

On the External Factors in Harbin's Urban Architecture Culture -- Taking Central Street as an Example

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Abstract: Influenced by the railway construction in eastern China, the Russo-Japanese War and Harbin's opening of its own port for trade, a large number of foreign immigrants poured into Harbin in the early 20th century. Among these overseas immigrants, there were many talented architectural designers and engineers. The urban construction style of Harbin also underwent fundamental changes under the influence of foreign architectural culture. In the first half of the 20th century, Harbin's architecture can be regarded as a miracle in the history of world architecture. Baroque, classicism, Romanticism, Renaissance, eclecticism, Art Nouveau and other artistic styles of architecture were concentrated on both sides of Harbin's central street, adding a lot of bright colors to the urban architecture.

Keywords: Harbin; Architecture; Central Street

1. Harbin has a wide range of overseas population in history

1.1 Russian immigrants

Since the railway construction in eastern China, the number of Russian expatriates gathering in Harbin has been increasing, from dozens and hundreds of people in 1898 to thousands of people in 1899. With the continuous development of railway projects and the urban planning and construction of Harbin, the number of Russian expatriates arriving in Harbin increased, reaching more than 12,000 by 1902. The Russo-Japanese War spurred a rapid increase in the number of Russians in Harbin, reaching 43,091 in 1912. After the October Revolution in Russia, most of the exiles flocked to Harbin. In 1920, the number of Russian expatriates in Harbin reached more than 130,000, and in 1922 it reached 155,000^[1], which was the peak number of Russian in Harbin.

1.2 Jewish immigrants

After the 17th century, the Jews from Eastern Europe gradually moved to Russia, in order to control the Jews, the Tsarist Russian government has long carried out the policy of discrimination and persecution against the Jews. In 1861, after the introduction of serfdom in Russia, Jews were allowed to move freely within the country, so that more Jews came to Siberia and the Far East. In 1902, the number of Jews was 300. After the Russo-Japanese War, the number of Jews in Harbin increased sharply, reaching 3,000 in 1906 and 6,000 in 1908. In 1917, the number of Jews in Harbin was 7,554^[2]. Later, due to the Russian Revolution, the number of Jews immigrated to Harbin doubled to about 30,000 by 1926.

1.3 Polish immigrants

Poland has been carved up three times in its history, and for a long time its people have been aliens. The first Polish immigrants who came to Harbin were engineers and technicians who built the railway of the eastern China, and many of them started to open factories in Harbin. After the railway of eastern China was completed, Harbin's population increased and business opportunities became increasingly mature. Some Polish industrialists began to move here for the purpose of setting up business enterprises. According to 1936 statistics, the population of Polish emigrants as: 2558 in 1916, 87 in 1924, 1356 in 1926, 562 in 1927, 735 in 1928, 874 in 1929, 1041 in 1930 and 1090 in 1931.^[3]

1.4 European and American immigrants

After the Russo-Japanese war, Russia realized that it couldn't occupy Harbin alone. Harbin has opened its own port, which

opened the door for the smooth entry of western capitalist countries. Western countries took the opportunity to seize the advantageous commercial position and try to expand their influence in the Far East. From 1907 to 1931, a total of 19 countries set up consulates in Harbin, 29 organizations of various kinds of immigrants, and industrial and commercial capital operation enterprises of 33 countries set up in Harbin. ^[4]According to incomplete statistics around 1930, there were about 1,700 European and American immigrants in Harbin.

2. The historical exhibition hall of Eastern and Western architectural art and culture - Central Street

The Central Street of Harbin, originally meaning “China Street” in Russian, starts from Jingwei Street and ends at the flood control Memorial Tower, with a total length of more than 1400 meters. This street can be regarded as the historical exhibition hall of Eastern and Western architectural culture, which brings together the architectural culture of dozens of ethnic groups and the architectural styles and characteristics of different times.

2.1 Renaissance architecture

Renaissance architecture is an architectural style that emerged after Gothic architecture in the history of European architecture. It was produced in Italy in the 15th century and then spread to other parts of Europe, forming Renaissance architecture with its own characteristics. It rejects the Gothic architectural style, which symbolizes theocracy, and advocates the revival of ancient Roman architectural forms, especially the classical column proportions, semicircular arches, and dome-centered architectural forms.

Representative building -- A · L · Okun building. Built in 1917, the A. L. Okun building at 73 Central Avenue was once the site of Union Bank in 1936. ^[5]It is a Renaissance eclectic building with French architectural features. The roof eaves are beautifully decorated, supported by eaves stone and decorated with relief, making the overall style simple and lively and rich in changes. Column arrangement of parapet works fine, wall color is light green, fresh and elegant.

2.2 Baroque architecture

Baroque architecture is an architectural and decorative style developed on the basis of Renaissance architecture in Italy in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is characterized by the use of strange and unusual techniques, such as broken eaves, overlapping columns, wavy walls, far-reaching frescoes, and exaggerated statues. The dramatic effect of the building under perspective and shadow reflects the rulers' efforts to create a mysterious religious atmosphere in the church and the pursuit of luxury in the palace and mansion.

Representative building - Central Street Education bookstore. Central Street Education Bookstore is located at 120 Central Street. It was started in 1916 and completed in 1918 and is being designed by the Russian A.A. Myakovsky. The whole building is brick and concrete structure, imitating Baroque architectural style. The architectural shape is magnificent, and the composition of the facade is controlled by classical columns to show the changes of light and shadow of the form. Above the entrance, two lifelike human sculptures support a circular balcony. The whole building is permeated with baroque strange vivid effect and changing light and shadow, reflecting the dynamic and strength of Baroque architecture.

2.3 Eclectic architecture

Eclectic architecture is an architectural style popular in some European and American countries from the first half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. It is one of the three retro architectural trends (classicism, Romanticism and eclecticism). Eclecticism jumps out of the limitations of classicism and Romanticism in architectural creation, arbitrarily chooses and imitates various architectural styles in history, and freely combines them in various architectural forms, so it is called “collection imitation doctrine”.

Representative building - Rabinovitch Building. Rabinovitch Building is located at No. 111-113 Central Street, Daoli District, Harbin City. Built in 1919, Rabinovitch Building has a brick and concrete structure and eclectic architectural style. In 1922, the Bank of the Far Eastern Republic of the Soviet Union set up a branch in Harbin, located in the Rabinovitch Building. On June 29, 1923, it was renamed the Bank of the Far East and operated independently. The building plane is L-shaped, with floor-to-ceiling Windows at the bottom, tall window sashes and uniform Settings.

2.4 Jewish national characteristic architecture

There are 24 existing buildings with Jewish national characteristics in Harbin, all of which have extremely obvious physical features: the eaves are decorated with honeycomb arches, the doors and Windows or porches in the shape of pointed vouchers, and the symbols of six-pointed stars on the roof windows or domes of pointed vouchers.

Representative building - Jewish Hospital. Jewish Hospital is located at No.36 West five Street, Central Street. It is now Harbin Eye Hospital. On June 4, 1933, the Jewish Hospital broke ground on East Business Street. On November 5 of the same year, the outpatient department opened. In 1934, the two-story building was expanded, and on October 29, the Jewish Hospital (including the inpatient department) was fully opened. Three stories were built in 1936, but only half of them were built due to lack of funds. The three-story building was completed in 1939 and a pharmacy opened, and an X-ray room was added in 1941.

3. Analysis on the architectural art and cultural connotation of foreign immigrants

Ever since the Russians built the railway in eastern China, Harbin has been a very different city from traditional Chinese architecture. Architects from all over the world have turned this place into a painting scroll with any brush and ink, giving full play to their imagination and creativity, creating a lot of European architecture here. Most of these European buildings remain, becoming the witnesses of the architectural history of Harbin and an important milestone in its historical development. Many excellent foreign architects transformed and innovated the essence of architectural culture accumulated in the world for hundreds of years into the cultural symbol of this city, making it have the reputation of "World Architecture Museum". Baroque, classicism, Romanticism, Renaissance, Eclecticism, Art Nouveau and other artistic styles of architecture were all architectural schools that emerged in Europe in the mid-19th century. Among the foreign immigrants in Harbin, there are quite a number of artists and decoration artists, architects and urban planners, who were deeply influenced by these architectural aesthetic thoughts in their higher education. They understand the essence of these architectural schools, so that they find a theoretical testing ground in Harbin, and leave exquisite works that are passed on to future generations.

The city is thick with history. The buildings of various styles and schools left in Harbin are the best examples of the free spread of various western cultures in the city. It is the collision, blending and combination of Chinese and Western cultures here that promotes the formation of a multifaceted social, political, economic and cultural form in Harbin, which reflects the diversity and symbiosis of urban culture. Helped Harbin to form a unique urban temperament. The unique style and characteristic landscape of each city has become a precious memory passed down from generation to generation by the people of these cities, as well as an important cultural landmark of these cities. The rapid development of economy and society, on the one hand, enables the exchange of a large amount of information, on the other hand, the large-scale and rapid development of urban and rural construction, also leads to the annihilation and degradation of urban characteristics. Construction is needed, development is also necessary, but if our urban construction planning is simple, only the pursuit of building speed, then the price will undoubtedly be the overall loss of urban beauty, character, human interest and comfort. In fact, urban construction should be like human metabolism, good things must be preserved. Because, the preservation of urban heritage is to leave urban memory, to continue urban context, to protect these historical and cultural carriers, from which can nourish new buildings and cities with Chinese characteristics. It is commendable that Chinese governments at all levels have fully realized the importance of preserving these heritages and have put them under protection. In the first half of the 20th century, buildings built in Harbin by expatriate designers and engineers have been listed as protected buildings in the city, some of which have been listed as Class I protected buildings. At present, modern Harbin is developing rapidly with a new idea. A whole century has passed since the city of Harbin was built by foreign engineers and architects. Today, these buildings still tell the story of the world to the residents and visitors of modern cities, and bring people the enjoyment of beauty with their magnificent momentum and profound and perfect architectural style.

References:

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