

In the book, "Understanding Early Civilizations", Childe had attempted to analyse the earliest cities, to do this he categorised it into 12 points within aspects of Neolithic villages. Childe strongly believed that these 12 aspects of ancient life had evolved in a coevolutionary way and were presented in any kind of social system which were simple or complex. How he defined early civilisation had similar attributes as the lists used during the 1950's to describe archaeological cultures. These lists consisted of beliefs from evolutionary anthropologists to define the stages of cultural development.

After reading the chapter, "Defining 'Early Civilizations'" I was intrigued by the fourth point on Childe's list which is 'monumental architecture', because I believe it serves a big part of creating a civilisation and shows its development, can show religious aspects of life, for example Buddhist Pagodas, or the complexity of their civilisation, art work and the sheer size of these Neolithic villages. Also, it can show how civilisations coped with different natural disasters and how their unique architecture copes with it.

Together with Arabian European architecture, ancient Chinese architecture is an essential component of the system of world architecture. During its lengthy advancement, it slowly became a design which featured timberwork combining rammed earth construction, stone carvings, bucket arch buildings and many more techniques. Industrious Chinese labouring people constructed many miracles regarding architecture miracles such as the Great Wall of China, The Forbidden City and the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor.

Ancient Chinese architecture is mainly constructed of timberwork. Beams, wooden posts, lintels and joists create the framework of a house. The walls serve to separate rooms without bearing the weight of the whole house, which is quite unique to China. There's a famous saying which goes 'Chinese houses will still stand when their walls collapse.' Antisepsis methods need to be adopted for the wood, therefore it develops into Chinese own architectural painting decoration. Coloured glaze roofs, windows with admirable design of beautiful applied flower patterns on wooden pillars, which reflected how high-level of the craftsmen's handicraft and their rich imagination.

The courtyards complex layout is also very unique in China. The main structure is placed on the central axis of a court while the less important structures are located to the left and right. The complete layout is symmetrical. Correlated with the European architectural design which is open and shut, a courtyard is like a hand scroll of paintings which would be unfolded a little by little. The landscape is different in each courtyard. Even by moving many steps in the courtyard. Also, the interior of these buildings, the view from no two windows is the same.

The Famen Temple is located at Famen town, China. It is a famous Buddhist temple with a long history, and it became a Holy Land of Buddhism because of the finger bone relic of Sakyamuni was placed in it.

Famen Temple was built within the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220). In the Buddhist scriptures, it states that in 272BC, King Asoka of India presented relics of Buddha to different places so

the Buddhist doctrines would carry forward. All these places which have these Buddhist relics, its compulsory for them to build pagodas to enshrine the items; therefore, 84,000 pagodas were built across the world. There are 19 of these pagodas within China, among them is Famen Temple, which is the largest one. Therefore, Famen Temple is also called the King Asoka Temple. It's a prosperity began from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), and then reached peak within the Sui and Tang dynasties (581-907), when it was alleged as an imperial temple. In the Tang dynasty, eight emperors welcomed many bone relics of Buddha back to the palace for their worship, and then awarded a large amount of treasure from the temple, which was stored in its underground palace.

Bibliography:

Hung, Wu. 2010. Contemporary Chinese Art. New York, The Museum of Modern Art.

Fisher, Robert E. 1993. Buddhist Art and Architecture. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd.

Sickman, Laurence & Soper, Alexander. 1968. The Art and Architecture of China. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Travel China Guide. Ancient Chinese Architecture. 2019. Travel China Guide.

https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/architecture/?fbclid=IwAR2JA0eRZPUzOqGvaNkXqIK6ji_1Zw1wW6y0-A8MV-ygFt1HjENNVieoTN8

China Daily Information Co. Famen Temple. 2010. China Daily.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/daminggong/2010-05/13/content_9845279.htm?fbclid=IwAR3m3Jf3q_bxgqvngQeYVwL2A0JZa2nEmxa9furWmBzrPecPrU-eXZLCzlY