



# Colours and Contrast: Ceramic Traditions in Chinese Architecture

*Clarence Eng*

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Ancient Chinese halls are celebrated for their majestic rooflines. Their finish and visual mass have evolved to meet the tastes of patrons and to signal the role of their occupants, whilst of course ensuring structural robustness. However, the visual impact of these structures comes chiefly from their ceramic ornament. Indeed, travellers through the centuries would first have glimpsed a distant city by the sunlight glinting from its tallest rooftops. These important ceramics can sometimes engage fully with established disciplines such as architecture or fine ceramics, but in "Colours and Contrast" Clarence Eng cogently argues that they be studied in their own right. He introduces the aesthetics, history and technology of Chinese architectural ceramics, demonstrates that similar levels of skilled expertise were applied both to glazed and unglazed ornament, and describes their special contribution to structures designed primarily to delight the viewer, such as screen walls and pagodas.

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