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CHINESE MYTHS AND ARCHITECTURAL CULTURE

КИТАЙСКИЕ МИФЫ И АРХИТЕКТУРНАЯ КУЛЬТУРА

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Annotatsiya: o‘tmishda qadimgi tamadduni, yirik shaharlari va me’moriy yodgorliklari bor bo‘lgan mamlakatlar Buyuk ipak yo‘lining yaralishida muhim o‘rin tutgan, uning harakat xaritasini belgilab bergan. Bu hududlardagi binokorlik o‘zicha, stixiyali tarzda emas, balki xalqlarning muayyan badiiy, madaniy-falsafiy qarashlari zaminida maydonga kelgan, har bir obida xalqning dunyoqarashi va mentalitetini moddiy tarzda aks ettirgan.

Mazkur maqola Xitoy xalqi badiiy-falsafiy dunyoqarashining binokorlikka ta’siri masalasiga bag‘ishlangan.

Kalit so‘zlar: Xitoy mifologiyasi, mifologik personajlar, falsafa, binokorlik, milliy mentalitet, ornament.

Abstract: Countries with ancient civilizations, large cities, and architectural monuments played a significant role in the formation of the Great Silk Road, defining its route. Architecture in these regions did not arise spontaneously, but was shaped by the specific artistic, cultural, and philosophical views of the people; each monument materially reflected the worldview and mentality of the people.

This article examines the influence of the artistic and philosophical worldview of the Chinese people on architecture.

Keywords: Chinese mythology, mythological figures, philosophy, architecture, national mentality, ornamentation

Аннотация: страны с древними цивилизациями, крупными городами и архитектурными памятниками в прошлом сыграли важную роль в формировании Великого Шелкового пути, определив его маршрут. Архитектура в этих регионах не возникала спонтанно, а формировалась на основе определенных художественных, культурных и философских взглядов народа; каждый памятник материально отражал мировоззрение и менталитет людей.

Данная статья посвящена вопросу влияния художественно-философского мировоззрения китайского народа на архитектуру.

Ключевые слова: китайская мифология, мифологические персонажи, философия, архитектура, национальный менталитет, орнамент.

The genesis of any given people's culture is shaped not only by mythology, religion, and art, but also by early architectural structures rooted in national traditions. As material expressions of the mythological-sacred worldview inherent to ancient humans, various rituals and ceremonies were

encoded in worship structures, and temples, churches, mosques and madrasas, residential buildings, markets, and bazaars were constructed. Within the system of myths, fundamental concepts related to human existence, the creation of the universe, and the dwelling as a microcosm of space were consolidated, organized, and brought into dialectical harmony. Such interconnectedness demands that, in order to fully comprehend and analyze any people's culture, it must be studied in conjunction with their totemic, animistic, and fetishistic beliefs, magical rituals, myths, and the architectural culture in which these are reflected.

Many of the ancient Chinese myths were created after the foundations of Confucianism, Taoism, and local religions had been laid. The stories exist in several, often contradictory versions, and are connected with the creation of the first humans associated with Shangdi, Nüwa, Pangu, and the Jade Emperor [1]. In Chinese architecture, four sacred mythological images hold particular importance - the dragon (龙, lóng) [2], the phoenix (鳳凰, fèng huáng) [3], the qilin (麒麟, qílín) [4], and the tortoise (龟, guī) [5] - each reflecting certain mythological concepts of the people in national architecture. The tiger [6, 349–351] also occupies an important place in Chinese mythology. Interpreted as a destroyer of demons and evil spirits, it bears on its forehead the hieroglyph "wang" - meaning king or ruler. Its depictions in architecture served as amulets against evil, while its claws were believed to protect against numerous diseases.

In Chinese mythology, the cat was regarded as a patron of silk cultivation, and its ability to see in the dark was considered evidence of its capacity to communicate with spirits. The rooster, as a symbol of the sun, was seen as a guardian against fire and misfortune, and in these respects such images held an important place in national architecture.

Other mythological or real animals in Chinese architecture also carried specific meanings: the crane was a symbol of good fortune. Figurines of elephants, camels, and lions were used in buildings during mourning ceremonies.

In China, the principles of Feng Shui are observed as much as possible in the construction of every building. Traditional Feng Shui is not a collection of incomprehensible ornaments and mysterious objects - it is, above all, the natural relationship between a person and the cosmos, and living in harmony with its order [7]. Feng Shui is based on the principles of Yin and Yang [8, 131] - the balance, harmony, and interdependence of existence. This teaching was applied in determining the placement of a building and the direction it should face. The interior appearance of Chinese homes is based on the teachings of Laozi (5th century BCE), the founder of Taoism: "The essence of a building lies not in its four walls and roof, but in the inner space intended for living..." [9].

Ancient Chinese peoples believed that evil spirits could only move in straight lines or backward. For this reason, all corridors in the palace of Emperor Qin Shi Huang (3rd century BCE) were built in a curved form. The corners of palace rooftops were also constructed with a slight upward curve so that evil spirits would be unable to move along them. In many cases, the Chinese decorated the lower portions of palace rooftops with the figures of the mythological creatures mentioned above, as they were believed, according to tradition, to serve as guardians against evil forces.

In ancient China, it was customary to create stone gardens. It was believed that the spirits of great persons and ancestors dwelled within the stones. Moreover, stones were considered symbols of spiritual purity and eternity, and for this reason stones washed by clear drops of water were highly valued. The Chinese believed that stones were alive until they were processed, and therefore, unlike wood, stones were rarely used in construction. In national architecture, great attention was paid to pathways made of gravel and colored sand. Such pathways were decorated with various

shapes, symbols, and hieroglyphs depicting folk tales and legends. In addition, pathways were sometimes constructed in the shape of a giant serpent or dragon.

Arched bridges built over ponds, together with various trees and shrubs, created a wonderfully picturesque scene. Such wooden bridges built over water, harmonized with the surrounding trees, symbolized the unity of humanity and nature.

Trees and stones conveyed distinct moods:

- Cypress - greatness, victory;
- Bamboo - solitude, sorrow;
- Sakura (Japanese cherry) - desire, peace.

Decorative forms in Chinese architecture carried specific meanings:

- Dragonfly - "renewal," "rebirth";
- Flower - "purity and innocence";
- Tortoise - "longevity";
- Monkey - "hearing, seeing, feeling."

It was believed that depicting animals or plants in architecture brought peace and tranquility to the owners and guests of a home. For example, the images of the phoenix, tiger, dragon, and tortoise represented the four cardinal directions. A crane in flight or in dance was considered a sign of happiness and good fortune.

In conclusion, it can be said that in China, it has always been customary to regard the forces of nature and certain animals as totems. These concepts were also reflected in the fields of construction and architecture, which emerged under the influence of syncretic relationships among particular peoples and their philosophical and cultural heritage - for wherever learning and the popular imagination flourished, architecture too developed, and civilizations took root.

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