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Discussing Methods and Methodologies: Chinese Architectural History – Concepts and Organising Principles

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the methods used in the existing literature on architectural history that introduce the characteristics of Chinese architecture. The investigation sought to address the research question: How might the characteristics of Chinese architecture be methodically classified and systematically organised to encourage creativity and innovation for architecture students? Following a preliminary discussion, three seminal architectural history books formed the core foundation of this study. One significant finding from the review is that no single method of categorisation can comprehensively illustrate the entire history of Chinese architecture. All systems of classification present a process and effort to balance the need for in-depth knowledge and the demand for a holistic overview. The paper proposes an 'integrated system' to systematise and present the subject to architecture students as a possible answer to the question posed in this study. This paper hopes to contribute to the current and ongoing local and international debate on the pedagogy of architectural history.

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