

# The Development of Chinese Buddhist Architecture: A Historical Study

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**Abstract:** The historical investigation of the development of Chinese Buddhist architecture is a paper that deeply discusses the development history of Chinese Buddhist architecture. This paper starts with the introduction and summarizes the purpose and significance of the research. Then, the article elaborated on the historical evolution of Chinese Buddhist architecture, which is divided into five stages: the embryonic period from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Three Kingdoms, the integration period of the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the continuous development of the Song Dynasty, and the solidification stage of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. These five stages have their own characteristics, which jointly promote the development and maturity of Buddhist architecture in China. When discussing the main forms of Buddhist architecture, the article lists five main forms, such as the gate, the Hall of the King, the temple and the pagoda, and briefly introduces their functions and characteristics. Then, from the perspective of architectural characteristics, the article deeply analyzes the connotation of Chinese Buddhist architecture. The early characteristics of Buddhist architecture are reflected in traditional Buddhist thoughts and architectural style, while modern Buddhist architecture integrates the characteristics of modern Buddhist thought and new demands for architecture on the basis of tradition, showing distinct characteristics of The Times. This paper also discusses the value of Chinese Buddhist architecture from the perspective of cultural significance. Buddhist architecture integrates poetry, painting and architectural meaning, providing people with spiritual sustenance and aesthetic enjoyment. Finally, the paper summarizes the main points of the full text, pointing out that Chinese Buddhist architecture is the crystallization of the integration of Chinese and Western culture, the integration of traditional culture and modern culture, and has a very high historical, cultural and artistic value. In short, through an in-depth investigation of the development history of Chinese Buddhist architecture, this paper reveals the evolution characteristics, architectural characteristics and cultural significance of Chinese Buddhist architecture in different periods, and provides valuable theoretical resources for us to better understand Chinese Buddhist architecture.

**Keywords:** Chinese Buddhist architecture; development history; architectural features; architectural significance

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Background

Chinese Buddhist architecture is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, which not only reflects the high achievements of ancient Chinese architectural art, but also reflects the spread and development of Buddhist

culture in China. Since Buddhism was introduced into China in the 1st century AD, after nearly two thousand years of development, Chinese Buddhist architecture has formed a unique style and characteristics, and has become a treasure of Chinese cultural heritage [1].

The development history of Chinese Buddhist architecture can be divided into four stages: the initial transmission period, development period, peak period and decline period [2]. The early transmission period (1st century to 6th century AD) was the early spread stage of Buddhism in China. The Buddhist architecture of this period mainly imitated the form of Buddhist temples in India, such as the White Horse Temple in Luoyang. The development period (from the 7th century to the 10th century) was the stage of widespread spread of Buddhism in China. During this period, Buddhist architecture began to integrate traditional Chinese architectural elements and formed Buddhist architectural styles with Chinese characteristics, such as Mount Wutai Foguang Temple [3]. The heyday (11th to 13th century) was the heyday of Buddhism in China. During this period, Buddhist buildings had great scale and exquisite craftsmanship, such as Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi Province. The decline period (from the 14th century to the present) was the decline period of Buddhism in China. During this period, the number of Buddhist buildings decreased, but the quality remained high, such as Jinding of Mount Emei in Sichuan. The study of Chinese Buddhist architecture can not only help us understand the development and change of ancient Chinese architectural art, but also help us to deeply understand the spread and development of Buddhist culture in China [4]. In addition, Chinese Buddhist architecture also has a high tourism value, attracting a large number of tourists from both domestic and foreign countries. However, due to historical changes and natural factors, many Buddhist buildings have been severely damaged and urgently need for protection and restoration [5].

### 1.2. Research Significance

Chinese Buddhist architecture is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, which not only reflects the high achievements of ancient Chinese architectural art, but also reflects the spread and development of Buddhist culture in China. Therefore, the historical investigation of Chinese Buddhist architecture is of great research significance.

First, through the historical investigation of Chinese Buddhist architecture, we can understand the development and changes of ancient Chinese architectural art. Buddhist architecture is an important part of ancient Chinese architecture. Its development course, style, characteristics and technology all reflect the development level and characteristics of ancient Chinese architectural art.

Second, through the historical investigation of Chinese Buddhist architecture, we can have a deep understanding of the spread and development of Buddhist culture in China. Buddhism is one of the important religions in China, and its spread and development have had a profound influence on Chinese social history and culture. As an important carrier of Buddhist culture, the development course and changes of Buddhist architecture can reflect the transmission path and influence degree of Buddhist culture in China.

Third, Chinese Buddhist architecture has a high tourism value, and the historical investigation of it is helpful to enhance its tourism value. Many Buddhist buildings have unique artistic style and profound cultural heritage, and are important tourism resources to attract tourists from home and abroad. Through the historical investigation of these Buddhist buildings, we can understand their historical background and cultural connotation better, so as to enhance their tourism value.

Fourth, due to the historical changes and the influence of natural factors, many Buddhist buildings have been seriously damaged and are in urgent need of protection and restoration. The historical investigation of Chinese Buddhist architecture can provide important reference information for the preservation and restoration of these buildings.

In general, the historical investigation of Chinese Buddhist architecture is of great theoretical and practical significance, and plays an important role in promoting the study of Chinese traditional culture, enhancing the value of Buddhist tourism, and protecting and restoring Buddhist architecture.

## 2. Historical Evolution of Chinese Buddhist Architecture

### 2.1. The Form and Importance of Chinese Buddhist Architecture

#### 2.1.1. The beginning of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Three Kingdoms

In the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism was in its infancy, and it was also the initial period of Buddhist architecture [6]. At that time, the Buddhist culture was not complete. There were few Buddhist buildings, and the rulers used traditional sacrificial buildings such as temples to carry out Buddhist activities. Buddhism began to spread in Middle Turkey in the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, and the development and spread of The Three Kingdoms objectively promoted it. The war in the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty caused the economic decline of Guanzhong [7]. The Buddhist buildings are mainly distributed in the vicinity of Luoyang and in the places with relatively developed agriculture. “Temple” was originally the name of an official office of the Han Dynasty, when the emperor named the white horse temple, the earliest Buddhist building in China, after the white horse of the eminent Tianshu monk. The layout of the White Horse Temple is a square courtyard layout at the center of the pagoda. When Buddhism was first introduced into China, the layout of Chinese Buddhist buildings showed obvious patterns of Indian and Western regions [8]. The plane layout of the White Horse Temple shows that the embryonic form of Chinese Buddhist architecture comes from the Western regions. In the late Han Dynasty, the Futtu Temple built in Xuzhou was also a typical building in this period. It was a courtyard layout centered on the tower, which was still in the Indian style. However, the special feature of Futtu Temple is that the wooden building partition structure of the tower and the surrounding corridor hall have gradually changed to the traditional style of Chinese architecture [9]. This is the initial fusion of the earliest Buddhism and traditional Chinese architecture.

#### 2.1.2. The Integration Period of the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties

During the Jin Dynasty and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Buddhism developed greatly, which was also the integration period of Buddhist architecture and traditional Chinese architecture [10]. A large number of temples, grottoes and pagodas were built. According to literature records, in the Western Jin Dynasty, there were 42 Buddhist temples in Luoyang, and there were 180 Buddhist temples in China. Buddhist architecture developed rapidly in the two Jin dynasties and the Northern and Southern Dynasties [11]. The “40 and 80 temples in the Southern Dynasty” came from this. Due to the prevalence of Buddhism in this period, the north mainly worship grottoes. In addition to the architectural sites distributed along the Silk Road, the north had the most Buddhist temples from Pingcheng to Luoyang; the four southern dynasties took Jiankang as the capital, so Buddhist temples were widely developed in this area [12]. The excavation of the Chinese grottoes began in the turbulent Wuhu Sixteen Kingdoms and reached a climax in the Northern Dynasty. The princes and nobles donated their houses as a temple, “the former hall for the hall, the later hall for the lecture hall”, thus appeared the Buddhist temple type of the main temple [13].

#### 2.1.3. Customized in the Sui and Tang Dynasties

In the heyday of Sui and Tang Dynasties, its purpose was to reflect the “great development and great prosperity” in the history of the Chinese nation [14]. With the revival of Buddhism art and cultural activities, Buddhism began to flourish. Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty was born in the Prajna Temple in the middle of the Tang Dynasty and was carefully raised by local monks, nuns and monks. Tang Taizong also got the Shaolin Temple and other monks support for preaching, the official religious support of the historical background directly prompted Buddhism in the early Tang Dynasty by state rule at all levels of full recognition and widespread trust, with the ancient Confucianism, became the Tang Dynasty regime of the supreme rule ideology. In this period, Chinese Buddhism, a large number of Buddhist scriptures were translated and formally introduced, and closely combined with the religious culture of ancient Chinese ethnic minorities, and developed many important sects. Among them, after many religious reforms during this period, Zen Buddhism was successfully and closely combined with the religious and cultural background of ancient Chinese ethnic minority cultural tradition, and finally gradually developed into a cultural mainstream of modern Chinese Buddhism [15].

Buddhist temple buildings in this period. The ancient temple buildings were redesigned after the urban planning style of China at that time, with clear administrative functions, and with the new grid state and flat road structure as the building foundation and traffic backbone [16]. The overall plane of the whole Buddhist architectural structure community has been arranged along the central axis of various buildings, and the worship and living space of monasteries, galleries and other kinds of residents are arranged in turn around. At the same time, since the tang dynasty, the Buddha pavilion because of its reasonable design and can accommodate a volume relatively large noble classical Buddha and frequently appeared in the body of all kinds of noble classical temples and building art axis, became the subject of all kinds of temples and buildings new art image on the visual core and has the traditional sense of art focus [17]. On the whole, Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties had received official attention and support in its heyday, and prospered and developed rapidly, forming many kinds of Buddhist schools, showing their vigorous spiritual activities [18]. After the integration with the local culture of Chinese nation, especially the Confucian culture, Zen Buddhism has been widely spread and accepted, and become the leader and mainstream of modern Chinese Buddhist culture. During this period, Buddhism basically completed the evolution process of the localization of Chinese nation [19].

#### 2.1.4. Sustainable Development in the Song Dynasty

In summary, During the Song Dynasty, Buddhism has basically begun to reach its mature period, After the ancient Chinese Buddhist temples and monks and temples and buildings initially formed the customization of Chinese Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, The Song and Yuan dynasties did not make any fundamental changes in the architecture because of the monastery, Only according to the historical trend of religious activities in the middle of Chinese Buddhists and other changes made some corresponding adjustments and changes, Further accelerate and enhance the axis of the intermediate point, And was improved and further developed in both the scale and detail of the Buddhist temple architecture, This stage is a long historical period, It is also a relatively safe and stable state, Marks the shape of Chinese Buddhist temple architecture, Has gradually developed to a mature stage [20].

#### 2.1.5. The Curing Stage of the Ming and Qing Dynasties

A series of changes and reforms of Buddhism have also been shown in the traditional temple architecture, which is highlighted to more firmly observe the hierarchical order of human beings in the traditional temple architecture [21]. Large temples have a number of central axes, among which the central axis is the most important, along the middle axis of the direction of the main distribution of the mountain gate, Tianwang Hall, great male hall, Buddha hall, etc., on both sides of the axis are the bell and drum tower, Jialan Hall, Yaoshi Hall, etc. The architectural shape of the traditional Buddhist temples of Chinese ethnic minorities in this period is also the most mature and complete form of the traditional Buddhist temple buildings of Chinese ethnic minorities, which was inherited and preserved, and has been handed down to this day [22]. Because of the Chinese buddhist temple architecture for the middle of the axis, and in the middle of the axis of the building attaches great importance to and emphasis, it is easier to highlight the Chinese buddhist temple building scale, thus for visitors and pilgrims have better attract effect, so now local in the construction of Chinese buddhist temples and temple architecture, are considering the antique practice, also tend to consider using this type of ancient architecture to space layout [23].

### 2.2. The Main Form of Buddhist Architecture

#### 2.2.1. The Gate

The gate, the front entrance of the Buddhist temple, is often built as a hall, which is called the gate hall. As shown in Figure 1, the temple is generally plastic with left and right two guardian Dharma of King Kong lux. The mountain gate has a double meaning. One is the door between the mountains and forests. Because the ancient Buddhist temples tend to be located between the mountains and forests, in order to avoid the common world, so it is called “mountain gate”. The second mountain gate is also known as “three gates”, which is

generally three doors. In The Northern Song Dynasty, Shi Daocheng collected the book: "For those who open three doors, only one temple is also called for three gates? Buddha di theory cloud: big palace, three liberation gate, for the place. Big palace metaphor empty nirvana also, three liberation door is empty door, no phase door, no door. Today the temple is to hold the monastery, to the nirvana living by three into also". i. e., three is a symbol of "three free door" for "empty" view method is "empty", by "empty" method "comprehend" no phase "and not clinging to" phase "method is" phase "," by "view" understanding "no desire" (no fate, no love dye will) method is "no door". The three methods are the way to nirvana, which is the most appropriate way to imply the entrance of the Buddhist temple [24].



**Figure 1.** Mountain Gate of Lushan Temple, Changsha, Hunan province.

#### 2.2.2. King's Hall

The gate and then the temple of the King, there is also a Buddhist temple will gate hall and the temple of the King, in order to follow the geographical location. As illustrated in Figure 2, Tianwang Temple as a Buddhist temple from the gate into the inside of the first temple, special status. In the middle of the worship of Maitreya, back wei Tuo day, the four heavenly Kings as the four continents protection law division around. Maitreya symbolizes the heart of equality, joy and tolerance, and the statue is opposite the mountain gate implies that these are the basic conditions of Buddhist learning [25]. The god of heaven behind him, his different postures have different meanings, which may be welcomed or declined to be the monk. Among the four Kings, the East symbolizes the sense of responsibility, the south increases the king symbolizes the enterprise, the West and the north shows the practice of watching and listening to increase the knowledge and wisdom. In short, the Temple of the Heavenly King is mainly a symbol of the statue to show the Buddhist concept [26].

#### 2.2.3. Great Hall

Figure 3 is the Great Hero Hall (Daxiong Baodian) of Guangxiao Temple, Guangzhou, Guangdong province. This hall, situated directly north of the Heavenly King Hall, is the architectural and spiritual center of the complex. King of heaven hall again north, that is, the top priority of the whole Buddhist temple one great male hall. In the foil of the surrounding buildings, the main hall is located on the magnificent Xumi seat platform, solemn and majestic, tall and magnificent. First of all, it is clear that the hierarchy system in Chinese traditional architecture is very strict, which is reflected in the platform, the highest specification is Xumi seat, followed by three layers, another layer, the most time is ordinary platform [27]. The Xumi seat was originally evolved from the base of the Buddha statue, which naturally highlights the important buildings in the Buddhist temple. Mount Xumi is the center of the world of Buddhist teachings, and the great male temple above the seat of Xumi is

naturally a symbol of the center of the world where the Buddha lives. In the middle of the main hall, there is the statue of Buddha Sakyamuni, which is a symbol of the spiritual core of the whole temple. The main Buddha statues enshrined in the Great Hero Hall also have one, three and five in three forms, and their symbolic meanings are different. For example, three Buddha form, the so-called “horizontal iii Buddha” on behalf of the today’s world (dance world) shakymuni Buddha, represent the eastern net glass world of medicine and represent the western paradise amitabha Buddha, also some “longitudinal iii Buddha” is the past burning lamp Buddha, reflect now shakymuni Buddha, reflect the future of Maitreya Buddha [28]. Another example is the so-called “Five Buddha”, in the middle of the Buddha, the Buddha, the Buddha in the east, the wisdom of Amitabha Buddha, and the success of the Buddha in the north. To the north of the Great Hero Hall are the practice places for the monks, such as the classic Dharma hall, the Zen hall for meditation, the monk hall for the monks to live in, and the pavilion for collecting scriptures. These practical buildings are less symbolic and will not be repeated [29].



Figure 2. Tianwang Temple of Guangxiao Temple, Guangzhou, Guangdong province.



Figure 3. Great Hall of Famen Temple, Xi'an, Shaanxi.

## 2.2.4. The Stupa

Among Chinese Buddhist architecture, the most special is the pagoda. In China, the pagoda has experienced the center of the temple to the corner of the temple and then independent, and its position is constantly changing. However, it is also because of the separation from the Buddhist temple into an independent building that it will widely appear all over China, showing a different style. Buddhist architectural culture and Chinese traditional culture influence each other, and also create the unique symbolic culture of Chinese stupas, which has become one of the representatives of Chinese Buddhist architecture. As the evolution form of this commemorative architecture, the strong symbolic meaning and the sanctity of the Chinese pagoda are obvious [30]. A typical example is the Dayan Pagoda (Giant Wild Goose Pagoda) in Xi'an, which not only inherits the core structure of Chinese pagodas but also integrates cultural connotations, becoming a landmark of Chinese Buddhist architecture and a witness to the integration of Buddhism and Chinese culture. (Figure 4) Although the types of Chinese stupas are diverse, except for the King Kong throne tower, which follows the ancient Indian system, they all have roughly the same basic structure, which is mostly composed of four parts: underground palace, tower base, tower body and pagoda temple. The underground palace was built under the tower to bury relics and worship objects. The tower is covered above the underground palace, bearing the pagoda body, but also uses the symbol of the center of the world umi tower. It is worth noting that the underground palace is buried in the relics of the “treasure box” above the main body in the underground, in line with the cultural tradition of Chinese burial; at the same time, often with stone, in line with the concept of ancient China “stone is dead, wood is born”, and compared with different structures and materials above and below, symbolizing the cycle of life and death and nirvana regeneration [31].

The tower body is the main part of the tower, divided into solid and hollow two kinds. Most of the tower layers are odd, such as one, three, five, seven, but its plane is mostly even edges, such as four corners, hexagonal, octagonal tower, etc. This phenomenon, in addition to the structural factors, also embodies China's unique theory of Yin and Yang numbers and cosmology. Since ancient times, China pays attention to “the sky is round and the place, negative Yin embrace Yang”, the number of days is odd, Yang number; the ground number is even number, Yin number. Naturally, the tower stands to the sky, highlighting the positive number in the vertical direction; the tower and highlighting the Yin number in the plane. Therefore, in terms of the tower structure, the unity of opposites of “numbers” from different axial directions subtly symbolizes the cosmic view of Yin and Yang since ancient times in China. Of course, Buddhism is also interpreted in “number”: for example, the four sides of the pagoda symbolize the four noble truths, the six sides symbolize the six reincarnation, the eight sides symbolize the twelve sides symbolize the twelve cause and effect, the odd number of the tower symbolizes innocence and nobility, the so-called “seven levels floating pagoda”. The “number” inside this is exquisite, and not enough. There is no denying that the Chinese theory of Yin and Yang numbers has gone deep into the Buddhist culture. Moreover, because the Buddha “is regarded as the incarnation of the ninth Vther. So the speculation that the pagoda has nine floors may be associated with this detail... the pagoda has seven floors is a similar situation; it is possible that this number implies that there are seven Buddhas at different times”. Vther is one of the Hindu gods, so the previous explanation also reflects the Hinduism and Buddhism, but does not conform to the principles of Chinese Buddhism and is not widely recognized; the seven Buddha, but in Chinese Buddhism, the seven Buddhas in the temple.

As Figure 5 shows the tower brake is the top part of the tower body, composed of brake seat, brake body, brake top and brake rod. “Cha” transliteration from the Sanskrit, this has the meaning of the land, the Buddha. The most obvious feature of this part is the heavy overlapping wheels on the brake pole, which symbolizes the Buddha domain of the sky, just like the top of the tower, and also shows the level of the fruit proved by the memorial. However, the pagoda of the Chinese pagoda has an obvious concept of the sun number, which is reflected in the structure of the odd phase wheel. There are still layers of decoration on the pagoda, such as lotus carving symbol of purity and elegance, symbol of noble canopy, symbol of light flame carving and beads and so on.



**Figure 4.** Big Wild Goose Pagoda of Dac 'en Temple in Xi' an, Shaanxi.

#### 2.2.5. Other

In addition to the above, individual Buddhist buildings have some special halls in terms of symbolic culture. Such as ten thousand Buddha pavilion, no beam hall, turn the wheel hidden cabinet and so on. A typical example is Figure 6. Wuliang Hall, Linggu Temple, Zhongshan Mountain, Nanjing, which perfectly embodies the symbolic connotation of this type of hall. The pavilion of ten thousand Buddhas is generally the main Buddha, and the image of thousands of Buddhas, showing the three (the death, the present, the future), the principle of everyone can become a Buddha is vividly revealed. And “Buddha” and “blessing” near the sound, ten thousand Buddha Pavilion also has the auspicious connotation of “Wanfu”. No beam hall is a brick arch structure to replace the wooden beam, is called “no beam”. This “no beam” is a homophonic “infinite” and set, is generally used for the worship of “infinite shou Buddha”. The infinite longevity Buddha is the Amitabha Buddha of the Western paradise, and its worship place is also bound to be different from the present world. Thus, the Hall has become a symbol of the western paradise in this sense. The wheel hidden cabinet built-in wheel hide, like the wheel, on the collection cabinet, a symbol of the Dharma spread, endless.

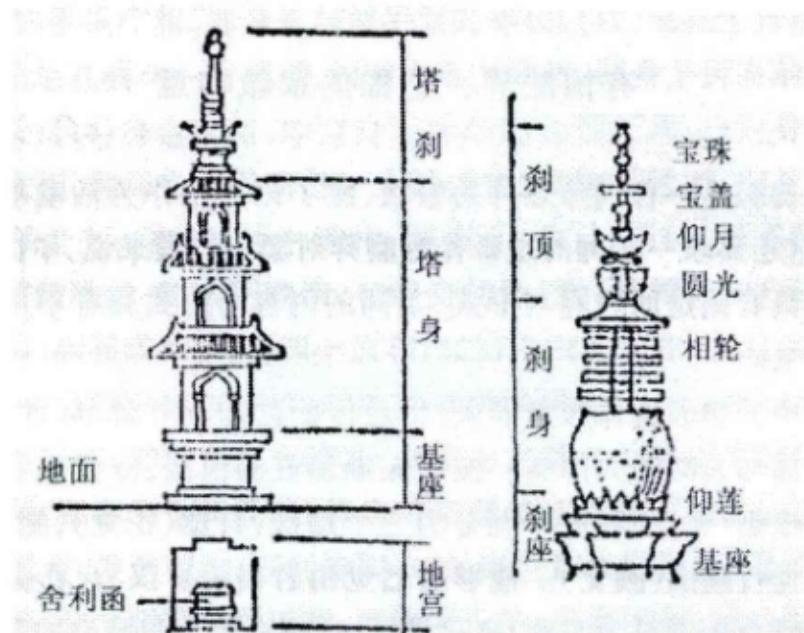


Figure 5. General structure of the stupa and its temples.



Figure 6. Wuliang Hall, Linggu Temple, Zhongshan Mountain, Nanjing.

### 3. Architectural Characteristics of Chinese Buddhist Structures

#### 3.1. Early Buddhist Architecture

##### 3.1.1. Characteristics of Traditional Buddhist Thought

Traditional Buddhist thought is the four life principles of suffering, gathering, extinction and tao, which is the so-called “four Noble truths”. It tells people that the essence of life is suffering, the cause of suffering, how to eliminate the pain and the cause of nirvana, only the Buddha can show it.

In the Eastern Han Dynasty, when Buddhism was just introduced, it showed the development direction of Chinese Buddhism. In order to enable Buddhism to take root and spread rapidly in China, Buddhists translated Buddhist classics in Chinese from the very beginning, and combined traditional Chinese culture and concepts as much as possible. Because the early Buddhist culture was not perfect, the rulers generally set up shrines to worship gods, ancestors and worship Buddha. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the rulers

deliberately emphasized the Buddhist thoughts of “adverse suffering”, “advocating nirvana” and “living suffering” to restrain the people, so as to consolidate the position of the ruler. In the Sui and Tang dynasties, the rulers adopted Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism to govern the country, which made the Buddhist culture and economy reach its peak, and Buddhism developed rapidly in China. In the Song Dynasty, Buddhist culture was characterized by secularization and popularization, which went deep among the people, and the famous famous mountains appeared in the country. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Buddhism was basically mature. The basic views of Buddhism were integrated with traditional Chinese cultural concepts and closely related to people's lives. The construction of temples, Buddhist art and rituals were all customized.

Buddhist culture is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, which has a great influence on the regional culture in the process of transmission, and accelerates the cultural communication between regions. The introduction of Buddhist culture into China has brought fresh blood to the traditional Chinese culture, and increased the vitality and sword-making power of the national culture, mainly showing the following characteristics:

(1) Independence: As a foreign culture, after thousands of years of development, its Buddhist theory has adapted to China's national conditions and established an independent system, and formed several major Buddhist sects of Han Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism and Southern Buddhism, which have influenced Korea, Japan and other countries.

(2) Integration: Buddhism and China's traditional culture and religious concepts permeate and integrate with each other, thus taking root in China and forming a special culture with vitality and vitality.

(3) Secularity: The combination of Buddhism and Chinese Confucianism and Taoism culture makes it more philosophical, and at the same time, it goes to the folk atmosphere, fades the religious color, and makes some Buddhist stories and characters deeply rooted in people's hearts.

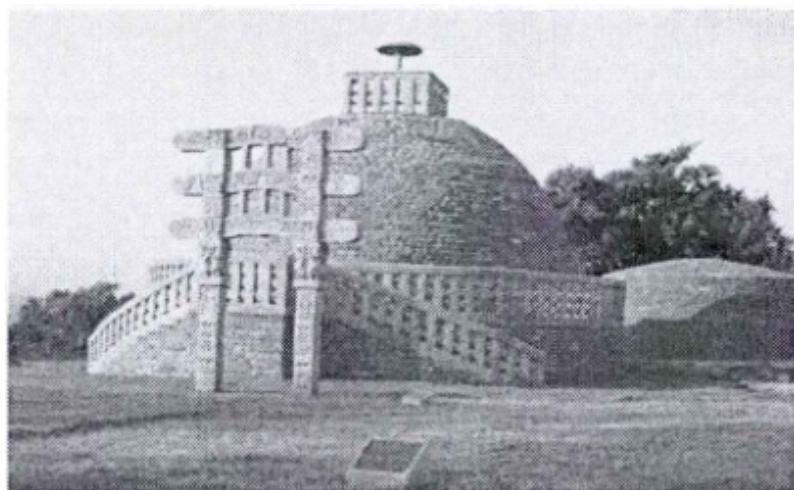
(4) One-sidedness: Buddhism is one-sided propaganda by the superstructure. As a tool of the rulers, Buddhism was suddenly considered by Buddhist scholars as “dead ghost Buddhism” mainly “Buddha”, that is, “dead Buddhism” and “ghost Buddhism”. The one-sided emphasis on the spirit of forming the world, exaggerating the difference between forming the world and entering the world, appeared in the development of traditional Buddhism, and increasingly moved towards a negative road.

### 3.1.2. Features of Traditional Buddhist Architecture

After the founding of Buddhism, the buildings used in Buddhism can be called Buddhist architecture, so the birth of Buddhism must be later than the buildings used in Buddhism. Including India, early Buddhist buildings including India (Figure 7) were not independently created by Buddhism, but from existing architectural prototypes in Indian society. The introduction of Buddhism into the Han region was a gradual process, so the construction of Buddhist buildings was gradual. In the Han Dynasty, Buddhist architecture was in the initial period. As a sacrificial building, it was impossible to build according to the layout and form of Indian Buddhist architecture due to the influence of the technical conditions of construction at that time. It is generally believed that the White Horse Temple, called “ancestral court” and “Shiyan” by the Buddhist circle, was the first Buddhist temple built in China. Its type system was built according to the official government system of the Han Dynasty (as shown in Figure 8).

During the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Buddhist worship was already very popular. Buddhist buildings also developed rapidly during this period, and temples and towers were built throughout the country. During the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the mountain Forest Buddhist temple was established, and the folk houses were temples, and the Buddhist atmosphere was high. Only in the Northern Dynasty, there were 30,000 Buddhist temples of different sizes. It is no wonder that the poet Du Mu left a famous sentence of “480 temples in the Southern Dynasty, how many buildings in the misty rain”. So far, consistent with the unique Chinese Buddhism formed in combination with traditional culture, Chinese Buddhist architecture has been basically finalized, forming a courtyard pattern of temple architecture with Chinese characteristics. In the Tang and Song Dynasties, due to the development of economy and culture and the improvement of people's living standards, the construction of Buddhist buildings reached its heyday, and the Buddhist buildings were in the

mature stage. The functions of the temples were gradually complex and diversified, and began to evolve to the architectural complex. Therefore, the Buddhist temple layout system of “Jialan Seven Hall” appeared. Due to the different objects of worship, the Tang Dynasty generally placed the pagoda before the hall, with the east and west corridors. The whole building was built according to the ritual system, with rich functions and tall single buildings. In the Song Dynasty, the Buddhist temple was regarded as the worship object, and after the tower was moved to the main hall, the temple was more secular. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Buddhist architecture formed a custom stage. The architectural style of the Ming Dynasty inherited the Han and Tang Dynasties, and the plane layout was more ritual. The basic layout of the temple is as follows: the main buildings are arranged on the north-south axis, from south to north, the mountain gate, the Tianwang Hall, the Bell and drum Tower, the Great Hero Hall, the Dharma Hall, the Sutra Pavilion, on both sides of the corridor, solemn momentum. The Qing Dynasty advocated Lamaism and strictly controlled Buddhist architecture. Buddhist architecture was basically the continuation and development of the Ming Dynasty, and the art of the gardens in the temple was improved.



**Figure 7.** India rustle the wall woman.



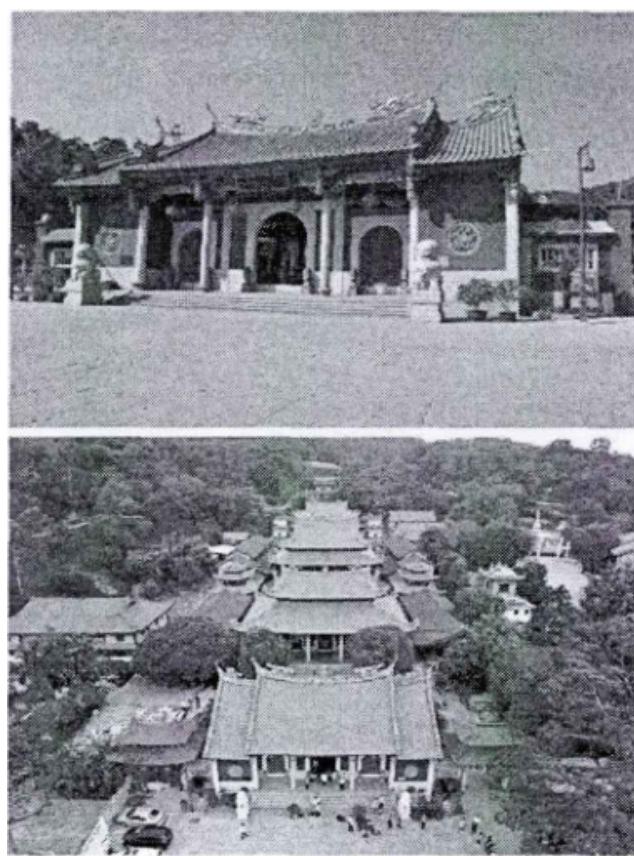
**Figure 8.** The White Horse Temple in Luoyang.

Throughout the development of Buddhist monasteries in China over the past thousand years, the layout of “corridor courtyard type” can be said to be the most basic plane layout mode. With the evolution of The Times, the layout form of corridor courtyard is also constantly evolving. From the early model of the front tower and the back hall with the pagoda as the center to the model centered on the temple, the temple focuses on the relationship of the axis and the corridor, as well as the basic model centered on the temple and the pagoda (see Figure 9). The Buddhist architectural shape of “Jialan Seven Hall” formed in Ming and Qing Dynasties (as

shown in Figure 10) is in line with the traditional Chinese ritual culture, and influences the layout of Buddhist temples later and even now. The single building is consistent with the contemporary official architecture, consistent with the architectural technology and artistic level of each dynasty. The exterior of the building is luxurious, magnificent, carved beams and painted buildings, colorful, the best construction. The internal space is centered on the Buddha statue, depressed and dark, creating a psychological feeling of awe and mystery, to express the supremacy of the Buddha Lord. The construction of the whole temple basically came from the imitation of the palace-type system, and gradually formed its own characteristics.



**Figure 9.** Longhua Temple in Shanghai.



**Figure 10.** The Brahma Zen Temple in Haicang, Xiamen.

At the same time, mountain forest temple is a unique phenomenon in the history of temple development in China, with “many famous monks in the world”. The center of the buddhist temple shifted from the city to the mountain forest, and the famous mountains in the world were quickly occupied by Zen temples, which changed not only the form and environment, but also the internal nature and content. The landscape of mountain forest

temple is a very prominent feature. In the eyes of literati, more poetry and painting are full of poetic painting. In general, the traditional Chinese Buddhist architecture is regular and hierarchical in plane layout; mysterious and luxurious in internal form: cumbersome and retro in external form; and internal and closed in character (see Figure 11).



**Figure 11.** Bird's eye view of South Putuo Temple in Xiamen.

### 3.2. The Characteristics of Modern Buddhist Architecture

#### 3.2.1. Characteristics of Modern Buddhist Thought

Different from the traditional Buddhism that holds that when it is good to die, modern Buddhist thought emphasizes "life", pointing out that "if you wish to become a Buddha, you must first be determined to be a man". In Taixu's view, the purpose and effect of life Buddhism (i.e., human Buddhism) are divided into four levels: improvement of life (good life), hyperplasia of later generations (better afterlife), liberation of life and death (please the reincarnation of the three realms), and the enlightenment of Dharma (supreme Bodhi). The concept of "human Buddhism" is put forward precisely to highlight the human nature that has always been ignored or misunderstood or hidden in Buddhism, and to oppose the obsessive world after death. The general idea is to emphasize that the promotion of Buddhism should be based on the living human beings, to "people" and "life", to the improvement of real life, and to the construction of human society. In handling the relationship between birth and entering the WTO, life and Buddha, and secular and religion, Buddhism should be coordinated with the scientific and technological, economic and cultural development of the state and society. Modern Buddhism should build a pure land on earth, promote the Buddhism, promote the construction of spiritual civilization of human society, promote the progress of human society, replace the traditional Buddhism emphasizing "dead ghosts" with a positive outlook, advocate the practice in life, life in practice, reflect the "realistic" character of Buddhism, and realize the Buddhism of the world and the interests of all living beings. "Human Buddhism" conforms to the needs of The Times, has the characteristics of both modern and traditional, promotes the modernization of traditional Buddhism, and is an important part of the modernization of Chinese traditional culture. "Human Buddhism" cares about life and the happiness of life, and sublimates the moral and spiritual soul. It is a practical religion needed by life, showing the characteristics of humanization, popularization, modernization, internationalization and localization.

(1) humanization: The soul of "human Buddhism" lies in the human nature, and its purpose is to implement Buddhism in the world and build a pure land on earth, which is different from the ghost and immortality of Buddhism in the past. Buddhism should pay more attention to the reality of human beings and their living environment, advocating the Buddhist life, Buddhism life.

(2) Popularization: The doctrine of "human Buddhism" is easier for the public to understand and understand, more useful and used in ordinary life, and more enables the public to participate in the activities of the Dharma meeting. It is more popular than the traditional profound and obscure Buddhism, and is a practical

Buddhism needed by the public in life.

(3) Modernization: The so-called modernization means to show the enlightenment of the past Buddhism to the public in a way that modern people are familiar with and willing to accept. Modern Buddhism adopts the principle of the integration of tradition and modernity, and adopts the modern method, but the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism remains unchanged by tradition. It is precisely because of the brave reform of modern Buddhism that Buddhism can keep pace with The Times and present a new situation.

(4) Internationalization: “Human Buddhism” has been recognized by more and more people around the world, making the Buddhist Dharma promoted all over the world. While conforming to the trend of The Times, modern Buddhism has increased the international cultural exchanges, expanded the diplomatic space, and promoted the international exchanges and interactions.

(5) Localization: The localization of Buddhism is the direction of the future development. According to the different customs, cultures and geographical conditions of different places, Buddhism with regional characteristics is developed. Localization is the source of power of Buddhism’s deep cultivation, enabling Buddhism to achieve the grand situation of a hundred flowers blossoming.

The thought of “human Buddhism” has gone through more than 100 years, and has been adjusted with the development of The Times, including some additions and cuts, but the main tone of its core focus on the human world and human society has not changed.

### 3.2.2. New Demand for Architecture in Modern Buddhism

In order to adapt to the development of The Times and make Buddhism closely connected with modern people’s life. While carrying forward Buddhist culture, Buddhism actively realizes the transformation of human modernization and strives to make it a “human Buddhism” that adapted to modern society and suitable for human beings.

The activities of traditional Buddhist monasteries in China are generally limited to the related religious activities of Buddhism itself. With the development of The Times, the concept of “human Buddhism” has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. Under the circumstances of highly developed material and spiritual civilization and the combination of traditional culture and modern civilization, the Buddhist temple shows strong and diversified functions. On the basis of the original religious activities, the Buddhist temple undertakes more charity, education, culture, green, health and other activities, and some even accommodate commercial and rest activities. The traditional Buddhist temple model that appeared in the late feudalism can no longer meet the demand of modern Buddhism for architectural space, and modern Buddhism has a new demand for architectural space:

(1) The diversity of the architectural space. There are various types of modern Buddhist activities, including Dharma association activities, cultural exchanges, cultural relics exhibitions, charity clinics, social services, etc. As long as they are beneficial to the promotion of the Buddhist Dharma, the temple will undertake them. Different activities also have different demands for architectural space, which requires the modern Buddhist temple space to be diversified to meet the needs of different functions.

(2) The complexity of the architectural space. Modern Buddhist temples show more complexity, and the traditional “Buddha, Dharma and monk” area has been interpreted into the four-zone system of “Buddha, Dharma, monk and career”. The districts of the Buddhist temple should not only be relatively independent, but also be closely connected. The activities of Buddhism itself and the social functions of Buddhism both have their own unique needs for the architectural space.

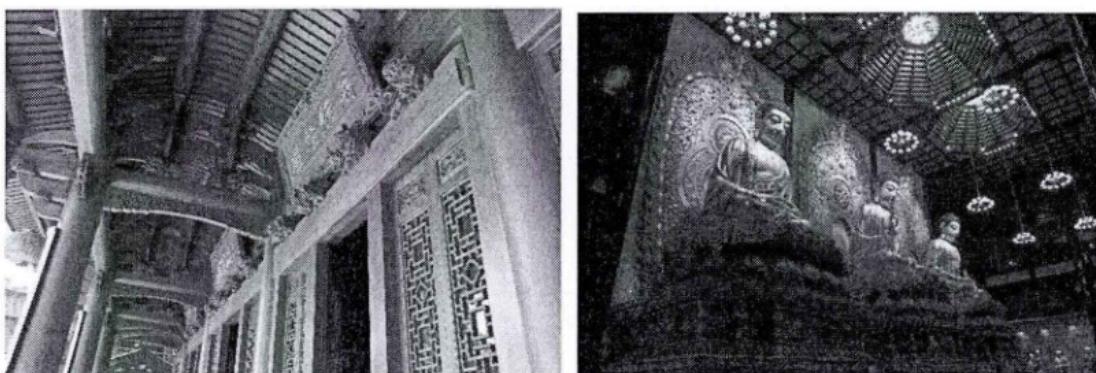
(3) Upsizing and periodicity of building space. Modern Buddhism often has thousands of people, the scale of the activities tends to be large. At the same time, the temple to participate in various activities in the Buddhist festival and the number of weekends, usually relatively small, cyclical changes.

(4) The architectural space conforms to the Dharma teachings and has a sense of The Times. Build Buddhist sites that embody Buddhist teachings and conform to modern architectural principles, promote social stability and promote Buddhist culture.

### 3.2.3. Characteristics of the Times of Modern Buddhist Architecture

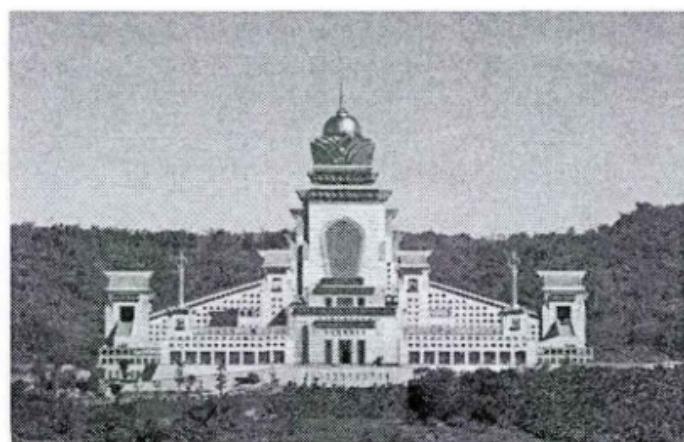
The traditional temple is generally arranged on the north-south axis, and is organized through the walls and

courtyards, presenting a reserved character; the building height is one or two floors, pay attention to the visual effect, tedious decoration, and the interior space is mainly “Buddha”, mysterious repression (see Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** The traditional temple is decorated and mysterious.

Due to the lack of land resources and the complexity of functions, modern Buddhist temples gradually get rid of the axis layout, and develop vertically according to the functions or freely layout according to the terrain (as shown in Figure 13). This centralized and free layout, on the one hand, ensures sufficient external space for the increasing demand for free activities of Buddhists, on the other hand, also reflects that modern Buddhism transcends the early simple ritual system and strict divine worship, and pays more attention to Buddhist philosophy and mass education. Due to the group layout, the early temple entered from the long side of the hall, and the Buddha was also placed on the long side of the hall. In order to solve the increasing number of believers, the modern Buddhist temple hall makes full use of the long side space, placing the Buddha statue in the short side of the main hall, increasing the practical functional area. Modern Buddhist temples go beyond the traditional plane layout of a complete and symmetrical representation, and focus more on the abstraction and communication of the Buddhist spirit. Different from the focus of traditional Buddhism, modern Buddhism is more prominent in social functions such as education, communication and service. The hall of the Buddhist temple integrates various functions such as ritual worship, doctrine, and practice, improving the mysterious color of the traditional hall, and becomes more friendly. Many Buddhist sites organized various lectures, exhibitions and charity clinics, which prompted the temple to become a large distribution place, and its architectural character changed from the early closed and introverted to open and extroverted. Nowadays, in the construction of Buddhist temples, modern materials are no longer suitable for traditional, extravagant and unrealistic decoration. More Buddhist temples choose simple materials to apply simple symbols to the building facade. The believers no longer focus on the appearance of Buddhist architecture, but focus on the inner character of Buddhism itself. The external image of Buddhist architecture is more of an expression of intention, more affinity and simplicity, but also a expression of practicality and internationalization.



**Figure 13.** Appearance of Zhongtai Zen Temple in Taiwan.

#### 4. Cultural Significance of Chinese Buddhist Architecture

##### 4.1. Poetic

Poetic refers to the artistic conception of the poem, which contains the feelings in the poem and the beautiful artistic conception constructed in the poem. Poetry and prose can directly reflect the social life form and people's psychological activities at that time, and often express the associations and emotions of the creators directly. In aesthetic evaluation, people often use the word "poetic" of traditional Chinese charm to describe the objects that give people beauty and strong emotion. Poetry and prose are the treasure of Chinese traditional culture, and "poetry" is an important category of the aesthetic evaluation of Chinese traditional art. The original origin of the poem is the mantra in the mouth of the wizard, which is closely related to the activities of offering sacrifices to the gods. Later, it gradually evolved into the record, praise and transmission of the great achievements of the ancestors, the miracle history of the clan, the victory of the military expedition, the appearance of the sacrificial ceremony and so on. With the development of The Times, poetry and prose have become the main way for the Chinese people to express their feelings, containing the rational spirit of The Times and reflecting the aesthetic taste of the society at that time. In the Book of Songs, three techniques of "fu, comparison and xing" are used to describe and record folk customs, palace songs and sacrificial songs, conveying rich and sincere emotions and shaping fresh and lively objects. "Fu, apply its matter and outspoken also. The author, with that object than this object also. Xing, first to cause the words also". It can be known that in order to enhance the meaning of poetry and prose, combine the feeling and scenery, things and meaning, the creators adopt the technique of "comparing and prosperity", and borrow objective known, vivid and concrete objects to express and express emotions, so as to obtain the resonance of readers. The implicit, introverted and warm aesthetic view of Chinese national characteristics formed by classical poetry constitute the poetic aesthetic thought of "all words, infinite meaning". For example, "the bright moonlight before the bed, if it is the frost on the ground, looks up at the bright moon and lower his head to think of the hometown", the author creates a specific image through the concrete "bed, moon, frost" and other concrete images. Through the direct lyric of the last sentence, he paints the moving artistic conception of heart palpitations, forming the poetry of infinite implication. Poetry pursues the realm of scene blending. Based on various different images, the author creates artistic conception and expresses emotions through words. Poetry is to pay attention to the interaction of physical environment and humanistic feelings.

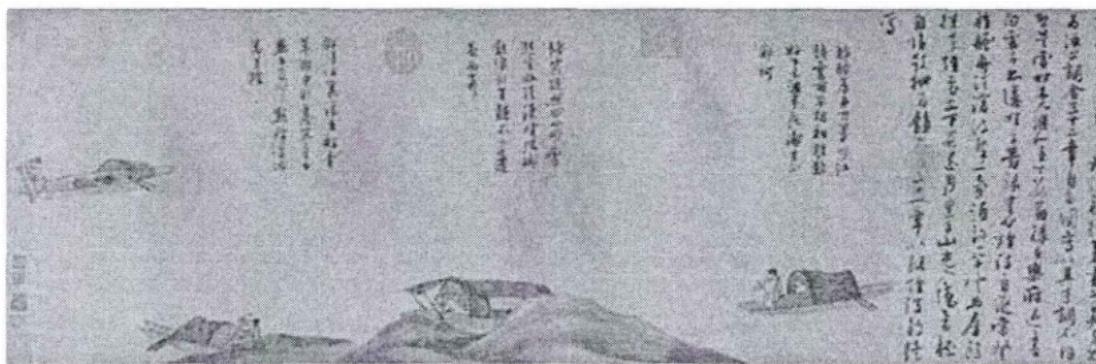
Poetry describes architecture through other vivid images, and architecture can produce poetry. The creators express their feelings by rendering the unique artistic conception through specific building images. In the Book of Songs, "such as toe wing, such as arrow thorn, such as bird leather, such as Hui Si fly", using the specific image of bird open wings to describe the appearance characteristics of ancient Chinese wooden architecture". Epang Palace Fu" "five steps to the first floor, ten steps a pavilion; corridor waist back, eaves and teeth peck; each embrace the terrain, hook heart horn. Pan how, how, beehive vortex, I do not know tens of millions of fall", by "ribbon" to describe the twists and turns of the corridor, by "bird mouth" to describe the protruding eaves, by "beehive" "vortex" to show the density of pavilions and pavilions. With the help of these objects to the author, the author of the palace of the rise and fall of the world, hope that the Tang rulers will not repeat the same emotion.... From the perspective of the historical development of the comprehensive prosperity of poetry and prose in China, the Chinese people have the same line of poetic wisdom and poetic aesthetic character, and permeate them into the fields of planning, garden, architecture and other art, becoming the highest aesthetic ideal in the pursuit of harmony between man and nature.

##### 4.2. Painting

Chinese painting emphasizes the transmission of conception and conception, not care about the shape of the image, but about the generalization of its charm. The painting is vivid and visible, but the thought and interest of the authors conveyed is rich and infinite. Painting, like poetry, also pursues the artistic conception of natural landscape and personal interest, that is, the integration of natural objects and subjective emotion. They are blood and flesh, and artists try to blend these two art forms to create an artistic realm beyond their own.

Calligraphy and painting is an important part of Chinese traditional culture. From the initial appearance to the later stage, it shows the change of the aesthetic intention of Chinese literati. Chinese painting is the culture of brush and ink. Since its maturity, it has moved to the realm of independent movement and ambition by means, paying attention to the charm, structure, theory and artistic conception. Not seeking the appearance, that is, "form from the spirit", is the highest realm of the traditional Chinese humanistic painting. Through the brush and ink, the artists use the limited space to express the infinite nature, infinite emotion, creating sometimes fresh and clever, sometimes majestic and other infinite artistic conception beauty.

In the field of ancient painting and calligraphy art, the artistic conception of expressing emotion through the depiction of objects is everywhere. For example, Wu Zhen's "Fishing Father scroll" (see Figure 14), in the painting, the fishing boats roam in the river, fishermen, sleep, sleep, leisure, only fishing bass not fishing name, everything from light not deep. Through the simple and abstract description of fishing boats, fishermen, Jinsong, hut and other things, we outline a picture of avoiding poverty and floating water. Express the painter is not for official career, indulge in landscape, the interest of alone. Another example is Ni Zan's Autumn Ji of Yu Village, Wang Meng's Spring, and Huang Gongwang's Silence of Autumn Mountain, all of which are the states to express their inner emotions through the abstract understanding and refinement of images.

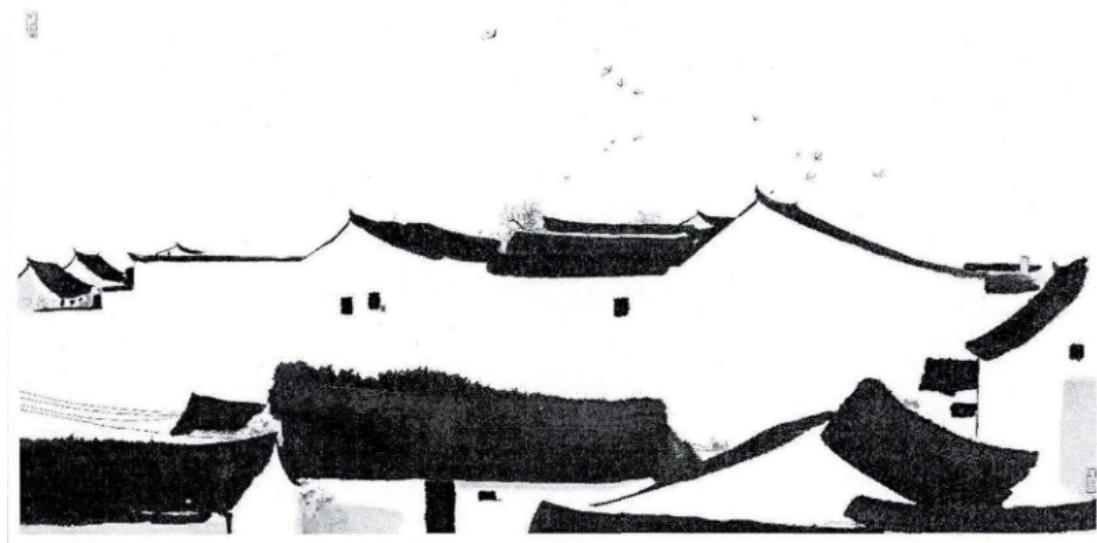


**Figure 14.** Wuzhen Tu of Wuzhen.

Chinese painting places the unique Chinese philosophical thoughts, personal emotions and life feelings on paper through the relationship between brush and ink. The pursuit of painting has reached the extreme in the development of Chinese painting, through the implicit and frugal way of expressing the introspective emotion and Zen philosophy. One of the artistic techniques of Chinese painting, "freehand brushwork", leads to the emergence of "white space", "ink painting" and other techniques in painting, elevating the position of artistic conception in painting to a new height. Artists associate readers with infinite wealth through "white space", and "ink painting" creates infinite, profound and unpredictable "painting meaning" for readers. They turn their external images into material carriers to express their inner emotions through artistic painting and calligraphy." Painting meaning", like "poetry", is the high evaluation standard for artists to judge the aesthetics of paintings.

Good works with architecture as the objects in paintings also have strong appeal, such as Wu Guanzhong's Jiangnan Residence and Grand Mansion (as shown in Figure 15). Master Wu Guanzhong emphasized that brush and ink are equal to zero, separated from the specific picture without isolated thought, and its value is zero. He likes to simplify the object and express the rhythm of the music of nature in a semi-abstract form. Early spring green, waterside cottage, black tiles and white walls, harmonious and fresh colors, to build a quiet, light and beautiful realm, so that the picture produced a kind of lyric poetry feeling.

Chinese painting pays attention to the cultivation of outside painting, and has formed independent values and aesthetic standards in the long-term accumulation. Chinese painting abstracts the object through Oriental culture, which is the spiritual summary of the object. It gives up the pursuit of appearance, turns to the pursuit of charm, artistic conception, grid interest, pay attention to the management of saving room to think outside the painting, its ideas directly affect the artistic aesthetic taste of ancient and modern gardens.



**Figure 15.** Wu Guanzhong in The Jiangnan Residence above and Wu Guanzhong in The Grand Mansion below.

#### 4.3. Building Meaning

##### 4.3.1. Proposal and Connotation of Architectural Meaning

The concept of architectural meaning (Architecturesque) was first put forward by Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin in the form of prose in 1932 from the perspective of cultural aesthetics. "Architectural meaning" is an architectural aesthetic concept with Chinese characteristics, which is based on the traditional aesthetic theory of "image", "artistic conception" and "realm" and the aesthetic theory of "poetry" and "painting meaning", and combines the unique aesthetic culture of architecture itself. Excerpt is as follows:

"These existence of beauty, in the eyes of architectural aesthetics, can cause special feelings, in addition to 'poetry' and 'painting', but also make him feel a kind of 'architectural meaning' happy..."

"... The natural material, built intelligently by man, becomes the sum of art and historical geography by the baptism of time, making it impossible not to arouse the feeling of a special spirit, nature and spirit.

No matter which towering ancient tower, or the soul of a decadent foundation, it is telling, even singing, the incredible changes in time; from the stories of gentle children to the killing of blood. What they say, 'mean by', is indeed 'poetry' and 'painting'. But the architect should solemnly declare that there is still a 'meaning' beyond this 'poem' and 'painting'. Eyes in the contact of human intelligence and life of a structure, in the light and shadow of the person, the harmonious outline of the vivid colors given by the wind; subconscious more 'eyes after he rises, see his building collapse' and rise and fall, occasionally found a piece, very delicate carving, a brush, an unknown craftsman, that sense, we also have to temporarily give him the same arrogant term, is it?"

Architectural meaning is a very emotional aesthetic emotion, so Lin Huiyin did not use professional and rational words in this description. She wanted to restore the first feeling of architecture, the beautiful appearance and perceptual shape of architecture, rather than the experience brought by architecture as a practical function. The beauty of architecture is a kind of rich beauty. In addition to the general properties of beauty, it also has the characteristics of architecture itself. It is the summary of formal beauty, spiritual beauty and humanistic beauty. Therefore, before the "architectural meaning" is put forward, no word can summarize the very special beauty that architecture brings to people.

In Chinese Architectural Aesthetics, Hou Youbin combined with the interpretation of Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin, and believed that "architectural meaning" is the general term of architectural image and architectural artistic conception, and the architectural artistic conception is the sublimation of architectural image. However, sometimes these two concepts are vague and there is no quantitative standard. Architecture is the combination of technology and art, and "natural materials" such as stone are of weight, but they have no spirit and no artistic conception. After the clever construction of the craftsmen, it has become an image carrier with "architectural

meaning". Compared with traditional poetry, painting, literature, music and other "pure art", which pays attention to spirit, architectural art is the most material art (Hegel), an objective artistic object with technology and construction as the core and more physical and spatial material attributes. It is the migration of this artistic aesthetic object that makes architecture possible to have "meaning" flavor.

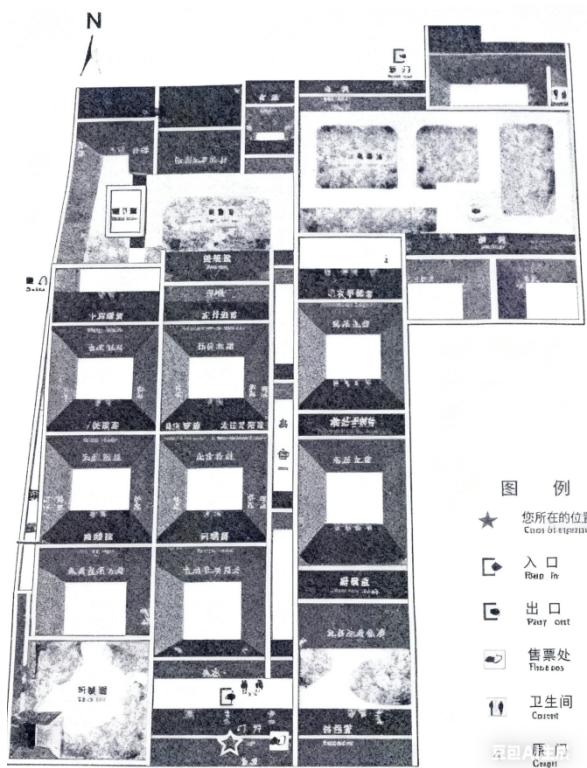
Architectural art is harmonious. The architectural image not only needs its own harmonious and beautiful structure and shape, but also requires the matching with its surrounding environment, so that the architectural beauty of architecture can be reflected. When the integration of the "pleasant light and shadow" and "wind dew" with the surrounding environment and the baptism of time, it can stimulate the "integration of the spirit of the nature and the feeling of consciousness" of the recipients, blend with the environment, and indulge in the artistic conception rendered by the building. This feeling not only has the "poetic" and "painting" description, but also contains the special life philosophy, time history, moral ethics, national spirit and other cultures contained in the architecture, which is the shock of people's spiritual emotion. It has gone beyond the scope of expression of images, to achieve a deep level of artistic beauty. As a spatial entity, architecture has a unique situation for the United States, the architecture of different styles, and the aesthetic psychology of the south of the Yangtze River, or the sacred city of Athens, or the ancient city of Suzhou Museum, or the elegance and publicity of the Sydney Opera House... we can appreciate its charm and feel pleasure.

However, the formation of this kind of architectural meaning is not unchanged, with the development of The Times, the rise and fall of history, will disappear some original architectural meaning, and derive new architectural meaning. For example, the winding Great Wall, when built as military defense and resistance against foreign nations, symbolizes a stable, safe and magnificent architectural meaning. With the rise of the Chinese nation, the Great Wall now brings more symbols of national splendid culture and the architectural sense of national pride. Not all buildings have architectural meaning. Only those that are built by technology and technology and combine aesthetic taste with cultural images, can they build buildings with artistic conception and cause the "pleasure" of people's spirit. At the same time, the subconscious sensitivity of aesthetic subjects and artistic and cultural accomplishment are also subjective factors in the appreciation of architectural artistic conception. The proposal of "architectural meaning" is in line with the traditional Chinese artistic aesthetic concept, and it is an energetic architectural aesthetic category with Chinese characteristics, which can provide theoretical support for us to appreciate the architectural beauty and improve the level of architectural creation.

#### 4.3.2. The Poetry and Painting Meaning of Architecture

Chinese traditional culture, the pursuit of "ritual music" harmony, the so-called music, refers to let a person sensory pleasure, contains "music, poetry, dance, painting, carving, architecture, honor, hunting, food content" ("the bronze age sun and music theory"), since ancient times, architecture and poetry, painting are mutual influence mutual development. Nowadays, the development of science and technology not only pays attention to the subdivision of various disciplines, but also pays attention to the mutual penetration and correlation between various related disciplines. Architecture, poetry and painting also have a close connection. As a subject integrating science and art, the products of architecture also reveal the artistic conception of poetry and painting.

Architecture and poetry seem to be completely different art forms, but they are both abstract and influential to a certain extent. They both mobilize feelings through certain images, give people emotional understanding of various aspects, and achieve the influence of spiritual spirit. To some extent, the art of poetry and prose seeks the direct expression of the spiritual emotion through the construction of the text and the art, which is abstract and inaccurate. Therefore, architecture is often combined with poetry and prose, sometimes using the balanced and symmetrical form of poetry and prose, and sometimes directly using the poetry inscriptions, all in order to expand the poetic interest of architecture and present the unique poetic and poetic nature of architecture. This poetic and poetic, can be elegant and implicit, can be high, can be high, can be deep, or strong passion... for example, traditional Chinese architecture garden, independent and connected between each other, and then through the poetry, plaque dot touch to expand the poetry of the building, its spatial sequence is a rhythmic and varied unified space. The creation of this kind of spatial artistic conception is exactly the same as the space construction of poetry, with depression and climax, repetition and contrast (as shown in Figure 16).

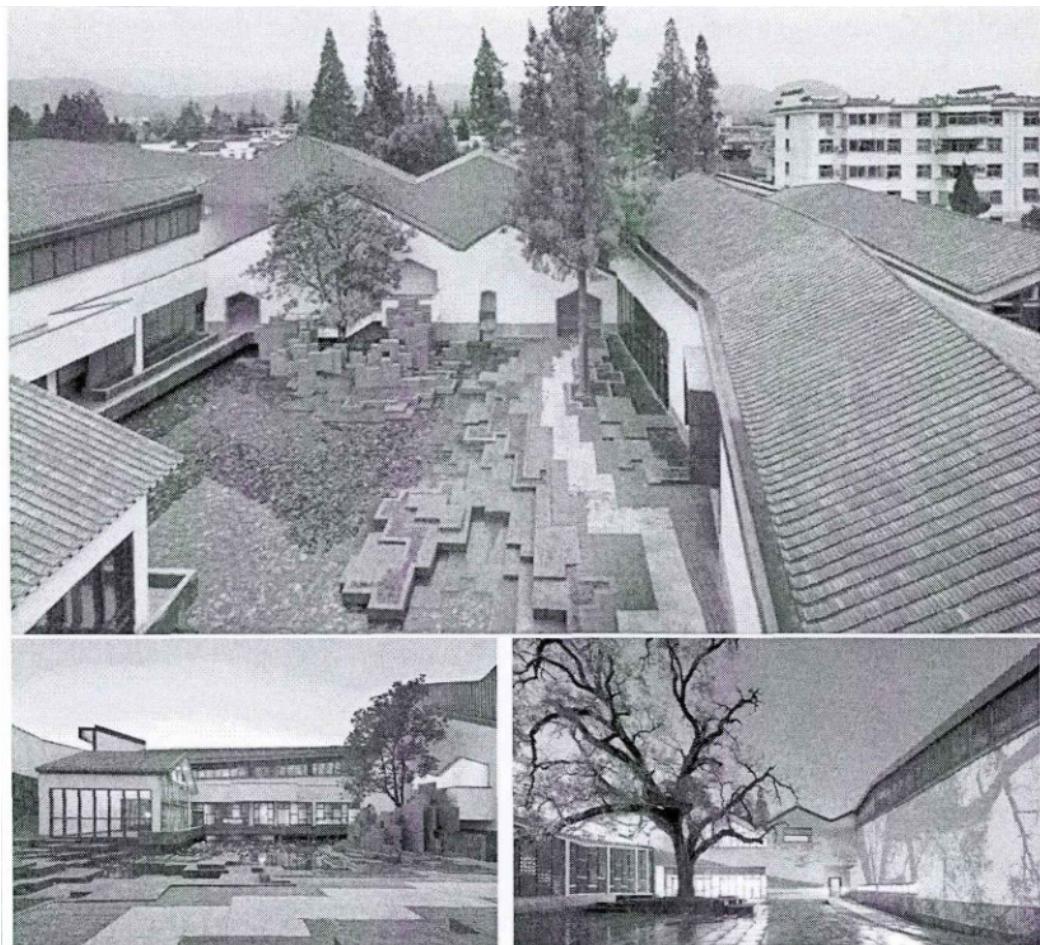


**Figure 16.** Wang's Small Garden (Former Residence of Salt Merchants in Yangzhou).

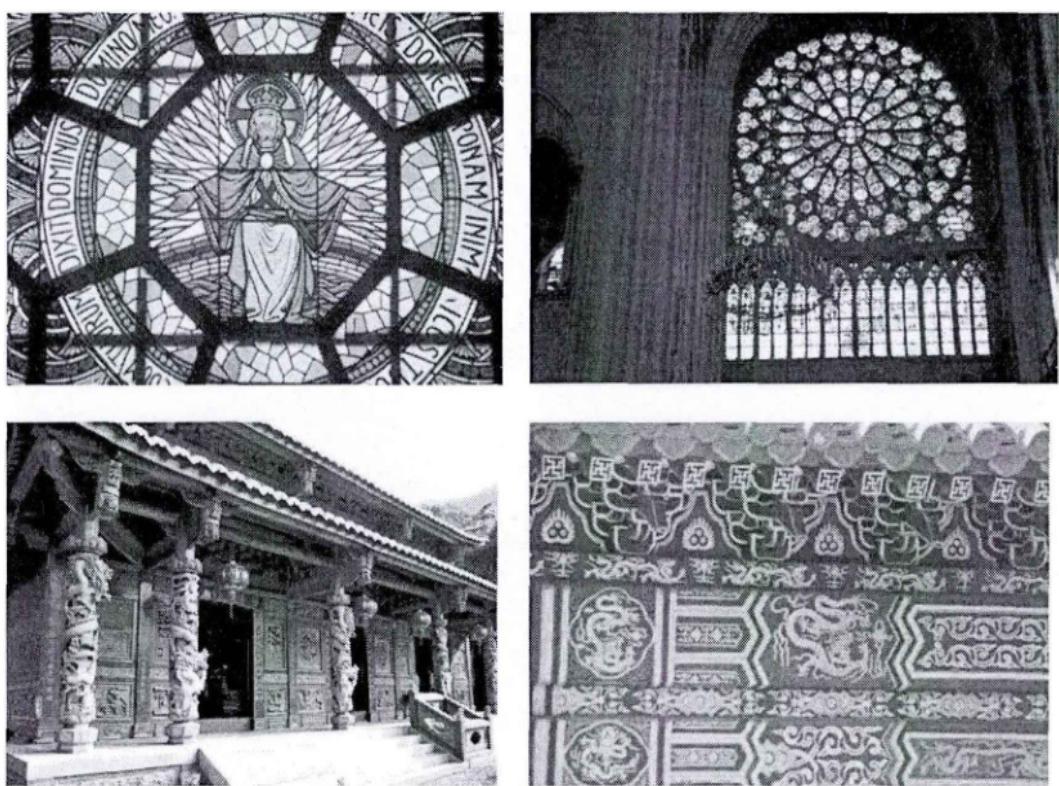
The architectural conception of Li Xinggang's Jixi Museum is as described in the authentic couplet of Mr. Hu Shi in the museum: "Because the trees are the house, and the heart is not far from the door to the point". The museum retains most of the trees in the original site, and these trees are used as an important element in the architectural design consideration, continuing the sense of historical place of the base. The buildings inside and outside the courtyard are interdependent with the trees. The buildings are vivid because of the trees, and the trees get the houses because of the buildings, which moves the hearts of the viewers. "Mountains" can be seen everywhere in the museum, including "rockery" piled up on the walls of the courtyard, "house mountain" with the mountain at the top, and the real mountain in the distance. The natural landscape and the man-made landscape are integrated, making the experiencer feel the poetry of "meeting the door not far away" (see Figure 17).

Architecture and painting, in terms of aesthetic significance, is a kind of image culture, which is the artists trying to show the emotional place and artistic conception set for us through the form of images. Through the integration of the overall layout and the environment, the stretching of the arrangement of individual buildings, the separation and circulation of the architectural space to create artistic conception, which are in line with the painting composition skills and techniques of expression. Architecture in the painting art, can more accurate and complete performance of the architectural emotion, such as church colorful painted glass seems to tell the quiet and sacred architecture, the Chinese carved dragon palace building phoenix seems to defend the rights and status of architecture... (see Figure 18) these buildings reveal thick painting, become a classic architectural art and painting art. Not to mention that Chinese gardens and Chinese landscape painting are through the creators of the three space generalization and sublimation, its essence is transplanted into real life.

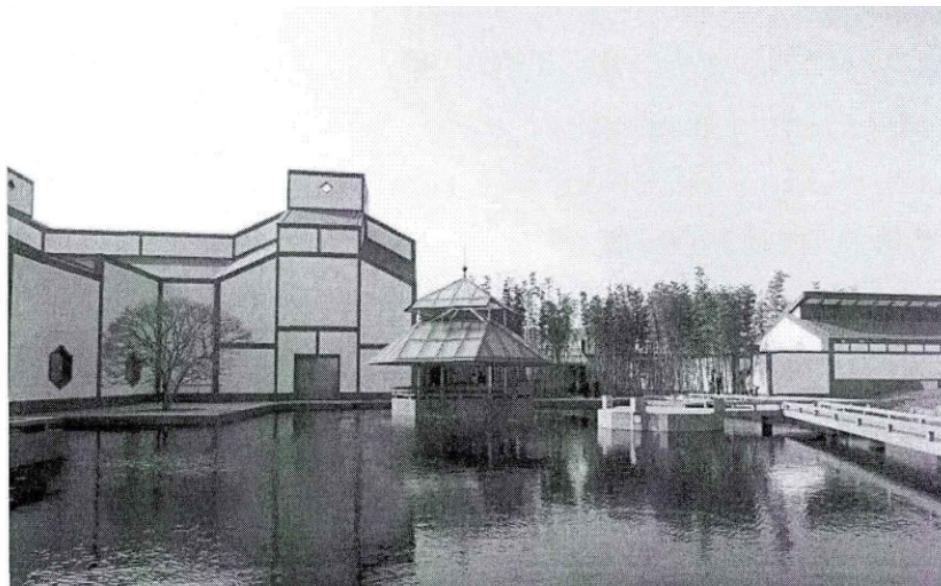
The design of the new Suzhou Museum respects the design concept of "medium but new, Su and new" and the principle of "not high, not big, not outstanding". It shows its own beauty in a low-key way, and is integrated with the historic sites, the Humble Administrator's Garden and the Zhong Wang Palace, borrowing the scenery and reflecting each other. The outer wall of the museum is made of pure white walls, and only gray lines are drawn at the space turn and the edge. The dark gray stone roof is matched with the white wall, which is the inheritance and innovation of the traditional white walls and black tiles of Suzhou dwellings. After the rain, the material of the gray lines becomes deep black, like a thick ink, depicting the hazy misty rain on the white wall (as shown in Figure 19).



**Figure 17.** The architectural artistic conception of “leaving the tree as a court, folding the top as a mountain” in Jixi Museum.



**Figure 18.** Painted glass in western churches, carved dragon and phoenix in Chinese palace buildings.

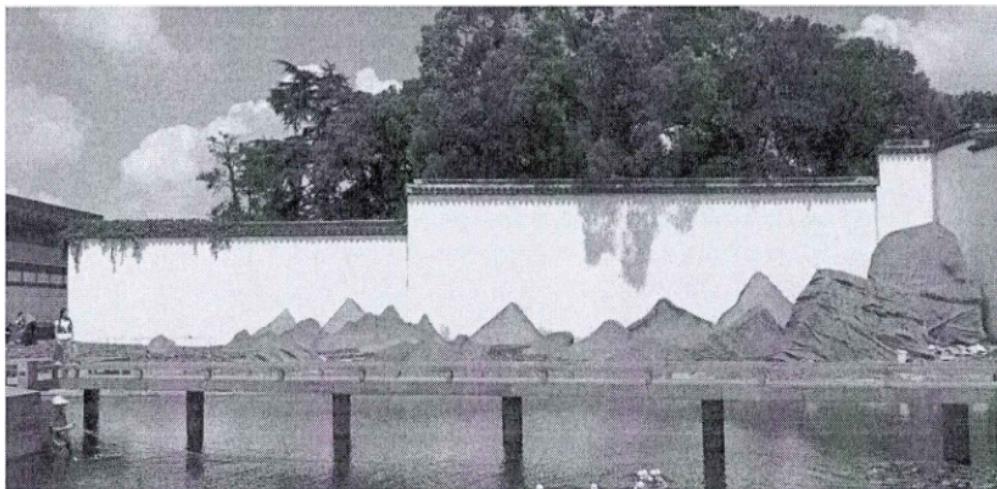


**Figure 19.** Suzhou Museum.

The designer uses modern materials and techniques, and through the excavation and refinement of the essence of traditional Chinese gardens, the designer “painted” the new Suzhou Museum into the historical district of Suzhou, perfectly integrating the modern and tradition. In the new museum, wisteria, bamboo, water and stone all became the landscape paintings of the “Song Dynasty”. The wisteria on the square flower rack of the wisteria garden is like an invisible brush on the wall and on the ground; the sun falls through the bamboo forest on the ground, quiet and poetic (see Figure 20). On the white walls in the courtyard, the gray lines outline its shape, and the dark gray Taihu stone is piled up into an image of a landscape painting of the Song Dynasty according to the turning changes of the wall (as shown in Figures 21 and 22). The creator uses the unique expression technique of “taking the wall as paper, taking the stone as painting” and his understanding of Chinese landscape painting to create the artistic conception of Chinese gardens in modern space. Here, architecture and painting are only changes in material form, but they create a profound and infinite artistic conception of ink landscape painting, and the traditional ink landscape painting is still the core of its aesthetic appreciation.



**Figure 20.** Wisteria and bamboo in the Suzhou Museum.



**Figure 21.** The Courtyard of Suzhou Museum.



**Figure 22.** Part of Mi Youren, son of Xiaoxiang Wonder.

#### 4.3.3. Architectural Meaning and Place Spirit

Mr. Wu Liangyong also has a deep understanding of the architectural meaning in his long-term study of traditional Chinese architecture and traditional “artistic conception” and “realm”. He connected “architectural meaning” with Noberschitz’s “place spirit” (genius loci), pointed out its conceptual similarity, believed that “place spirit” is called “place artistic conception” is more in line with Chinese cultural tradition and aesthetic spirit, and put forward related concepts such as “holy land sense”, “environment meaning” and so on.

According to the belief in the guardian of place in ancient Rome, Norbert Schutz in his book “The Spirit of Place Towards the Phenomenology of Architecture” believed that “every independent body has its own soul to protect; each place, regardless of domain size, also has its own local guardian. This god gives place and people to life and vitality, determine their nature and characteristics, and accompany them from life to death”, and points out that the “site” into “place”, is the purpose of the architectural spirit, place is composed of specific things through some relationship, and our architect’s task is to create a relationship with the natural place. This kind of creative thought is fundamentally unified with the traditional Chinese theoretical basis of artistic conception, “the unity of man and nature”. From this perspective, the “spirit of place” and “architectural artistic conception” have a high conceptual similarity.

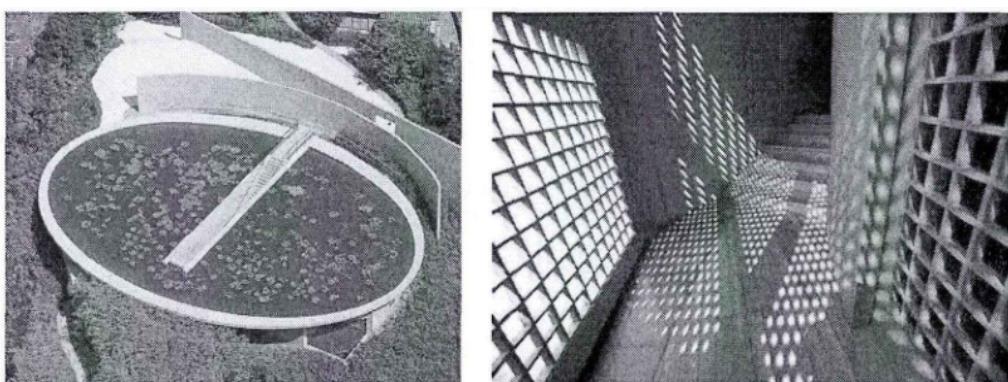
“Place spirit” and “architectural meaning” are two similar concepts put forward under different cultural backgrounds, which both believe that the construction of architecture and environment should have the existence of “meaning”. This “meaning” and “spirit” are the emotional focus of the creators and the experiencer, and any shaping of architecture and environment can not be abandoned. The differences between eastern and Western cultures may make them have different “meanings”, but this “meaning” can be shared and communicated, and its purpose is to make people more “harmonious” when they interact with the natural environment.

#### 4.3.4. Architectural Meaning of Buddhist Architecture

Whether a Buddhist temple can be accepted by the public and the monks, in addition to satisfying the functional use, the space and the form are also particularly important for the expression of the use. As a kind of spiritual place, the “architectural meaning” of Buddhist architecture is an important evaluation factor. Only by creating an architectural artistic conception suitable for the Buddhist function, can the Buddhist temples meet people’s demand for the Buddhist experience in the senses and mind, reflect the local artistic conception of the Buddhist architecture itself, and leave a deep experience process for people. The “architectural meaning” of Buddhist architecture is not a concrete and simple spatial form, but contains the place artistic conception that can accommodate Buddhist related activities and Buddhist spiritual temperament. It not only needs to fit with the space form needed for carrying the function, but also needs an artistic conception to reflect the spiritual significance of Buddhist activities.

The space and form of Buddhist architecture are the basis and premise of producing the meaning of Buddhist architecture. Buddhist architecture has the basic space enclosure mode and form characteristics, which can enable people to accurately locate and identify the space. The architectural meaning of Buddhist architecture should first start with specific factors such as space, structure and materials, and put the experience of human activities and time, so as to form a clear form and expression method of Buddhist architecture. Buddhist architecture is the material carrier of Buddhism and the place for Buddhist activities and spiritual exchange. Buddhist architecture is the limitation and enclosure of spatial structure, thus forming a spatial form that satisfies the use: “place” is the embodiment of the interaction between space use value and spiritual function, so as to form the place spirit of Buddhist architecture and obtain the architectural meaning of Buddhist architecture.

Although Buddhist architecture is a material carrier, it is also metamaterialistic. The facade material, color, spatial expression and formal expression of Buddhist buildings are not absolutely static objective images. Their construction should be integrated with Buddhist activities and the spiritual activities of visitors. It is a state of complex and multiple movements, and then forms a Buddhist world that is different from other public Spaces. Therefore, the generation of architectural meaning should first meet the construction of the space and form of Buddhist activities, and then form the specific architectural atmosphere and artistic conception of Buddhism. For example, the Water Imperial Hall organically combines the design of Buddhist architecture with architectural meaning, and achieves the meaning of “intimate dialogue with Buddha” in the construction of architectural functions and spatial forms. The interior space and external form of Shuiyu Hall reflect the seclusion and mystery of Buddhism, reaching a very clear and strong Buddhist architectural meaning (see Figure 23).



**Figure 23.** Internal space and external space of Water Royal Hall.

In the artistic conception construction of the Buddhist temple, the Buddhist experience is more important than the space and the form. The experience of Buddhism is the process of subliming the space and form of Buddhist architecture, which makes the Buddhist activities in the space more profound. It is not limited to simple entry and participation, but a complete, continuous time, and successive process. It is the infiltration and infection on the spiritual level that the architectural meaning of Buddhist architecture is also generated in the activities, thus making the Buddhist activities more impressed in the experience of visitors.

## 5. Conclusions

The historical investigation of the development of Buddhist architecture in China is a cultural journey through thousands of years. It not only reflects the spread and localization process of Buddhism in China, but also reflects the exquisite skills and rich connotation of Chinese ancient architectural art. From the Eastern Han Dynasty to the germination of the Three Kingdoms period, to the integration of the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, and then to the formation and customization of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, each step of the evolution is the result of the integration of Buddhist culture and traditional Chinese culture.

In the course of the development of Buddhist architecture in China, it not only carries the function of religious belief, but also is the master of the Chinese traditional architectural art. The sustainable development of the Song Dynasty and the solidification stage of the Ming and Qing Dynasties marked the maturity and perfection of the Chinese Buddhist architectural style. The main architectural forms, such as the gate, the Tianwang Temple, the Great Hero Hall and the pagoda, constitute the rigorous layout and grand scale of the temple, showing the wisdom and creativity of ancient Chinese craftsmen. The structural characteristics of Buddhist architecture, from the architectural style under the influence of the early traditional Buddhist thought, to the new needs of modern Buddhist architecture and the characteristics of The Times, are constantly adapting to the development of society and the religious practice of believers. These buildings not only have religious functions, but also are rich in profound cultural connotation and artistic value. The cultural significance of Chinese Buddhist architecture is profound. They are poetic, pictorial, but also a collection of architectural meaning. Every brick and tile in the temple seems to tell us about the vicissitudes of history and the wisdom of religion. With their unique art forms, they enrich China's cultural heritage and enhance the connotation of national culture.

To sum up, the development process of Chinese Buddhist architecture is not only a history of religious culture, but also the evolution history of ancient Chinese architectural art. They are an important part of the Chinese civilization and embody the wisdom and creativity of the Chinese nation. In the days to come, we should continue to protect and make good use of these precious cultural heritage, let them become a bridge between the past and the future, continue to shine in the background of the new era, and inherit the excellent culture of the Chinese nation.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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