METAPHYSICAL SPACE
IN CHINESE CULTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

Everybody perceives and conceives space differently due to different culture and historical background. This is because man’s experience is moulded by his own environment and space is in turn mould by these experiences/intuition based on memories.¹ The metaphysical² space is place with many abstract meanings. It is also a place that can offer clues to understand a particular cultural way of perception not just in terms of attitudes towards life but also their way of living. Chinese metaphysics here would refer to Chinese cosmology, which itself is imbued with philosophical meanings.

This paper is thus interested in unraveled within this realm of the metaphysics some of its fundamental concepts and how it translated/related into or to the geometric formation of Chinese (Classical) Architecture formulation. It is interesting to see that Chinese architecture seems to have a stylistic indigenous paradigm that does not change formally across the centuries. The architecture are symmetrical, in balance, trends towards horizontality rather than vertical, have a series of courtyards spaces within a house etc. Thus what is the ideas that lead them to such conception of space. It is thus the purpose of this paper to look back to the fundamentals: metaphysics (cosmology) to search for some answers.

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¹ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason
² Metaphysics -meaning -part of philosophy which deals with being and know i.e what we really are and how we know things. adj.-metaphysical