# A Preliminary Study on the Cultural Characteristics of "Mixed Chinese and Western" in the Architectural Planning and Layout of Nanjing Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum

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#### **ABSTRACT**

"Adhering to the principles of European and American science and the advantages of Chinese art" is the architectural design principle and standard of the Republic of China given by Sun Ke in the preface of the "Capital Plan". The Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum designed by architect Mr. Lv Yanzhi cleverly combines the rationality and orderliness of Western culture with the sensibility and romanticism of Chinese culture in site selection and planning layout, presenting a mixed cultural feature of Chinese and Western cultures. In terms of layout, the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum has a strong sense of rationality and orderliness, manifested in: planning the architectural layout according to the symmetry of the central axis, paying attention to the proportion and scale relationship of Western classical architecture, and using geometric shapes to regulate and strengthen the relationship between architecture and the environment. In terms of building site selection and sequence planning, it follows the ideas and methods of traditional Chinese imperial tomb architecture, but has been simplified, with the building using a bell-shape to metaphor "wooden priests warning the world", and imply Mr. Sun Yat-sen's ideas and propositions through numbers. The integration of Chinese and Western cultures has endowed the architecture of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum with both the solemn and magnificent rational beauty of Western style architecture and the emotional beauty of traditional Chinese architecture.

Keywords: Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, Cultural characteristics, Symbol.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Finnish architect Pallasmaa stated in "Collision and Conflict: Pallasmaa Architecture Chronicles" that "architecture is the only discipline that exists today as a bridge connecting two fundamental cultural boundaries". The architectural art of the Republic of China period precisely confirms the viewpoint that during a specific period of social development in China, two different cultures intersect and collide, harmonize and blend, forming an architectural art style with characteristics of the times. This architectural style was most prominent in Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China, where the "Capital Plan" was implemented. Nanjing is known as the "ancient capital of six

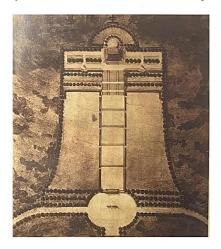
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dynasties" and the "metropolis of ten dynasties", and its urban memory is renowned for its rich culture. In modern times, Nanjing has become the capital of the Republic of China, carrying important historical memories of the Republic of China. Since 1912, Nanjing has preserved a large number of Republican era buildings with different styles and unique features. These buildings present a unique national identity, namely the "inherent form of the nation" architecture, which is different from traditional Chinese architecture in terms of type and spatial form but is closely related in blood. They are "adapted from ancient times and compatible with both Chinese and foreign cultures", possessing a unique national character, that is, the "national inherent form" architecture.

The Republican architecture in Nanjing includes a wide range of types, including government office buildings such as the Presidential Palace and various administrative offices, as well as commercial, cultural, and embassy buildings. Among them, the Presidential Palace and Sun Yatsen Mausoleum are the most core carriers of the cultural memory of the Republic of China city in Nanjing, and are an integration of "national form" architecture. The Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, featuring a blend of Chinese and Western styles, is located at the southern foot of Purple Mountain in Nanjing and was designed by architect Mr. Lv Yanzhi. After the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, he participated in the solicitation activity for the

architectural design of Sun Yat-sen's tomb and won the bid. The submitted design documents include nine design drawings, including plan ("Figure 1"), elevation, section, perspective, and side view oil painting of the sacrificial hall, as well as the "Design Explanation of Tomb Architecture Patterns" that states the design ideas. He said, "Public buildings, as the main representation of our people's construction spirit, must adopt the unique architectural style of China, conduct detailed research, design patterns with artistic ideas, and construct them with scientific principles.



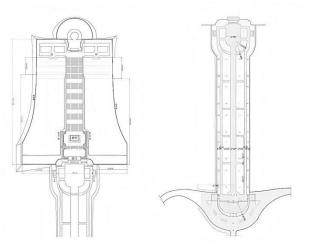


Figure 1 Plan design of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum.

a Source: "Research on the Architectural Layout of Nanjing Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum Based on Engineering Drawings and Current Surveying of Sun Yat-sen
Mausoleum Archives"

Nicholas Pevsner, a British historian of design and architecture, believes that architecture is a product of the changing spirit of a changing era. The Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architectural complex is a new form of Chinese cultural spirit explored between Chinese and Western styles, and is a brandnew architectural style formed by the intersection and integration of Chinese and Western cultures. It is based on the "architectural spirit of China" and the "unique architectural style of China", integrating Western "scientific principles" and "artistic ideas" for planning and design. Architecture embodies the rational and orderly beauty of Western architecture and culture, as well as the poetic essence of traditional Chinese culture. It uses symbolic language to narrate the design of buildings. As commemorative a typical representative of "ethnic form" architecture, the "mixed Chinese and Western" style of the Sun Yatsen Mausoleum architectural complex contains rich cultural characteristics of both Chinese and Western cultures.

## 2. THE REPRESENTATION OF "MIXED CHINESE AND WESTERN" ARCHITECTURE IN THE SUN YAT-SEN MAUSOLEUM ARCHITECTURAL GROUP

The architecture of the Republic of China, also known as "national form" architecture, is a summary of the design concept of "national inherent form" in architecture during the Republic of China period. The architectural art of the Republic of China originated from the emerging art movement in the fields of art and culture at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, mainly expressed in the forms of "Western crafts in Chinese form" and "Western application of Chinese style", that is, "a mixture of Chinese and Western styles". The rational, orderly, and practical design aesthetics, mechanical aesthetics, and functional aesthetics of the West intersect with the emotional, freehand, implicit, and poetic aesthetic

ideas of China, and the modernization process of architectural culture and style independence begins.

### 2.1 The Design Concept of 'Mixed Chinese and Western' in Republican Architecture

Regarding ethnic architectural styles, Zhao Shen, the president of the Chinese Architectural History Society during the Republic of China period, advocated for "the integration of Eastern and Western architectural features to promote the inherent colors of Chinese architecture". During the Republic of China period, the characteristics of Western architecture that differed from Chinese architecture were most prominent in terms of materials and technology. Chinese architecture is mainly made of wood, and the architectural style is what Mr. Liang Sicheng called the "seamless" and "consistent" styles. Mr. Liang Sicheng said in "A History of Image Chinese Architecture": "With the emergence of reinforced concrete and steel frame structures, Chinese architecture is facing a severe situation. ... Can traditional Chinese architectural structural systems use these new materials and find a new form of expression? There is a possibility. But this should not be blindly 'imitating antiquity', but must be innovative." The "Declaration of the Establishment Conference of the Shanghai Architectural Association" was published in February 1931, which provided guiding opinions on "innovation", namely "to use new theories, integrate them into old architectural methods, use Western material civilization, promote the true spirit of China's inherent literature and art, and architectural forms that meet requirements of the times." Simply put, ethnic architectural style refers to the integration of traditional Chinese architecture into the structure and function of Western modern architecture.

#### 2.2 The External Representation of the ''Mixed Chinese and Western'' Form in Republican Architecture

The "mixed Chinese and Western" external manifestations in Republican architecture are diverse, but its core is the fusion of two architectural cultures, which presents multidimensional cultural characteristics in architecture. Compared to traditional Chinese architecture, the "mixed Chinese and Western elements" in Republican architecture has many manifestations, such as: in terms of building structure, reinforced concrete materials have almost

completely or partially replaced wooden structures; The layout form of architectural space is no longer rhythmically laid out along the ground like traditional Chinese architecture, and a new upward rising style, namely single high-rise buildings, has emerged in large numbers; In terms of architectural form symbols, the large roof of Chinese architecture has been preserved as an important symbol carrying the "traditional Chinese style"; different Due to materials. architectural components and decorative patterns such as Owl Kiss, architrave, arch of wooden architecture, Queti, etc. have been removed, simplified or geometrically modified, etc. The core meaning of these external changes is the harmonious coexistence between two cultures after their intersection.

#### 2.3 The Representation of "Mixed Chinese and Western" Architecture in the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum Architectural Group

The "ethnic form" architecture in Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China, was unique in both quantity and type. Feng Lin from Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts said in "Research on Nanjing Republican Architectural Art": "There are a total of 48 Republican buildings (units) and over 200 (individual buildings) related to this topic in Nanjing area." The types of buildings include commemorative buildings, cultural buildings, schools, hospitals, banks, embassies, mansions, auditoriums, stations, docks, as well as office buildings of the Nationalist Government and its various branches. Among them, the Presidential Palace, Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, and Meiling Palace are typical representatives of the "mixed Chinese and Western" characteristics. The Sun Yatsen Mausoleum architectural complex is a fusion of commemorative architectural design ideas from both the East and the West. It is a rational, orderly, and patterned design that combines Western functionality and pragmatism, and a poetic fusion of Chinese rhythm. Pallasmaa said in "Collision and Conflict" that "architecture has two opposite origins: practicality and poetry", and he advocates "infusing poetic meaning experiences into practical and material construction activities". Compared to Western architecture, the poetic representation of traditional Chinese architectural culture is implicit and profound. The Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architectural complex is the result of the collision between the poetic essence of traditional Chinese commemorative architecture and the practicality and materiality of Western style architecture.

# 3. THE CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF "MIXED CHINESE AND WESTERN" IN THE PLANNING AND LAYOUT OF THE SUN YAT-SEN MAUSOLEUM ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX

As a commemorative building, the site selection and planning of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum is the result of the combination of Western culture's rationality and orderliness with Chinese culture's sensibility and poetry. The rationality and orderliness of Western culture are mainly manifested in the axial symmetry of architectural planning and layout, as well as the geometric and patterned nature of architectural planning and layout; The sensibility and poetry of Chinese culture are mainly manifested in the adaptability of building site selection and layout, as well as the simplification of planning and layout based on traditional tomb building sequences. combination of the two gives Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architecture both the dignified, solemn, and magnificent rational beauty of Western style architecture and the poetic quality of time and movement contained in traditional Chinese architecture.

#### 3.1 Temporal and Dynamic Characteristics Inherent in the Chinese Architecture Sequence

Traditional Chinese architecture, especially commemorative buildings, contain Chinese traditional etiquette culture and have temporal and dynamic characteristics. The first feature is that it is located at the main peak of Zijin Mountain, and the architectural layout needs to follow the mountain trail and advance layer by layer. French philosopher Meg Ponty believed in "Phenomenology of Perception" that motion is "given in a field", and the field of natural landscape environment provides the possibility of "grasping the surrounding environment" for the "phenomenal body" in the process of commemorative activities. In addition, the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architectural complex presents a narrative based on the architectural sequence of ancient Chinese imperial tombs, preserving the temporal and dynamic characteristics of traditional Chinese architecture. But in the specific design plan, simplification was made, and the architectural sequence includes Boai Fang, corridor, tomb gate, stele pavilion, steps, sacrificial hall, and tomb chamber (as shown in the right

picture of "Figure 2"). This is different from the Xiaoling Mausoleum of the Ming Dynasty, which is also located in the Zijin Mountain in Nanjing. The architectural sequence of the Xiaoling Mausoleum of the Ming Dynasty includes: Xiama Square, Dajin Gate, Shengde Stele Pavilion, Yuhe Bridge, Wenwu Square Gate, Xiangdian Hall, Fangcheng, Soul Tower, Baoding, etc. ("Figure 2", left). Among them, the two sides of the Sacred Road, which starts from Xiama Fang and ends at the main entrance of Xiaoling Mausoleum, are decorated with stone beasts, as well as stone carvings of civil officials and military generals, as ceremonial guards. The simplified architectural sequence of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum still takes the memorial archway as the starting point, retains the mausoleum gate and the stele pavilion, replaces the Sacred Road with the stone statue as the guard of honor with the corridor of pines and cypresses planted on both sides, retains the sacrificial hall, that is, the hall of enjoyment in the Ming and Qing dynasties, connects the internal space of the sacrificial hall and the tomb, and cancels the design of the top of the Soul Tower in Fangcheng in the Ming and Qing dynasties. This simplified sequence not only conforms to the cultural characteristics of the Republic of China era, but also preserves the time and movement attributes contained in traditional Chinese architectural etiquette culture.

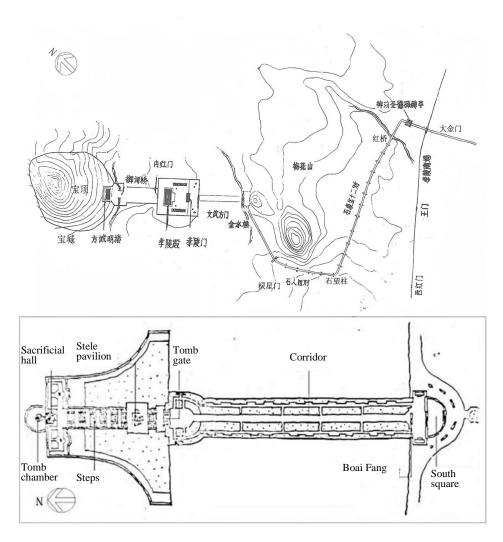


Figure 2 Comparison of architectural sequence between Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum (up) and Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum (down).

#### 3.2 Constructing a Reverent and Tragic Atmosphere with the Symmetrical Axis of Western Palace Architecture

Symmetry, especially the symmetry design of traditional commemorative buildings, is a form adopted in both Eastern and Western architectural design. However, traditional Chinese mausoleum architecture places more emphasis on the design concept of "shaping according to the trend", and the architectural sequence is relatively long. Therefore, in terms of symmetry, clever designs will be made based on the form of the architectural group and the terrain and landforms, such as the curved design of the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum shaped according to the trend. This is different from the performance of Western architecture. Western traditional architectural groups have centralized

Source: "History of Chinese Architecture"

characteristic, pursuing linear axial symmetry, such as the Palace of Versailles in Paris (left in "Figure 3"). Although it has a very wide and long landscape sequence, the axial symmetry of the buildings is consistent. The palace architecture and garden layout are centered around the central axis, strictly symmetrical on both sides, creating a grand and magnificent spatial atmosphere. Mr. Tong Jun believes in "Jiangnan Garden Chronicles" that compared to the twists and turns of Chinese gardens, the symmetrical arrangement of the central axis in the West "can lead to awe, influence, and tragedy", which happens to be in line with the commemorative characteristics of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architecture. The architectural group of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum starts from the big memorial archway at the entrance, along the tomb path, tomb gate, stele pavilion, memorial hall and

even the tomb chamber. All the main buildings are precisely arranged on a north-south axis. The landscape planning along the axis, such as roads, squares and green spaces, matches the architectural sequence in geometric form ("Figure 3", right).

This symmetrical layout gives the building a strong sense of order and solemnity, strengthening the solemnity and solemnity that commemorative buildings should have, and allowing visitors to feel a strong sense of ceremony during the journey.

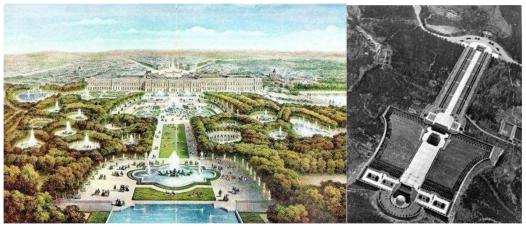


Figure 3 Comparison between Versailles Palace (left) and Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum (right).

a Source: Online

#### 3.3 Creating a Grand and Majestic Atmosphere with the Chinese Construction Concept of Taking Advantage of the Mountains

The Western style symmetrical layout on the rising mountain structure, and the architectural group has the characteristics of time and movement advancing layer by layer, requires the integration of Chinese and Western design languages to form a new form in specific design. The architectural group of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum has a natural blend of Chinese and Western styles. The rise of mountains inevitably requires steps, and the sequence of axis symmetry requires designing nodes to place each individual building. Hierarchy and variability also arise from this. In terms of specific techniques, first of all, according to the design concept of Chinese traditional architecture "shape with the trend", with the rise of the mountain, the building sequence of the axial symmetry layout planning also rises layer by layer along the mountain trend. Memorial archway, mausoleum gate, stele pavilion and memorial hall form the nodes of the building sequence respectively, and use the terrain height difference from low to high to form an orderly spatial hierarchy. Secondly, in the upward trend, that is, between the stele pavilion and the sacrificial hall, the idea of using steps to achieve the integration of architecture and terrain is in line with the traditional Chinese architectural concept of "adapting to the situation". Once again, the strictly symmetrical architectural sequence seamlessly blends with the natural environment. Whether it's the layered pine trees on the corridor resembling an honor guard, or the surrounding cypress trees in the sacrificial hall, tomb chamber, etc., they all envelop and enclose the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, achieving the realm of "unity of heaven and man". Compared with the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum, which has a total length of nearly 3,000 meters, the horizontal distance of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum is only 700 meters, but the vertical height difference is 70 meters. The central axis is symmetrical and the layout of the architectural group is simple and compact. Together with the multi-level white marble steps and blue glazed tile roofs, Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum imitates Buddha as a blue gray gemstone embedded in the foothills, with an elegant, solemn and grand atmosphere, showcasing the magnificent and tragic momentum of commemorative buildings.

### 3.4 Using Geometric Shapes from Western Architectural Planning to Construct Building Boundaries and Coordinate Relationships

The relationship between architecture and environment differs significantly between China and the West. Traditional Chinese architecture is known as the culture of walls. Walls are the boundaries of architectural groups, but the

architectural groups inside the walls still contain several small groups that need to be peeled off layer by layer to reveal the appearance of individual buildings. For example, the Forbidden City, Qianqing Palace, Kunning Palace, etc. in Beijing are interconnected and independent in the main axis sequence of architecture. So, discussing the boundaries of ancient Chinese architecture requires a hierarchical exploration. In addition, the affinity and naturalness of ancient Chinese architecture also weaken the sense of boundaries of the architecture. The boundary of mausoleum architecture planted in natural mountains and waters is relatively weaker, because the architecture focuses more on designing based on terrain and landforms, and is good at creating the effect of "a hundred feet in shape, a thousand zhang in momentum" through node designs such as curved water and hole bridges. Western architecture, whether classical or modern, has clear forms and boundaries, and stone emphasizes the separation between architecture and nature. Western architecture often constructs its basic form and spatial order through simple and regular geometric shapes, and its relationship with the environment is interdependent. The architecture of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum is mainly made of stone, and the overall boundary treatment of the building Western architectural characteristics. Specifically, in the architectural group, each individual building is a standard rectangle or square, and the corresponding squares, corridors, stone steps, etc. also use geometric shapes to give each part clear geometric boundaries and obvious pattern effects. This use of geometric shapes not only enhances the overall coordination between architecture and the environment, but also reflects the Western architectural planning's emphasis on rationality and order. The rational orderliness is also reflected in the design of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, which follows the proportion and scale of classical Western architecture. The blue and white colors blend well into the environment, and the overall planning and layout are staid and dignified.

#### 3.5 Using Bell-shaped Symbols to Symbolize "Warning the World" in Architecture

Symbolic techniques are commonly used in Chinese and Western architecture. Language, text, graphics, etc. can all convey information and shape meaning through clever organization and design. The architecture of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum employs certain symbolic techniques in its design and planning, with the most representative being its patterned floor plan and layout. Mr. Lv Yanzhi stated in his "Design Instructions for Mausoleum Architecture Patterns" that the design of Sun Yatsen Mausoleum is "roughly in the shape of a bell" ("Figure 4"): the crescent shaped square has a circular arc at the top of the bell, the Xiaojing Ding on the south side of the square is the apex of the bell, the dome top of the tomb chamber at the top of the tomb is like a pendulum hammer, and the Bo'ai Square and the corridor are like suspension cables under the bell. The transmission and acquisition of the meaning of the bell-shaped symbol is a cultural link recognized by both designers and readers. In ancient China, the meaning of the bell was rich. It was homophonic with "终 (zhong, means end)" and extended to mean the end of life. Due to its loud striking sound, it had a warning effect and was widely used in activities such as warning the world and governing. Zhong(bell), also known as Muduo, is a bell-shaped structure used in the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, symbolizing the use of "Muduo warning the world". The phrase "Muduo warning the world" originates from the record in the Analects of Confucius, which states: "The world has been without morality for a long time, and heaven will take Confucius as the Muduo." In this sentence, Confucius is compared to the Muduo to warn and educate the world. The role of Muduo in warning the world, spreading politics, and educating is very consistent with Sun Yat-sen's thoughts and achievements, reflecting Sun Yatsen's legacy of warning the world that "the revolution has not yet succeeded, comrades still need to work hard".

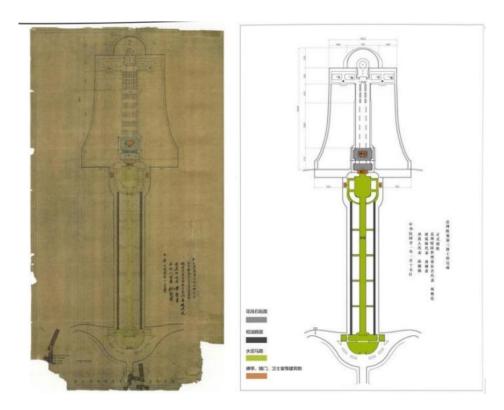


Figure 4 Completion and receipt of the third section of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum project.

a Image source: "Research on the Architectural Layout of Nanjing Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum Based on Engineering Drawings and Current Surveying of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum

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#### 4. CONCLUSION

The "mixed Chinese and Western" cultural characteristics of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architecture in site selection and planning layout are not limited to this. Its extroversion and connotation not only follow the principles of European and American science, but also reflect the advantages of Chinese art. Adhering to the principles of "European and American science" and "the advantages of our country's art" are precisely the architectural design principles and norms of the Republic of China that Sun Ke proposed in the preface of the "Capital Plan". Many explorations of Republican architecture are interpreted from the perspectives of "Chinese style" and "Western style", and the planning and layout of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum architecture perfectly integrates Chinese and Western representations. As a masterpiece of the "integration of Chinese and Western architecture" trend, the analysis conducted in this article is only a small exploration of site selection and planning from the perspective of design culture, beyond artistic and scientific aspects. Whether it is traditional Chinese wooden frame architecture, classical architecture dominated by stone in the West, or modern architecture made of

reinforced concrete, materials as material are silent, but the architectural form formed by careful planning and organization is sound. As Juban Pallasmaa said in "Limitations of Architecture: Towards Silent Architecture," "Great architecture is a silence transformed into material, a solidified silence." The value and significance of "ethnic form" architecture lies in the silent transmission of information in its "mixed Chinese and Western" form, the language and symbols of the "inherent form of the nation", and its cultural characteristics condensed in the architecture. Through silent silence, it triggers spiritual understanding, and with its rational self-restraint, concentration, and contemplative appearance, it forms valuable inspirations for modern and contemporary design.

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