

Li Sui'an

14 The Attitude of Harbin Towards European Architecture (1949–2019)

Abstract. Over the last 70 years (1949–2019) in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the attitude of people from Harbin 哈尔滨 (the Harbinese) toward European architecture has changed at various times, which reflects Harbin's tortuous process of perception and acceptance of European culture. Harbin city is the product of the Chinese Eastern Railway built in the late 19th and early 20th century, where consulates of 17 countries were established and various schools of European architecture were presented. More than 10 years since the founding of the PRC the relationship between China and the Soviet Union remained friendly. China launched a campaign for the so called *Xuexi Sui'an* 学习苏联 (Learn from the Soviet Union) and actively introduced Soviet culture, including architectural art. During this period, a number of buildings in European or, precisely speaking, Soviet style were built in Harbin. The remains of such architecture stayed under protection at the same time. In the course of the Sino-Soviet confrontation period, especially during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese society showed hostility to foreign historical and cultural heritage. Regarding European architecture (mainly Russian architecture) as the mark of the colonial era, the proof of a Russian invasion under the Tsarist regime, and the symbol of disgrace to the nation, the Harbinese took actions to destroy said architectural buildings. In the wake of the Cultural Revolution, China entered the historical period of *Gaige Kaifang* 改革开放 (Reform and Opening). Chinese society has undergone tremendous changes since then, and so have the thoughts and values of the Harbinese accordingly. They have come to realize the aesthetic value of the relics in European architecture and acknowledge that these relics are precious pieces of cultural heritage. As a result, a new attitude toward European monuments in Harbin is adopted; a caring attitude toward restoration and preservation of the old, but also construction of the new, buildings in European architectural style.

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Therefore, Harbin has been provided with a different European characteristic from other cities in China. Harbin's care for European architecture at the time of the Reform and Opening shows the spirit of the era in which China as a whole has been actively integrating, and enthusiastically learning and adopting foreign culture. In this article, the term "European architecture" can be used interchangeably with "Russian architecture" and "Soviet architecture" in some cases for two reasons: first, there are many types of architecture involved in this article. It is more convenient to use the term European architecture. Second, Russian architecture/Soviet architecture is the product of Russia through studying Western European culture, which is a variety of European architecture.

Keywords. Harbin, European architecture, Russian architecture, Soviet architecture, Perception.

Buildings in Soviet Architectural Style in the 1950s

The PRC was founded on October 1, 1949. China soon established an alliance with the Soviet Union, and both states began a period of friendly relation for more than 10 years. The campaign "Learn from the Soviet Union" sprang up in China, which brought in aspects of Soviet culture on a large scale, including architectural art. Given this background, buildings in Soviet architectural style were being built everywhere in Heilongjiang 黑龙江.

Heilongjiang Province used to border the Soviet Union; a certain number of Russian expatriates were living in the Chinese territory. In addition, of the total 156 projects of technical assistance in industrial enterprises by the Soviet Union (hereinafter "156 projects"), 23 were arranged in Heilongjiang Province. The friendly atmosphere of China and the Soviet Union in this province was ever stronger as opposed to inland provinces, the Soviet style buildings there thus also outnumbering those anywhere else. The Soviet style buildings constructed during this period mainly include the Harbin Institute of Technology Main Building, the Harbin Workers Culture Palace, and the Harbin Youth Palace.

The construction of the magnificent Harbin Institute of Technology Main Building (henceforth HIT Main Building, fig. 14-1) began in August 1959 and was completed in 1965. It consists of 13 floors above ground and one floor underground with the total height of 75.61m and a total mass area of 17,923 m². Fully equipped with a lobby, an auditorium, conference rooms, and VIP rooms, the building as such adopts a frame structure, which belongs to the socialist ethnic architectural style of the former Soviet Union. It absorbs, and derives from, a variety of European architectural

styles, standing grand and stately with its breathtaking majesty. The mechanical building (1954) and the motor building (1955) were built respectively on the east and west side of the HIT Main Building. With the same shape and scale, both buildings also fulfill a sense of architectural eclecticism. These three buildings altogether form a complete and spectacular building complex.¹

It is commonly known that the HIT Main Building imitates Moscow University. The former is a simplified and miniature version of the latter. This imitation embodies the spirit of times during “Learn from the Soviet Union” and the Sino-Soviet friendship. In addition to Harbin Institute of Technology, the Heilongjiang University and the Northeast Forestry University incorporate Soviet architectural style in their own main building as well (fig. 14-2).

The Harbin Workers Cultural Palace was completed in November 1957 in the Russian Baroque style. The main structure is a total of 3 floors. The internal structure is designed for cultural and artistic functions, providing venues such as a concert hall, theatre, rehearsal studio, lecture hall, library, and chess and card room etc. The Workers Culture Palace was the largest public venue for cultural events in Harbin as well as the largest workers cultural palace in the country at that time. From its completion until early 1990s, the Workers Culture Palace served as a venue for large scale cultural events in Harbin (fig. 14-3). There have been performances by Matsuyama Ballet Company from Japan, Berlin Police Orchestra from Germany, and A.V. ALEKSANDROV Twice Red-bannered and Red-starred Academic Song and Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Army from the Soviet Union (now the Alexandrov Russian Army Song and Dance Academic Ensemble from Russia).²

The Harbin Youth Palace is located in the Stalin park by the Songhua River (fig. 14-4). The construction with a concrete block structure in modernist style was finished on May 4, 1961. The Old Harbin Measuring & Cutting Tool Factory also belonged to one of the “156 projects” assisted by the Soviet Union, which was built in accordance with eclectic architecture. It is now used as a hotel (fig. 14-5).

1 “Finalist for the Architectural Creation Award - the Harbin Institute of Technology Main Building”, 2010, July 9. Available online: http://www.chinaasc.org/project/Show_article3A.aspx?id=573 (last access 2010, December 14).

2 “Past and present of the Harbin Workers Cultural Palace”. Available online: <http://z943631.blog.163.com/blog/static/16626521320106210563973/> (last access 2010, December 2).



Figure 14-1: The HIT main building³



Figure 14-2: The main building of Heilongjiang University⁴

3 “Finalist for the Architectural Creation Award - the Harbin Institute of Technology Main Building”, 2010, July 9.

4 “Dongbei diqu gaoxiao qian shi ming, zhe liang suo 985 gaoxiao shei shi di yi?” 东北地区高校前十名，这两所 985 高校谁是第一？ (The first ten higher education institutions



Figure 14-3: The Harbin Workers Cultural Palace
Photo taken by LI Suian



Figure 14-4: The Harbin Youth Palace
Photo taken by MEI Qingji



Figure 14-5: The Old Harbin Measuring & Cutting Tool Factory
Photo taken by LI Suian

of Dongbei region, which one of these two leading institutions is at the top?). Available online: <http://mini.eastday.com/a/180921204814246.html> (last access 2020, March 10).

Apart from Heilongjiang Province, there were several Russian style and Soviet style buildings, e.g. the “China-Soviet Friendship Building” and the “Palace of China-Soviet Friendship”, in Beijing 北京, Shanghai 上海, Guangzhou 广州, Changsha 长沙, Wuhan 武汉, and other main cities. All these buildings carry a symbolic representation, depicting the relation between China and Russia as solid as rock and the loftiness of friendship between their people. They are preserved to this day, offering the people of China a strong visual impact.

Among all, the Soviet Exhibition Hall in Beijing and the Sino-Soviet Friendship Building in Shanghai are the most famous buildings, of which Soviet architects participated in the design and construction (fig. 14-6, 14-7). Given the Romanesque and Gothic elements used on its exterior decoration, as well as the Russian classical architectural style for its main structure, the exterior of the Soviet Exhibition Hall (now Beijing Exhibition Hall) clearly follows that of the Admiralty Building in St. Petersburg (built in 1806–1823).

Due largely to its arresting and unique figure in Russian classical style, the Sino-Soviet Friendship Building (now Shanghai Exhibition Center) still stands out from numerous skyscrapers in Shanghai today. It is awarded as the “Top 10 Shanghai architecture” for the period from 1949–1989 and the golden prize of “Top 10 classical architecture selection for the 50th Anniversary of the PRC”.

It is common for China and other countries within the socialist community to build Russian style buildings and Soviet style buildings given the high prestige of the Soviet Union in the 1950s. The same can be said for the House of the Free Press (Casa Presei Libere) in the Romanian capital Bucharest, and the Palace of Culture and Science in the Polish capital Warsaw, the HIT Main Building in China is modelled after the design of the Main Building of Lomonosov State University in Moscow. It is a valid example of China being passionate about Soviet architectural art, imitating the famous Soviet Russian architecture, besides expressing China’s friendship with the Soviet Union and its adherence to the Soviet model.



Figure 14-6: The Soviet Exhibition Hall (now Beijing Exhibition Hall)⁵

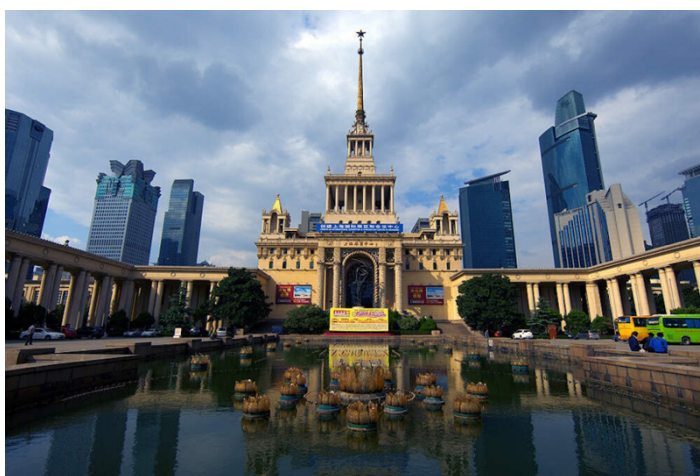


Figure 14-7: The Sino-Soviet Friendship Building
(now the Shanghai Exhibition Center)⁶

5 “Yi ge 30 wan pingfang mi zhangan – Beijing shi fou xuyao?” 一个 30 万平方米展馆—北京是否需要? (A 300,000 m² exhibition hall - is it needed in Beijing?), 2014, July 31. Available online: <http://news.expoon.com/c/20140731/9709.html> (last access 2019, December 10).

6 “Shanghai zhanlan zhongxin” 上海展览中心 (Shanghai Exhibition Center). Available online: http://dp.pconline.com.cn/sphoto/list_1876387.html (last access 2020, March 10).

The Harbinese Destruction of Russian Style Buildings During the Cultural Revolution

A 10-year cultural revolution began in China in the 1960s. Ironically, although this political storm was called “the Cultural Revolution”, what happened instead was actually a cultural destruction indeed. Foreign cultural heritage was damaged, but Chinese cultural heritage also suffered.

In this period, there was a trend of extremist thought in Chinese society (usually called “ultra-left” thought in Mainland China), which manifested itself in hostility toward intellectuals but also historical and cultural heritage. Extreme thoughts led to extreme behavior such as the persecution of intellectuals across the country, the destruction of scenic spots and historical sites, and the burning of books. The Confucius Cemetery in Qufu 曲阜, Shandong Province 山东省, was damaged; Confucius’ grave was dug out. The Red Guards also planned to demolish the imperial palace of numerous former Chinese emperors, the Forbidden City. However, the palace was fortunately spared from demolition thanks to the military protection dispatched by ZHOU Enlai 周恩来 (1898-1976).⁷

In such a social environment, the recognition of foreign cultural heritage happened to be seriously mistaken for which the remains of Russian architecture in China were treated as the symbol of colony and the disgrace to the nation. Sino-Soviet relations broke down in the early 1960s, and both states then engaged in confrontations with each other for almost 20 years; military clashes along the border also occurred. Under these circumstances, the Russian architecture had to bear another blame — the mark of “Tsarist Russia” (Тsarskaia Rossiia) and “Soviet revisionism”, and the proof of Russian invasion under Tsarist regime. Such prejudices led the Red Guards to speedily destroy any related architecture. The famous St. Nicholas Cathedral and the Holy Annunciation Church in Harbin were no exception.

Named after Saint Nicholas, the Harbin St. Nicholas Cathedral was designed by architect I.V. PODLEVSKIĭ of the Orthodox Church and built in 1900. The icon of the mother of God above the main entrance but also the frescoes inside the cathedral were painted by Russian artist D.I. GLUSHCHENKO. As the logs were red pines brought from Canada, the interior decorations were transported from Moscow including the relics, holy icons and the big bronze bell which was manufactured by a family factory in 1866 in Tyumen (Тiumen’), Russia. From its location

7 “‘Wenge’ shi po si jiu, weihe Gugong mei shou chongji?” ‘文革’时破四旧，为何故宫没受冲击? (Why did the Forbidden City survive the destruction caused by the Cultural Revolution and its breaking of the Four Olds?), 2011, September 2. Available online: <http://history.people.com.cn/GB/205396/15572764.html> (last access 2012, February 6).

on top of Qinjiagang 秦家岗 (now the Nangang district 南岗区) facing the Harbin Railway Station, this cathedral was a classic work of the Orthodox Church and a landmark in Harbin (fig. 14-8).

SONG Hui 宋挥, a photojournalist of Heilongjiang News and Photo Agency, was a witness of the Red Guards demolishing the cathedral. Here is his description of the situation at that time:

“On August 23, 1966 morning, my colleague Wan Jiyue 万继跃 and I accompanied the volleyball team of the Albanians in Harbin and held interviews with them for the upcoming match. The team was received by our province vice governor, Sun Xiqi 孙西岐. The Albanians lost three consecutive games to us, so we formed another team to play - the Federation of Trade Unions. They finally managed to defeat us once. It was about eleven o'clock after the match was over at the stadium in Nangang (across the street from the northeast of the St. Nicholas Cathedral). Back in the international travel agency, looking from the windowsill on the second floor we saw huge crowds of people at the “Lama Tai” 喇嘛台 (namely the St. Nicholas Cathedral). Two men and one woman even climbed to the top of it, chanting slogans and giving speeches with all the fervor. Many long placards of slogans were hanging around the cathedral, which mainly expressed the idea of destroying the signs of imperialist aggression against China, and the den of feudalism, capitalism, and revisionism. Many participants in the destruction were workers and students mainly from secondary schools and partly from colleges; no specific information was given about where exactly they worked or studied though. Everyone was wearing an armband. The Albanian guests were very interested, and the team leader went downstairs to watch. Some students approached him and asked whether he supported their revolutionary action. The leader expressed his support and voiced his opinion in a seemingly decent and beautiful manner. I went closer to the cathedral to take photos with my camera. A tall man suddenly came up. His name was Li 李, and he said he was a [second] year student of [the] mechanical department at Harbin Institute of Technology. A moment ago, they reportedly found someone from Denmark who did not support them, so they exposed his film and took him out. Worried that I was a special agent, Li was going to snatch my camera. I showed my press card and told him that I am a photojournalist accompanying the volleyball team from Albania. I said this was precious history material and were to be left to commemorate this revolutionary action. Li promised to let me freely take pictures but also gave me a special treatment: [f]our people each in the front and in the back led me into the cathedral. As I went inside, the students were busy smashing things and burning the scriptures or something. The smoke and dust inside were suffocating. I aimed my camera at them. Moving up and down I took two rolls in total with my Rollei camera (12 rolls each, 6x6). After the photos came out, I lent them to Li and a teenager wearing glasses called Chen 陈 from the Harbin Sport University to have a look. Then I came out from the inside and heard that the two men and the woman [just mentioned at the beginning] could not get down from the top of the cathedral. The vice governor Sun told the director of the public security bureau to send a fire

ladder to take them down. ... After a long weary day, at midnight, the whole cathedral collapsed with a loud crash. The situation outside the cathedral was shot by my colleague Wan until the scene was cleared. The leader of the entire demolition was Su Guangming 苏广铭 (the National Model Worker and worker at the Harbin Vehicle Factory); some other model workers were also involved.”⁸

DONG Jixiang 董吉祥, employee of the Harbin Railway Station, was just a junior high school student at that time. Hearing people shouting “remove the ‘Lama Tai’!”, he also went to take a glance. It was around eight or nine o’clock in the morning. A ceremony was held where the host announced and asked SU Guangming to give a speech to the crowd before they chanted slogans and began to tear down the cathedral (fig. 14-9, 14-10). DONG could see many in the crowd were workers. Considerable security measures were taken to prevent people from being hit by accident; ropes were put around the scene, and many people were keeping order. No one was allowed to go in and out as they liked.⁹

The misfortune of the St. Nicholas Cathedral also fell on the Holy Annunciation Church in Harbin (KHarbinskii blagoveshchenskii khram) a few years later (fig. 11). Built in 1900 and completed in May 1903, this is a Russian Orthodox church in Byzantine style located at the intersection of the Jingcha Street 警察街 (now Youyi Road 友谊路) and the Zhongguo Street 中国大街 (now Zhongyang Street 中央大街) in the Daoli District 道里区. The fire broke out on February 23, 1918 before it was rebuilt in the same year until 1919.

8 “Faxian zhi lü – xiaoshi de jianzhu” 发现之旅 – 消失的建筑 (Discovery journey — disappearing architecture). Available online: <http://jilu.cntv.cn/humhis/xiaoshidejianzhu/classpage/video/20100420/100004.shtml> (last access 2011, March 1). Cf. United States Central Intelligence Agency: “Albanian Visitor Lauds Red Guard Activities”. In: *Daily Report: Foreign Radio Broadcasts*, No. 166–170, Ohio: Ohio State University 1966, August 27.

9 FAN Zhengmei 范正美: “Zhui meng zhi si” 追梦之思 (Reflection on chasing dreams). In: FAN Zhengmei: *Qiu meng zhuisi* 秋梦追思 (Reminiscence of autumn dreams), Beijing: Higher Education Press 2007. DONG Shi 董时: “Ni gu la jiaotang bei hui jishi” 尼古拉教堂被毁纪实 (On-the-spot report of the destruction of Harbin St. Nicholas Cathedral). In: DONG Shi: *Lao zhaopian* 老照片 (The old photographs), Jinan: Shandong Pictorial Publishing House 1997, pp. 50–54.



Figure 14-8: St. Nicholas Cathedral in Harbin¹⁰

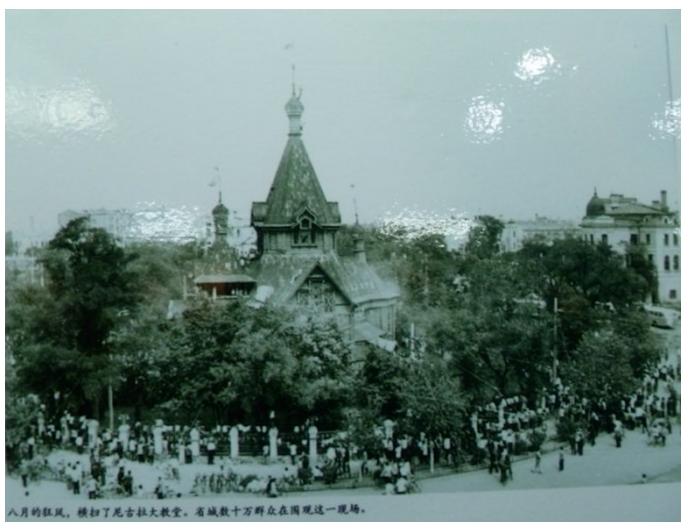


Figure 14-9: The Red Guards destroying the St. Nicholas Cathedral
Photo taken by WAN Jiyue

10 ZHOU Zongshu 周宗澍: “Manzhou heishou dang’ biji – ben shu zhong de Ha’erbin miaoxie” 《满洲黑手党》笔记——本书中的哈尔滨描写 (Notes of the Manchurian Mafia – Description of Harbin in this book), 2018, January 29. Available online: <https://book.douban.com/review/9111538/> (last access 2020, March 10).



Figure 14-10: The Red Guards destroying the St. Nicholas Cathedral
Photo taken by WAN Jiyue



Figure 14-11: The Blagoveshchenskaia Church
(the Russian name of the Holy Annunciation Church in Harbin)¹¹

¹¹ “Ha’erbin Bulagewiyinsikaya jiaotang” 哈尔滨布拉格维因斯卡娅教堂 (Blagoveshchenskaia Church in Harbin), 2011, February 19. Available online: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4dee14e30100okni.html (last access 2011, March 1).

The second reconstruction took place in 1930 and finished in 1941. With tremendous artistry and exquisite architecture, it was known in the Far East area as the most magnificent and spectacular church which had a capacity of 1,200 worshipers. As it was demolished in 1970, the structure of the church was said to be very sturdy that it took several times to dynamite but still it was not completely bombed out. The remaining part of the church can be found in the building of Harbin Architectural Designing Institute today.¹²

The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church (KHram v chest' Iverskoï ikony Bozhieĭ Materi) in Harbin was severely damaged as well, although it survived the demolition (fig. 14-12 to 14-14). It is a typical Russian Yaroslavl style (stil' iaroslavskikh tserkveĭ) multi-domed church. The architecture shows the pattern of the Greek cross and the prominent Russian Byzantine style. The five onion shaped domes stand tall and straight. The iron eaves are in the Art Nouveau style. The apses, arches, doors, and windows under the eaves are all Roman style. It is uniquely elegant and beautiful especially above the bell tower where the onion-domed pedestal and the Roman style apses are joined to complement each other. All that is left now is the orphanage, an outbuilding left with exquisite shapes and rich details, showing the bright colors of mosaics at the entrance of the building.

In 1927, under the initiative of archpriest Dimitriĭ VOZNESENSKIĭ and the liberal artist BARANOVA-POPOVA of the Kiev Conservatory, the Harbin Musical Training Institution was founded in the Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church to provide piano, violin, and vocal classes, and nurture numerous music talents. The church suffered severe damages during the Cultural Revolution. The onion-shaped domes on the church were pulled down. Other outbuildings vanished except the orphanage. After the Cultural Revolution, the internal structure and external walls were ruined; the church was surrounded with broken scaffolds.¹³

Although the St. Sophia's (Sofiĭa) Church in Harbin was not completely removed, it had almost fallen to pieces. It was once used as a warehouse and surrounded by messy buildings. Not only did the Russian buildings in Heilongjiang suffer, but also the Soviet Martyrs Cemetery in Lüshun 旅顺, Liaoning Province 辽宁省, was destroyed.

12 "Harbin Central Bookstore - Architectural Picture Exhibition of Harbin Churches". Available online: <http://shequ.kongfz.com/225766.html> (last access 2011, March 1).

13 XU Ping 徐平 and JIN Xin 金鑫: "Ha'erbin ni huifu bainian Sheng Yiwei'er jiaotang bing jiang pijian guangchang" 哈尔滨拟恢复百年圣伊维尔教堂并将辟建广场 (Harbin intends to restore the century old Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church and open a square), 2005, March 25. Available online: <http://heilongjiang.dbw.cn/system/2005/03/25/050006981.shtml> (last access 2011, March 1).



Figure 14-12: The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church¹⁴



Figure 14-13: The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church after its domes being removed¹⁵



Figure 14-14: The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church after its domes being removed¹⁶

14 “Jiu ying – Ha’erbin Sheng Yiwei’er jiaotang” 旧影 – 哈尔滨圣伊维尔教堂 (Old Photographs — The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church in Harbin), 2017, December 8. Available online: https://www.sohu.com/a/209175462_350855 (last access 2020, March 10).

15 2015, July 3. Available online: <https://touch.travel.qunar.com/comment/3818452?from=client> (last access 2020, March 10).

16 Ibid.

Buried in the cemetery were Soviet pilots who fought alongside the Chinese army during the Korean War. At times of the Sino-Soviet confrontation, vandalizing the cemetery became a way for the Chinese to vent their dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union.¹⁷ In summary, the period of the Cultural Revolution was a special one in which the construction of Russian style buildings ceased in Heilongjiang, and the remains of colonial Russian architecture were ignored, antagonized, and destroyed.

The Revival of Russian Architecture in the Era of Reform and Opening

Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, China entered a new historical period. The reformists under the core leader DENG Xiaoping 邓小平 led the ideological liberation movement and promoted the policy of Reform and Opening. Given that extreme ideologies over the course of the Cultural Revolution were now abandoned, ideologies and values of Chinese people changed significantly.

This new historical period sees the Harbinese no longer showing the hostility to colonial European architectural remains. LI Shuxiao 李述笑, a specialist in the history of Harbin, puts forward his viewpoint that European architectural remains in Harbin are the witness to colonial history rather than the criminal evidence of colonial history. To put it simply: the colonizers are guilty, but the European architecture left by them is not.

The Reform and Opening period brought huge progress to the thoughts and concepts of people from Harbin - realizing the aesthetic value of European architectural relics, but also recognizing that as appreciation and pursuit of beauty are human instincts, these relics are precious relics of human cultural heritage. The disregard and destruction of these monuments during the Cultural Revolution do not necessarily mean that people from Heilongjiang province had no spiritual demand for aesthetics at that time, but that this spiritual demand of the Chinese in general was suppressed and distorted by fanatical ideology in the course of the revolutionary movement. After the revolution ended, Chinese gradually recovered their normal aesthetic psychology. It is such a stark contrast of how the European buildings were looked at between the era of the Cultural Revolution and that of

17 “Yi ge Zhong Mei Su xinzhao bu xuan, yanshou le 50 nian de mimi” 一个中美苏心照不宣、严守了 50 年的秘密 (A secret strictly guarded for 50 years by tacit consensus among China, the U.S. and the Soviet Union), 2010, July 6. Available online: <http://news.yorkbbs.ca/world/2010-07/399028.html> (last access 2011, March 1).

DENG Xiaoping; in the former the Red Guards looked at them with hostility and hatred while in the latter the Harbinese looked at them with admiration and praise.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that commercial considerations are a huge driving force for the restoration and rebuilding of European architecture in Heilongjiang. The European architectural remains exclusive to Heilongjiang as a region adjacent to Russia are the unique tourism resources, which cannot be found in other provinces. Heilongjiang strives to develop tourism by highlighting the “European style” and “Russian atmosphere” as their own regional characteristics to enhance the popularity of their hometown and to attract domestic and foreign tourists. Heilongjiang’s largest city Harbin and the border city Manzhouli 满洲里 are particularly successful examples. In order to boost tourism, no effort has been spared to enrich the exotic atmosphere in these two cities. To be precise, it is to attach great importance to restoring and conserving the European architectural buildings as the remaining historical heritage while new buildings in European style are to be constructed. Apart from the various factors in advocating the revival of the foreign architecture in Heilongjiang, the following three approaches have been taken to fulfil the task.

Restoration and conservation of old European style architecture

Government officials are in charge of this approach as a project. This is not only applied to individual European style buildings, but also to the streets and the communities with many such buildings, which are entirely renovated and transformed into a lively European-esque hotspot.

Let’s take Harbin as an example. In order to preserve and make use of European architectural heritage, the Harbin municipal government has established the notion for more than 30 years: “not only to preserve historical buildings, but also to preserve the surroundings”; “not only to preserve the historical districts, but also to preserve the urban patterns, structures, and characteristics” [of these districts]. Following a set of main tasks has been also undertaken:

- I. To draw up protection laws and regulations for famous historical cities and accordingly to preserve historical and cultural heritage: approved by the municipal government, the “administrative measures for the protection of buildings, streets, and districts in Harbin city” were implemented on January 2, 1997. The “Regulations for Preserving Buildings and Areas of Harbin City” were also issued in 2001.

2. To clarify the scope of protection: after three times of approval by the municipal government, 247 buildings and 14 blocks were listed for protection and confirmed.
3. To map out a series of specific plans: There have been more than 200 plans that effectively guide the corresponding projects such as the master plan for the conservation of famous historical cities, the comprehensive renovation plan for plaza 1 and 2 of Zhongyang Street, and the reconstruction plans for the plaza 1 to 3 of the St. Sophia's Church Square.

The specific maintenance and conservation work can be divided into three stages:

1. From 1984 to 1996. A stage to conduct research, investigation, restoration, and maintenance of historical and cultural sites and protected architecture units.
2. From 1996 to 2001. Second stage to undertake comprehensive renovation in the surroundings of the historical and cultural sites and protected architectural buildings such as both sides of Zhongyang Street, Jingyu Second Street 靖宇二道街 in the Daowai 道外 area, and the St. Sophia's Church Square etc.; to remove the majority of buildings which were privately or improperly constructed during the 10 years of social unrest, in order to reproduce the historical features of the city.
3. From 2002 to the present. The third and final stage to work on the entire region. The pedestrian area of the Zhongyang Street, the Russian Style Town at Sun Island, and the blocks with Jewish architecture have already been well renovated.¹⁸

The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church and the St. Sophia's Church can be taken as examples to show the way Harbin preserves the Russian style architecture. With reference to information from GUO Changwu 郭长武,¹⁹ it helps shed light on how Harbin managed to refurbish the badly damaged Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church with a new look (fig. 14-15 to 14-20).

18 YU Binyang 俞滨洋: "Cong Ha'erbin lishi wenhua mingcheng baohu yu chengshi fuxing kan Huayuan jie lishi jiequ de guihua yu fazhan" 从哈尔滨历史文化名城保护与城市复兴看花园街历史街区的规划与发展 (Viewing the planning and development of historical blocks in Huayuan Street through the protection and revival of the Famous Historical and Cultural City Harbin). Available online: <http://www.upp.gov.cn/view/ghdt/article/013127.html> (last access 2011, March 1).

19 GUO Changwu 郭长武: "Chengshi de jiyi – Sheng Yiwei'er jiaotang" 城市的记忆 – 圣伊维尔教堂 (The memory of the city – the Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church), 2018, November 24. Available online: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_c0a5d5890102y7ip.html (last access 2019, February 1).



Figure 14-15: Restoration starting with clearance of the surrounding area – April 13, 2017²⁰



Figure 14-16: Restoration of the exterior finished first without the domes – October 25, 2017²¹

20 GUO Changwu: “Chengshi de jiyi – Sheng Yiwei’er jiaotang” (2018).

21 Ibid.



Figure 14-17: Seven wrought onion shaped domes waiting to be mounted²²

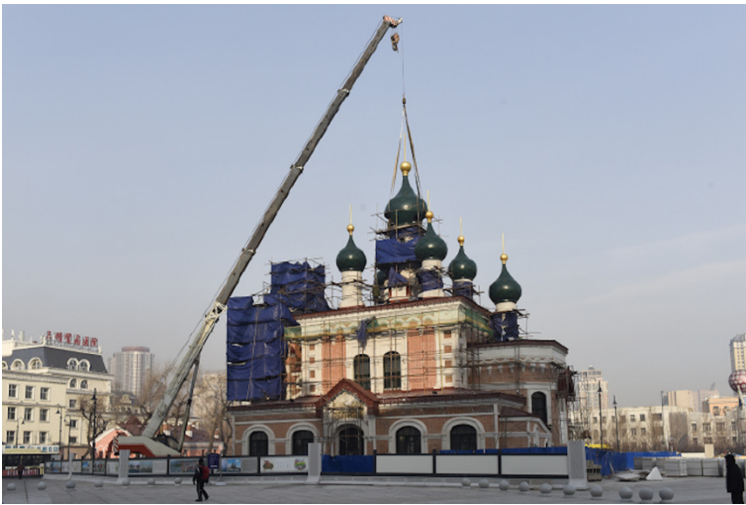


Figure 14-18: Mounting the domes on the church – December 6, 2017²³

22 Guo Changwu: “Chengshi de jiyi – Sheng Yiwei’er jiaotang” (2018).
23 Ibid.



Figure 14-19: The completely restored version of the Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church²⁴



Figure 14-20: The restored Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church and the newly built North Square of Harbin Railway Station²⁵

24 “Ha’erbin Sheng Yiwei’er jiaotang” 哈尔滨圣伊维尔教堂 (The Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church in Harbin), 2018, June 26. Available online: <https://www.douban.com/photos/photo/2526240762/> (last access 2019, June 24).

25 “Ha’erbin Sheng Yiwei’er da jiaotang” 哈尔滨圣伊维尔大教堂 (The Great Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church in Harbin), 2018, August 25. Available online: <https://weibo.com/ttarticle/p/show?id=2309404276882186052783> (last access 2019, June 24).

The restoration process of the St. Sophia's Church is similar to that of the Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church (fig. 14-21, 14-22). A tourist attraction with European characteristics was set up around the St. Sophia's Church as the core of the square. In addition of the above mentioned two churches, other churches in Harbin have also been renovated, such as the two neighboring ones on Dongdazhi Street 东大直街 shown below (fig. 14-23 to 14-28).

Two streets in Harbin have been transformed into Russian featured streets due to an extensive amount of Russian architecture being found there. One of them is the above-mentioned Zhongyang Street (known as Zhongguo Street (China Avenue) during the colonial period, fig. 14-29, 14-30). Thanks to the concentration of Russian architecture, this street is also called Harbin's "Arbat Street" 阿尔巴特街 (the famous old street in Moscow). Now it has been renovated into a charming pedestrian street of a high national standard.

The reconstruction of the Harbin Railway Station in recent years has reflected Harbin's persistence in maintaining the Russian featured look of the city (fig. 14-31 to 14-34). The main body of the former Harbin Railway Station is shown below. It was the design of architect Ignacy CYTOWICZ who adopted the Art Nouveau architectural style that was popular in Russia and Western Europe. The original "Russian feature" disappeared in 1988 after the Harbin Railway Station was rebuilt. Another round of reconstruction was launched in November 2015, with the goal of restoring its appearance to its earlier form to highlight its Slavic nature. Completed in November 2019, the renovated version as such has been deemed to be successful in relinking the historical context of Russian architecture with Russia-featured look of the city.

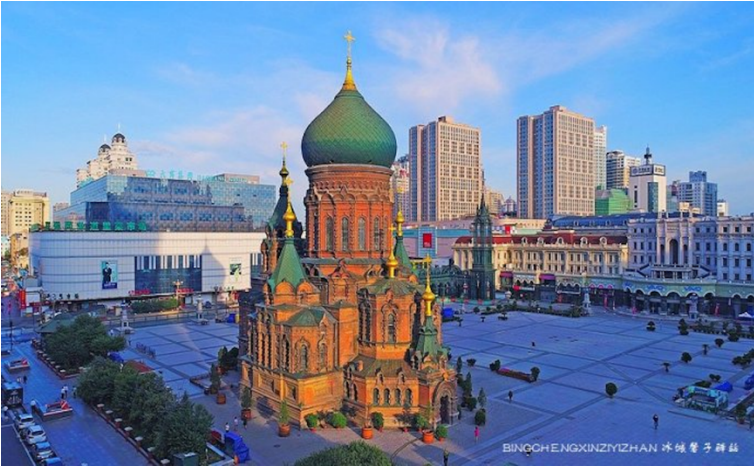


Figure 14-21: The restored version of the St. Sophia's Church
photo taken by ZHAO Tianhua



Figure 14-22: The night scene of St. Sophia's Church²⁶

26 "Ha'erbin – xuexiang – Yabuli – Malapali – menghuan jiayuan" 哈尔滨-雪乡-亚布力-马拉爬犁-梦幻家园 (Harbin – Snow Village – Yabuli – Horse sleigh - Dreamland). Available online: <https://www.tuniu.com/tour/210411883> (last access 2020, April 10).



Figure 14-23: Two neighboring churches on Dongdazhi Street
photo taken by LI Suian



Figures 14-24 and 14-25: Harbin Nangang Christian Church
photo taken by LI Suian



Figures 14-26 and 14-27: Church of the Intercession, Harbin
photo taken by Li Suian



Figure 14-28: Church of the Intercession – Subordinate
cemetery pavilion for prayers
photo taken by Li Suian



Figure 14-29: Zhongyang Street
photo taken by ZHAO Tianhua

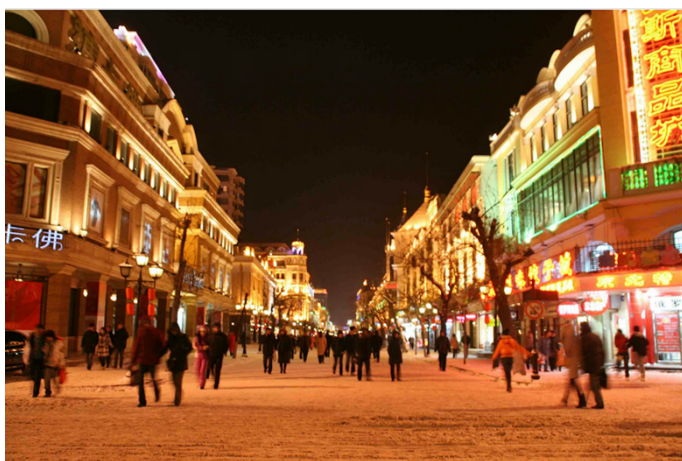


Figure 14-30: Night scene of Zhongyang Street²⁷

²⁷ Available online: <http://travel.qunar.com/travelbook/note/5148920> (last access 2020, April 10).



Figure 14-31: The main area of the former Harbin Railway Station²⁸



Figure 14-32: The Harbin Railway Station in 1988
photo taken by Li Suian

28 LUAN Deqian 栾德谦: “Ha Shi 68 sui Fu Xingzhong jia zhong zhencang liang zhang hanjian caise mingxin pian, bashi nian qian mingxin pian chongxian lao Ha zhan ‘fangrong’” 哈市 68 岁富兴家中珍藏两张罕见彩色明信片，八十年前明信片重现老哈站“芳容” (Two rare colored postcards have been collected at 68-year old Harbiner Fu Xingzhong’s home, the “beautiful countenance” of old Harbin station reappears on the eighty-year-old postcard). In: *Shenghuo bao* 生活报 (Life) no. 9, 2017, March 25. Available online: <http://epaper.hljnews.cn/shb/20170325/265194.html> (last access 2020, June 16).



Figure 14-33: The sketch of the reconstruction result presented at the Harbin Railway Station
photo taken by LI Suian



Figure 14-34: The Harbin Railway Station today
photo taken by LI Suian

New construction and reconstruction of Russian style buildings

The Harbinese have expressed their enthusiasm for European architecture not only through restoration and maintenance but also through largescale new constructions, especially over the past 20 years. Despite MA Zhongjun 马忠骏 as one of the Harbinese participants in the construction, it was extremely rare to see Harbinese-built European architecture in the early 20th century. At that time, Russian architecture was basically imitated and combined with Chinese architecture, and the “Chinese Baroque” style was thus produced. From the end of the century onwards, the Harbinese were able to construct typical Russia-style buildings on a scale much larger than before. It is no exaggeration to say that a huge trend has emerged in increasing Russian style buildings in Harbin over the past ten years.²⁹

On top of that at the leading role of the local government, some individuals managed the reconstruction very well in the current upsurge of Russian style buildings. During the colonial period, almost no one from Heilongjiang province had the skills to handle typical European architecture. However, there appeared a wealthy class in the beginning of the 21st century, and some of them put their investment in the reconstruction of Russian style buildings. Among all of them, HUANG Zuxiang 黄祖祥 was the most noticeable while the resort park, the Volga Manor, he invested in has earned an increasing reputation in both China and Russia.

Compared with the government, individuals like HUANG pay more attention to detail and quality when it comes to building Russian style architecture. The responsibility for the entire construction plan, design of specific buildings, and supervision of construction of the Volga Manor was all assigned to Russian architects. Dozens of exquisite and unconventional buildings have been built in the manor, forming a panoramic view and fully showing the splendiddness of Russian classical architecture. It is more than apt to call the Volga Manor a miniature museum of Russian classical architecture. Even more commendable is that some classical architectural buildings which long disappeared in Russia or became debris

29 The imitation of foreign architecture also happened in other regions of China. A government office building in Anhui resembles the White House in the USA typical medium-sized German town in a Bauhaus style was constructed in Anting Town, Shanghai, 2006. There stands the copied statue of GOETHE and SCHILLER. The romantic town Hallstatt, Austria's world cultural heritage, is also being copied in Guangdong Province. The town's mayor, Alexander SCHEUTZ, is discontent with the Chinese version of Hallstatt and has asked UNESCO for help. UNESCO officials said that the consent to copy in such a manner should in principle be obtained from the corresponding country. Cf. “De mei: Zhongguo mimi fuzhi Aodili xiao zhen” 德媒：中国秘密复制奥地利小镇 (German media: China secretly copies Austrian town), 2011, June 20. Available online <http://world.people.com.cn/GB/14946613.html>.

and ashes because of the brutal Red Guards have been added on the lands of the manor. Without Huang's efforts, these buildings would not have reappeared in the suburbs of Harbin.

The gate of the Volga Manor was modelled after that of a castle which no longer exists on the outskirts of Irkutsk, Russia (fig. 14-35, 14-36). In Nizhny Novgorod (Nizhniĭ Novgorod), the hometown of Soviet writer Maxim GORKY (Maksim GOR'KIĭ) in Russia, the exhibition hall of a jute mill was built in 1896 and demolished in 1925. After more than 80 years the jute mill has been reproduced in the Volga Manor, right at the reception center (fig. 14-37). The Volga Hotel in the manor was another reproduction of architectural work also originally built in Russia in 1896 and destroyed in 1925. The Pavlov Castle, tumbled down after two tumultuous centuries in Russia, is also modelled after and newly built here inside the resort park (fig. 14-38).

Among numerous European style buildings newly built in Harbin since the period of Reform and Opening, even some public facilities have also adopted European architecture, such as blood donation centers shown below. The public toilet in the Cultural Park has also been seen as one of the most special toilets in Harbin city. In a contemporary Harbin, you can see helmet shaped domes and Gothic spires on top of newly constructed buildings. They altogether constitute a perfect skyline of Harbin. Even several bus shelters and kiosks are featured with beautiful elements of European architecture as well to decorate the city (fig. 14-39 to 14-43).



Figure 14-35: The Volga Manor
photo taken by ZHAO Tianhua



Figure 14-36: Main gate of the Volga Manor³⁰

30 Available online: <http://www.mafengwo.cn/sales/2605839.html?cid=1030> (last access 2020, April 10).



Figure 14-37: Reception Center of the Volga Manor with
the rebuilt St. Nicholas Cathedral
photo taken by LI Suian



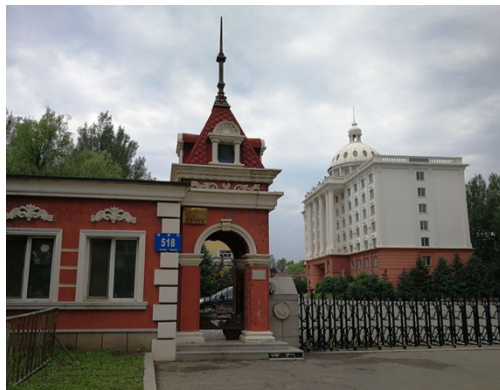
Figure 14-38: The newly built Pavlov Castle in the Volga Manor
photo taken by LI Suian



Figure 14-39: Blood donation center in European style in Harbin
photo taken by Li Suian



Figure 14-40: The public toilet in a European style in the Harbin Cultural Park
photo taken by Li Suian



Figures 14-41, 14-42 and 14-43: European design adopted on newly constructed buildings
photos taken by LI Suian

Using European architecture as the theme of painting and sculpture

Painters, ice sculptors, and photographers in Harbin use the preserved historical European architectural buildings as the subject matter, that is, the objects they paint, and reflect this in their artistic creations. The artistic genre of their works is thus incredibly special. For example, the historical building in the first picture below used to be the official residence of the director of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) Company, built in 1920 in the Art Nouveau style with a wood and brick structure (fig. 14-44, 14-45). The painter WANG Huandi 王焕堤 took this residential building as a model for his gouache painting (fig. 14-46 to 14-48).

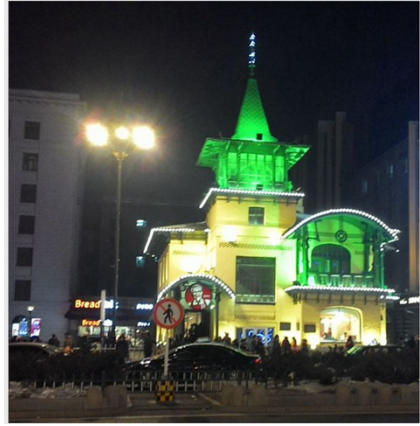
In his published collection *Ha'erbin shuicai biji*³¹ 哈尔滨水彩笔记 (My Gouaches of Harbin), the paintings depict European, and especially Russian, architecture. As an artist, he hopes to strengthen the diplomatic relationship between China and Russia by means of folk art instead of governmental diplomacy. In June 2019, he presented his collection as a gift to the Russian Ambassador to China Andrey Ivanovich DENISOV (Andrei Ivanovich DENISOV).

On the other hand, watercolor painter CHEN Song 陈松 hopes to reflect history through his painting. As he believes that buildings in various styles in Harbin are actually expressive of their times, he has recreated in his works the look of those buildings in earlier days.³² In his collection *Yi tiao jie yu yi zuo cheng* 一条街与一座城 (A historical street in a historical town), the first piece “Painting 001” is the Restaurant Miniatur³³ built in 1927 representing an Art Nouveau building with a wood and brick structure.

31 WANG Huandi 王焕堤: *Ha'erbin shuicai biji – xian hua shuicheng* 哈尔滨水彩笔记 - 闲画水城 (My Gouaches of Harbin – leisurely painting of a city in watercolor), Harbin: North Literature and Art Press 2019.

32 “Shuise de yongtan: CHEN Song ‘Yi tiao jie yu yi zuo cheng’ xilie shuicai zuopin” 水色的咏叹：陈松《一条街与一座城》系列水彩作品 (The sigh for the days gone by in watercolors: the series of watercolor pictures *A historical street in a historical town* by Chen Song), 2018, June 29. Available online: <https://www.xuehua.us/2018/06/29/%E6%B0%B4%E8%89%B2%E7%9A%84%E5%92%8F%E5%8F%B9%EF%BC%9A%E9%99%88%E6%9D%BE%E3%80%8A%E4%B8%80%E6%9D%A1%E8%A1%97%E4%B8%8E%E4%B8%80%E5%BA%A7%E5%9F%8E%E3%80%8B%E7%B3%BB%E5%88%97%E6%B0%B4%E5%BD%A9%E4%BD%9C/zh-hk/> (last access 2020, March 19).

33 Transliteration of Russian “Miniatur”. Cf. Nikolay Petrovich KRADIN (Nikolai Petrovich KRADIN): “From the history of Russian culture park creation in Harbin” (2013). Available online: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/8388098/np-kradin-kradin-nikolay-petrovich-doctor-of-architecture-pjau> (last access 2019, February 26).



Figures 14-44 and 14-45: The residence of the director of CER Company today
photo taken by LI Suian

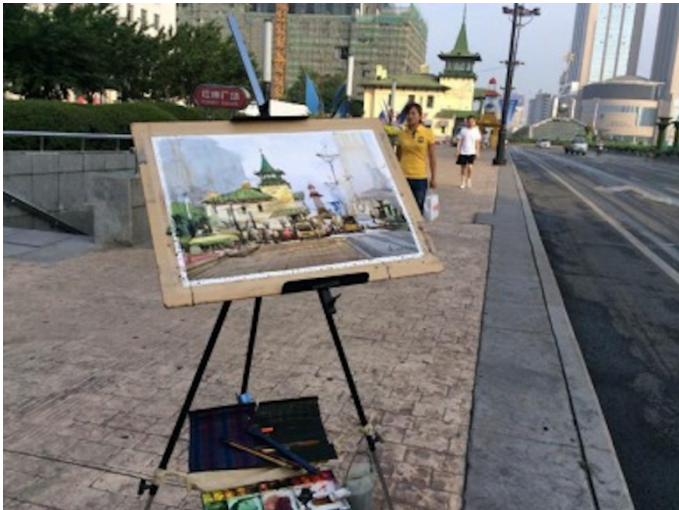


Figure 14-46: WANG Huandi's gouache painting using the residence
of the director of CER as the model
photo taken by WANG Huandi

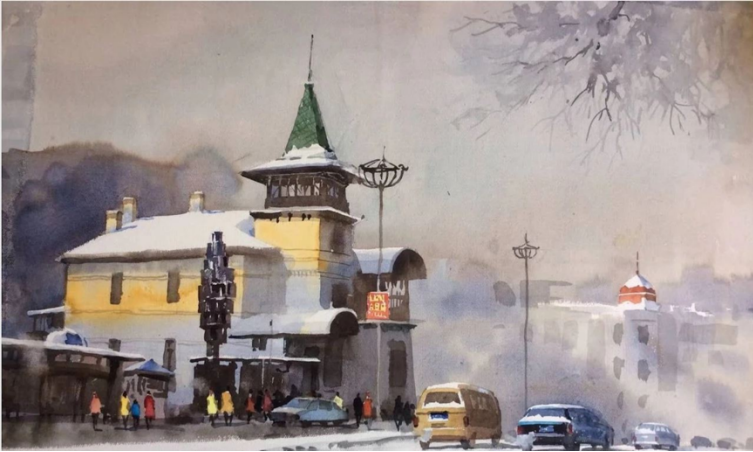


Figure 14-47: WANG Huandi's gouache using the residence of director of CER as the model
photo taken by WANG Huandi

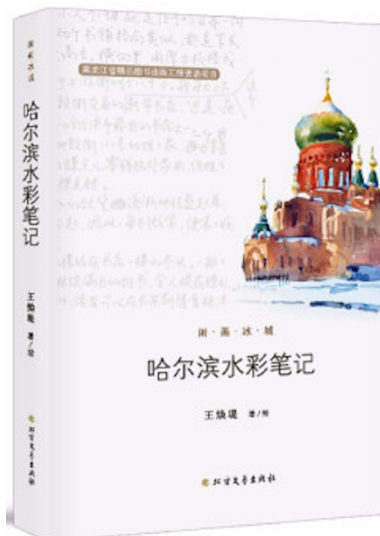


Figure 14-48: Cover of “My Gouaches of Harbin – leisurely painting of a city in watercolor”
photo taken by WANG Huandi

In 1927, the head office of the American Thriftoor Bank was set up at 3 Zhongyang Street, moved to Shanghai in 1934, and subsequently closed in 1935. This historical building was unfortunately removed at the end of the 20th century but is represented in “Painting 008”. Needless to say, CHEN Song has tried to paint the former look of the buildings based on historical photographs (fig. 14-49 to 14-51).

Unlike WANG Huandi’s and CHEN Song’s painting method, two other Harbinese artists, YOU Kunlun 由昆仑 and LI Gangfeng 黎纲峰, portray the Russian architecture in Harbin in a different way, with pen and ink drawings. The historical look of the aforementioned architectural buildings at Zhongyang street such as St. Sophia’s Church and the Restaurant Miniatur are finely drawn in detailed black and white tones by YOU Kunlun (fig. 14-52, 14-53). Another outstanding pen drawing by him is the “Wanguo Foreign Firm”, a historical building built in 1922 with a two-story concrete block structure in eclectic architectural style located at 130 Zhongyang Street (fig. 14-54). The pen and ink works by LI Gangfeng (also known as a sculptor) are as impressive as those by YOU Kunlun. Just take a look at his refined drawings of both the past and present of St. Nicholas Cathedral (fig. 14-55, 14-56). During the national struggle against the new coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV), LI presented a picture to advise Harbin citizens to wear masks with the picture of the St. Sophia’s Church in Harbin wearing a surgical mask and the slogan “Behave yourself, wear a mask!” (fig. 14-57).

Harbin, just as other cities in China, has launched a campaign called “creating a civilized city” to improve the image of the city. Moreover, the Harbin Municipal Government has also carried out publicity campaigns in order to promote the core values of socialism for instance. In the course of these campaigns, many posters and billboards have been produced, posted on the walls and the streets. The government has been used to adopting churches and other European architectural buildings as the cultural symbols of Harbin on the layout of these posters and billboards. Below are some examples:

Next to the picture of the St. Sophia’s Church, the slogan in green on the top right reads “Ni wo gong jian wenming Ha’erbin” 你我共建文明哈尔滨 (Let us create a civilized Harbin) with the catchphrase in the middle “Hongyang hexin jiazhiguan, chuangjian quanguo wenming cheng” 弘扬核心价值观，创建全国文明城市 (Promote core values; create a national civilized city) and the message at the bottom reads “Welcome to Harbin” (fig 14-58).

On the next poster (fig. 14-59), one can see the upper part of several churches. The slogan in purple reads “Langman dingxiang cheng, wenming Ha’erbin 浪漫丁香城，文明哈尔滨 (Romantic Lilac City; civilized Harbin). As lilac is the representative city flower of Harbin, Harbin is hence also renowned as the “Lilac City”.



Figures 14-49 and 14-50: A historical street in a historical town – Paintings 001 (left) and 008 (right)³⁴

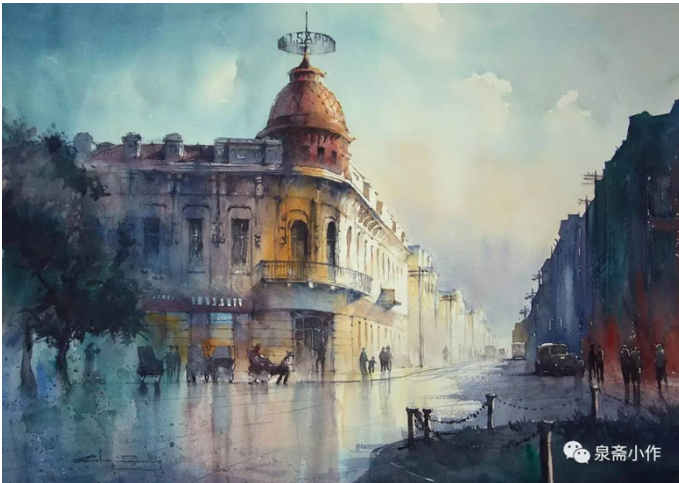


Figure 14-51: A historical street in a historical town – Painting 003

34 “The sigh for the days gone by in watercolours: the series of Gouaches in Yi tiao jie yu yi zuo cheng” 一条街与一座城 (A historical street in a historical town) by CHEN Song, 2017, May 10. Available online: http://www.sohu.com/a/139560923_713474 (last access 2019, November 2).



Figures 14-52 and 14-53: St. Sophia's Church by YOU Kunlun (left) and The Restaurant Miniatur by YOU Kunlun (right)



Figure 14-54: Wangguo Foreign Firm by YOU Kunlun



Figure 14-55: St. Nicholas Cathedral before demolition by LI Gangfeng



Figure 14-56: Rebuilt St. Nicholas Cathedral in the Volga Manor by LI Gangfeng



Figure 14-57: St. Sophia's Church wearing a surgical mask by LI Gangfeng



Figure 14-58: Poster with St. Sophia's Church
photo taken by LI Suian



Figure 14-59: Poster with the upper part of several historical churches
photo taken by LI Suian

The text at the top left corner of the following poster (fig. 14-60) reads “Yi sheng suo ai – wei geng hao de jiayuan xingdong” 一生所爱 – 为更好的家园行动 (Love for all generations; action for a better hometown). The building standing next to the church is the office building of the Songpu Foreign Firm in the colonial period at Zhongyang Street.

The slogan in the following left picture (fig. 14-61) reads “Da shu cong zhongzi kaishi, wenming cong yanqian zuo qi” 大树从种子开始，文明从眼前做起 (Huge trees grow from small seeds, a civilized city starts right before our eyes). The slogan in the right picture (fig. 14-62) reads: “Jingcai rensheng lu, wenming di yi bu” 精彩人生路，文明第一步 (A civilized city is the first step on the way to a wonderful life). The following billboards show the combination of St. Sophia’s Church and the face of the national hero LEI Feng (on the right, fig. 14-64) as well as the slogan (on the left, fig. 14-63) “Zai pan wenming chuangjian xin gaofeng, yingzao zhenxing fazhan hao huanjing 再攀文明创建新高峰，营造振兴发展好环境” (Let’s establish a new level of civilization; let’s build, revitalize and develop our environment in a good way).

Every winter, ice sculpture artists in Harbin treat European architecture as their most important source materials. Their ice sculptures present a fantasy art world across the backdrop of the dark night. Here are some pictures of the scenes (fig. 14-65 to 14-68).

Even the traditional screens made in Harbin are decorated with the European architectural buildings (fig. 14-69). Such screens usually belong to Chinese furniture. It used to provide concealment in a room but it has more recently become a highly decorative work of art. Playing the role of a decorative ornament to embellish the house and beautifully enhance the living room, the screens contain cultural features embedded in the shape, pattern, and text, which reflects the taste of the owner. The photograph below presents a good example of an elegant five panel folding screen made in Harbin featuring Chinese calligraphy and European architecture in a traditional Chinese painting.

From right to left, the first panel shows the title of the screen in golden print “Bing cheng yinxiang” 冰城印象 (Impression of the icy city – Harbin). The building on the second panel next to the title panel is the Italian building “Palazzo di Gibello-Socco” (Gibello-Socco Palace), which was the former Consulate of Italy in Harbin during the colonial period³⁵. The remaining three panels show the

35 ZHUANG Haowen 莊皓文: “Ha’erbin zui mei weilan yuan Yidali lingshiguan Jibieluo-Suoke dalou yi lei baohu weilan yi chaichu” 哈爾濱最美圍欄原義大利領事館基別洛索科大樓一類保護圍欄已拆除 (The most beautiful fence in Harbin, the original Italian Consulate Building, Palazzo di Gibello-Socco, has been demolished), 2019, September 1. Available online: <https://kknews.cc/world/nl69ae2.html> (last access 2020, March 19).

classical Russian buildings in Harbin which have already been mentioned: St. Sophia's Church (the middle panel), the Songpu Foreign Firm (the fourth panel) and St. Nicholas Cathedral (on the far left).



Figure 14-60: Poster with a European Church and Songpu Foreign Firm at the center
photo taken by LI Suian



Figures 14-61 and 14-62: Billboards with a slogan and church picture
photos taken by LI Suian



Figure 14-63 and 14-64: Billboards of pictorial combination with slogan (left) and Lei Feng (right) photos taken by Li Suian



Figures 14-65 and 14-66: Scenes of ice sculptures of European architecture³⁶

36 "Ha'erbin - Manzhouli - Haila'er - Hulunbei'er wu ri you. Yong zhe de lücheng." 哈尔滨-满洲里-海拉尔-呼伦贝尔 5 日游。勇者的旅程。(Harbin - Manjur - Hailar -



Figures 14-67 and 14-68: Scenes of ice sculptures of European architecture
photo taken by ZHAO Tianhua



Figure 14-69: Five panel folding screen made in Harbin
featuring European architecture
photo taken by CHEN Wenlong

Hulunbuir five-day travel. A trip for the brave.) Available online: <https://www.tuniu.com/tour/210062117> (last access 2020, April 4).

Harbinese cherishing European architecture through the nostalgia for the St. Nicholas Cathedral

At times of the Reform and Opening movement, there was strong condemnation in Harbin of what the Red Guards brutally did against the St. Nicholas Cathedral during the Cultural Revolution. Meanwhile, people in Harbin felt regretful and nostalgic for the disappearing architecture. Driven by these mixed feelings, the Harbinese took subsequent action.

First, the cathedral mindlessly torn down by the Red Guards has been recreated in the Volga Manor in a perfect replica (fig. 14-70). In order to perfect the recreation, Nikolay Petrovich KRADIN, PhD in architecture, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Construction Sciences (RAACS), professor of Architecture and the Urban Planning Department of Pacific Nation University (Khabarovsk), was invited to be the leading designer. Dr. KRADIN is an active participant in the restoration of Russian monuments as well.

As the original St. Nicholas Church was designed in the former Russian capital St. Petersburg, the relics, holy icons, and bronze bells inside the church were transported from Moscow to Harbin. HUANG Zuxiang, major investor in the Volga Manor wanted to see the replica designed, measured, and built in exactly the same way as the original cathedral. He, his team, and Dr. KRADIN cooperated to achieve this goal with several key methods. First, they imported the same kind of logs and timber used for the original cathedral from Russia. Secondly, they looked for and hired only those skilled craftsmen who are capable of the meticulous refined carving and conforming to blueprints of the original cathedral, especially the proportions. Third, they ordered most of the interior and decorative objects, be it bronze bells, holy icons, candlesticks etc., from Russia. Even the styles and colors of some of the tables and chairs were consistent with those of the original cathedral. All in all, they skipped no tiny detail, such as where nails are used and where not, what size and shape of the decorative patterns on the outer wall are taken and so forth, in order to recreate an architectural copy of the original one.³⁷

37 PENG Bo 彭博 and XU Jiandong 徐建东: “Ha Shi xiangfang ‘Fu’erjia zhuangyuan’ chongxian Eluosi jingdian jianzhu” 哈市香坊“伏尔加庄园”重现俄罗斯经典建筑 (Volga Manor in Harbin recreates Russian classical architecture). Available online: <http://house.focus.cn/newshtml/680494.html> (last access 2011, March 17). Cf. Nikolay Petrovich KRADIN: “From the history of Russian culture park creation in Harbin” (2013).



Figure 14-70: Newly built St. Nicholas Cathedral in the Volga Manor
photo taken by Li Suian



Figure 14-71 and 14-72: Miniature version of the St. Nicholas Cathedral
near the original location
photos taken by Li Suian



Figure 14-73: The carved drainage cover of the cathedral near Harbin West Railway Station Square
photo taken by LI Suian



Figures 14-74, 14-75 and 14-76: From left to right - the carved drainage cover opposite the North Theatre, near the Qiulin Company and opposite HIT Main Building
photo taken by LI Suian

It was a great dedication of both Chinese and Russian teams in the reconstructing of the historical Russian architecture on Chinese soil. Now that the resultant replica towers in front of them makes them feel gratified by and large, but they truly wanted the replica to leave nothing to be desired. Dr. KRADIN, in particular, continues to believe things could have been done better. After the completed reconstruction, this critical architecture expert took a long walk through the Volga Manor day after day, looking at the architectural buildings, scrutinizing them in silence and pondering over some tiny detail or another. One day, he found a fly in the ointment of the replica and said to a Chinese team member and colleague “The roof color of the cathedral is too light, that gets mixed up with the color of the sky.”³⁸

Another example to prove Harbin’s nostalgia for the St. Nicholas Cathedral can be found around 200 meters away from the original location of the cathedral. A miniature version has been built there as a street decoration, which is very eye-catching day and night. Furthermore, you can find carved images of the cathedral even on some drainage covers on the street (fig. 14-71 to 14-76).

European Architecture in Other Chinese Cities and Conclusion

Toward the end of the discussion, it is worth talking about the Chinese attitude toward another specific type of European architecture, that is, namely German architecture. The destruction European architecture suffered during the Cultural Revolution was not limited to Harbin but in fact everywhere in China. Just as the Red Guards and their fellow revolutionary groups in Harbin demolished the St. Nicholas Cathedral built by Russians, the Red Guards in Qingdao 青岛, Shandong Province, also tried to blow down a Catholic church built by Germans for the same reason: it represented a colony. The German church made the invasive colonization unforgettable and reminded Chinese people of the colonial disgrace. Consequently, attempts were made to pull down this church, and yet the violent demolition teams were unsuccessful because the church was too sturdy (fig. 14-77, 14-78).

38 GAO Mang 高莽: “Zhongguo you ge ‘Fu’erjia zhuangyuan” 中国有个“伏尔加庄园” (A “Volga Manor” in China). Available online: http://www.cass.net.cn/show_news.asp?ID=281239 (last access 2011, March 20).



Figure 14-77: The sturdy surviving Catholic church in Qingdao
photo taken by Li Suian



Figure 14-78: Marital couples taking pictures in front of the church
photo taken by Li Suian

Similar to the situation in Harbin, the attitude of people from Qingdao toward this church since the act of Reform and Opening has changed fundamentally. The Catholic church, like many other European architectural buildings left by the Germans, is treated as an important part of Chinese cultural heritage. Careful renovation has also been done to the church. It is now a sightseeing place in Qingdao as well as a popular spot for young marital couples.

Nevertheless, the significant architectural achievement of Germany in China, the Tianjin-Pukou Railway 津浦铁路 Jinan Station 济南站 (a.k.a. Jinan Old Railway Station) completed in 1909³⁹, did not survive the removal commanded by ignorant officials in 1992 (fig. 14-79). Furious at the unscrupulous officials of those days, people in Jinan now are all missing the old railway station and hoping to see this great German station building realized once again. NIU Changchun 牛长春, head officer of the Jinan Planning Bureau, states that “The Old Jinan Railway Station with a mixture of Gothic and eclectic architecture is hardly forgettable among Jinan citizens. Especially in recent years, a group of the NPC (National People’s Congress) representatives of Jinan, members of the CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference) and many Jinan residents have repeatedly proposed that the integration project of the new Jinan North Square Station should show the characteristics of the Old Jinan Railway Station. This is not only a cultural symbol of Jinan, but also a nostalgia complex of the entire Jinan [area]”.⁴⁰

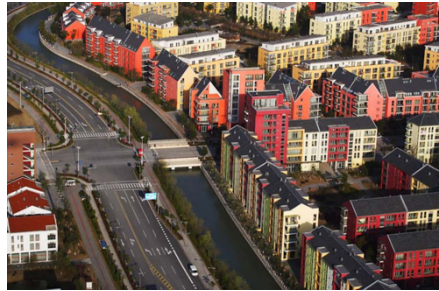
A typical medium sized German town in a Bauhaus style was constructed in Anting Town 安亭镇, Shanghai, 2006 (fig. 14-80, 14-81). There stands the copied statue of GOETHE and SCHILLER originally from Weimar, a city symbolizing German culture (fig. 14-82). The replica of this popular statue is also reported to be found in Cleveland, Milwaukee and San Francisco. The design of this new community in Shanghai was conducted by nearly a hundred German designers from more than ten German design firms including ASP, GMP, ABB, IFB, W & R, A + W, B + S, Zahn, Behnisch & Partner etc. Professor Albert SPEER, chief planner of the world expo Hannover, Germany in 2000, was the leader of this group of German designers. In 2010, he came to Anting New Town to inspect the results and commented: “This looks really like an authentic German town”.

39 Cf. Li Hongmei: “On the Architectural and Cultural Value of Jinan Old Railway Station”. In: *CS Canada* vol. 10, no. 6, 2014, pp. 158–161. DOI: 10.3968/5071.

40 Fu Xiaoying 付晓英: “Jinan lao huoche zhan: Juejue chaichu yu caoshuai fu jian” 济南老火车站: 决绝拆除与草率复建 (The Jinan Old Railway Station: Opposition to destruction and hasty reconstruction), 2013, September 6. Available online: http://qd.ifeng.com/xinwenzaobanche/detail_2013_09/06/1192265_0.shtml (last access 2019, February 6).



Figure 14-79: The Jinan Old Railway Station
photo taken by LU Shen



Figures 14-80, 14-81 and 14-82: Anting Town and the
copied statue of GOETHE and SCHILLER⁴¹

41 “Anting xinzhèn – Wanke Anting xinzhèn jiàgé” 安亭新鎮 – 萬科安亭新鎮價格 (Anting New Town – Prices for Vanke’s Anting New Town), 2019, January 1. Available online: <https://www4.freep.cn/id1836523.html> (last access 2019, June 24).

Looking at all the examples we have discussed in this article, one can confirm that European architecture has become a symbol of beauty in the eyes of the people of Harbin and an indispensable part of Harbinese culture. The buildings of this kind of architecture like the St. Sophia's Church, the Holy Iveron Icon Orthodox Church and so on have become landmarks in Harbin. The modified Harbinese attitude toward European architecture after the Reform and Opening period reflects the reformed spirit of the era in which China as a whole has been actively integrating into the world and enthusiastically learning from foreign culture. Such positive attitude and the actions taken in Harbin are the epitome of all people of China. To conclude, the spread of European architecture in Harbin, but also across the whole of China, embodies the twists and turns of how modern China has come to accept Western culture.

(translated from Chinese by Neshric TIMOTHY)

