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NATIONAL IDENTITY IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE ARCHITECTURE AND WALL PAINTINGS: SYMBOLISM, TRANSFORMATION AND ARTISTIC EVOLUTION

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Abstract

The article examines aspects related to the expression of national features in traditional Chinese architecture and art. The generalisation of research data on historical pagodas, temples, small pavilions and murals determines what exactly became signs of national and regional identity in them. Using the examples of outstanding historical objects, it is traced how, under the influence of local traditions resistant to change, borrowed architectural forms, such as pagodas, were transformed and changes in art took place, which is proven by the examples of Buddhist murals in Dunhuang. It analyses how the number of pagodas – dominants, which were supplanted by local forms of temple pavilions, gradually decreased. The symbolism, sacred content and artistic features of polychromy in architecture and art are studied. It is proven that the period of economic and cultural prosperity in the Sui and Tang eras simultaneously became periods of improvement in architecture and art, a period of active form formation and the search for new artistic techniques.

Keywords*: China; National feature; Traditional architecture; Dominant; Polychromy*

Introduction

Traditional Chinese architecture was formed under the influence of three religions: local Taoism, Confucianism, borrowed Buddhism and Feng Shui beliefs. It should be noted that local traditions and beliefs were so resistant to change that they led to the transformation of borrowed traditions from the outside—from Buddhism borrowed from India in the early period to European Art Nouveau in colonial cities on the territory of China.

Two main features of traditional Chinese architecture are form and color. The two main types of traditional building forms in China are the *pagoda* as a high-rise dominant and the *pavilion* and in this list, the pavilion is a more universal type of building that can be adapted as needed for different functions—for example, to be a residential building, a hall for ceremonies, a gazebo in a garden, on a bridge or near a spring, or a palace. On this occasion, it is difficult not to mention the Forbidden City in Beijing, which was built as a facility of the Ming and Quing monarchies. It is the largest ancient palace complex in the world, which served as the imperial seat where power was also exercised. Like the Summer Palace, it has been listed as a World Heritage List.

The pagoda, as a type of specific Buddhist building borrowed from India, is a single-function object, which is why the number of new pagodas in China gradually decreased, giving way to a more universal type of temple pavilion. The universality of this type of building for

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religious ceremonies is generally evidenced by the fact that the temple pavilions of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and even mosques have the same appearance. There has also always been a certain hidden meaning in this form, expressed in certain elements, in the order of their arrangement and even in sculptures and decorative decoration.

The second characteristic feature of traditional Chinese architecture is its rich polychromy, which also has a certain symbolic meaning. Bright polychromy, oversaturation of details and décor—this is the feature that distinguishes traditional Chinese architecture from the more restrained, ascetic Japanese architecture, based on the beauty of minimalism and limited detailing.

The influence of local traditions existed not only in the polychromy of the interiors and exteriors of objects but also in the murals, which is clearly visible when analyzing the Dunhuang frescoes of different periods. If in the early periods, there is a direct influence of ancient Indian Buddhist traditions, then gradually, under the influence of the development of local artistic techniques, the images move away from Indian samples and acquire regional originality, the same applies to changes in polychromy, the colour palette is enriched and pastel colours are actively used in a softer combination.

The purpose of the article was to analyze and summarize those features of traditional Chinese architecture that are expressed in form, polychromy and wall paintings.

To achieve the goal, it was proposed to solve the following tasks:

– analyze the type of Chinese pagoda and trace the characteristic features of pagodas on the examples of a certain region;

– analyze the universality of the pavilion form and determine its typical constituent features;

– formulate the features that determine national identity in form and polychromy.

Considering the multifaceted nature of the tasks, scientific sources were studied in the following areas:

– traditional Chinese architecture and architecture of small pavilion forms in natural surroundings [1–13]

– symbolism, polychromy and techniques of Chinese wall paintings [14–25].

In particular, the following aspects related to the formation of traditional Chinese architecture were studied:

– characteristic features of Chinese temples as the basis for their preservation and restoration [1];

– Chinese pavilion as a multifunctional type of building adapted to various functions [2];

– nature of the “pavilion-environment” interaction [3–4];

– features of the pavilions’ formation and construction [5–13];

– characteristic features, sacredness and symbolism of ancient Chinese wall paintings [14–25].

Despite the large number of detailed studies on each of these aspects, there is a need for a generalizing study that would identify the specific features of traditional Chinese architecture using examples of buildings of different functions and murals from different periods to determine the quintessence of the national in traditional Chinese architecture. That is why a team of scholars was formed to conduct such a generalizing study, each of whom deals with a certain aspect of Chinese architecture.

Materials and methods

Since the research is multifaceted and covers such problems as the interaction of the object and the environment, form formation, polychromy of exteriors and interiors and murals, this has determined a large number of general scientific research methods that are used to solve specific problems. The method of historical analysis and the method of culturological analysis

highlight those external and internal factors that contributed to the emergence of certain forms of architecture and the spread of certain types of art and artistic techniques. The method of religious analysis made it possible to study the sacred component of traditional Chinese architecture and its hidden symbolism (the same applies to art). The method of comparative analysis made it possible to analyze the process of the genesis of architecture and art and to compare objects and murals with each other. The graph-analytical method and the method of photofixation provided the evidentiary basis for the study. The method of system-structural analysis allowed us to analyze the components of one hierarchical level: in one row, architectural objects with their elements were analyzed; in another, wall paintings and traditional polychromy were analyzed separately.

Results and discussion

The aspects of the study were systematized in the following areas: traditional temples of the province selected for the study; small architectural forms—pavilions; traditional polychromy of temples and pavilions (exteriors and interiors); traditional wall painting. For each of these aspects considered in detail, the quintessence of national features was determined, which were then combined into one general conclusion.

As an example of a temple, consider the Temple of Heaven, which was built in Beijing during the Ming Dynasty (1406-1420). Initially, it was a place of worship of Heaven and Earth. In 1530, when a separate Earth Temple was erected, the structure became a place of worship for Heaven only. The building is considered one of China's finest classical architectural works, which impresses with its simple form and magnificent colors. It is a building that was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in the late 1990s. Other examples of traditional temples are buildings in Shaanxi province.

Traditional temples (using the example of Shaanxi province)

Shaanxi province was chosen for the analysis, where there are many unicellular temples from different dynasties. At the same time, the temple architecture of Shaanxi province was analyzed in the general range of temple architecture in China.

Despite the presence of common features, the temples of the northern provinces are simpler in form, less decorated and have smaller sizes; carved ornament is used for the external decoration of the ends of the side walls made of brick. In contrast, the temples of the central and especially the southern and eastern provinces have a greater connection with the surrounding environment, which is determined by climatic conditions. They are more open to nature, larger in size and distinguished by greater decoration. In contrast to the temple sites of the central provinces with a rigid symmetrical layout, the temples of the southern provinces have a more picturesque location in the natural environment.

The first important feature of Chinese temple architecture is the continuity of traditions. From dynasty to dynasty, the canons of local religions (Taoism) and Confucianism, the postulates of Feng Shui were preserved and Buddhism borrowed from India gradually spread; in the process, it was modified under the influence of local traditions and eventually formed a religious syncretism with Taoism and Confucianism. In architecture, this was expressed in the replication of established forms and constructive schemes, polychromy and decorative techniques and borrowed forms, such as pagodas, which were gradually supplanted by the locally established form—the pavilion.

The defining features of Chinese temple architecture, regardless of the environmental conditions, including climate, were the secondary nature of architecture following the natural environment; strict adherence to the principles of Feng Shui in the layout of the site orientation (rigid symmetry); the status of the object expressed through the image, building materials and decoration; and continuity expressed in compositional characteristics, morphology of forms, structures, polychromy and decoration.

If we talk about urban planning characteristics in the layout of sites, then this is the location of several courtyards along the north-south axis, which is the main axis of the complexes of various provinces of China, where the main objects are located in the center or in the northern sector of the courtyards and their main facades are oriented to the south. By the way, palace complexes are also planned according to this principle of rigid symmetry. An important feature of the garden layouts was their sequential nature, which provided a glimpse of the interiors that followed. Although multi-tiered pagodas are traditionally considered dominant in Chinese architecture, in Buddhist temple complexes there were two less well-known dominants—the Bell and Drum Towers. These towers were paired, had a certain sacred meaning and therefore were placed in a strictly defined place, namely in front of the main gate to the temple. If we talk about how the status of the temple was emphasized, it was not only the size of the plot, the height of the pagoda, or the luxury of the decoration; the status was also expressed by the number of such courtyards and their size.

Regardless of the function of the building, all buildings in ancient and medieval China were built on a wooden base.

It is believed that the prototypes of ancient pagodas were Indian funerary stupas, but some researchers consider a more important factor to be the powerful pre-Buddhist local architecture, which actually determined the formation of Chinese pagodas and their departure from Indian canons. Gradually, certain canons of pagodas developed in China, the most perfect of which was the seven-tiered pagoda. Although the pagoda is traditionally imagined as a high-rise multi-tiered structure, in addition to the type of tower pagodas with several varieties, there were also tombstone pagodas and ritual pagodas for smoking incense of small height. Although early Chinese pagodas were everywhere wooden, gradually pagodas made of brick, stone and metal, sometimes faced with ceramics, appeared. Accordingly, metal pagodas were of lower height compared to those made of brick.

The pagoda also went through periods of complication and diversification of forms, planning and an increase in the number of tiers. In addition to square ones, round, six- and octagonal pagodas appeared. So, in this case, we can talk about the process of the evolution of a borrowed dominant under the strong influence of local traditions. One such example is the pagoda type of the Tang period (618-907) with a combination of several local traditions, the constructive scheme with pillars over the burials of the Han era and the construction of the "pillar pagoda" of the early cave temples. Another notable phenomenon was associated with the gradual displacement of traditional Indian pagoda types by local varieties of pagodas: the most widespread in China was the tower pagoda type based on the "dou-gong" construction, the main construction of Chinese architecture in general. Instead, the typical Indian type of pagoda, the "Diamond Throne," with several pagodas on one stylobate, did not spread in China, as did the pagodas "Mother and Children" complex, similar to the outlines of a lotus flower.

So, the main feature of the evolution of the Chinese pagoda type is the diversification of types and vertical development with an increase in the number of tiers to 7–8 (less often 13–14) and the final formation of a characteristic three-part volume (a more massive base, a multi-tiered main part with a reduction upwards and completion) with a prospective reduction of tiers upwards, while the basis of the structure is the dou-gong system. The maximum period of pagoda diversification is the Tang and Song periods and the Tang period was simultaneously the period of maximum artistic perfection of the Buddhist sanctuaries of Dunhuang. This proves that the period of economic and cultural prosperity of the state had a positive impact on the evolution of both architecture and artistic techniques—decoration, murals and sculpture.

The characteristic features of pagodas were analyzed using the example of one province, Shaanxi, where the world-famous pagodas—Giant Wild Goose Pagoda and Small Wild Goose Pagoda—are located (Figs. 1–4).

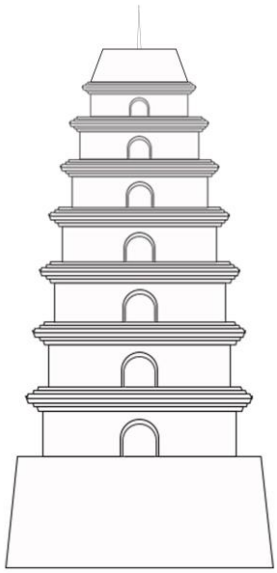

Fig. 1. Fa Wang tower. Period Sui. Drawing by Ding Yang

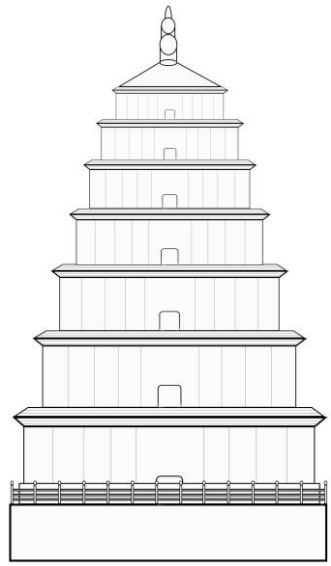

Fig. 2. Giant Wild Goose Pagoda. Period Tang. Drawing by Ding Yang

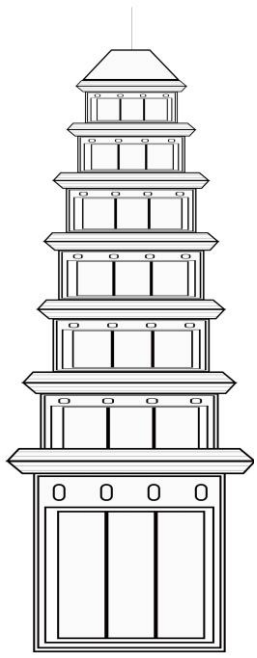

Fig. 3. Chang'an Huayan Temple Tower. Period Tang. Drawing by Ding Yang

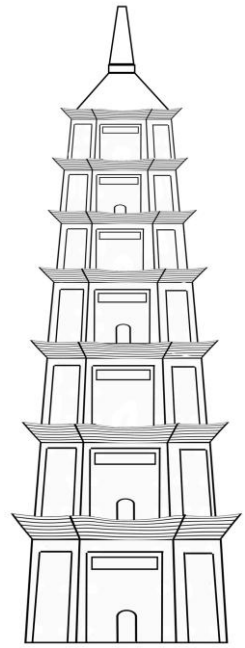

Fig. 4. Daqin Temple Tower. Period Tang. Drawing by Ding Yang

In Shaanxi province and the city of Xi'an, ten pagodas from the heyday periods—Sui (581–618), Tang (618–907) and Song (Northern Song (960–1127) and Southern Song (1127–1279)—have been preserved, with the predominance of pagodas from the Tang period. The

dating of these objects covers the period from the 6th to the 13th centuries. All these objects were built based on traditional Chinese metro-rhythmic characteristics. The diversity in architectural, construction and artistic processes was expressed without one dominant type, either of the object or the work of art. For example, during the Tang period, pagodas of three types were built: with a small angle of inclination of the walls (Tang period—Xi'an Two Dragon Tower, Xiangji Temple Shandao Pagoda, Small Wild Goose Pagoda, Song period—Jingde Tower, medium angle of inclination of the outer walls (Tang period—Xingjiao Temple Tower, Chang'an Huayan Temple Tower, Song period—Daqin Temple Tower and with a large angle of inclination of the outer walls of Sui period—Hannah Pagoda of Xianyou Temple (Fa Wang Tower), Tang period: Chang'an Huayan Temple Tower, Da-Yan Tower—otherwise—Giant Wild Goose Pagoda.

Even though from the point of view of expressing tectonics, the emphasized massiveness of the base tier in comparison with the upper tiers seems logical (for example, Wild Goose Pagoda), other variants of the proportions of the parts are known, when the base tier is similar to the upper one (Daqin Temple Tower) or even deliberately reduced in size to visually create the effect that it is under tension from the load (Giant Wild Goose Pagoda).

The analysis made it possible to determine the quintessence of typical features of the national identity of pagodas:

– verticalism and resistance to change with the simultaneous appearance of a significant number of variable subtypes;

– expression of tectonics (massive and simpler lower tier of the base, multi-tiered multi-cornice main part, large-scale completion);

– the principle of perspective reduction, reinforced not only by the reduction and height of the tiers but also by the inclination of the external walls (this technique, by the way, has long been used in Ukrainian wooden churches, which visually increased their height by 1.5 times);

– typicality of the active silhouette with the ratio of the base side to the height as 1:3-4, which corresponded to both the composition and construction calculations of stability;

– dominance of pagodas on a square plan in comparison with pagodas on faceted or round plans; therefore, the square became the most resistant to change in plan form;

– the morphology of the forms has the following specifics: four-pitched or faceted roofs, topped with a roof with a spire or a bathhouse with a spire, large eaves, a large number of tiers, semicircular openings and almost always no facade decoration.

The fact that in the 17th–19th centuries pagodas were gradually replaced by types of traditional temple pavilions and no new types of pagodas were created, but only old pagodas were rebuilt, existing models were repeated and sometimes excessive decoration was used, testifies both to the persistence of local traditions and to the gradual decline of this type of temple building. The pagoda type gradually evolved from variability in form to variability in decoration.

As mentioned above, the pagoda was gradually replaced by a local type of temple—the pavilion. Such trends took place in the territory of Shaanxi province during the Yuan (1271–1368) and especially the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912) periods. Just as the periods of maximum flowering of pagoda construction are the Sui, Tang and Song, the period of intensification of the construction of pavilion temples is the Ming.

Analysis of the characteristic temple pavilions of Shaanxi province allowed us to formulate the following characteristics:

– similarity of silhouettes, including similarity with palace pavilions;

– the presence of a basic type as a model for numerous variants (two such basic types are the Xingjiao Temple and the Hu County Huayang Temple);

– the genesis of the temple pavilion from the Tang to the Qing era indicates a commonality with the processes in architecture and art in general, but with a certain chronological discrepancy (the heyday of the pavilions fell on the Ming era, that is, later than

the heyday of the pagodas, but in the Qing era it also experienced a decline, expressed in the replication of types and eclecticism due to excessive detailing);

– the most common ratio of the width of the main facade to the height is less than 1.5 the height or equal to 1.5 the height, less often two heights;

– a typical temple pavilion is divided into four parts (roof, cornice, wall, plinth, or stylobate);

– the morphology of the forms has the following specifics: the roofs are four-pitched or four-sloped with a bend; traditionally, the corners of the roofs are strongly curved upwards, the cornices are developed with a large extension, the walls are single-tiered and the openings are most often rectangular.

Small architectural forms—pavilions

As already mentioned above, the pavilion became the most universal building in China, which over time developed in various variations according to different functions (Fig. 5).

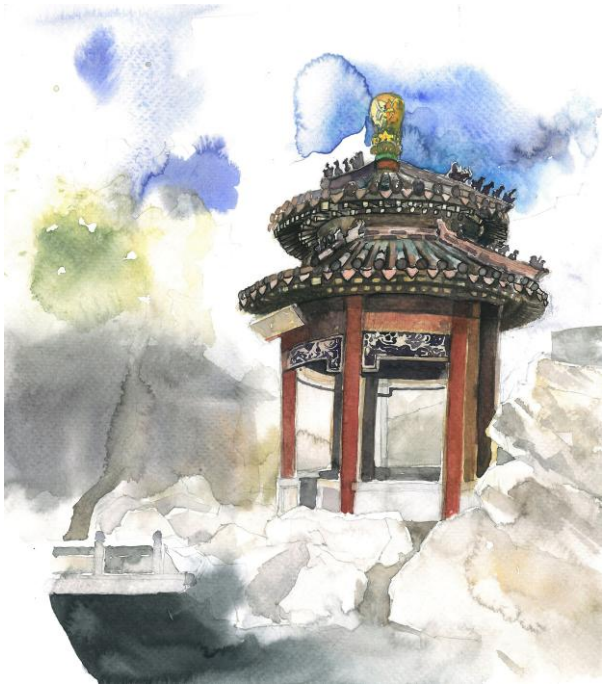

Fig. 5. Biluo Pavilion, Qianlong Garden of Forbidden City, Beijing. Watercolour by Chang Peng

These were completely open structures on supports and partially open and completely closed structures with walls. The term "pavilion" could essentially mean a residential building, a palace residence, a temple and a small architectural form, although for small forms in this sense a special term was used – "ting ji". The first mention of pavilions for military purposes, the so-called strategic pavilions on the borders, dates to 1066–221 BC and already in 206 BC–220 BC the process of development of structures continued; the list of functions of pavilions expanded in 265 AD–439 AD. The tradition of decorating pavilions appears and during the Tang Dynasty, when the state was experiencing a period of economic and cultural prosperity, there was a flourishing of landscape design and therefore of garden pavilions. Between 1046 and 1634, text documents appeared on the procedure and requirements for the construction of pavilions.

Early types of pavilions included military, postal, religious, roadside, memorial, pavilions on bridges, at springs and entrance pavilions to the city.

Later types of pavilions: garden, landscape, spring, i.e., recreational.

So, the main specifics of the genesis of the type of small architectural form—the pavilion—was the departure from the dominance of exclusively function towards aesthetic pleasure and recreation. Thus, landscape pavilions, such as the Second Spring under Heaven Pavilion at Mount Huishan, the Thatched Pavilion in Mount Qingcheng, the Heart-Cleaning Pavilion in Mount Emei and the Pavilion of Holding the Sun at Mount Jiu Hua, served exclusively for admiring mountain landscapes; therefore, they were installed at the most picturesque points of the relief. Numerous water pavilions on lakes and rivers were used for the same function, such as the Mid-Lake Pavilion of West Garden in Suzhou (Fig. 6) and the Five-Dragon Pavilion at the North Shore of Taiye Lake in Beihai Park, Beijing. A large garden complex at the foot of the water assumptions is the Beijing Summer Palace, mentioned earlier. It is located in the northwestern part of the city. It is the best-preserved complex from the Qing Dynasty. On an area of about 3 million square meters are located buildings that exemplify classical Chinese architecture, as well as gardens combining various garden styles from different regions of China.

Other examples of architecture in close proximity to the aquatic complex include the following: World View Pavilion in West Lake, Hangzhou; Music Terrace (Chuitai) in Yangzhou; Pavilion of Spring Notes—Zhichun Pavilion of Summer Palace, Mid-lake Pavilion at Xiyuan, Lotus-surrounding Pavilion—He Feng Si Mian Pavilion in Suzhou, Kaiwang Pavilion at the West Lake of Hangzhou (Fig. 7), Sizhao Pavilion of Shihu Garden in Weifang and others.

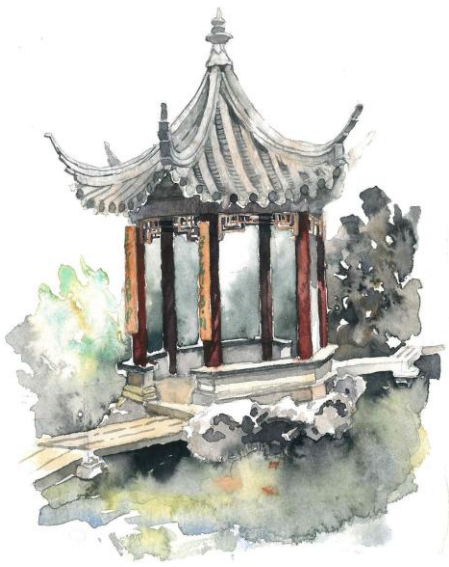

Fig. 6. Mid Lake Pavilion in the Park of Stone Lions in Suzhou. Watercolour by Chang Peng

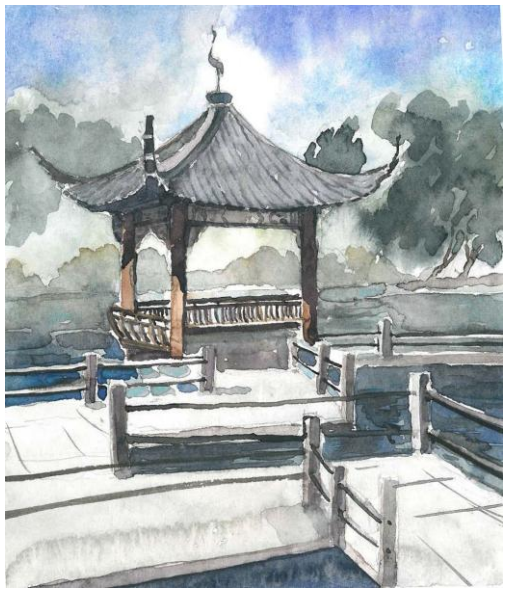

Fig. 7. The Kajwang Pavilion, Hangzhou West Lake. Watercolour by Chang Peng

Analysis of well-known examples of small architectural forms—pavilions in different provinces of China—allowed us to determine the quintessence of national features in this type of building:

– smaller scale compared to temples, palaces and pagodas and always secondary concerning the natural environment;

– unlike pagodas, a small pavilion was rarely dominant and served as a complement to the environment or performed a specific function (the exception was the rather rare high-rise

pavilions with a multi-part division into four or five parts (wall, multi-tiered roof), which served as low dominants);

– the environment dictates the image of the pavilion;

– the largest number of variations of volumetric and spatial composition, layout, morphology of forms and decoration of all types of buildings;

– the most frequent with a three-part division (roof, wall, base, or roof, cornice, wall);

– plans: rectangular, round, six- and octagonal, "Begonia shape", "fan shape", "plum flower shape", single and double (Fig. 8), in the form of two crossed circles or in the form of two connected hexagons;

– most often, due to natural and climatic conditions, the roof overhang is equal to 1/3 of the column height (pavilions in the north, east, northeast, center and southwest of China);

– a developed silhouette with the active plasticity of a single-tier roof, which played a major role in creating a characteristic silhouette; the most dynamic roof silhouettes were in pavilions in the east of China, sometimes in the center and southwest of China;

– roofs of six main types: original in shape, with corners concave upwards or downwards, multi-tiered and stepped, or two paired roofs, where the shape was determined by local natural and climatic conditions (paired roofs of pavilions in the northeastern part of China and in the east and less often in the center and southwest a type of strongly concave upwards "horned" roofs, not typical for the north and northeast of China, two-tiered pavilions in the northeast, less often in the southwest and in the center);

– four-pitched roofs (single- and double-tiered), four-pitched with upturned ends (single-, double- and triple-tiered), tented with concave sides on an orthogonal plan, in the form of a truncated tent with upturned ends on a hexagonal plan, half-pitched, conical, with a combination of several types of roofs and the pavilions themselves—single-, double- and triple-tiered and several types of roofs could be arranged in one pavilion at once;

– types of pavilions by the ratio of length and height: Type 1—horizontally elongated, with a ratio of 1:0.5; type 2 (the most characteristic)—close to a square with a ratio of parts of 1:1; and type 3—vertically elongated, with a ratio close to 1:2, the composition of the pavilions did not develop upwards and its expressiveness was based on the expressive silhouette of the roofs. The determining factor in the image of the pavilion was the natural and climatic conditions of a particular region, which is visible in the example of specific pavilions.

Fig. 8. Double Pavilion in Huzhou. Watercolour by Chang Peng

The role of polychromy in creating the image of Chinese national architecture

A separate aspect of research is polychromy. It is worth noting that traditionally pagodas, which are clearly visible on the examples of objects from Shaanxi province, were almost devoid of decoration on the outside and restrained in color; the color scheme was gray-ocher or ochre. Such a restrained color scheme of the facades corresponded to a pure monumental architectural form devoid of decoration, which is noticeable in such outstanding objects as Fa Wang Tower in Xianyou Temple, Xi'an Two Dragon Tower, Chang'an Huayan Temple Tower, Da-Yan Tower, Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Xingjiao Temple Tower, Zhaohui Tower, Gaoling Pagoda and Xiangji Temple Shandao Pagoda. Decoration did not become widespread; exceptions are such objects as Chang'an Shengshou Temple Tower, Daqin Temple Tower and Jingde Tower.

A fundamentally different approach was used in Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist temples in later periods, as their polychromy and decoration were subordinated to local traditions. If we compare the trends in the decoration of Xiangji Temple of the Tang period and Hu County Huayang Temple and the Forest of Steles in the Ancestral Temple of Chongyang Palace of the Yuan period, then here we record the same processes that are observed in the formation, namely, the departure from a pure form with an active silhouette and almost no decoration towards increased decoration and the active use of roof decoration in the form of symbolic figures that testified to the status of the owner and the building itself. These same trends intensified in the periods of the late Ming and Qing dynasties.

As already mentioned above, the construction of pavilion-type temples was most active in Shaanxi province in the Ming era. At the same time, a widespread set of decoration techniques and traditional polychromy of facades and interiors was formed. Examples include Arhat Temple, Baxian Temple, Caotang Temple, Shuilu Temple, Louguantai, "Shujingtai", Xuandi Temple and Jade Emperor Building. Characteristic of these Ming temples is bright polychromy with saturated colors, excessive decoration in the form of decoration of structural elements, sacred inscriptions, design elements of a ritual nature, symbolic figures on the ridges of roofs and sculptures, complex finely detailed ornaments and red lanterns. Even in the case when Ming temples become more restrained in polychromy, the place of bright polychromy is replaced by decor (such an example is the almost monochrome Thunder Temple Wan Pavilion with ritual figures on the ridges of the roof and small elements of the walls and roof).

The trend away from pure form-making towards decoration, when the plane of the wall is no longer perceived as a holistic form due to excessive detailing, also took place in the Qing period. Thus, in Dongyue Temple of Hu County and in Daxingshan Temple, bright polychromy of facades, decor of symbolic figures on the roof's ridges, ritual elements and red lanterns were used. Significantly, this appearance was also acquired by reconstructed older buildings, such as the ancient buildings of Guangren Temple in Xi'an. A less typical example is a restrained color scheme with a contrast of two colors, as in the Du Gong Temple with a contrast of brown and white.

A study of the coloristic solution of pagodas and temples (using the example of Shaanxi province) has shown the following:

– in architecture, there was a shift from pure form-making towards decoration and polychromy; that is, the architectural object simultaneously becomes an object of design;

– early pagodas were distinguished by restrained polychromy and the absence of decor, in contrast to temple pavilions, especially of the Ming and Qing dynasties;

– both traditional decoration techniques and a characteristic color scheme based on a combination of rich contrasting colors with a predominance of red, blue and yellow (in imperial objects) colors gradually formed. Polychrome, finely detailed ornaments also became widespread.

The combination of form and decoration in small architectural forms—pavilions—was also analyzed. There, the trends were somewhat different: in landscape pavilions in the mountains or among landscapes, the emphasis was on form and active silhouette; there could be

no decoration at all and the pavilion itself was quite restrained in color (as an example, the Thatched Pavilion in Mount Quingcheng, Sichuan Province, is worth mentioning). However, there were also a large number of luxurious polychrome-decorated pavilions, such as the Sunset Glow Pavilion in Lintong, Shaanxi Province and the Biluo Pavilion in Qianlong Garden of Forbidden City in Beijing (Fig. 5). The greatest luxury of polychromy and decoration was noted in the imperial pavilions.

Despite the modification of the type of Buddhist pagoda borrowed from India under the influence of local traditions, the gradual displacement of this type of building by the temple pavilion indicates that the pavilion turned out to be the authentic type of cult building that was more resistant to change, which later became a model for temples not only of Taoism and Confucianism but also of Buddhism and even for mosques in China. The versatility of this type of building was such that it actually eliminated the visual features of a temple of a certain religion on the facades, since traditional Chinese roofs and decorations were also used in mosques. At the same time, an analysis of the process of the genesis of the temple pavilion indicates a departure from pure form-making to excessive decoration; that is, the architectural object simultaneously turns into an element of design. The design is characterized by rich, bright polychromy, ornamentation, paintings and sculptures, with both colors and decor carrying a certain symbolism.

If in the case of pagodas and temples of Shaanxi province we can speak of a tendency to move away from excessive decoration in the Ming and Qing periods, when the design elements essentially determine the image of the building, then in the case of pavilions the trends looked different. The location of a small architectural form in the surrounding environment becomes decisive (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9. Pavilion in the Luyuan Garden. Watercolour by Chang Peng

Thus, landscape pavilions were neither polychrome nor decorated; the emphasis was on conformity to the landscape and a harmonious silhouette. Instead, imperial pavilions were luxurious, polychrome and decorated, where the status of the owner was emphasized in this way.

Conclusions

The study of the national features' manifestations in traditional Chinese architecture using examples of pagodas, pavilion temples and small architectural forms—pavilions—has shown the following.

Often the analyzed sites are large complexes located on vast areas surrounded by natural settings (water, greenery). Garden interiors are generally characterized by sequential design,

which allows for a free transition from one interior to the next. The architecture of Chinese pavilions is characterized by a typical roof structure (Figs. 2-4) and the use of natural materials, such as wood appearing in combination with brick. Color, the use of which has a symbolic dimension, is not without significance.

It should be noted in passing that the same influence that local traditions had on Buddhist architecture borrowed from India was also exerted by local traditions on the Buddhist murals of Dunhuang: analyzing the murals of sanctuaries of different periods, one can observe a shift away from Indian artistic traditions towards local traditions, including in polychromy [17–25].

The periods of economic and cultural prosperity in the Sui and Tang dynasties equally positively influenced the new formation of architecture and new directions in art. In contrast, the external problems of the Xi Xia and Yuan dynasties led to the decline of fresco painting techniques, the introduction of the artistic canons of Tibetan Buddhism and later the decline of Dunhuang. The typification of temple pavilions in the Qing period and the eclecticization of architecture also testified to the problems in the state.

At all times, the most characteristic and universal type of building in China was the small pavilion. However, despite the prevailing opinion that the most characteristic type of pavilion is the pavilion with strongly curved upward corners of the roofs of a large extension (which, in fact, became a model for European pavilions of the “chinoiserie” style), the list of pavilion forms was not limited to just one type.

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