China Zun: Beijing’s New Icon, 2018’s Tallest

At 528 meters, China Zun was the tallest building completed in 2018, and became the new tallest building in Beijing. It is the anchor of a 30-hectare new central business district (CBD) established on the east side of the city, where more than 20 buildings of 150 to 350 meters’ height will ultimately rise. CTBUH Editor Daniel Safarik interviewed Wuren Wang of CITIC HEYE Investment Co. Ltd., on the eve of this significant occasion.

Why was it important to reach the 528-meter height of China Zun?
In the past 40 years, the CITIC Group has created landmarks for Beijing in every decade. For example, in the 1970s, we built the city’s first international-grade office building – the CITIC International Building on Chang’an Street. In 1989, we constructed the Capital Mansion, which, at 183 meters, was Beijing’s tallest building at that time. In the 2000s, we built the National Stadium (Bird’s Nest) for the 2008 Olympics. Now, China Zun, as a high-quality high-rise landmark building, reflects the maturation of our development process in our fourth decade, and that of the city as well.

We think China Zun’s appearance demonstrates the culmination of the world’s most advanced design concepts and equipment manufacturing capabilities, and that it affirms the construction speed of China’s high-rise building industry. In the future, it will continue to stand as a comprehensive model of whole-lifecycle management by the owner’s development team. It will also show the economic strength and outstanding social responsibility of CITIC Group.

Additionally, the zun in Chinese culture resembles the idea: “Heaven is a circle and the Earth is a square.” Learning from that in a literal and practical sense, the structure of China Zun uses circles and squares in order to provide a solid and stable base as well as an elegant shape. At the same time, it reflects both the history and the profound connotations of Chinese culture.

What kind of design choices were made to ensure the safety of the tower in case of an earthquake?
China Zun was fortified to withstand an 8.0-intensity seismic event. To do this, we adopted a combination of anti-lateral-force structural systems, in a configuration we refer to as a “giant outer-frame tube plus core tube.” This ensures that it will safely survive the strongest earthquakes, that it will be repairable following moderate earthquakes, and will not register any damage in a minor earthquake.

Beijing is currently planning to move significant government and residential developments further to the south, as well as open a new airport in that direction. How do you think this will affect the business operations and appeal of China Zun and the Chaoyang CBD, whose value is partly based on distance from the center city and the Beijing Capital International Airport?

In September 2017, the Beijing municipal government released its General Urban Plan for the period 2016–2035. In part, it states that the strategic orientation of Beijing should be along several lines: as a national political center, a cultural center, an international
The ‘zun’ in Chinese culture resembles the idea: ‘Heaven is a circle and the Earth is a square.’ Learning from that in a literal and practical sense, the structure of China Zun uses circles and squares in order to provide a solid and stable base as well as an elegant shape.”