

REVIEW OF WESTERN AND EASTERN APPROACH IN ARCHITECTURE: A RETROSPECTIVE¹

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ABSTRACT

Architecture is basic requirement of human needs. Architecture is the shell that enveloped a space in which the human activities is carried out. The basis for architecture design is to house all those activities which are conformed to human dimension and comfort ability. The architecture evolved on culture and context. This paper aims to take the level of understanding in fundamental architectural approach in western and eastern point of view. architectural design approach especially in Asian context to the next level by understanding the fundamentals of design and environments through chronological or timeline exploration, with the intention of comparing western and eastern approach and how it being percept in contemporary way. While preserving the valuable principles and cultural content, a new approach and point of view of space exploration is created. Therefore, designing an architectural physics with a sense of eastern statement is not only creating a space of material but a narrative space which is highly philosophical but yet within the current epoch and at same time preserving the nation's heritage and legacy.

Keywords:

1. INTRODUCTION: THE MAN & ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is one of the man most basic need of life, evolutes from simple shed or shelter in pre-settlement or pre-civilization period to mega complexes or skyscraper as what we have witnessed today.

Architecture in meaning, as per in Ancient Greek, the architect was known as the “*master builder*” (“*archi-tekton*”). The word architecture, if translated by meaning of the language today means;

Architecture – 1 the art or science of building, including its planning, making and decorating.

2 the style and manner of building in a particular country or period of history

Both meaning suggest that architecture is matters of building and it is concerning principles of artistic and scientific formulations, and another definition suggests as in second meaning but concerns geographical region and time. This is significant as the factor of climatic and land terrain differentiations make the architecture differ.

The art entity of an architecture mainly encompasses the concept or the non-physical matters of it and it is the whole essence and the hidden content of the creation and existence of one architecture. The Science entity of architecture suggests the structural and surface aspect or the physical matters of it and it is the whole mass of the creation. The thought or the concept and the form or the mass is a co-existence of architecture, both are inter-related. The form or the mass of architecture is a consciousness and materialization of designers or architects thought: *the ‘Science’, the reality of virtuality*, and the thought of designers or architects is the unconsciousness and dematerialization of the design or architectural form: *the ‘Art’, the virtuality of reality*.

Man and architecture is inseparable, the need for architecture in man lives is far more than just a routine. By observing and thorough analysis of nature cycle of man, *the existence of man is in the sense of ‘being contained’ or ‘in the container’*, before birth man live in their mother womb for nine months, the first intuit of ‘being contained’ or ‘in the container’, after birth, man progression from

baby until the last breath of he or she died, man live in space or an architecture where he or she reside / shelter from or working in, the second sense of 'being contained' or 'in the container' and lastly when died, man will be buried in a space which was called a 'grave' or even if cremated, the ashes of remaining will be kept in the urn, which is the third sense of 'being contained' or 'in the container'. And according to religious believe, when the dead is awaken in front of God during Judgments Day, they will be judge and then to be cast to Hell or Heaven. Which is describing of all religious scholar as a space for the 'bad' or the 'good'.

Logically, by man thinking and by ignoring last sense of 'being contained' or 'in the container', suggest that *man and architecture is a unit or of 'Unity'* if seen from any lenses of view, whether Westerners or Easterners. The existence of man is factoring to space or in our context is architecture and the existence of space or architecture is factoring to the content or to be exact in our discussion is the 'man'.

- ***Problem Statement / Research Objectives***

The topic of Fundamental Architectural Design: A General Review of Western and Eastern Approach has been chosen in comparing how the basis of architectural design being applied from the early civilization till today, it is essential especially for the developing nation in the east have some insight on how it is supposed to be developed. The reasons are that most of newly developed architecture in the east has lost its eastern values or it becoming to internationalize until it lost its aesthetic dimension which is the cipher of eastern culture.

The following concerns are where are we heading to, are we producing another New York City of the east? Which are meaningless after all the effortless effort in developing it? Or maybe we are too absurd to the western benchmarking of how developed city supposed to be developed. With the all the richness in eastern culture and traditions, the eastern architecture should be developed within our mold as it is to house our activities and preserve our beliefs. We do not need a copied architecture all over the world which come from the same mold and it lost its uniqueness. The reason being the western culture is losing their roots, and the histories always explain it's doomed to collapse.

- ***Research Questions***

In order to be able to address the problems/objectives of the research it is necessary to find out the most frequently asked questions regarding the direction or approach of an architecture.

The following questions are commonly asked regarding the directive approach. They are as follows:

- Cultural / traditions awareness, how it is percept?
- Benchmarking or ruler of measuring a developed architecture, does it need to be western set?

Or maybe we are too absurd with the modern western architecture and suggest all eastern values and traditions are obsolete?

These questions help create a guideline of what needs to be looked into and answered. It helps to show what have been missing and give a brief idea of the following steps to take.

- ***Research Aims***

The aim of this research is to disturb our intelligence and to reflect what we have been through by revisit the past. In developing our current architecture and planning our cities, a retrospective pause and reflective thought is crucial in inherit the roots and the richness traditions of the eastern values for the future generations to come.

The research concentrated on values and traditions or cultural understanding through observation, literature and documentation, and on the basic approach or directive understanding that our future designers requires in executing projects and designs within our own mold.

- ***Research Objectives***

The objectives shall be;

1. To evoke awareness on directive architectural approach and values of what have been left out, where in pursuing of the future of design to be
2. To identify the fundamentals substantial element of eastern and western architectural substance.
3. To create balance between contemporary design mainstream and eastern cultural traditions, and will attempt to discover the likelihood of creating 'our' architecture of 'us'.

- ***Research Methodology***

There are various ways in which information shall be collected and compiled within this research, with much of it coming old literature, architectural history chronology, journals, the internet and observations.

Observational studies is conducted to observe the architectural and new eastern of the globe city development, with an inventory on the design and approach. In this way, a comparative situation can be created based on the growth to come that are seen as necessary in developing the future architecture.

2. THE VIEW: WESTERN APPROACH

Western Architecture believes to start during the Bronze Age, The Classical Foundation of Western Architecture, which is The Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman Civilisation. However the first of it Classical Foundation, The Greek Civilisation and its' architecture believe to be rooted from the Near East and Egypt, in the valley of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia and, further west, of the Nile in Egypt, that the earliest civilization or buildings to be discovered. The Western Architecture and Culture derive much of their richness and reverberation from this two eastern civilizations. Most of westerners early theory and principles are actually derivative form these two early civilizations.

The Western Architecture and civilization which base on this two roots developed from Classical Foundation of Greek Civilization, Hellenistic and later on the Roman Civilization, within these three civilization especially The Greek, we have witness a birth of Western Scholar such like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. And in architecture, The Greek architecture is regarded as a perfectionist in proportion, and most of architecture is modeled base on temple design, which is rectangular in shape and supported by series of colonnade. The Greek also come out with an idea in constructing architecture with the theory of Golden Section and Greek Order. Another important Western Civilization during Classical Foundation is The Roman which is well acknowledge of their structural genius or engineering achievement and well ordered city planning have become a modeled for later period of western architecture development especially The Renaissance.

After the classical foundation weaken, and the split of roman Empire to western in Rome or Italy today and to eastern in Constantinople or Turkey today, have evoked a new period which was called Byzantine and Early Christianity. In architecture the Byzantine and early Christian era, have demonstrated a few impressive architecture such like Santa Sophia or Hagia Sophia in modern turkey today. And in the western empire also the new building was built in need for such new religious of Christian, for example St. Peter's basilica in Rome and St. Vitale in Ravenna. Architecturally, most of this religious architecture is base on classical foundation such like St. Peter and St. Vitale is modeled from Greek orthodox temple of The Pantheon or Roman cylindrical temple with a dome top of The Pantheon. The important inventions of the Byzantine in architecture are the squinch and the pendentives where they solved the problems of constructing hemisphere dome on a square base.

The collapse of Roman Empire on the west by the Germanic and the barbaric have shift a new era in western architecture, which are the Carolingian and Romanesque Era. The chief civilizing forces of that time was monasticism, which reached Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries by Christian hermits of Syria and Egypt. These hermits soon gathered themselves into group and formed first primitive monasteries. The monasticism flowering throughout Europe under the ruling of the Lombards in Italy, Franks and Burgundian in Gaul; Anglo-Saxon in Britain; and Visigoth in Spain. After the defeated of Arab army in Poitiers in 732 by the Frankish leader Charles Martel, his son pepin made himself king of Franks in 751, and establishes Carolingian Dynasty later succeeded by Pepin son, Charnalenge, was crown as first Holy Roman Emperor in St. Peter, Rome, on Christmas Day 800. The Charnalenge ruling was later on expanding through-out Europe which included most of present day Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, France and Italy which once under territories of eastern roman empire, The Byzantine.

In the tenth of century the new period of architecture have given risen western architecture which too many stylistic explanations as Gothic. This strange flowering of poetic and constructional genius, seemingly so at the variance with the classicising elements in the Romanesque tradition which it interrupted. The gothic architecture has been variously explained as the inevitable expression of the Catholic religion, of national character, of structural honesty, of scholastic philosophy. Gothic architecture which believe was born in France in the 1130s which main features characteristic such as the rib vault and the pointed arch had appeared in both Romanesque and Islamic architecture, however gothic architecture differs from medieval or classicism especially in the break is characterized in aesthetic terms by the elimination of massive wall structure and frontality of Romanesque churches in favor of a lighter and more diaphanous structure with an emphasis on diagonal lines and views. This new sense of space is with it combined division of interiors in to a of ribbed cells, are articulated in

the way that seem analogous to a skeleton, and this method of articulation had not featured in classical or early medieval period. Another new element in gothic architecture is the emphatic verticality in which the horizontal line is obscured and all lines soars upward to heaven in seeming insolence of gravity. In this particular period also a numerous of Crusades win back the Holy Land from Islam, the isolated monasteries, castle and villages of the Romanesque world gradually gave way to cities and towns as a center of population and culture, but united by international concept of Christendom. This particular period also saw the birth of idea of nation state in England, France and Spain.

The growth of intellectual life in thirteenth and fourteenth century and also the idea of nation state and especially in Italy where came a new class of professional administrator, which not necessarily in Holy orders, who thought Latin, grammar and rhetoric. These humanists provided intellectual climate in which it increasingly believed that not only the classical literary text is valuable but the civilization that produce them should serve as a model for a modern cultural Rebirth or Renaissance. Humanist scholars promoted 'humane' studies; that is, worthy of dignity in humankind, we should not interpret humanism as hostile to Christianity, for it was universally believe that humans were made in the image of god. The believed that mankind could rival god in bringing rational order harmony to the world was given expression in the painting at the beginning of fifteen century by the invention of linear perspective. The new emphasis on human capabilities led to the growth of the many-sided man who might be at once a scholar, soldier, banker and poet. Artist such as Leonardo, Raphael, followed the architect Leon Battista Alberti, the most important of these 'universal men' in the fifteenth century, and, above all, Michelangelo, who is an architect, sculptor, painter and poet, whose talent cause him to be known as 'divine' in his lifetime.

The new ideas of rebirth or Renaissance culture of Italy was influential throughout Europe, though at first often confined as ornamental details and spread slowly but become as what the basis of modern civilization and adopted by the world until today.

Baroque in architecture is regarded of expansion and overwhelming decorations of what is renaissance and the precedent of by. The exuberance and splendor of baroque architecture, especially in Italy and south Germany, represent the climax power of the Catholic Church and catholic princes before both were submerged by the rising tides of rationalism and nationalism.

The eighteenth century architecture in Europe which was known as neo-classicism, it's also known as French Enlightenment in France and the Picturesque gardens and gardens building in England. These style of architecture not only flowering in Europe but beyond especially by western colonialization. The language of international neo-classicism was established in the mid eighteenth century at the French Academy in Rome by the French scholars who had been awarded the Grand Prix as student of the Academy in Paris. The concept of neo-classicism as the term suggested is, to design especially public buildings on a megalomaniac scale with endless colonnades, stone domes complex plan, which inspired by the classical foundation architecture in particular the Romans. Neo – Classicism also rejected the spirited movement and rich ornamentation of baroque architecture, as it is incompatible with the stylistic purity and structural honesty of antiquity architecture.

At the end of eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, western civilization have witness another and one of the most important circumstances in their development, The Industrial Revolution. The Revolution, which took place in 1780 in England and in 1789 in France, has create a new paradigm in western civilization. The new paradigm which resultant of the Revolution had shaped and mould a new political order, social context and economy, and these new paradigm also effect and affect the field of art and architecture as they are looking for new style that fit the new society. And these search for new directional in designing and art making continued at the turn of the century a new movement of art and design was renamed and which of what it base on the industrial society: Modernism.

3. THE VIEW: EASTERN APPROACH

The Eastern approach in architecture always related to traditions, whereby the traditions is defined and related to,; according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (10th. Mordad, 1350)

“to speak of tradition is to speak of immutable principles of heavenly origins and of they're their application to different moments of time and space. Tradition of which the most essential element in eastern view is the religion in its universal sense”

In eastern lenses, architecture is regarded as 'the architecture', it is subject oriented and it has an entity of its own and it is spiritually spirited. The easterners always believe that of anything they do, should

related to traditions or religion and not only base on science and logic as the westerners did, the traditions or religions suggest of the Being and beings, the Highest of the highest and nothing is almighty than the Being. And as suggested, 'the architecture' in eastern views not a matter of laying foundations, erecting beams and columns and other components of it, but it is a whole complex process of conniving the time, orientations and performing the ritual traditions or religion ceremony.

Eastern architecture is wide if comparing to the western, where the western architecture consist only of the development in Europe continent and it tradition only circulating on the classical foundation orthodox religion and Christianity. Only in the era of western colonialization it become spread outside Europe and become international at the turn of 20th. Century when modernization took place. Eastern architecture, which was rooted a very long time before the early civilization in western chronology, had evolved from settlements or community base on irrigation. The most studied of non-western or the eastern architecture is the traditional art or architecture of India, China and Japan and also what the western so called Islamic architecture because it also included their history when the Islamic empire spread northward until their defeated in Crusade battle in Poitiers, France. In reviewing eastern architecture and its approaches, it's differ from the western review where it is always written in form of timeline or chronology, the eastern architecture in this particular seminar is review from it principles sources which is religion and to speak of religion it is impossible to explain in timeline as per western as the religion is the totality of all that encompass and the existences, and the principle of religion is immutable and uninterrupted by the factor of time.

The all above, of eastern architecture whether classified under ethnicity or nation civilization or of customs or tradition precisely, the traces of art or architecture is very much related to religion or mysticism. It means, most of eastern architecture is related to devotions of the easterners to the divine or god, which one might worship. In any of the eastern main religions, whether Islam, Buddhist, Zen-Buddhism or Hindus or doctrines by the eastern scholars such as Taoism and Confucianism suggested a similarity, attachment to god or ancestor which shown in action or manner in praying, adulation and worshipping in one's religion, and the need of these spaces of worship has resultant a religious architecture suchlike mosque, shrine and temple. These house of worship or the temple is design base upon religious philosophy and contemplation, and the extension of these spaces is actually the ideas of other spaces such like the dwelling area, working area and may be a legislature area where the rule is conceive and also serve a place of seek justice. The commonality aspect in architecture of the eastern is however very basic and it is actually differs mostly to Islamic architecture which is the only monotheism religion or faith in our Asian context.

The eastern architecture is of general architecture which base upon tradition or religion, and most of the set example is base on Islam and Islamic architecture as it also being mention in western chronology of architectural development and also as it is share similarity with main religions of the westerner, Christianity which also a monotheism religion.

Islamic civilization presents an eminent example of tradition civilization, where we can observe the presence of certain immutable principles that have dominated the whole civilization in both time and space. Tradition art or architecture in particular Islamic art is no more than reflection of the spirit and even the form of Quranic revelation. These principles also apply to Hindus or of Chinese architecture where the representation of spirit is applied in their form of roof and also figurative elements in their temple, which related to the deity that the particular temple is built for. If seen from Islamic fundamental principles, namely unity (tawhid) that all element in Islamic architecture and in which ever period sought to integrate all of its feature so as to lead to this unity.

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (10th. Mordad, 1350); *Islamic architecture like all other traditional architectures, is intimately related to cosmology. Traditional man lives in the universe that is meaningful, the cosmos reflect the Divine Principle and so does man. Therefore, man is himself intimately related to the cosmos, he is the microcosm and, like the cosmos reflect the Metacosmic Reality.*

There is a lot of Islamic text explained the correspondences between man and the cosmos. For example the statement above which explained a profound reality and reveal the connection which bind the different level of man existence to the corresponding level of cosmic existence, only humanity or *humanism* that has become blind to the higher level of its own existence and fail to "see" the higher level of cosmic reality and these failure to "see" reduce the understanding of cosmos to it purely quantitative and material aspect. The denial of understanding of cosmos and regard 'it' to pure quantitative and material has become the subject of modern quantitative science and the object of unlimited exploitation of modern technology.

Tradition or religious base architecture, especially temple architecture or the mosque, is also an image of the cosmos or a man taken in his cosmic dimension. The body of the man is the temple where inside rest the Spirit (ruh), also same as in the cosmos, which is animated by the same spirit (ruh). So in that case, the temple or in particular the mosque is a replica of the cosmos and the locus or the meeting point of the encounter of man and the Divine Word or Logos. Of course in eastern tradition god is everywhere, and for that reason the whole earth, in its virgin and undefiled aspect, is a mosque or temple.

The well-known saying of the Prophet of Islam asserts;

The mosque provide for man, amidst the imperfections of his own creation and in the sedentary environment he has built for himself, the freshness, peace and harmony of virgin nature, which come from the hand of God and whose phenomena are in the most profound sense vestigia Dei. The mosque must therefore, be like the handiwork of God; it must remind man of the Creator.

The basis understanding of eastern tradition architecture, which extend the principles of sacred or holy architecture from temple or in particular a mosque to practically every other architectural unit and finally to town and city planning itself, is the relation existing between the cosmos, man in the traditional sense of anthropos, and architecture. This relation sustained and rooted to the Divine Principles, which is the sources of all these realities. In a sense, from tradition or religious point of view, man and the cosmos are the works of “sacred art” themselves.

The unitary point of view of tradition embraces not only architecture in its totality but all of the element that together create an architectural form, such as space, light, color and matter. To understand tradition architecture or Islamic architecture in particular, it is necessary to understand the way traditional man view not only the totality of the architecture, including its cosmic dimension, but also its component, of which ‘space’ is the most fundamental. In traditional architecture space is never divorced from ‘form’, it is not the materialization of abstract space, which ‘form’ are ‘placed’, but space is qualified by the forms that exist in it.

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (10th. Mordad, 1350)

A sacred Center polarizes the space is just as the Holy City of Mecca – which for Islam is the terrestrial point in the axis connecting the heaven and earth – polarizes all space for the supreme Islamic rite of the daily prayers.

The concept of qualified space regulates architecture and provides means for the tradition architect to achieve Unity and synthesis, to create a building or city, which helps man to integrate his daily movement into the ‘Center’. The spaces that materialize in tradition architecture are to seek either to actualize this ‘Center’ in a direct manner or to indicate it in an indirect way.

Another important element in tradition architecture, or to be specified in Islamic architecture is that the shapes used in architecture are inseparable from the traditional concept of mathematics, particularly geometry and geometric forms. Geometric forms and number are not just what they appear to be quantitatively as it is matter in modern mathematics today. The geometric forms and numbers have a qualitative and symbolic aspect, each numbers and forms when observe in its symbolic sense, is an echo of Unity (tawhid) and a reflection of quality contained in the principles within the Unity, which transcend all differentiation and all qualities but yet contained them in a principal manner.

according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (10th. Mordad, 1350)

the square of Ka’bah repeated in classical courtyard and building is not just a square. It is also the symbol of stability and completion and a reflection of the quadrangular temple of paradise of which the Kabah itself is the earthly image

The octagonal form of so many of mosques, and mosques is not ‘just’ an architectural device to enable the architect to place a dome upon a square bases, but a reflection of a Divine Throne (arsh), which according to Islamic traditions is supported by eight Angels.

The dome is not ‘just’ a way to cover the walls. It is the image of the vault of heaven and beyond it of the infinite and illimitable world of Spirit of which the sphere or the circles is the most direct geometry symbol.

In traditional architecture or art, nothing is ever divorce from meaning. And the meaning is non other than the Spirit of ‘Divine Essence’.

4. THE CONCLUSION

After reviewing both approaches of western and eastern, a few differentiation and similarities is

established, and by comparison, modern western architecture during Renaissance period evoke from ideas of 'humanism', where the intellects of that time started to 'trip' their devotions to Christianity and favoring the concept of 'universal man', where man can rival God and mankind should not be hostile to Christendom. Where else in the Eastern, their approaches in architecture is base on tradition or to be define by the religious and of course, adopted universally by the Easterners that religion is the Truth which is timeless, and nothing more timely before and after than the truth, the message of tradition is relevant now, because it has been relevant at all times, in the past, now and always will ever be present. So by understanding the principles of Divine Truth, nothing should be superseded and should remain as it is and that's why it is always should be.

The most significant differentiation of western architecture in comparison with the eastern counterpart is that, their direction in approaching in design values. The western believe architecture is just a quantitative matter not as being perceived by the easterners that architecture should be approach from their qualitative matters. Another important differentiation in modern western architecture is an architecture is placed within a space and the space is defined by the contours of the material forms it surrounds, but in eastern architecture, the space is 'cut-out' from the material forms around it and is defined by the inner surface of these forms. The space is 'cut-out' in such way as to achieve synthesis and unify the multiple facets of life.

To conclude, Modern Western Architecture is purely quantitative and isolated to it outer surfaces and material only, and it primary existence is to function as a piece of machine or a device for human need and comfortability. Where else in eastern Architecture, the architecture is rich in content qualitatively and immaterially, and it is an entity with its own totality. The existence of eastern architecture is not only to suit human need, but the architecture itself is the cosmos and the cosmic which have relation to it's root of the Divine Principle that govern it creation and existence.

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