

5.2 Ancient China in Mud and Wood :: 7.2 Tang China as Gridded Capitals and Pagodas

1) **Ancient China**

- Architecture and language as far back as 7000 BCE but little remains due to lack of permanent materials.
- **Zhou dynasty** dominates off and on until 256 BCE and establishes capital city at **Chang'an** (City of Everlasting Peace)
  - Later moved capital city to Luoyang

2) **Major ideas:**

- **wangcheng diagram** - (wong-cheng) diagram for design of Chinese cities which essentially is a nine-square grid. Diagram shows three gates on each side, each leading to broad avenues, which, when cross, create a nine-square with the imperial palace as the center.
- **Mandate of Heaven** - A mandate from about 1000 BCE that bestowed upon the emperor semi-divine status, a **son of heaven**, from which his authority was based. The mandate could be bestowed upon or taken from any person.
- **feng shui** - (fong-schway) Ancient Chinese practice of geomancy which establishes a spiritual or psychological resonance between humans and human activity and a fundamental orientation to one's physical environment or world, a.k.a. cosmos. When one is *favorably oriented* in one's physical space, the *energy is good*. The energy is called **qi** (chee).
- **qi** - (chee) The good or **positive energy** of a person when properly or favorably oriented in physical space. It can be something as simple as having one's back to the wall facing the center of a room, rather than facing a wall with one's back to the center of the room.
- **Cardinal points important**
  - *south* - palaces and city gates face south. The direction of the Red Phoenix
  - *east* - region of the Blue Dragon, growth, spring, upright tree
  - *west* - region of the White Tiger, autumn, harvest
  - *north* - region off cold winds, invaders, destruction

3) **Construction :: tripartite system**

- Foundational platform
  - stone or masonry, often stepping up hierarchically
- **timber frame**,
  - **jian proportions** - an additive system in room-sized modules
  - *jian proportions* basically 10' x 20' modular bays
  - **dougong brackets** - structural connection system of main beams to smaller beams and cross beams with multiple connections, leading to the support of the roof. *Dougong* brackets diffused the structural loads and could be manipulated to curve upward in the traditional Chinese fashion.
- **decorative roof** - tiled roof, corners and hip-rafters curving-upward, finial and corner carvings on roof.

4) **Qin dynasty** (chee-eeen) 221-206 BCE first dynasty of imperial China

- **Shi Huangdi** was emperor who consolidated **Qin dynasty** (221-210 BCE)
  - reputation as ruthless military leader and administrator
  - national written language
  - national currency
  - national straight highways
  - national program to build **Great Wall of China**
- **Great Wall of China**
  - world's first great public works project
  - Great Wall continued to be worked on in later empires
  - defense on the northern and western borders
  - toll road along the **Silk Route**
- **Shi Huangdi's Army**
  - emperor's burial mound - **tumulus** - discovered near Chang'an in 1974
  - thirty-three percent (33%) bigger at base than *pyramid of Khufu* but only half as high
  - contained **8000 terra cotta soldiers, archers, charioteers** - very detailed and original

- 5) **Sui dynasty** 581-605 CE
  - **Sui dynasty** (soo-way) (581-605 CE) led to the **Tang dynasty**
    - Sui built the largest canal system in world
    - Sui rebuilt Chang'an as capital city (calling it Daxing)
    - **Chang'an** (Daxing) **was the eastern terminus of the Silk Route**
    - modern name of Chang'an is **Xi'an** (zhee-en)
    - **Bridge of Zhaozhou** (616 CE) built by craftsman Li Chun (possibly assisted by architect Kai) very modern arching bridge spanning 121 feet.
    - Sui dynasty architect Kai laid out Chang'an based on the **wangcheng diagram**
    - very wide streets - 500 feet wide - led to segregation of city
    - **108 fangs** or wards interspersed with palaces, markets, squares (see map)
  
- 6) **Tang dynasty** 618-907 CE
  - **Buddhist pagodas and monasteries**
    - Buddhism comes to China *100 BCE from along Silk Route*
    - height of pagoda related to cosmology of Buddhism
    - visitors achieved enlightenment as well as enjoyed the vast views of the city
  - **Great Wild Goose Pagoda** (652 CE)
    - **lounge type** (stepped level pagoda)
    - built for Ci'en monastery
    - 197 feet tall
  - **Small Wild Goose Pagoda** (707 CE)
    - **miyuan type** (hollow core pagoda)
    - built for Yi Jing
    - 148 feet tall
  - *Monasteries destroyed about 845 CE*
    - monasteries grew too powerful economically
    - threatened imperial power
    - 46,000 destroyed
  - **Empress Wu** (623-705)
    - wife of 3rd Tang emperor who assumed imperial power when husband Gaozong died in power
    - *evil person with bad reputation* in history for various atrocities
    - came to be wife of Gaozong through system of concubinage and rose to be imperial consort (Queen Consort or Queen Concubine)
    - *gained legitimacy through architectural patronage*
    - **Empress Wu's Necropolis** most important work (680 CE)
    - three natural hills, grand wide boulevard, hundreds of colossal sculptures
  
- 7) **Korea**
  - Silla dynasty (668-935 CE) almost contemporary with Tang
    - Bulguk-sa Temple, very similar to Tang dynasty construction
    - Silla tombs in the form of tumuli, very similar to burial tumuli of Ireland