionalism alone is not enough to derive the future of our architecture.
3. Be critical to vision modernism: we should see the shortcomings of modernist architecture, which includes the lack of respect on contextual culture, history and environment of the site. In many cases, mega-structures are welcomed in our historical cities to damage the original urban fabric.
4. The methods that we should consider:
 - i) The method of trans-culture, that is, to absorb any experience no matter it is from abroad or domestic, old or new, as long as it is relevant to our design here and now.
 - ii) The method of complete analysis on regional culture, that is, to pick out rhythms and inspirations from a broader range of investigation and derive new approaches from the incorporation of multi analyses, not just from case studies of buildings.
 - iii) The study of sustainability in Chinese regional architecture and urban planning: there are certain scientific concepts within our architecture and city planning. These philosophies of regional sustainability are worthwhile for inheritance and development.
 - iv) The development of design technique, that is, to seek for a system or a strategy from the disorder of "old and new" and "East and West".

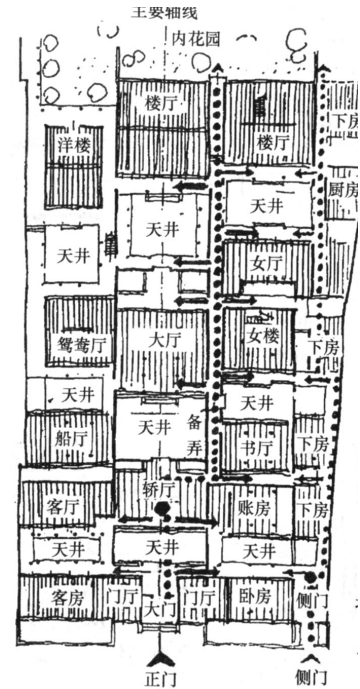


Fig. 10.33 Wu Liangyong, plan study of a Suzhou Complex.

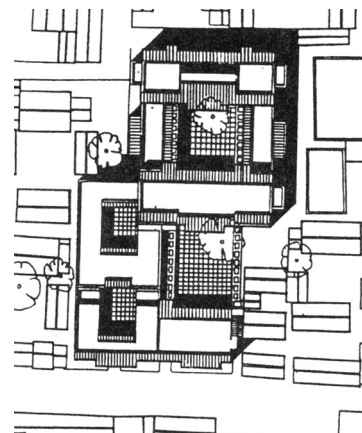
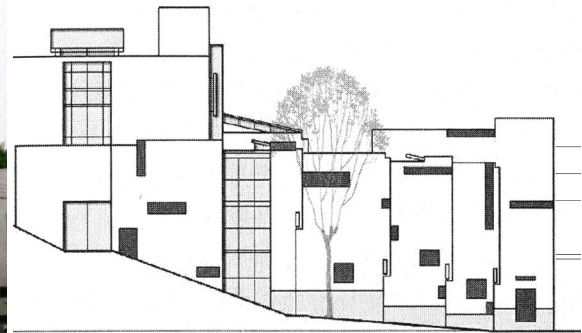


Fig. 10.34 Wu Liangyong, plan study of Juer Hutong Project.



Not everyone sees regional architecture as the answer for modern Chinese architecture. Guo Mingzhuo, Guangzhou, believes that both "national" and "regional" architecture is suitable only for some special projects, like Juer Hutong in old Beijing.

Today, it is impossible and unnecessary to emphasize them as the direction of our architecture... For any typical architecture, if we talk about "regionalism" and "nationalism", it is a mere limit for architectural thinking, a total disadvantage for the creative process... We architects should have boarder vision, and should not set our eyes only at the region we are living in, but to the entire world. The world is wide and colourful, but with the advancement of technology, the world becomes small and can even be seen in front of a computer monitor.⁴⁶

The Guo's view is shared as a common vision among the younger generation of architects in present-day China.

Regionalist Architecture in the recent two decades, first by imitating the form of traditional examples and then by deriving innovative expression. Here is an example at Mount Huangshan, province of Anhui.

Fig. 10.35 (top left) Li Yuxiang, Huizhou Architecture at Province of Anhui.

Fig. 10.36 (top right) Dan Deqi, Complex of Clouds and Valley at Huangshan built in 1987.

Fig. 10.37 (middle left) Dan Deqi, Huangshan Artist Centre built in 2004.

Fig. 10.38 (middle right) Dan Deqi, Side Elevation of Huangshan Artist Centre built in 2004.

The Contemporary Constraints and the Fourth Generation of Chinese Architects

The year 1976 marked an ending to an epoch: the struggle for the pure Socialist utopia was terminated along with the closure of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the arrest of the Gang of Four⁴⁷, the deaths of Premier Zhou Enlai⁴⁸ and Chairman Mao Zedong.⁴⁹ Compiled by the Academy of Building Research of the State Capital Construction Commission, the English book *New China Builds* was published in this critical year. The book signifies the construction achievement and Maoist ideologies on urban development from 1949 to 1976, with photographs and sometimes plans of important buildings and engineering works built in the period.

The first image presents the mighty Tiananmen Square, with the Monument of the People in front, the Great Hall of the People on the left, and Tiananmen at the back—the political centre of China. The first section of the book is dedicated to industrial constructions, such as the Taching Oilfield, the Peking General Petro-Chemical Works, and the Anshan Iron and Steel Factory. The second section is on infrastructural projects, such as the Peking Railway Station, the Tatienching Bridge, and the Urumchi Airport. After the factories and infrastructure came sections on the civic and residential, the public, and the rural and water conservancy (including the People's Commune Units at farming communities) projects. With large colour photographs, *New China Builds* functioned well as a clear political manifestation to outline the achievement and Socialist ideologies to Westerners.

1976, the year of Mao's death, marked the end of the ten years of

Fig. 10.39 The first project shown in *New China Builds*: the Taching Oil Refinery. Academy of Building Research, the State Capital Construction Commission.



Cultural Revolution, which took the lives of a number of Chinese scholars like Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen. As Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978, conditions had finally improved. In the 1980s, a number of works were published to reclaim the honour of these scholars, who had been persecuted during the political movement. University education had re-established its order, scholarship and research had resumed, and scholars such as Liu Zhiping were finally able to publish their manuscripts written prior to the 1960s. The Open Door Policy also brought in a new atmosphere in the field of scholars, as interaction with the outside world were resumed.

Architectural graduates in the 1980s and 1990s are considered the fourth generation of Chinese architects. They are products of the reformed China—a China that has finally stepped onto the tracks of globalization and market economy. As the political restrictions tunes down their influence in scholarship, what the new generation is confronting today is a new and complicated world of commodities, global issues, and dramatic urban transformations. Yet, the face of the current money-oriented building industry, there seems to be an unbalanced development between the amount of construction completed and the level of critical forum on architecture. "Indeed, given the hiatus in almost all theoretical discussions forced by the Cultural Revolution and the frenzied gorging on all that had been missed that followed, a vigorous critical viewpoint had little chance to develop."⁵⁰

Other than the immature critical forum on architecture, Chinese architects also suffer from their shallow experience and knowledge on modernist architecture as the Chinese society has hardly gone through an undisturbed decade in the twentieth century, and scholars have not yet enjoyed a time with adequate resources and little political restraints. Taking this factor into consideration, the current immature condition of Chinese architecture is inevitable; China has just stepped out from its medieval years in 1911 when the Imperial Qing had finally collapsed.

Architect Zou Denong points out the three attitudes that contemporary Chinese architects share in common regarding the development of architectural theories: "first, we have great interest in

the application of architectural theories in designs, but we are lacking a thorough study on the fundamentals of architectural theories, including the Western ones; second, we believe that designs are produced under the direction of theories, that is, theories always exist before the creative process; and third, we are passionate on deriving a unified theory, to pursue for a unified thinking and action among architects of the entire nation."⁵¹ He further indicates:

... right now, our architecture critical forum is very shallow, far away from the creative demand. Within our profession, critical debates are rare. Even if there are, they are mostly on foreign projects but not our own; or they are comments from governmental officials but not from the general public; or they are voices only in private conversations, but not widely and openly expressed. As we are all standing at the frontier of the industry, we do not even have time to breathe, so publication work is always put aside for "free time in the future", or left for researchers and scholars in universities. Thus, the creative experience and the study of theories are pretty much unhooked.⁵²

This situation is quite different from the condition in the 1930s and in 1950s when architects such as Yang Tingbao, Tong Jun, Chen Zhi, Liang Sicheng, etc were both doing academic and scholarly works as well as practicing architecture in various aspects from design, restoration, and preservation, to urban planning.

When faced with the shallow understanding of architectural theories, the overwhelming number of Western reproductions, and the lack of identity among cities, some Chinese scholars hold a more passive opinion about the situation. "When I figure back and forth on how Chinese architecture can escape from the 'dead hutong' that I. M. Pei has described,⁵³ there seems only one answer: to wait for a generation of brilliant urban officials and a group of architects with mixed qualities and contractors with skills and right attitude, to create an enormous revolution."⁵⁴

Many others, however, are tackling the issue in a more positive and practical way, "First, we should raise the level of architectural understanding of some governmental officials and developers through the use of broadcasting media... Second, we should advocate the publicity of architectural culture and develop a tool to express it in media and create a supervision organization in charge of it... Third, we should encourage students of different faculties to study Western architectural concepts,"

suggest scholars Xu Fenggong, Zhou Jiangping, and Shen Chunzhu of Nanjing University.⁵⁵

The constraint on modern Chinese architecture is nonetheless enormous:

The first factor is the deep imprisonment of our psyche by traditional culture. Chinese traditional culture emphasizes on practicality, harmony, conservatism, and the repression of individual development, that is a major restriction on the creative process of architects. . . . The struggle for floor area, the low status of the profession, the discouragement on creativity from the bureaucracy, the pursuit for all-roundness, the undeveloped discussion forum, the mute of critical voices, the flattery among architects, the short of funding in many areas and the inadequateness of local architects etc. are all obstacles for architectural modernization.⁵⁶

Scholar Ma Guoxin sees the immature architecture profession of his country as unavoidable. "Since the nationalistic fellowmen of the last century had taken the concept 'redeem our nation and strengthen our people' to perceive Western cultures, and since there was a conflicting conscious of egocentricity and defeatism, our cultural psyche did not acquire the rationalization and capacity to get away from the blindfold love-and-hatred to deal with anything foreign."⁵⁷ He refers to Pei as once telling him that Chinese architecture and architects would require endeavours from several generations for reaching an international standard. This will probably be the case if China can provide a stable period of time for the profession to develop.

Scholar Zhang Jiong urges the profession and the architectural scholarship to let go of the burden of national culture: "Only when we put down the task to express the glory and downfall of our nation through surface qualities of architecture, that our designs can finally get the opportunity to approach the reality of contemporary cities and develop a healthy and colourful circumstance."⁵⁸

The architectural scholarship and profession of China seems to be obtaining some of their required liberation from the contemporary generation of architects, just as Peter G. Rowe, the Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, portrays:

Fortunately, a different answer emerges if the relationship between "identity" and the "subject" is reconceptualized so that the construction of identity is taken into account. That

is, a statement like "I am Chinese, and therefore such-and-such must follow in order for this reality to be expressed" is replaced with something like "I am in a modernizing society that also happens to be Chinese, and therefore such-and-such must follow in order for this reality to be expressed." This reformulation doesn't entirely skirt the issue of identity in the instance of "Chineseness," but it avoids putting its symbolization first; that symbolization is thereby allowed to



Fig. 10.40 Computer Image of Wang Fei's Rose House.

result from the cultural production of architectural space and form in a specific place and time.⁵⁹

The liberation of Chinese architecture begins to strive as a portion of the fourth-generation Chinese architects is gradually formulating their ideologies to express the current epoch. A number of exhibitions on contemporary experimental architecture in China have been held in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Paris, New York, and Berlin since 1999, representing a new evolution of Chinese architecture is under way.⁶⁰

A major group of participants in forming the evolution is the recent generation of "returned diasporas" trained in the West. Mainly born in the late 1960s or early 1970s, educated in the 1980s and early 1990s, these "returned diasporas" become a strong group of members within the fourth generation of Chinese architects. They fully recognize the contemporary constraints of Chinese architecture: "To speak of architecture of China today means to speak of confusion."⁶¹ What makes them different than the first generation of returned diasporas like Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin is their fundamental attitude towards architecture and their lack of burdens from historical memories. To them, "architecture represents only architecture itself. There is no separation between special and typical, luxury and low class, architecture represents only architecture, nothing else."⁶² They believe that "every

generation should have a distinct vision on architecture in order to differentiate themselves from their predecessors... To us, educational background, nationality and social identity have no importance. This generation of architects, no matter what people name us as 'the returning group', 'the returned diasporas', 'the semi-Westerners', or the 'amateurs', will rise as a new community. Within our vision, there is no architecture of 'Chineseness' or 'Internationality'."⁶³ The returned diasporas can perhaps provide a catalysis in the evolution of both the scholarship and the making of contemporary Chinese architecture.

Educated at the Southeast University of China and obtaining a postgraduate degree in ETH-Zurich, the forty-year-old returned diaspora Zhang Lei manifests his ideology on architecture in his book *Fundamental Architecture: Buildings and Projects of Atelier Zhang Lei*:

The basic principle that the design should be concerned about is solving problems with the most reasonable and the direct spatial organization and the way of construction, responding to requirements of adaptability with ordinary materials and construction methods as well as trying to find out the potential visual expressiveness from among ordinary materials. This should further become a work-strategy applicable to the requirements of large-scale construction in the rapid development of Chinese society today, as well as benefit rational application and arrangement of limited human resources. Meticulous analysis always takes place after acute intuition. Attention must be paid to the fact that the illusion woven by the consumer-oriented society with material products constantly enriched is luring us to lose acute perception and accurate judgment of basic architectural issues.⁶⁴

The questions "what is Chinese architecture?", "how do we inherit regional traditions?", and "how do we filter Western ideas?" are finally off the agenda. There is no danger of formalism, and there is no restriction on cultural expression either. The only obstacle lying ahead is the reality of social imbalance and immaturity of the profession.



Fig. 10.41 Zhang Lei, Taoyuan 02 Graduate Student Dormitory of Nanjing University (2001).



1. Stamp set of Famous Chinese Paintings: **Bian River in the Qingming Festival.**
2. Wong, Young-tsu.. **A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan.** Taipei: Rye Field Publications, 2004.
3. Abrahamsen, Eric. **Insider's Guide to Beijing 2004-05.** Shantou: Shantou University Press, 2004.
4. Ticket of Hebei Provincial Museum, Shijiazhuang.
5. Hebei Provincial Museum. **Tomb of the Duke of Zhongshan at Mencheng.** Beijing: Geography Press, 1998.
6. Wen, Zhixian. **Ambiguity in Collective Re-Presentation about Architecture.** Taipei: Gardencity Press, 2002.
7. Ticket of Tiananmen, Beijing.
8. Chiu, Kwongchiu. **Not Only Chinese Timber Architecture.** Hong Kong: Joint Publishings Co. Ltd., 2000.
9. Rowe, Peter G. & Kuan, Seng. **Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China.** Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002

2004.12.10. Zhaozhou Bridge and Shijiazhuang

At 07:30, I boarded an express train for Shijiazhuang, the provincial capital of Hebei. At 10:30, I walked out of the main railway station of Shijiazhuang and headed south to the Huaxia Bus Terminal. The Huaxia Bus Terminal, I learned from my guidebook, served the coaches that run to the countryside in the south. I passed by a number of suppliers and metal equipment retailers, pumping merchandise, and a street full of toilet appliances and ceramic tiles. Shijiazhuang seemed like a base of home equipment manufacturing.

I got to the intersection of where the terminal supposedly is located but failed to see its entrance. I walked around the intersection several times and decided to go into a restaurant located at the corner to ask for directions. Once I got into the restaurant, I realized I had arrived at the lobby of the former bus terminal. Half of the lobby space had been turned into a restaurant. I sat down at a table, had a bowl of noodles and asked a waitress for directions to the new terminal. She told me the address and suggested me to take a taxi since it would cost only 5 RMB. I followed her advice and reached the Nanzao Bus Terminal at the southern edge of Shijiazhuang.

I arrived at Zhaoxian after one and a half hours on the bus. From Zhaoxian I hired a taxi for 15 RMB to make a round trip to the Anji Bridge. Anji Bridge (or Zhaozhao Bridge), designed by engineer Li Chun in the Sui Dynasty (AD 581 to 618), is the oldest stone bridge of its kind in the world. It has stretched 50.82 m (archway spans 37.37 m) across the Jiao River for 1,400 years. Li Chun's challenge was to build a durable bridge that could withstand regular flooding (and even earthquake) and allow boats to pass beneath and chariots to run on top. He chose the geometry of a parabola for the main span. Li also added two small arches on each side to reduce the self-weight as well as to allow flood water to pass through. Li's bridge predates the oldest of its type emerged in Europe for 800 years, as the Italians built this type of bridge in Venice during the early Renaissance period.

Liang Sicheng came to Zhaoxian in 1933 after his trip to Zhengding. The locals told him about the ancient bridge still in use at Zhaoxian. Liang investigated the bridge and determined the date of construction. He and his team measured and documented the bridge, just like any other ancient buildings they had come across.



Fig. 11.1 The Anji Bridge at Zhaozhou.

I arrived at the Anji Bridge Park after ten-minute taxi ride. The local authorities have marked off an area as a park the size of several soccer fields, and charge an admission fee. They have also erected several historical statues and traditionalist buildings near the bridge. The bridge no longer remains in use, although a decade ago it was still strong enough to bear the load of daily automobile traffic. The government erected another narrower bridge, about 100 m away from the Zhaozhou Bridge, as a viewing platform. At one end of the Zhaozhou Bridge stands a plaque in a glass box given by the American Association of Engineering Societies to certify the achievement of Li Chun and to confirm that the bridge is the oldest of its type.

The bridge seems larger than I had thought, anchoring stiffly into the earth at both sides. I walked up the ancient bridge and checked out the ornate dragon relief on the balustrades. The bridge is quite flat and wide, good enough for several horses to run through at the same time. On the inside of the stone balustrade I found bas-reliefs of several dragon heads. However, they look as if they were carved only twenty years ago. In fact, the issue of over-restoring historical structures has been a problem in China since the time of Liang. Liang had complained more than once that local authorities simply ruined the historical value of the ancient structures by over-restoring them into shiny objects for the sake of tourist



Fig. 11.2 Many scholars have condemned the restored bas-relief on the balustrade of the Anji Bridge as too clean and modern.

promotions. The Zhaozhou Bridge was one of the attractions Liang detested during the 1960s. One more thing I dislike about the site is how the authorities have walled off the area into a tourist spot. I presume Li Chun would rather see his bridge being in use for pedestrian traffic as long as it is safe. Right now, tourists seldom visit the site because of its remoteness, and local villagers can no longer use the bridge because of the admission fee.

After viewing the bridge, I took a bus back to Shijiazhuang from Zhaoxian. Then I took a taxi straight to the provincial museum. The Hebei Provincial Museum was built in a style similar to the National Museum in Beijing: Socialist-Realist colonnade entrance and massive concrete structure. The museum was quite large, but I could hardly find any visitors, except an old man and a young couple. I was surprised by at least two exhibition halls in the two-storey complex. First, I came across the exhibition of the Zhongshan Kingdom, a small kingdom in the region during the Warrior Period (475 to 221 BC). Artefacts on display varied from daily tools to warrior weapons. Life-size weapons such as artillery and spears filled a single display chamber. Before the visit, I didn't even know there was a Zhongshan Kingdom separated from the seven main warrior states in the period. Zhongshan was conquered by the kings of Zhao in 296 BC.

The other impressive display was the artefacts of a tomb found in the area. The tomb belonged to the feudal king Liu Sheng in the Han

Dynasty (206 to 8 BC). Liu's tomb was unrobed when found, quite a rare phenomenon in China. Archaeologists found a large amount of treasure in the tomb including a jade suit sewed together with real gold thread, the circular jade plate of a dragon pattern, several bronze mirrors, and the bronze Changxin Lamp—a magnificent bronze work moulded in the shape of a maid holding a lantern. The lamp was designed such that the size of the opening of the lamp holder (the lantern) was adjustable. Black smoke or dust particles would be trapped within the arm of the maid since the top part of the lamp holder was directly linked to the hollow interior of the maid's arm. The entire lamp, approximately 48 cm tall, could be taken apart for cleaning. Another treasure worth noting was the bronze Boshan incense box. About 36 cm in height, the bronze box was shaped like a sphere of waves stirred up by three dragons. The smoke from the incenses would escape through the gaps between the layers of waves to scent the surroundings.

I walked back to the railway station after visiting the fantastic museum. A three-hour train ride brought me back to the Beijing West Railway Station. I hopped onto a bus and headed back to the Eastern Morning Hostel. Just around the corner of the hostel at a ground unit of the Oriental Plaza, I bought a MacDonald's combo for dinner. The time was late and I didn't want to go elsewhere.



Fig. 11.3 The public square in front of the Hebei Provincial Museum.

2004.12.11. National Library

Today at the computer room in the National Library I collected some articles on the development of Beijing. They basically fell into two categories: urban renewal of the old city, issues about newly built districts and large, well-known projects. Most articles on urban renewal agreed on the organic renewal method used by Wu Liangyong in his Juer Hutong project. The large amount of siheyuans hundreds of years old with poor living conditions in Beijing is quite a dilemma for both citizens and the authorities. Most people believe that protecting these heritage buildings is a responsibility of modern citizens but none of them want to remain living in these worn-out buildings without massive renovations. If there is a choice, the authorities would certainly prefer to demolish the old neighbourhoods, save the renovation money, sell the land to developers, and construct new modern districts. Yet they are also willing to protect a small number of the siheyuans for tourism promotion.

The articles on the new development of Beijing were mainly about the CBD, Zhongguancun Technological Park, and various Westernized neighbourhoods. These Westernized villa or townhouse communities are situated in suburbs of large cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. These projects have always been controversial in the industry. They are basically a replica of either a North American or a European neighbourhood, with exact street layouts and housing designs. Most of these neighbourhoods are walled off from the surroundings; as so, an inhabitant is "truly" living in a "foreign" environment. Several years ago, these projects were targeting foreign workers, but nowadays they have become a representation of luxury. Many scholars condemn the way modern developers import foreign lifestyle into the nation without proper filtering, but are instead promoting them as a luxurious trend.

In my previous Toronto office, I had worked on a project of a Shanghai villa community. The landscape design requirement was bizarre: they wanted an English garden, a French garden, and an Italian garden in the same neighbourhood. Did the Chinese really love flashy Western representation or was it just a device for real-estate promotion? Chinese architects often argue that their clients do not really know what they like except for the price tag and brand names. I see that as a transitional period of the Chinese modernisation. As the societal development becomes more



stable and the collective level of education rises, the Chinese citizens will be able to define their own needs and preferable living environment. Now, everyone wants to be different and get rich fast, so right now they can only follow others and accept whatever is available out there. The development is pretty much controlled by the hands of real-estate tycoons.

Fig. 11.4 A street post at the Orange County China near Beijing. Names such as California are used as local street names.

Fig. 11.5 'They built a number of model homes, where everything, including the design, construction wood and interior finishes such as furniture, dishes and pictures on the wall, was imported.'

Fig. 11.6 (top of page) Guards patrol the street between the Italian-Spanish- and French-style homes. 90% of these villas are weekend homes of wealthy businessmen.

2004.12.12. National Library

Again at the library, I went up to the fifth level to read some more of the reference materials. This time, I chose books about several Chinese architects from three different generations.

Yang Tingbao is a name that every local architect knows apart from Liang Sicheng; Liang was a theorist, Yang was a real practitioner. Although a classmate of Liang at the University of Pennsylvania, Yang took a slightly different approach than Liang and focused more on implanting modernist ideas on the Chinese soil. Similar to Liang, Yang was also a pioneer professor in China. He taught in the Nanjing Institute (Southeast University) for over 40 years. There was a time when Yang had to travel all over the world to attend conferences, and he was appointed vice president of the UIA twice. According to his biography, Yang worked long hours, seven days a week until his death in his 80s. He represents a role model for the Chinese architectural field. In Beijing, Yang designed the Beijing Railway Station, a department store at Wangfujing, and a hotel at the nearby Jinyu Hutong.

Wu Liangyong can be considered as a second-generation Chinese architect and planner. He graduated from Cornell in 1949. He came back to China in 1950, taught at Tsinghua University, and later became director of the Architectural Institute to succeed Liang Sicheng. He is now the president of the Chinese Society of Urban Planning. He was a scholar for most of his career but his Juer Hutong project has earned him uncounted awards and a wonderful opportunity to express his regionalist theories in reality. In the book *Architecture, City, Living Environment*, he explains "A General Theory of Architecture" and other concepts of urban and residential designs. His General Theory of Architecture aims to include aspects from other subjects into architecture such as geography, history, economics, community planning, etc, having "the creation of well living environment" as the core. Wu highly regards Lewis Mumford's theories. Derived from Mumford's idea of "the region as a whole and the city merely as one of its parts", Wu advocates the creation of an integrated economic, social, and environment network in the Jing-Jin area (Beijing, Tianjin, and the surrounding parts of Hebei).

Zhang Lei can be considered a fourth-generation Chinese architect. He graduated from Southeast University in China and then from ETH-

Zurich in 1993. Zhang is a typical young architect in practice. I picked up a book introducing a number of his projects, ranging from residential to institutional. His fundamentalist approach to building form and construction materials unfolds a new generation of design thinking that represents contemporary China well. No trace of ornament and cultural linkage can be found in his projects, only a systematic solution to the site challenge and contemporary issues. No extra features are included to promote grandeur, luxury, or the future glory of the city. His project expresses nothing more than the project itself and the contemporary lifestyle of the inhabitants. Zhang's projects represent a new direction of young Chinese architects who put their focus on the present, rather than on the past or future.

After several generations of establishment, Chinese architecture is beginning to welcome more options on design approaches. From the heavy cultural responsibility and bearing the national identity of the first generation to the pragmatic urge of improvement of the recent group, Chinese architects gradually gain the freedom to choose what they want to tackle. They have the freedom to continue the search of a national identity, and they can also put this identity aside and focus on current situations.

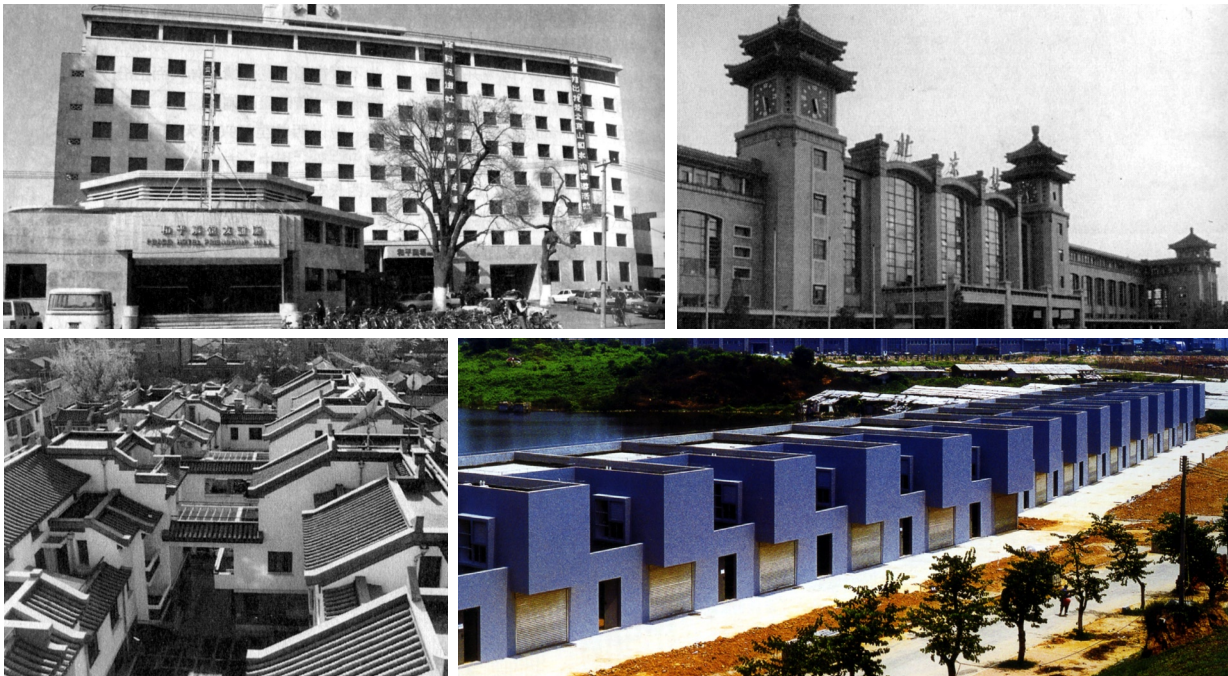
I finished up the necessary note-taking and returned to the Oriental Plaza for dinner.

Fig. 11.7 (middle left) Beijing Peace Hotel (1951) by Yang Tianbao.

Fig. 11.8 (middle right) Beijing Railway Station (1959) by Yang Tianbao.

Fig. 11.9 (bottom left) Beijing Juer Hutong (phase one completed in 1990).

Fig. 11.10 (bottom right) Row House at Dongguan (2004) by Zhang Lei.



2004.12.01. Juer Hutong

I found myself in the *hutong* neighbourhood near the Drum Tower again, after a month between the last visit. This time, I went to see Wu Liangyong's Juer Hutong project. The Juer Hutong project attempts to renew the old siheyuans in a city block and turn it into a compound of modern courtyard low-rise apartments. The apartments are three to four storeys high, and their interconnected layout and courtyard planning are mainly derived from traditional concepts. On the other hand, the modern architectural standard provides a guarantee of human comfort and safety.

Wu generated a new prototype of Chinese residences from studies of various common dwellings across the nation. His aim was to renew the *hutong* neighbourhood without damaging the heritage continuity system, living customs, and existing urban fabric of old Beijing. Wu's endeavour paralleled the thinking of a number of the first-generation architects who put effort in making buildings that were both traditional and new, or both Western and Chinese. The Juer Hutong project provided a fruitful conclusion to their effort after Wu had received a number of international awards.

I entered the Juer Hutong from its west end. Some old siheyuans were still flanking this part of the *hutong*. After a series of four-storey apartments, I reached the redeveloped residences and its new community centre—a double storey building with full-height glazing at the ground floor. Wu's compound was not contained within a wall enclosure. He abandoned this tradition and put living units right against the street, just like normal apartment buildings. From the tiled roofs, courtyard arrangement, interconnecting laneway, and screen and door details, I could tell that the attachment to a traditional Chinese dwelling was still strong, especially on the idea of a community settlement.

I entered the compound (phase one I believe) through an entrance beside the community centre, on top of which a second floor unit bridges across to form a gateway. Similarly, below-unit passage arrangement was ubiquitous, reminding me of the gateways of an ancient complex, while maximizing the density of living spaces. I wandered from one courtyard to another, just like touring the Wang Compound in Shanxi. The common aspect in both compounds was the interconnecting



11.11-11.12 Gateways of the Juer Hutong New Siheyuans.

relationship between units. All courtyards were paved and contained at least one or two trees. These trees were mainly preserved from original siheyuans on the site. Small Western touches were also found: Ivy covered a number of the white-washed stucco walls and European iron lamp posts at various courtyard corners. Inhabitants had left vegetables here and there in the open spaces for drying, and some courtyard spaces were occupied by bicycle and even automobile parking. The courtyards also served as the main access points to the units. Semi-outdoor staircases were provided to connect all units to the courtyards.

I climbed up one of the staircases that led to different units at every half-level landing (the staircase operated as a pinwheel in the pivot point of an "L"-shaped complex). From the third level, I shot some photos of the courtyards and the surroundings. One thing disappointing was the under-usage of the courtyard spaces, perhaps because of the time of day and season of the year. Furthermore, many of the dwellers (original residents of the torn-down complexes on the same site) preferred to socialize with the neighbours on the *hutong* laneways, at customary locations where chairs and couches had always been. The more private courtyard spaces of the Juer Hutong become a secure space for children instead.

11.13 A courtyard in the Juer Hutong complex.





11.14 Another courtyard space at the Juer Hutong.

In terms of living conditions, the new Juer Hutong is an obvious heaven compared to the previous tiny and shabby chambers in the chaotic, ancient complexes where residents did not even have their own private kitchens and bathrooms. Little details such as door handles of lion faces and traditional-patterned stone screens helped to generate a sense of familiarity for the elderly. Despite there being a number of street entrances opened to the courtyards, most were gated off from unexpected visitors like me. I exited the compound from where I came in without even meeting a single dweller throughout the entire visit.

The Juer Hutong project marks a new chapter of regionalist architecture in China. Wu has found a good balance between cultural and living aspects of architecture. The main concepts attempt to create the sense of community similar to the previous siheyuan dwellings and to create a new cell in the long-developed urban fabric of old Beijing are by and large successful. It is a great approach to improve the living conditions of the dwellers, but may not be appropriate to apply this style in all Chinese cities. In fact, the low density rate of the design has discouraged the spread of Wu's idea beyond the Juer Hutong; thus, his project from the early 1990s remains as a crucial milestone in the search for deriving a new Chinese prototype, but is by no means the conclusion.

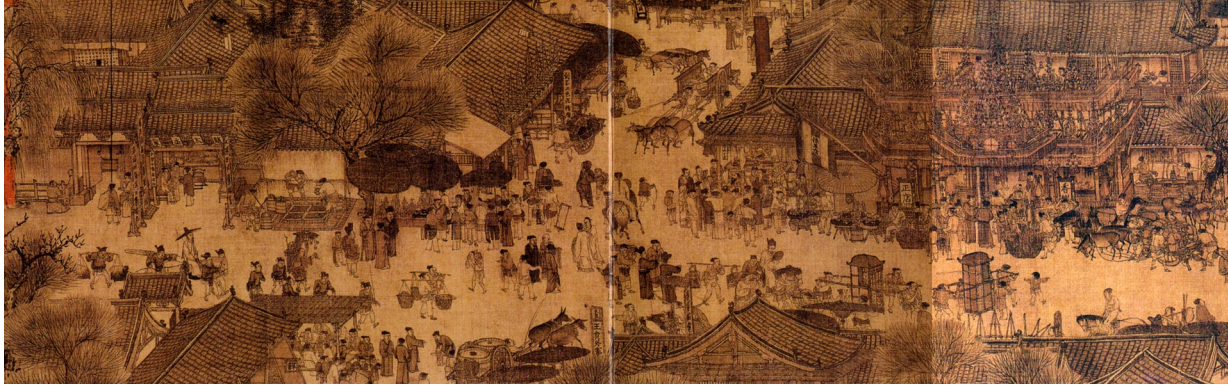
2004.12.01. Tiananmen and Wangfujing

This is my last day in Beijing. The forecast yesterday predicted there might be flurries this morning, but I did not have the fortune to see a white Forbidden City. Instead of white, a deep, greyish gloom blanketed the entire city as I stepped out the glass door of the Eastern Morning Hostel.

In the morning, I carried two piles of books in plastic bags to the post office, which is right beside the hostel entrance. I went down to the basement lobby and searched for shipping services. Beside the information counter, a man was packing a pile of textbooks into a white box purchased at the counter. I purchased two medium-sized boxes and loaded my books in. None of the books I put in were architecture related, as I figured the shipping might take quite a while. The clerk asked me the destination and I said, "Canada", in Mandarin. She brought out a thick black binder to look for the unit price per kilogram. At last, I paid a little over 400 RMB for the two boxes (the shipping cost is about the same as the total value of the books). She said the shipping would take about two months. "That would be around Valentine's Day then," I thought.

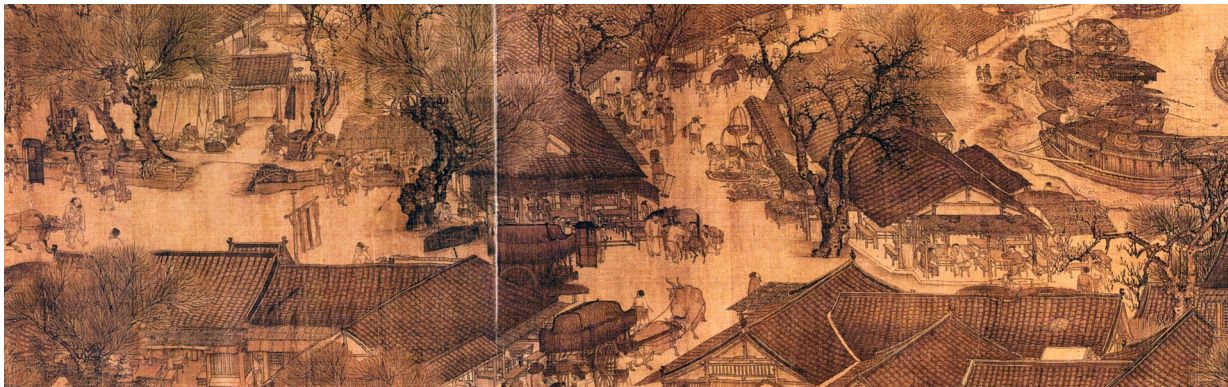
I entered the postal shop on the ground floor and bought several sets of stamp souvenir sheets and first-day covers. The stamp I like most is the set of famous Chinese paintings. I particularly like the one with Zhang Zeduan's *Qing Ming Shang He Tu* printed on it. The Song painting is my favourite ancient Chinese painting. The super-long horizontal scroll (24.8 cm x 528.7cm) depicts the Song capital city Kaifeng from the suburb area all the way to the city centre, including street markets, ferry docks, city gates, all types of retail stores, a magnificent arch bridge, uncounted pedestrians, sedans, camels, horse carts, and sailing boats. The river in the middle of the city serves like a highway for passenger and freight boats from outside towns. There is not much order on the shopping street, with citizens doing all sorts of business. It seems that the city is quite overcrowded and people basically fill up every corner within the city wall. Each person's face and each detail of the buildings are clearly shown. Within the city depicted, there is even a three-storey building under construction.

To many Chinese, Zhang Zeduan's Kaifeng is their ideal city, but not the symmetrical and ordered version advocated by the imperial



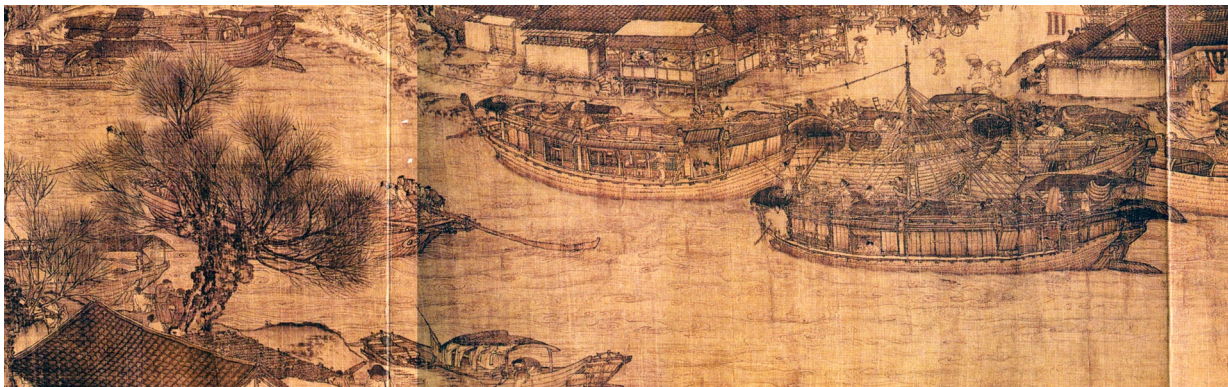
Official's Home

Lamb Meat Restaurant

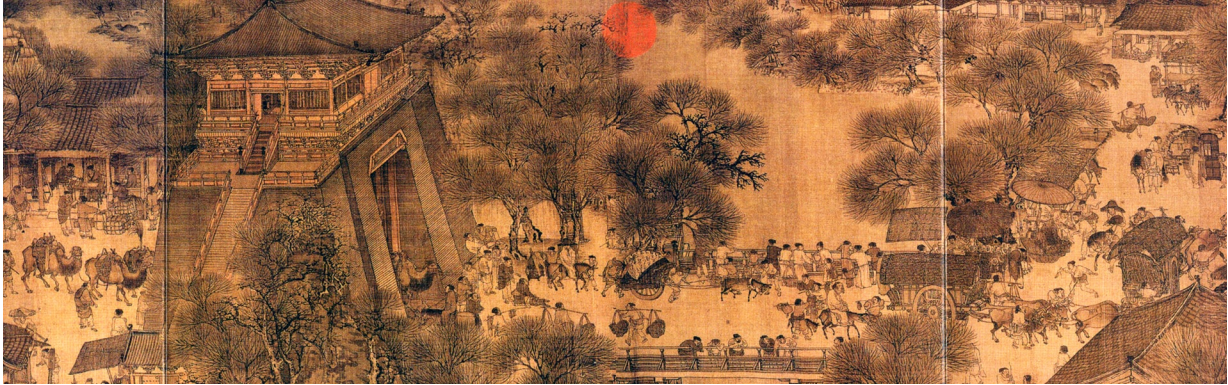


Wealthy Mansion

Riverside Market Street



Outer Markets



City Gate

Moat



Construction Site

Crossing the Bridge



Ships from the outer provinces

Suburbs

11.15 Zhang Zeduan, Qing Ming Shang He Tu (Crossing the Bridge at the Qing-Ming Festival). The painting shows the capital Kaifeng of the Northern Song Dynasty (AD 960-1127). The city housed a population of 1.5 million, and is famous for its crowdedness and trading, as well as the freedom to set up markets and business anywhere in the city.



11.16 Admission ticket for the Tiananmen Gate Tower. An advertisement for China Mobile occupies the back.

courts. The imperial version, namely a reflection of the perfect heaven, is a city full of hierarchical controls and spatial restrictions. The Qing Beijing contained the imperial ideals in the Inner City and the citizen version in the Outer City, where the Dashanlan and Xianyukou markets were situated. Today the physical wall between the Inner and Outer cities is gone, and the hierarchical difference between people and the authorities is not as strong. Beijing is a unique Chinese city because it contains a strong political as well as an economic aspect. The authorities seem to be trying hard to maintain a balance between the two. The centre of the city, the Tiananmen Square area, however, is entirely a venue for politics and national glory. The scale of the core area does not belong to any single individual, but to the collective, or

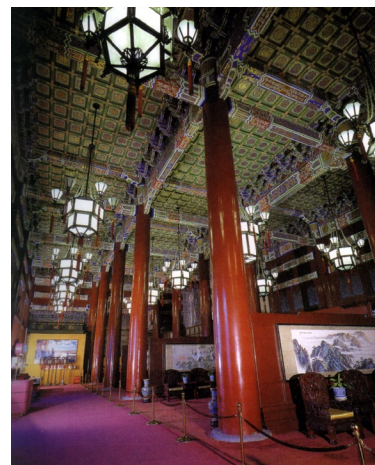


the entire Chinese universe.

At noon, I convinced myself to pay the admission to go up the Tiananmen—the icon of Beijing for the past several centuries. The stairs are located at the back side of the gate. I was asked to leave my camera bag at the coat-check counter and walk through a metal detector before going up. Unlike during weekends, today there was hardly anyone in line for the attraction. I walked up a stone staircase flanked on both sides by red walls.

I reached the upper platform of Tiananmen, where Mao had announced the formation of Communist China on October 1st 1949. The row of red flags along the railing that faced the square appeared dark grey in colour against the lighter grey sky. The view down to the square was disappointing due to the foggy weather. Even the National Museum and the Great Hall of People across the Changan Avenue looked blurry and it was impossible for me to pick out their windows and architectural details. The Monument of the People and Mao's Mausoleum basically became two layers of faint silhouettes, one on top of another. The hard stone pavement of the square and the Changan Avenue reflected a little of the dim sunlight and emerged as planes of pinkish-grey colour, just like the sky. Cars and pedestrians, like clusters of black ants, moved against the different shades of grey. I felt as if I were colour-blind.

The palace hall on the gate platform was a large exhibition space for the Communist Party. The space itself was once the location where Mao and other leaders held meetings about the ceremonies, and the making of Communist China. A black-and-white documentary was constantly playing on a television to remind people of the historical moments.



11.17 The main hall inside Tiananmen Gate Tower.



11.18 The view to the Tiananmen Square from the Tiananmen Gate in a smoggy day.



11.19 The south entrance into the Wangfujing Street on the Changan Avenue.



11.20 Entrance into the embassy district of Beijing at the turning of the twentieth century. The embassy district contained embassies and establishments of the eight foreign nations that invaded Beijing in 1900 (Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, USA, Belgium and Austria). The embassy district lay directly south of the Wangfujing Street. Foreigners established a number of shops in the Wangfujing Street selling imported goods such as cameras and clocks.

Souvenirs of Mao were also available at the counter.

After the gate, I hesitated as to what to do in the afternoon. It was my final day in China, but the weather had been very discouraging. I walked along the Changan Avenue, passed the Beijing Hotel and wandered back to the Wangfujing District again. I lingered at the shopping street and checked out the famous fur-hat shop. The keeper put two fur hats at the display windows and labelled one Mao's style and the other Zhou Enlai's style. Apparently Mao and Zhou each had a unique type of fur hat, or they both were customers of this renowned old store. Some shops in the district had been around for several decades.

Wangfujing had long been a high-end shopping street since the turn of the twentieth century. Foreigners, imperial officials, and wealthy businessmen loved to hang around the foreign shops along Wangfujing. The Europeans, Americans, and Japanese sold clothing, mechanical clocks,

photographic equipment, jewellery, and other imported goods. After the fall of Qing, the street became even livelier than before, and was one of the first streets in the city to be paved and to be equipped with electricity. The Dongan Bazaar, at the intersection of Wangfujing and Jinyu Hutong, offered a wide range of local eating, drinking, shopping, and entertainment. In the market, the famous Jixiang Theatre showed both Beijing opera and Western movies. In the Maoist years, the shops at Wangfujing were all nationalized. Many shops had been closed down or modified at the Dongan Bazaar, and all foreigners were asked to leave. After 1978, Deng Xiaoping came to impose the Open Door Policy, and Wangfujing gradually revived its former grandeur and diversity.

I went into the New Dongan Square, a shopping mall built at the site of the former bazaar. The 215,000 m² mega structure was built by Hong Kong developers in 1998. The shopping centre contains two seven-storey-high atriums to let in natural sunlight. At the basement, a touristy reconstruction of an old Beijing market scene was created to house several dozens of the former small enterprises at the Dongan Bazaar. They were mainly eateries and gift shops.



11.21 Engraving of the Old Dongan Bazaar in the late 1910s.



11.22 Model of the New Dongan Square, designed by RTKL, Los Angeles.

I walked further north along Wangfujing and reached the Dongtang (East Cathedral), or St. Joseph Church. The Renaissance-style church was rebuilt in 1904 on the site of its 1655 version, found by Portuguese Jesuit priests. The Dongtang was one of the first churches built in China.

I popped into several shops and walked further north to the Commercial Bookstore. I didn't get anything from the traditional bookstore this time. On my way back south, I passed by the intersection of Jinyu Hutong. To my east, along the sidewalk of Jinyu Hutong, several dozen vendors, red lanterns, and white and red parasols formed a long line of a street food market. I was told by a vendor that they originated from the eateries of Dongan Bazaar. After the government's redevelopment of the Dongan Bazaar into the New Dongan Square, the vendors were given a standardized set of parasol, vending cart, red lantern, and chef uniform to continue doing business on Jinyu Hutong. Under the bright light of each stall, all sorts of local, cooked foods were under display: meat kebabs, noodles, fried rice, dumplings, meat buns, and also some unexpected options like sea-horses, starfish, and scorpions. I didn't have the courage to test these out.

Instead, I walked into a small restaurant that offered dishes from southern China. I had some dumplings with vinegar and a bottle of domestic beer for dinner.

I returned to room 6443 at about 20:00 and started packing right away. The purchased books, Professor Peng's CDs, articles in the flash disk, and my 50 rolls of film are the most crucial items to bring back to Canada. Tomorrow my flight is at 07:30 in the morning so I should go to bed a little earlier, if I can fall asleep. Within my wallet, there is still a little over 100 RMB left for tomorrow's taxi ride. The taxi rate to the airport, I learned from hostel staff the other day, will cost around 70 RMB. Getting a taxi is the only way that I can ensure reaching the airport on time with my huge backpack and a suitcase full of books.

The lights of Oriental Plaza and Wangfujing should still be vibrant and bright, but now it is 22:00 and I am about to turn off the lights in room 6443. The 24-inch television sits still on the empty wooden desk. The floor is clear and my two pieces of luggage lean at the far corner next to the door. Tomorrow I will get up to be a different person. I will no longer be a solo stranger cloistered at the B4 dungeon—the backstage of capitalist Beijing.



11.23 Wangfujing Shopping Street at 21:00.



11.24 The pathway between the Tiananmen and Duanmen at 21:30.



11.25 The Tiananmen Square at 22:00.

Aftermath

In the following passage, the scholar Luo Xiaomei evaluates the first generation of Chinese architects in terms of the contributions they made to the emerging complex of economic and socio-political China:

If we look back at his (Yang Tingbao) creative career from 1920s to now (1980s), we will be surprised at its diversity as like reading a textbook of history on Chinese architecture for the past sixty years. His projects comprise of traditional approaches, or traditional merged with modernist, and contain a Chinese design language, or a Western one, or a combined one. Although one can pick out any of his projects and categories it with a style or certain ism, this does not tell his complete story. Yang and the other first generation architects have not advocated any design school, but promoted a quest of realism in China's complicated political and economical situation of this century, and of our own path among foreign and traditional influences. Within this difficult process, they have done their best to understand the society, adapt to the society and design parameters, and constantly improve themselves so that they can come up with good design solutions for the inconsistent demands and under very limited resources. That's their contribution.¹

The second generation of Chinese architects inherited the responsibility of their predecessors—the search for their own architecture. Furthermore, from the second generation there has followed a third and even a fourth. This generational unfolding shows a deep concern for developing a new architecture that might represent the *Zeitgeist* of a modern, or even contemporary, China. At the same time, there was great hope that this new architecture would bear the longevity of Chinese traditions and possibly even express the particularities of regional uniqueness.

However, the inherited responsibilities were soon challenged by the complex reality of an emerging contemporary China. Under certain political and economic constraints, and the continuous tension between the process of self-discovery and re-presentation of age-old traditions, many Chinese architects have struggled with two fundamental concerns of modern architecture: the initiation of societal change or adjustment and the development of a framework of analysis and critique that accounts for the diverse physical and cultural needs of an emerging society. Indeed, if the modern age was a celebration of change and invention in the light of nostalgia and memory, then the contemporary horizon has inherited this challenge. This is nowhere so marked as in

current-day China. Over the last hundred years, clashes between past and present, foreign and domestic, and opposing political regimes have led the nation into various stages of mass oppression, cultural confusion and social disorder. In such a difficult context, the foundation of a new architecture or the development of a sophisticated framework of analysis was by no means easy to achieve. Because of this, many architects reacted to the challenges facing them in much the same way as the authorities themselves: through hasty conclusions reached in very short periods of time. Since chances are scarce and time is always limited—even in today's China—many contemporary architects follow the sometimes heedless path of modernism and value newness for its own sake. Thus, they express their nationalistic fervour and reveal their political consensus towards the regime; as such, they emphasize the surface styles and outer appearances of buildings without much attention to the deeper concepts and theories at play, whether architectural or political. Furthermore, many contemporary architects lack the vision needed for social betterment. As Sarah Goldhagen suggests in "Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern," "neither a definition of the new architecture after the First World War nor a framework of analysis for modernism can be founded on style."² She continues to describe the importance of developing a framework of analysis when reading the generative principles beneath emerging styles:

We must therefore dig beneath style to get at the movement's generative principles and, based on them, to develop a framework that is descriptively powerful and analytical useful, and that distinguishes these principles from their manifestations in typology, style, and individual orientation. Only when the interlocking cultural, political, and social dimensions that together constitute the foundation of modernism in architecture are identified and analyzed can we properly make sense of modernism's initial complexity and its evolution over time.³

In the same way, we cannot use style to analyze Yang Tingbao's contributions to modern Chinese architecture, nor can we simply focus on typology to establish a foundation for reading and creating a new Chinese architecture.

The Chinese authorities have long been involved in the making of modern architecture. In particular, during the Maoist years when the government advocated the creation of a "national style," architectural design was based on the political needs and personal tastes of regime. On one hand, in order to connect their current achievement with past glories,

the authorities reconstruct historical buildings and support traditionalist architecture; on the other hand, in order to underscore their political vision, they promote the image of a prosperous future through more innovative urban design and contemporary architecture. As such, they restrict the emergence of what Goldhagen, in "Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern," calls the *negative critics* in the architectural profession:

Negative critics believed that architecture bore a political obligation to use their designs to advance social progress and alleviate social ills, yet they asserted that the only way this might be accomplished is through a two-step process. In the first step, the practitioner offered a revelatory architecture that would disclose the deficiencies of the political system and social institutions by which they were oppressed. In the second step, the then-enlightened populace would rise in revolt against their oppressors.⁴

Without the freedom to criticize the relationship between social development and the political regime, Chinese architects become mere "consensualists" who can work only within the boundary of the society and under its existing rules. Therefore, their political goals are limited and their power to facilitate social growth from the perspective of the citizens is weakened by the restrictive influence of political authority. Perhaps, in this context, the lived experience of the Western modernist movement of the twentieth century could provide a key to reducing political restrictions and raising both social understanding and the critical awareness of the architects themselves. In order for this to occur, it is essential that Chinese architects be given the opportunity to build up their confidence in self-expression and to maintain a balanced communication with the masses and authorities. This socio-architectural reform will speed up and bolster the restructuring process of the Chinese society as it enters an age of extreme change and invention. It is not a question of how many skyscrapers China can build—but how well- prepared its society is to accommodate the social changes and complexities inherent to modernization.

Today's China bears three different, often violently contradictory, legacies: the imperialist past, the communist utopian ideology and the capitalist dream of a consumerist paradise. As such, the society is complex and its citizens possess mixed feelings about their past, present and potential future. Many Chinese architects want to reflect the essence of their new epoch and their past glories by inventing a contemporary

classical language. The dilemma and difficulty involved in this task shows both their innovative capacity and their traditional roots simultaneously. After the First World War, a strikingly similar challenge was experienced by the early modernists in the Western world, when a change of architectural expression was needed to represent the modern era. The modernists arose from the decline of the Beaux-Arts culture and they never accepted tradition as the provider of typologies. Instead, they began their movement on revolutions against traditional approaches.

Today, as Chinese architects look for inspirations from tradition, they must be able to acknowledge the path of its evolution, since each tradition carries within itself a past, a present, and a future. Every tradition is constructed from former creative innovations—even from revolutions. In order to promote and support the development of traditions, therefore, Chinese architects must possess a critical eye to read, critique, and deconstruct those same traditions. Indeed, it is through a kind of deconstruction that the essence of traditions can reveal themselves fully; in order to devise new ideas and to create architecture that represents and responds to their own era, architects in contemporary China might look to the past for indications of the future. In many ways, traditions are essential to the establishment of an architectural vision or perspective, as traditions carry both the successes and failures of past designers. Most importantly, traditions carry within them the records of societal changes from previous centuries. From this perspective, traditional architecture could be seen as a series of still photographs gradually unfolding into a motion picture of evolution—an evolution that shows how earlier masters satisfied the needs of their contemporaries, how one societal stage led to another, and what reasons lay behind the transformation or even seeming obliteration of an emerging culture. As innovative designs emerge from the ground up, new ideas contribute to the making of what might be called a "novel tradition." And yet, the only way to sustain the momentum of tradition-making is found through a kind of radical departure from the past.

At the 1959 CIAM meeting in Otterlo, Kenzo Tange claimed that "tradition can be developed through *challenging* its own short-comings implying the same for regionalism."⁵ For Chinese architecture, Tange's words suggest that traditions and regionalist qualities are useful only when architects develop a critical attitude towards them through self-

examination and self-questioning. In *Critical Regionalism: Architecture and Identity in a Globalized World*, Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis advocate a method of critiquing regional influences that informs the use novel skills or modern technologies in contemporary design. In this way, the architect can generate ideas, design intentions and invent fresh architectural languages that are not merely novel in themselves. In fact, according to Lefaivre and Tzonis, when the combined study of domestic history, built forms, materials, social backgrounds and environmental issues are put into consideration with modern techniques, a unique type of architectural language develops to counter the linear movement of globalization, wherein a building becomes "displaced, rebellious and alien to its immediate environment."⁶ To avoid such a "self-sufficient structure" whose region is simply "anywhere,"⁷ Critical Regionalism posits a development that is both local and modern. This, it would seem, is a potential approach or solution that Chinese architects have been investigating over the past few generations. Under the guidance of such models as Critical Regionalism, new Chinese architecture could be used to counter the global assimilation movement with its consequent stereotype that "every Chinese city looks the same." In such a manner it would escape the limited and dominating world of symbols, styles and typologies.

Many of the most fundamental principles of Critical Regionalism are summarized in Kenneth Frampton's "Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity." In this text, there are five points that are particularly relevant to the case of contemporary Chinese architecture, insofar as they prevent Critical Regionalism from becoming a mere support for classical revivalism of a kitsch oddity of regional representation. First of all, although Critical Regionalism critiques modernization, it nonetheless believes in the "emancipatory and progressive aspects of the modern architectural legacy."⁸ Secondly, the theory advocates the "realization of architecture as a tectonic fact rather than the reduction of the built environment to a series of ill-assorted scenographic episodes."⁹ Thirdly, Critical Regionalism should respond to the site-specific factors such as climate and topography. Fourthly, such a theory must equally weigh the importance of the tactile and visual aspects of architecture. Finally, Critical Regionalism does not limit itself

to needless self-absorption. It rather opens up the possibility of deriving reinterpreted vernacular elements from foreign sources:

In other words it will endeavour to cultivate a contemporary place-oriented culture without becoming unduly hermetic, either at the level of formal reference or at the level of technology. In this regard, it tends towards the paradoxical creation of a regionally based "world culture," almost as though this were a precondition for achieving a relevant form of contemporary practice.¹⁰

The humanist concern is another fundamental principle that can be used to direct the development of a new architecture so that it properly reflects the *Zeitgeist* of contemporary Chinese culture. When we look back to the evolution of Modernist Architecture in the first half of the twentieth century, humanism arose in the 1950s during a period when international modernism had attained a certain self-referential limit—so much so that buildings almost became "art" pieces of the machine age. It was also the period when the post-war nations such as Britain possessed insufficient material resources and cultural assurance to develop a monumental expression in architecture.¹¹ In this context, young British architects such as Alison and Peter Smithson initiated New Brutalism to create a counter-culture against the modernist ideals that dominated the pre-war eras. They based their movement on the primacy of two things: architectural materials and the humanist tradition. This "realization of the affinity between building and man"¹² opened up a debate regarding ethics and architecture and initiated a breakthrough in the aesthetic evaluation of architecture. In *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic*, Reyner Banham described the Brutalists in the following terms: "Like many others of their age, they were trying to see their world whole and see it true, without the interposition of diagrammatic political categories, exhausted 'progressive' notions or prefabricated aesthetic preferences."¹³ The April 1957 issue of *Architectural Design* underlined the Brutalist effort in understanding the reality of the society:

Any discussion of Brutalism will miss the point if it does not take into account Brutalism's attempt to be objective about 'reality'—the cultural objectives of society, its urges, its techniques and so on. Brutalism tries to face up to a mass-production society.¹⁴

As such, the spirit of New Brutalism served as an important force to counteract the modernist domination in architecture half a century ago. Perhaps, if it could be argued that the limitations of a dominant discourse

trouble contemporary Chinese architects, the spirit of New Brutalism could be use of to inspire and inform the emerging architectural language of present-day China. Furthermore, this perspective can be divided into three categories: materiality, social awareness and humanism. First of all, as New Brutalism places great emphasis on the reverence of architectural materials, it leads to a deeper realization of the both limits and qualities of the building materials. In the 1950s, the sincere passion for and thorough understanding of architectural materials helped the Brutalists to explore the purity of forms and the exposure of structures—it also aided them in their attempt to invent an architectural language that expressed the conditions of their age. Contemporary Chinese architects, however, mostly communicate with computer-rendered or aided images and, subsequently, their creativity is bounded by a set of "prefabricated aesthetic standards" and by a lack of knowledge regarding the specific properties of building materials. This is a crucial point, since the reverence for and understanding of materials often emerges from an architect's experience, thereby allowing them to investigate the potentials embedded within a new architectural language. Furthermore, this approach may help to raise the craftsmanship standards of the Chinese building construction industry and to foster a concern among young architects for the importance of mastering both design and construction.

In another way, the concerns of the Brutalist movement can be used consolidate the Critical Regionalist approach by reflecting the real situation of contemporary China. Chinese architects are under a personal and social obligation to understand their society well; through their works, they are asked to express the qualities of the current social phenomena that surround them. It is through this double reflection that they must make their architecture unique in its relationship to the contemporary architecture of other countries and social realities. Instead of designing architecture that is based on foreign modules, spectacular facades or the taste of authorities, the key must be to understand the local social context and attempt to express its reality through an invented architectural language.

Finally, the Brutalist ethic that advocates the invention of an improved living environment is linked to the humanistic aspect of the movement—and it, above all, proves to be the biggest asset to emerging

architectural languages. In the years of devastating social unrests and famine during the 1960s and the Cultural Revolution, millions of Chinese suffered from harsh and severely depressed living conditions; even today, many people still find themselves cramped in flimsy shelters or tiny apartment flats without private kitchens and bathrooms. Certainly, standards of living have vastly improved during the last two decades, following the economic boom and its consequent pursuit of material comforts. Yet, as China's economy becomes the fourth biggest in the world, only after the United States, Japan and Germany¹⁵, the authorities immediately support the creation of monumental and futuristic architecture, insofar as it seems to express their openness and political achievements. At the same time, however, and to the detriment to the Chinese population, the authorities overlook opportunities that advocate the research and design of better individual homes for the mass population. As the process of Chinese modernization evolves, contemporary architects, like the New Brutalists before them, should rise and promote humanist values of social betterment in the creation of a new Chinese architecture that can reflect the modern ideals for living. For instance, they might take as their inspiration the following New Brutalist motto:

It is impossible for each man to construct his own home.
It is for the architect to make it possible for the man to make
the flat his house, the maisonette his habitat...
We aim to provide a framework in which man can again be
master of his house...¹⁶

Alison and Peter Smithson

More importantly, the quest for a contemporary architectural language in China should never come to a close. It should be read as a motivation for Chinese architects to self-transform and surpass their predecessors. Architecture has to be reevaluated and renewed from time to time. Every time one begins a search, it is a different journey. The next time a student takes an architectural research trip to China, the experience should be different. Although there may be no perfect destination, every time a new approach is taken, that experience will refine its past and contribute to the next seeker's journey.

Notes

Reconstruction of Memories

1. See Mitchell, 'Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt', *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, 212.
2. See Wang, *Tale of the City*, 318.
3. See Halbwichs, *On Collective Memories*, 51.
4. See Broudehoux, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, 45.
5. See Wong, *A Paradise Lost*, 89.
6. See Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture*, 1.
7. See Wong, *A Paradise Lost*, 186.
8. *ibid.*, 187.
9. See Broudehoux, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, 64.
10. *ibid.*, 65.
- 11–14. See: "Should Yuanmingyuan be rebuilt?", *The China Daily* 2005, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-01/21/content_411124.htm.
15. See Broudehoux, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, 74.
16. Original on the plague at the ruins of the Western Mansions. See Broudehoux for English translation, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, 78.
17. See Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture*, 4-12.
18. See Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, 122-123.
19. For information on the design of the national emblem, see Qin, "Lin Huiyin and the National Emblem", *Architect Lin Huiyin*, 117-122.
20. See Wong, *Chinese History*, 87.
21. See Schoppa, *Twentieth Century China*, 182.
22. See Knauer and Walkowitz, *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*, 1.

Beijing Tourist

1. See MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 13.
2. *ibid.*
3. A statement proclaimed by the mayor of Beijing Chen Xiantong in early 1990s.
4. Widely used in essays of Chinese scholars referring to the erections of buildings in historical forms. The term was initially used by architectural scholar Lin

Huiyin and Liang Sicheng in the 1950s to oppose the demolition of a number of historical buildings in the capital. They foresaw after the demolition of the "real relics", that there would be a day when the government would be desperate to reconstruct "fake antiques" in order to define national identity.

5. "New Beijing, Great Games!" was the slogan for the bidding of the Olympics Games in 2001.
6. See Montefiore, *Prince of Princes*, 380.
7. *ibid.*, 380.
8. *ibid.*, 383.
9. *ibid.*, 381.
10. See Broudehoux, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, 30.
11. See Lefavre and Tzonis, *Critical Regionalism*, 18.
12. See Wang, *Tale of the City*, 111.
13. Cited from Broudehoux, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, 198.

Cultural Fusion and Clash

1. See Wu and Peng, *Great Discovery of Chinese Geography*, 83.
2. See Wu and Peng, *Great Discovery of Chinese Geography*, 97.
3. See Halbwichs, *On Collective Memories*, 160.
4. See Dong, *A Study on Christian University Architecture of China*, 52.
5. From the Opium Wars to the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the Imperial Qing government had signed many unfair treaties with the foreign powers after military defeats. Other than the frustration towards extensive land loss and the heavy reparations, the local peasants also faced dramatic increase on taxation, and religious clashes and land disputes with missionary organizations. The secret cult Boxer Rebellion emerged and attracted great numbers of peasants in Northern China. In 1900, they began to attack churches, embassies and other foreign establishments, and damage objects of modernization. The movement went out of control and the rebels began to murder Christians and whoever that owned foreign books and wore eye-glasses.
6. See Dong, *A Study on Christian University Architecture of China*, 72.
7. *ibid.*, 73.

8. *ibid.*
9. See Rowe and Kuan, *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China*, 229.
10. See Liang, "National Style of Architecture", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 58. Liang Sicheng cited the party policy number 41 to indicate that "our architecture should be a product of the nation, science, and the collective." He explained that national architecture should involve national history, traditional art and techniques, reasonable building science, and comfortable living qualities for the collective. Also see Liang, "Our Traditional Architecture and Contemporary Problems", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 136. Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin indicated the three design issues of their contemporary architects: "to cleanse the shameful semi-colonial appearances of our cities, to develop a national style and expand the values of traditional architectural system, and to absorb experiences from Soviet Russia in creating Socialist and economical buildings to satisfy the collective." Also see Liang, "Corrections of Our Design Philosophies by the Russians", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 150. Liang listed the five principles of Russian Socialist architecture: first, the care for the collective; second, the recognition that architecture is a form of art; third, the concept of unity and nationalism on architecture and urban planning; fourth, the unity of a city, region and the entire nation; fifth, the manipulation of national architecture.
11. See Liang, "From 'Utility, economy, and, if conditions allow, beauty' to Traditions and Innovations", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 303. Liang introduced the policy declared by the Party in 1953 as a creative invention of pragmatism, a general comment that stayed close to reality of the Socialist China.
12. Charlie Cheng, a master graduate from the school of architecture at University of Liverpool, gained his Doctorate degree in Urban Planning at University of London. Cheng was appointed to assist Liang in 1949 as the chair of the urban planning committee and the Assistant Architect of the Academy of Architectural Design in Beijing. Cheng worked with Liang in writing the proposal of constructing the new political core of Beijing outside the city wall to the west. See Liang, "Proposal of the masterplan of the central government administrative core", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 60, for the full Liang-Cheng Proposal.
13. See Wang, *Tale of the City*, 82. Wang depicted the Russian comments in counter with Liang and Cheng's proposal on reconstructing Beijing: "Beijing has no big industry, however, other than cultural, scientific, and artistic aspects, a capital city should also contain industrial aspects." "It is best to start reconstructing an area at a thoroughfare or a public square, like the Tiananmen Square, since you have used it for military parades and declaration for the nation founding recently." "The attempt to move the core out of the Old City is to give up the architectural and reconstruction value of it." See also Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*, 170. Fairbank quoted a comment from Mayor Peng Chen to Liang Sicheng when both were standing on the Tiananmen Gate, "Chairman Mao wants a big modern city: he expects the sky there to be filled with smokestacks."
14. See Liang, "Several Crucial Issues in Architectural Designs", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 356.
15. See Liang, "Our Native Architecture", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol.5*, 233.
16. See Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*, 172.
17. See Se, "Reread I. M. Pei", *Compilation of Articles of Architects*, 147.
18. See Wiseman, *I. M. Pei*, 184.
19. Mayor Chen Xitong of Beijing deliberately asked for Chinese roofs on all prominent building buildings in the city.
20. See King, *Spaces of Global Cultures*, 117.
21. *ibid.*, 118. Both Toronto and Vancouver are the most preferred cities for Chinese and Hong Kong immigrants to settle in North America.
22. Wu Liangyong received a number of awards on the project including American Architects Association Honours (1990), the Gold Award from the Asian Architects Association (1993), and the World Habitat Awards of the United Nations (1993), etc.
23. See Wu, *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing*, 104.
24. See Wu, *Chinese Architecture*, 108.
25. See Peng, "Emergency Rescue for the National Theatre", *International Chinese Newsweekly*. The project is comprised of a gigantic steel and glass blob within which three auditoriums are sunken six to eight storeys below grade. The main entry is a tunnel that goes through an enormous pool of water, while the body of water surrounds the blob on all four sides. Many architects are concerned with the safety of fire escapes for the approximate 10,000 audiences.
26. See Peng, "Emergency Rescue for the National Theatre", *International Chinese Newsweekly*.
27. See Rowe and Kuan, *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China*, 174.
28. See www.citymayors.com.
29. See www.info.gov.hk/censtatd/eng/hkstat.

Chinese Architectural Theories

1. See Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings*, preface.
2. See Fergusson, *A History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 447.
- 3-4. *ibid.*
5. See Siren, *A History of Early Chinese Art Vol. 4: Architecture*, 1.
6. *ibid.*, 72.
7. See Ito, *History of Chinese Architecture*, 12.
8. *ibid.*, 34.
9. See Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*, 29. Educated in Japan, Liang Qichao was a famous reformist in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in China,
10. See Liang and Lin, "What is Architecturesque", *Compilation of Articles of Architects*, 4.
11. See Liang, "Why Study Chinese Architecture", *Liang*

- Sicheng Collection Vol. 3*, 377.
12. See Liang, "Our Native Architecture", *Liang Sicheng Collection Vol. 5*, 197.
 13. See Knapp, *China's Old Dwellings*, 9.
 14. See Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China*, xxiii.
 15. *ibid.*, 205.
 16. See Serstevens, *Living Architecture*, 11.
 17. *ibid.*, 39.
 18. See Liu Lawrence, *Chinese Architecture*, 11.
 19. *ibid.*
 20. See Musgrove, *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture 19th Edition*, xvii.
 21. See Fletcher, *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture 9th Edition*, 913.
 22. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Philippe_Cret. Paul Cret (1876 to 1945) was educated at the École des Beaux-Arts in Lyon then in Paris, and came to the US in 1903 to teach at the University of Pennsylvania. His work through the 1920s was firmly in the Beaux-Art tradition, but with the radically simplified classical form of the Folger Shakespeare Library, finished in 1927, he showed himself to be one of those who flexibly adopted and applied monumental classical traditions to modernist innovations. Some of Cret's work is remarkably streamlined and forward-thinking. He won the AIA Gold Medal in 1938. Ill health forced his resignation from teaching in 1937, and after years of inactivity in terms of architecture, he died of heart disease.
 23. See Liu Zhiping, *Typology and Structure of Chinese Architecture*, 20.
 24. *ibid.*, 125.
 25. See Li, "Architectural Theories and Philosophical Guidance on Designs", in *Jian Zhu Xue Bao (Architectural Journal)* 8:18-21. Li Xiankui is the officer of external affairs in the Architectural Construction Department of China, and the vice president of the Association of Study on National Architecture.
 26. See Wen, "Influences on Architecture from Time and Space in Fusion of Heaven and Man", *Zhongwai Jianzhu (Chinese and Foreign Architecture)* 5:18-20.
 27. See Lao, "Again on 'Fusion of Heaven and Man' and traditional Chinese Architecture", *Xin Jianzhu (New Architecture)* 4:49-51.
 28. See Gang and Gang, "The Soul of Chinese Architecture: The Ecological Fengshui of Architecture", *Ziyuan yu Renju Huanjing (Territorial Economy)* 7:38-41.
 29. See Rao, "Fengshui and the Modernization of Chinese Architecture", *Xin Jianzhu (New Architecture)* 4:73-74.
 30. Cited in Zhang Weigang, "The Influence of Lao Tzu's 'solid and void' on the Spatial Theories of Chinese Architecture", *Journal of Tibet Nationalities Institute* 25(3):62. Lao Tzu's *Tao De Jin (Book of Tao)* part 11.
 31. See Zhang Weigang, "The Influence of Lao Tzu's 'solid and void' on the Spatial Theories of Chinese Architecture", *Journal of Tibet Nationalities Institute* 25(3):62-64.
 32. See Pan and Zhang, "Spirit of 'Emptiness'", *Huazhong Jianzhu (Architecture of China)* 21(2):6-7.
 33. See Liu Su, "An Analysis on the Three Classical Revivals in 20th Century Chinese Architecture", *Zhongwai Jianzhu (Chinese and Foreign Architecture)* 3:7-11.
 34. See Zhu Zixuan, "Several Comments about 'The Revival of the Ancient Capital'", *Beijing City Planning and Construction Review* 2:5-8.
 35. See Zhang Bo, "About Hats, Roofs, and Pavilions", *Compilation of Articles of Architects*, 110.
 36. See Knapp, *China's Old Dwellings*, 1.
 37. See Xu, "Globalization and Regionalism: a Modernist Question", *Jianzhushi (Architect)* 109(6):68-75.
 38. See Zou, *Essays on Modern Chinese Architecture*, 99.
 39. See Qi, "Regionalist and Modern Architecture", *Jiangsu Jianzhu (Architecture of Jiangsu Province)* 92:2-5.
 40. See Ling, "Towards Liberated Regional Architecture", *Jian Zhu Xue Bao (Architectural Bulletin)* 9:52-54.
 41. See Wu, *Architecture – City – Living Environment*, 62.
 42. See Lefaivre and Tzonis, *Critical Regionalism*, 10. The notion of critical regionalism was first introduced by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in "The Grid and the Pathway," in *Architecture in Greece*, 5:1981. They emphasize an approach to design giving priority to the identity of the particular rather than to universal dogmas.
 43. See Wu, *Architecture – City – Living Environment*, 57.
 44. See Lefaivre and Tzonis, *Critical Regionalism*, 21.
 45. Cited from Wu, *Architecture – City – Living Environment*, 57.
 46. See Guo, "How to Understand 'Regional Features'", *Jian Zhu Xue Bao (Architectural Bulletin)* 1:70-71.
 47. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gang_of_four. The Gang of Four included Jiang Qing, Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan. Under the orders of Mao, they were in charge in a number of political persecutions on old Party members. In 1973, they began to take control of the Communist Party and the pace of the Cultural Revolution. They were arrested a month after Mao died in September 1976. Their downfall signified the end of the Cultural Revolution.
 48. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhou_Enlai. Zhou Enlai (1898 to 1976): the most popular and beloved premier in Communist China. Zhou was responsible for both internal and external affairs, and remained active in re-establishing the order, industry and economy in the first decade of Communist rule. In the 1960s and 1970s, the power of Zhou was affected greatly by the Cultural Revolution, but he still maintained his position and was largely responsible for the re-establishment of contacts with the West (such as US President Nixon) and protection of uncounted cultural, architectural, historical sites and artefacts during the ten-year chaos. In 1975, he pushed for the "four modernizations" to undo the damage caused from the campaigns, and his job was passed down on to Deng Xiaoping when he discovered he had cancer. He died in January 1976.
 49. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao_Zedong. Mao Zedong (1893 to 1976): the first chairman of Communist China. Mao was the leader of the Chinese Communist Party from 1945 until his death. Mao

is credited for creating a mostly unified China free of foreign domination for the first time since the Opium Wars. However, critics point out that Mao's inappropriate economic policies such as the Great Leap Forward in conjunction with the Three Years of Natural Disasters caused the famine of 1959 to 1961, which lead to deaths of more than 20 millions of Chinese. Mao has also been criticized for his establishment of a one-man dictatorship, and initiating the internal turmoil of the Cultural Revolution for the purpose of a power struggle.

50. See Rowe and Kuan, *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China*, 171.
51. See Zou, *Essays on Modern Chinese Architecture*, 269.
52. *ibid.*, 271.
53. Cited in Lu, "How can Chinese architecture escape from the dead hutong", *Dangdai Jianshe (Contemporary Construction)* 6:34-35. "Pei says, 'Chinese architecture has been completely entered the dead hutong'. The problem is that in the past, we have learnt from Soviet Russia, and right now, we are copying from the West. We just don't have our personalities."
54. See Lu, "How can Chinese architecture escape from the dead hutong", *Dangdai Jianshe* 6:34-35.
55. See Xu, Zhou and Shen, "The Problem of Ethnic Feature in the View of Communication", *Xin Jianzhu (New Architecture)* 3:74-76.
56. See Shi, "Modernization of Chinese Architecture", *Anhui Jianzhu (Architecture of Anhui Province)* 5:53-54.
57. See Ma, "To Create the Modernization of Chinese Architecture is the Responsibility of Chinese Architects", *Jian Zhu Xue Bao (Architectural Bulletin)* 1:10-12.
58. See Zhang Jiong, "Context of Symbiotic Culture and Contemporary Architectural Creation in China", *Huazhong Jianzhu (Architecture of China)* 21(1):25-26.
59. See Rowe and Kuan, *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China*, 208.
60. See Qin, "Documents of Contemporary Experimental Architecture Exhibitions", *Time + Architecture* 5:44-47.
61. See Zhang Hong & Zhang Er, "Standard Architecture – In the Name of 'China Design'", *Time + Architecture* 4:34-37.
62. *ibid.*
63. *ibid.*
64. See Zhang Lei, *Fundamental Architecture*, Introductory Remarks.
8. Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 187.
9. *ibid.*, 199.
10. See Wang Jun, *Tale of the City*, 285.
11. See Lim, "Beijing's Building Revolution", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3543419.stm>.

Aftermath

1. Cited in Yang, Bingde, *The Combination History of Sino-west Architectural Culture in Modern Times of China*, 338.
2. Goldhagen, "Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern", 302.
3. *ibid.*, 303.
4. *ibid.*, 305.
5. Cited in Lefavre and Tzonis, *Critical Regionalism*, 45.
6. *ibid.*, 43. Written by Kallman in *Architectural Forum* in February 1958, about Ernesto N. Rogers' Torre Velasca i Milan, one of the early masterpiece of regionalist architecture.
7. *ibid.*
8. Frampton, "Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity", in *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 327.
9. *ibid.*
10. *ibid.*
11. Frampton, "New Brutalism and the architecture of the Welfare State: England 1949-59", in *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 262.
12. Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 46.
13. *ibid.*, 47.
14. *ibid.*
15. Bradsher, Keith, "Chinese Economy Grows to 4th Largest in the World", <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/25/business/worldbusiness/25cnd-yuan.html>
16. Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 47.

China Diary

1. See Harper, *Lonely Planet: China*, 443.
2. See Lin Zhu, *Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyin and Me*, 88-89.
3. Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 165.
4. *ibid.*, 168.
5. See Harper, *Lonely Planet: China*, 231.
6. See Wang Jun, *Tale of the City*, 318.
7. *ibid.*, 317.

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1.6. Liang Sicheng, *History of Chinese Architecture*, reprinted in 2002, cover.
1.13. Admission ticket for the Forbidden City.
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1.31. Admission ticket for the Temple of Heaven.
1.34. Institute of the History of Natural Sciences and Chinese Academy of Sciences, *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture*, 145
- 2.1. Liang Sicheng, *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture*, 8.
2.2. *ibid*, 11.
2.3. *ibid*, 44.
2.4. Lin Zhu, *Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyin and Me*, p.125.
2.5. Liang Sicheng, "Our Native Architecture", *Liang Sicheng Collection vol 5*, 233.
2.6. Liang Sicheng, *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture*, 10.
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3.31. Liu Dunzhen, *Ancient Chinese Architectural History*, 138.
3.34. Unknown source, *Dizhuan Bodhisattva's Teachings*, 3.
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4.2. Chung, *Drawing Boundaries*.
4.3. Siren, *The Imperial Palaces of Peking*, 214.
4.4. *ibid*.
4.6. Official website of Yuanmingyuan, under the subject patriotic education. <http://www.yuanmingyuanpark.com/zy/agzhyjiaoy3.htm>.
4.7. Official website of Yuanmingyuan, under the subject patriotic education. <http://www.yuanmingyuanpark.com/zy/agzhyjiaoy5.htm>
4.8. Poster from Professor Stefan R. Landsberger (1955) at University of Amsterdam. <http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/ssc1-1.html>.
4.11. R. Keith Schoppa, *Twentieth Century China*, 50.
4.12. Wong Fok Yuen and Tam Chung Sau, *Chinese History Form Three Textbook*, 71.
4.13. Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing*, 62.
4.15. Wong Yiman, *Chinese History Form Five Textbook*, 75.
4.16. Qin Yaoguo, "Lin Huiyin and National Emblem", *Architect Lin Huiyin*, 121.
4.17. Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing*, 67.
4.18. *ibid*, 71.
4.19. *ibid*, 72.
4.20. *ibid*, 73.
4.21. *ibid*, 44.
4.23. *ibid*, 101.
4.24. *ibid*, 90.
4.25. *ibid*, 14.
4.26. *ibid*, 77.
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4.28. Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing*, 83.
4.29. R. Keith Schoppa, *Twentieth Century China*, p.179.
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4.32. Wong Yiman, *Chinese History Form Three Textbook*, 105.
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4.34. China Building Industry Press, *New China Builds*, 1-2.
4.35. Wong Yiman, *Chinese History Form Three Textbook*, 106.
4.36. Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing*, 43.
4.37. Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing*, 79.
4.38. *ibid*, 17.
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- 5.6. Wang Jun, *Tale of the City*, 268.
- 5.9. *ibid*, 269.
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- 5.65. Fu & others, *Chinese Architecture*, 276.
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- 5.74. Admission ticket for the Dule Temple.
- 5.76. Institute of the History of Natural Sciences and Chinese Academy of Sciences, *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture*, 91.
- 6.1. China National Tourism Administration, *Tourist Map of Beijing*, 2004.
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