

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

McGraw Hill

10
2003

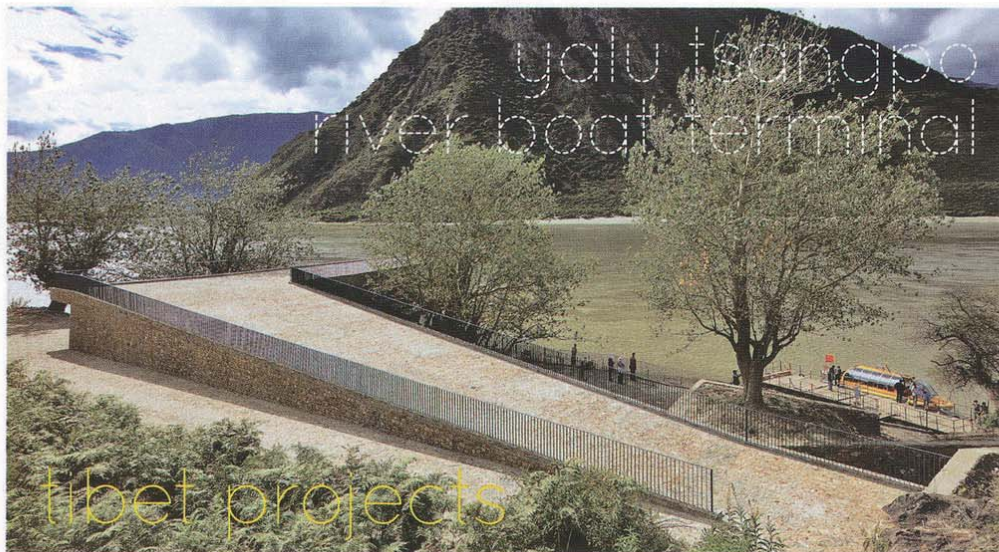


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SET IN A SPECTACULAR REGION OF Tibet, the Yalu Tsangpo River Boat Terminal (2008) is the farthest one can go via boat to the foot of Namcha Barwa mountain, the eastern anchor of the Himalayas. A series of ramps wind from the river's edge around poplar trees, then over and through a structure housing a waiting lounge, ticket office, toilets, and lodgings. The ramp terminates on the roof, where it projects over the water. Standard sought to create a work of contemporary architecture that would blend into the natural landscape, so the structure uses mostly indigenous materials. Walls and roofs were built of rocks gathered nearby by Tibetan masons, who determined the stones' patterns, while cabinetry and floors were made of local timber.

SITUATED AT THE START OF A SCENIC drive in Tibet, between a road and a river, the Niyang River Visitor Center (2009) houses a ticket office, a changing room for rafting, and toilets. Like other Standardarchitecture projects in Tibet, it is built of local stone and timber beams, and has thick walls with deep recesses.

The building's angled geometry was a response to the site boundaries, while its four entry points – one on each side – accommodate circulation needs, merging at an open central courtyard carved out from the main volume. In contrast to the exterior walls, this inner void is painted in mineral-derived pigments of bright blue, orange, and red to create a visual effect that shifts as one glimpses it through the building's various openings and at various times of day. Zhang Ke wanted to reference the importance of color in Tibetan culture – though in this case, he stresses, the hues hold no symbolic meaning.

"We want to create an equal standpoint where we're neither ignoring Tibetan culture nor imitating it," says Zhang Ke. "The building had to have an autonomous beauty within itself."

