600 - 800 CE

OUTLINE:

7.2 TANG CHINA, EAST ASIA
  Tang China, Korea, Japan
  Pagodas
  Shrines

7.3 THE MAYA, CENTRAL AMERICA

Dates: Middle Imperial Period: (see slide following)
  Sui Dynasty  581-619
  Tang Dynasty  618-907

Note:
• The Buddhist religion spread through the Chinese Empire and eastern Asia. Empress Wu Zetian sponsored monasteries and pagodas, and political stability protected the Silk Routes. (OUP)
• At 600, India and China were prospering, and Southeast Asia, Korea and Japan were emerging as economic forces, and sources of architectural innovation. Europe was in disarray as its lands were carved up by various tribes that produced small fortified settlements of wooden construction. This left Byzantium as a hotspot of cosmopolitan urban life. By 651 the Sassanian Empire had collapsed and was replaced by the Rashidun Islamic caliphate (632-661) which soon stretched from Afghanistan to Morocco and then succeeded by the more powerful Umayyad caliphate, (661-750). (Wiley)
• The Sui and the T'ang succeeded in establishing centralized dynasties that made determined investments in public works, in particular the building of canals and roads. Chinese capitals were designed as a spatial imprint of imperial rule. (Wiley)
• 7th century China: Foreign traders came by land and sea, and Chinese goods were on sale in Baghdad; Nestorian Christians [who believed Christ had two natures], Jews, Moslems and Persians were seen in the streets of Canton. But the Chinese were forbidden by Imperial rescript from going abroad, and their architecture consequently suffered little influence from the expansion of trade. Buddhism reached its peak and stimulated the arts and influenced architectural form. Printing was introduced. The first book on architecture was issued in 1103. (Fletcher)
Ruling Dynasties: Dates: Middle Imperial Period:

Sui Dynasty 581-619 CE:
- Established Chang’an as an imperial capital; built it a few kilometers south of the old Han city, and called it Daxing “Great Prosperity”.
- sponsored Buddhist art and architecture (Gardner)

Tang Dynasty 618-907: a period of unequaled magnificence (Gardner)
- T’ang dynasty China built Daxing into one of the greatest cities of the time, and the largest in the world. The first cities of China were what one might call palace cities linked to a court culture. The development of the centralized imperial government in the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE and in the T’ang dynasty gave rise to large metropolitan cities of one million or more. Chinese capitals were designed from the outset as a spatial imprint of imperial rule. When there was a change of imperial control, capitals were usually destroyed and depopulated, which was disruptive but gave the Chinese a lot of experience in designing cities at a great scale. (Wiley)
- Chang’an had hundreds of Buddhist monasteries; Buddhism reaches its height. Chang’an was the greatest city in the world.
- In the 9th century Confucianism was reasserted and Buddhism was briefly suppressed as a foreign religion. Thousands of temples, shrines and monasteries were destroyed. (Stokstad)
- Nestorian Christianity arrived in 635 CE. (The Nestorians professed the humanity of Jesus). Manichaeism arrived with Persians fleeing Islam ~694.

Liao and Song Dynasties 907-1279:
- The Liao erected the world’s tallest wood building the Fogong Si Pagoda (Gardner)
- From the 1st century, Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla grew to control the peninsula and Manchuria as the Three Kingdoms of Korea (57 BCE–668 BC), until unification by Silla in 676. In 698, Go of Balhae established the Kingdom of Balhae (c.f. modern Bohai Sea) in old territories of Goguryeo, which led to the North–South States Period (698–926) of Balhae and Silla coexisting. (Wikipedia)
- What we will look at will all be from Silla, during Korea’s own golden age, when temples were built in the capital of Gyeongju.
- Buddhism arrives in Korea in the 4th century.

Asuka period 538–710:
- Buddhism is introduced from Korea, arriving in the 6th century [initiating this period]. Forms of philosophy, culture, city planning, architecture, etc., came from Korea and China at an astonishing pace. Worship of Buddhist deities took place in temples close to imperial cities. (Stokstad)
- Assimilation occurred between a new rice-centric culture and the ancient Shinto traditions, represented by the Ise Shrine. Shinto architectural expression changes in the 7th century with the arrival of Buddhists and their highly developed culture of temples and shrines. The village granary, already sacred, became an imperial symbol. (Wiley)

Nara period 710–794: Named for Japan’s first permanent imperial capital founded in 710.
- The Nara period ends with the moving of the capital to Kyoto in 794.
- In the 19th century shrines and temples were separated. The name Shinto is coined. State Shinto was established dedicated to the glory of the Emperor. After WWII State Shinto was abolished and state and religion were legally separated.
Early Asia: Silk Route

Source: Pearson

Size: see scale

Note:
- Silk Route terminates at Chang’an/Xi’an; the silk route would take more than nine months, usually handled as a series of relays. (OUP)
- The Silk Route began at the western end of the Great Wall (Stokstad)
- Dunhuang is the westernmost gateway to China on the Silk Route. (Gardner)
- Buddhism, transmitted in the 1st and 2nd centuries by merchant caravans, became the most widespread organized religion. Confucianism and Daoism are philosophies rather than religions in a western understanding. (Moffett)
China and Korea

Source: Pearson

Note: focusing in a bit closer

- China is crossed by the Xi, Yangzi and Yellow rivers.
- The Jade Gate on the Great Wall is a frontier pass, 80 mi. NW of Dunhuang. (wikipedia)
Note:
• Tang Emperors exercised military and cultural influence over Vietnam, Korea and Japan. (OUP)
Title: the Tang Chinese empire

Architect: Tang Dynasty

Date: 618-907

Source: worldhistory.us/chinese-history/china-tang-dynasty-and-song-dynasty.php

Medium: map

Size: see scale

Note: Here we see Korea as a tributary area.

- Tang Emperors exercised military and cultural influence over Vietnam, Korea and Japan, and as far west as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. (OUP)
- Tang China was fascinated by Turkic cultures of Central Asia. (Stokstad)
Title: Dunhuang Caves/ Magao Grottoes/ Caves of a Thousand Buddhas

Architect: Tang Dynasty

Date: begun c. 750, the site was worked on and decorated for about 1000 years.

Source: https://www.iias.asia/thenewsletter/article/journey-dunhuang

Medium: photo by James and Lucy Lo, 1943/4

Size: n/a

Note:
- Over 500 caves in sandy cliffs. (Stokstad)
- Beginning in the Six Dynasties period the Chinese cut hundreds of sanctuaries into the soft rock of these cliffs, which are best known for their murals, as well as sculptures and scrolls. The earliest extant caves date to the early 5th century. (Gardner)
The Dunhuang grottoes are especially important because in 845, Emperor Wuzong instituted a major persecution, destroying 4,600 Buddhist temples and 40,000 shrines and forcing the return of 260,500 monks and nuns to lay life. Wuzong's policies did not affect Dunhuang, then under Tibetan rule, so the site preserves much of the type of art lost elsewhere. (Gardner)

This repression [see above] was so vast that few buildings from this era have survived into modern times. The government wanted to keep monasteries from becoming a type of alternative government. (Wiley)
DUNHUANG CAVES

Title: Dunhuang Caves

Architect: Tang Dynasty

Date: begun c. 750 CE, the site was worked on and decorated for about 1000 years.

Museum:

Medium: caves Size: n/a

Note:
- The cave No. 465 (above) is located in the north end of the cliff, approximately a kilometer away from the other decorated caves. It is the only cave in Dunhuang containing Tantrayana Buddhist iconography in typical Tibetan style. The cave dates to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) (Stokstad)

No. 17 Library cave from 1907 photo by Aurel Stein. Among its manuscripts was the Diamond Sutra, perhaps the oldest printed material in the world.
Title: The Western Paradise of Amitabha Buddha (seated at center, shown living in his Pure Land, a paradise)

Architect: Tang Dynasty

Date: begun c. 750 CE, the site was worked on and decorated for about 1000 years.

Museum: Cave 217, Dunhuang, Gansu, one of about 500 caves in Dunhuang

Medium: mural

Size: 10'2" x 16'/ 3.1 x 4.86 m.

Sukhāvatī/ the Western Paradise: refers to the western pure land of Amitābha in Mahayana Buddhism. The Sanskrit sukhati, fem. form of sukhati "full of joy; blissful", from sukha "delight, joy" and -vat "full of". (wikipedia)

Note:
- The Sui dynasty unified China and was Buddhist. Several styles of Buddhist art fused in the style called Amitabha, a figure that dwelled in the Western Pure Land, where followers were promised rebirth. This became the most popular form of Buddhism in China. (Stokstad)
Title: The Western Paradise of Amitabha Buddha (seated at center, shown living in his Pure Land, a paradise)

Architect: Tang Dynasty 618-907

Date: begun c. 750 CE, the site was worked on and decorated for about 1000 years.

Museum: Cave 217, Dunhuang, Gansu, one of about 500 caves in Dunhuang

Medium: detail of a wall painting

Size: 10'2" x 16'/3.1 x 4.86 m.

Note:

- Paradise is depicted as a sumptuous palace setting (Khan Academy)
- Buddhist Pure Land sects, especially those centered on Amitabha, the Buddha of the West, had captured the popular imagination during the Six Dynasties and continued to flourish during the Tang. Pure Land teachings asserted that individuals had no hope of attaining enlightenment through their own power because of the waning of the Buddha’s law. Instead they could obtain rebirth in a realm free from spiritual corruption simple through faith in Amitabha’s promise of salvation. Richly detailed, brilliantly colored pictures steeped in the opulence of the Tang dynasty, greatly aided worshipers in gaining faith by visualizing the wonders of the Pure Land paradise. Amitabha sites in the center of a raised platform against a backdrop of ornate buildings characteristic of the Tang era. (Gardner)
Title: Reclining Buddha in cave 148, second largest reclining figure in Mogao

Architect: Tang Dynasty

Date: begun c. 750 CE, the site was worked on and decorated for about 1000 years.

Museum/ Source: Cave 148, Magao, Dunhuang, Gansu, one of about 500 caves in Dunhuang, photo by Bairuilong; b/w: https://www.princeton.edu/news/2014/11/17/bringing-ancient-buddhism-light by James Lo

Medium: cave

Size: n/a

Note:
- Dunhuang was a major stop on the Silk Route. (Stokstad)
**Title:** Chang’an, rebuilt during Sui dynasty

**Architect:** Yuwen Kai, engineer and planner, Sui dynasty, fl. 581-618

**Date:** 580, developed by the Tang dynasty during the 7th cent.

**Source:** OUP  **Medium:** plan

**Size:** see scale; > 30 sq. mi.; central avenue was 155 m./ 508’ across; this tended to keep areas segregated.

**Note:** this map does not correlate well to later city maps.

**Yuwen Kai**

(Britannica)

- At the eastern terminus of the Silk Route; the two markets were each larger than most cities of the time. The blocks separated areas called *fangs* which sat within their own walls. (OUP)

- At this time Chang-an (present day Xi’an) was probably the greatest city in the world. (Stokstad)

- While the ancient texts described the model city as surrounded by a square wall with the emperor’s palace at the center of the city, now the planners of the city placed the palace, Daming Palace “Palace of Great Brilliance” in an enclave outside of the square to the north. The fangs contained temples, parks, commercial buildings and housing. Each of the two markets occupied two fangs. (Wiley)

- The Daming Palace site was discovered in 1957 and is now an archeological site and park. (wikipedia)
Title: The Daming Palace
Artist: Formerly Attributed to Wang Zhenpeng (Chinese, active ca. 1275–1330)
Date: early 15th century
Note: the rooflines, the undulating wall

Source: MMA, # 1989.363.37
Medium: Handscroll; ink on paper
Size: 12 1/4 in. × 22 ft. 5 in. (31.1 × 683.3 cm)
Title: The Daming Palace  
Artist: Formerly Attributed to Wang Zhenpeng (Chinese, active ca. 1275–1330)  
Date: early 15th century  
Note: the fountain, the multiple stories  
Source: MMA, # 1989.363.37  
Medium: Handscroll; ink on paper  
Size: 12 1/4 in. × 22 ft. 5 in. (31.1 × 683.3 cm)
Title: Zhaozhou Bridge/ Anji Bridge, Jiao/ Namjiao River, Hebei Province

Architect: Li Chun, engineer/Yuwen Kai, Sui dynasty

Date: 605-616

Source: en.wikipedia; map: https://www.travelchinaguide.com/images/map/hebei/hebei.gif

Medium: segmental arch bridge; stone and iron rods

Size: 37 m. span (121')

segemental arch: an arch based on a segment of a true arch, appearing flatter than a true arch.

Note:
• Exemplifies the engineering achievements of the Sui dynasty. (Wiley)
Title: Nanchan Temple, Mt. Wutai, Wutaishan, Shaanxi

Architect: Tang Dynasty  Date: 782

Source: Pearson  Medium: small hall

Size: 38' x 32'

Note:
- This is the earliest important surviving example of Chinese architecture. [The wood usually didn’t last.] The tile roof has taken on a curved silhouette, which will become more pronounced on later buildings. (Stokstad)
- The central bay is wider. The tendency to build curves is an optical refinement. (Moffett)
Note:

- Typical is the bay system in which a cubic unit of space is formed by four posts and their lintels, which functioned as a module. (Stokstad)
- When the doors are opened worshipers can view from the courtyard the statues inside. Monks circumambulate the altar. (Moffett)
- Three bays with a xiēshān roof. (Wiley)
- [In Chinese architecture] the roof is the chief feature, supported on timber uprights and independent of the walls. (Fletcher)
Title: East Hall, Foguang Monastery, Duocun, Shanxi Province

Architect: Tang Dynasty, 618-907

Date: 8th cent.

Source: wikipedia

Medium: n/a

Size: n/a

Note:
- only four examples of Buddhist temples from the Tang dynasty period survive. The Foguang Monastery is the finest example. (OUP)
Title: Foguang Monastery, Duocun, Shanxi Province

Architect: Tang Dynasty  Date: 857


Medium: section

Size: see scale

cao: Chinese architecture: space (Wiley)
dougong: Chinese, a cantilevered bracket or cluster of brackets to support a roof.

hipped roof: pitched roof with sloping gable ends

Note:

• the dougong connected the columns to the beams and the rafters, and diffused the load of the roof with each bracket extending further out than the one below. (OUP)

• The eaves cantilever over 13’ from the supporting column face. The statues are set further back to allow more room for ceremonies. The roof is hipped rather than a gable. (Moffett)

• four by seven bays; the columns dividing the hall into an inner and outer cao. (Wiley)
Title: Great Buddha Hall, Foguang Monastery, Duocun, Shanxi Province

Architect: Tang Dynasty    Date: 857

**gong:** a cantilevered bracket in traditional Chinese construction (Wiley)

**purlins:** horizontal beams in a roof structure parallel to the ridge beams, resting on the main rafters and giving support to the secondary rafters (Gardner)

Note: there are no walls in this diagram, and we’re not quite in post and lintel anymore…

- unlike the rigid elements of the triangular trussed timber roof common in the west, which produce flat sloping rooflines, the varying lengths of the Chinese cross beams and the variously placed **purlins** can create curved profiles. (Gardner)
- Bracket sets of this complexity never developed in India, Mesopotamia or areas to the west where walls played a more important role in the structural stability and expression of a building. Bracket sets keep a building stiff against rotational forces. (Wiley)

Source: [https://arthistorypi.org/media/uw/excerpts/Lin_excerpt.pdf](https://arthistorypi.org/media/uw/excerpts/Lin_excerpt.pdf); Orthogonal view of the Foguang Monastery, After Fu Xinian, “Wutaishan Foguangsi jianzhu,” fig. 4. Diagram courtesy of Fu Xinian.

**Medium:** structural diagram    **Size:** n/a
Lin Huiyin and Liang Sichen

Title: Lin Huiyin and Liang Sichen
Architect: Lin Huiyin and Liang Sichen
Date: 8th century
Size: n/a

Note: Lin Huiyin and Liang Sichen were introduced as teens by their families and later studied together at the University of Pennsylvania.

Liang authored the first modern history on Chinese architecture, and he was the founder of the Architecture Department of Northeastern University in 1928 and Tsinghua University in 1946. He was the Chinese representative of the Design Board which designed the United Nations headquarters in New York City. He, along with wife Lin Huiyin, Mo Zongjiang, and Ji Yutang, discovered and analyzed the first and second oldest timber structures still standing in China, located at Nanchan Temple and Foguang Temple at Mount Wutai. He is recognized as the “Father of Modern Chinese Architecture”. Princeton University, which awarded him an honorary doctoral degree in 1947, issued a statement praising him as “a creative architect who has also been a teacher of architectural history, a pioneer in historical research and exploration in Chinese architecture and planning, and a leader in the restoration and preservation of the priceless monuments of his country.” (wikipedia)
Note: the brackets
- only four examples of Buddhist temples from the Tang dynasty period survive. The Foguang Monastery is the finest example. The dougong brackets supporting the roof eave are made of interlocking wood joinery, in a complex system relating to the columns and the plan.
Title: Foguang Monastery, Duocun, Shanxi Province, Site plan

Architect/ Date: Tang Dynasty, < c. 845; pagoda: 1056, during the Khitan-led Liao Dynasty. The pagoda was built by Emperor Daozong of Liao (Hongji) at the site of his grandmother's family home.


Medium: plan

Size: see scale

Note: there's also a monastery by this name in Taiwan; don’t be (too) confused.

• More widespread than the cave temples was the practice of building Buddhist temple complexes with a hall for venerating images and a pagoda or tower erected over relics symbolic of the Buddha’s presence. (Moffett)

• Monasteries generally consisted of a Buddha hall framed by a courtyard within a colonnaded enclosure with a north and south gate [this plan is thus not entirely typical] (Wiley)

FOGUANG MONASTERY

Floor plan of the ground level of the Timber Pagoda. fr. Chen Mingda, Yingxian muta (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1966)

LEGEND

(A) Main Buddha Hall/ East Hall, 857
(B) relics / Timber pagoda, ca. 600/1056
(C) sutra pillar, 857
(D) sutra pillar, 877
(E) Hall of Manjusri, 1137

Gray area indicates the position of the former Great Maitreya Pavilion
Title: Mu-ta Timber Pagoda, Foguang/Fogong Si Monastery, Duocun, Shanxi
Architect: Buddhist  Date: 1056
Source: Lin, Wei-cheng, *Performing center in a vertical rise, Multilevel Pagodas in China’s Middle Period*, Ars Orientalis 46, Smithsonian Institution, Wash., D.C., 2016 (Lin) and as noted
Medium: timber pagoda  Size: 220’ H
cross section: an orthographic projection of a section made by cutting transversely, esp. at right angles to the long axis of an object. Also called transverse section (Ching)
zaojing: The caisson (Chinese: 藻井; pinyin: zǎojǐng; lit.: 'algae well'), also referred to as a caisson ceiling, or spider web ceiling, an architectural feature typically found in the ceiling of temples and palaces, usually at the centre and directly above the main throne, seat, or religious figure. The caisson is generally a sunken panel set into the otherwise largely flat ceiling. It is often layered and richly decorated. Common shapes include squares, octagons, hexagons, circles, and a combination (wikipedia)

Note:
- The oldest surviving pagoda constructed entirely in wood and one of the tallest wooden buildings anywhere. The octagonal building rises five levels in 10 structural tiers, alternating upright posts with cantilevered roofs and balconies. On the exterior these levels are expressed as intricately bracketed overhanging roofs and galleries that contrast with trabeated wall sections. The entire structure tapers to the center contributing to stability and giving the impression of greater height. (Moffett).
- cross section of Timber Pagoda, showing the five iconic sets [of rooftop eaves] aligned along a vertical axial from the seat of the Sakyamuni Buddha on the first level to the head of the Vairocana Buddha under the sunken ceiling (zaojing) on the top level. (Diagrams after Liu Dunzhen, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhushi*)
FOGUANG MONASTERY
Title: Fuguang Monastery, Duocun, Shanxi  Architect: Buddhist  Date: 1056
Source: Lin, Wei-cheng, Performing center in a vertical rise, Multilevel Pagodas in China’s Middle Period, Ars Orientalis 46, Smithsonian Institution, Wash., D.C., 2016 (Lin)
Medium: timber pagoda  Size: 220’ H
pingzuo: In Chinese architecture, terraced balconies. (wikipedia) see label on right drawing

Neicao and waicao refer to the inner and outer colonnade spaces, respectively, courtesy of architect L. Zhang; see labels on left drawing
- the lowest story consists of three independent rings of wooden pillars, two inner rings forms the inner and out cao. The upper stories are all open. (Wiley)
PAGODA: STUPA INTO PAGODA

Title: Elements of Architecture: Pagodas: early stupa (top), later stupa, watchtower, stone pagoda, wooden pagoda
Source: Pearson

**pagoda:** from Sanskrit word for stupa: dagoba (Moffett); multistoried Chinese or Japanese prayer tower with projecting roofs at the top of each story (OUP); from Portuguese pagode, via Tamil from Sanskrit (wiktionary)

**ta:** in Chinese architecture, tower or pagoda; a Chinese pagoda in which a deceased high priest is buried (Wiley)

**Note:**
- In Nepal and China the stupa form from India combined with the Chinese watchtower form to develop into the pagoda. (OUP)
- Buddhist temple complexes in China were built with a hall for venerating relics symbolic of the Buddha’s presence. (Moffett)
- The axis mundi is retained. (Stokstad)
- The pagoda was inspired by the parasol-like finials atop northern Indian stupas and by multistoried watchtowers from Chinese military construction. The pagoda’s purpose was expanded to make the structure itself into a vertical marker in the landscape. (Moffett)
- While the stupa is an earthen mound and the ta/ pagoda is a tower, they serve the same purpose, to house a relic at the core. The ta magnifies the vertical axis and displays the levels of heaven inhabited by Buddhas. While the form is inspired by watchtowers it never functioned as one. The form emerged after Buddhism allowed representation; the pagoda is also the chattris (umbrella) at the summit of the stupa blown into huge proportions. Under Mahayana Buddhism the esoteric abstractions of the stupa were slowly replaced by a more graphic and literal iconography. In China, as the ta became the dominant form the figure of the Buddha was inserted into the pagoda. (Wiley)
One theory is that an early pagoda type did have a solid or partially solid core, much as an Indian stupa had a solid core, making the interior of the pagoda non-functional, just as it would be as the pagoda became a totally empty core, and equally non-functional. (Lin)
Title: Pagoda, Songyue Monastery, Mt. Song, Henan

Architect: Buddhist  Date: 523

Note:
• This is the oldest surviving “ta”. Note the columns on the 2nd story. (Wiley)
• This physically imposing structure serves no practical purpose. No facilities for climbing were built inside or outside, and none of the windows and doorways is truly functional other than the four entrances on the ground level. The pagoda is essentially a hollow shell that has neither interior spaces nor actual levels. (But it is built over a crypt) But a taller structure might more easily access the divine. A polygonal structure offers more points of vertical support than a square. (Lin)

Source: Photo by Wei-cheng Lin, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/ars/13441566.0046.005?view=text&rgn=main  Diagrams after Liu Dunzhen

Medium: front elevation, floor plan of the lower level, and a section of the chattra showing the crypt locations, made of brick.  Size: 12 sided, 40 m. high with 15+-/ levels
SONGYUE TEMPLE

Title: Pagoda, Songyue Monastery, Mount Song, Henan

Architect: Buddhist, founded under the Northern Wei    Date: 523


Medium: map, photo

Size: 12 sided, 40 m. high with 15+-/- levels

Note: There is extensive 20th cent. restoration

- Parabolic forms may owe something to the shikhara roofs of Hindu temples. This is the oldest surviving brick structure in the country. (Moffett)