

The Borders of Chinese Architecture

Nancy S. Steinhardt
Tongji University, March 2017

The talk starts with the comparison of a brick pagoda in Ningbo and one in the Changbai Autonomous Region of Jilin province. Structurally they are as similar as two pagodas can be, but their builders had no contact with one another. They are evidence of how far the structure of a four-sided *louge*-style Tang pagoda spread.

The talk follows with four more examples of Chinese-style architecture outside China. The first is a the sixth-century tomb of King Muryeong of Baekje, that is also employed in a tomb in Zhongxiao, Nanjing, dated to the Wu kingdom in the third century BCE. The structure is also employed in the Jiayuguan-Jiuquan region of Gansu. This example shows the spread of a structural type from Nanjing to Gansu to the Korean town of Buyeo.

The talk next turns to a tomb in the Bayannuur district of Bulgan province of Mongolia, about 220 kilometers west of Ulaanbaatar. Covered by a mound, entered by a diagonal ramp, and of two chambers, a green dragon and white tiger are painted on the approach ramp walls. Buildings painted above archways, horses and grooms, and figurines are among the other features that identify this as a Tang tomb.

The third subject is a brick pagoda in Kherlen Bars whose sources I show to be Tang and Liao pagodas of China, but that was part of an architectural group with roots in China and Korea.

Finally, the talk looks at Amarbayasgalant Monastery in Baruunbüren district of Selenge province of Mongolia. Built between 1727 and 1736, every building is supported by a wooden frame of straight timbers. Every ground plan indicates a modular basis for its proportions. Every roof is golden ceramic tile. No details identify the Mongolian location.

Where, then, are the borders of Chinese architecture reached?