

LEARNING FROM NATURE, SPRIT OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THROUGH SILK ROAD

Shaghayegh. Afrasiabian¹ , Mohammadjavad. Mahdavinejad²

¹ *Tehran University, Iran*

² *Tarbiat Modares University, Iran*

Keywords: Nature, Oriental architecture, Eastern philosophies, Biophilia, Silk Road

Abstract

The interaction between men and nature as one of the most important architecture's guidelines presenting in designing process especially in oriental architecture emanating from Eastern philosophies. The five great religions of Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucius emphasized the unification concept between men and nature in many different ways. Following the review, in this field, the major question is how to realize the unity between men and nature by observing the special architecture of silk road countries? To answer the question , the used research method is logical argumentation with libratical searching and physical studies with literature survey as the basis of all studies. Twenty survived samples of architecture effecting by nature are selected to study on. As the result, there is a correlation between nature and architecture in fields of colors, materials and contextualism. Accordingly nature and architecture are the key to unity between architects in silk road countries.

1.Introduction

The environmental connection between human and nature, is based on an intrinsic agent that is substance. Nature, knows the architecture space as one of the most important guidelines among different spreads in forming process and its main meaning, will be important and understandable when it is in humans understanding. The architecture is of the categories that has made the meaning of nature understandable for men.The studies show that during the history, the architects, have always been seeking for an order based on using the natural gifts that are set to the order existing on nature. By revising the relation between nature and architecture in eastern culture, this result is given that a respect has caused that the human tries his best in keeping it. It's not possible to study all of religions because of the multiplicity of them ,in this research we study about the religions that possess valuable works in the field of architecture such as Islam, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Buddhist and Confucius. [1]

2.The nature of the point of view of religions

One of the basic aspects of art, is internalizing the artists beliefs. For this reason, the architecture, is not exceptional as a part of art is in relation with environment more than other factors and it is always affected by the ideologies that have formed it. Observing the common viewpoints about nature, will show this point that a different variety of beliefs have been existed in different religions rather than nature that has caused that we see the natural environment in facing with artificial environment. The religions, choose the proper pattern

with these viewpoints in organizing the artificial environment and we can point to the nature-making, nature-fighting, nature-escaping, naturist and unity with nature. Despite there being common points in the way of looking of religions to nature, this is note-worthy that different viewpoints, have caused differences in how architecture behaves with the natural environment. These differences are in a way that the degree of nature has been variable rather than the degree of god-believing till the evils living place. Different viewpoints such as 1) all gods-believing, 2) the natural elements as gods, 3) the nature as god's living place, 4) the holiness of natural elements and their godly-being symbols, 5)the nature as a sign, 6) the nature, as the evils living place.[2]

Table 1: Nature of the point of view of religions ,designed by authors

	All Gods believing	Natural elements as Gods	Nature as God's living place	Holiness of Natural elements	Nature as a sign
Islam					✓
Hindu	✓	✓			
Zoroastrian				✓	
Buddha				✓	
Confucius				✓	

Islam: In Islamic belief, the nature is clear as a manifestation of God. It is created for human, but the human, can't use it in every way that he wants. It is a symbol of laws ruling the world.

Hindu: In Hinduism, the nature is the god and in this religion, a kind of god-believing is observable, as all the world is a part of Brahma and a big part of Hindu, knows the order of nature as the symbol of gods order. In this religion, in addition to god-believing, we see the worship of natural elements as different gods and in real, the gods, are the symbol of nature.

Zoroastrian: The Zoroastrian religion, entitles the worship of Ahura Mazda and in the Zoroaster message, the nature and respect to land and water, soil and plants is seen. In this religion the fire is a symbol of Ahura Mazda and polluting the nature and its elements like water, wind, soil and fire, is a big fault.

Buddha: The Buddha, is a moral religion that has practical concerns rather than theoretic. Buddhism has been the most important source of inspiration and will of Chinese art. The teachings of Buddha recommends the respectful and non-violating view rather than all the living-beings and with more emphasis to the tree. The Buddha, looks at the living-beings and the nature respectfully and tries to prevent the destruction as far as after the appearance of Buddha in china, most of gardens were made naturally and freely and it is tried to imitate the nature and totally, they made a natural landslide in a smaller scale, again.

Confucius: The special feature of Confucius, is the humanistic element. This system, is a human-believingly system and its most important concept is humanity. This religion has changed the concept of higher man radically with this belief that all the humans can reach completeness. Totally, the Chinese philosophy, is emphasized in Confucius system till Buddha and the human feels this world as his home completely and also, supposes him as a complete part of his environment.(e.g.,[2], [3], [4], [5]).

3. Research question and method


The major question is how to realize the unity between men and nature by observing the special architecture of silkroad countries?

The used research method is logical argumentation with librarical searching and physical studies with literature survey as the basis of all studies. The first step is to analyze literature and other related documents. The second step is to rethinking about architecture monuments based on location, culture , religion and the relationship with nature. The third step is to show that architectural monuments beside Silk Road have a lot to do with nature.[6]

4. Case Studies

The following paper, shows the interaction among humans and nature in eastern culture. To reach the answer of how much the nature has been affective in architecture, 20 samples of the remarkable architecture, have been selected and all the cases of the architectural monuments of the countries beside the silk road that the eastern culture has had a resounding role in forming them. Following table show some of these samples.

Table 2: Nature inspiration in architecture, designed by authors

Construction Information					Contextualism (Inspired by Nature)										
Pictures	Name	Location	Architectural Style	Religion					Nature Elements	Architecture In Nature	Nature In Architecture	Conceptual Naturalism	Integrating with Nature	Colors Inspiration	Vernacular Materials
				Islam	Hindu	Zoroastrian	Buddha	Confucius							
	Persepolis	Iran (Fars)	Persian Architecture			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Akshardham	India (Delhi)	Hindu Architecture		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Taj Mahal	India (Agra)	Persian & Hindu Architecture	✓					✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	Mogao Caves	China	Rock-Cut Architecture				✓		✓				✓	✓	✓
	Shaolin Monastery	China	Buddhist Architecture				✓		✓	✓		✓			✓

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Twenty survived samples of architecture effecting by nature are selected to study on. These study shows that the nature has always been the best source of inspiration for architects. It seems that considerable amounts of architectural monuments through the Silk Road inspired by nature, in the other hand nature can be manifested as the main concept for architectural design through Silk Road.

As the most important result, there is a correlation between nature and architecture in fields of colors, materials and contextualism. Accordingly nature and architecture are the key to unity between architects in silk road countries. we could call the nature as the main stream in understanding concept of Silk Road countries in architecture , art and etc . Finally it could be the main idea for rethinking about culture and it's interaction with architecture.

6. References

- [1] Shaghayegh, Afrasiabian., Dr.Mohammadjavad, Mahdavinejad.& Negar Badri. The nature as a source of sustainable design in architecture of oriental countries. IaSU2012 JAPAN – 2nd International Conference on Archi-Cultural Transitions through the Silk Road, From: July 14 (Sat.) – To: July 16 (Mon.), Japan, Nishinomiya, Pp. 299-303, 2012.
- [2] Seyedhadi, Ghoddusifar., Farah, Habib.& Mahtiam Shahbazi. Sophia perennis and nature's place in ideology and temples architecture of religious sites. *Bagh nazar Journal*, vol. 9, No.20, pp. 35-48, Spring 2012.
- [3] Hamzehnejad, M. The impact of 11th spiritual Isfahan philosophy on nature - oriented architecture and urbanism in Isfahan, *Congress of Isfahan school , the collection of essays on architecture and urban planning*.p.259, 2008. (In Persian)
- [4] Oriental philosophy : *Naturalism, Supernaturalism and Humanism*.
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/oriental/Naturalism.html> (18/03/2012)
- [5] Rogers, Gottlieb. A greener faith : Religious environmentalism and our plant's future. *Oxford university press*, pp.312-315, September 2009.
- [6] Linda Groat & David Wang. *Architectural Research Methods*. John Wily & sons, pp.275-325 Canada, 2002.