Competing Visions of the Modern: Urban Transformation and Social Change of Changchun, 1932-1957

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley

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Abstract

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Examining the urban development and social change of Changchun during the period 1932-1957, this project covers three political regimes in Changchun (the Japanese, the Nationalist, and the Communist), and explores how political agendas operated and evolved as a local phenomenon in this city. I aim to reveal connections between the colonial past and socialist “present”. I also aim to reveal both the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism vis-à-vis Western colonialism from the perspective of the built environment, and the similarities and connections of urban construction between the colonial and socialist regime, despite antithetically propagandist banners, to unfold the shared value of anti-capitalist pursuit of exploring new visions of and different paths to the modern.

The first three chapters relate to colonial period (1932-1945), each exploring one facet of the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism in relation to Changchun’s urbanism. Chapter One deals with the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism as manifested in planning Changchun are the subject of the next chapter. Chapter Two charts out the plurality of architectural styles in the city, and analyzes the diversities, ambivalences, and ambiguities in the practice of statecraft and urban construction. Chapter Three gives a picture of how the downtown of Changchun was reconstructed to meet new political agenda when Socialist Realism took sway of aesthetic program. I also examine in this chapter the nature of Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo from the perspective of rituals and public pageantries, by using Yamamuro’s analogy of the client state to a hybrid beast of chimera.

The last two chapters examine Changchun’s development since 1945. Chapter Four pictures how the downtown of Changchun was reconstructed to meet new political agenda. Chapter Five explores Changchun’s urban expansion under Maoism: the construction of the First Automobile Works, a key project of Maoist industrialization. The purposes of the dissertation have been anchored by an overall objective to fill up this
vacancy from the perspective of urban construction and urban life.

This dissertation has unfolded a proliferation of competing formulations of the modern in Changchun’s urban history, some inspired by Western creations but more competing with Western concerns. In the competition for the dominance of the world, Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo and Chinese socialism both represented massive anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist qualities.
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Introduction

When I first went to Changchun in June 2004 as a graduate student of the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University, I was a member of a team that aimed to produce the twenty-year (2005-2025) strategic general plan for Changchun. We were introduced to local collaborators and were toured everywhere in the city. In order to complete the plan for architectural preservation as part of the larger project, I returned in August again, spending about forty days during that summer photographing and surveying old buildings, guided by two colleagues from Changchun’s Bureau of Cultural Artifacts and Changchun’s Institute of Urban Planning respectively. The three of us worked pleasantly, and I was impressed by the mild weather of early autumn in the Northeast. Despite Changchun’s relatively short history of approximately two hundred years, I was surprised to discover the high standard of her buildings and the diversity of architectural styles that had been overlooked for a long time.

Soon after my arrival in Changchun, I was attracted by the well-planned urban space. In local people’s words, the city is characterized by “wide avenues with rows of trees, circular plazas, red-roofed houses, and concrete structures.” Before I first came to Changchun (and the Northeast), I had only sporadic information about the city: I heard of the Japanese client state of Manchukuo and knew Changchun was its capital, also the last emperor of the Qing was enthroned there by the Japanese as a puppet emperor, and then the city was the base of automobile industry under Communism. However, except for very little literature, colonial legacies had sunken from the sight and memory of the people for decades, especially that colonial architecture and city planning that, as a form of visual politics, continue to function in present-day Changchun. As David Buck noted, the Chinese encyclopedia volume on architecture, city planning and gardening published in the late 1980s contained no entry on Manchukuo, its capital city or Japanese colonial architecture.1 It was not until 2000 when topics as such surfaced to public attention, partly because of the national policy to explore the Great West and Northeast, and they soon gained popularity in academia as well as in mass media. Fundamental change of research on Manchuria in general and Changchun in particular was underway when I was there in 2004.

As I gradually familiarized myself with the old buildings, I was intrigued by the historical evolution of the city and its built environment, which eventually became the subject of my graduate thesis filed in 2006. Most of the buildings we visited were built in the era of the puppet state of Manchukuo (1932-1945), but in order to balance 14-year Manchukuo era with the rest of Changchun’s urban history, the Tsinghua team tried hard to add other buildings to the list, especially those of the early Communist era, and drew the preservation limits for them in the general plan. As such, I became especially

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interested in how political agenda, first colonialism then socialism, operated and evolved as a local phenomenon in Changchun? And how the relationships between Chinese architecture and the history of China’s politics in the 20th century, having been first planned by the Japanese, and appropriated to different ideological effects in the People’s Republic of China in the early 1950s, are made manifest in Changchun’s urban history? Attempts to answering these central questions have undergirded my years as a doctoral student on the other side of the Pacific. This dissertation thus centers on Changchun City and discusses how the city was imagined, built and changed during the period between 1932 and 1957. 1932 was the year Changchun was made the capital city of Manchukuo and was renamed “Xinjing,” or New Capital, while 1957 was the ending year of Communist first Five-Year-Plan which marked the transformation of Changchun from a consumptive “capital city” to a socialist industrial city. In investigating Changchun’s urban history of that period which covered as many as four regimes (the Japanese colonial rule from 1932-1945, the Russian military 1945-1946, the Kuomintang 1946-1948, and the Communist since 1948), I found some interesting connections between the modernizing programs of the colonial times and different decolonizing efforts. Therefore, the timeframe of my dissertation moves beyond the collapse of Manchukuo in 1945 and ends in the First Five-Year Plan (1953-57) of the People’s Republic of China.

In a time when nation-states allegedly represented the will of the people, the Manchukuo regime claimed instead to represent the essence of Asian culture, hence an inevitable connection between the Japanese colonial construction and later socialist reconstruction of Changchun’s urban landscape. Over the course of the 1930s, Pan-Asianism as a matter of official policy came into increasingly sharper focus in Manchukuo, followed by the declaration of the “Greater east Asia Co-Prosperous Sphere” in 1940.

In the case of Changchun, like many other cities, the city (and state) building process involved the attempt to redefine and repackage the notion of “identity” and “modernity” under different regimes. As the title suggests, Changchun’s urban transformation epitomized competing forces of exploiting and developing, Western and Eastern, colonizing and decolonizing, into new visions of the modern as alternative to Western civilizational discourses. The tension between different definitions and practices of cultural identity and modernity is a significant theme that weaves throughout the dissertation. I aim to reveal both the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism vis-à-vis Western colonialism from the perspective of the built environment, and the similarities and connections of urban construction between the colonial and socialist regime, despite antithetically propagandist banners, to unfold the shared value of anti-capitalist pursuit of exploring new visions of and different paths to the modern.

In order to better understand the urban transformation during the colonial and early Communist years, I will first outline Changchun’s urban history since 1800 to the 1950s as the backdrop. In each phase of Changchun’s urban development after the
In the twentieth century, modernity found different forms in the urban construction of the city, revealing that modernity is not a constant and not secluded from the larger political and cultural milieu. Influenced by factors both indigenous and foreign, modernity is constantly reinvented to fit in new contexts and meet new needs.

I. A Brief History of Changchun until the 1950s

Changchun lies in the central plateau of the Northeast (dongbei), which region is also known in the West as Manchuria. Changchun was part of the property of Mongol princes and had been a forbidden land for Han Chinese immigrants until the late eighteenth century when such policy gradually got loosened. The first administrative office was set up in the south of present-day Changchun in 1800, to take care of increasing number of Han Chinese immigrant peasants. In the nineteenth century, Changchun remained a small trading town, except that the seat of the administrative office was moved to the north, a place local people called “Kuangchengzi” (broad walled town), due to frequent flood of Yitong River.

Changchun existed as only a small trading town in central Manchuria in the most part of the nineteenth century, and had established its status as a trading center for the collection of soybeans from central Manchuria – so much so that some nicknamed it the “Bean Capital”. The Sino-Russian Secret Treaty signed in 1896 allowed Russia to obtain personnel and police received extraterritorial jurisdiction along the to-be-built Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) across Manchuria. The Russians began the construction of a settlement for railway workers building, and a small Russian town, generally north-to-south rectangle, was built up around 1900 to the north of walled Changchun.

In the wake of the victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Japan gained control over the southern half of the railway and Changchun became the breaking point between the two halves of the line. The Japanese construction of the modern in Manchuria fell chiefly to the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR, or better known as Mantetsu), a quasi-official corporation created in the model of British Eastern India Company to take charge of modernizing programs to foster the growth of a modern society in Manchuria.

Having abandoned the existing Russian railway station and settlement, the Japanese built in Changchun their own railway settlement, or annexed land railway (Ch: fushudi; Jp: fuzokuchi). The SMR went about its colonial projects in Manchuria in a consciously modern fashion, one that expressed a Japanese colonial modernity that had much in common with other colonial powers. By providing appropriate physical

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4 Such as operated ports, shipping lines, warehouses, telegraphic communications, urban construction, and other endeavors.
infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, libraries, and auditoriums to the new section of Changchun, the Japanese were earnest to demonstrate their ability to run a modern city, an equal to the Western powers.

However, the SMR town was not the only venues demonstrating new built environments. Between SMR’s new towns and the already extant Chinese cities, new “commercial districts” (Ch: shangbudi; Jp: shofuchi) appeared. Here could be found Chinese creations of the modern, some inspired by Japanese creations and some competing with Japanese concerns.

It was during the 1920s that the rising tide of Chinese nationalism under the warlord regime of Zhang Zuoling and Zhang Xueliang clashed violently with Japan. As a result of a chain of conflicts, the Japanese Guandong Army (also known as Kwantung Army) occupied the whole Manchuria in 1931 in the aftermath of Manchurian Incident (known also as “9/18 Incident”), and a puppet state of Manchukuo was established the next year.

Much of Manchukuo’s modernity was evident in its new capital, Xinjing (also Hsinking; Jp: Shinkyo), a much more ambitious project based on the railway town and Chinese city at Changchun. Its very name – “New Capital” – connoted a new vision of modernity. This was not to be a capital named for its geographical location like Beijing (northern capital), Nanjing (southern capital), or Tokyo (eastern capital). Manchukuo’s capital was to be a modern capital, one with plazas, parks, public transportation, and the other amenities commonly found in a modern urban setting. Above all, the previous fragmented urban sections were incorporated into a larger plan, so called the 1932 Capital Plan, and various urban construction were initiated under the banner of Wangdaoism (the way of the king, or the kingly way), the specific form of pan-Asianism in Manchukuo that embraced ethnic harmony and Confucian values such as filial piety and loyalty.

While the SMR defined modernity almost materialistically – doubtless assuming that from material changes would emerge modern mentalities – Manchukuo authorities focused on morality, despite however superficiality. Manchukuo’s basic ideological principle was the “Kingly Way”, a concept that supposedly reinvigorated Chinese tradition by making it more appropriate for a modern nation state. In this light, the culture of Manchukuo was to surpass that of the SMR era because it created an improved kind of national subject, one supposedly less beholden to the capitalist West and more in tune with Asian societies and traditions. The construction and urban life of capital Changchun will be a main subject of this dissertation.

Indeed, when the Pacific War broke out in 1941 most of the urban construction had ceased and resources were drained to the war. When the Japanese were defeated in August 1945, the city was taken over by the Russian Red Army, and shortly it once again became the battle field of Chinese Civil War. The deterioration of the city continued into the early 1950s when Manchuria was the home front for the Korean War.

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(1950-1953). However, the Commission of the first Five-Year-Plan selected the outskirts of Changchun for the site of the First Automobile Works, which effectually changed the image of the city into a socialist industrial base. In the meantime, fundamental changes occurred in the middle and late 1950s when a number of public buildings were erected in downtown Changchun to house administrative, educational and cultural facilities, as well as the renaming and reusing of many colonial buildings for similar purposes. It is since then that Changchun has been recalled as China’s famous “Auto City,” “Movie City,” and “City of Science, Technology and Culture,” instead of a colonial capital city that bore infamous stigma, although some of colonial legacies are still functioning today.

II. Two Overarching Themes of the Dissertation

It is apparent that the study of architecture and city planning is a complex cultural formation that is part of a larger discursive field by which it is influenced and in which it actively participates. I intend to discuss below two interrelating themes that embrace the main issues of this research: the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism, and the relationship of the colonial and socialist rule as manifested in the built environment. I argue that Japanese pan-Asian ideology in Manchukuo is central to understand physical construction and cannot be simply dismissed as a camouflage of the brutality of Japanese imperialism. I also argue the built environment of Changchun offers visual interpretation to the idiosyncracies of Japanese colonial practices in Manchukuo and Communist modernizing projects, and uncovers connections between the two.

Japanese Imperialism in Manchukuo

The emergence of anti-imperialist nationalism represented one of the most important conditions for the transformation of imperialism. In China, the nationalist sentiment was, in Liang Qichao’s words, awakened in the aftermath of China’s defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and attained a new height the May 4th movement in 1919. Although the May 4th movement was mainly directed against Japanese imperialism, ironically the Japanese also began to develop an anti-imperialist discourse – the discourse of anti-Western pan-Asianism. That the Western powers refused to recognize Japan as an equal in the Washington Naval Conference and passed anti-Asian immigration laws in the US in the early 1920s disillusioned many Japanese. Under the slogan of “Returning to Asia,” experimentation with new colonial development also characterized the 1920s in Korea as a response to the March 1919 nationalist uprisings. The new strategy emerged as “Cultural Rule” that marked a shift in colonial cultural policy from the one based on coercion to the one based on pacification. 

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which was an emblem of “Japan-Korea cooperation” and gathered “the spirit of the Far East” in order to prosper on its own.  

The new Japanese politics of colony became full-fledged in Manchukuo after its establishment in 1932. As Prasenjit Duara has observed, the Japanese exploitation of colonies was accompanied by increases in productive capacity. For example, the accumulated per capita British investment in India and Japanese investment in Korea were eight dollars and thirty-eight dollars respectively in 1938. It was the fact that massive investments and resources flowed into the client states thus breaching the classical dualism between an industrialized metropole and a colony focused on the primary sector that Prasenjit Duara calls for the idea of “new imperialism” that differs from “theories of neocolonialism, which continue to emphasize underdevelopment and traditional forms of exploitation.” And Manchukuo was the very first full-blown instance of this new imperialist practice that heralded the Soviet Eastern bloc and the American buildup of her empire since the 1950s.

In Manchukuo, while the Japanese maintained ultimate control of their dependencies through military subordination, they created and maintained a somewhat legally sovereign nation-state with political and economic structures that resembled their own. Indeed, the Japanese made considerable economic investments in Manchuria, even while exploiting these regions, and attended to the modernization of institutions and identities. Unlike previous imperialist experiences, the imperialist formation of Manchukuo was not founded in principle upon the sustained differentiation between rulers and ruled that characterized most colonial formations. Moreover, Manchukuo became a model for later additions to the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a formation of regional bloc that promoted economic autarky as a means to gain global supremacy.

In the rhetoric of Japanese imperialism in Manchukuo, an anti-Western pan-Asian sentiment was ubiquitous. As Cemil Aydin argues, pan-Islamic and pan-Asian thought was the product of the legitimacy crisis of a single, globalized, international system, and the content of both these alternative visions of world order was shaped by the challenge to the intellectual justifications of late-nineteenth-century imperialism, especially through discourses of Orientalism and racism. Pan-Asianism had emerged as an ideology incorporating Japan’s role as both victim and victimizer in the imperialist game, and the ideology permitted the Japanese the conceit that it was

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10 Ibid. In Duara’s words, “Although the U. S. is hardly a regional power any longer, as a global empire it employs … a vast system of ‘political and military vassalage’ and fosters a ‘functional specialization between the imperial and vassal (nation) states….’ In this respect, the post-war US represents the apogee of the new imperialism.”
obliged to lead the Asian nations against the West in a “Holy War”.  

In Manchukuo, pan-Asianism came to play an important role in maintaining both the militaristic character of the regime and its claim to legitimacy based upon adherence to the “kingly way.” “Kingly way” first appeared in *The Mencius* as an ideal form of governance in classic old times. This conception in relation to pan-Asianism came out from a famous 1924 speech of Sun Yat-sen, the father of modern China, in Kobe, Japan, entitled “Greater Asianism” (*Da Yaxiyazhuyi*). Sun warned the Japanese that Japan would have to choose between becoming “a willing handmaiden of Western imperialism or the great bastion of East Asia’s kingly way”. Sun Yat-sen’s conception of pan-Asianism was also centered on Confucian virtues of the “kingly way” (Ch: Wangdao; Jp: *odo*), an ideal that has long been used to designate virtuous governance based in benevolence, an approach contrasted with despotic rulership (Ch: *badao*; Jp: *hado*). Therefore, Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing was installed as the benevolent king, though he soon realized he was merely a puppet head of the state while the Japanese military was the real owner of the client state. In Manchukuo’s official accounts, not only the Western powers but previous warlord Zhang regime and Kuomintang regime were dismissed as despotic rulers. Thus Manchukuo’s ideology contained elements of a return to East Asian traditions which self-consciously embedded an opposition to the modern Western or Westernized state.

It was reported that when the construction of the colonial capital was underway, Zheng Xiaoxu, Manchukuo’s first Prime Minster and an ardent Confucian advocate, gave main streets “proper and beautiful names” based on Confucian ideals. For example, both the most important street of the city and the civic center were named after Confucian ideal of *datong*, or Great Unity, and the name of the main street of Manchukuo’s administrative quarter was Shuntian (following the way of heaven), while its terminal vista plaza was Anmin (bringing peace to the people), showing the principle of the Kingly Way was a comprehensive concept based primarily on ethnic harmony, “following the way of heaven and bringing peace to the people” (*shuntian anmin*), and the principle of people as the basis of the state.

In addition to an Asian unity to overcome Western colonialism and materialism, the Japanese highlighted in Manchukuo the cultural and racial continuity with themselves, and Japanese pan-Asianism emphasized a cultural independence and the revival of indigenous tradition and ethics. In this vein, the content of a new modern was itemized,

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12 The root of pan-Asianism went back to Meiji era when the Sinocentric world order collapsed and a number of political associations were formed, advocating the ideal of “solidarity with Asia” and the notion of “raising Asia” (*ko A*) or “developing Asia” (*shin A*), to align with other Asian nations to establish a new world order under Japanese leadership. For the historical development of pan-Asianism, see Sven Saaler. “Pan-Asianism in modern Japanese History”. In Sven Saaler and Victor Koschmann ed. *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

13 See Sun Yat-sen. Sun spelt out the key political category of wangdao or the way of the ethical monarchs and peaceful rulership, opposed to the unethical and violent way (*badao*) of the hegemon (the way of the West), calling for a return to the previous Sinocentric world order.

such as frugality and diligence, filial piety (xiao), loyalty to monarch (zhong), chastity of widowed women (jie), etc. The state of Manchukuo embodied the pursuit of the ideal of a moral state.

Duara notes the fluidity and vulnerability of the status of the dependent state under the new imperialism, “in part because the rapidly changing demands of global competition could, depending upon the circumstances”\(^{15}\). The status of Manchukuo over its fifteen-year history gradually shifted, in official rhetoric, from that of an independent nation-state - with Japan conceived as a friendly country (Ch. youbang) and ally (Ch. mengbang) - to that of a dependent kinsman (Ch. qinbang), “the eldest son of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere”. In Confucian language of “family state,” the ethics of paternalism, such as children must obey their father and the younger obey the elder, should be practiced on a larger scale in national political life.

In investigating Japanese colonial rule in Manchukuo, the colonial built environment is an effective vehicle to observe how Japanese colonialism related to and differed from “classical” Western colonialism. The state makers of Manchukuo impugned the despotic and predatory nature of Western modernity, insisting the superiority of Confucian values and Asiatic moral systems emphasizing ethical responsibilities. In order to distinguish themselves from Western colonialism in the 1930s, the Japanese consciously looked into indigenous sources for inspiration and legitimacy from the very outset. In planning colonial Changchun, the siting and orientation of the emperor’s palace became a significant issue that defined the form of the city. Despite higher construction cost, the realized scheme located the palace at the center of the city, and a due north-south axis was closely observed as in traditional practices of Chinese capital building.

This juxtaposition of indigenous and Western elements in buildings was also practiced in British, French, Italian or Dutch colonies, but it was the preserved and temporarily-built buildings for ritual purposes that made Xinjing distinct, and indigenous traditions were revitalized and made an essential part of national political life. The most distinct example of this kind is the preservation of xiao zi fen (Temple of Dutiful Child), the symbolic representation of Confucian ideal of familial piety. Despite its intrusion into the newly-planned central avenue, xiao zi fen was, after rounds of debates, eventually preserved by the authority and was widely circulated for Manchukuo’s new modern of a moral state. (Fig 1)

So far, I can conclude that, in the light of theories of New Imperialism, though Manchukuo as a client state was militarily subordinate to the metropole, it was not in the Japanese colonial interest to have Manchukuo economically or institutionally backward. Through spatial interpretation of Manchukuo’s state ideology of the Kingly Way, the pattern of planning Changchun differed not only from classical colonial urban planning,

as the absence of obvious racial segregation to resonate the ideal of ethnic harmony; but differed from theories of high modernism, which emphasizes the zealous pursuit of rationality and efficiency in spite of existing cultural layers. The built environment thus serves a useful vehicle to study the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo.

In colonial Changchun, the dominant architectural style for governmental buildings, *Shin-A* (Developing-Asia) style (Fig 2), displays striking characteristics such as large sloping roofs on a functional plan. However, an aesthetic pluralism was omnipresent in the colonial capital, involving various ethnic, religious and cultural representations. In terms of architectural multiplicity, Changchun had an established tradition of incorporating different sources since the turn of the twentieth century, as Neo-classicism, Art Nouveau, bungalow, and eclecticism were all introduced in Changchun to compete with each other for modernization. However, when Changchun was made the capital of Manchukuo in 1932, indigenous elements were enhanced to match Japan’s exterior policy of pan-Asianism and increasing hostility against the West. A commentator suggested the construction activities in the new capital were helping to renovate not only architectural forms but civilization itself.  

I will try to prove in the following chapters that the ideals of the Kingly Way, such as cultural independence, ethnic harmony, and economic autarky, respect for the king, etc. all found distinct demonstration in the colonial built environment.

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**Fig 1** *Xiaozifen* at Datong Street with the railway station in the far background. Note the intrusion of the temple into the street.  

**Fig 2** Hall of State Council, the typical building in Developing Asia style.  

The Manchukuo’s national capital was designed as the chief exhibit displaying the magnanimous and progressive character of Japan’s new leadership amongst Asian races. Its creators had hoped the model could be transferred back to Japan to purify the

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political and social corruptions. Gwendolyn Wright has characterized a similar mode among French colonial planners in which they saw colonies “as a terrain for working out solutions to some of the political, social, and aesthetic problems that plagued France.”

Years of rapid construction had attracted numerous talented Japanese architects to the nascent state of Manchukuo, amongst whom Maekawa Kunio, Sakakura Junzo, and Tange Kenzo, pioneers of post-war Japanese modernism, were most well-known. With the transfer of personnel and experiences, Manchukuo’s new capital had fulfilled its role as what may be called “an experiment yard”.

**Contradiction, Competition, and Correlation of Japanese Colonialism and Chinese Socialism**

The central contradiction of Japanese colonial rule in Manchukuo was that the Japanese tended to represent themselves as victims of Western imperialism and racism while building their own empire through the discourse of continuous culture and race as well as progressive science and technology. Much of the dissertation has been devoted to examining the discrepancies between the idealist ideology of the Kingly Way and the realities of urban life in the city. For example, based on the multiracial tenet of “harmony of the five races” (gozoku kyowai), Manchukuo’s highest educational institution, Nation Founding University (Kendai), aimed to promote ethnic harmony amongst students and “pioneering leaders in the establishment of a moral world.” The propagandized stipulations of campus life and spatial arrangement of dorms were said to enhance brotherhood of students of various ethnicities in Manchuria. However, discrimination of treatment such as food was generally practiced, and secret anti-Japanese associations questioning Japanese rulership in Manchuria were popular among young Chinese students, an indicator that the self-consciously egalitarian Kendai was unable to live up to its declared creed.

Inhabitants in the city were organized into neighborhood units (Jp: tonali gumi, Ch: ling zu), and were required to practice air defense and other sorts of military drills, in addition to tree planting, voluntary labor, etc. The sources of support were managed, maintained, and mobilized by the Concordia Association (Ch. xiehehui, J. kyowakai) under the control of the Japanese military, which effectively turned Changchun into a huge military camp under close surveillance.

Yamamuro Shin’ichi in his famous work *Manchuria under Japanese Dominion* suggests that Manzhouguo is represented well by the mythical chimera, a beast with the head of a lion, the body of a sheep, and the tail of a dragon. “The lion is comparable to the Guandong Army, the sheep is the state of the emperor system, and the dragon the

20 ZFGB, 1939, Jianguo daxue ling (Decree on the establishment of national founding university)
Manchukuo’s state pageantries and rituals, such as the coronation and worshipping rituals of Confucius (replaced by worshipping Ameterasu after 1937), indicated the ambiguities and conflicts among various forces at work in Manchukuo. It is explicit that the Japanese Guandong Army was above all the real master of the clumsy beast of chimera. As a result, the reality upholding the “harmony” of races in Manchukuo emerged in the form of expelling the heterogenous elements to enforce obedience at gunpoint. In this way, the divorce from political reality has made it manifest that Confucian ideals of virtuous governance and the Kingly Way become “little more than opportunistic idiom of Japanese aggression.”

Though never explicitly elaborated in Manchukuo’s official accounts, the principle of the Kingly Way can be summarized as a comprehensive concept based primarily on following the way of heaven and bringing peace to the people (shuntian anmin), people as the basis of the state (minben), and ethnic harmony. The three principles, which as Yamamuro astutely understands, bore significance as each was to be the antithesis of the Three Principles of the People (sanmin zhuyi). Thus, one can easily see that the principle of the Kingly Way was used as a countermeasure against the Three Principles as well as against the Nationalist government and Republic of China which were dedicated to them.

Competition of the visions and practices of the modern was an underlining theme throughout the Manchukuo era. The self-contradictory stance of Manchukuo’s pan-Asian ideology and Japan’s paternal practices was a characteristic of Manchukuo from its birth, and they constantly competed with, rather than complemented, one another within the colonial state. As Bill Sewell notes, because in Manchukuo the Japanese were vastly inferior numerically to Chinese and technologically inferior to Soviet and American military power, they resorted to whatever means they could to protect their economic and emotional investments on the continent. The fear of an imminent war and anxiety of legitimacy crisis in Manchukuo had normalized Japanese competition with the West, the Nationalists, and the Communists.

Ironically, this competition mindset saw interesting continuities from the colonial buildup to the socialist reconstruction in the built environment, despite totally different ideologies and propagandistic banners of the two regimes.

First, in Manchukuo, Japanese statesmen enshrined pan-Asianism as the spiritual alternative to excessive Western materialism and individualism. Moreover, Asiatic moralities were celebrated in governmental discourse to emphasize ethical

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responsibilities as alternatives to capitalism whose mercantile consequences grievously plagued in the home islands of Japan. As a result, Changchun’s city plan of 1932 aimed to “prevent the incursion of capitalist land speculation” and put all commercial activities under the colonial authorities. Besides, preparing for war with the Soviet Union, the Manchukuoan economy was run in a quasi-Soviet manner through state planning. For example, the Manchukuo government had initiated two Five-Year-Plans for industrial development in 1932 and 1938 respectively, and the construction for the capital was also carried out under a Five-Year Plan of Capital Construction, ended with a spectacular commemorate in 1937.

On the other hand, city planning in socialist countries was integral with the overall economic planning of the state, based on the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. Socialist planning, as some scholars argue, can be termed “active planning,” that is, the active projection of economic activities (allocation of resources, distribution of income, transportation, etc.), to correct the ills inherited from the era of capitalism and to develop a new pattern for the city to embrace the ideal of socialist egalitarianism.\(^\text{26}\) Upon the establishment of the PRC, the Soviet sent numerous technicians and officials to help China building socialism. Under Chinese socialism, the predominant role of state and its ownership of means of production including land preclude capitalist speculation, and ideally all part of the city should be standardized with no sharp distinction as in capitalist cities. A shared anti-capitalist ideology sanctioned a centralized economic and political system for both regimes.

Second, the role of the city’s center to serve principle public buildings and monuments as well as the site to provide room for parading troops and for gathering to celebrate state holidays. In planning colonial Changchun, as the general principles of socialist planning dictates, the distinctive character of the conception of the city’s center was that it functioned not as an area of retail concentration but as the political, cultural, and administrative center. In socialist reconstruction of pre-capitalist city’s center, normally the only commercial elements added were “the hotel for tourists, the single department store, and perhaps a restaurant and coffee shop”.

When the central Datong Plaza was erected in the early 1930s, it was surrounded by Manchuko’s institutional buildings: the central bank, the Capital Construction Bureau office, municipal police office, and the office of telegraph and communication. After the Communist took over Changchun, its name was changed into “Stalin Plaza,” and a hotel and the People’s Palace of Culture were added to complement the complex. The central plaza as a significant exhibit of national pride and its place in grand political movement and state building however remained. (Fig.) The absence of commerce in the center was evident in both colonial and socialist times, a radical departure from the capitalist concept of central business district, while commerce was alienated because land costs and goods prices were uniform under authoritarian regimes.

Third, the neighborhood unit in colonial Changchun provided another source for the socialist invention of work unit, or danwei, among other traditional and recent practices. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, the theory of neighborhood unit planning of the late twenties and relevant practice such as that of Redburn was soon introduced to capital Changchun, as implemented in governmental housing districts in the back of Manchukuo’s offices. On a larger scale, the whole urban residents were organized into neighborhood units (ling zu) under the surveillance of Concordia Association to maintain social stability and make preparations for war. The similar mechanism, so-called bao-jia system, had been practiced for thousand years in rural China, and had been recently revived by the Kuomintang to replant to urban areas.27 Various forms of neighborhood unit, either Chinese bao-jia or Japanese ling zu, resonates to the Confucian ideal of corporal life (shouwang xiangzhu).

During the first years of the PRC, the socialist regime reorganized the society into self-sufficient communities affiliated to production or administrative units, hence the specific danwei system. An elaborate division of the city into self-contained units was a common practice in all socialist countries, and basic tool of socialist planners to create “urban uniformity” was carried out by neighborhood unit. However, as scholars have noted, Chinese danwei had played a much more active role in stabilization of the society and mobilization of the mass, partly due to similar cultural practices in the long past. In Changchun, socialist danwei did not only come from new urban communities of socialist institutions, but saw smooth transformation of well-built neighborhood units in relation to renewed offices, both of which means promoted urbanization and modernization under Maoism.

Moreover, the decentralization of commerce in the Manchukuo era fit well into the socialist restructuring of city planning which demanded an equal distribution of social resources. When Changchun as colonial capital was built up, commercial buildings were unusually restrained both in small number and modest style, and few were seen along the most important Datong Street, while another widest street, Shuntian Street, was exclusively for governmental use. An absence of concentration of commercial buildings along vital arteries of the city is somewhat deviated from the normal practice in Western colonies where commerce and consumption were of paramount concern. However, commercial decentralization in Changchun eased socialist transformation targeting at standardization of all parts of the city.

Fourth, the unique architectural forms of the Manchukuo era featured by traditional elements were modified and applied in the attempts to achieve socialist goals. At the time, imported Stalinist monuments and socialist realism played a central role in new construction in Chinese cities. Realism and tradition were two of the fundamental principles of socialist realism, which called for “socialist content and national form”.

Theorists dismissed modernism as a product of capitalism, and instead looked into recent practices of Chinese Revival and Japanese Developing Asian buildings for inspiration. (Fig 3) The past cannot be erased or escaped.

In Changchun, most striking of all was the massive Workers’ Palace of Culture facing the central plaza. In the PRC, like all other socialist countries, workers became the leading class, while in Changchun the most important break from the colonial regime was the replacement of ethnicity with class. The Cultural Palace was built as a symbol of the new political order in socialist realism with tiled gabled-roof and omnipresent traditional decorations. On the one hand, socialism gave priority to Chinese nationalism; on the other hand, there were not plenty of technical means available to choose from, a fact that simplified sloping roofs and concrete brackets were used again in the late 1950s, despite a nation-wide political movement of 1955 to criticize construction waste due to imitating traditional motifs.

Rebuilding downtown Changchun abounded with colonial legacies put great challenge to socialist planners, as the new regime intended to eliminate the residues of infamous history of Manchukuo. Techniques were developed for this purpose, such as renaming of streets, changing functions of colonial buildings, complimenting the colonial planning rather than demolition at significant sites of the city, etc. However, the most effective decolonizing effort to erase Changchun’s colonial past was the construction of a large modern factory community in the southwestern outskirts of the city, i.e., the First Automobile Works and housing compounds for its workers. Tens of thousands of worker were brought to Changchun due to the automobile factory and a huge industrial town was built in the outskirts of Changchun which was freed of heavy industry because of its political status. In this way, Changchun was eventually transformed from a colonial cancer of consumption to a prosperous industrial center under Chinese socialism. However, the application of traditional elements in factory buildings became the most infamous instance of extravagance at that time.28

In building and rebuilding Changchun, both the Japanese and the Communists

28 See Chapter Five.
envisioned their utopian schemes to transform the society in new directions through alterations to the built environment. It was the ideology of competing and overcoming the West to achieve the modern that activated bold experiment. And it was the driving force to explore something new and different from the West stipulated the connection between different modernizers through various modernizing projects, hence similarities of their approaches to the modern.

In the meantime, the cultural attitude of “the modern” did not tally with its notion in the West: in Manchukuo era, Asiatic virtues such as frugality and filial piety were the key part of Japanese modernizing project, while in the PRC standardization and urban uniformity became the norm of socialist planning. The competition of Manchukuo with the West eventually turned into Japanese fifteen-year war (1931-1945), while the socialist competition with capitalism was an essential part of a much prolonged Cold War. In Changchun, it is explicit that the socialist built environment was tangibly affected by the inherited spatial arrangements as well as previous architectural and planning practices, and intangibly by the cultural attitudes of identity and the modern.

The references of the dissertation come from three groups of literature. The first is historical research on Japan’s expansion into Manchuria and the theorization of Japanese pan-Asianism. For example, Eri Hotta situated Manchukuo in a larger background of Japan’s fifteen-year war that called for a propagandistic banner to unify Asian countries. Historians have found rapture between Japanese pan-Asian ideology and brutal colonial realities in Manchukuo, amongst whom Yamamuro likens the client state as a hybrid beast of chimera. These books do not have an explicit focus on spatial construction, but provide a solid background for the study of Changchun’s built environment as the study of architecture and city planning is a complex cultural formation that is part of a larger discursive field by which it is influenced and in which it actively participates.

The second camp of literature involves those on colonial urban history in general and Japanese colonial cities in particular. Books on British, French, Dutch, Italian colonialism inform the structure and issues to be studied of this project, while I have

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become aware of the departure of Japanese colonial rule as manifested in spatial arrangement from classical colonial model. Japanese architectural historian Koshizawa Akira produced his book on the city planning of Manchurian cities and later on colonial Changchun specifically. 31 As Bill Sewell remarks, Koshizawa’s developmental approach and narrow range of sources, mostly Mantetsu and Manchukuo official materials, failed to provide a full picture of colonial life in the city. 32 Nishizawa Yasuhiko, on the other hand, used a broader range of sources and insisted that imperialism was a system that encompassed almost every aspect of Japanese society in Manchuria, and architecture was no exception. 33

Two dissertations on the built environment of colonial Changchun are of particular relevance to my own project. 34 Tucker details how Changchun’s planning, parks, political and cultural facilities emerged in the larger context of state and nation building of Manchukuo. Making a good use of two contemporary journals, Manchurian Architectural Magazine (manshu kenchiku zashin) and Urban Problem (toshi mondei), Sewell’s work concerns more on Changchun’s spatial dimension under Japanese colonialism (1905-1945) and the evolution of idea of modernity. Both works end in the year of 1945.

Third, I consult different sources on political and urban life of Changchun published in Japanese and Chinese. For colonial era, the mammoth 144-volume Manchukuo’s Governmental Bulletins, zhengfu gongbao, along with two widely circulated official newspapers of Shengjing Daily (shengjing shibao) and Datong News (datong bao), provide official view of major issues in Manchukuo and its capital. Other contemporary publications offer a more comprehensive understanding of Manchukuo’s culture, religion, ethnic policy and so forth, such as the Mantetsu-edited Contemporary Manchuria, an English bimonthly magazine that discussed latest political events and the theories of the Kingly Way, while Japanese commemorative brochures are informative for critical events like the Decennial ceremonies in 1942.

For the communist era, I mainly depend on my fieldwork in the archives and libraries in Changchun. City planning and architectural blueprints of the First Automobile Works are kept in the factory’s own archives, where people were earnest to tell visitors the stories of the factory they knew. Wenshi ziliao (Accounts of Culture and History) is an oral-history-style collection of personal experiences supplementary to gazetteers, which many urban historians have found useful. I rely on Wenshi ziliao to restore a vivid picture of urban life in Changchun from Manchukuo to the PRC. 35

33 Nishizawa Yasuhiko. manshu toshi monogatari (Manchuria’s cities). Tokyo: kawade shobo shinsha, 1996
35 For example, there are special volumes of Changchun’s wenshi ziliao on topics such as Nation Founding University (Kendai), colonial Changchun’s industry and commerce, the establishment of the First Automobile Works, and stories
In investigating the urban history of Changchun, I put a conscious focus on the built environment to explore the ways it represents and conditions different ideological effects on societies and cultures in Changchun. Examining urban development and social change of Changchun during the period 1932-1957, I aim to trace how the urban region of present-day Changchun came into formation during these culminating years of political turbulence, and reveal connections between the colonial past and socialist “present”.

Following an introduction, the dissertation goes into five chapters. The first three chapters relate to colonial period (1932-1945), each exploring one facet of the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism in relation to Changchun’s urbanism. The idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism as manifested in planning Changchun are the subject of the next chapter. Two cases, the siting of the palace and the preservation of xiaozifen (Temple of a Dutiful Child) will be examined to demonstrate how Japanese colonialism differed from its Western counterpart.

Chapter Two charts out the plurality of architectural styles in the city, and analyzes the diversities, ambivalences, and ambiguities in the practice of statecraft and urban construction. I argue that the limitations of Manchukuo’s egalitarian claim and Japan’s paternalism competed with, rather than complemented, one another.

Chapter Three focuses on cultural practices in Changchun under Japanese colonial rule, which delineates three state ceremonies: the coronation, worshipping Confucius before 1937, and worshipping Japanese deity, Amaterasu, as the founding Goddess after 1937. I propose that Japan’s ideological stance towards the rest of Asia was crystallized through ceremonies, exhibitions, and expositions.

The last two chapters examine the transitional years (1945-1948) and Changchun under Chinese socialism. Chapter Four gives a picture of how the downtown of Changchun was reconstructed to meet new political agenda when Socialist Realism took sway of aesthetic program. Chapter Five further explores Changchun’s urban expansion under Maoism: the construction of the First Automobile Works, a key project of Maoist industrialization. I argue that although Maoist socialism aimed to reorganize Chinese society at large and indeed presented many unique aspects of the new life, the socialist inventions were yet restricted and diluted by the past. I conclude the dissertation with some general reflections on the study of Manchukuo and ongoing preservation in the city.
Chapter 1  Idiosyncratic Colonialism: Planning Changchun under the Kingly Way

Following Japan’s military occupation of the whole Manchuria in 1931 (9/18 Manchuria Incident) and the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo the next year, Changchun was made the capital city of the colonial state and renamed Xinjing (“new capital,” Japanese: Shinkyo). Like many Chinese port cities at the time, Changchun was territorially divided by ethnical sovereign as a collage city before 1931, while the integral planning in 1932 then incorporated all the older elements of Changchun into the site of massive construction and magnificent monuments as a Japanese colonial capital city.

Backed by the limited access to economic and governmental sources in the colonial regimes, the progressive capital planning was put into reality in a short period of time in the First Five-Year Capital Construction (1933-37). Being the most magnificent exhibit of the Japanese colonial order in Manchuria, most part of the city was built from scratch. It was because of the scale and speed of colonial Changchun’s urban construction that scholars such as David Buck refer the modernizing project as a high modernist scheme, wherein “no compromise is made with the preexisting city, the new cityscape completely supplants its predecessor.”

However, I will probe into the detail of the 1932 Changchun Planning and argue that it differed from high modernism when situated in the 1930s in the lieu of Japanese pan-Asianism. The process of decision making and implantation of the 1932 planning demonstrated the idiosyncratic nature of Japanese colonialism. With this in mind, this chapter attempts to disassemble the relevant parts of the 1932 planning, identify urban life in relation to the nation-building ideals of Manchukuo, and reassemble them as components of Changchun’s urban history under Japanese colonial rule.

This chapter begins with a brief review of the formation of Manchukuo, which was transmogrified from a military annexation to a nominally independent state, reflecting competing thoughts and forces at work in Manchukuo’s early state building. The state-founding (Japanese: kengoku, Chinese: jian guo) principles, the Kingly Way, deserve an elaboration and is a key to understand the idiosyncrasies of the 1932 Planning and Japanese colonialism as a whole.

Ambitiously building Changchun as a modern city to justify the colonial rule and Japan’s leadership in Asia, the Japanese constantly consulted indigenous sources to compete with, and overcome, the Western notion of modernity. Two examples merit a close examination: the siting of the imperial palace and the preservation of a Taoist temple (xiaozifen) along the most important and magnificent street. Indeed, the contradictory stance of Manchukuo’s pan-Asian ideology and Japan’s paternal practices was a characteristic of Manchukuo from its birth, and urban life in the city vividly revealed the rupture between smoke screen of the Kingly Way and realities. I conclude

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that building Manchukuo’s capital signifies not only a military conquest, but also a vast socio-politico-cultural project that represented Japan’s modern efficiency expressed in the forms of Manchukuo’s capital city.

I. Manchukuo and Its Nation-Founding Ideals

In 1905, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War on Manchurian soil in the power struggle over Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. Manchuria, with an area of one million square kilometers, was a fertile plain and rich in natural resources, particularly coal, copper and iron. In 1906, following the victory, Japan took over the southern half of Manchuria with Changchun the dividing point, and rebuilt the former Russian rail network into the South Manchurian Railway (SMR, or Mantetsu), which became the key to the Japanese imperial plan. In 1919, Japanese troops deployed to guard the leased territory were restructured into the Guandong Army (GDA), which played a decisive role in Manchuria and later the formation and operation of Manchukuo.

According to the American China scholar Owen Lattimore, in the 1920s it was China and Japan which faced off on radically opposed sides in Manchuria-Mongolia, the area he dubbed a “cradle of conflict.” The policies the Japanese government undertook there were an effort to separate Manchuria and Mongolia as a special zone from China’s proper. The Chinese nationalist movement which rapidly arose following the May Fourth Movement aimed at bringing about national unity domestically and recovering national sovereignty vis-à-vis the foreign powers. The Japanese managed to (re)build towns along the railway after Russian model, and pursued political and commercial goals in the region where the Chinese, Russians, the Americans and British had their own interests. However, it was during the 1920s that the rising tide of Chinese nationalism under the warlord regime of Zhang Zuoling and Zhang Xueliang clashed violently with Japan. As a result of a chain of conflicts, the Japanese GDA occupied the whole Manchuria in 1931 in the aftermath of Manchurian Incident, and a puppet state of Manchukuo was established the next year.

Despite their initial military victory in the 1931 Manchurian Incident, however, faced with the ardent opposition of Army Central in Japan to the plan of annexation, the GDA had to move to an alternative for the establishment of an independent state. On March 1, 1932 the government of Manchukuo declared it an independent nation and Puyi, the last emperor of the late Qing dynasty, was installed as chief executive (zhizheng). On March 14, Changchun, which had been designated as the capital, was renamed Xinjing, and Manchukuo made its debut for the first time.

Multiple ideologues contributed to the formation of nation-founding principles
of Manchukuo. Pan-Asian ideologues in the Japanese military such as Ishikawa Kanji comprised a pan-Asian ideology born of the earlier effort to reject capitalist and proletarian influence which had flooded into Manchuria. In addition to an Asian unity to overcome Western colonialism and imperialism, pan-Asianism emphasized a cultural independence and indigenous tradition. Besides, the state of Manchukuo embodied the pursuit of the ideal of a moral state. In this vein, the content of a new modern should be itemized, such as frugality and diligence, filial piety (xiao), loyalty to monarch (zhong), ethnic harmony, and agrarian autarky. It was this state-founding ideal that indicated in a straightforward way how Manchukuo envisioned itself and its own internal logic.

Another camp of Manchukuo’s ideologues consisted of Chinese monarchists. Of whom Zheng Xiaoxu, an ardent Confucianist and the first Prime Minister (1932-1935) of Manchukuo, was representative. In Zheng’s opinion, Manchukuo was founded as a state for morality and justice, main components of the Kingly Way. After appointed as the Premier, Zheng also established a Ministry of Culture and Education and esteemed moral education in curriculum. He issued a State Council order of March 25, 1932, calling for “the use and teaching of the Four Books and Classic of Filial Piety in school curricula and the honoring of Confucian morality”. However, as it became clear later, Zheng’s position that Manchukuo to be open to both Japan and the West with equal opportunity conflicted with Japanese imperial interests, and he was deposed by the GDA and confined to his death in 1938.

Since its establishment, the Manchukuo has made the Kingly Way (Japanese: odo rakudo, Chinese: wangdao) its ideal, and expressed it at every opportunity. The three principles of the Kingly Way were a comprehensive concept based primarily on ethnic harmony, “following the way of heaven and bringing peace to the people” (shun tian an min), and the principle of people as the basis of the state. It was seen as a new approach as Manchukuo emerged in the chaotic face of contemporary world politics.

On the principle of ethnic harmony (Ch: minzu xiehe; Jp: minzoku kyowa), the State-Founding Proclamation issued on the day of the establishment of Manchukuo, stated:

As a whole, the people who now reside on the terrain of the new state make no distinctions among races or between superiors and inferiors. In addition to the Han, Manchu, and Mongolian peoples who were originally from this region and the Japanese and Korean -- that is, people from other lands--those who wish to reside here in perpetuity shall enjoy equal treatment. The rights they receive

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9 The content of the Kingly Way was never explicitly expressed in any governmental document, but scholars and officials had touched on its manifestations in political and everyday life on many occasions. For example, see the analysis of Jin-ichi Yano. “Wangao – the Kingly Way”. Manchoukuo Yearbook. Published by Toa-keiza chosakyoku (East Asiatic Economic Investigation Bureau). Tokyo: Uchiyamashita-cho, kojimachi-ku, 1934.
Chapter 1 Planning Colonial Changchun

shall be protected and shall not be violated in the least.\textsuperscript{10}

This is the basis for the principle of ethnic harmony or the harmony of the five peoples whereby the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Japanese, and Korean ethnic groups would plan for coexistence and co-prosperity all together and equally. Manchukuo was thus an attempt at the formation of a multiethnic society in which peoples of different races, languages, customs, and values coexisted and in which Japan was involved on a large scale for the first time in its history.

In the meantime, the State-Founding Proclamation stated:

\textit{In implementing the principle of the Kingly Way, we enable all the peoples within the borders to ascend the spring dais in great splendor [namely, rule will be peaceful and beneficent]. Protecting the eternal honor of East Asia, we are about to create a model for the government of the world}\textsuperscript{11}.

Thus, the text was energetically propagandizing the fact that not only did the significance of the establishment of Manchukuo bring an ideal realm of peace and happiness to the thirty million inhabitants of Manchuria-Mongolia, but it broke through the impasse reached by Western governments with a spirit of East Asian political morality and offered a model state altogether new in human history.

However, as Dr. Yano Jin’ichi, a contemporary scholar in Manchukuo, observed, it was surprising that as to the explanation of what was meant by the administration of the Kingly Way, no general interpretation had yet been made in the name of Manchukuo. But the features of the Kingly Way, a political system that has long been considered ideal in China, may be recognized by comparing it with the polities of Western countries that developed on the basis of the principle of legal administration and capitalism. Jin’ichi has illustrated some eight differences between the Western Despotic Way and Eastern Kingly Way, meriting the prominent status of moral and cultural education, spiritual happiness, anti-individualism and mutualism and so forth in the administration of the Kingly Way.\textsuperscript{12} Contained in this construction was the idea that the warlords, the KMT, and their Western counterparts all ruled in the way of despots or hegemons, and by contrast the government of Manchukuo brought peace, harmony and a paradise of the Kingly Way to its people. To represent moral and technological superiority of the administration of the Kingly Way, the Japanese urged to build the capital city of Manchukuo. And indeed, as Bill Sewell has noted, much of the modern envisioned in Manchukuo was embodied in its capital city.\textsuperscript{13}

II. Planning the Modern Capital of Manchukuo

Being a nexus of the political and economic conflicts among Chinese, Russians

\textsuperscript{10} ZFGB; Yamamuro Shin’ichi. Joshua Fogel (tran.). \textit{Manchuria under Japanese Dominion}. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p.89
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Jin-ichi Yano. “Wantao – the Kingly Way”. \textit{Manchoukuo Yearbook}. Published by Toa-keiza chosakyoku (East Asiatic Economic Investigation Bureau). Tokyo: Uchiyamashita-cho, kojimachi-ku, 1934
and Japanese, Changchun was spatially fragmented as a collage city before 1931. (Fig. 1-1) After Changchun was made the capital of Manchukuo, this new capital was designed to reflect the vision, power, and non-western modernity of the Japanese-controlled state of Manchukuo. All the urban sectors before 1932 – the Russian railway town, the Japanese railway settlement, the old walled city, and Chinese commercial district – were incorporated into a grandiose plan. (Fig. 1-2)

From the viewpoint of decision-making, it was apparent that the Guandong Army dominated the Changchun planning. Professor Sano Riki (also known as Sano Toshikata), a prominent architect of the time in Japan, was appointed to advise the Guandong Army in the principles of planning and architecture. Guided by the planning policy formulated by the military, two metropolitan schemes were drawn up in 1932: one by Manchukuo’s Capital Construction Bureau (CCB) and the other by the Mantetsu. Both were masterminded by Japanese planners educated in Japan under the European system, who demonstrated their capabilities in planning in the Beaux-Arts mode; thus the two schemes exhibited some common themes. After heated debate, the compromised master plan was published in 1933.14

The design was characterized by a geometrical composition and a monumental perspective. The most important and decisive elements of the urban structure include Puyi’s palace and Manchukuo’s governmental quarter, and the railway station and wide avenues radiating from it. The previous Mantetsu settlement became the northern part of the new capital, and set the model of rational Beaux-Arts planning for the latter. The street layout of the old town, now incorporated into the new city, were maintained with a major street leading towards the curvilinear river. The less developed area on the east side of Yitong River, which sat on the lower part of the city’s dominant wind, separated

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light industry factories (mainly flour processing) from the city centre.\(^{15}\)

As such, the new capital was planned to extend over an area of 100 square kilometers (including the 21 square kilometers of the built area before 1931) and to contain a population of 300,000. The plan was to be realized in two stages over the following eight years: the first stage (1932-1937) was the construction of major urban areas; the second stage (1938-1941) included further developments incorporating educational institutions and sport centers, as well as planting and landscaping for the whole city. After the Sino-Japanese War was escalated in 1937, especially after Pacific War broke out in 1941, war exigencies resulted in diminished resources for the construction of the capital, except for a series of spectacular events in 1942.\(^{16}\)

Changchun as a capital was not only ambitious in scope to exhibit East Asian modern and Japanese leadership, but the Japanese described Changchun an “experiment yard” for the modern theories and constructions, expecting the experiments would serve as exemplars for the Japan home islands, and the planned capital city for the Japanese-controlled state of Manchukuo offered a futuristic model for a Japanese-controlled Asia. New trends of thoughts and theories on urban planning appeared in a continuous stream in the early twentieth century, and they were introduced to Japan immediately, including E. Howard’s garden city and the practices in England, theory of satellite cities proposed by Unwin, theory of neighborhood unit and the practice in Redburn in 1928, etc. Drawing nutrients on these theories, Japanese urban planners were well prepared to fulfill these theories in the early 1930s, reflecting Japanese conceptions of the modern city. Building Changchun as a colonial capital was an aggregation of experiments in regional planning based on imported concepts.

The modernity of the 1932 scheme of Changchun consists of the following aspects:

\textbf{Functional zoning system}

A significant feature of the 1932 planning of Changchun was functional zoning which was prominent in the 1930s. All lands in the city were divided into two purposes of use: official and public. The former included lands for governmental buildings, roads, public facilities, public green spaces and military uses, while the latter included residential districts, commercial areas, industrial areas, special uses (farming) and reservations, which regulated the structure to lot ratio and building height. In regard to residential districts, they were subdivided into four classes, while commercial areas were also subdivided into lands for wholesale, retail and business. Industrial areas were divided into lands for light and heavy industries. The planning principle of efficiency was also adopted.

In CIAM IV in 1933, a major theme of that conference was modern urban planning and the principles for functional zoning were systematically summarized for the

\(^{15}\) Mantetsu keizai chosakai. \textit{Shinkyo toshi kensetsu hosaku}, 1935.

\(^{16}\) See Chapters 2-3.
first time. The 1932 planning of Changchun was one of the first examples in China, and another prominent case of the time was the reconstruction of Nanjing in 1929, produced by the Republican regime in Nanjing.

According to recent scholarship informed by Foucault, the unstated goal of modern-era architecture, city planning, and zones has been to create a naturalized discipline within the subject. This modern means of discipline, in order to work from within, requires that the elements of particular social processes be broken down into their separate functions and then reassembled into more productive combinations, hence the zones.

However, the zoning system applied in Xinjing was less complex than Western models. In the United States, zoning gained a suburban constituency that wished to control residence or land use. Land use in colonial Manchukuo, not unlike in Japan and Republic China, applied more to cities than to suburbs. Besides, modern planning techniques such as zoning are also a form of control over the environment and activities of the population. This is because cities in the non-western world became the sites for the modernist enterprise, the most visible expression of the cultural upheaval in all its destructive and creative glory. As Anthony King notes, in the West the society gave rise to modernity while in the colonies cities became of the exhibit of modernity.\textsuperscript{17} It was certainly more efficient for cities rather than rural areas to demonstrate the modernizing achievements of the government and in turn to legitimize it.

\textit{The Network of Streets and Circular Plazas}

Like in the Mantetsu era, magnificence and monumentality were realized through the adaptation of Beaux-Arts planning principles of street network in a new cultural setting. This became a major feature of the New Capital, which still works actively in present-day Changchun.

In the 1932 planning of Changchun, broad streets and circular plazas at all important intersections were used to shape the modern profile of the city. Japanese planners made classification for urban roads, and divided all roads into main streets, branch streets and auxiliary roads, subdividing them into 4 levels totally 11 kinds, with width of the cross section ranging from 60 meters down to 5 meters.\textsuperscript{18} (Fig. 1-3) Planning wide avenues in Changchun for automobiles was a tradition that could be dated back to Mantetsu era under the supervision of Goto Shimepi.\textsuperscript{19} In addition to width, Japanese planner introduced “street gardens” to Changchun, that is, separation belt in the center of the avenue was planned for pedestrians as playground or rest place. A comparison with the road classification of Canberra indicates that the Japanese learned


\textsuperscript{18} Mantetsu keizai chosakai. \textit{Shinkyo toshi kensetsu hosaku}, 1935.

their lessons from the precedents of their Western counterparts. (Fig. 1-4)

Fig 1-3. Road system in capital Changchun
Source: Koshizawa Akira, 1978

Fig 1-4. Road system from Griffin’s Canberra Plan
Source: Stuart Mackenzie, p.134

In planning Changchun as a colonial capital, the Japanese drew on many sources, and were aware of contemporary city planning of Angora and Canberra.20 One bold modernist city plan in the early twentieth century was Walter Griffin’s design for Canberra. The original Griffin plan featured a multiple-centered city where government, commerce, education and residence each had a core district built around circular plazas from which streets radiated. The Japanese planners for colonial Changchun apparently learned a lot from the precedent in Canberra, such as combing the city’s plan with its topography, the hierarchy and classification of street system, the grid and diagonal streets, and the urban structure that defines the new capital. In the comparison of the downtown parts of the two cities, the similarities are apparent along the lines of a hexagonal central plaza and its relationship to the major boulevards around the circular plaza. (Fig 1-5)

Two major parallel streets, Datong and Shuntian Streets running from north to south, defined the skeleton of the city. Datong Street stretched from the railway station to the far south, spanning over six kilometers.21 The name of the central palaza, da tong, or “great unity” in Chinese, was a utopian ideal in Confucianism as well as the fundamental guideline of Japanese colonialism in Manchuria, suggesting its importance in the cityscape. (Fig 1-6) Datong Street was an extension of the broadest main street of 36.3 meters in Mantetsu settlement, which ran due south of the station that split the

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20 As a review reported, the capital “It reveals a rate of development never equalled elsewhere, even more striking in the speed and extent of work than previously ought the imagination of the world when Australia went to work on the building of its new capital at Canberra, and Turkey began to build a new seat of government at Angora.” See “First Five Year of capital Construction”. Contemporary Manchuria, Jan 1938, Vol.II, No. 1, p.2.

settlement into two sections.\textsuperscript{22}

Corresponding to the rolling topography of Changchun, elevated plateaus were made circular plazas at the interactions of streets as the vistas in Baroque cities, serving to channel off traffic. Located at the center of the city atop a small plateau, broad avenues radiated from the hexagonal circle that made the plaza accessible from all

\textsuperscript{22} Thanks to Goto Shimpei’s insistence, this street was wider than any street in the Japanese home islands in the 1910s. The street was initially called Changchun Avenue (Choshun Taikai) and later was known as Central Avenue (Chuo Dori). While Changchun Boulevard became Chuo Dori (Central Avenue), the boulevard diagonalling across the east side of the Mantetsu settlement gained a new orientation: Nihonbashi, the "Bridge of Japan," the name of an actual bridge in Tokyo from which distances in the empire were once measured. In a similar vein, East Park became Nihonbash Park, and West Diagonal Boulevard became Shikishima Dori. Renaming not only the streets but also the town's subdivisions was significant, because it showed the success of articulating modernity and technological superiority in building the settlement demonstrated growing Japanese confidence to recreate society without the need to compromise. Renaming the central avenue took place in the early 1920s when Goto Shimpei left Manchuria to take office in Tokyo. The names of prominent features in the settlement eventually became purely Japanese in the early 1920s.
quadrants of the city. Looking north, the wide Datong Street led straight to the first train station, south it continued unbroken for five kilometers. The plaza was the first constructed space of the new city, and the huge area of the circular plaza provided a perfect public space for mass gathering and ceremonies. The civic center on Datong Plaza at the heart of the New Capital expressed Japanese modernist goals vividly.

Upon completion, Datong Street which connected directly railway station in the north became an integral part in national political life. The new road was designed to provide a space where Japanese colonial politics could be realized visually and spatially. In public celebrations, processions were directed to sweep over Datong Street, and important mass assemblies were staged at Datong Plaza, frequently inspected place by the emperor. In 1937, Datong Park, right at the southeast side of Datong Plaza, was made the site for the ceremony that the emperor would attend to confer honors and awards to people who contributed to urban construction. Five years later, it became the primary site for the 1942 Manchuria Exposition.

Using street as a major exhibit of modernizing accomplishment of anti-capitalism was not unusual in the 1930s. As Mussolini referred to the newly built promenade of Via dell'Impero at a ceremony on it in June 1933, “streets are also born under a sign of destiny. The Roman Via dell'Impero could not more speedily affirm the fate implied by its name. No sooner born, it has become the true heart of Rome. And here beats the most ardent life of the capital city of Italy.” Datong Street functioned not as an area of retail concentration, as most buildings flanking the street were military and governmental offices, and it was designed to promote a modern façade of the city through the movement along the street. In the meantime, Datong Plaza served as a setting for principal public buildings and monuments, designed to provide room for parading troops and for the throngs of people on holidays and political events. These characters radically departed from the traditional capitalist planning. However, as war exigencies drained resources and labor away to the front after 1941, construction on the street ceased and the street did not thrive again until the Communists began new modernizing projects after 1948.

On the other hand, Shuntian Street, to the west of Datong Street, formed the administrative quarter of Manchukuo. Puyi’s palace was situated in the northern, overlooking this quarter from a vast plaza. Offices for six ministries were erected along the street which terminated at the circular Anmin Plaza in the southern. The names, Shuntian and Anmin, came from one of the principles of the Kingly Way, that is, following the rule of the heaven and bring peace to the people. In the 1942 Decennial, Puyi was invited to stand at Anmin Plaza to symbolically inspect the administrative quarter, the power center of Manchukuo, while in fact it was dwarfed by the nearby Datong Street where Japanese institutions such as the headquarters of the GDA and the

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Concordia Society were located.

It should be noted, however, the idea of basing fundamental urban structure on motor vehicle technology was innovative for Japan, where it took major efforts to widen streets. Changchun was not the center of a highway system. Despite a modest railway and horse town for decades, the 1932 Plan turned the city into a boombtown of a regional agricultural and transport center. Manchukuo could lay out avenues for the capital, but it had to bring in cars by railway so that the residents of the new automobile city could drive on its new streets. In this respect, the New Capital was a design drawn on “an empty sheet of paper.”

Through the network of transportation, the creation of a new capital at Changchun represented one of many efforts around the world attempting to demonstrate state power through the built environment. In the first place, Changchun’s modernity was made manifest through the transportation system consisting of the grid of streets and a chain of circular plazas. However, the Beaux-Arts plan required a princely power and heavy capital investments, which called for the ascendancy of absolutism, centralized coercion and stringent control. The transformation of the city into a client state whose powers had been granted by military might. Second, in contrast to efforts before 1931, colonial Changchun differed in that it was entirely planned. Modernity showed along Datong Street, for example, was of the variant that later became dominant in Japan itself, that of the military and its concern for complete planning in preparation for total war. For example, the wide streets and parklands had another purpose of defense against air and gas attack. Solid, isolated buildings and open spaces made it more difficult for bombardiers to strike their targets, and open spaces would help disperse poison gas.

**Public Green Space and Drainage System**

Like the street hierarchy, the Xinjing Plan provided for a hierarchy of parks throughout the new city. The two projects, roads and public green spaces and parks, commingled, as some of Xinjing’s roads were parkways (“park roads”) that linked the parks into a single network. (Fig. 1-7) At the top of the park hierarchy were large parks

![Fig 1-7 Green belt and drainage system in Xinjing Planning](Source: redrawn based on Akira Koshizawa, 1978)
built around artificial lakes. Below them were middle-sized parks, then traffic rotaries, and neighborhood gardens. Around it all was a greenbelt and beltway road in the suburbs – mostly agricultural land under land use control with tree nurseries.

There was a quite generous area of public green spaces in Xinjing, like parks and gardens. The vegetation area per capita reached a distinguishing 31 m², paralleling most western famous cities such as Chicago, Canberra and Paris. According to the urban terrain, slight depressions and creeks were made parks, and green belts connected the public green spaces in the whole city. Meanwhile, separate system of drainage was used in large parks. Two sewer systems, one taking domestic sewage and the other collecting rainwater from roads, yards, roofs, etc., made it possible to reserve water in Changchun short of water. Some large lakes came into being in this way, such as South Lake and the lake in Chaoyang Park. This combination of green belt and drainage system constituted another significant character of the city.24 The 1932 Plan set aside “7% of its city area for parks, playgrounds and stadiums, against 2% of Berlin, 2.8% of Tokyo, 1.4% of Washington, and 9% of London.”25 This did not deviate much from the call of the early-20th-century planning theories for spacious green space, but Japanese planners had relocated the practice of modernity to “other” geographies outside its conventional locus of Western Europe and North America.

These parks were more than a matter of introducing nature into the new city; they were an attempt to create a nature as idealized as this city. This nature would not only be a nature of amenities that would complement those offered by the city’s buildings to its inhabitants, but also be aestheticized so as to become an icon to them: an icon of modernity and the aspiration of the unity of Asia under Japan’s leadership. Looked at one way, Changchun’s parks were more than mere spaces for the possibility of a public sphere and individual relaxation and play, but unifying tools to inspire awe, reverence, and patriotic solidarity.

*Neighborhood Unit Housing and Other Facilities*

In order to attract more Japanese immigrants, Xinjing Planning put much emphasis on the construction of residential districts. In the planning, Japanese drew many sources, for instance, Garden Apartment in 1926, the concept of “Neighborhood Unit” in 1929 proposed by C. A. Perry. Shortly after these theories were put forward, the Japanese planners practiced with guidance of these theories in the construction in Xinjing (Fig.) Such “experiments” cast big impacts on another urban planning, Datong Planning in 1938. Later on, Sakakura Junzo, a prominent modernist architect produced the planning for a luxury resident district near by South Lake in 1939.

From its beginning, Japanese planners of Manchukuo's capital imagined their


city as a “cultural city,” by which they meant a properly administered city with such modern facilities as running water, but also one that would have a wide range of cultural institutions. Changchun should have the cultural array of any world great capital, they thought, and made lists of museums, zoos, botanical gardens, universities, research institutions, athletic fields, and other facilities to build. The building of these recreational facilities became a symbol of modernity identical with that in the West or in Asian port cities.

Other athletic facilities were close behind – school playgrounds and athletic fields, baseball grounds, rugby and soccer fields, sports halls, basketball and tennis courts, a hockey rink, steeplechase course, an all-purpose stadium with the first rubberized track on the Asian continent. The city used its large sports facilities for large athletic meets, national, and international sports festivals. The closest analogies to the kind of sports-cultural urban complex that Manchukuo’s capital attempted to build might be the Olympic complexes of the second half of the 20th century, and the preparations of Rome and Tokyo for the 1940, and Berlin for the 1936 Olympics. In the late 1930s, the city planned a large cultural campus at Nanling in the southeast of the city. Here it built a very large park with zoo and botanical garden, the national stadium, and several other sports facilities. The plan, which included museums, a library, a memorial tower, and a plaza with a capacity of 300,000 people, came to a halt in 1941 when the Pacific War broke out. Another recreational facility served political needs as well, the Nanling Athletic Complex. Just east of the zoo, it encompassed a variety of fields and pavilions. Because it provided a large space for spectators to gather, it was used to host the ten year anniversary celebrations of the puppet state in 1942.

By 1937, the site of 21.4 square kilometers in area was completed with construction, which brought the first five-year program of Capital Construction to an end. Aside from the modern infrastructure, the city boasted a population of 304,994, an increase of 99 per cent over 1932. An impressive ceremony in celebration of the capital’s successful completion of construction was needed, so that “this memorable event will certainly color the pages of Manchukuo’s early history and will always be remembered as a shining symbol of the inception of the world’s newest state.”

### III. The Commemoration for the Completion of Capital Construction in 1937

The central concern of the colonial authority of planning Changchun was its role as a national capital. On March 1, 1937, a modest celebration was held in Xinjing in to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the establishment of Manchukuo. As the colonial state had been established for five years, the official propaganda advocated the allying relation between Japan and Manchukuo, industrial and economic development, and a new social order based on Asiatic virtues. All these ideas were demonstrated in a poster produced for that event. In the poster, different ethnic peoples in silhouette were waving national Manchukuo flags in jubilance in the forefront to a few cavalry troopers in high

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profile, as Manchukuo’s military forces were the guardian of the state.

However, except for front-page headlines in official newspapers, the fifth anniversary was not much played up, and a much grander ceremony was saved until September for the completion of the Five-Year-Plan of capital construction. In Xinjing, Japanese wanted to create a city that glorified their leadership. Making a few concessions to Chinese sensitivities, this new vision focused idealistically on the creation of a new civic order, one that championed rational state planning, mass mobilization, and Japanese leadership. For five years, until the outbreak of Sino-Japanese war in 1937, it was widely conceived that the Manchukuo government had achieved to articulate this vision. By then, Changchun’s grand boulevards had been the most imposing part of a layout that expressed state power and modernity.

On September 16 and 17, 1937, a grand commemorate ceremony was held in the capital. The purpose of the ceremony was not only to celebrate the completion of the first five-year plan that “transformed a small village in the wild to a magnificent capital,” but also intended to “convey to the world the message of the capabilities and potentials that Manchukuo has.” Since most Western nations disavowed the legitimacy of Manchukuo when it was established in 1932 which resulted in Japanese withdrawal form the League of Nations the next year, this ceremony was thought an exceptional opportunity to announce to the international audience Japanese prowess in its “civilizing mission” there. Furthermore, as the establishment of the capital and the coronation were not attended by the public, the ceremony to celebrate the completion of capital construction was also deemed the public ceremony in the place of the 1934 coronation.

In order to prepare for such a crucial event, the Manchukuo government set up a special committee for this purpose on February 18th, 1936. The committee members included two pre-eminent Chinese officials, Zheng Yu, son of Zheng Xiaoxu and head of Capital Constriction Bureau, and Han Yujie, mayor of Xinjing at the time. Preparations included siting, constructing temporary buildings, deciding the agenda and participants, security, propaganda, and above all, the tour of the emperor. The total cost for the ceremony reached 149,565 Yen.

In the agenda, the first day included an official ceremony in Datong Park attended by Puyi, followed by his visit to the building of CCB and the State Council building. When the emperor returned to the palace, the GDA and Manchukuo government officials had dinner banquet, and public celebrations started in the evening. The emperor’s inspection tour on the 16th was the focal activity of propaganda. As scheduled, the emperor first arrived at Datong Park around ten o’clock and received the

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27 Shengjing Shibao (SJSB), 1937-3-2 (1).
31 ZFGB,
32 Guo dian she ji nian shi dian zhi, pp.185-202.
salute and congratulations of 3000 of his officials. Then he walked to the Building of Capital Construction Bureau (CCB) and rose to its top terrace to look at Datong Plaza, the heart of the capital, and its surrounding buildings and radiating avenues. (Fig 1-8) Zheng Yu, the former Chief of CCB, accompanied him and reported the course of construction. Next, the emperor moved to the State Council from whose top terrace he could see a series gardens and ministry buildings in the governmental quarter, and inspected the exhibits of the construction achievements housed in the State Council. Around noon the emperor visited Anming (appeasing people) Plaza, the terminus of the avenue of the governmental quarter and then went back to Datong Park. The officials had banquet together while the emperor returned to the palace.\(^{33}\) (Fig 1-9)

The emperor’s itinerary covered the most magnificent part of the city – Datong Plaza and surrounding buildings, the governmental quarter along Shuntian Street, Datong Street, and a series of smaller circular plazas. Scholars on world’s fairs have noticed the city’s image and reputation depends upon how well it represents the nation to the rest of the world, while the nation, in order to evaluate the success or failure of that symbolic representation, has to consider the basis of its own character.\(^ {34}\) Built from scratch in five years, the new capital was the embodiment of Manchukuo’s progress and spirit, and epitomized the major forces that were shaping the nation. The rise of Changchun mirrored metropolitan growth as well as national ambition and pride, in the accumulation of which resulted the ceremony. By this token, the most felicitous commemorative activity was to show the audience, both domestic and international, what

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33 Manshu teikoku kensetsu kyoku: kokuto kensetsu junnen, 1938.
accomplishments Japanese colonialism had obtained in the culmination of an “exhibitionary edifice”. The emperor’s itinerary evoked the city and its grandeur, bringing it to life, remaking it each time as a meaningful cultural landscape in the eyes of participants and spectators.

The photos of the emperor’s inspecting at the top terrace of CCB Building and the itinerary of the emperor and his retinue were circulated in printed sources for this ceremony. The presence of the emperor at the building forcefully announced the urban construction of capital Changchun was under the tutelage of the state power, and in turn it represented the image of a powerful and ambitious state.

The ceremony attracted the interest of common citizens, most of whom had moved here not long before due to the opportunities and jobs provided by the large scale construction of the new capital. A lot of people joined the parade procession and other activities, and even before September 16th, stamps and souvenir postcards with special postage—stamps for this ceremony were all sold out.\(^{35}\) The most influential local newspaper, *Shengjing shi bao*, had been covering news about preparations and the agenda several months before, and radio broadcast the ceremony in Datong Park and elsewhere simultaneously, as commoners had no access to those areas that day.

On the evening of the 16th, a bonfire tower at the center of Datong Plaza was lit up by the Prime Minister at 7:00pm, formally signaling the start of civic celebration.\(^{36}\) More than 10,000 students from schools throughout Xinjing gathered in the plaza around the tower awaiting the flame that night. The shape of the tower resembled the memorial in Lushun dedicated to those died in the Russo-Japanese War. On the tower body, the four Chinese characters, *yi xin yi de*, or “heart and virtue in unity,” were eye-catching in the day and flashing in the night. The bonfire tower at Datong Plaza as a temporary monument extended the propaganda of “co-existence and co-prosperity” in an imposing manner that symbolically unified the youth under the colonial banner.

After the tower was lit up, citizens were mobilized to pour into the streets in Xinjing and organized into a “lantern parade,” led by governmental and school music bands. The parade resumed the next day, succeeded by a mass congregation to celebrate the accomplishments in construction. Flag ritual took place in several places and the parade procession began shortly after the ritual.\(^{37}\) It was prescribed that these mass movements be carefully organized to maximize the grandeur of the colonial state and capital city.

In addition to being mobilized into the parade, common inhabitants were encouraged to participate in the celebration in various ways, not just as spectators. Elementary students were organized to compete for composing a song eulogizing the new capital; artists were asked to design a poster for the ceremony; all were required to clean up the streets and plant trees for the upcoming ceremony. However, these public

\(^{35}\) Manshu teikoku kensetsu kyoku: *kokuto kensetsu junnen*. 1938, p.61.

\(^{36}\) Ibid, p.104-105.

activities were under close surveillance. Thus, the colonial authority induced citizens to abide by the rule of a “progressive” colonial government but also the social and ethnic hierarchy of the capital that reinforced Japanese control through citizen participation in the festivals.

The 1937 ceremony aimed at rationalizing Japanese colonialism by showing the industrial and cultural progress of Changchun under the first five years of colonial rule. What were distinctly missing in the ceremony are commercial and entertaining units, commonly a major concern in similar occasions such as world’s fairs elsewhere. The student bands on streets diluted the graveness for such an event of celebration, but no consideration was given to the marketplace, at least from the official perspective, an expression of anti-capitalism and anti-consumerism. The colonial state monopolized the ceremony and offered expression and interpretation for them.

IV. Competing the Modern: Building the Kingly Way

Backed by the authoritarian colonial government, the progressive design was put into reality in a very short period in the First Five Year Plan (1932-1937). With waves of immigration from Japan, Korea and other parts of Manchuria, the urban population had increased dramatically in Changchun. By 1937, the population was a total of 335,000 inhabitants including 20 per cent Japanese, and increased to 415,000 in 1939.

It is the scale of massive construction and speed of construction under the auspices of a totalitarian government, along with the modern aspects delineated above, that scholars came the conclusion that the 1932 Plan of Changchun was an early version of high modernism, not unlike Brasilia or Chandigarh. In this section, however, I will argue that the delicate treatment of indigenous elements attached special quality other than high modernism to colonial Changchun, and they also signified some of the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism.

As aforementioned, the planners of colonial Changchun showed that the new order in Manchuria continued to depend on modernist vision based on rational progress and material development. Applying most recent and advanced planning techniques from the West to the new capital of Manchukuo, however, Japan struck out on a different path in building the city, one that conspicuously rejected some of the forms of Western imperialism in favor of new ones they thought might appeal to or impress the native population more forcefully. While the Japanese settlement demonstrated Western affinities, the New Capital attempted to underpin nation-founding ideals in urban

38 SJSB
39 The encouragement of citizens to perform in political and cultural events as a mechanism of making new citizenry is by no means a Japanese invention. Spanish had used the same techniques in colonizing Mexico and especially in Mexico City. For more detail, see Linda Curcio-Nagy. The Great Festivals of colonial Mexico City: performing power and identity. Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press, 2004, pp.40-45
40 in the year of 1937, the Sino-Japanese War broke out and lasted till 1945 when the Japan was defeated.
construction as a new set of political and cultural manipulations to exhibit state power and authority.

The state makers of Manchukuo impugned the despotic and predatory nature of Western modernity, insisting the superiority of Confucian values and Asiatic moral systems emphasizing ethical responsibilities be celebrated as alternatives to capitalism and Marxism, both Western doctrines. As expressed by the “Kingly Way” and “obedient to the Heaven” whereas the king was the surrogate of the Heaven, the construction the king’s palace was one of the first concerns in planning the New Capital.

In order to court people from different walks, the colonial government constructed a series of cultural idioms embodying those concepts through and by which the colonial authority was to be represented to Manchurians. In the pursuit of a moral state, the rhetoric of Manchukuo emphasized on a cultural independence and the revival of traditional values and ethics, such as filial piety (xiao), loyalty (zhong), chastity (jie), frugality and diligence, etc. As a contemporary tourist pamphlet stated:

Herein lies the significance of the important mission to be played by culture in Manchoukuo, for concord through culture is not only the easiest, but also the most desirable means whereby complete harmony among the five races may be attained. Consequently cultural progress in the future is expected to be made with this end in view. Considering the phenomenal strides with which the new State has advanced in all lines of activity, it is not difficult to predict that culturally, Manchukuo will continue to make steady progress in the future.43

Survival of these customs and historical sites rendered them venerable in an age of rapid change, which was regarded useful to gain wider support. As the majority of Manchukuo’s people were Han Chinese, a few Chinese indigenous customs and shrines were carefully preserved.

In this section I will elaborate on two examples in the city planning of colonial Changchun: the siting of Puyi’s palace, and the preservation of a Taoist temple on Datong Street. I argue that the ideal of the Eastern Kingly Way (wangdao) in opposition to the Western Despotic Way (badao) was made explicit in these two examples, and they in part demonstrate the idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo. In order to distinguish themselves from Western colonialism in the 1930s, Japanese consciously looked into indigenous sources for inspiration and legitimacy from the very outset, amongst which Chinese Confucianism was accorded a distinct place in the state ideology. The construction of the New Capital was then a spatial representation that made visible the shift in colonial cultural policy from the one based on coercion to the one based on pacification.

The Siting of the Palace

The palace had been a highly controversial issue between the Guandong Army and Puyi. Between 1932 and 1937, the most important problem was the location of the

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palace. This exposed the conflicts between the Guandong Army and Puyi in relation to the intrinsic purpose of the city. The Japanese regarded Changchun as the capital of a new colony to which Japan had given birth. For the Japanese, railway stations and financial and commercial buildings were of paramount importance. For Puyi, the component of central importance was the imperial palace, and the location and orientation of the palace could only be determined with reference to a cosmic order.

Puyi was self-conscious about his former role as Emperor of China. He made it clear that the new palace should follow the Beijing model, which was designed according to principles of capital city planning laid down in the fifth century BC. It should incorporate a grid plan with the grand palace located at the centre on the north–south axes. Governmental buildings should be symmetrically laid out south of the palace. The Ancestral Temple was to the east and the Altar of Land to the west. The capital’s energy, unlike other cities, emanated from its palace and not from its trade centers or markets.

Thus, the palace located in the most commanding situation in the urban composition should be the first building erected in the city. Centrality was not only a Beaux-Arts attribute, but also an ancient Chinese attribute. In Changchun, the problem was not simple. Who was to be at the centre and what was the locus? The conflict arose from the political contradiction between the introduced Western-style governmental institutions and the restored Chinese monarchy. The political paradox brought urban design to a deadlock and made the architectural arrangement very difficult to resolve.

In the Mantetsu proposal, the palace was picturesquely placed on a hill looking on to a park, but off the north–south axis and separated from the government complex (Fig. 1-10). In the CCB plan, by contrast, the palace was off-centre, but north–south set on a hill, in which the orientation reflected the vision of Puyi.

![Fig 1-10 The Mantetsu scheme for the capital, which was the most economic one of the four proposals. Source: Yu Weilian, p. 124](image)

Between 1932 and 1937, the most important problem was the location of the palace. For the Japanese, railway stations and financial and commercial buildings were of paramount importance. The desire of Puyi for the outward appearance of his palace was Chinese style. By 1937, the Design Office of Palace Buildings had submitted two
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schemes, both reflecting traditional Chinese buildings. The chief differences concerned the incorporation of a garden. Puyi chose a scheme with a garden. Laid out according to Chinese cosmology, the site was rectangular (51.2 hectares) with two north corners curved to symbolize heaven and the south corners to represent earth, expressing the Emperor’s intermediary position between heaven and earth, and also symbolizing the centre of the cosmos where the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, dwelled. The Emperor’s office and apartment building were set on the north-south axis. An open square was to the south, and a garden to the north designed with Japanese elements as well as western ornamental features.44

Though Puyi understood that he was merely a puppet head of state (“Chief Executives”),45 he had insisted on the centrality of his palace and its due north-south orientation. The location and orientation finally became a deciding factor for the 1932 plan. The Guandong Army, Mantetsu and Manchukuo’s Capital Construction Bureau proposed their schemes respectively and made alternations according to the location and shape of the palace.46 In Western colonial capital planning, it was the house of the Viceroy as in New Delhi and Rabat defined the form of the city, while in Changchun the palace for an emperor occupied the most conspicuous location. Such decision, on the other hand, was unacceptable under the nation-founding ideals of Kingly Way. So long as Manchukuo was predicated on the tenet of “following the heaven and bringing peace to the people” under benevolent kingship, overt disrespect of the emperor was not acceptable in spatial arrangement. In planning the New Capital, the palace became the best manifestation of a new model of colonial rule, an updated Japanese colonial policy from assimilation to co-existence and collaboration.

The Preservation of Xiao Zi Fen

Though most part of Changchun was built from scratch with the gigantic and spectacular strides as the foundation of the new state, the Japanese planners deliberately preserved old temples and shrines that related to the Kingly Way before 1937. For example, rituals in the Temples of Confucius and Guan-Yue were regularly practiced as national holidays, a subject I will turn to in Chapter Four. However, these temples were located in the old walled city, while the preservation of Xiaozifen (The Grave of a Dutiful Child, hereafter XZF) was quite a different and difficult decision to make, which explicitly embodied the ideal of the Kingly Way (wang dao) in opposition to traditional capitalist planning pursuing efficiency and productivity.

The main artery of colonial Changchun, Datong Street, stretched from the railway station in a straight line for over six kilometers to Nanling, lined on both sides by

large modern office buildings and department stores. XZF was located on the west side of Datong Street, not far from the spacious thoroughfare Datong Plaza, the heart of Manchukuo’s capital, standing a small earthen mound solitarily on one side of the street. In the end, the difficult decision to preserve XZF became the most conspicuous official propaganda of promoting the Asiatic virtue of filiality. (Fig. 1-11)

Fig 1-11 the XZF, from the view it is clear the mount intruded into Datong Street, with its edge aligned to the median.

Source: Shinkyo gaikan shashin. Tokyo: Taisho shashin kojisho, 1942

The XZF had existed at the site for decades before Capital Construction started and the story of the temple goes as follows. A dutiful son, under the surname of Wang, was a local villager of some sixty years ago where the district was then a farming land. Wang was very much devoted to his mother and did his best to make her happy and comfortable by buying her the things she liked. His Filial piety, however, could not sustain the weight of years and the aged mother finally died under his tender care. Wang was greatly grieved over the loss of his mother and buried his mother in the place where later XZF would be. After a short journey to a Taoist temple to pray for the repose of her soul, Wang returned home to find his mother’s grave was to be transferred elsewhere owing to the readjustment of land. Wang tried to persuade his fellow villagers not to relocate the grave and mysterious phenomena happened when some tried to cut the tree. All were greatly surprised and believed that the spirit of Wang’s mother still and forbade the removal of the remains, and they decided to leave the grave intact. Subsisting on only boiled millet and water, Wang spent the rest of his life keeping vigil over his mother’s grave by sitting upright before it with his eyes closed. Upon his death the neighbors erected a small temple which they named Xiaozifen, to worship his filial piety. It soon became a favorite place of Changchun for local people to visit and pray for their parents.47

When the Capital Construction Program was launched following the establishment of Manchukuo, the XZF was fated to destruction since it stood on the projected Datong Street. The construction of Datong Street started in 1933 by the CCB,

and drainage piping work proceeded to the area close by the XZF in May 1934. However, rumors went out amongst local labors that murmuring sounds had been heard from the grave that the construction must not remove the grave and the tree. In face of the labors’ refusal to follow the original construction plan, the CCB increased the price of earthwork from 200 Yen to 1200 Yen, yet no one would sign the contract. But the Japanese still insisted on “a careful relocation of the local deity to elsewhere” in June, and pronounced that if local Chinese labors would not collaborate, immigrant workers would be hired to do the work.48 A month later, a Japanese monk came to the forefront of the debate to make a petition to the Ministry of Culture and Education to move the XZF to a “quite place to avoid the noise of the main street of the new capital”.

The involvement of the Japanese monk who called for demolition of the XZF annoyed local communities and redemptive associations such as World Red Cross and Buddhist Association, and they convened a meeting to oppose to this petition. They insisted the XZF “has been a spot of historical interest for long with high popularity amongst local inhabitants. If it is moved to elsewhere, such cultural meaning will lose, and (we are) afraid that local people will all rise to oppose the decision.”49 In the end, the Ministry of Culture and Education, chaired by Zheng Xiaoxu at the time, replied that the Japanese monk did not have much to do with the XZF in the past, and it was not appropriate to move temple in regard of preservation. In the meantime, the people living near the shrine presented another petition to the CCB explaining the history of the temple and surrounding circumstances.50 Eventually, Zheng Xiaoxu made an explicit statement that removal of the XZF should be well reconsidered so as not to hurt the feelings of local people.51

Because local communities, religious associations and the Premier all agreed to preserve the XZF, the GDA conceded to this proposal, claiming that the preservation of the XZF would court local support and educate the people with “being loyal to the monarch and being pious to their elder kinsmen”. The preservation of the XZF added technical difficulty to the construction of the street, and pipe-work was delayed two month. Although the existence of the old grave on the capital's principal thoroughfare renders traffic inconvenient to some extent, it clearly affords a touch of Manchurian local color and at the same time, more than contributes to the promotion of public morals.”52 However, As a result, in the official propaganda it was the colonial government that from the onset “decided to leave the temple unimpaired out of deference to the earnest entreaties of local people.

That the XZF stood on the western side of Datong Street, extruding into slow traffic lanes, seemed as if the planners had forgotten to remove it during the construction

49 Ibid. p.116.
50 “Manchu Legends”. Contemporary Manchuria, 1938-5, p.3
51 Yu Jing, 2001, p.117.
52 “Manchu Legends”. Contemporary Manchuria, 1938-5, p.5
of the avenue. The sight of incense burning there from morning fill night offers a strange contrast to the modern atmosphere of the surroundings. On the top of this mound, a small building was built in grey bricks on a hexagonal plan on the mound, and the grave was buried under a lone elm tree. This place was constantly visited by devout men and women, who came to pray for their parents, and XZF was selected one of the most favorable tourist sites of Xinjing, and as late as the summer of 1943 it was still maintained by the colonial government. After the renovation, the plan of the mound formed a quadrangle-like complex, occupying an area of about 50 square meters. The base was reinforced and rounded by oval stone wall, and banisters with decorations were added to the stairs and top of the mound. Many high ranking officials such as Premier Zhang Jinghui had contributed steles to honoring the ZXF. The place remained in the same place until 1958 when it was finally demolished by the Communist government “because its intrusion of traffic”.

Rather than eliminating existing layers of the previous age that was usually practiced in Western colonial city planning to give way to the European town, the preservation of the XZF was the most distinguishing example of how Chinese Confucianism was embedded in the state ideology in urban construction. Moreover, the XZF gained more attention as time elapsed and became an emblem of the New Capital. In official propaganda (pamphlets and guidebooks), Manchukuo’s creators and backers were intently concerned with making it both thoroughly modern and deeply rooted in tradition. It is noteworthy that the ZXF was scheduled to be removed in the original plan, and it was superstition and rumors that delayed demolition, and Zheng Xiaoxu’s involvement was crucial for an alternation for preservation in the end. However, as Zheng was deposed in 1935, his contribution was overlooked in the official narrative, while the XZF itself was continued to be crowned as the manifestation of Kingly Way in urban construction.

David Buck calls the 1932 Changchun Plan “a high modern scheme,” because it was backed by “the absolute power of the colonial state” lacking in both British India and Australia. However, the preservation of the XZF at the heart of the capital marked a significant and interesting compromise with the preexisting environ at Changchun, and demonstrated the Japanese struggle to compete with the Western hegemony of defining “the modern” in the milieu of East Asia. The colonial government found it useful to preserve the site as it was closely associated with a few Confucian virtues such as piety of children and chastity of women, upon which didactics the state was built. In the Japanese scheme, due to cultural similarities, everyday life in Changchun rested more on social and moral norms that stretched from what the local people (and the Japanese themselves) had been familiar with for centuries, than a rigid segregation along racial line, though both aimed at “classifying and keeping everyone and everything in place”.

53 SJSB
Together with broad avenues and green space in the city, the XZF projected the colonial propaganda of the Kingly Way over urban life.

V. Living the Kingly Way: City Planning, Urban Life, and Japanese Colonialism

Manchukuo emerged calling for the realization of an ideal realm on earth and a paradise of the Kingly Way (wangdao letu) in which humanity would live in peace. The content of the Kingly Way such as following the way of heaven with the king as the surrogate, ethnic harmony, and Confucian virtues of filial piety and loyalty to the throne all found manifestation through the spatial arrangement of Changchun. In practice, however, on one level it relied on exaggerated ideals and wishes, while on another level it was filled with simple embellishments and hyperbolic delusions.

A multi-ethnic state of five races, Manchukuo boasted that it was the first state which was founded on the principle of ethnic harmony. The 1932 Plan reflected social conditions most explicitly in its zoning system. Manchukuo had five official races, with the Japanese taking the “leading role,” but the relationship between these races within the city plan is not strongly delineated. In this aspect, colonial Changchun, quite comfortably incorporated all four parts of previous construction by different authorities into a new capital, differed from other civilizing missions such as the British planning of New Delhi or French planning of Moroccan cities. New Delhi, was a city “with no room for the marginal: the prostitute, the gambler, the homeless, the itinerant, the infirm or even any kind of industry or workshops,” while French planning insisted on a definite separation, a cordon sanitaire between new and old cities. However, there was no explicit general commitment to racial segregation, as there was in some colonial planning. Nor was there any cordon sanitaire or zone of non edificandi separating new colonial Changchun from the old city.

Nevertheless, both planners and inhabitants of Changchun conceived of the new capital so distinct from the old city, which they saw as old, corrupt, and backwards. Japanese planners clearly proposed a division of labor in which prostitution, industry, and other activities dirty but inevitable, should be assigned to the Chinese sectors. According to David Tucker’s research, by 1937, the Capital Construction Bureau claimed to have spent 350,000 yen to construct 32 brothels with 984 rooms in Chinese entertainment district in the old city and to have compelled brothels in other areas to move to it. Some Taiwanese who worked in the New Capital during the 1930s and 40s found that although food and entertainment in the Chinese district was cheaper, they felt unsafe there because the Chinese would not talk to them and hostility was ambient against who spoke Japanese. For example, Ms. Lin Gengwei, who worked in the

57 David Vance Tucker. 1999. p. 387
58 Chen Yongxiang. Chen Yongxiang xiansheng fangwen lu (an interview with Mr. Chen Yongxiang). Institute of
Ministry of Finance, remembered that:

“The Manchurians did not dare to say anything bad about the Japanese... As their living conditions were relatively low, they did not good feeling toward Taiwanese as well. Besides, the differential treatment of Manchurians and Chinese stipulated by the Japanese aroused their antagonism. For example, coal had a ration quota at that time. But the Japanese and Taiwanese did not need to stay in long lines in the air to get coal, while the Chinese were forced so, and oftentimes they ended up with nothing after long hours of waiting. ... Sometimes I sold white rice and coal to them, so they also treated me well.”

In colonial Changchun, it was true that no stringent restriction of racial segregation was legalized during the Manchukuo period, compared to French and British colonialism, and people were allowed to move relatively freely between different sections of the city. However, residential quarters were classified into four kinds according to population density and equipped amenities. The density for the first class was 4,000 people per square kilometer, while the number jumped to 12,000 for the fourth class. It was stipulate that only governmental employees may live in the first two classes of residential areas. Considering the Japanese-Manchurian ratio in the government, it was a practical tool of banning the Chinese out from residential quarters of better living conditions.

In the government of Manchukuo, the Japanese-Manchurian ratio of seven-to-three was taken as something of a standard, though in some critical departments such as the Capital Construction Bureau this changed to Japanese always occupying at least 80% of the positions. The aim of this allotment of positions to Manchurians and Japanese was to take a form wherein Chinese would basically be given the top administrative posts and Japanese the subsidiary ones, while the government’s organization would operate on the basis of the autonomous initiative of the Chinese. In this way, the Japanese wanted to avoid international criticism that Manchukuo was a puppet state, and the same form was adopted in the chartered corporations and public companies within Manchukuo. The Manchurians so appointed, though, were all men who had studied in Japan, and none of them had nay real power – they were budded “ornamental supplements”. In particular, the Japanese effectively held a monopoly by

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controlling such pivotal functions as personnel desk and planning desk.

Looked at one way, parks in the New Capital were spaces for the possibility of a public sphere and individual relaxation and play. The parks, however, were not merely for play; they were part of defense system – anti-aircraft sites, fire defense, population dispersal areas. Parks also had important health and moral purposes, as Japanese authorities had repeated the common opinion that parks were necessary for moral health: “We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that overcrowding causes immorality.” Moreover, the park provided space for a monumental and ceremonial aesthetics. Statues and temples in Changchun’s parks bore explicitly Japanese iconography and marked a change in the trend of ritual Japanization of space. For example, the designers composed the National Founding Shrine, the most sacred monument of Manchukuo which corresponded to the Japanese imperial shrine at Ise, with architectural elements of Japanese shrine arrangement. I will turn to this subject of monuments and state rituals later in the following chapters; suffice it to say here is that the hierarchy of ethnicities was distinct with Japan’s uncontested leadership to create and sustain a utopia of the Kingly Way, despite the banner of ethnic harmony.

One of the most explicit attempts to materialize ethnic harmony through urban construction came in the form of Manchukuo’s national university: Nation Founding University (Kenkoku daigaku, or Kendai). Kendai was opened in May 1938 in the midst of the China War. Aiming at producing “pioneering leaders in the establishment of a moral world,” Kendai, at least in principle, was an institution aimed at the production of cross-cultural, Pan-Asianist agents of future generations to lead the revival of East Asian. Puyi attended the opening ceremony in 1938 and declared the Kendai to be the highest educational institution of Manchukuo that was bound to embody nation-founding ideals. In 1938, the first class matriculated 150 students, of which 75 were Japanese including 3 Taiwanese, 50 Manchurians, 25 Koreans, and 25 Russians and Jews.

Sitting a couple of blocks away from the Monument to National Foundation around the southern terminus of Datong Street, Kendai occupied a land of 2,140,000 square meters and had buildings of classrooms, dormitories, playground, gym, and library. Kendai had a unique management system of dorm (shu) that every 25 students consisting of different races lived in the same dorm and a staff of the university was assigned to live with and supervise them in everyday life. (Fig 1-12) All members got up at 5 in the morning, performed a series of rituals, for example, praying for victory and saluting toward Puyi’s palace, and other routine included study, military exercise, and going to bed at 10 in the evening.
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Although Manchukuo had by then developed into a highly stratified society, at the Kendai, by contrast, it was reported that from the start all students were reported to have eaten an equal mixture of rice and sorghum, at the insistence of the Japanese students.\(^{67}\) It was taken as counterevidence that discrimination in food was generally practiced, and that anyone except Japanese ate white rice could be punished for an “economic crime.”\(^{68}\)

Euphonized as the first moral state of the world that was built upon the ideal of ethnic harmony, the concept had another side. As it took shape in confrontation with Chinese nationalism and the Three Principles of the People, the design of the slogan of ethnic harmony aimed to quietly eradicate a distinct national or ethnic consciousness which had become the root of anti-Japanese feeling. As a result, the reality upholding the “harmony” of races in Manchukuo emerged in the form of expelling heterogenous elements to enforce obedience to the colonial authorities. In March 1942, 17 Chinese students of the first class were took away and then dropped out from the university, accused with “Antagonizing Manchukuo and Japan” by reading forbidden texts such as Three People’s Principles and alike. As a result, the president of Kendai was forced to resign in June 1942 because “the dream of Kendai was shattered.”\(^{69}\)

However, students began to question the Japanization of the rest of Asia as the first step towards Asian salvation. More Chinese students joined in secret forbidden-book reading association, and they concluded that “Manchukuo was regrettably a puppet state of Japanese imperialism in actual substance.” Another Chinese student confessed that each time they were made to take part in the ritual morning worship of the Japanese Emperor, he and other Chinese students prayed silently that “imperialist Japan would be defeated.”\(^{70}\)

A sense of disillusionment was also felt by Kendai’s Japanese students. Morisaki Minato (1924-45) who studied in Kendai and committed suicide after the Japanese defeat noted:

*I suppose we should not consider Manchuria's Han Chinese and the Chinese*
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of China proper as separate peoples. Manchukuoans are also Chinese, and moreover, the more patriotic one is, the more one tends to think of himself as a "Chinese" rather than "Manchukuoan". Sadly, those human resources who should be welcome as worthy colleagues by our camp, who could really work for the good of Asia and our ideals, are working for the opposing camps. Their anti-Japanese and counter-Japanese movement too should be admired accordingly.71

Although in order to boast the dream of racial harmony, Kendai and its equal, Datong Academy, employed mixed elements of various sources, the self-consciously egalitarian Kendai was unable to live up to its declared creed. The limitations of Manchukuo’s egalitarian claim and Japan’s paternalism competed with, rather than complemented, one another. This eventually resulted in the disillusionment amongst the best educated and highly expected people toward the nation-founding ideals, and some turned themselves against the Japanese.

Aside from promoting ethnic harmony in urban life, the Japanese planners were also earnest to show Asia could be modern without relying on the West through various modernizing projects. The planning institution, Secret Service of the Guandong Army, stated in the beginning of Briefs of Draft Scheme for Xinjing Urban Planning that

“...(Changchun) was made the capital of the whole country at a sudden accident, ... construction must be made as a crucial measure to cultivate popularity within the country and to represent grandiosity and modernity as a manifesto to the world.”

Modern city planning and architecture, under Western dresses but with something essentially different from their Western models, came to be identified with the powerful presence of the Japanese colonizers. To draw Louise Young’s seminal thesis of a "total empire" to explain the comprehensive manner of Japanese mobilization for Manchukuo,72 I regard modernity manifested in colonial Changchun as the prelude to the larger Japanese militarist conquest of East Asia, hence a bastion of further incursion into China and necessary preparations for “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.”

The 1932 Plan turned a soybean town into a booming colonial capital. The construction of roads, parks, housing, governmental buildings, banks, theatres, and all other infrastructures was made possible only under an authoritarian colonial power in colonial Changchun which was based on a zealous futurism to catch up with western civilization. As Tucker has written, “An ideal design, the interests of the construction industry, or of land speculators were not enough to create this city. It required force.”73 At Changchun the Japanese dominated planning, although the city always had a majority of Han Chinese population. Japanese constructed Changchun to make the city the

71 Eri Hotta, pp.130-131.
citadel for a further military and economic intrusion in China.

Capital Changchun was a much more military city than is evident in its plan and modern aspects demonstrated in the 1932 Plan were closely associated with the Japanese militarism. The planners described it as an automobile city, but the roads were wide to accommodate armored vehicles, and much of traffic that filled colonial Changchun’s streets was military. The wide streets and parklands had another purpose that may seem quaint in an age of neutron bombs or fuel-air explosives, but was almost an obsession of 1930s Japanese planning – defense against air and gas attack. Isolated buildings and open spaces made it more difficult for bombardiers to strike their targets, and open spaces and wind would disperse poison gas. Changchun’s inhabitants all knew that antiaircraft artilleries could be deployed on the 60-meter-wide Datong Street in the event Russian army as the imaginary enemy invaded.74

As the Communists took the initiative of civil war in Manchuria since 1947, Changchun became an isolated stronghold under the control of the KMT, and was finally besieged in March 1948. The previous colonial capital city was intended to be built as a large fortress and had an advantageous position of defense due to sufficient infrastructure networks. Regarding the colonial buildings left by the Japanese, the KMT General Zheng Dongguo, commanding general of Changchun at the time, wrote in his memoir that:

During the occupation [of Changchun] by the Japanese army, a large number of permanent and semi-permanent military structures were built, such as pillboxes, moats, tunnels, watchtowers, and all other kinds of equipments. The Headquarters of Guangdong Army [and other three buildings] stood at the four corners in the center of the city, connected with one another by underneath concrete tunnel crossing wide streets. The buildings above the ground were covered by concrete roofs and guarded by thick walls, narrow and heavy windows. Even the bombs of medium aircrafts cannot make substantial damage to them. ...... the previous Manchuria Bank is an extremely solid building. Its external walls were all made by granite, with the thickness of over one meter. The large interior space was available to store up a huge amount of ammunition, food, and water, and a generator was also equipped for electric power in the building. The headquarter of my corps was set in this building. ...... Based on the military structures left by the Japanese, the whole city formed a modern defense system. ...... With all these efforts, I was confident that Changchun became an impregnable fortress, and could afford any attack from the People’s Liberation Army.75

Inhabitants in the city were organized into neighborhood units (Japanese: tonali gumi, Chinese: ling zu), and were required to practice air defense and other sorts of

74 Hong Zaiming. Hong Zaiming xiansheng fangwen lu (an interview with Mr. Hong Zaiming). Institute of Modern Chinese History at Academia Sinica (ed.). Taiwanese in Manchuria under the Japanese rule. Taipei: Institute of Modern Chinese History at Academia Sinica, 2002, p.325.

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military drills, in addition to tree planting, voluntary labor, etc. A Taiwanese couple remembered that:

"Generally six families composed a neighbor unit, and communicate with each other with a bulletin board. Normally a neighbor unit consisted of six to eight people. ... Members must attend neighbor unit meetings, and participated in training programs, such as fire safety skill and air defense drill which demanded people to run to bomb shelters as soon as possible."  

In this way, all inhabitants of Changchun were socially mobilized to serve the goal of “total war”. All kinds of activities organized by neighborhood units were covered in contemporary newspapers, such as voluntary labor in national holidays and weekends, military drills of air-, gas-, and fire-defense, and various contributions to warfare ranging from monthly wage to metal pieces, etc. For example, the traditional Chinese agricultural holiday of Grain Rain Day (guyu) was stipulated as national tree-planting holiday. On April 3, 1941, an article appeared in Datong News stating that during the tree-planting week, inhabitants were to be organized according to their neighborhood units, to plant trees to “nurture the attachment to the motherland of Manchukuo”.

Despite the modern surface of Changchun, the military nature of the city planning of Changchun, and omnipresent fear and multi-faceted ambiguities embodied in living the Kingly Way in the city demonstrated the discrepancy between propaganda and political realities which made Manchukuo’s nation-founding ideals become “little more than opportunistic idiom of Japanese aggression.”

VI. Conclusions

The capital city of Changchun, and Manchukuo as a whole, was the site of a movement to expel Western imperialist control and build an ideal state in Asia. Carried out under the propagandistic banner of pan-Asianism, the city embraced the materialization of principles of the Kingly Way through planning, such as ethnic harmony, following the heaven and revering the king, and Confucian virtues such as filial piety and loyalty. Japanese colonialism thus differed from Western counterparts in that the attempts to embody the Kingly Way in the built environment represented idiosyncrasies of Japanese colonial policies, and the planning model of Changchun cannot be reduced to a high modernist scheme. In the meantime, the spatial arrangement turned out to enhance the image of the “East Asian modern” and publicized it to the outside world.

However, despite the earnestness with which some of the Japanese reformers attempted to fashion the “East Asian modern,” Manchukuo’s modernity was, as many scholars have noted, ultimately built on the system of unilateral exploitation, coercion,

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77 Dating Bao. 1943-4-3(2).

and cruelty that changed and cost a magnitude of lives, making a pan-Asianist utopia a hollow promise in reality. In fact, Manchukuo’s military-dominated public life afforded little room for non-Japanese to hold positions of substantial political power, and ethnic discrimination and oppression was evident in the everyday life of Kendai. The greatest issue confronting ethnic harmony in Manchukuo, however, was the ethnocentrism of the Japanese who were advancing this very policy. Not unlike the Western counterpart in operating colonies, the Japanese saw mutual antagonism and discord among the various ethnicities as a means of rulership. With the coming into being of Manchukuo, there were differentiations made—Japanese ranked first, Koreans second, and Manchurians and Chinese third. In a document sent by the GDA to Japanese officials, favor should be given to Korean people when they took issue on the Chinese and both sides held reasons.79 In this point Japan was no so different from the European colonialism which Japan itself was criticizing.

79 Manchuria under Japanese Dominion, p. 178.
Chapter 2  Ambivalent Anxieties: Showcasing Colonial Architecture of Changchun

In arranging Manchukuo’s capital, Japanese architects attempted to affirm the state’s authority through the use of space, and to create a new modern that embodied the ideology of kingly way. However, the modern facades of colonial Changchun was not at all monolithic, despite a totalitarian state that patronized massive urban projects to be completed in a very short period of time. The diversity of style characterized the urban landscape of colonial Changchun, and the official culture of the city was best defined by its ambivalences, contradictions, and ambiguities.

Because the ideology of “Kingly Way” was never explicitly elucidated in governmental texts of Manchukuo era, the manifestation of it allowed various possible solutions in physical construction. A new style, so-called “Developing Asia” (Shin A) was generated for institutional buildings in Changchun, resonating with the nationalistic movement in Japan and China at the time. But in practice, the new style did not deviate much from Western historicism and modernism that had strong presence in the city too. However, architectural plurality beyond one singular aesthetic style was evident in Changchun, which found its root back to Mantetsu era. The colonial regime’s practice of accepting and supporting a range of aesthetics meant that multiple imageries and aesthetic formulations represented Japanese pan-Asian ideology and were a part of its cultural system, its imaginary and its aesthetic universe.

Because it is caught with uncertainly in the act of composing its powerful image, the Japanese cultural authority was Janus-faced ambivalent: a pan-Asian aura must be produced while the substance of the legitimacy of leadership was Western knowledge. The ambivalence was also felt by architects. The Japanese justified their colonial project in Manchuria as bringing in modern scientific and technological knowledge to this region, and some of modernism’s most ardent opponents routinely made effective use of the most advanced building methods and repeatedly wrote of the need to develop architecture appropriate to local contemporary conditions. Though some Japanese modernists had extensive training abroad and a longstanding commitment to modernist architecture, they sometimes conceded in the face of nationalistic pressure and turned to pre-modern form, not only in Japan but also in Manchukuo.

Brian McLaren has used the concept of ambivalent modernism to analyze Italian colonial rule in Libya, and gives a number of reasons why Homi Bhabha’s discussion of the ambivalence of the colonial relationship is pertinent to the description of plurality of modern architecture in the Italian colonies. The ambivalence of colonial discourse as theorized by Bhabha is a useful way to view the production of colonial space in Libya as a form of cultural hegemony that is neither uniform nor unchanging. It is the effect of...
uncertainty that afflicts the discourse of power in Manchukuo as well.

This chapter illustrates the ambivalence of the colonial regime and its agencies in building Changchun as a modern capital. It begins with a brief review of the rise of the Imperial Crown buildings in Japan and the equivalent in China, which had great influence on the Developing Asia style, and analyzes the aesthetic plurality of colonial Changchun in relation to a competing ideology to overcome the West to achieve “the modern”. The approach to competing modern visions culminated in Manchukuo’s Tenth Anniversary ceremonies including the 1942 Greater East Asian Exposition in Changchun, which aimed at mass mobilization in the war against the West. Discrepancies and ambiguity in urban construction were, as I will show in this chapter, at the core of Japanese colonial project, not unlike that between the reality of political inequality and the demands of ethnic harmony. Through these cultural pageantries, the city as a whole was manipulated to showcase the novel colonial ideologies and rhetoric.

I. Architectural Profession in Japan and China till the 1930s

The Japanese architectural profession was established in the 1870s as a part of a broad program of modernization based on Western models, and since then architects were trained in the latest construction methods and in Western styles. Their designs housed the public and private institutions that drove the process forward, and they invented symbols of power and status that affirmed the newly emerging social order. However, westernization of Japanese architectural profession did not go unquestioned, and critics anxiously warned that if modernization continued on its present course, the Japanese would eventually lose their distinct cultural identity. These concerns stimulated research into Japanese architectural history and led to the passage in 1897 of Japan’s first law on the preservation of historically significant buildings. It was during the same time when the Japanese were more confident in their ability to preserve political autonomy in the face of Western colonial expansion. More importantly, the Western powers refused to recognize Japan as an equal and passed anti-Asian immigration laws in the US disillusioned many Japanese who had been aggressively pro-Western in the aftermath of the first Sino-Japanese War (1904-1905).

As a result, the image of a self-serving pan-Asian solidarity nourished in contrast to the prior equation of Western culture with technology and progress. The Japan Revival style began in the 1890s and grew thereafter, especially during periods of patriotic fervor, which was bound to have an effect on Western-style architecture. On the other hand, some among the second generation of academically trained architects began to advocate the incorporation of pre-modern Japanese architectural forms into design as a strategy for “Japanizing” modern architectural practices. Ito Chuta (1867-1954), the graduate of the Imperial University of Tokyo (Todai), was representative

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3 The earliest example of Japan Revival was probably the Nara Kencho of 1895 by Nagano Uheiji. In the heterogeneous context of late Meiji Western architecture, however, it was just one more style. For more detail on the rise of Japanese nationalism and related architectural movement, see Dallas Finn. *Meiji revisited: the sight of Victorian Japan*. New York : Weatherhill, 1995.
of this new development. Despite his immersion in Western architecture, Ito argued for the development of a new architectural style partaking of both Japanese and Western elements.\(^4\) To that end, Ito became a prominent supporter of the style known as *Nihon shumi* (Japanese taste), associated with public buildings of the late 1920s and 1930s.

It was during this period that the so-called *teikan yoshiki* (Imperial Crown style) in architecture thus became the recognized emblem of Japanese nationalism and, later, expansionism. The term was dubbed due to a competition of 1917-18 for the Imperial Diet Building, employed by opponents in the pre-WWI period to mock the seeming superficiality of putting traditional roofs on modern structures, but was used in the interwar era to describe this type of design for governmental buildings.\(^5\) Two examples representing the *teikan yoshiki* merited attention: the Kanagawa Prefectural Office (1926) and the Nagoya Municipal Office (1930), both of which resulted from competitions. (Fig. 2-1) In order to achieve monumentality, a massive square tower topped by a pagoda-like roof was added to a standard industrialized frame. The winning design for the Nagoya City Hall (1930) by Hirabayashi Kingo added decorative gables to the roof of the central tower, thereby suggesting the distinct application of Japanese taste in architecture.\(^6\) The architectural treatment of Imperial Crown style later had lent tremendous influence in Japan’s colonial urban construction in Manchuria.

![Fig 2-1 the Kanagawa Prefectural Office](source.png)

*Fig 2-1 the Kanagawa Prefectural Office*

*Source: Jonathan Reynolds, p.91*

![Fig 2-2 the KMT’s Central Procuratorate, by Yang Tingbao, 1935](source.png)

*Fig 2-2 the KMT’s Central Procuratorate, by Yang Tingbao, 1935*

In the increasingly anti-Western atmosphere of the late 1920s, however, Western technological and scientific knowledge held sway in architectural profession. Despite rising nationalist sentiment and Ito’s arguments of artistic nature of architecture, for the first two decades of the twentieth century an aggressively engineering-oriented group of

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\(^4\) Ito’s numerous contributions to the history of Japan’s pre-modern architecture began with a groundbreaking work published in 1893 on the seventh-century Buddhist temple complex in Horyu-ji. He helped restore many historic buildings and collaborated with his former teacher Kigo Kiyoyoshi in constructing the Heian Shrine, a replica of a portion of the late-eighth-century Imperial Palace produced in 1895 to commemorate the city of Kyoto’s 1100th anniversary. In his role as a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, Ito was also instrumental in expanding other architects’ awareness of Japanese architectural history.


\(^6\) ibid, p.49.
architects exerted tremendous influence within the profession. Their primary concern was to explore new construction technology, including the steel frame and steel-reinforced concrete. One of the leading exponents of this approach was Sano Riki (1880-1956), who had supervised the construction in major railway cities under the aegis of Goto Shimpei, the first director of Mantetsu, and served consultant for the 1932 Plan of Changchun.\(^7\)

Modernism was introduced to Japan as an international movement, and in their early manifestos the modernists claimed that their efforts were a part of a project of international significance. The rebuilding of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo between 1916 and 1922 by Frank L. Wright presaged an influx of Modernism into Japan. In 1920 a group of recent graduates from Tokyo Imperial University formed the Japan Secession Group (Bunriha Kenchikukai), the first movement in support of modern architecture in Japan. All its members came under the influence of both Viennese Secessionism and German Expressionism. Young Japanese architects such as Maekawa Kunio and Sakakura Junzo went abroad after their graduation from Todai to work in Le Corbusier’s office in Paris, exposing themselves to modernist radical ideas and projects. Maekawa and Sakakura, as well as Tenge Kenzo who had worked in both of their offices, left their impact in the urban construction of colonial Changchun in the thirties and forties.

On the other hand, modern architectural profession in China was established several decades later in the 1920s. After the Boxers’ Uprising, American missionary architects, such as Harry Hussey (1880-?) and Henry Murphy (1877-1954), led the path of exploring possibilities to include traditional Chinese architectural elements in many missionary universities. As architect Liang Sicheng (1901-1972), a graduate of University of Pennsylvania in 1927 and also the founder of the discipline of Chinese architectural history, criticized the first Chinese-style buildings designed by American architects “lack research in details”,\(^8\) Chinese architects, many of whom returned to China after being educated abroad, took the leadership from the Americans to build modern Chinese architecture since the 1920s onwards. But the practical experiences by the American forerunners took direct effects on new Chinese architects. For example, Lu Yanzhi (1894-1929), a graduate from Cornell University in 1918, once worked in H. Murphy’s office and participated in the planning of Yenching University in 1916 and Nanking University for Women. Shortly after that, he won the international tender for

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\(^7\) After graduating from Tokyo Imperial University in 1903, Sano remained at the university to conduct research and lecture, becoming a full professor in 1918. Sano’s primary concern was to explore new construction technology, including the steel frame and steel-reinforced concrete in the face of natural disasters. He became a specialist in earthquake-resistant design. The unreinforced brick and other Western building materials that had been used extensively during the Meiji period were extremely vulnerable to earthquake damage. Sano’s research highlighted the importance of employing materials such as steel and reinforced concrete to improve safety. In 1911 Sano wrote: “Given the present state of our nation, if we decide that it is fair to set as a primary requirement benefiting all of the people of the nation, then it is clear that Japanese architects ought to base their work in science and ought to be engineers ... The most important responsibility of the Japanese architect is to understand the problem of how to build the strongest and most efficient building at an affordable price.” Sano also introduced toilet and sanitary regulations to Changchun. See Jonathan Reynolds. *Maekawa Kunio and the emergence of Japanese modernist architecture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, pp. 18-19, 32.

the Mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1925. This so-called Chinese Renaissance style was a milestone in modern Chinese architectural history.

After military success of the Northern Expedition, Kuomintang (KMT) had the national capital moved to Nanking from Peking in 1928, and carried out the Capital City Plan (Chinese: shoudu jihua) immediately. The plan regulated that important official buildings should employ national style, with big roofs as the most distinguishing signs. In the Capital City Plan, the overall architectural style was regulated to consist of “a modification of the classic Chinese style”. In this way, big roofs and exquisite traditional decorations were put on the functional plans for a lot of buildings in the 1930s, for example, the Building of Railway Ministry in 1929 by H. Murphy, and the KMT’s Central Procuratorate in Nanjing by Yang Tingbao, graduate from University of Pennsylvania in 1925, etc. Later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was completed in 1933 by Zhao Shen and Tong Jun, graduates from University of Pennsylvania in 1923 and 1928 respectively. By the late twenties, a number of professional associations had been founded and professional journals circulated, hence the establishment of modern Chinese architectural profession.

In this larger historical background of nationalist movement (sometimes in the form of anti-Westernism and anti-imperialism) which called for a sovereign nation-state independent from the West, Japanese and Chinese architects consciously looked back into history for traditional motif to be applied in modern buildings to represent cultural pride and national identity. It was the architectural current of the late twenties and early thirties in both countries that predicated the emergence of a specific style in Manchukuo.

II. Architectural Plurality of Changchun before 1931

The construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) by the Russians around the turn of the twentieth century brought profound changes to Changchun and many other cities along the route. The first modern architecture in Changchun appeared in the Russian settlement and the most elaborate buildings were of course those relating to the railway. The railway station was a modest single-story building, signifying Changchun was an ordinary freight post along the railway.

Following the victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Japan gained control over the southern half of the railway and Changchun became the breaking point between the two halves of the line. The Japanese and built their own railway settlement, or annexed land railway (Ch: fushudi; Jp:fuzokuchi). Under the supervision of Goto Shimpei, the first director of Japanese Southern Manchurian Railway Company (Mantetsu) which played out the national role of modernizing Japanese settlements in Manchuria, Japanese planners produced a plan based on western technologies boasting efficiency and rationality, both emblems of progress. The high percentage of space

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reserved for roads was significant. At a time when automobiles were rare, Goto’s foresight of a city for vehicles embraced modern technology and modernity. The influence of both City Beautiful and American railway town planning was obvious in the making of Japanese settlement in Changchun, which later also became the principles of planning Manchukuo’s capital.

Since late Meiji, the variety of building styles has been striking. In the rich soil of materials, both vernacular and imported from abroad, a profusion of styles flourished: Baroque, Neo-classical, Gothic Revival, Tudor, Secessionist, Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, and ingenious inventions, including the Imperial Crown. These developments in the Japanese home islands were introduced to Manchuria after the Japanese influence grew in that region. In Changchun, the newly-built concrete station was in the Renaissance style, much larger than its Russian counterpart. The neo-classic Mantetsu regional office nearby the station plaza was a massive, symmetrical, three story structure, while the Yamato Hotel, Changchun’s most preeminent hotel, at the other side of the plaza had a sleek facade in Art Nouveau style. (Fig. 2-3) Sitting across from the train station on either side of Changchun Boulevard, they first greeted visitors upon disembarking in Changchun. Along the boulevard were library, post office, and police station. For example, the two-storied Changchun post office was constructed of stone, reminiscent of the European Baroque.

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10 Planners set aside twenty-three percent of the total area for streets. There were six classes of roads, the widest of which was, and the narrowest 10.9 meters, or six ken. All but the smallest (the sixth class) had sidewalks. The basic grid was formed by eight east-to-west streets and ten north-to-south streets. Two diagonal streets radiated from the railway station and convergence at two circular plazas, upon which Japanese could erect buildings with impressive facades. See Koshizawa Akira. Manchukoku no shuto keikaku: tokyo nop genzai to mirai o tou (The planning of Manchukuo’s capital: an inquiry into the present and future of Tokyo), Tokyo: nihon keizai hyoronsha, 1988.


12 All three buildings and the station were designed by Ichida Kichijiro, a 1906 Todai graduate who joined Mantetsu the following year. See Bill Sewell. Japanese Imperialism and Civic Construction in Manchuria: Changchun, 1905-45. dissertation, Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 2000, Chapter 4.
It is noteworthy that except for Shinto shrines and statues Japanese elements were largely absent in the Japanese settlement. The new Yamato Hotel demonstrated that Japanese were capable of constructing in any style the Russians could. However, art nouveau did not captivate Japanese architects as it did many Europeans. The Japanese use of art nouveau for Changchun’s Yamato Hotel did not result from any cultural crusading rebelliousness. Instead it demonstrated a desire to demonstrate technical competency in a powerful, new style. In building the settlement as a Japanese colony, not only contemporary technologies and organizations but architectural styles too represented Japanese society as culturally and technically sophisticated as that of any other power. By the same token, it was because European architects at the turn of the century viewed the eclectic style as representing modernity that that Japanese designers felt equal to join.

In the face of Japanese encroachment, the Chinese government began to build a commercial district (shangbudi) in Changchun as well, a means that had been practiced in many cities before. Despite commercial interest, the primary concern for developing a Chinese district was to antagonize Japanese economic and territorial expansion in Changchun. Xu Shichang, Governor of Three Eastern Provinces (1907-1909), reported to Beijing:

> Chinese sovereignty must not be infringed by other peoples... and local officials should take suitable measures to different conditions and alter the situation. The right of land ownership must be operated and managed by our government, hence commerce can prosper.14

Xu appointed Yan Shiqing, a nationalist local official (jichang daoyin), to supervise Changchun’s Chinese commercial district. Yan built his administrative office, and a police station and a commerce office, on the south edge of the Japanese settlement, to prevent further expansion of the Japanese settlement. The main hall of the administrative complex was built in 1909, in the so-called verandah style. Fitting the hot and humid climate in South China, veranda-style buildings were widely seen in treaty ports as a combination of dwelling and office for Europeans. Though the veranda does not fit harsh winter in Manchuria, the main hall was surrounded by masonry veranda on all sides measuring 2.4 meters in depth.15 In this case, considering the proximity of this office to the neighboring Japanese railway settlement, the display of modernity and a gesture to demonstrate resolution to resist Japanese incursion prevailed over practical concerns. (Fig.2-4)

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13 The first examples of developing a Chinese new town or commercial district within a traditional political center in the first decade of the 20th century are Xiangfang district in Beijing, new districts in Tianjin and Jinan respectively under Yuan Shikai.


15 Chen Suliu. 2003. ‘A Survey of the Office for Intendant of Jinlin and Changchun’. In Zhang, Fuhe (ed.) Study and Preservation of Modern Chinese Architecture VIII. Beijing: Tsinghua University, p.501. The complex included offices and houses that composed a series of courtyard like traditional Chinese yamen. It was later used by Puyi for the inaugural ceremony as Chief Executive in 1932, and sequentially used as Puyi’s temporary palace, State Council of Manchukuo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.
Other modern buildings in the newly developed district included a Russian Consulate that survives to today, a Japanese Consulate, and several light industrial plants. Jin Yufu (1887-1962), a renowned historian on Manchuria and historiography, chiefed a small pulp factory in this area in the 1920s. Although the Japanese settlement was the most dynamic part of Changchun, the population of the old city and new Chinese-run district far surpassed that of the Japanese.

As Changchun was fragmented spatially, ethnically and administratively in four sectors nearly separate from one another before 1931, the architectural plurality put a visual commentary to the complexities of power relations in the city. But be it the Japanese, the Chinese or the Russians, the approach to the modern was an unmistakably westernizing program: while various styles and materials of architecture that embodied Western modernity abounded in the city and competed with each other, no hint of Chinese (or Oriental) element was referred to in the boasted images of Changchun’s modernization at the time. In this way, the plurality of Changchun before 1931 differed from what it was to be as a colonial capital.

III. Architectural Plurality in Capital Changchun

As the Japanese occupied whole Manchuria after Manchurian Incident (1931), the puppet state of Manchukuo was established the next year and Changchun was made its capital and renamed Xinjing (New Capital). Fragmented pieces of Changchun were incorporated into a much larger and more ambitious plan that I elaborated in the previous chapter. Reflecting on architectural development in Japan and its colonies overseas, Kishida Hideto, a professor at the Todai who had wide connections with officials in Manchukuo, in a 1935 essay classified new Japanese buildings into three categories: a “Japanesque” style, known often as the Imperial Crown style (teikan yoshiki), historic styles, and new styles (modernism). This classification can be applied to describe the architectural practice of Manchukuo’s capital as well.

In January 1933, the Five-Year Plan (1933-1937) of capital construction proposed by Capital Construction Bureau (CCB) was approved, and a group of buildings for the central government immediately started construction. However, despite a strong central state that unified administration and carried out construction schemes quickly, there were various architectural manifestations or styles in the city, and the urban landscape was constantly characterized by a plurality of architectural styles. The modified Imperial...
Crown style appeared in the capital as “Developing Asia style,” which was widely used in Manchukuo’s institutional buildings, while Japanese Revival, Frank Wright’s prairie style, neo-classicism, expressionism, and modernism all had strong presence in Changchun.

The diversity was comparable to that of the previous decade, but it was the ambiguous and self-contradictory nature of Japanese colonial ideology in Manchukuo, rather than fragmented administration, that prescribed architectural plurality in Changchun. Unlike previous construction that boasted equality with the West, the new and specifically modern in the capital represented superiority over the West. Through the appropriation of cultural and ethnical identities, building Changchun as the new capital was a means to boast a positive and benign image of the colonizer that brought civilization and modernity to all ethnic communities, as well as a means of rebuffing and taming Chinese nationalism in Manchukuo.

**Developing Asia Style**

The distinctive style for governmental architecture in colonial Changchun is generally referred to as “Developing Asia” (Ch: xingya; Jp: shin a), which displayed striking characteristics such as sloping roofs and exquisite decorations. Though not too much deviated from the concurrent Imperial Crown style in the Japanese home islands, the Developing Asia style embodied more continental elements than Japanese. Except for some subtle difference, the basic features of the appropriation of cultural identities in colonial buildings of Changchun were very close to those built in Nanjing and other major cities under Kuomintang (KMT), and to those later under the PRC since 1949, notwithstanding the three regimes fought each other relentlessly.

A tentative experiment of the Developing Asia style appeared in the capital’s first two major structures, the First and Second Government Buildings, which began in 1932 on Datong Plaza and were completed next summer. The first that housed the Capital Construction Bureau (CCB) and the Ministry of Culture and Education, featured a flat roof and an ornamental parapet that repeated as a motif atop the porte-cochere and tower (Fig 2-5). The Second, used as municipal police station, had a distinctly Asian façade and a cluster of towers decorated by tiled roofs and mythical animals. (Fig 2-6) Both buildings were symmetrical, two-storied, and had a square, high tower projecting from its geometric center, reminiscent of the Kanagawa Prefectural Office Building (1926) and the Nagoya Municipal Office Building (1930). Located upon either side of Datong Dajie on the southern side of Datong Plaza, the two offices faced the distant railway station like sentinels, reflecting the first attempts of combining Western and Eastern architectural heritage in the colonial capital. According to contemporary critics, the First and Second Government Buildings were flawed with disproportion and disingenuous accouterments and failed to present a style that “embodies an updated modernity in a newly born country,” however, they experimented an appropriation of shared East Asian elements in the undertakings of Manchukuo, and presented the most

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striking trademarks of the ensuing Developing Asia style: symmetry, massiveness, verticality, and a square tiled tower at the center (as in the Second Government Building).

The Developing Asia style matured in building the Hall of State Council. (Fig 3-7) It had a massive, three-story, columned at the main entrance. The four columns of the porte-cochere served as a unifying motif which graced the entryways at either end of the central section and reappeared on each side of the central tower. More prominent than the engaged columns of the Second Government Building, the free standing columns were also more striking than the colonnade effects produced by the use of stone in the Nagoya and the Kanagawa Buildings. Overall, the repetitive effect of the columns enhanced a sense of verticality and monumentality. The sense of monumentality and state power was further emphasized by extravagant land use. While the plans of the Nagoya and the Kanagawa Buildings were square, the Hall of State had an H-shaped plan, which made the Hall of State Council even more sprawling. Sitting upon a much larger city block amid trees and lawns, the Hall of State Council spanned more space.

Moreover, recognizing the dissonance of a stark fusion of contrasts that attached a large tower with a sloping, tiled roof to an otherwise Western, steel-framed building, the Hall of State Council de-emphasized the central tower by reducing its proportional height while maintaining its role as a grand, central stairway. The building’s dark coloration also made it more striking, leaving the white tower and columns to have a stark impact on the viewer. Though fenestration was bound to be grouped vertically, as in skyscraper design, the impression of modernity in western notion was dissipated in the over-insistent application of false corbels and heavy tiled gables.

Like the Imperial Crown style buildings in Japan, however, the Hall of State Council was similar in that the floor of the central section below the projecting eaves was often set back, or indented slightly, to offset the excess of height and to produce the sensation of a roof supported in the traditional manner on cantilevered faltering. This trick may be derived from Frank L. Wright’s treatment at the Imperial Hotel a decade earlier. Its adoption in the Imperial Crown was intended to deemphasize the role of the structural steel members which upheld the roof.

Another element suggesting the influence of Wright’s Imperial Hotel on the
Imperial Crown is the nearly inevitable presence of the porte-cochere. In Wright’s building, the covered entryway designated a true focal point and also merged visually in the context of repeating horizontals that compose the front elevation. In the Imperial Crown buildings, on the contrary, the porte-cochere is usually endowed with a diminutive Japanese-style roof, possibly in imitation of the covered exterior stair of many Shinto shrines. The Developing Asia buildings, on the other hand, neutralized the Japanese elements, and the porte-cochere became a dynamic component in colonial public buildings.

Other Developing Asia buildings included, amongst others, the Ministry of Justice, several blocks to the south of the Hall of State Council, and Supreme Courthouse sitting at the southern end of Shuntian Street. The Ministry of Justice was built in 1935, and was reported to be “the most successful application of this style”.20 (Fig 3-8) A central tower surmounting on three-storied hall presented a pyramidal effect that was reinforced by the use of triangular gables on each side of each floor of the tower and on the front of the porte-cochere. Although European in style, its roof’s materials and decorative ridges were distinctly Chinese. The courthouse, on the other hand, was completed in 1938. Its plan included long wings almost the same length of the central section, but rounded comers and the oblique angles in which the wings extended gave the building a more expansive appearance. However, the most focal element of the building was once again the central roofed tower that rose above the main entrance.

Fig 3-7 the building of colonial State Department, built in 1933
Photo by the author in 2006

Fig 3-8 the building of colonial Ministry of Justice, built in 1934
Photo by the author in 2006

Developing Asia buildings congregated in Manchukuo’s administrative quarter, flanking both sides of Shuntian Street. Apparently, the colonial regime expected to use this hybrid style to promote the positive image of the newly established state. The most grandiose building of this sort was Puyi’s palace, scheduled to be built on the northern

plaza of this political quarter, but the Pacific War suspended its construction.

The Developing Asia building provided a comparison to the modified Chinese architectural style called for in the Capital City Plan in Republic Nanjing, which also employed exquisite traditional decorations and simplistic lines on the facades, boldly doing away with the traditional Chinese style large sloping roofs. However, central tiled-roofed towers were more often referred in colonial Changchun than the palace-style buildings with large sloping hipped roof in Republic Nanjing.

**Modified Historicism**

The Developing Asia style was a hybrid aesthetic program that combined Asian and Western elements in a single building, while a historicist style also abounded in both public and private sectors in colonial Changchun. In contrast to the nearby administrative quarter of Manchukuo where Developing Asia style dominated the landscape, the making of Datong Street called for a mix of various styles and a blending of science, technology, rationality, revivalism, and Asianism.

A conspicuous building comprising the new “civic center” at Datong Plaza was the headquarters for the Bank of Manchuria. This enormous four-story structure completed in 1938, occupied thirty thousand square meters, and the frontal Doric colonnade evoked a classical air.\(^{21}\) The bank represented a distinctly Western modernity, and marble was ubiquitous. (Fig 3-9) It seemed the directors of the Bank had a peculiar predilection to the West, and had its club and employee houses built in modernist style.

As the real ruler of the colonial state, the headquarters for the Guandong Army (GDA) was the most prominent example of historicism along Datong Street. Completed in 1935, it was a sprawling, three story structure with three “crowns,” each reminiscent of the upper reaches of Japanese castles. (Fig 3-10) Unlike the Developing Asia buildings, it boldly boasted the striking Japanese castle roof.

![Fig 3-9 Central Bank of Manchuria](image1)  
Source: Yu Weilain, p.117  

![Fig 3-10 the headquarters of the GDA](image2)  
Source: Li Zhong  

A similar structure meriting Japanese element was the Jimmu den (Jimmu Hall), reeced in a park on the east side of Datong Street. Completed in 1940, it was a long

hall built of reinforced concrete, though its low roof, multiple wings and gardening detail marked it as typically Japanese. Its 920 square meters provided a protected enclosure for fencing, judo, and archery.\textsuperscript{22} Both the GDA headquarters and the Jimmu Hall were emblems of Japanese presence in the capital city, hence the Japan Revival style.

Chinese palace-like buildings appeared in special events as well. In order to prepare for the commemorate ceremony for the completion of Five-Year Capital Construction in 1937, Datong Park was made the site for the ceremony that the emperor would attend to confer honors and awards to people who contributed to urban construction. Temporary buildings in the park, such as a pavilion for the emperor to inspect over, a ceremonial gate, tents to seat officials that attended the event, etc., were under construction shortly. The similar form of gabled palace with sloping roofs reappeared in the Tenth Anniversary ceremony in 1942. In official report, the large sloping roof covered with yellow tiles was supported by red columns, and the seat of the emperor was set at the center of the palace, flanked by his advisors and guards. Large sloping roof, as the most distinct element of East Asian architecture, was used once again in a ceremonial building and showed the Japanese role as the preserver of the old and precious tradition of the region.\textsuperscript{23}

Religious complexes of the colonial times were traditionally built in a historicist style. The most imposing Japanese Shinto shrine in the early years of the colonial rule in Changchun was the Higashi Honganji, completed in 1937. Although emulating the Meijin Shrine, the large sloping roof and decorative ridge were made in bronze. Besides, the largest Buddhist temple of several courtyards in Manchukuo, located on the north side of Datong Plaza, and a Gothic-style catholic church were both constructed by 1937.\textsuperscript{24} The diversity of different styles visually elucidated the state ideology of “kingly way” that different religions were tolerated on condition that they served the ideal of “bringing peace to the peoples,” i.e., maintaining colonial order and pacifying dissidents.\textsuperscript{25}

Another kind of building involved a historicist style which ordinary citizens would frequent was public monument. After the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, “the way of the king” was gradually replaced by “the way of the God,” and Shinto shrines construction and rituals were stipulated in national laws.\textsuperscript{26} Japanese Shinto shrines were clearly attempts to Japanize Manchuria to replace Confucian temples, a subject I will discuss in the next chapter. In February 1940, Japanese architect Fujishima Tetsusaburo designed a one story, tile roofed, wooden building in Puyi’s palace as the National Founding Shrine.\textsuperscript{27} Construction began at the end of March, and was complete two

\textsuperscript{23} Da dong ya bo lan hui jie mu (the opening ceremony for the Great East Asia Construction Exposition). Shengjing Shibao. 1942-8-12(1)
\textsuperscript{25} Renxin. “Weiman fojiao zonghui huizhang ruguang.” WSZL, 1984-5, pp.1-16. for Bo’re Temple under colonial rule specifically, see WSZL, 1990-3.
\textsuperscript{26} For more detail on Manchukuo’s state rituals, see Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{27} Wang Shaoshong. Wei jianguo shenmiao (the temple of nation-founding god of Manchukuo). Wei huanggong chenlieyuan nianjian (Annals of the puppet palace museum). Changchun: Puppet Manchukuo palace museum Press,
months later, and it was used by Puyi to salute and pray for the Japanese empire. The Monument to National Foundation, on the other hand, was built at the far south of Datong Street on September 18, 1940, the anniversary of the beginning of the occupation, which was used as a surrogate of the National Founding Shrine. Corresponding to Tokyo’s Yasukuni Shrine, it could be reached through a two large gateways, between which sat a square compound that included two other gateways on either side. As I will elaborate, the historicist Japanese style in the building of shrines since China Incident (1937) suggested the consolidated status of Japanese leadership without the need to compromise with local people.

**Modernism**

The capital city of Manchukuo was an experimental terrain for Japanese architects, some of whom extended the grandeur of the Imperial Crown style in the Japanese colonial undertaking in Manchuria, while some practicing modernism found the experience in Manchuria crucial and inspiring in post-war Japan.

Facing Datong Plaza, the southwest of the bank was the headquarters of the Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (Fig 3-11). Completed in 1935, it was similarly modern – a four story monolith with a smooth brick façade with a tower rising three stories above the central stairwell. Similarly, the headquarters of Guandong Bureau, sitting across Datong Street from the headquarters of Guandong Army, also employed functional and efficient style, and appeared more radical with a flat roof that revoked central tower.

![Fig 3-11 Mandei Building at Datong Plaza](source: Li Zhong, p.77)  
![Fig 3-12 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](source: Li Zhong, p.79)

Somewhat detached from the colonial ideology, commercial buildings at Xinjing were built in much more restrained and clearly civilian style. The Fengle Theater built in 1935 is a representative of this style, which echoes the Art Deco architecture found both in private houses and office buildings in the Japanese settlements in other cities in Manchuria and Shanghai.

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Another exceptional modern building was Manchukuo’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the long debate between Mantetsu and the Guandong Army over borrowing overseas to develop Manchukuo, it structure in colonial Changchun was built with direct foreign loan. Designed by the French firm of Brossard-Mopin, the Foreign Ministry building was completed in 1936. The odd structure was a busy mix of a variety of modern techniques. It was a rare Manchukuo governmental building that was not adorned with Asian roof and tiles. (Fig. 3-12)

Two Western leading modernist architects had some influence in the construction of colonial Changchun, through their ideas and their students. Frank Lloyd Wright had rebuilt the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, and his influence was prolonging amongst his Japanese disciples. In the 1930s, one of his Japanese assistants, Endo Arata, moved his office to colonial Changchun and settled down in the city, where he designed the Manchurian Central Bank Club, a large compound with residences and a spacious clubhouse built in Wright’s Prairie style that gained immediate recognition.29

The other Western figure whose influence can be seen in building colonial Changchun is Le Corbusier. Two young modernist architects, Maekawa Kunio and Sakakura Junzo came to Manchuria in the 1930s after returning from Le Corbusier’s office in Paris. Though frustrated in competitions in Japan, Maekawa won two tenders in Manchuria, Workshops of Showa Steel Corporation (1937) and Civic Hall of Dalian (1938). As David Steward observes, in the entry of Civic Hall of Dalian, Maekawa did not insert a physical central tower but cunningly “borrowing” (as the Japanese landscape gardening tradition has it) the Monument to the Loyal Dead which stands on a hill behind the building.30 Though not part of the architecture, it manages to afford the crowning element of the design.

Maekawa opened his branch office in Shanghai in 1939, and in 1942 he worked on a series of designs for the Manchurian Aircraft Company. The firm designed factory buildings and housing in Mukden (Shenyang). The projects in Manchuria and in Shanghai were essential to the Maekawa firm’s survival, because the main Tokyo office had very little work. From 1942 until the end of the war, the firm had approximately twenty-one projects, of which only sixteen were built: seven of these were for the Manchurian Aircraft Company.31

As Maekawa confessed, the years of Manchukuo was a period of growing ambivalence toward the principles of modern design and their significance for Japanese architecture.32 However, he confirmed that modernism was not a threat to tradition and could be mobilized for nationalistic ends that allowed him to establish his vocation and reputation in the Japanese colonial undertaking in the mainland. Indeed, shortly before,
in 1943, Maekawa for the first time had prepared a competition entry in the ancient Japanese palace style for the Japanese Cultural Center at Bangkok.

Sakakura Junzo (1904-1968) went to Le Corbusier’s office in 1931 and worked there for 5 years. In 1937, he went to France for the design of Japanese Pavilion in Paris Exposition, and this project established Sakakura’s fame as a world-recognized modernist architect. In particular note, Sakakura’s planning for the South Lake Complex in 1939 inherited the main idea of the planning for Alger and resident blocks in Antwerp by Le Corbusier in the early 1930. (Fig. 3-13) Meanwhile, it also reflected the opinions of “Brilliance City” proposed in 1935, when Sakakura worked right there in Le Corbusier’s office. However, except for the Japanese Pavilion in the Paris international Expo in 1937, and the residential housing proposal in the colonial capital, Sakakura had no equivalent works during a long period of 15 years.33

Incidentally, when Maekawa worked on the Darien Competition in 1938, a younger architect, Kenzo Tange, entered the Maekawa office fresh out of university. Tange stayed with Maekawa until returning to graduate school in 1942. For a period of time, however, Tange Kenzo also participated in the production of South Lake Housing Complex under the supervision of Sakakura. Architectural historian Yatuska Hajime suggests in his research on Tange’s Tokyo Bay Project in 1960 that his working experience with Sakakura two decades ago had been an inspired source for his later works of waterfront planning.34 (Fig. 3-14) The three modernist architects, Maekawa, Sakakura and Tange, became prominent architects in postwar modernism, but the strong connection of their previous practice in the 1930s and 40s in colonial Manchuria, as well as the connections amongst their experiences, can not be overlooked.

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33 It was not until the economic resurgence in 1951 that he got the chance to put the design of Kamakura Gallery into reality.
chance to fulfill their architectural ideas. As anti-Western sentiment intensified in Japan in the immediate prewar years of the early Showa era since 1925 onwards, even mild forms of Westernization risked censure. However, as nationalistic as Ito’s rhetoric was, it never approached the venom of Nazi critiques of modernism. The Japanese members of modernist movement were also ready to make compromise with the imperial government. For instance, Maekawa and other modernists would go on to incorporate selected pre-modern elements in their designs, as exemplified in the competition of the Japanese Cultural Center at Bangkok, Thailand, their opponents would find it difficult to accuse them of being anti-Japanese in the same way that the opponents of the Bauhaus accused German modernists of being anti-German. Rather than challenging the nationalistic values that lay behind the imperial roof style, modernists made a Ruskinian plea for honesty in artistic expression.

In every European country, as well as in America, the thirties saw a resurgence of interest in monumental styles for which modified neoclassical forms were employed. However, Japanese members of modernist movement did not want to be branded as either “un-Japanese” or “red”. They argued that architects should concentrate on their architecture and not become too wrapped up in politics, hence were considered less threatening politically than that in Western Europe. Prominent modernists like Maekawa were not at all stubborn and were ready to employ traditionalist elements such as hipped roof to evade attack from the nationalists.

This tremendous diversity often blurred the stylistic boundaries between modernists and non-modernists. The growing ambivalence toward the principles of modern design and their significance for Japanese architecture was shared by architects of all stripes. But despite their differences, these architects shared a keen sense of group identity – they were all engaged in a struggle to forge new architectural solutions appropriate to East Asian modern, hence the plurality of architectural styles in Changchun as a showcase of Japanese colonial rule.

IV. Architecture and Politics: the Rationale of Aesthetic Pluralism

In Europe many found the concept of internationalism threatening as a radical and dangerous ideology, and it produced a significant rift within the architectural community. In Japan, too, the concept of internationalism became suspect as the political climate in

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37 The organizers of Japan International Architectural Association (Nihon Intanashonaru Kenchikukai), the largest and most influential modernist institution, were concerned that if they appeared to advocate internationalism too aggressively, they might be subject to political attack from the Right. Members debated the merits of changing their name by substituting the Japanese word kokusai (international) for the Western loanword intanashonaru, which was problematic for two reasons: it was foreign in origin, and, as in Europe, it was associated by some with Communism. On the contrary, kokusai would have been a more neutral term.
38 The difference can be also explained, in part, by modernists’ personal links with the political elite and with the leadership of the Japanese architectural profession. For example, Sano Riki had been a close friend and consultant to Goto Shimpei, while Maekawa Kunio had wide family connections in the government. See Reynolds, p.137.
the late 1920s once again grew nationalistic. However, some of modernism’s most ardant opponents, such as Ito Chuta, did not portray modernism as a particularly dangerous threat, but he insisted that architecture could be found that was better suited to Japan's climate, history, and culture. Although Japanese modernists encountered significant resistance on both architectural and political grounds, they had far more success in continuing to work and to participate in the public discourse than did their colleagues in Nazi Germany. As such, architects were entering into an era in which greater political caution was necessary for survival, and they were anxious about the threat of attack from nationalists.

The diversity was more explicit in Changchun, the capital of Manchukuo. In the nascent state, experiments of statecraft were omnipresent to construct “the first nation in the world based upon the lofty ideal of ethnic harmony.” The rank of the experiment included architecture as well. New architecture in colonial Changchun was monumental and mixed. The differences of urban landscape in Japanese and their German allies occurred because of different ethnic policy and ideological concerns. The Nazis considered modern architecture not only decadent but foreign, implying Jewish or Bolshevik connections. The public buildings of the Third Reich therefore sought to return to a pre-modern conception of community untouched by undesirable traits. Theories of racial purity inevitably became manifest as architectural purity. By contrast, architecture in Manchukuo was far more hybrid and plural by nature.

Efforts were made at demonstrating the egalitarian principles in the nation building of Manchukuo. Combining Western, Chinese and Japanese elements in architecture, the Developing Asia style and the management of ornamentation was one manifestation of the “spirit of ethnic harmony” (minzoku kyowa no seishin) that underpinned the colonizing project. An arresting building that embodied the ideology of “harmony of five ethnicity” on Datong Street was the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs (mengzhengbu), built in 1937. The embedded columns and cornice gave the building a western appearance, yet it was balanced by a tiled gable roof rising above the center. Just as no other country in the world had a basis in ethnic harmony, a contemporary critic thought Manchukuo’s architectural culture was without parallel. In the entry hall of the State Council, A large painting of five rejoicing young girls from the five ethnicities was hung on the wall at the lobby of the Hall of the State Council, and it was reprinted as stamps that had an extensive circulation as ethnic harmonious coexistence.

Borrowing the Imperial Crown, the Developing Asia style played out the role of new modernity in colonial Changchun most effectively. Designed to impress viewers with a sense of grandeur and power, it demonstrated both technical innovation and ideological message of “returning to Asia”. The technological and cultural icons of the non-western modernity can be better understood in comparison to practices in Western colonies. For example, some of the most prominent classical features in Edward Baker’s secretariat design, above all the columned porticoes opening from the top

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ministerial offices far above the plain, “were meant to reinforce this sense of empire; for
from these porches ministers could look out over the far ruinous sites of the historic cities
of the Hindu and Mahomedan dynasties to the new Capital beneath them that united for
the first time through the centuries all races and religions of India.”

The architectural manipulation of institutional buildings to express state power
and associative rule in the Secretariat of New Delhi to appease local people was evident
in the Hall of State Council, too. However, Developing Asia buildings supported by a
pan-Asian ideology also substantially differed from their Western counterparts. In this
case, Baker and Lutyens’s use of Indic features is widely regarded as a reflection of the
loss of imperial self-confidence. Their appropriation of Buddhist forms acknowledged
that Britain, if not yet ready to abandon altogether its authority over the subcontinent, had
nevertheless abdicated its claim to a superior knowledge of India’s peoples and its past.
The hybrid form was part of a compromise to stabilize British colonial rule in Indian.
By contrast, the Japanese painstakingly pursued a policy of non-westernization in the
construction for colonial Changchun, as they regarded themselves the leader of “Greater
East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.” The construction of colonial Changchun was used to
display their newly assumed leadership role in Asia unified by cultural similarities to
“protect the interests of all Asian nations to resist the invasion from the West.” In this
sense, the Developing Asia style was widely used in governmental buildings as a means
to compete and overcome Western civilization.

Striking as the Developing Asia style was, only a few structures were ever in
keeping with it outside the administrative quarter along Shuntian Street. Instead, a
plurality of architectural styles characterized urban landscape. The diversity of style
was comparable to that before 1931, but it was the GDA officer and different
administrative organs of the colonial government and their agencies, rather than the
managers of different part of Changchun, who were responsible for its development.
Moreover, the creation of modernity in the 1930s did not simply imitate the Western
models, but involved various modified indigenous elements and aimed at revealing
superiority to the West, as exemplified in the 1932 Capital construction Plan.

Despite the powerful totalitarian government in place, however, architectural
pluralism was evident in the capital. I offer two reasons for explanation. First, neither
pan-Asianism nor the Kingly Way had at its disposal a complete philosophical system. I
have mentioned the content of the Kingly Way was never articulated in official account.
Rather, Manchukuo’s pan-Asian ideology was little more than a complex of ethical
principles, credos, and aversions, held together by aesthetic glue. Unable to resolve the
question of its identity by means of recourse to the utopias of theory and technology,
pan-Asianism required and attempted to stimulate through the lavish patronage of modern
art “an aesthetic overproduction” – a surfeit of Fascist signs, images, slogans, books, and
buildings – in order to compensate for, fill in, and cover up its unstable ideological core.
This is one reason why Japanese colonial regime of Manchukuo, like Fascist Italy, despite

its authoritarianism, tended toward an “eclecticism of the spirit” in its cultural policies, encouraging a proliferation of competing formulations of the modern, among which the authorities felt free to choose as a function of circumstances.

Second, the preference for aesthetic style of different governmental units and the intension amongst them were omnipresent in Manchukuo as in Japan and elsewhere. In Japan, the Ministry of the Imperial Household may have wanted its Tokyo museum designed in accordance with “Japanese taste,” while throughout the late 1930s the Ministry of Communications continued to construct projects in high modernist style. Although efforts were made to employ architecture as propaganda, no public projects on the scale of the Berlin Olympic stadium or Speer’s Zeppelinfeld were completed in Japan during these years. Even in Nazi Germany, Hitler endorsed vernacular houses and clubs as well as monumental public buildings, while Hermann Goering chose modernist functional style for his Air Force ministry and institute.

Likewise, in Manchukuo the responsibility for government-sponsored construction remained divided among various ministries and ruling organs, which aggressively protected their autonomy. For example, although Japanese castle crowns were used for the Guandong Army Headquarters, the Bureau of Guandong Territory was a modernist building. That the Manchukuo government did not carry out a unified national building program or establish an officially sanctioned architectural style in the manner of Nazi Germany, and no architect or group of architects acquired the kind of high-level support that Albert Speer enjoyed under Hitler explains the plurality of architectural styles in colonial Changchun.

Besides, the selection of either Developing Asia or modernist buildings was an outcome of political concern and aesthetic preference that resulted in different decorative motifs, but the footprint and construction technology were consistent. Some of modernism’s most ardent opponents, such as Ito Chuta, routinely made effective use of the most advanced building methods and repeatedly wrote of the need to develop architecture appropriate to local contemporary conditions. As Sano Riki, a powerful architect and jury member for many projects in Manchukuo, insisted on safety and technology, the profession could not completely abandon its modern building technology and revert to pre-modern construction practices. This was a further indication that Manchukuo was being “civilized” and becoming a modern state. In other words, la mission civilisatrice was the legitimizing basis for Japanese control, and in this point Japan was no so different from the colonial control of Western European imperialist states of the time which Japan itself was criticizing.

Under the Japanese colonial rule, capital Changchun was an ensemble of diverse

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styles, an outcome not only from the rivalry against the West and Republic China, but also from a vague ideology and different aesthetic ideals within. After Pacific War broke out, this pan-Asian approach to compete with the foes of Japanese empire became more evident, as explicitly exemplified in the series of ceremonies in 1942.

V. Decennial Ceremonies and the Greater East Asian Exposition in 1942

As Changchun matured into the capital of a far-flung colony in the 1940s, the colonial authority increased their activities and festival patronage to better showcase their city. The year of 1942 was the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Manchukuo. The colonial government staged a commemoration in September followed by a series of ten celebrating events throughout the whole year, of which the Greater East Asian Exposition was the most spectacular one in the dense calendar of festivals.

Although there is an enormous literature on the world’s fairs and exhibitions and on the way in which these originally western spectacles promoted European and American colonialism, there are no comparable discussions of the Japanese colonial exhibitions staged between 1895 and 1945 in Korea, Manchuria, and Taiwan. How were expositions used in the non-western colonial world? And what were the ideological drives of these spectacles during wartime? The 1942 Exposition, which began on August 12, 1942 at the peak of Japan’s military success, offers a remarkable case study. Like the plural representations of institutional buildings discussed in the previous pages, this exposition also played out the role as the purveyors of political and colonial concept of East Asian modern.

Exhibitions were an integral part of Japanese colonial policies to mobilize resources and morale of the colonial state during wartime, and the city became the most magnificent exhibit to demonstrate Japanese colonial achievements and promise a better future. How were historical and political issues expressed through the style and spaces

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of Xinjing Exposition and how well did they produce obedient colonial subjects? To address these questions, this section considers three aspects of the exhibition: the funding sources and organization of the exhibition, the Japanese political designs as expressed at the Exposition, and the exhibits and pavilions on the site. Taken as a whole, these perspectives provide a revealing look at a crucial aspect of Japanese colonial ideology. This process was as much intellectual and cultural as it was political and administrative. By explaining, rationalizing and promoting the new colonial order in Manchuria, the 1942 Exposition became a metaphor for the Japanese pan-Asian project.

My focus is on the spatial and visual grammar encoded in the exhibition buildings and the strategies of representation used here rather than politics or economics. The Japanese colonial regime staged a number of events through which they attempted to realize a distinctively East Asian Modernity. Based upon archival and published materials from the 1930s and 1940s, I restore the dense calendar of exhibitions and ceremonies in a specific place and a specific time. In comparison to world’s fairs and regional exhibitions elsewhere, this paper aims to explicate some characters of the expositions staged in Changchun and how they related to and differed from the Western models, and look deeper into the Japanese colonial rule in Manchuria. I conclude by considering some of the Chinese responses to the exposition and suggest that this modern cultural spectacle ironically contributed to overthrowing the hope of mobilizing support for building a Greater East Asia sphere.

Organization and Funding

The Greater East Asian Exposition in 1942 was part of a larger commemorative enterprise for the Tenth Anniversary. The budget of all sorts of ceremonies for the purpose of the Tenth Anniversary reached turned out to be an unprecedented amount of 3,501,344 Yen. The 1942 Exposition cost a conspicuous amount of 407,727 Yen from the governmental sector, itself surpassing all other events in budgetary terms, and the private sector contributed another 500,000 Yen, making the total expense of the exposition only second to the commemoration whose budget was 1,005,080 Yen. The Manchukuo government afforded half of the total expense, and the other half came from state-owned cultural and industrial enterprises. The sale of lottery tickets was introduced and encouraged by the state to turn the revenue to “serve the majority of the people,” and there were several places to sell lottery tickets in the park.

Though the exposition proved to be a success, as can be seen in the size of population it attracted which almost tripled the number of Changchun’s inhabitants, it was not included in the original commemorating scheme. At the very start, the Committee of Commemoration for the Tenth Anniversary (CCTA) had conceived totally

45 As a comparison, the Exhibition and Congress of Developing Agriculture cost 120,000 Yen, the sports meeting 100,000, the mass mobilization congress 100,000, the Exhibition of National Situation 56,000, all other’s budget did not exceed 50,000. 建國十周年慶祝典並慶祝事業志, p.24
46 ibid, pp.25-26
47 The sale of lottery first appeared as a means to fund the exhibitions in the 1889 Paris exposition.
ten major events were decided to illuminate the TENTH anniversary. These events included a series of congresses for mass mobilization for the ongoing Pacific War and for reinforcing education and propaganda, a sports meeting, and several other exhibitions. As the utopian image of Manchukuo rested upon agricultural autarky and natural resources, colonial officials came to the point that an exhibition that aimed to display the potentials of the subordinate nation and the achievements of developing agriculture and related fields consisted of a crucial part of the commemoration. Another goal of the agricultural exhibition was to demonstrate the history and accomplishments of Japanese peasant immigrants in Manchuria.48

In preparing for the Agricultural Exhibition, however, the organizers recognized that the scope of the exhibits should go far beyond agriculture, mining and forestry of Manchukuo, as the goal of the exhibition, and the commemoration as a whole, was to make manifest “the Kingly Way, ethnic harmony and unity, morality in society, and a co-prosperous Greater East Asia,” which was out of the reach of an agricultural exhibition. Put in other words, political, economic and cultural life of other Asian nations under Japanese leadership should be also comprehensively exhibited in a grand exposition. As a result, the CCTA decided to stage a Greater East Asian Development Exposition (da dong ya jian she bo lan hui) in Changchun and set up the agenda for it. To keep a dense calendar of celebrations in Changchun,49 the grandiose exposition start from August 12th, 1942, till the end of September for a total duration of 50 days.

A special committee was set up in charge of the preparation and operation for the Exposition on February 18th. As the exposition was an enlarged version of the Agricultural Exhibition which also partially financed it, the exposition had much in common such as personnel. In realities, the committee of the Agricultural Exhibition and governmental departments of mining and industry played a central role in the Committee of Exposition, as “the success of the Exposition was premises on their close collaboration” to facilitate the collection of exhibits and guarantee a coherent exhibition policy.50 As the wartime budget was tight, three semi-official newspapers were invited to finance the project and to collect exhibits and publicize the event.51

On April 28th, 1942, the exposition committee announced the guidelines of the Exposition. In the section of “Goals,” it stated that the exposition aimed to

“commemorating the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Manchukuo,
display the history of founding process of the state and introduce the situations of the states within the Greater East Asia’s Co-prosperous Sphere. By doing so, the exposition will contribute to establishing Manchukuo of highly military defense,

48 It later combined another exhibition of a much more modest scale, the Exhibition of National Situation, which was planned to be itinerary around major Manchurian cities, mainly consisted of photographs and paintings about the accomplishments in industry and domestic security in Manchukuo.
49 Festival calendar – in this case, the exhibition of National Situation was staged from May 1st to early August, and the Greater East Asian Development Exposition was planned right after that.
50 SJSB
51 It should be noted that even the urban of construction of Xinjing in the first five-year plan were exclusively financed by Japan and Manchukuo, except for a very small portion from French loan in building the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
and the relation between Japan and Manchukuo will be bound together more closely. As the exposition highlights the important status of Manchukuo in the Greater East Asia’s Co-prosperous Sphere, the pride and morale of general citizens will be aroused.52

It effectively highlighted what the colonial government wanted to accomplish through the exposition, that was, to represent the nature of Japanese rule as they conceived it: military prowess, cultural and moral superiority, and ethnic unity, which was in their ideology part of the whole system of colonial control. All organized and backed by CCTA, ten major activities alike were held in Changchun in 1942 within months of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

But this also testified to the fact that at the exposition commercial profit was never the priority for Manchukuo. The vast sums the colonials government put into the exposition were expected to pay back through stimulation of military confidence and cultural unity; as such, they were not simply displays of produce, but a physical manifestation of Japanese colonial accomplishments.

**Political and Cultural Design of the Exposition**

A close examination of the major concerns of the 1942 Exposition can explicate its characteristics and difference from its various predecessors. The idea of world’s exposition was well established in the Western context. So widespread was the attempt to imitate London’s success that it would not be an exaggeration to say that the world’s fair, between 1851 and 1939 became a significant institution of Western culture. Expositions increased trade by increasing foreign demand for home products, stimulated industrial and artistic development, and raised the host country in the world’s estimation. Closely associated with western colonialism, expositions were both a massive celebration of progress and at the same time an object lesson in educating people to better understand that progress.53 Though in a time of expanding capitalism when all colonial powers stressed the economic advantages to be gained from their colonies by showing the raw materials and crafts they produced, there were significant national differences in the ways of imperial powers displayed their colonies.54

Universal and colonial expositions not only took place in the West, but were also held in the colonies. These exhibitions began as a local cultural event that aimed to promote indigenous arts and craftsmanship, such as the 1883 Jaipur Exhibition, and in a later time matured into international exhibitions, such as the 1884 Calcutta Exhibition and the 1902 Colonial Exhibition in Hanoi.55 These exhibitions staged in European colonies aimed “to developing and promoting the commercial prosperity of India,” and to communicate the potential wealth offered to France by the colonization of Indochina.56

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52 “The Purview of the Greater East Asian Exposition” 建國十周年建設博覽會
54 For more detail, see Burton Benedict. *Rituals of presentation*, p.31;
56 Michael Vann. “All the World’s a Stage”, Especially in the Colonies: L’Exposition de Hanoi, 1902-3. Martin Evans
Yoshimi Shunya has written about the effects of Western world expositions on the construction of Japan’s modern and imperial identity, and the astute acceptance of the basic function and meaning of the institution painstakingly resituated Japan in the world in the latter half of the nineteenth century. To commemorate its colonial rule, Japan organized the 1915 Korean Products Competitive Exposition, the 1929 Korean Exposition, and the 1935 Taiwan Exposition. These expositions were special because they were staged by a non-western colonizer in a colony. Japanese colonial policy changed over time, and as Hong Kal has written at length, the 1929 Seoul Exposition signaled the shift in colonial cultural policy from the one based on coercion to the one based on pacification. This was done not only for purely functional or aesthetic reasons, but rather was predicated upon an ideology of “co-prosperity” between Japan and Korea, the development of which was supposedly based on their shared spirit of “Eastern” cultures.

The new politics of the colony continued to guide the expositions in Taipei in 1935 and that in Changchun in 1942.

At a time of the Pacific War, the 1942 Exposition was the only events capable of bringing such a wide selection of people to the same place for the purpose of edification and mobilization for war. As such, the exposition was no mere trade fair or festive celebration, instead it intended to indoctrinate and unify a population, embracing outward manifestations of a nation attempting to flex national, military, cultural and economic muscles for the ongoing warfare. The interesting aspect of “Greater East Asia” was the high-profile acclamation that through the exhibition of this kind the Japanese could gain global supremacy and enhance their influence in regional cultural and economic affairs.

Not surprisingly, unlike almost all the exhibitions preceding it, the concern for peace was totally absent in the 1942 Exposition, several months after the attack of Pearl Harbor. No matter how vain and disguised, peaceful concerns were at the top of the list for many international exhibitions, because whenever different peoples came together to show off the achievements of their respective cultures, this would result in a reduction of differences and the growth of fellowship. In Changchun, however, the Pavilion of the Pacific War as the main hall of the Exposition occupied a conspicuous location that boasted Japanese military prowess and recent success over Britain and the United States.

Millions of visitors strolled through the sites were taught and indoctrinated by the display of achievements as a result of Japanese policies in Manchuria and elsewhere, with the aim to arouse “the pride and morale of the people”. Imperial education was the fetish of the exposition, and vulgar propaganda of government was to be seen everywhere. The exhibits were used as an educational tool to visually and vividly explicate colonial polices to fairgoers, and the youth became the focus of educational displays, as they were

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59 The most distinct example is the 1937 Exhibition in Paris. See also Greenhalgh.
important labor resources for the purpose of war. Even the amusement park of the Exposition (the Third Site) was filled with military training facilities. The organizers also opened the site for a series of conferences, but the objective was to indoctrinate the public with the major themes of Japanese colonial policies in Manchuria and pan-Asian ideologies, such as agricultural autarky, ethnic harmony, etc.\(^{60}\)

But above all, the most distinct difference of the 1942 Exposition from its Western counterpart was an absence of commerce. Trade had created Western power, and Western exhibitions were no more than an expression of that power. However, the state makers of Manchukuo impugned the despotic and predatory nature of Western modernity, insisting the superiority of Confucian values and Asiatic moral systems emphasizing ethical responsibilities be celebrated as alternatives to capitalism and Marxism, both Western doctrines.\(^{61}\) In opposition to consumerism and individualism, thrift, frugality, diligence, family value, and self-restraint were highly-esteemed merits that the client government called on. Unlike Western colonialism, the Japanese also developed industry in Manchuria which reduced the development of industrial consumerism as a crucial cultural component of colonial economic expansion.\(^{62}\) Moreover, quota system had existed in Manchukuo long before the war broke out, and only the agents of the colonial government had the power to collect and distribute agricultural produce. In the agricultural exhibition, peasants were allowed to sell exhibiting goods, but the amount and the impact was neglectable compared to any exhibitions held in the capitalist world.

Larger and larger areas of sites were given over to entertainment through the 20th century, reaching a grand climax in the 1930s, as can be seen in the expositions in New York and San Francisco in 1939. However, the 1942 Exposition had no section for entertainment tantamount to the Midway in the West. By the same token, Datong Park, the major site of the exposition, did not became the subject to complex landscaping plans with extraordinary pieces of fantasy architecture to delight and amaze visitors, while in the West by 1890 it had been accepted that the appearance of site itself was the greatest factor to entertain the crowds, and hence generation of profit. All in all, solemn attitude and serious education of the ongoing war were the rationale behind the whole event.

Progress was another major theme of the 1942 Exposition of Development. As common in all exhibitions, technology was the most frequently suggested vehicle to achieve progress. In addition to technological achievements, the client government advocated Asiatic moral, culture and social progress. They proposed a new world order on the basis of *wangdao* (the kingly way) and *daoyi* (morality and justice). Ironically, common Chinese inhabitants in Changchun had long recognized the oppressive nature of the puppet state in ethnic discrimination and cruel suppression of dissent.\(^{63}\)

\(^{60}\) 建国十周年建设博览会 kenkoku jūnen kensetsu hakulankai
\(^{63}\) I discuss the distrust of Xinjing inhabitants, from the puppet Emperor to commoners, against the colonial government in a following section in the longer chapter. The general civilians, especially ethnic Chinese, knew too well
The exposition was financed by three newspaper presses headquartered in Changchun. In publicizing the event, Manchukuo’s journalists circulated information about the exposition, awakening interest across East Asia, and encouraging the participation of governments and individuals. But the Japanese also made an important invention to facilitate the circulation of the image of the exposition. Long before the use of registered trademarks emerged, other sources of imagery, including exhibition buildings and architectural monuments, symbolized the themes of world’s fairs, such as Crystal Palace (London, 1851), Eiffel Tower (Paris, 1889), and Fine Arts Palace (Chicago, 1893). The images of these architectural structures have been manipulated to define and control the meaning of the visitor’s experience through commemorative activities or merchandise. No such grand buildings were left in Xinjing after the Exposition ended 50 days after its inauguration. The 1942 Exposition, though without such an ostentatious building, bore an official logo or mascot. The pattern of the official logo, so called rui yun shi zi zhang (cross-like badge with propitious cloud), is a cross of Chinese ideograph shi (ten), suggesting the Tenth Anniversary. The official mark served as an abstract yet powerful icon, adorning virtually everything not only in the Exposition but also in all other events that were staged to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary. The Japanese invention of the logo became the precursor of highly sophisticated corporations that rely on official logos and mascots to capture the attention of tourist-consumers in post-war world’s exhibitions and sports meetings.64

**Pavilions, Exhibits, and Related Activities**

The primary site for the Exposition was Datong Park because of its central place in the geographical and political landscape of Changchun.65 However, as it was not large enough to accommodate all exhibits, two further sites were selected as well.66 The second site was located in the lot reserved for a hotel, opposite to Datong Park across Datong Street; and the third had been reserved for the construction of the headquarter of the Manchuria Heavy Industrial Company (MHI, Jp: Manju). Datong Park was the nominal property of Capital Municipality, while the land lot of the second site belonged to the Southern Manchuria Railway Company (Mantetsu), and Manju owned the third. In an official report of 1943 that reviewed the ceremonies, the generosity of the three institutions of lending the sites for the purpose of the Exposition was acknowledged. Without a powerful and authoritarian colonial state, the coordination of different interest

that the actual rule was firmly at Japanese hand, and the mood of distrust and indifference grew in between “collaboration” and “resistance”. On several occasions this colonial twist resulted in everyday disasters which ironically point out the failings of Japan’s imperial project in Manchuria.


65 In the last chapter I discussed the Ceremony of the Completion of Capital Construction in 1937, and the built environment of Xinjing was used as a grand exhibit to spectators. In that event, Datong Park was the primary site for royal ceremony too.

66 The influence of the most recent 1935 Taipei Exposition was also notable, as four sites were chosen instead of a single one at the time.
parties is unimaginable, let alone the swift construction of all pavilions. Behind the variety of ostentatious exhibits, congresses, mass assemblies and propaganda were the organizers and sponsors – the colonial authority.

Datong Park was unanimously termed the “most pivotal site of the Exposition (among the three), and pavilions in the park mainly display Manchukuo’s recent history, culture, mining, industry, and natural resources,” supplemented by pavilions of Japan, Mongol, and Nanjing regime – the latter two were Japanese vassal states in occupied China. The layout of the pavilions was carefully arranged surrounding a small lake in the park. (Fig. 2-15) The path leading to the pavilions from the newly-built entrance was flanked by weapons, such as airplanes, armored vehicles, anti-aircraft guns, etc., a reminder that the state of Manchukuo was engaged in war. Crossing the bridge, the tourist engaged the Pavilion of the Greater East Asian War which sat at the top of a sloping hill overlooking the cluster of Manchurian pavilions and the central square filled with captured weapons. (Fig. 2-16) These exhibition buildings were arranged along two common corridors and a square, framing an east-west axis that was commonly seen in Japanese traditional spatial arrangements.

In the Manchurian section, major Manchurian cities such as Pavilions of Xinjing (Capital Changchun), Mukden, and Harbin (Fig) and propagandistic sections (Pavilions of Nation’s Founding History, Savings, and International Situations) all had their own pavilions. The pavilions of Jiandao and Kantojo (Territory of Dalian and Lushun), both

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67 建國十周年建設博覽會 kenkoku jūnen kensetsu hakurankai
68 Ibid.
already Japanese colonies before the establishment of Manchukuo, were placed alone at the northeast corner. Though corporations also sponsored their own pavilions in western expositions, as in New York in 1939, two huge state-backed corporations, the SMR and MHI, were regarded the agent of civilizing Manchuria, and the location of the pavilions (facing the pavilions of Manchurian cities) suggested their accomplishment and importance in state-building and developing Manchuria. This reminds us of what Prasenjit Duara calls “new imperialism,” a self-contradictory ideology in which domination and exploitation coexisted with development and modernization.70

A special pavilion (te she guan) displaying four other state-owned corporations in charge of the most crucial registers of everyday life such as electricity, ratio of necessities, and trade was also grouped in the Manchurian exhibiting area. However, as Manchukuo’s crucial economic institutions carried out Japanese colonial policies, their appearance was not a surprise. As a matter of fact, the legacy of the Mantetsu railway settlement, including broad, diagonal streets radiating from large, circular plaza, continued to shape Changchun’s urban structure in the 1930s.

Across the lake, the southern section consisted of Pavilions of Taiwan, Korea, and Mongol, North China and Nanjing on the east side, and on the west the pavilions of Japanese cities and counties, and corporations such as Mitsubishi and Mitsui. The Pavilion of Jehol was located in the far west, close to the entrance as the end of the tour. These pavilions were built to introduce the visitors to the culture, economy, and resources of East Asian states under the leadership of Japan, and Japanese industrial innovation. Here Japanese pavilions were spatially intermingled with those of Japan’s colonies, and they altogether announced a spirit of coexistence and co-prosperity, the ideology of the exposition.

The construction work of pavilions in Datong Park began on June 1st, only two months away from the opening day. As war exigencies drained resources and labor away to the front, the Committee found themselves not only short of time but also resources. Later in the report of the Exposition, the Committee admitted the difficulties and acknowledged the help with providing materials from different governmental organs, such as logistics, forestry, and economy.71 Given wartime circumstances, it was easy to understand why eventually all pavilions looked the same in simplistic and functionalistic form based on a quadrangular plan. By appearance, one could hardly tell Xinjing Pavilion from that of Tokyo and the pavilions of military exhibits resembled recreational ones like the café and dinning houses.

However, the general plan prescribed an unmistakable route through the park. In addition, huge symbolic signs and tablets that visually introduced the content or property of a pavilion hung above the entrance, which served an economic but easy marker for orientation, perhaps a lesson learned from the Taiwan Exposition in 1935. Distinctive


71 建國十周年慶祝典並慶祝事業志 (kenkukuo jushunen keishyuku jukyoukenshi), p.538
cultural elements, such as an exquisite wooden gate and a lama tower were used in the pavilions of Nanjing and Jehol respectively.\textsuperscript{72}

As in the amusement section, exoticism was not a concern of the 1942 Xinjing Exposition either. Unlike the world’s fairs in the West and its colonies, no single entry was found about “exoticized displays of people” in official documents and the exposition did not contain a reconstructed “native villages”. As Timothy Mitchell argues, the Orient was perhaps the most important object on display at Europe’s exhibitions, as the West’s great “external reality”.\textsuperscript{73} Japan, on the other hand, emphasizing ethnic closeness and the humiliation incurred by the West, advocated an ideology of “co-prosperity” between nations based on their shared spirit of “Eastern” cultures. The repetitive and ubiquitous propaganda made it clear the revival of East Asia could only be obtained under Japanese leadership and people, especially those of Manchukuo, should feel obliged to Japan. This pattern of “knowing the outside world” with appreciation for Japan intended to make the hierarchy of colonial power visible and orderly.\textsuperscript{74} Inside the pavilions, exhibits ranged from photographs, drawings, maps, and illustrations to products, models and even captured weapons in the war. Most exhibits boasted military prowess or industrial accomplishment to enhance morale, but some were also used to arouse a sense of cultural superiority.

A few service facilities were built in the park in modest size. Two months before the opening day, the government publicly called biddings for selling snacks and renting boats in Datong Park, and café and dinning facilities were built to house people who sought a rest. Frugality was deemed a virtue and the state encouraged civic saving after the war broke out, and a Pavilion of Savings was built along with the cluster of Manchurian pavilions, symbolizing its importance as an institution in the state. This contrasted sharply with consumptive states of capitalist ideology.

The second exposition site on the other side of Datong Street was designed to introduce Manchuria’s agricultural sources and the accomplishments in developing the region, and “meanwhile make preparations for the Agricultural Exhibition.”\textsuperscript{75} The newly built entrance faced a large fountain used also as a fishpond of scare fishes, surrounded by five pavilions of agriculture, aquatic products, livestock products, forestry, and development of the land. A vendor facility was erected nearby the entrance to sell domestic agricultural products on the site. A popular attraction was the model agricultural garden on the northeast corner, which served “an introduction of agricultural

\textsuperscript{72} Nanjing at the time was the capital of the Chinese government under the leadership of Wang Jingwei (1890-1944) collaborated with the Japanese, and Jehol was a province within Manchukuo, famous for its Tibetan temples and summer resort for Manchu emperors.

\textsuperscript{73} As Mitchell argues, as an epitome in the exhibition, the Western experience of order and truth depended upon creating the very effect of an “external reality” beyond all representation. See Timothy Mitchell. The world as exhibition.


\textsuperscript{75} 建國十周年建設博覽會(The Exposition of the Development for Tenth Anniversary of Founding Nation), The Second Site
work and rural life to urban inhabitants” so that visitors could experience plowing and planting themselves. The latter half of the site was reserved for the subsequent Agricultural Exhibition, also targeting at exhibiting agricultural products and mechanics.

The third site of the Exposition somewhat provided a retreat from the graveness of the exposition, mostly attracting children’s interest and serving a machine of amusement for the public. An aviation tower was set up facing the entrance, (Fig 2-18) behind it a field for children’s trial drive of small automatic vehicles. A model of submarine (in the shape of a warship) was used for the youth to experience navy life and engaged them in warfare. Though joyous to younger generation, these facilities were all military related, and aimed to familiarize children with the Japanese war machines. In the small site a pavilion that displayed the history of Manchukuo’s recent history was built up to “inculcate the youth with state ideologies and aroused their appreciation for Japan.”

Judged on all sides and by all standards, the entertainment facilities were no equivalence to the carnival atmosphere of the Midway. The Midway at the 1893 exposition in Chicago became one of the most successful and famous amusement areas of any of the great world’s fairs, and it provided a much needed escape from the harsh realities of daily living, or perhaps, it provided a patently unselfconscious, eclectic, and noisy relief from the idealism of progress and unity so pervasive elsewhere on the fairgrounds. In contrast, either lottery or facilities on the third site aimed to remind people, especially youth, of the ongoing war. Under colonial rule, nothing attempted to teach Manchurian people to be joyously merry.

The exposition opened at eight in the morning and closed seven in the evening.

Fig 2-17 The 2nd-site layout. The latter half of the site was reserved for the Agricultural Exhibition.
Source: kenkoku jujunnen kensetsu hakulankai

Fig 2-18 Entertainment, trade, and consumerism were largely absent in the Exposition as well. Even amusement section was filled up with military training facilities.

76 See Greenhalgh and Badger.
everyday for 50 days. A huge number of people from all walks of life, including government officials and employees, military people, business men, farmers, and children came to visit the sites. A good many special groups from outside the capital and foreign tourists from Japan, Korea and Taiwan also came to Changchun to see the Exposition. The emperor and his Prime Minister paid a visit to Datong Park in September, too. The total number of visitors to Datong Park reached 608,139, and combined those visiting the other two sites the number exceeded 2,000,000, at a time when the population of Changchun was 645,166. The ticket price was fifty Manchukuo cents for adults and 25 cents for children and military people. Considering that the average income for a Chinese governmental employee was 36.65 Yen and for Japanese employees generally double or triple the amount, it was a luxury to common Changchun inhabitants to visit the exposition but enthusiasm was overwhelming. The official final report wrote “since its opening day the splendid exposition was very popular among citizens, especially Chinese inhabitants.”

With its physical and intellectual appeal, the exposition had brought together “all classes of the population.” In “Regulations for the Greater East Asia Exposition,” fairgoers were required to dress properly, observe rules, maintain the order self-consciously, and not to damage exhibits. In line with Tony Bennett’s interpretation of the disciplinary functions of exhibition, this event was instrumental to educating the mass in what was expected of them, and could be internalized into a new citizenry, an obedient and proud colonial subject. In 1942, it became manifest that the making of the new citizenry had the ability to promote social cohesion utilizing symbols and ritual acts that held diverse even contradictory, cultural meanings. When the exposition was going on, a couple of cultural events were being held as well, such as the rituals at Japanese Shinto shrines, Confucian rituals, and ceremonies to honor xiao zi (dutiful children) and jie fu (chaste widows). Back in early March, the mass were mobilized to plant trees and renovate fields surrounding monuments and shrines. In each event, Japanese, Han Chinese, and other ethnic groups each experienced the festivals in a unique fashion, and therein lay the power of such rituals of legitimacy because they could promote social cohesion utilizing symbols that held diverse even contradictory cultural meanings. The common action of witnessing or participating in the festivals and acceptance of the general parameters of the Japanese ruling system fostered cultural and military pride as well as societal unity. The greater the spectrum of differences in colonized cultures, the stronger was the impression of the colonizer’s power and the vastness of his domain. This form of social civility thus occur not only as a form of control in Foucaultian sense, but also in the creation of positive values which promoted and enhanced institutions of civil society as class phenomena.

79 建國十周年慶祝典並慶祝事業志, p.541
80 ibid, p.531
81 Ibid; SJSB
At the exposition, two arresting phenomena rare at the time were the appearance of corporative pavilions, and the apathy of amusing machines and displaying exoticism. These corporations functioned as the agent of Japanese colonial rule in Manchukuo’s economic life, and deserved a place in the exhibition that accentuated the Japanese role in developing Manchuria. As wartime fair, Japan use the event as a reminder of devotion and dedication to war, instead of a retreat from the real world. Furthermore, Japan had dislodged its symbolic identification with the West and associated itself with “Asian civilization” since the late 1920s onwards, hence the juxtaposition of Japanese pavilions and those of its colonies.

All temporary buildings at the three sites were moved out immediately after the close of the Exposition on September 30th, 1942. As temporary installations, they could not compete with the permanent institutional buildings. Thus, in the Exposition’s posters, the central image was always the State Council, the Imperial Palace or the like. With a tight budget due to war exigencies, the exhibiting policy adroitly connected the exposition and exhibitions to the city at large, and the most strategic and alluring spaces of Changchun were transformed. Ephemeral as the exhibition itself may have been, the cultural changes in the state as epitomized in the capital evident in the exposition were more profound and long-lasting, and the most impressive exhibit became the city itself. Significantly, the “declared” masterpiece of the exposition was not found within the temporary installations at all; it was once again the city itself.

VI. Conclusions

Invented ideas are not always novel as they seem to be and the newness is oftentimes diluted by the past experiences. The new style in capital Changchun, so-called Developing Asia, was an outcome of a synthesis that rooted in nationalist movements and architectural practices in Japan and China. It marked a profound change of Japanese colonial policy and cultural attitude towards the modern. Under the slogan “returning to Asia,” the image of a self-serving pan-Asian solidarity nourished during Japan’s buildup of her relatively short-lived empire in contrast to the prior equation of Western culture with technology and progress.

It is clear that the ideological message of the regime was deliberately forged in the form of streets and buildings and was emphasized in the subtexts of their architectural details that aimed to communicate the ability of a regime to provide and control. With an interpretation of the styles of historical eclecticism and Art Nouveau that were also popular in contemporary Europe, many styles gained popularity in Changchun before 1931. Reflecting developments not only in Japan but also in Europe and in Europe’s colonies, Japanese expressions of the built environment in Changchun was part of a global discourse to equal the West.

The plurality continued into Manchukuo era though under different circumstances and with different attitude towards the modern. In the capital city of Manchukuo, there was no single and dominant mode with which modernity and indigenous culture
interacted. This negotiation was part of a shifting cultural ground that transformed along with the politics of Japanese colonialism – which were by no means uniform or unanimous through this period, and the production of space in Manchukuo was thus neither unchanging nor uniform. As Homi Bahbah notes, the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it mirrors the ambiguities of the political structure.\footnote{Homi Bhabha. “Introduction”. In Homi Bhabha ed. \textit{Nation and Narration}. London; New York: Routledge, 1990.} The plurality of aesthetics in Changchun of the 1930s reflected the inherent rapture and discrepancies of Japanese pan-Asian ideology. Moreover, the pluralism demonstrated in the built environment was deliberately set in a hegemonic political structure. For example, the military used the Japan Revival buildings such as the GDA headquarters, Jinmu Hall, and various Shinto shrines to enhance their presence in the city, while most Manchukuo institutions were housed in Developing Asia roofs.

In the capital city of Manchukuo, there was no single and dominant mode with which modernity and indigenous culture interacted. This negotiation was part of a shifting cultural ground that transformed along with the politics of Japanese colonialism – which were by no means uniform through this period, and the production of space in Manchukuo was neither uniform nor unchanging. As Homi Bahbah notes, the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of “composing” its powerful image.\footnote{Homi Bhabha. “Introduction”. In Homi Bhabha ed. \textit{Nation and Narration}. London; New York: Routledge, 1990.} The plurality of aesthetics in Changchun of the 1930s also mirrored the inherent rapture and discrepancies of Japanese pan-Asian ideology.

The anti-capitalist and anti-Western approach to the modern through showcasing exhibitionary edifice of the capital city was epitomized in the exhibitions held in 1942, at the height of the war, which comprises an overlooked chapter in the history of regional fairs.\footnote{Homi Bhabha. “Introduction”. In Homi Bhabha ed. \textit{Nation and Narration}. London; New York: Routledge, 1990.} Japan and her Asian allies and client states, such as Manchukuo, Mongolia, Najing regime, Thailand, etc., built their pavilions in the Exposition, and Germany, Italy and Bulgaria sent convoys to attend the event. Using the event to mobilization the public for war was the ultimate concern of the exhibition, while peace, trade and amusement were absent from the scene. Both an expression of ideology and propaganda, the event was an important moment not simply in the implementation and consolidation of colonial rule in Manchuria, but in the ambition of bringing Asian countries under the Japanese leadership in the warfare against the West. The ideology of competing the West to achieve the modern culminated in the 1942 Exposition.
Chapter 3  The Politics of Worshipping under Japanese Colonial Rule: the King, Confucius, and Amaterasu

As discussed in the previous chapter, fourteen years of Japanese colonial rule left behind a body of artistic production that permits neither simple formulas nor easy judgments. No one style, school, or monument can readily summarizes the state rhetoric and ideology of pan-Asianism. Rather, the official culture of Manchukuo is best defined by its diversities, contradictions, and ambiguities. The need to appease dissent, both at home and abroad, led to the tactics of aesthetic pluralism in the early and mid 1930s and encouraged the promotion of hegemonic pluralism – a Gramscian-informed notion describing the semblance of pluralism that coexists within and gives legitimacy to a repressive regime.¹

This chapter further explores the hegemonic political structure as exemplified in spectacles and public pageantries in colonial Changchun. Three types of such events will be discussed in detail: the coronation of Puyi in 1934, state worshipping rituals of Confucius and, after 1937, Amaterasu. The coronation and other important political events such as the anniversaries of the establishment of Manchukuo I discussed in previous chapters were celebrated as jubilees. The colonial government used these ceremonies and exhibitions to promote a positive image of Manchukuo and to exhibit its capital’s modernity.

Under the ideology of the Kingly Way, venerable and decayed ceremonials were revived, and new institutions were clothed with all the anachronistic allure of archaic but invented spectacle. Confucian and Taoist rituals were regularly practiced in the first years of the colonial regime, while Japanese religious rituals were also well established. The year 1937 had special significance in this narrative which marked two distinctive phases of colonial cultural policies. The first Five-Year program of Capital Construction was completed in 1937, while Sino-Japanese broke out in the same year. As resources were drained to war after 1937, a series of changes took place both in the organization of the government as well as in cultural policies. As a result, Chinese rituals gave way to Japanese rituals of worshipping Amaterasu in national political life. The Japanization of cultural life in the second phase (1937-1945) had a conflicted status among bureaucrats, administrators, and commoners, and carried within it the seeds of the collapse of the client state.

In building Manchukuo, state ideologues advocated an Asian ideology drawn from a variety of regionally circulated ideas and symbols as promoted in Wangdaoism (“kingly way”), in opposition to the alleged Western ideology of “hegemonic way”. I have elucidated how political realities departed from this ideal as exemplified in the built environment. The ruptures and discrepancies can partly be explained by the metaphor of the classical Greek beast, the chimera which has the head of a lion, the body of a sheep,

and the tail of a dragon, to imagine the forces at work in this government sponsored by the Japanese military. Yamamuro Shin’ichi likens Manzhouguo as the Chimera: the lion is comparable to the Guandong Army (GDA), the sheep is the state of the emperor system, and the dragon the Chinese emperor and modern China.² Through ritual practices as an important part of urban life in capital Changchun, I will further demonstrate in this chapter that the GDA was the real master of the colonial state of Manchukuo, and more contradictions inherent in the pan-Asian ideology of the Kingly Way.

I conclude that the ambivalence mirrored the structural ambiguity. Japan’s ideological stance towards Manchukuo was crystallized through the public pageantries that encouraged widespread participation. Through these cultural pageantries, the city as a whole was manipulated to display the novel colonial ideologies and rhetoric, though the hegemonic structure of colonial politics in Manchukuo eventually resulted in mistrust between the colonized and the colonizer, and carried within it the seeds of the collapse of the client state.

I. The Coronation Ceremony in 1934

Puyi left Tianjin after the Manchurian Incident and arrived in Dalian, welcomed by the GDA. On February 25, 1932, it was decided to make him the head of the new State of Manchukuo, “according to the eager wish of the thirty million inhabitants”.³ A modest ceremony was held on March 9, 1932, eight days after the inauguration of the new state, in which event Puyi was formally made the Chief Executive (zhizheng) of Manchukuo. Puyi expressed his disappointment for this title, and felt “being cheated by the Japanese and betrayed by his subordinates,” as the Japanese had promised to enthrone him upon the establishment of Manchukuo.⁴ In order to appease Puyi and his loyal followers, a Government Organization Law was instituted to confirm that “the government by the Chief Executive is a transitory administrative form until the promulgation of the Constitution, and in order to strengthen the national foundation, the promulgation of the Constitution is to be hurried as much as possible”, and a committee for studying the Constitutional system was appointed to investigate the subject.⁵

Two years later, after long negotiation between Chinese monarchists and the GDA, the Japanese agreed to let Puyi ascend throne on March 1, 1934, on the third anniversary of the establishment of Manchukuo. In the meantime, the former Government Organization Law was abolished, and the new National Organization Law which was regarded as the provisional Constitution until the promulgation of the Constitution was published announced Manchukuo to be a constitutional monarchy. In

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⁵ Manchukuo Year book, 1934. p.781
order to commemorate this political event, to advocate the Kingly Way of an independent country, and to publicize that Puyi “is supported by the entire people, and bears the responsibility for the entire people,” the preparations for a grand coronation ceremony were underway immediately.6

As Puyi recollected in the 1950s, he wanted to have on formal Manchu attires (longpao) in the enthronement ceremony in his palace, but this proposal was declined by the GDA. The Japanese had made it very clear from the onset that the new state of Manchukuo was not a continuation of late Manchu Qing, and the government “should make every effort to keep this idea out from public opinions”. As such, Manchukuo’s emperor should dress “generalissimo attire” in the ceremony. But in order to court Puyi, the GDA agreed that Puyi could wear Manchu attires in the ritual of offering a sacrifice to Heaven (jitian) before the enthronement ceremony.

The ritual of worshipping Heaven was a long tradition in Chinese culture, as the Confucian idiom of “respecting Heaven and observing ancestry” (敬天法祖); it was also one of the most important royal rituals in countryside (jiaosi, 郊祀) in imperial times. Special altars and temples for this purpose were built on the order of the vassal or emperor, and the Altar of Heaven had been a major element in city planning in China since the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, as recorded in The Records of Examination of Craftsman (考工记). The layout of the Altar of Heaven accords to Chinese cosmic concept that the Heaven is round in shape while the earth is square (天圆地方). (Fig 3-1) The ritual of offering a sacrifice to Heaven was to be regularly held every year on summer solstice of Chinese lunar calendar, and only the emperor or his special envoy could host this solemn ritual. But in special events, such as coronation or pray for rain, more grandiose rituals would be held too. The ritual of worshipping Heaven had been regarded the symbol of legitimacy of imperial rule.

According to Confucian cosmological conceptualization of human and nature, a large round altar was built to symbolize the Heaven, with no building on its top except for a temporarily-set table to put sacrifices on. After sufficient preparation work the ritual should take place before the sun rose on that day, and hundreds of sacrificial vessels and sacrificing articles all around. The emperors actively participated in the ritual of worshipping the Heaven as a means of legitimizing his rule over the vast country as the son of the Heaven. This ritual had been practiced in Beijing’s Altar of Heaven for about five hundred years, a tradition that was reinvigorated by Yuan Shikai in 1914 as part of the preparations for ascending to the throne.7

In order to prepare for the ritual of worshipping the Heaven, Puyi ordered to build a new altar in Xinhuaucun which was reserved for the emperor’s eventual palace.

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7 Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was important Chinese general and politician famous for his influence during the late Qing Dynasty, his role in the events leading up to the abdication of the last Qing Emperor of China, his autocratic rule as the first President of the Republic of China, and his short-lived attempt to revive the Chinese monarchy, with himself as the "Great Emperor of China."
At that time, Xinhuacun was still countryside but new construction of Xinjing had already expanded to nearby area, so the roads could be easily laid out to connect Puyi’s temporary palace. The altar in Xinjing was built in November 1933 with frozen soil clumps, and appeared a trilaminated stair-stepping platform based on the model in Beijing. (Fig 3-2) The diameter of the top platform was 27 chi, 7 chi from the ground, while the altar occupied a much larger area.\(^8\) Wooden posts and palings were place surrounding the round altar, covered by yellow cloth (yellow is the symbol of the royal house), eventually forming a large square. The layout of the altar responded to Chinese cosmic conception of round Heaven and square earth, though of much smaller scale compared to that in Beijing.

At 7:50 on the morning of March 1, 1934, Puyi got on his limousine and departed from his temporary palace after being greeted by his officials. Before he arrived at the altar, his Premier Zheng Xiaoxu, GDA officers and Japanese and Chinese officials had been waiting there for long. Puyi carried out the enunciation to heaven \((\text{gaotian})\) ceremony by reporting to heaven that he had received its mandate and acceded to the throne. He was wearing the \textit{longpao} or imperial gown with gold dragons embroidered on each shoulder front and hack, which was brought to Puyi from Tianjin for this purpose.\(^9\) On his head he wore a circular cap with a leather trim to which red and pearl decorations had been affixed. (Fig 3-3) The ritual Puyi headed in Xinhuacun closely followed what had been in imperial times, and the whole process was filmed by an American company, Fox Film Corporation.\(^10\)

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\(^9\) Ibid. p.104.

Having completed the entire urban ceremony, including the enunciation to heaven, attired in long skin boots, the ceremonial garb of the Qing court, Puyi returned to the temporary palace, where he held the formal coronation at 11 o’clock in the morning in front of the same group of people waiting at the Xinhuaun Altar, but with different attires. They celebrated the coronation ceremony at the palace, when Puyi this time was in the full dress uniform as Generalissimo of the Manchukuo’s army, navy, and air force. (Fig 3-4)

In this ceremony, Puyi promulgated the imperial edict of enthronement. This edict reiterated that the State of Manchukuo was established due to “the noble aid from the friendly country of Japan,” hence the monarchical state would be more able to practice Wangtaoism “with consultancy and collaboration with the Empire of Japan”. After Puyi received greeting letters and ovation from his subordinates, the ceremony was followed by an imperial banquet in the palace around noon. In the afternoon, Puyi accepted the sign of submission - the three kneelings and nine knockings (kowtou) from the descendants of the Aisin Gioro clan who had come from Beijing. The enthronement ceremony then drew to an end.

Chapter 3   Politics of Worshipping

The use of the two sets of attires, one of Chinese tradition and the other modern state, is the best illustration of hegemonic pluralism of Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo, wherein numerous traditions and cultural practices were allowed (and sometimes were encouraged) to co-exist, but the Japanese colonial concerns overwhelmed the others. Puyi in generalissimo attire on the coronation later became his standard portrait and a symbol of the client state. However, the combination of the traditional imperial attire indicates that the Japanese had to concede to the pressure from resourceful Chinese monarchist, in order to gain wider support at a time when the consent of local elites was crucial to the initial state building. The result of bargaining and compromise between the two sides was to have two ceremonies: the ceremony held in the suburb of the city in his longpao, and the accession ceremony held in his military uniform. The classification of different attires for the formal enthronement ceremony and the private heaven worshipping suggest the nature of the hegemonic structure of colonial politics.

The puppetry of Manchukuo and the constitutional monarchy placed Puyi above politics as patriarchal figures for the whole of the nation. Because the emperor was secluded from active politics, it would be safe enough to enhance the position of the head of state ceremonially with no threat to the veneration of the colonial authority. Moreover, in such an age of change, crisis and dislocation, the “preservation of anachronism” such as his Manchu attires, the deliberate, ceremonial presentation of an impotent but venerated monarch as a unifying symbol of permanence and national community became both possible and necessary. In Manchukuo, while the ceremonial shadow of power was cast over the monarch, the substance increasingly lay elsewhere in the GDA. Under these circumstances, the monarchy appeared, particularly on grand, ceremonial occasions, as the embodiment of consensus, stability and community.

The Japanese did not want to misinterpret this ceremony to the international audience that Puyi, the last emperor of late Qing dynasty, reasserted the throne in Manchuria. Instead the new State of Manchukuo must be “a modern and new state totally different from the past times,” therefore Puyi had no choice but wore “modern” attires in the coronation. Even the ritual of worshipping the Heaven changed in detail from the imperial times. Puyi took a private limo to the altar instead of a traditional royal carriage, and he did not stay over night at the altar before the ritual. The elements of discontinuity and modern aspects of the State of Manchukuo were distinct, but the traditional Manchu attires, previously commonplace, became endowed with a romantic splendor which had never been attainable before, and they became emphatic proof of the monarchy’s unique capacity to call in the new world to redress the balance of the old.

After the coronation, the GDA demanded that people in all governmental units including schools salute and bow to Puyi’s photos and the enthronement edict on schedule. The combination of the novelty of the media and the anachronism of the

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ceremonial rendered royal ritual both comforting and popular in an age of change. Newspapers and governmental covered the coronation as well as celebrating parades in Changchun and elsewhere in Manchukuo, and Puyi’s head portrait on the coronation was printed on post stamps.

However, once again as we have seen in the aforementioned public pageantries, the well managed ritual was restricted from commercial exploitation. The government ordered a limited number of commemorative medals to be produced, to be worn on the left breast. This medal can only be worn by the recipient, while his descendents were required to carefully keep it as a souvenir. As no transaction of the medal was allowed, this part of the ceremony was quite different from the British coronations which were regarded as paradise for medal-makers. The separation from commerce reflected respect for the ruler as a long Chinese tradition, as well as the colonial state’s antipathic position of free trade and capitalism.

To some extent, an anachronism characterized the cultural life of Manchukuo. Nostalgia and ceremonial rituals were regarded as appropriate to revive Asiatic moralities and achieve the Kingly Way in the end. This great emphasis on ritual was not limited to the royal house. In many other spheres of activity, too, venerable and decayed ceremonials were revived, and new institutions were clothed with all the anachronistic allure of archaic but invented spectacle, among which the most distinct example was the rituals of worshipping Confucius.

II. Worshipping Confucius and Guan-Yue

The traditional ritual of worshipping Confucius which centered upon offering sacrifices to Confucius’s spirit in the Confucian temple had lasted for thousand years, starting from the first emperor of Han dynasty. Confucius’s central concepts of humanity, loyalty, piety, family state, etc. were the cornerstone of imperial dynasties, and the state cult of Confucius had become one of the means to legitimize the emperor’s rein as a unifying symbol. As such, the worshipping of Confucius had been increasingly venerating in imperial times in China. In imperial times, the regular national worshipping was held twice in early February and August of Chinese lunar calendar, with an additional festival on August 27 of lunar calendar, which was Confucius’s birthday. Worshipping Confucius had the same significance with worshipping the Heaven in dynastic times, both of which were regarded emblem of legitimacy of imperial rule.

However, in a time when the Qing was overthrown and a republic state was cried out for, pre-eminent statesmen and educators, such as Cai Yuanpei, called for abolishment of worshipping Confucius as “being loyal to the emperor is against the spirit of republic, as much as honoring Confucianism against the spirit of liberty”. During the turbulent

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years of early Republic, the public reception of Confucius and the ritual became more entangled with the changing political circumstances. In 1913, Yuan Shikai issued orders to reinstate the respectable status of Confucius and hosted a state ritual of worshipping Confucius on September 28, 1914, the first time of the kind in the Republic. As Yuan’s worshipping of Confucius was largely regarded part of the endeavor for his short-lived monarchy opposed by the whole nation, the ritual had ever since lost its political legitimacy and disappeared in many parts of the Republic of China for decades.\(^\text{15}\)

On March 1, 1932, the Manchukuo government published “Announcement of the Establishment of Manchukuo,” claiming that “one of the tenets of the new state is conforming to the Heaven and securing the people…… it is very important for all nationals that education should be promulgated, and ceremonies and rites should be respected. Wangdao should be widely practiced…… to build Manchukuo as the model of world politics.”\(^\text{16}\) The government further explained that the Kingly Way was the way of ancient meritorious kings who followed Confucian teachings, which had been “the source of rule by virtue deeply embedded in people’s mind in the past two thousand years.”\(^\text{17}\) As a result, the government decided to revive the rituals of worshipping Confucius immediately, and announced the worshipping of Confucius of February and August as national holidays.

In the first few months of Manchukuo, it was the Bureau of Culture and Education under the Ministry of Civil Affairs that took charge of the ritual of worshipping Confucius. A few months later, the Bureau of Culture and Education was escalated to the Ministry of Culture and Education in July 1932, and Premier Zheng Xiaoxu held a concurrent post of its first minister, indicating the importance of worshipping rituals in national political affairs. The new ministry included three bureaus of general affairs, rituals and education, in charge of ideology, religion, worshipping, and education. Seeing the damage made to Confucian Temples and abandonment of traditional rituals in Manchuria under the Zhang regime, Zheng declared that “the spirit of Wangdao rule and idea of Datong (great unity) will be based on the worshipping of Confucius as the foundation of the new state,” and published his books to promote and publicize Confucian doctrines.\(^\text{18}\)

The governmental organization installed Confucian teachings the foundation for Manchukuo’s national education, in sheer contrast to previous regimes in Manchuria.

\(^{15}\) For example, in Shangxi Province, the ritual of worshipping Confucius disappeared since 1923 until the region was occupied by the Japanese in 1937. In Shandong Province, the formal worshipping of Confucius took place in 1934, as sponsored by four Kuomintang’s pivotal figures: Chiang Kai-shek, Wang Jingwei, Ye Chucang, and Dai Jitao. See Xu Zaibin. “qianxi 1934 nian Shandong jikong huodong” (A study of the Confucian ritual in Shandong in 1934). *Heilongjiang shizhi* (History and Gazetteer of Heilongjiang), 2010(5).

\(^{16}\) *Manchukuo Yearbook*, 1934


Chapter 3  Politics of Worshipping

The May Fourth movement spread to Manchuria in the late 1910s, and the warlord government commenced to adopt a modern educational system of their own in imitation of the American school system. After 1928, when the Zhang Xueliang administration subjugated to the Kuomintang, the so-called Educational Party Policy was introduced to Manchuria, and nationalistic education based on the spirit of the “Three Peoples Principle” of Sun Yat-sen came to govern the educational field in Manchuria, which replaced private schools based on the teachings of Confucius and on the so-called family system which was the basis of the social structure in China for thousands of years. The cry for recovering lost national rights was gradually instilled into the younger generation, and even the text-books for elementary schools were injected with much anti-foreign sentiment.\(^{19}\)

After the establishment of Manchukuo, however, the educational policy aimed to “respect the Wangtao, and humanity and justice; to observe the Declaration issued by the Chief Executive upon the State foundation; to govern individual life, families, and the country by the Wangtao; to establish the national spirit; and to harmonize the sentiments of the peoples of the world. That is to say, the educational policy is based on moral education, and thus it is fundamentally different from the educational policy under the former Three Peoples Principle which was founded upon anti-foreign sentiment.”\(^{20}\)

As stated in official propaganda, the new educational institutions and enterprises for propagating and materializing the new educational policy were expected to be based upon the principles of the Kingly Way. Zheng Xiaoxu, Minster of Culture and Education, order that “the use and teaching of the Four Books and Classic of Filial Piety in school curriculum and the honoring of Confucian morality”.\(^{21}\)

The fundamental idea of Manchukuo, that was, the principles of the Kingly Way, originated in Confucianism.\(^{22}\) As in the past, those who belonged to the educated class established the temples of Confucius in various places, and enshrined Confucius and other sages of the school of Confucius in them. On the two seasonal festival-days,\(^{23}\) grand and almost purely religious ceremonies were held. Despite of abandonment for decades, after the establishment of Manchukuo, the ritual of worshipping Confucius was effectively revived. The Department of Education ordered surveys to be carried out to comprehend the present state of the temples, so as to repair them throughout the country.\(^{24}\) Henceforth, as the Kingly Way was closely related to Confucianism, the two Confucian rituals became national festivals as cornerstone of the state. (Fig 3-5)

20 Manchukuo Yearbooks, 1934, p.623-634
21 ZFGB
22 Confucianism may be said to be a sort of religion which was founded by Confucius and expounded by Zi’en (子恩), Mengtzu (孟子) and others based on Chinese ancient ideas, combined with high philosophical ideals. In Confucianism the questions of life and death are never touched; to cultivate oneself and to govern others are its objects, seeing benevolence as the highest virtue of the human world.
23 April in spring and August in summer in Chinese lunar calendar.
24 Manchukuo Yearbooks, p.707-708
On September 3, 1932, Zheng Xiaoxu headed officials and conducted the first ritual of Confucian festival in Changchun’s Temple of Confucius. In the meantime, the ministry also sponsored the Confucius festival throughout the country, and issued decrees that the festival should be observed in spring and autumn every year throughout Manchukuo. Though experimental and modest, the first Confucian ritual set up the model for the following rituals to surpass. Moreover, as it would be difficult to extend such cultural development to the area outside the capital because affairs concerning ceremonial procedures and ceremonial music were not perfected, Zheng Xiaoxu helped open the Yenle School (燕乐传习所) at the Confucius Temple of Changchun. At the school, thirty students are trained for three months to enable them to handle the affairs of national festivals and ceremonies.25

Based on these preparations, Zheng issued a decree in early February the next year, prescribing in detail that “public lectures should be held on the day of the Confucian ritual, on the subject of Wangdao and nation-founding,” and “all teachers should learn from the ritual of the virtues and salient words of Confucius and other sages.” In the meantime, “all Confucius temples should be repaired, and a good many ceremonial articles, musical instruments, and dancing equipments should be well prepared.” On March 2, 1933, Zheng Xiaoxu led the worshipping group again in the Temple of Confucius in Changchun, and the GDA (Guandong Army, kantogun) officers also attended the grand event.26 In the meantime, all heads of Manchukuo’s provinces were required to lead the ritual on the same day, and it was reported that it seemed the whole country was celebrating a festival with great jubilation.27

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25 *Manchukuo Yearbook*, 1934, p. 684-685
27 SJSB 1934-3-4.
The grandest Confucian ritual in Changchun took place on September 28, 1933, led by Puyi himself and attended by a corps of GDA officers. Chinese high ranking officials played their part in the ritual, followed by performances of chorus, music, and dance. (Fig 3-6) All participants except for GDA officers dressed in traditional attires as in the imperial times, and at the end of the ritual people knocked head to the ground three times and bowed to Confucius’s portrait nine times. The whole ritual lasted about two hours in the early morning. However, this was the only time for Puyi to attend Confucian rituals. Since 1934 onwards, Confucius worshipping rituals were led by the premier, first by Zheng Xiaoxu and then by Zhang Jinghui who replaced Zheng in 1935. As promulgated by Zheng Xiaoxu, Confucianism became the exclusive national religion in the early years of Manchukuo.\

In the “Announcement of the Establishment of Manchukuo,” the Japanese colonial authority attempted to incorporate indigenous culture and traditions as part of state policies to establish colonial rule in a time of turmoil and international condemnation in the wake of Manchuria Incident. Confucius had been the unifying symbol of the nation for thousand years, and Confucian teachings were closely related to the Wangtao ideology of Manchukuo, many principles of which had been advocated for years by monarchists such as Zheng Xiaoxu. When Zheng died in 1938, the colonial government sponsored burial commemorations in Changchun and Mukden where Zheng was buried. In commemorating Zheng, his contribution of promoting Wangtaoism and institutionalizing Confucian rituals was mentioned.

Confucianism as the national religion was expected to mitigate ethnic conflict and social tension of that time, complicated by opposing ideologies of warlord federalism, anti-foreign Three Peoples Principles, Communism, etc. The Japanese astutely recognized the very meaning of reviving the rituals and publicized it as a national festival. In the early stage of Manchukuo, GDA officers supported and attended the ritual of worshipping Confucius in the state building to elevate the ritual to a conspicuous place in political and cultural life of Manchukuo. The ritual of worshipping Confucius would help achieve the political objectives that “the ritual promoted Asiatic morality and virtues and helped form national spirit and self-cultivation” by the colonial authority until 1937.

As Confucian ideals and rituals were revived and practiced in the first years of Manchukuo, worshipping Guan-Yue (Guan Yu and Yue Fei) also gained popularity. In terms of significance in official discourses, worshipping Guan-Yue was only second to the national ritual of worshipping Confucius.

Guan Yu, the Chinese God of War, was born in Shanxi province at the end of Han dynasty. Intelligent and daring, he displayed an exuberance of strength and activity,
which caused him to be feared by all. But it was his loyalty to his elder brother emperor, Liu Bei, that finally made him a legendary figure of the “Three Kingdoms” (A.D. 221-265). The literati had published various works for the purpose of extolling Guan Yu and of exhorting to the practice of virtue, herein they exposed Confucian theories of civic virtues, filial piety, and the five-relations (五伦). It should be noted that Guan Yu was not only revered by Confucian literati, but worshipped in many Taoist and even Buddhist temples. Guan Yu was also called God of Richness, God of Brotherhoods, and God of martial power, and he was thought of magic possession of healing wound. Guan Yu ranked top of the list of Chinese mythic idol that had the largest number of cult temples and household shrines in the early-twentieth-century China. It is Guan Yu’s virtues of five-relations, his mysterious power of protecting the empire, and his image of the God of Richness, that gained him so much popularity among all social classes, and made him another unifying symbol of the nation to be well manipulated in Manchukuo.

Yue Fei (A.D. 1103-1142), on the other hand, was a famous Chinese patriot and military general who fought for the Southern Song Dynasty against the Jurchen armies of the Jin Dynasty, widely regarded the ancestors of Manchu people. Worshipping Yue Fei in the same temple of Guan Yu began after the collapse of the Qing, as a result of anti-Manchu movement. However, the Manchukuo government claimed that “it would not be appropriate to abolish this (new tradition), and to worship both of the deities can be regarded as the government’s generosity and tolerance.” It is obvious a cultural pluralism was at work in the early phase of state building of Manchukuo.

The Manchukuo government decided to make the worshipping of Guan-Yue as national holidays too, twice a year in lunar February and August, after Confucian festivals. The rituals took place both in Changchun led by the Minister of Military Affairs and in all provinces led by the chief of local garrison troops. In doing so, “the government aims to foster respect of martyrs and faithful and courageous soldiers, and the morale of the army and police will be inspired”. Both led by high ranking bureaucrats in the capital, the rituals of worshipping Confucius and Guan-Yue were incorporated in the official propaganda that Wangdao, as exemplified in the revival of Asiatic rituals of virtuous old times, was being well practiced in the new state of Manchukuo. It also conveyed the message that Asiatic virtues such as benevolence, loyalty, courage, and brotherhood were

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31 The five constant relations among mankind, that of sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger, husband and wife, friend and friend.
32 Renowned during life as a man of daring, courage and fidelity, honorary tiles were lavished upon him after death. His glorious deeds were extolled in romance, legendary and popular tales. Hero-worship was thus developed and led by slow but sure degrees to finally placing him among the gods in 1594 in late Ming dynasty, “assisting Heaven, faithful, upright, and protecting the Empire,” hence the title Guan Di (关帝). In the Qing, after the suppression of Taiping Uprising, Guan Yu received the title of “Sage or Great Teacher,” Guan fu zi (关夫子), and was made the equal of Confucius. See Justus Dollittle (ed.). The Chinese recorder, Volume 3. Foochow: Rozario, Marcal & Co, 1871, p.43-45, also Henry Dores. Researches into Chinese Superstition, Shanghai: T’usweii Printing Press, 1920, pp.78-80. See also Prasenjit Duara. “Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War”. The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Nov., 1988), pp. 778-795.
highly esteemed by the government “as a model for the world politics”.

The Guan-Yue Temple in Changchun was built in 1799 in Qing dynasty, which was widely regarded as the starting point of Changchun’s history as a town on Manchuria, and the temple was rebuilt and extended with shrines for other deities in 1850. The entrance was an exquisitely decorated gate with three bays. A square-plan bell tower close to the entrance and the flag posts on either side of the gate indicating its function as a temple. (Fig 3-7, Fig 3-8) The main hall was a modest single-story building also with three bays. Statues of Guan Yu and attendants of the God of War were enshrined in the middle of the main hall. Beyond the main hall, a small building was devoted to the Emperor of Heaven. In the rear of the temple, there were a few paralleling halls that housed Yue Fei, Niang Niang (more elaborations in next section), and other deities of Taoist myths. The large courtyard were crowded with people during the ritual of worshipping Guan-Yue, and when the ritual ended, indigenous operas and plays would took place, much like a traditional temple festival.

Curiously, after 1937 when the China War broke out, the worshipping ritual of Guan Yu did not ascend to a more prominent place in national life. In the contrary, the ritual, though twice a year as national festivals, was only sporadically covered by governmental newspapers and gradually disappeared from the sight of the public.

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Moreover, the colonial authority adopted the policy of reducing Chinese cultural influence in Manchukuo. What took the place of Guan Yu as the protective God of Manchukuo were Japanese deities.

To make it worse, the Ministry of Culture and Education, which was in charge of worshipping Confucius, was reduced to a bureau and merged into the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 1937. In 1939, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued a decree that participants in the Confucian rituals should wear the specific attires of the Concordia Association (Ch. xiehehui, J. kyowakai), while the rites of knocking head to Confucius should be replaced by bowing to the portraits and tablets of Confucius. A fraction of GDA officers even proposed to abolish worshipping Confucius, but considering the effectiveness of the ritual to appease local people, it was finally decided that Confucian ritual be preserved with diminished importance.

After 1940 when Shinto shrines were built in large quantity and rituals of worshipping Amaterasu were established, Confucian rituals were reduced to a subordinate place to Shinto rituals while Guan-Yue was formally eradicated from the list of national holidays.

III. Worshipping Amaterasu

In the wake of China Incident in July 1937, as Manchukuo was increasingly involved in China War, it became urgent to align Manchukuo to the Empire of Japan in culture and religion to mobilize morale and resources for war. For this purpose, the GDA, the Manchukuo government, and the Concordia Association held a series of meetings and came to a consensus that “a nation-founding god has been protecting Manchukuo since its birth,” as a result, a grand temple should be built to enshrine and worship this “nation-founding god”.

However, there had been heated debate over which deity should be enshrined in the temple. Ishiwara Kanji, who was responsible for Manchuria Incident and had stationed in China for a long time, suggested Chinese gods instead of Japanese ones be worshipped, while other GDA officers argued for a combination of gods from both sides, including Confucius, Taoist gods, Emperor Meiji, and even the first emperor of Qing dynasty. Yoshioka Yasunao, the GDA representative in Puyi’s palace, insisted that the Japanese goddess of Amaterasu should be worshipped in the temple, as the GDA contributed single most to the state building of Manchukuo under the order of

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the Japanese emperor, and the emperors of Japan were decedents Amaterasu. This suggestion was finally accepted. In August 1938, right before he left the position of Vice Chief of Staff of the GDA, Ishiwara Kanji, the ardent advocate of pan-Asianism, formally proposed to the Manchukuo government that “it is required a nation-funding be set up… in order to unify various ideologies and different beliefs of different ethnic peoples in Manchuria, which will be the true heart of the eternal life of Manchukuo”.

But the plan of building the national shrine was protracted by two military incidents with the Soviet along the northern border.

According to Japanese myth, the first Emperor Jinmu founded Japan in B.C. 660. Therefore the year 1940 was the 2600th anniversary of foundation of Japanese Empire. In June 1940, the GDA arranged Puyi’s second visit to Japan to celebrate the ceremonies. When Puyi returned to Changchun, he brought back with him three sacred talismans of Amaterasu. The next day after Puyi’s return, the State Council of Manchukuo convened a meeting, discussed and approved that the Manchukuo Emperor should worship Amaterasu, and a National Foundation Shrine and a public agency temple should be built for this purpose. In the meantime, the law of governmental organization should be amended to accommodate the change in national ritual. A few days later, Puyi issued the third imperial rescript of his rein, declaring that

“When we reflect the great achievement of and look to its source, we saw that it was all thanks to the divine blessing of the HEAVEN SHINNING BRIGHT DIETY [Amaterasu] and the protection of His Majesty THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN (the development of the state) is the outcome of the blessing of Amaterasu and Japanese Emperor... Thus may the basis of the Nation be consolidated by venerating the Way of the Gods [Japanese Shinto religion], and the principles of the Nation be founded in the teaching of Loyalty and Filial Piety.”

Consequently, the amended Law of Governmental Organization ordained that the emperor should lead the ritual of worshiping Amaterasu, and the Shinto ritual (Ch. wei shen, J. kamunagara) was established and institutionalized in 1940.

Before Puyi left for Japan, the National Foundation Shrine had been built up in

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42 Zhi Lijiang.
44 Battles of Zhanggufeng (July 1938) and Nomenhan (May 1939).
45 Wang Shaozhong, p222
46 Guoben dianding zhaoshu (The Imperial Edict of Nation Founding) See Puyi. From emperor to citizen : the autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989, p.301 (capitalized words by the author)
47 The sun goddess Amaterasu (“great shining heaven”) is the chief divinity of Shinto, the indigenous pre-Buddhist religion in Japan. Worshipped in simple tree-flanked shrines as Shinto is a nature-honoring religion, Amaterasu is also seen in the simple circle on the Japanese flag, which represents the mirror that is central to her myth. As her myth makes clear, the primary symbol of Amaterasu is the bronze mirror, which has been kept at the Great Shrine at Ise. Aside from the mirror, Amaterasu’s other two major symbols are a curved piece of jade necklace and a sword. The jade connects the sun goddess with the womanly craft of spinning, while the sword reveals her martial aspect. It was the three ritual articles of Amaterasu’s symbolism that Puyi brought back to Changchun. See Patricia Monaghan. The goddess path: myths, invocations and rituals. St. Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 1999, p.71-73
May 1940, located at the southeast corner of Puyi’s temporary palace. (Fig 9) On July 15, 1940, a solemn ceremony was held to honor Amaterasu in the temple, with the presence of Puyi and some 120 dignitary in the GDA, the Concordia Association and the Manchukuo government. The calendar of worshipping Amaterasu in the national shrine was publicized in April 1941, and it required the emperor lead two grand worshipping rituals: one on March 1, the National Day, and the other on July 15. He attended four medium worshipping rituals a year: the New Year Day, Puyi’s birthday (February 6), Grain Rain Day (Ch: guyu, also Manchukuo’s Tree-Planting Day), and Awarding New (Shangxin) Festival. As such, the emperor was kept in a busy schedule in worshipping the exported deity, in sheer contrast to his only presence in Confucian rituals and absence from all Guan-Yue rituals.

The shrine was situated in a fairly large complex in the southeast within the temporary palace. The inner shrine area of 13077 square meters was surrounded by concrete walls, with a larger outer shrine area of 46237 square meters. The inner and outer area was connected by a magnificent Japanese gates (torii). The shrine sat in the north facing the south, 13.1 meters in width and 20.7 in depth, occupying a floor area of 109.79 square meters. The whole building was supported by 41 stone columns extruding from the ground, a modern construction techniques in imitation of traditional Japanese Shinto shrines. Inside the National Foundation Shrine, the space was divided into three parts, and Amaterasu’s three talismans were enshrined in the inner most space. During the worshipping ritual, traditional Japanese music and dance were performed, while the emperor sat in the shrine in formal generalissimo attire. In order to commemorate the enshrining of Amaterasu at the National Foundation Shrine, a special

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49 Ibid. p222-223
medal was issued to Puyi’s ranking officials in 1940.\textsuperscript{50}

As the ritual in the national shrine was only attended by the emperor and high ranking officials, a large temple of Amaterasu was scheduled to be built in the southern outskirts of Changchun, near by the Jingyue Reservoir, “so that the public could worshipped the national god at any time”. Though it was never realized because of war, an agency temple (she miao), the Temple of the Martyrs of National Foundation was built up on September 18, 1940, to commemorate the eighth anniversary of Manchuria Incident. (Fig 11) This temple was regarded as the Manchukuo version of Yasukuni Shrine in Japan, dedicated to those who died in campaigns since Manchuria Incident. There were more than twenty rituals as such in this temple, some of which were attended by the emperor himself every year.\textsuperscript{51}

The spring and autumn worshipping rituals at the Temple of National Foundation substituted former Confucian rituals. In addition, Japanese shrines and monuments to deceased soldiers scattered in Changchun, such as the Kodoma Statue in Kodoma Park, the Monument to National Foundation, the Kuanchengzi Battlefield Memorial, etc. attracted a larger number of pilgrims, while Chinese rituals were let to decay.

Fig 3-11 the Temple of the Martyrs of National Foundation and worshipping rituals
Source: \textit{jianguo miao zaoying gaiyao}

Pu Yi, the last Manchu emperor – who became first president and then emperor of Manchukuo – was forced to have a rebirthing ritual in 1940, from which he emerged, as from the womb of Amaterasu, as the younger half-brother of Hirohito, the Japanese emperor. Becoming the younger brother of the emperor, entailed, of course, a strictly dependent and subordinate status. Brotherhood in the Confucian understanding reflected a hierarchical relationship. The same slippage in the idea of brotherhood was also very important in pan-Asianism, and we might even say that brotherhood was the


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pivot that joined the hierarchical “family state” ideology with pan-Asianism. On the National Day of the tenth anniversary of Manchukuo in 1942, Puyi issued another imperial edict that promulgated the relationship between Japan and Manchukuo changed from two friendly countries (youbang) and allies (mengbang), to that of a dependent kinsman, and Manchukuo was a child or younger brother of Japan.

Brotherhood or, more broadly, the family relationship among East Asian peoples implied sharing a mission regardless of one’s preferences. It was the obligation of the patriarch or the older, dominant brother to create the ethos of the family, its enterprise, and deliver the goods it promised. Japanese rhetoric did not fully develop this metaphor to embrace the relationship between Japan and Manchukuo, and the rhetoric always appeared somewhat contradictory, perhaps because of the continued lip service to the independence of Manchukuo. Nonetheless, by 1940 the “family state” model was utilized to characterize the relationship of citizen to state within Manchukuo: “National citizenship is the expanded version of family membership. Just as the family member has an obligation to obey the family unconditionally, so does the citizen have to obey the state.”

Manchukuo was developed as an East Asian brother or son who set up a house modeled closely upon, and subordinate to, that of the Japanese patriarch. Practically, this structure meant using Chinese officials at all levels, including in the top administrative and political positions, but having their activities supervised by Japanese officials responsible ultimately to the GDA.

The location of the national shrine at the temporary palace used to be the temple of ancestry in traditional Chinese capital and palace planning. The enforced change of his ancestry made the puppet emperor felt deeply disgraceful, while he had no choice but obeyed the GDA. Puyi recollected that he obeyed the requirements of worshipping Amaterasu, but he “knocked to the ancestors of Qing emperors before leaving for the Amaterasu ritual”. When he bowed to Amaterasu, the emperor read silently that he was bowing to the Kunning Hall of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

Since the emperor expressed resignation as such, it was not difficult to imagine how common civilians of Manchukuo felt toward the exported god and enforced rituals. In order to educate the public of Manchukuo with Shintoism, the colonial government stipulated that all employees and students in the government and schools should bow to the direction of Japan when the emperor worshipped Amaterasu. Besides, all people should bow to Japanese shrines and war monuments when passing by the neighborhoods. In fact, many Chinese inhabitants chose to detour to avoid the mandatory bowing. Indeed, Puyi recalled in the 1950s the decision of making Amaterasu the national god of Manchukuo resulted in tremendous mistrust amongst Manchukuo’s bureaucrats and bureaucrats.

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52 SJSB
54 ZFGB
I later heard that there had been disagreements over this within the Kwantung Army as some of the officers who knew China better thought that it would arouse fierce opposition among the people of the Northeast and increase Japan’s isolation. Later it was decided that with the passage of time the Shinto religion would take root among the young while the older generation would get used to it. The decision to go ahead with this policy was unpopular with most of the Chinese collaborators, to say nothing of ordinary people, and I found it even more difficult to stomach than the robbery of the Eastern Mausoleum.  

In the last month of the Second World War, Changchun was bombarded by the allies. To make the situation worse, the Soviet army invaded from the north on August 8, 1945, and the GDA defense was quickly shattered. Puyi was required to leave Changchun on the evening of August 12, and when his car left the palace, he saw the national temple was on fire. The building was burnt to ground, leaving only the 41 stone sockets on its foundation.

IV. Cultural idioms

As the majority of Manchukuo’s people were Han Chinese, a few Chinese indigenous customs and shrines were carefully preserved. Traditional Chinese (and acculturated Manchu) festivals, such as New Year, Lantern festivals, Middle Autumn, etc. were written to tourist pamphlets to attract tourists and international audience, and the most exotic and indigenous Manchurian festival is Niang Niang. Other ethnicities, such as Korean, Mongol, Tibetan, and Russian all had their customs and religions manifested in urban or rural settings. Survival of these customs and historical sites rendered them venerable in an age of rapid change, which was regarded useful to gain wider support. But all these festivals were left outside the official propaganda and were submitted to Japanese rituals. Although the colonial government accepted and supported a range of cultural practices, like architectural aesthetic pluralism, Japanese culture had the advantages over all others. Hence the hegemonic pluralism was doomed as it sought to be simultaneously multiple and unitary.

**Commendatory meetings and art exhibitions**

While the Xiaozifen (XZF) was the most distinct representation of the Kingly Way in the built environment as I elaborated in Chapter One, the idea of filial piety and respect to the elderly were also demonstrated in other cultural events under the tutelage of the

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57 Chinese festivals were recorded by Japanese photographers on many issues of a famous Japanese-English magazine. See, for example, Manshu gulahu (Manchu Graph), 1936-1, pp.3-5, and 1936-1, pp.13-15.
58 For example, they oftentimes appeared in pamphlets introducing Manchukuo under the section of “local customs” or “colorful life,” while Shinto and Confucian rituals were branded “state ceremonies”.

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colonial government. In the early phase of Manchukuo, in parallel to grand state ceremonies, the Ministry of Culture and Education convened elder inhabitants in Changchun to discuss state affairs, a tradition that had been practiced for long in imperial China, and hosted commendatory meetings to award certificate of merits and medals to dutiful children (xiaozi) as well as chaste widows (jiefu).

The earliest such commendatory meeting took place in 1933, Zheng Xiaoxu noted in the preface of the records of this event that:

“The benevolent Wangdao should first be practiced to care for four weak groups: widowers, widows, orphans and childless couple, and nowadays those with the virtue of filial piety and chastity are equal to these four weak groups (hapless people). ... When filial piety and chastity are exalted, the attitude of the people will be adjusted to the politics of Wangdao.”

And in his admonitory talk in the meeting, Zheng explained the importance of extolling traditional virtues in the state building of Manchukuo: “the relation of husband and wife, and that of father and son, can be extended to the relation of the monarch and his subject. To extol hapless but virtuous people as pious sons and chaste wives will contribute most to cultivating moral sense and establishing social order.” As a result, “the Wangdao will be promulgated quickly and fluently as wind blows down grass.” In this meeting, 14 dutiful sons, 45 chaste widows and other 3 chaste women were awarded certificates and medals. The second commendatory meeting was held in July 1934, four months after Puyi was enthroned.

When the Ministry of Culture was merged into the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the latter took charge of these commendatory meetings. In the preface of the Records of Extolling Virtuous Persons of 1939, Minister Sun Qichang stated that

“filial piety is the most basic virtue of all human behaviors, while chastity is the most basic virtue for all women. ... if chaste wives and dutiful sons become a social norm, the state will have plenty of loyal officials. Hence the respect for dutiful sons and chaste widows (for over thirty years) is an essential part of the benevolent Wangdaoism.”

After the Pacific War broke out, the idiom continued to be practiced under the aegis of the state, for example, a grand commendatory meeting was held in parallel with the decennial as part of the commemoration enterprise. There amounted to about 2700 chaste widows and 700 dutiful sons and daughters who were awarded certificates during the Manchukuo regime.

Because these commendatory meetings were extolling mundane civilians of Manchukuo with the government sponsorship, they represented what a moral state could

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60 Ibid.
61 One widow died because of resistance of being insulted, the others were unmarried women.
62 Minsheng bu. Jie xiao bao jiang lu. 1939
63 Xinhua she jiefangjun fenshe (The PLA news press). Wuwang jiu yi ba (never forget the 9/18 incident). Beijing:zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001, p. 147
achieve in educating people under the Kingly Way. However, the concepts the meetings extolled, such as chastity and loyalty, helped educate the public to respect those who did surrendered and deceased in battles. For this reason, they were allowed to remain as a cultural event in Manchukuo with more tightening colonial cultural polices after 1937.

Other cultural events in Xinjing such as art exhibitions, music performances and movie festivals were encouraged, on the condition that they were held to promulgate cultural diversity and ethnic harmony with no danger to the colonial cultural policy. In the case of fine arts, traditional Chinese painting was officially banned to be displayed in the exhibition, as they were regarded “backward and had bad aesthetic taste,” while Chinese calligraphy was encouraged. In the first Manchukuo Art Exhibition, the Minister of Civic affairs, Sun Qichang, declared that

“Art exhibitions as well as music and movies can be mobilized to cultivate and educate the public, and it is highly important to use them to promulgate the benevolent politics of Manchukuo. ... And the objective of the exhibition embodies the concord between Japan and Manchukuo.”

Unlike fascist Italy where the state served as a generous patron to generate and tolerate pluralistic styles, art exhibitions in Manchukuo were used to embellish grand state ceremonies, such as Puyi’s first visit to Japan and the decennial ceremony, and the regime aimed to promulgate consistent cultural vision through art exhibitions. In order to serve war after 1937, the topics on mundane civilians who dealt with specific work contributing to the state welfare were encouraged. Some of the realist art works also left the present-day audience of what Manchukuo and Xinjing looked like in the thirties and forties.

Niang Niang Festival

The colonial government did not interfere much in indigenous customs, and if a custom did not go counter to the colonial rule, the government had the interest to promulgate it to advocate the cultural and ethnic policy. One of the most popular indigenous customs was worshipping goddess Niang Niang. The spirits embodied are the three goddesses, who had the miraculous power of giving happiness and longevity, bestowing children, and healing eye diseases respectively. The Niang Niang festivals on Mt. Mizhen (also spelt Michen) in the vicinity Dashiqiao, one of the Southern Manchurian mainline railway stations, were held for four full days commencing on April 16 of the lunar calendar. Thousands of devotees thronged to the sacred grounds from far and near by train, horse cart or on foot, and they were “spurred and imbied by something akin to religious passion” came from remote corners of Manchuria to attend

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Chapter 3  Politics of Worshipping

this festival. A Japanese writer observed that

*The desire of the Chinese and Manchus to have children, especially boys, is very great because they consider it an unpardonable sin should they have no offspring to continue their ancient lineage. This is one reason for the general practice of concubine among the Chinese race. The intense desire of Chinese women to have offsprings is manifested in the fervent prayers they offer to the goddess Niang Niang, who is believed to possess the miraculous power of bestowing children.*

Niang Niang was said to be the representative goddess of Taoism and temples dedicated to this deity were found in all parts of Manchuria. In the plan of the Temple of Guan-Yue in Changchun, Niang Niang was enshrined in a hall at the rear of the complex, as in many cases elsewhere in Manchuria. But many upper-class families also had a small household shrine worshipping Niang Niang. Traditionally, during the period of maternity various restrictions were placed upon the expectant mother. For instance, she was not permitted to go out at night. Upon reaching the fifth month of pregnancy it was customary for her to call over a midwife to perform the ceremony of putting on a maternity belt. When she approached maternity, a picture of the goddess Niang Niang should be hung in the room in which she would bear the child. Offerings were made and the arrival of the stork is eagerly awaited. If the parturition was difficult, hurried visits were paid to the Niang Niang shrine nearby and prayers were offered, or red hot iron was immersed into vinegar, or other superstitious customs are observed, for it was believed that difficult delivery is due to the hindrance of evil spirits. The midwife who had been present at the birth, returned to officiate on the occasion. The goddess Niang Niang and the god of heat were worshipped, and candles and incense were burned on this day to beseech protection of the infant, while at the same time the ancestral spirits were worshipped and a report rejoicing at the arrival of a descendant, was made. The ceremony finished, the picture of the goddess Niang Niang and the tributes were burnt. According to tradition, the death of a child was due to the infant being carried off by evil spirits.

Niang Niang festival and household worshipping continued throughout the Manchukuo regime with little official restriction. So was other customs of Han Chinese and other ethnic groups, for example, the Lunar New Year festival, lantern festival, mid-autumn festival, etc. Japanese ethnographers made curious and careful investigation into these festivals and recorded how people celebrated them under the colonial rule.

The display of various festivals and rituals celebrated by Chinese, Mongols, Koreans, Russians and Japanese seemed to have provided ideal representations of cultural diversity and ethnic equality under Japanese colonialism. But as I have elaborated in the

68 “Marriages, birth, and funerals in Manchuria”. *Contemporary Manchuria*. 1938/4, p.102-106

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first section of this chapter, rituals that had the potential to jeopardize the colonial rule were diminished or eradicated, such as the Confucian and Guan-Yue rituals which had too much impact among the people. Though the Manchukuo government did not forbid people to celebrate their cultural festivals, it was stipulated that all people bow to Japanese shrines whenever they passed by, and on the days of worshipping Amaterasu and numerous “national festivals,” such as the birthday of the Japanese emperor, the anniversaries of Manchuria Incident and Marco Polo Bridge Incident, etc., all people had to follow the rule to show respect. The hierarchy of pluralism is obvious that within a hegemonic political structure, the colonial regime balanced the need for rhetorical propaganda of “Five-race harmony” with emotional investment in prioritized cultural programs that encouraged widespread participation.

V. Conclusions

The sensory impact of the public pageantries and spectacles on Changchun’s inhabitants was profound, but the feeling solicited amongst the populace was distrust and fear rather than gratification and pride as Japanese hoped. Ever since the establishment of Manchukuo, the rulers created effective instruments of repression: an intrusive police force, a horrific program of biological experimentation on the population, and massive repression directed at armed groups and dissidents alike. In memoirs, Chinese officials and commoners recalled the terror of not being in line with the colonial stipulations. It was through a parable of the horrors and hubris that the colonial authority engineered political stability and social unity under the banner of “Harmony of the Five Races”.

As in architectural styles, a wide arrange of religions and rituals were allowed, and oftentimes different rituals and customs featured many pamphlets to promote cultural plurality and tolerance of the colonial authority. However, the pluralism demonstrated in the built environment and cultural events was deliberately set in a hegemonic political structure manipulated by the GDA. This patronage system, based on a plurality of expressions, took potentially oppositional rituals and aesthetic languages and integrated them into a ruling structure.

Although Confucianism was stipulated as the national religion in the first years of Manchukuo, its role diminished as the colonial authority established firm control. And despite the limited influence of Shintoism and other Japanese rituals that had been practiced in Manchuria for a long time before Manchukuo, it practically superseded all other forms of rituals after 1937. The Japanization of cultural life superseded other forms of had a conflicted status among bureaucrats, administrators, and commoners, and carried within it the seeds of the collapse of the client state. The composite character of worshipping rituals reflected the contradictions inherent in ritual pluralism as the official ethos of state culture. However, by elevating a patronage strategy based on support for a multiplicity of aesthetic languages and cultural programs, the colonial regime achieved legitimacy, visibility, and cultural authority.

70 WSZL
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The presence of the monarch in these ritual events was significant politically and spiritually. The emperor was invited to play a role partially ceremonial and partially logistical. In each case the emperor’s participation reaffirmed the ideology of the Kingly Way, the twin concern with modernity and the past which theoretically linked everyone. However, Puyi only attended Confucian ritual once while he was enforced to lead the ritual worshipping a Japanese Goddess. The commemorative ceremony (discussed in previous chapters) and rituals were a success in terms of organization and the large number of participants engaged, while the main purpose of these events as a whole of inculcating unity and gratification largely failed. Indeed, ethnic stratification and discrimination was with Japanese enjoying various social and economic privileges, for example, there were salary differentials; there was even a distinction in food: the Japanese ate primarily white rice while the Chinese ate only sorghum. As simplified and crystallized in ritual events, it could not become more obvious that only the GDA and the corps of Japanese bureaucrats in Manchukuo, the actual owner of Manchukuo, was “omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent”.

The politics of worshipping in Manchukuo best illustrates the metaphor of the hybrid beast of chimera, that Manchukuo was nominally structured according to the emperor system while the client state was headed by the military, and the emperor was reduced to an inconsequential, but indispensable, part that was added when everything had been set.

Puyi soon realized and was depressed by the fact he was no more than a puppet manipulated by the GDA and Japanese counsels in his palace. Frightened that Japanese would poison and replace him, he had to follow their instructions, including presenting himself in rituals and ceremonies. Repeatedly but secretly he expressed his anger and depression of being humiliated and employed as a symbolic puppet. It is notable that the emperor himself was muted. The emperor was invited to play a partly ceremonial and partly logistical role in creating what would be a brand new nation-state complete with all the modern political trimmings. The presence of the monarch in these commemorative and ritual events was significant politically and spiritually. In each case the emperor’s participation reaffirmed the ideology of Wangdao (“the Kingly Way”). He himself was made a sign of the grandeur of the colonial rule. The ceremony gave the people the opportunity to “meet” the emperor, and in many respects, the emperor was both an actor in and the subject of this grand theater of power.

Alongside the Japanization of cultural life, the relation of Japan to Manchukuo changed from the “friendly country” (youbang) to “the ally” (mengbang), and finally the “parental country” (qinbang). Thus, with each change in terminology,
Japanese-Manzhouguo relation moved from an equal footing to unequal, hierarchical ties as patterned after a parent-child bond. As Puyi put it in his Rescript on the Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the State, this parent-child relationship “exhausts devotion in repaying our debt of gratitude,” the key point being that, in order to repay is parental debt to Japan. Manchukuo had to unilaterally exhaust its devotion and filiality, which even aroused resentment of the most obedient collaborators like Premier Zhang Jinghui. The fluidity and vulnerability of the status of the dependent state subject to “global competition and changing circumstances” under new imperialism was made manifest through public pageantries and ritual ceremonies. While the rituals were a success in their own terms (such as organization, wide participation, etc.), the main purpose of these events as a whole of inculcating unity and gratification largely failed.

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Chapter 4  Decolonizing Changchun

Chapter 4  The Process of Decolonization: Changchun under Reconstruction, 1945-1957

Till the time when the PRC was founded, three regimes established the rule in Changchun in the aftermath of Japanese defeat in 1945, i.e., the Soviet military (August 1945 – April 1946), the Nationalist (April 1946 – October 1948), and the Communist (since October 1948). In the process of decolonization, successive political regimes in Changchun, despite their disagreement and conflict, made continuous efforts to wipe out Japanese colonial imprint left in the city. As a result, profound change took place in areas such as ideological superstructures, institutions and political apparatuses to institute new social systems, alongside the new way and content of life. Like in the colonial times, the new society was accompanied by new symbols that had been integrated into daily life: the red flag, the hammer and sickle and other symbols of the unity of workers and peasants, the five-pointed star symbol of communism, etc. Labor’s Day (May 1st) and the anniversary of National Day (October 1st) replaced Confucian and Shinto rituals and became great national holidays, representing the traditional festival of the labor movement and the day on which history definitely took a new turn. The anniversaries of these and other important socialist events were celebrated as jubilees, and the collective life of socialism aimed to supersede old regimes.

However, one of the most fundamental changes was the transformation of urban space. As Henri Lefebvre notes, “[a] revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential. … A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space.”¹ Therefore, a close examination of the emergence of a range of governmental strategies and techniques of spatial intervention that served to consolidate and define the new regime is needed. Accordingly, I will explore in this chapter how the colonial built environment was appropriated by successive regimes, and how newly built spaces under Maoism embodied and bolstered socialist ideology. In the following chapter, I will examine a Chinese work unit of automobile production in the outskirts of Changchun, and chart out how socialist spatial formation has been crucial in the production and reproduction of socialist relationships and collective subjectivity.

This chapter deals with various kinds of urban transformation in downtown Changchun as part of decolonizing movements, including politics of renaming, appropriation of old space, and newly constructed buildings. After the tumultuous Civil War in Manchuria during the years of 1946-1948, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established firm rule in Changchun. When the CCP assumed political power over all of China, the question of how to govern the cities was foremost in the minds of its leadership. In his address to the Central Committee in March 1949, Mao Zedong declared that imminent victory would signal a shift of focus in party work from the countryside to the cities and a shift in emphasis from military struggle to economic

According to Mao, the major task of this new urban-centered strategy was to bring about a transformation in the nature of the Chinese city. During the three-year economic recovery period (1949-1952), with the implementation of centralized planning, private ownership of the means of production was abolished or restricted to a minimum. When the first Five Year Plan (1953-1957) started, not only the urban landscape of Changchun was transformed, but also the general perception of the city was changed. By the end of 1957, the last year of the first FYP, Changchun was officially recognized a “new” city of an industrial base and home to many important socialist institutions, while the urban life in the city had long been attuned to Chinese socialism.

Nevertheless, the built environment from the old social order lived on. As we shall see, a lot of colonial institutional buildings, as well as streets in Changchun, were renamed and reused according to Communist ideological content. The decision to utilize and modify the old city to the need was crucial because it implied that the new regime would be constructed on the bones of the old. No doubt this resulted in the erasure of much of the past, yet it also ensured that important spatial memories of the past would be imprinted upon the architecture of the new. This chapter thus aims to unfold how the same urban space was appropriated for different political ends.

The reuse of existing spatial forms, however, could only go so far. In form, a new society meant a new art and a new architecture. The Soviet pattern of socialist realism was not only mentioned by name, but Chinese architects and planners had enthusiastically mobilized themselves to apply the conception of “progressive national form” in practice. In this vein, ironically, it turned out new buildings under Maoism resembled colonial Developing Asian style in the abundance of traditional decoration, meanwhile Western modernist and functionalist buildings were criticized for their smooth, plain facades. The overarching goal to compete with and to overcome the West in approaching to a new modern society reappeared in the built environment under the new regime. Like its colonial precedent, socialist urban design and architecture were conceived as a positive counter-image to the alleged decadent Western metropolis, and aimed to assert social, moral and political superiority of the socialist state.

It has been widely recognized that socialist cities were dominated by standardization and unity seen as reflecting an overall unity in ideological stance. Unlike stylistic diversity that featured colonial times, the grand vistas and totalizing landscape of the socialist city and the economy of scarcity effectively reduced aesthetic representation into a monotonic form. When the first Five-Year Plan (FFYP) started in 1953, socialist realism was elevated to the sole tolerated ideal in China. On the one

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hand, by abandoning functionalism and modernism, the urban construction in Changchun quickly broke away from the multiplicity and plurality of expression that characterized colonial Changchun. Important buildings should be built in line with a political system based on the principle of the leading role of the CCP, a principle so radical that could not be reconciled with any challenge, and the Party line was to be closely observed for the state-managed socialist construction. On the other, national form applied on new buildings unambiguously proclaimed Chinese cultural identity, unlike the innocuous or hegemonic hybrid form of the colonial times which entailed a distinct reference made to the West or Japan. It was the allure to Chinese nationalist sentiment that made it easier and more efficient to let the colonial legacies sink from memory by completion rather demolition of old buildings, as exemplified in the reconstruction of Changchun downtown. Specifically, I argue that the newly built socialist in Changchun, despite its obvious connection with the colonial past, embodied and bolstered socialist ideology of egalitarianism and the leading status of working class.

I.  Changchun during Transitional Years, 1945-1948

Unlike Tokyo, Changchun did not suffer from formidable air bombardon until toward the end of the war. The Soviet Union joined the war in Far East on August 8, 1945, and the capital of the puppet state of Manchukuo was bombarded the next day. On August 15, 1945, the Japanese emperor declared the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, announcing that the Japanese Government had accepted the Potsdam Declaration demanding the unconditional surrender of the Japanese military. Two days later, Puyi, Manchukuo’s emperor who had fled with his family and a coup of officials outside Changchun, announced the Imperial Rescript of Abdication in a small frontier city on the border of Manchukuo and Korea.6

The Soviet Red Army entered Changchun in late August 1945, and set up a military government in the city immediately. The first measure taken by the Soviet army was to rename Xinjing back to Changchun, and tried very possible means to eradicate Japanese colonial influence. For example, Datong Street and Datong Plaza were renamed into Stalin Street and Stalin Plaza, respectively. Many major institutional buildings of the colonial times were occupied by the Soviet army, for example, the Headquarters of Guandong Army was used for the headquarters of the Soviet army in Manchuria headed by Marshal R. Y. Malinovsky. Parades of soviet troops were held oftentimes to demonstrate the overwhelming power of the Soviet military, and symbols of socialist revolution, such as Stalin’s portrait, red flag, and Party flag, were hung over on important buildings throughout the city.7

At a time of tremendous social and cultural change, monuments were readily

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6 Ironically, this was third time for Puyi to announce his abdication from the throne. The first time took place in the aftermath of the 1911 Revolution, followed by the second abdication of an unsuccessful restoration of monarchy in 1917.

used to proclaim the imminent arrival of the socialist utopia and demonstrate the strength and permanence of the new political order. In the meantime, the demolition of reactionary monuments became indispensable part of the campaign to eliminate colonial signs in Changchun, long before the reconstruction projects were in place. As early as the Russians came in Changchun, memorials associated with Japanese colonialism and militaristic heroism were demolished immediately. For example, in memory of Kodama Kentaro (1852-1906), the late chief of general staff who won the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), a statue of Kodama on a horse was erected in Changchun’s first park near the entrance in 1938, but the statue was demolished by the Russians immediately after Russian takeover.

The military government also decided to build a new monument in Changchun’s center, Stalin Plaza, in order to glorify the Soviet military forces and memorize that deceased in the battles against the Japanese. This site, full of political and cultural significance for political ceremonies as discussed in previous chapters, had been used to be temporary buildings for state ceremonies and celebrations, such as the tower for the Completion of Capital Construction in 1937 and the bonfire tower for the Tenth Anniversary in 1942. (Fig 4-1) The Russians consciously chose this site to set up their monument to supersede the former foe.

The Soviet Martyrs’ Monument, designed by Russian military engineers, was divided into three parts: base, pedestal, and tower body. The low round base is 30 meters in diameter and 0.1 meter in height, above which stands the round 3-layered pedestal that occupies about 314 square meters. The height of the pedestal is approximately 2 meters, and the diameter of its top layer is 8 meters, equal to the diagonal length of the section of the tower body’s bottom layer. On the pedestal rose symmetrical low walls and stone posts, and the whole complex demonstrates symmetry and monumentality that characterized Soviet socialist realism. The tower body, five-stepped trapezium in form with square sections, is totally 27.5 meters in height. Each edge of the bottom layer of the tower body is 5.7 meters, and the edge of the top
layer is 2 meters. In addition to its height and symmetrical composition, four posters on the base that surround the main tower also mark the so-called socialist realism, which had been copied in later socialist construction in Changchun.

Erecting a monument was a usual practice in the aftermath of Soviet victory in the WWII. In Russia and its allies in East Europe, the Soviet monuments were of three main types: the Soviet soldier, in bronze or stone; the pillar or obelisk; and, taken from the battlefield, the Soviet tank or gun put up on a stone base. The Changchun monument was a combination of the latter two types. The whole tower was built in granite, while at the top of the tower body was erected a Soviet bomber model made in cast iron, with its head facing the north (the direction to the railway station). The northern side of the tower body is carved with Chinese and Russian inscriptions that glorify Soviet military martyrs, their names and ranks, and a Soviet insignia. The monuments, as the victory army’s the first implementation that was erected at the center of the city, conveyed a message on the endured Soviet influence, as practiced in the Eastern bloc. (Fig 4-2)

Using Japanese war prisoners as labor, the Soviet monument was erected within two months, right before the celebration of the 28th Anniversary of Great October Socialist Revolution in 1945. On November 7, 1945, Marshal Malinovksy headed the celebration ceremony as well as the inauguration of the new monument in Changchun. The Soviet troops paraded through Stalin Street (previous Datong Street), and Japanese girl students were arranged to present flowers to the monument at the inauguration. (Fig 4-3) A few high-ranking deputies from the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) government in Nanjing attended the ceremony, including Chiang Ching-kuo, son and political heir of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek who had been detained in the Soviet Union for 15 years. (Fig 4-3 young Japanese girls presenting flowers to the Soviet monument, shown at the background. Source: sui Yue Dongbei. p. 189

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10 As Anders Aman observes the examples of Soviet victorious monuments in Bulgaria and Poland, a victorious army does not erect stone and bronze monuments to itself in places where it proposes to relinquish control, and the Soviet victory monuments were the first implementation of this doctrine in the future people's democracies.
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The KMT government had somewhat reluctantly signed the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance (zhong su you hao tong meng tiao yue) with the Soviet government on August 14, 1945, which affirmed the legitimacy of the KMT government and Chinese sovereignty of Manchuria at the price to conferre special rights to the Russians, including the use of the railway and the lease of Dalian and Lushun. The KMT had sent a corps of some five hundred officials in middle October to Changchun where the Soviet army headquarted, but they were prevented from entering other cities. Political negotiations and debates on the date when the Soviet army retreated from Changchun continued into the next year, when Madam Chiang Kai-shek visited Changchun in January 1946 to “extend regards to Soviet soldiers on the behalf of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek”.12

After the Chinese Civil War (1946-1949) broke out, the KMT occupied Changchun for most of the time before it was finally liberated by the Communists in October 1948. Lack of necessary sources to rebuild the former colonial capital, the KMT government manipulated the names appearing on map as the most efficient and economic way of asserting a new regime in Changchun. The central plaza was renamed from Stalin Plaza to Zhongzheng Plaza (“Zhongzheng” refers to the literal name of Chiang Kai-shek). The northern part of central avenue (from the station to Datong Plaza, now Zhongzheng Plaza) was renamed Zhongshan Dajie, in memory of the late Premier Sun Yat-sen, while the southern part of the street was called Zhongzheng Dajie, named after Chiang Kai-shek himself. In June 1946, Stalin Park (previous West Park or Kodama Park after 1938) was also renamed Zhongshan Park. Other places and buildings were also renamed following the suit of the Three People Principles.

![Fig. 4-4 Portraits of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek on a building that faced Zhongzheng Street.](source: suiyue dongbei. p.201)

![Fig. 4-5 a group wedding ceremony for KMT officers held at the entrance of former Yamato Hotel.](Source: http://www.ccrpf.org/bbs/thread.php?fid=49)

Another widely used method of eradicating the Japanese colonial influence was

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hanging everywhere the portraits of political leaders, Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen, especially on primary institutional buildings along main avenues as previous Datong Street and Shuntian Street. (Fig. 4-4) The KMT also did not differ too much from what the Russians had done to appropriate colonial buildings for their use. During warfare, very little construction was made in Changchun, while many colonial buildings were easily converted into military fortresses in preparing for a street battle. For example, the Manchuria Bank became the headquarters of KMT army stationed in Changchun, and the previous Guandong Army Headquarters became the headquarters of a KMT army. Also, the previous Yamato Hotel was expropriated by the military as an officers’ club. (Fig. 4-5)

As the Communists took the initiative of civil war in Manchuria since 1947, Changchun became an isolated stronghold under the control of the KMT, and was finally besieged in March 1948. The previous colonial capital city was intended to be built as a large fortress and had an advantageous position of defense due to sufficient infrastructure networks. In addition to solid buildings, other facilities such as cisterns and the lake system in Changchun provided enough water for the KMT army and inhabitants, and frustrated the PLA by an attempt to cut off the water supply from outside the city. Knowing that it was unlikely to conquer Changchun in a short period of time, the PLA officers decided to besiege the city in the long run, and expected that the KMT army would debacle in the end because of hunger and demoralization. As the result of the seven-month siege, the KMT army stationed in Changchun surrendered to the PLA in October 1948.

The statistical analysis of the size of Changchun’s population reveals the remarkable slowdown of the population growth during the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 until 1945, and then a dramatic decrease until the Communists took over the city in October 1948. When the Communists entered the city, the number of population in Changchun decreased from 700,000 at the end of the Sino-Japanese War to slightly over 170,000 in October 1948, due to the turmoil of Chinese Civil War and a long siege of the city. The city was gradually recovered in the following three years according to the census in 1953 with a rapid increase in population and restoration of urban governance.

Due to turbulent warfare in Changchun during the transitional years up to 1949, urban construction came to a halt and the city was deteriorated. Appropriation of

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13 For solidity of the building, see memory of General Zheng Dongguo, who was the ranking officer of KMT troops stationed in Changchun, quoted in Chapter 1.
16 Ibid.
17 In Manchuria as a whole, the population rose from 36,703 millions in 1950 to 43,753 millions in 1953 by more than seven million people. Alfred Schinz. Cities in China. Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1989, p.405.
colonial buildings and manipulation of names and political signs were major means of urban management. The Soviet monument at the central plaza was perhaps the only achievement in construction of this period was to affect later socialist construction after the PRC was founded in 1949.

II. Socialist City Planning and Architecture: Soviet and Colonial Imprint

The most characteristic feature of socialist construction in the PRC, as in the Soviet Union, was the degree to which it was coordinated and planned through central government agencies. City planning in socialist countries was based on the philosophical tenets of Marxism-Leninism, derived theoretically from the social ownership of the means of production and the predominant role of the state in all economic activity. Planning was institutionally established by the state and was integrated with overall economic planning of the center. From this perspective, socialist city planning was a form of central planning, aiming to assist in achieving national needs and goals.

As Xie and Costa elucidate, socialist planning was assumed to create a new form and a new pattern for the city. The overall goals of socialist planning included: (1) to correct the ills inherited from the era of capitalism; and (2) to reduce the danger of alienation during urbanization; and (3) to develop a strong community spirit within urban subcommunities. The political ideology of eradicating the “three great contradictions” - the difference between workers and peasants, city and countryside, and manual and mental labor - became an important part of urban development policies. As such, city planning, especially neighborhood and district planning, should promote the principle of self-reliance, a tradition the CCP had practiced from the Yan’an period. I will elaborate on this model of socialist planning as exemplified in the construction of the First Automobile Works in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here is that socialist planning is, like what the Japanese colonists in Manchuria had argued, the active projection of economic activities (allocation of resources, distribution of income) as opposed to the passive forecasting of spontaneous development in the capitalist world.

Like many other fields, planning was institutionally established in socialist China with the aid from the Soviet Union. With Soviet influence, city planning became an important component of the nation’s economic development program (the national five-year-plan). However, it is the centralized planning institutions and agencies that remind us of the similarities between socialist and Japanese colonial planning practices. Specifically, the four general elements characteristic of socialist city planning has summarized by Jack Fisher have somewhat relevance between the two planning regimes: 1) proper size of a town that any increase in the size of the urban complex depends on calculation of the “city-forming” segment of the population; 2) neighborhood unit concept which supported an elaborate division of the city into self-contained units by

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using official norms and standards; 3) city’s center which serves as a setting for the principle public buildings and monuments. The only commercial elements programmed for the socialist center were the hotel for tourists, the single department store, and the like.19 The reconstruction of the civic center of Stalin Plaza (previous Datong Plaza) was a good example that remodeled colonial legacy into a characteristic element of socialist city. 4) standardization, or urban uniformity that embodied socialist egalitarianism, and this may be the most distinctive difference from the colonial precedent. With the implementation of centralized planning, modern techniques of government were combined with the radical objectives of socialism, leading to important innovations in the standardization of housing and urban design in every Chinese danwei. But the way of organizing communal life within a certain compound was not too much different between the socialist and colonial regimes, as exemplified in the National Founding University (Kendai).

For architecture and planning, there were three more key implications that connect the two regimes. First, the overthrow of capitalism made possible the abolition of bourgeois private land tenure, thus providing an unprecedented opportunity, for the planned redesign of urban space – a possibility that was unimaginable under capitalism. This had been already practice by the Japanese in constructing the capital city from scratch. Second, the centralized planning process and implementation averred the primacy of politics over technology. On the same vein, with the overthrow of capitalism/colonialism, the same technologies that served the capitalist/colonial order could be redeployed in the service of socialism. Hence, technology could play a positive role in the building of a new society, but only when deployed under the guidance of a socialist government. Third, centralized planning was used to implement sweeping construction dictated by five-year-plans, educate the mass, create subject identity, and foster a strong community spirit to meet ideological propaganda, be it the Kingly Way or socialism.

During the first years of the 1950s, in the arena of architectural representation, socialist realism was introduced for socialist public buildings in many Chinese cities. The term “socialist realism” was first used in the Soviet Union in 1934, referring to a literature genre.20 It was favored by Stalin and took sway in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, and was later exported to Eastern bloc after WWII. The corresponding concept of socialist realism was “socialist content and national form,” and it represented itself in neoclassical and monumentalist public buildings.

A distinctive departure of socialist realism from the previous radical constructivism was the return to the classical form and a combination of nationalist elements. The special significance of the word “national” can be traced back to the period immediately following the death of Lenin, when Stalin denounced Trotsky and his

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idea of permanent revolution and affirmed the concept of “socialism in one country”. That concept engendered a doctrine with tremendous repercussions, such as the rejection of modernism, promotion of socialist realism and national form, in architecture as in other artistic fields. In literature it was easy to understand what was meant by realism, but national form was less clear. But in architecture, the opposite was true: realism there was a difficult concept and would remain so, while national form, on the other hand, was easy to understand as exemplified in classical architecture. Consequently, Chinese architects who reconstructed socialist cities looked into the practices of Chinese Revival under the KMT and Developing-Asian buildings under Japanese colonial rule for inspiration, hence the continuity in urban landscape with the recent past.

Socialist realism was an antithesis to the notion that revolutionary buildings needed a radical reordering of social space and appearance, but rather afforded a merely technical and decorative role. Instead of becoming a site for the production of new proletarian culture, as the radical architects had hoped, Chinese cities, like the Soviet counterparts, rapidly became the site of monuments and grandiose state buildings that were designed to represent the might of central power and the dominance of the masses (embodied by the state) over the individual. Maoist architects at the time condemned modernism and functionalism which embraced universal values and cosmopolitanity were as “remnant of exploiting class,” while extolled the advantage of socialist realism that embraced socialist system and national identity.

When the CCP assumed political power over China, the question of how to govern the cities was foremost in the minds of its leadership. As Mao urged his colleagues in the eve of the establishment of the PRC in 1949, “From the very first day we take over a city, we should direct our attention to restoring and developing its production .... Only when production in the cities is restored and developed, when consumer-cities arc transformed into producer-cities, can the people’s political power be consolidate.” Thus, while the urgent short-term goal was to restore production, which had been severely affected by the war, the longer-term objective was to turn the cities into net producers instead of net consumers of wealth. This reflected a common view among CCP leaders that Chinese cities were characterized by a predominantly wasteful and decadent bourgeois lifestyle. The urban policies of serving the people and serving producer-cities had brought about great changes. On March 17, 1949, the renmin ribao (People’s Daily) editorial stated that:

“Old China’s cities were all consumer cities. Although the cities were exploited by imperialism, they acted as exploiters toward the rural areas. Therefore, let us remove the antagonism between the cities and the rural areas, and speedily restore the productivity of the cities.”

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24 renmin ribao (People’s daily). 1949-3-17.
Hence, the gravity of the CCP shifted from the countryside to the cities. From 1953 the FFYP marked the shift from recovery to construction. A number of laws and regulations were promulgated in order to facilitate the construction of heavy industry and across the nation large-scale construction of industrial bases. During the FFYP, planners were trained, and administrative organizations and professional associations prepared themselves to build Chinese socialism.

The driving force of national economic planning was the emphasis on industrialization, with particular emphasis on heavy industry. Hence, it is taken for granted that urban planning should serve the purpose of the country's socialist industrialization, production and the welfare of the working population. In practice, cities were divided into four categories according to the degree of industrial construction: (1) new industrial cities; (2) cities to be enlarged in proportion with industrial construction; (3) cities with little industrial construction where public facilities exist; and (4) medium and small cities. It is obvious that such construction principles reflected the view that “the speed of development of socialist cities is inevitably determined by the rate of growth of socialist industry”.

As this categorization was decided in 1952 when Changchun was still what remained as a typical consumption city due to its colonial trait, Changchun was put under the third type. (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 An overview of primary cities of priority for construction (1952)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Proportion of industry in the city</th>
<th>Cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Newly built heavy industrial cities (8)</td>
<td>Beijing, Baotou, Xi’an, Datong, Qiqihaer, Daye, Lanzhou, Chengdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Old cities with much industry (14)</td>
<td>Jilin, Anshan, Fushu, Benxi, Shenyang, Harbin, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Old cities with little industry (17)</td>
<td><strong>Changchun</strong>, Nanjing, Shanghai, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Other cities</td>
<td>Cities other than the 39 cities listed above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 For example, Suburban Land Reform Regulation (November 11, 1950), Provisional Regulation for Taxation of Urban Housing, Land and Property (August 8, 1951), Provisional Law for Capital Construction (January 9, 1952), Law for Requisition of Land for National Reconstruction (December 5, 1953)


27 Guanche zhongdian jianshe chengshi de fangzhen (Thoroughly implement the principle of constructing cities according to priority). *Renmin ribao*. August 11, 1954. Also, City planning in socialist China were charged for the following responsibilities: (1) To serve proletarian politics; (2) To serve socialist production; and (3) To serve the livelihood of the laboring masses. It is the “foundation” of the national economy. Industrial development has been emphasized as the "leading factor" guiding the nation towards modernization. The objectives of city planning aimed to: (1) Combine industry with agriculture (Gong nong jiehe); (2) Combine city with country (Cheng xiang jiehe); (3) Benefit production (Youli shengchan); and (4) Facilitate people’s livelihood (Fangbian shenghuo). See Laurence Ma. “The Chinese Approach to City Planning: Policy, Administration, and Action”. *Asian Survey*. Vol. 19, No. 9, 1979.

In this plan six of all the eighteen industrial cities to be supported by the Central Government were located in the Northeast, leaving only twelve cities for the rest of China. Changchun and all other important cities of the region were included except Dalian, the harbor city. Between 1952 and 1955 the urban population increased 26 per cent but the average increase for ten industrial cities including Shenyang, Changchun, Luoyang, and Xi’an was 51 per cent. The Soviet urban planning was the model, and the idea prevailed in urban planning “must reflect the new era’s greatness and beauty” as dictate by Stalin.

III. Changchun during Socialist Economic Recovery, 1948-1952

When the PLA took over Changchun in October 1948, the Communists immediately tried all means to restore the vigor of the city, based on recent experience of the management of large cities. Running water, electricity and several bus lines were reactivated in the same month. A total number of 80,000 people gathered at the previous Datong Plaza (now renamed Stalin Plaza) on November 11, 1948, to celebrate the liberation of the city as well as to memorize those who died in the siege.

When the People’s Republic of China was founded on October 1, 1949, the new regime joined in the Soviet bloc immediately and began to emulate the Soviet model of building state and society. In March 1950 the central government began to carry out energetic measures for unifying the financial structure of the country and stabilizing the currency and prices of consumers’ goods. The successes achieved in this area laid the foundations for the restoration and development on a broad national scale of both state

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29 Si Gengsheng. “wo guo renkou tongji fangmian siyao taolun yanjiu de jige wenti” (Some problems concerning discussion and research on our country’s population statistics). Tongji gongzuo tongxun (Statistical Bulletin). 1955, No.12
30 Lan Tian. “anzhao jing ji, shi yong, mei guan de yuan ze jian she cheng shi” (Reconstruct cities according to the principles of economy, function, and beauty), Renmin Ribao, January 7, 1954)
and private industry. The three years (1949-1952) were not only years of basic social reform which decisively altered the face of Chinese society and established the democratic dictatorship of the people headed by the working class, but also facilitated the transition to full-blown central planning in the FFYP.

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, Changchun, and the Northeast as a whole, became a base of “helping the front”. Hundreds of thousands of patriots expressed a desire to join the ranks of the people’s volunteer.32 On December 8, 1950, a large number of people gathered at Stalin Plaza to celebrate recovering Pyongyang, the capital of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.33 Also, the campaign for suppressing counter-revolution and the “sanfan” and “wufan” movements were begun at the very height of the great patriotic movement mobilized for the Korean War. The former targeted corruption, waste, and bureaucratism among party cadres, government officials, and administrative organs, while the latter targeted the urban bourgeoisie with a crackdown on bribery, tax evasion, fraud, theft of government property, and state economic secrets.34 Together these two campaigns were designed to consolidate unified central leadership over the urban sector and had great impact in urban life. For example, the wufan congregation of Changchun’s construction workers was held in the state-run architectural design firm in February and March 1952, as sign that “the class struggle sharpened”.35

In the core urban area of Changchun, three basic methods of (re)construction were applied: manipulation of naming and renaming, erection of statues of Chairman Mao and revolutionary martyrs in front of existing colonial buildings, and new buildings of socialist realism that complete urban form so that supplementation rather than demolition played a more active role in forgetting the past. When the Communists liberated Changchun in late 1948, and the main street that stretched several kilometers from the railway station to the South was again renamed Stalin Street, when the Soviet was regarded as the most reliable and powerful ally for the industrial base of the Northeast. Another main street, Shuntian Street where Manchukuo administrative

32 The famous motto “for resistance to American aggression, aid to Korea, defense of the fatherland and home,” put forward by the patriots of the Northeast, became the motto of the entire Chinese people.

33 In official propaganda, the movement to resist American aggression and help Korea demonstrated the vitality of the people’s order, stimulated the birth of titanic forces and energies of hundreds of millions of people of free China in all the diversity of their heroic deeds, and played a tremendous organizing and mobilizing role in socialist construction. As the result, “all the moral unity of the Chinese people increased still further and its faith in the strength and creative capacity of the people’s order strengthened”. U.S. Government translation. Democratic and socialistic Structure in Contemporary China. Research &. Microfilm publications. (UC Berkeley), p. 16. For mass conventions, see Xinhua Ribao. 1951-10-29, 1951-11-11, 1951-11-15.

34 The sanfan campaign was intended to remove party and government officials, including former GMD functionaries, who had shown themselves unreliable in the implementation of government policy. Unified planning required a loyal and dependable cadre, or as Mao commented in relation to the purpose of these campaigns, “Planned economy is impossible unless we are clear about the situation.” If the sanfan campaign signaled the CCP cleaning up bureaucratic ranks in preparation for the task of socialist construction, the wufan campaign signaled the end of the brief “New Democracy” alliance with the national bourgeoisie. See David Bray. Social Space and Governance in Urban China. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, pp.110-111.

offices were congregated, was renamed Xinmin, literally meaning New People, reflecting the objective of socialist revolution to create new subject identity. The names of districts, streets, squares, parks and buildings of Changchun had been already changed for several rounds, while reconstructing colonial buildings was also an economic way to reuse existed buildings to embody socialist ideals.

As the Communist government issued decrees immediately after its liberation that no estate or industry of old regimes should be destructed, most colonial buildings along the central avenue continued to function as they were, but under different names and political guise. For example, the Guandong Army headquarters housed the Communist Party Committee of Jilin Provincial. The former Capital Construction Bureau building was remade to house People’s Municipal Government of Changchun. (Fig 4-7) Yamato Hotel was renamed Chunyi (Changchun’s Friendship) Hotel, and the previous Fengle building was still used as a theater but with a new name Chuncheng (“the city of Changchun”). Other buildings were remodeled to accommodate new functions. For example, the Concordia Association headquarters beneath Datong Plaza was converted into a military club, and the buildings of former Manchukuo governmental organs and Japanese corporate headquarters were changed into hospitals or universities. The nationalization of land and the way buildings and places were given new uses and meanings, even when the physical configuration of those spaces was little changed, indicating that space was subject to political interests. (Fig 4-8)

Fig 4-7 The former CCB building was reused for people’s Municipal Government of Changchun
Source: http://www.ccrpf.org/bbs/index.php?m=bbs

Fig 4-8 The former Capital Police Bureau was remodeled to house police department of socialist Changchun
Source: http://www.ccrpf.org/bbs/index.php?m=bbs

In Changchun, as the reconstruction of war-torn colonial capital demanded tremendous material resources in a city where practically everything was in short supply, the PLA issued decrees immediately after entering the city in 1948 that existing buildings of the previous regimes must not be destructed at random.36 Besides, the estates and enterprises of the former KMT government, war criminals and collaborators were

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confiscated and nationalized.37 Under the socialist regime, by the end of the recovery period, the old mercenary organs of industrial administration underwent a basic reform and a considerable part of the old technical specialists was unified and re-educated to “voluntarily serve the people”.38

Construction workers as part of the leading class in the new society joined in building socialism enthusiastically. Like in Eastern European countries, the socialist movement was everywhere in evidence, and strikingly often its message was conveyed with the assistance of buildings, bricks, and bricklayers that soon became popular subjects in mass media and newspapers. For example, even modest demands for increased private consumption had to be put off, added to which the Polish people expected the regularly recurring money-raising campaigns to yield voluntary funds for the reconstruction of Warsaw, and one out of every six people living in Warsaw was employed on reconstruction.

Chinese construction workers were also organized for reconstruction, and new building methods of the Soviet and its Eastern European variants were rapidly introduced to the Northeast. Several model construction workers and their skill of fast bricklaying were extolled and publicized in media. The Manchurian mason and bricklayer Su Changyou, like his counterparts in the Eastern bloc, became a well-known public figure as a model construction worker.39 Su invented a new bricklaying technique in 1951, and all contemporary major Chinese newspapers covered his outstanding deeds and advanced techniques. Su and his brigade achieved a 128% increase in brick laying labor productivity in 1951, and a 215% increase in 1952.40 In 1952, Su improved the fast bricklaying technique, and traveled all over in Manchuria to demonstrate with his fellow workers his new techniques and to inspire socialist competition among his fellow countrymen. On May 20, 1952, the “Su Changyou Brigade” came to Changchun to demonstrate his method. His appearances were a kind of festival and workers in Changchun gathered to welcome his arrival. A few brick layer brigades began to follow Su’s example of the Su Changyou Brigade in building new houses.41

At a time of huge social and cultural change, monumentality of new buildings proclaimed the imminent arrival of the socialist utopia and demonstrated the strength and

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37 For example, the irrational system of administration of industry was abolished, factories and mines cleansed of counter-revolutionary elements, and the feudal despotic contractors who mercilessly oppressed and exploited the workers were over-thrown. U.S. Government translation. *Democratic and socialistic Structure in Contemporary China*. Research & Microfilm publications. (UC Berkeley)

38 During these three years the production of pig iron in the country increased almost 7.7 times, the production off steel 8.5 times, the production of rolled stock 9.2 times, coal production doubled and the production of petroleum increased 3.6 times; the production of machine tools increased sevenfold. The restoration and development of the industry of China were proceeding at accelerated rates. As a result, by the end of 1952 industrial production reached the pre-war level, and in a number of industry branches exceeded the pre-war level. See Supplement to the magazine *People’s China* No.22, 1954.

39 Su Changyou (1925-1981) invented the “segmented continuous brick laying method” in 1950 and joined the CCP the same year. Though a famous mason and bricklayer of the early 1950s, little was known about him and his life after the first FYP.

40 *People’s China*, No. 1, January 1955, p. 24

41 *Xinhua ribao*, No. 6, June 1952, p. 98
permanence of the new political order, while the mania of erecting new statues also displayed China’s own radical and revolutionary tradition that superseded the colonial past. Among the reconstructing projects, the Changchun First Film Studio (CFS) was most famous, whose precedent was a film production company to publicize colonial propaganda, founded by Mantetsu and Manchukuo government in 1937 (Man’ei). After the Japanese defeat, the Communists took over the buildings and equipments and established the first film studio of the new regime. In 1955, it was renamed Changchun Film Studio, and old buildings were renovated and expanded, and Mao’s statue was erected in front of the main building. (Fig. 4-9) The CFS produced hundreds of revolutionary films that made it the most well-known film producers in Maoist China. The first of its field, the CFS, as well as the FAW, hence became the emblem of socialist Changchun and the most frequently visited places by foreign guests, including the Soviet Presidium.42

Changchun’s first park, West Park, formed another example of this sort. West Park was designed by Todai professor Shirasawa Yasumi in 1915 when the public park was a novel institution in Asian cities, with its main gate facing the central avenue. At the time, the creation of green space was more fundamentally another means of creating modernity, and building parks was a kind of competition, a means of invigorating Asian culture as a whole against that of the West.43 In memory of Kodama Kentaro (1852-1906), the late chief of general staff during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), a statue of Kodama on a horse was erected near the entrance in 1938, and the park was renamed Kodama Park. The statue was demolished by the Russians immediately after the WWII. In June 1946 when the nationalists took over the city from the Russians, the park was renamed Zhongshan Park. In March 1949, the Communists changed its name to Victory (shengli) Park, and a huge painting was placed at the entrance where the Kodama statue stood. (Fig 4-10) In the heyday of Cultural Revolution, a 6.8-meter-high

43 In 1940 Shinkyo's total green space ----including parks, plazas, cemeteries, athletic fields, and seedbeds--at last reached the level of Europe and North America, about 453 people per hectare. See William Sewell. 2000. *Japanese Imperialism and Civic Construction in Manchuria: Changchun, 1905-45.* dissertation, The University of British Columbia. p.188
statue of Chairman Mao was erected to replace the dilapidated painting in 1968,\footnote{Yu Qiyuan. *Wangshi cunzhen*. (A record of the past). Changchun: Changchun political consultancy press, 2007.} (Fig 4-11) which was finally replaced by a marble statue of Mao in the 1980s. The change in name and statue was matched by a new demand on sculptors to produce monuments that reflected and popularized the new ideology.

Another frontline of building Chinese socialism lied in mass propaganda, a common practice of socialist states. During the three-year period of recovery, a large number of socialist paintings and posters that eulogized construction workers and urban construction were produced. (Fig 4-12) In the poster, building was a symbol of learning from the Soviet, and the working class was dealing with reconstruction, the Party, and Chinese socialism. The bricklayer in this poster is not a proletariat muscle man, nor does he represent a corps of exalted skilled workers. He is the representative of youth and tomorrow, the new man in the making during “the construction of socialism.” The construction worker is a typical bricklayer, not typical in the sense of ordinary but typical of the direction of current social development. The young bricklayer as an individual is a *tabula rasa*, but the socialist future is firmly staked out: the construction project in progress in the background.

The major figure of bricklayer reminds us of one of the best-known paintings in the 1950s in Poland, that is, *Pass Me a Brick*. (Fig 4-13) In this painting, three bricklayers are working on a building site, who stood out monumentally against the background sky. “Pass me a brick” meant “Play your part in the reconstruction of Poland. Your country needs you!”\footnote{Anders Aman. *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992. pp.181-183.} In both paintings, heroic work of constructing socialism was a far cry from the gray drudgery of everyday work and workers became the focal point, a symbol of profound social change under socialist ideology.
Chapter 4   Decolonizing Changchun

As working class was the base of the new regime, the organs of the people’s government showed great care for improving the status of women workers, and the material condition of workers and employees were also improved considerably. In three years their wages and salaries increased on the average by 61.2%, and their purchasing power increased 3.8 times. During this period 5.3 million square meters of housing floor space were repaired and constructed for workers and employees. Thus, under the leadership of the Communist Party, the broad masses of workers entered into the patriotic competition of production with great enthusiasm, introducing numerous efficiency proposals and steadily raising the productivity of labor. Socialist political movements, educational campaign, working competition, etc., all these together strengthened the CCP’s administrative and political control over urban industry, and facilitated the transition to a larger scale socialist construction.

IV. Rebuilding Changchun Downtown under Socialism, 1953-1957

Through the three-year period of recovery, necessary conditions were created for broad planned economic and cultural construction, for the industrialization of the country and for assuring steady progress forward to socialism. The municipal government of Changchun convened a large meeting attended by representatives from all walks on January 28, 1953, to mobilize for the economic development of the upcoming FFYP.

According to an official statistics, by the end of April 1953, nineteen work units (danwei) in the city had started construction, including research institutes, factories relevant to livelihood of the people such as electric power plants, universities, etc.

46 People’s China No. 1, January 1953, p. 2
47 Ibid. p. 25. The people's government spends considerable sums on improving conditions of work and on work safety measures. In 1952, 1,283 billion yuan were spent for these purposes. “People’s China” No. 10, May 25, 1955, p. 16
Fourteen out of the nineteen construction sites amounted to a total area of 147,000 square meters. Streets and bridges of the colonial times were widened, and a new bridge was built to connect the old city to the newly-built FAW on the southwestern outskirts. Due to Changchun’s strategic geographical position on Manchuria, and its capacity of a host of important institutes and factories, the provincial seat moved from Jilin City to Changchun in 1954. As a result, a number of cultural and recreational facilities were built in the new provincial seat. For example, two cinemas were completed in 1954, and in the meantime, old libraries, theaters, hotels and housing left by the Japanese were renovated while new ones were built up.

Reconstructed compounds and new buildings scattered throughout the city. Nevertheless, the most impressive transformation in urban landscape came with a few important projects that gathered up along two major arteries of previous colonial capital: Datong Street (now Stalin Street) and Shuntian Street (now Xinmin Street). New buildings along the two streets not only gave the city with an updated skyline, but also effectively eradicated colonial influence.

**Stalin Street (previous Datong Street)**

After the FFYP started in 1953, the Communists began to build their own monuments along the central street in Changchun. It was during this period that Stalinism left on Changchun an indelible mark through what became known as socialist realism that dominated the construction of the First Automobile Works in the outskirts of Changchun. The alignment with socialist thinking encompassed new meanings of architectural and urban design aesthetics, and socialist realism was used as one major means to consolidate political power. As such, the civic center of the city was once again accorded pre-eminence as the locus of state power.

As the Japanese did not fully realize the 1932 Capital Plan before they were defeated in WWII, the central plaza was incomplete in that two blocks were left empty by 1955. After the Communist takeover, the Manchurian Bank fronting Stalin Plaza became the headquarters of China Bank, while the previous CCB building was occupied by Changchun Municipal Party Committee. The colonial Municipal Policy Station, Manchuria Communication Building and the CCB all functioned as what it had been designed for, but under a different name of Changchun Policy Department.

After the FFYP started, a Cultural Palace of Workers was proposed and construction began in July 1956. Completed in late 1957, the Cultural Palace of Workers is an enormous four-storied building. (Fig 4-14) Not unlike its surrounding colonial buildings, the central portion of the Palace rose above the wings. The location
of the Palace at the center of the city indicates the important status of workers in the new regime under the proletarian-revolutionary ideology, thereby being enabled to reorient and recast China into a socialist nation. As in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, the “workers’ club” had been a new, widely publicized building type, and it served the factory community as part of socialist content. However, a palace of culture at the center of the city was larger than a club, aiming to serve the whole city. The main facility of the Cultural Palace of Workers of Changchun was a large assembly hall (complete with stage and foyer) for theatrical performances, film shows, and political meetings.

The most important quality of the Cultural Palace and the Hotel is its large scale, which expresses power, because it presupposes the tremendous concentration of resources. Next in order of importance are symmetry and centrality. Superiority/subordination is the principle by which the volumes of the building are organized. National form was displayed through the roof style and window decorations, while socialist content of the ruling class of proletariat was equally unmistakable. Like factory buildings in socialist countries, the aphorism of “national in form, socialist in content” had been translated into built form.

To the south of the Palace stands the newly built Jilin Provincial Hotel, an even larger building of six stories. (Fig 4-15) Unlike the Palace, the hotel is abounded with traditional motifs, such as roof and window styles, exquisite decorations on cornice, etc. Symmetry unmistakably featured all these buildings. In this way, if we can see socialism as a historically “rational” project of modernity in certain circumstances, we may be ready to acknowledge the fact that socialist realism is, after all, a radical form of modernism and a radical formulation of the mainstream Enlightenment idea of modernity. Along with the colonial institutional buildings, the cultural palace and hotel which were built under different political guise but with similar outlook eventually completed the urban design of the civic center. Once again, the central plaza became a fundamental site of ideological intervention and manifestation, but this time of socialist advantage over the decadency of the West.

Fig 4-14 Changchun's Cultural Palace of Workers at Stalin Plaza
Fig 4-15 Jilin Provincial Hotel at Stalin Plaza in Changchun

Away from the plaza, new buildings that flanked the central street included a gymnasium that began construction in October 1956, which ingeniously fit the aesthetics of socialist realism in with structural innovation that featured the entrance. A series of science and research buildings were built, amongst which the most famous one was Optical Apparatus Institute built up in 1958. A new building for stationary army in Changchun was also built in 1958. Like the “triple ten” projects in Beijing, the Changchun Municipal Government sponsored ten construction projects to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the People’s Republic, the five buildings mentioned above were selected.

As Stalin Street advanced to a political ensemble of socialist symbols for the creation of a new and better society, active participation in the construction of the new society became postulated as an educative measure that helped shape the new socialist being of the future. The central plaza and railway station plaza on the street continued to be the venues of mass assemblies, for political events under different banners. Seen from the widest avenue Changchun, banners and red flags on these buildings proclaimed the new political objectives, constantly reminding people of what had been achieved already: liquidation of the old political system, abolition of the private ownership of the means of production, establishment of the people’s democracy, friendship with the Soviet Union, etc. Most of all, with the completion of central plaza, the intensification of official efforts to dominate public space and construct a new socialist monumental landscape accompanied the imposition of the socialist model.

**Xinmin Street (previous Shuntian Street)**

As discussed in Chapter Two, the palace and buildings lining the previous Shuntian Street formed the administrative quarter of the Manchukuo government. The buildings of State Councils, the Ministry of Military, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Transportation, and The Supreme Court at the southern end altogether represented the best efforts to create the new Developing Asia style. However, construction of capital Changchun drew to a close by 1941 when the Pacific War broke out, by which time only foundation work of the palace was completed, while a few land lots were left vacant in this quarter.

The name of the street (Shuntian) in the colonial times was excerpted from the idiom of Confucian classics, *shuntian anmin*, meaning following the Heaven and bringing peace to the people, also a major principle of the colonial ideology of the Kingly Way. The circular plaza of the southern terminus of the street was named Anmin Plaza. After Communist takeover, the street was renamed *Xinmin* after the Communist regime was established, meaning New People. The circular plaza at the southern terminus of Xinmin Street was renamed from Anmin Plaza to Liberty Plaza. To the south of the plaza was the largest artificial lake, South Lake Park, and a monument was set up at the

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entrance in the 1980s to memorize those deceased in the 1948 campaigns to liberate Changchun. The previous colonial Supreme Court at the corner of the plaza had been changed to an air force hospital.

As such, the previous colonial administrative quarter was changed into a new district that took care of public health and people’s cultural life, as what the new name of the street Xinmin (new people) suggested. It is also interesting to see the cultural attitude Asian modernizers enthusiastically demonstrated towards newness of the modern, be it the Japanese New Capital, the KMT’s New Life Movement (1935), or the Communist New China and New People. The desire of bringing up something new to overcome the past and the contemporary competitors stipulated the connection between these modernizers.

Colonial buildings along Xinmin Street were put under the military for a while, and all the institutional buildings which were in good status after civil war, were renovated as military hospitals and medical research institutes. In 1954, a medical college was established on the foundation of Henry Norman Bethune Medical School of the 1930s in Yan’an, and changed previous colonial institutional buildings into hospitals and affiliated facilities. For example, the previous Hall of State Council, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Transportation, and Ministry of Economy were remodeled teaching and research buildings. A statue of Bethune was erected in front of the main entrance at the former State Council, though the internal space did not entail too much change.

As part of the larger reform of restructuring of universities and colleges according to party line in 1952 and 1953, Changchun Institute of Geology was established in December 1952. The site of the new college occupied the former palace and imperial garden. The existing foundation on the site, which was designed for a two-storied developing Asian palace, was used for a new main building of four stories for administration and teaching. The project started in 1953, and upon its completion in the following year, it was the first building in “national form” in Changchun, preceding those to be built in the First Automobile Works.

The architect, Wang Fuchen of Changchun Municipal Architectural Design Institute, however, had referred to the original design left by the Japanese but elevated the height of the base. The large sloping roof and decoration on the ridge, entrance, and beams all resonated with the colonial Developing Asian style, only the color was more brilliant than before. The college, like all other research institutes and colleges at the time, was a self-sufficient work unit (danwei). The main teaching facility built upon the foundation of the previous palace was not only prominent in its own terms but also an organizing element that dominated spatial arrangement within the compound. With a

55 Henry Norman Bethune (1890-1939, Chinese name: Bai Qiuen) was a Canadian Communist and physician and medical innovator. Bethune is best known for his service in war time medical units during the Spanish Civil War and with the People's Liberation Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War. After his death, Chairman Mao had a famous piece to memorize his internationalist spirit, and a medical school was establish after his name in yan’an, the capital of the Communist regime during the period 1936-1947.

total floor area of over 30,000 square meters, it became the landmark of socialist Changchun and selected as one of the ten major buildings of the city in 1958.\textsuperscript{57}

As provincial seat was moved to Changchun in 1954, the party newspaper of Jilin Province was relocated in the previous Manchukuo administrative quarter, on the site next to the Hall of State Council. Opposite the street was the television and broadcast station. To follow up the political elevation of the city’s status, a number of cultural facilities were built up during the FFYP. The largest project was Jilin Provincial Library, located in opposite to the previous Ministry of Transportation across Xinmin Street. (Fig 4-17) Completed in 1957, it was a four-storied building with an extruding tower at the center, covering a total area of 12,000 square meters.\textsuperscript{58} Aside form the tiled tower, the most ornamented part was the portico that fronted the main entrance. In terms of decorative motifs, height, mass and color, the library stood in harmony in the historic quarter with existing colonial institutional buildings.

A few blocks away from the previous Hall of State Council (now the main building of Bethune Medical College), a university building in true socialist realism was built up in October 1956. It covered a total floor area over 30,000 square meters, which was one of the largest university buildings of Maoist Changchun.\textsuperscript{59} The nine-storied central tower was a monumental manifestation of the achievement of Chinese socialism. Sloping roofs were absent from this building, however, the message conveyed by exquisitely decorated portico was unmistakable: the present rested on the foundation of tradition, and the present surpassed tradition as exemplified in its height, structure, and the speed of construction.

The buildings that were new built along Xinmin Street filled up previous vacant blocks of the 1932 planning, and had successfully transformed the former administrative

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. It is noteworthy that during the criticism against socialist realism and construction waste, this project became the main target of the movement in 1955, three years before it regained recognition.
\textsuperscript{58} Yang Zhaoyuan. Changchun Jianzhuzhi caogao (Manuscript of Gazetteer of Architecture in Changchun). p.256
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. p.253, 256.
quarter of Manchukuo into an educational and cultural district. Through education, workers were trained to become both politically enlightened and technically proficient, or in the parlance of the time, “both red and expert.” Promoting a large number of “red experts” was considered a crucial precondition for achieving a transition to socialism. New and old buildings along Xinmin Street altogether played a vital role in producing proletarian subjects. (Fig 4-18)

![Fig 4-18 a group of young medical students at the entrance of the former Ministry of Justice, now teaching building of Bethune Medical Institute. Source: http://www.ccrpf.org/bbs/index.php?m=bbs](http://www.ccrpf.org/bbs/index.php?m=bbs)

In early 1957, it was all clear that the FFYP was going to be completed ahead of time. As Changchun in particular and the Northeast as a whole had confirmed its role during the FFYP as an industrial base of the whole country, several key projects of the second FYP had been prepared in Changchun. The construction of the main building of Automobile Mechanic Repairing Factory began in March 1956, while the Changchun Railway Vehicles Factory started in May 1957. The latter was to be China’s the first factory of its kind that is still producing high-speed railway vehicles today. Two factories that produced meteorological and optical instruments were expanded in August 1957, both of which were the largest in China. By November, the list of socialist achievements were added a new dam in the outskirts of Changchun and a tuberculosis hospital. Power stations, dams, hospitals combined with newly founded factory communities were altogether referred to as “the great construction projects of Communism,” demonstrating as they did the superiority of the new social system over the old, and the great accomplishments of the first FYP in Changchun. On December 20, 1957, the official newspaper, Changchun Daily, proclaimed that “by the end of 1957 the FFYP has been successfully completed with the joint efforts of all people, … and Changchun has already been a new industrial and cultural center.”

V. Conclusions

Three regimes (the Soviet military, the KMT, and the Communist) took turns to

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61 Ibid. p.119.
operate the war-torn city of Changchun after 1945. What these regimes shared in common was the goal to eradicate Japanese colonial legacies left in this former capital city. In rebuilding Changchun’s urban core, the decolonizing efforts included three basic methods: manipulation of naming and renaming, erection of statues of Chairman Mao and revolutionary martyrs to replace old ones in front of existing colonial buildings, and completion of urban form with new buildings in socialist realism so that supplementation rather than demolition played a more active role in forgetting the past. Both the examples of reconstruction of Stalin Plaza (Fig 4-19) and Xinmin Street (Fig 4-20) showed a similar way of eradicating colonial memory, that through complementation rather than demolition of existing spatial form.

Fig 4-19  completed central plaza. Buildings as follows: 1. Workers’ Palace of Culture (1957); 2. Jilin Provincial Hotel (1958); 3. CCB (Municipal Government, rebuilt in the 1990s); 4. Manchurian Central Bank (People’s Bank of China); 5. Telegraph and Communication Building (Changchun’s Telegraph Bureau); 6. Capital Police Bureau (Changchun’s Police Department); 7. the Soviet Monument.

Fig 4-20  completed Xinmin Street. Buildings as follows: 1. Imperial Palace (Palace of Geology, 1953); 2. Jilin Provincial Library (1958); 3. Hall of State Council (teaching facility for medical institute); 4. Ministry of Military (hospital for medical institute); 5. Ministry of Justice (teaching building); 6. Ministry of Transportation (hospital); 7. Ministry of Economy (hospital); 8. Manchukuo’s Supreme Courthouse (hospital of air force of the PLA)

The decision to utilize and modify the old city to the need of the new regime was not simply the result of a reassertion of CCP power at the behest of Mao, nor was it the
triumph of socialist modernization over bourgeois classicism. Rather it was a victory of pragmatism over utopian architectural purism. This decision was crucial because it implied that the new regime would be constructed on the bones of the old. No doubt this resulted in the erasure of much of the past, yet it also ensured that important spatial memories of the past would be imprinted upon the architecture of the new. The most distinctive examples of this endeavor were the redesign and redeployment of Datong and Shuntian Streets. Decorated by various impressive landmarks, the two streets were both treasured urban projects that displayed power of the state and achievement of Japanese colonization. Based on socialist ideals, however, they were now renamed into Stalin Street and Xinmin Street, respectively, and became an ensemble of socialist achievements of urban decolonization and construction.

The reuse of existing spatial forms did not go beyond the years of economic recovery and it wasn’t long before economic construction began to transform the urban environment. The massive construction project set out in the FFYP and launched in the mid-1950s called for the development of hundreds of new industrial plants, the majority of which were to be constructed in and around the existing major urban centers. This resulted in the dramatic expansion of cities and the emergence of new forms of urban space. It is out of this process that the newly built public buildings that housed key socialist institutions, such as the Provincial Hotel and Library, came to dominate Changchun’s spatial organization and urban life.

As Duara notes, the ideals of decolonization and the anti-imperialist movement were built upon two pillars, that is, socialism and the discourse of alternative civilizations. With the Soviet aids, the PRC adopted the socialist program completely, and merited the socialist ideals of equality, market restrictions and state redistribution programs as the alternative to the imperialist capitalism. Ironically, the Japanese colonial government had similar anti-capitalist mindset to compete and overcome the West, and the connections were evident in the spatial formation and reformation in Changchun.

For example, the distinctive character of the socialist conception of the city’s center was that it functioned not as an area of retail concentration but as the political-cultural/administrative center. The more closely the socialist center approached the concept outlined above, the more radically it would depart from the traditional capitalist concept of the central business district. As we have seen, the central plaza of Manchukuo’s capital, which was renamed Stalin Plaza later on, resonated with socialist planning principles. The driving force to explore something new and different from what had been known in the Western civilization stipulated the connection between these modernizers, in which programs new nations would surpass Western materialism and capitalism through a competing approach to the modern, be it the Kingly Way or socialism.

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During the First Five-Year Plan (FFYP), a few factory communities were built in Changchun as crucial part of Maoist industrialization, of which the First Automobile Works (FAW) was the most prominent example that epitomized socialist Changchun and the achievement of Chinese socialism. It packed in everything: planned economy, heavy industry, mobilization of workers, aid from the Soviet Union, new working methods, socialist competition, and above all, an early but perfect model of Chinese work unit (danwei) that combined both production and non-production sectors to be an essential social institution of Maoist China.

Within eight short years since 1949 the danwei had been cemented as the dominant social, economic, and organizational unit of Chinese city, and became the basis for a distinctly socialist strategy of urban management. Such was the success of the new regime in remaking and reorganizing urban China that by 1957 over 90 percent of the urban population already belonged to a socialist danwei of some kind. Although recent scholarship has revealed how danwei emerged and became an essential institution of Chinese socialism, the detailed study of its spatial formation and architectural composition still needs more exploration.

By examining the specific example of the FAW, I aim to trace the design processes and outcomes of its factories and housing compound. The FAW compound made a telling example of urban development in the spirit of socialist planning with exciting experiment to counter over-standardization in housing design. Through spatial intervention, the FAW became a “social condenser” in which production, proletarian culture, and everyday social life were combined within a single collective space. At the same time, it played a crucial part in mobilizing labor to transform “consumer” cities into “producer” cities and in the process create a large new working class.

Collectivism, the crucial part of so-called socialist content, was promulgated through urban planning and housing construction, and the pursuit of a “modern” state was set on a different path from the capitalist model. It should be noted that collective housing was by no means a novel idea in China. Nonetheless, it was the large scale and its social function with serious practical and ideological consequences that made the housing compounds of Chinese socialist work units an active player of urbanization under Maoism. In the pages to follow, we will see how socialist planning and architecture, as a vehicle for public education and instruction, regained the notion to inform, educate and elevate society under strong state control.

I begin this chapter by a brief explanation of the nation’s economic development program, that is, the national five-year-plan. The rest of the chapter goes into three parts: the construction of the factories (production sector), residential compounds (non-production sector), and the life in the FAW as observed and remembered by visitors.

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and workers. Specifically, I argue that the construction of the FAW compound was a unique, yet overlooked and abolished experiment of socialist modern and provided antithesis to over-standardization that dominated Chinese urban landscape in the next decades.

I. The First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957)

As has been discussed in the last chapter, by facilitating the formation of unified and loyal party-led regimes within Chinese cities, the sanfan and wufan campaigns greatly strengthened the CCP’s administrative and political control over urban industry. This process was part of the CCP’s attempt to consolidate and centralize governmental practices in preparation for the full implementation of the planned economy and further facilitated the transformation of bourgeois-run factories into socialist danwei in readiness for the shift to full-blown central planning.

As the Korean War drew to an end in 1952, the PRC began to initiate nation-wide modernizing projects. The historical task of the PRC was the building of a socialist society. To this end, a powerful weapon in the hands of the Communist state in the performance of this task was the planning of the national economy. In 1953, the Chinese Communist Part (CCP) commenced to fulfill the First Five-Year-Plan (FFYP) of the national economic development in accordance with the general party line.

The experience of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries had shown that socialism was impossible without a unified planned economy. Subsequently, with the beginning of the FFYP, the sphere of state planning began to steadily expand in connection with socialist industrialization and transformations. The principle of the socialist planning of national economy was eventually fixed in the Constitution of the Chinese People’s Republic: “The State, with the aid of the economic plans, directs the development and transformation of the national economy and uninterruptedly raises the productive forces with the aim of the development of the material and cultural level of the people, the strengthening of the independence and security of the country.”

The FFYP aimed at the creation of a primary base for the socialist industrialization of the country, for the reform of heavy industry, agriculture and handicraft industry by various production cooperatives. For the fulfillment of the

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2 The sanfan (Three-anti Campaign: corruption, waste, and bureaucracy) in 1951 and wufan (Five-anti Campaign: bribery, theft of state property, tax evasion, cheating on government contracts, and stealing state economic information) in 1952 were political movements originally issued by Mao Zedong in an effort to rid Chinese cities of corruption and enemies of the state. For detail of the two campaigns and their place in the transitional period, see the last chapter.


4 After several rounds of debates and revision, the FFYP was eventually worked out by the CCP and was ratified in July 1955, in which time a large proportion of construction had already begun.

5 Constitution of the PRC, Article 15.

6 In the course of five years the plan aimed at increasing the gross output of the industry of the Chinese People's Republic by 98.1% in terms of value. The gross output of contemporary industry was to increase by 104.1%. Steel production in 1957 was planned to be brought to 4.12 million tons against 1.35 million tons in 1952; electric energy to 15.9 billion kilowatt hours (against 7.26 billion kilowatt hours in 1952); coal to 115 million tons (against 61.53 million tons in 1952); electric generators to 227 thousand kilowatt (against 50 thousand kilowatt in 1952); auto truck to 4000
Chapter 5  Building Changchun Automobile Town

FFYP, there were assigned 76,640 million yuan. As the first and most powerful industrial base of the country, Manchuria was assigned an important role in the fulfillment of the basic goal of the FFYP, and a significant number of industrial plants of the FFYP were built in Northeastern China. During the 1950s, the Northeast remained in the center of attention.

The CCP authorities closely followed Soviet practice in developing strategies for the implementation of central economic planning. In the first year of implementation of the FFYP in 1953, an agreement (Sino-Soviet Friendship Alliance Treaty) was signed between the Soviet and the PRC on assisting the latter in the development of its national economy. According to this agreement the Soviet Union obligated itself to give technical assistance to China in the construction and reconstruction of 141 (later 15 more projects were added) large industrial enterprises and to deliver the equipment for these enterprises, of which the First Automobile Works was one of the largest and most important projects. In addition to these major projects, another twenty-three hundred smaller-scale industrial construction projects were to be completed.

As working class became the leading class in the PRC, the FFYP also aimed at raising the welfare of the workers of China. By the end of 1957 it was planned to increase the wage of workers and employees by an average of 33%. In the course of five years it was proposed to spend 5 billion yuan on labor insurance, medical help, public services and cultural-educational work. It was planned to build 46 million square meters of living area for workers and employees, most of which were in the Northeast. As an official report claimed, without the development of cultural construction and improvement of workers’ livelihood, it would not be possible to even dream about industrialization, cooperative organization and other socialist reforms.

II. Construction of the First Automobile Works (FAW)

As indicated in Table 5.1, Changchun as of 1952 had little industry. Being a former colonial capital city, it had been designed as a “political center” under colonial rule, while the industrial center in Manchuria was designated to Shenyang, 300 kilometers south of Changchun. In colonial times, there were “850 factories in units (there was no production in 1952) etc.” U.S. Government translation. Democratic and socialistic Structure in Contemporary China. Research & Microfilm publications. (UC Berkeley)

Of this sum 55.8% was earmarked for capital construction, while of the auto earmarked for capital construction 58.2% was planned to be invested in industry. Ibid.

Dongbei Ribao, 4 February 1955; Xinhua Ribao 1952-1-3, it was reported that the industrial development in the Northeast had great achievement, the industrial products held 53% in the whole national economy. By the end of 1953, the first year of the plan, the size of capital construction exceeded by 32% the size of capital construction in the four preceding years taken together.

Of great importance also is the agreement on scientific-technical cooperation signed on October 12, 1954. It provides for an exchange of technical documentation and pertinent information and also for the dispatch of specialists for rendering technical assistance and familiarization with the achievements of both countries in the scientific-technical field.

Because of the priority given to these industrial construction projects, virtually all available capital was channeled into this sector at the expense of other sectors, especially agriculture.

Changchun, of which 650 were small ones (with a total number of employees ranging from five to thirty). The largest plant in colonial Changchun was a tobacco factory, while almost all other large factories were flour mills, a traditional light industry in Changchun since the late Qing. All light industry congregated on north of the railway station, and to east of Yitong River. The major concern of such arrangement was Changchun’s predominant wind direction which blew from the southwest to northeast, so as to reduce industrial pollution as much as possible. Prospective heavy industry such as mechanical repairing also appeared in the 1932 Plan, yet was never realized.

After the PRC was founded in October 1949, a Chinese delegation headed by Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai went to Moscow and signed the “Sino-Soviet Friendship Alliance Treaty” with the Soviet Union, which was the prelude to the establishment of China’s industrial infrastructure. During his stay in Moscow, Mao visited Stalin Automobile Works (previous Avtomobilnoe Moskovskoe Obshchestvo) and was impressed by Soviet heavy-duty trucks (it should be noted that China did not produce any automobiles before the establishment of the PRC). As a result of the Sino-Soviet treaty, the Soviet agreed to aid 156 major industrial projects during the FFYP, including the construction of China’s first modern truck factories.

As early as in 1950, a special committee was organized to study the location of the first automobile factory under Premier Zhou’s leadership. Several possible cities were proposed, such as Beijing, Xi’an, Wuhan, etc., but finally Changchun was chosen due to practical consideration. In March 1951, Zhou Enlai announced that “the First Automobile Works will be built near by Changchun in the Northeast, … the site will be in Mengjiatun in Changchun’s outskirts.”

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12 Kuokuto shinkyo. Xinjing: manshu seiban kaisha, 1942. “Xinjing’s Industries”, p.102-103
13 Stalin himself also urged the Chinese to build up a new factory to produce heavy-duty trucks. See guanguo zhengxiewenshi he xuexi weiyuanhui (Political consultancy and research committee of China) (ed.). yiqi chuanghai fazhan licheng (establishment and development of the First Automobile Works). Beijing: Chinese Culture and History Press, 2009, p.9
14 According to planned annual output of 30,000 units, the factory needed 24,000-kilowatt electric power plus sufficient supply of more than 200,000 tons of steel every year. Transportation was also a primary concern that the factory alone needed about one million tons of transport. At the time, the steel works in Beijing could not meet the requirement until 1956, while there was not enough volume of transport. Changchun, on the other side, had convenient transportation and well-equipped railway facilities since the colonial times, and Manchurian forests could provide enough fuel for power. See Yang Zhaoyuan. Changchun shi guihua zhi caogao (manuscript of gazetteer of the planning history of Changchun). chapter 3 section 6. see also
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Mengjiatun used to be a place where a secret unit of the Japanese army, Unit 100, stationed. Like the famous Unit 731 in Harbin, Unit 100 also conducted bacteriological research in the outskirts of Changchun. After the Japanese were defeated, Mengjiatun was virtually deserted, but the infrastructure such as barracks, water supply, railway transportation, electric power plant was left without much damage. In the summer of 1951, students from Tsinghua University completed the surveying drawings of the area, and a modern socialist automobile factory would soon be built up on colonial remainders.

Mao Zedong took a strong personal interest in the FAW project. Mao signed on the final project plans in June 1952 which called for completion of the factory within 3 years. Later, he autographed the foundation stone of the new factory, urging that new China must possess the capability to produce vehicles as part of modern transportation infrastructure and part of Chinese socialism.

Soviet influence had a strong presence in planning and building the FAW. Over 40% of the equipment of the Changchun automobile plant was delivered by the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. The Stalin Truck Factory was commissioned to produce the general plan for the whole region of Mengjiatun, including defining the circumscription of the factory and residential areas respectively, alongside with the plan of transportation, water and power supply, etc. in the meantime, during three years of 1953-1956, six teams with a total of 518 young Chinese technicians from the FAW were sent to the Stalin Truck Factory for instruction in

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18 Li Gang. “yi yiqi choujian qianqi de zhu mosike gongzuo xiaozu” (A memory of the working group in Moscow for the preparations of the construction of the FAW). quanguo zhengxiewenshi he xuexi weiyuanhui (Political consultancy and research committee of China) (ed.). *yiqi chuangjian fazhan licheng* (establishment and development of the First Automobile Works). Beijing: Chinese Culture and History Press, 2009, p.18
truck production, including the future president Jiang Zemin (rein 1989-2003) who worked in the FAW for over a decade. On the other side, hundreds Russian experts came to Changchun to assist with the construction and operation of the FAW. In order to accommodate Russian experts, a three-storied building was built in 1953 in the residential area. (see Fig 5-14)

The construction of the FAW began on July 15, 1953, on which day a grand ceremony was held to lay the foundation stone with Mao Zedong’s autograph for the FAW. (Fig 5-2) The FAW was the largest productive enterprise of the FFYP, completed with a whole series of other enterprises, including transformer, machine building, electric generator and ball bearing factories. The buildings of its 34 workshops and subordinate enterprises cover an area of 150 hectares.

As shown in the last chapter, city planning in the PRC was an integral part of the overall economic planning of the country, and the whole nation was engaged in this construction project (“aiding the construction of the FAW in Changchun”). The entire country participated in the construction of the FAW. Orders for the manufacture of machinery were filled by enterprises in Tianjin, Qingdao, Harbin, Shenyang, and other cities in the country. Machine builders came from Shanghai and lathe workers and technologists from Nanjing.19 The Engineer Corps of the People’s Liberation Army came to Changchun in 1953 to help building factories, while many hard workers also came from the countryside for the construction of the country’s first auto factory.20

The general plan of the region was rendered by Soviet experts, and became a symbol of the friendship with the Soviet and the Eastern bloc. All important factory buildings were designed in Russia, and the Soviet model of socialist realism was imported through the design and immediately became a dominant style in building socialism, under the political movement of “learning from the Soviet Union in all registers” in the early 1950s. Thus it was not surprising that factory buildings of the FAW bore the postmark of socialist realism that was still popular in the Soviet Union under Stalin’s rein.

As discussed in the previous chapter, socialist realist as an architectural style was favored by Stalin and took sway in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, and was later exported to Eastern bloc after WWII. Stalin’s theory of “socialism in one country” engendered a doctrine with tremendous repercussions, such as the rejection of modernism, promotion of socialist realism and national form, in architecture as in other artistic fields. With the Soviet influence, Chinese architects at the time condemned modernism and functionalism which “embraced universal values and cosmopolitanity as remnant of exploiting class,” and extolled the advantage of socialist realism that embraced socialist system and national identity.

Like many contemporary factories in the Soviet Union and East European

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19 The FAW Archive ed. Diyi qiche gongsi wushinian dashiji (Chronicles of the FAW in the past 50 years). Changchun, p.12.
countries, the main entrance of the FAW and its plaza has been conceived as an architectural iconography and a symbol of the ideological content of building socialism. (Fig 5-3) The founding stone of Mao’s autography was set as focal point of the plaza. At its back stood a row of neo-classical gate houses, decorated with tall, simplified columns on the exterior wall, demonstrating the two fundamental principles of socialist realism, namely, classical composition and decoration. The Soviet Union provided the accompanying iconography of dramatic pictures of heavy industry such as steelworks in clouds of steam and coal smoke. These themes blossomed forth in literature and political rhetoric into a cult of steel, having both symbolic and linguistic points of contact with building socialism.

Two large factories nearby the main entrance served as two sentinels guarding the gate, one for tool molding and the other for mechanical processing. Planned in symmetry and regularity, the most striking element of the two buildings was the twin towers at the corner of the building. The hip-roofed tower was covered with deep green glazed tiles, commonly seen on a traditional pagoda in Chinese gardens. The tower was used as a light well for the large factory space beneath, though the symbolic meaning outweighed its actual function. Chinese form and the achievement of socialist industrialization was amazingly synthesized, while the posts surrounding the base of the tower on the roof that resembled the design of the 1945 Soviet memorial in Changchun and the high classic porticos along the façade showed an unmistaken Russian influence. (Fig 5-4) The monumentalization of factory gate and the two towered factories became a staple item in the architectural iconography of Mao’s industrial regime, and many photographs of the FAW since the 1950s included the main entrance and the two towered buildings against cooling towers and chimneys in the background. As political symbols,

21 The earliest example in Changchun, and in China as a whole, was the Soviet victorious monument built in 1945.
22 Chairman Mao declared that he would like to see clusters of chimneys from the Tiananmen. At a time when pollution was far from a popular concern, chimneys were the symbol of prosperous industry, especially in China which lacked heavy industry in the early 1950s.
the new factory became almost as important as the red flag.

Fig 5-4  the tool processing factory near the main gate
Source: photo by the author in 2009

Fig 5-5  National Cultural Palaca in Beijing, designed by Zhang Bo in 1958
Source: photo by the author in 2003

In regard to national form, the pagoda-like tower was perhaps the easiest and most widely used motif in modern Chinese architecture that looked back to indigenous tradition. Before the Japanese imposed Developing-Asia in Changchun in the early 1930s, under the auspices of the KMT, returning architects such as Yang Tingbao and Dong Dayou had completed a few governmental buildings in Nanjing and Shanghai that applied roofed-tower as a unifying element in design. In constructing the famous “triple ten” buildings in Beijing in 1958 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the PRC, Chinese style towers appeared on six out of the ten buildings.23 (Fig 5-5)

There are several reasons for why the ruling governments were so engaged with towers in institutional buildings as a symbol of the regime. Extruding towers could easily catch the audience’s attention, and fit well with architectural composition. Large sloping roofs above the space of modern function meant a huge construction waste, both economically and architecturally. Tower-like roofs, instead, reduced the waste to the minimum, and can be added to buildings of all kinds without too much interference to interior spatial arrangement. Towered buildings were also a variation of high-rise buildings, “the most ample expression of technical progress and of man’s victory over the forces of nature.” Towers thus were architecture’s foremost contribution to monumental propaganda and they carried conspicuous prestige to convey ideological message.

If examined closely, however, the Chinese-style towers reminded the audience of the colonial State Council and Kangde Building (Mitsubishi Kotoku kaikan) built in colonial times, as national traditions had been revitalized earlier in Changchun during the 1930s under the colonial rule for different purposes. Both Developing-Asia style and

23 “Triple ten” refers to “ten buildings in ten months to celebrate the ten years of Liberation” in 1958-1959. The municipal government in Changchun emulated the efforts of that of Beijing to build ten large public buildings, some of which have been discussed in the previous chapter, such as the hotel and Cultural Palace at the central plaza.
socialist realism enlisted a single, slender tower crowned with an Asian roof with an allure to Chinese (or East Asian as a whole) tradition, not to mention exquisite traditional decorations. However, as analyzed in Chapter Three, the colonial towers were a combination of both Chinese and Western elements, i.e. a combination of sloping roof and modified column order. The socialist towers, on the other side, a focal point as well, entailed Chinese decorative motifs alone. Towers in this case were modest as they were part of factory, but the Chinese element in design is more illustrative in the residential area to be discussed in next section.

More importantly, Chinese elements were used in Japanese institutional buildings as the materialization of Pan-Asian ideology in which Asiatic moral virtues were endowed with the power to compete and overcome Western civilization, hence the rationale of the new modern. The towers on socialist factories, on the other hand, represented the expected combination of socialist content and national form, and modernization was equal to rapid industrialization. It is obvious that, as Bill Sewell notices in his research of architectural representation in Changchun in the first three decades of the twentieth century, the modern is not a constant but has been redefined and repackaged according to ideological concerns.

The most distinct difference between developing-Asian and socialist realism (and Chinese renaissance under the KMT regime) exists in the use of traditional decoration in relation to Chinese nationalism. Under the colonial rule, as elaborated in previous chapters, cosmopolitan ideal pervaded that resulted in diverse styles, and although Chinese motifs among many other ethnic traditions were used, like popular and regional culture, they were stage-managed. Put in other words, in these cases Chinese culture was not spontaneous or innocuous, and was cautiously alienated from national independence. On the other side, after the victory over the America in Korean War, Chinese tradition as “national form” was ostentatiously incorporated with socialist content of a sophisticated automobile industry, which resulted in national pride of independence and mightiness of the motherland.

Despite their difference, ideological pretensions were equally enormous in towered buildings of different regimes (Nationalist, Japanese, and Communist). Towered buildings derived their inspiration from the same historical tradition, but they were part of the ideological content of the city. The content was conveyed by news and articles on the progress of building operations, by films and novels, posters, poems and paintings, cantatas and popular music. In the FFYP, the political metaphor charged Changchun with a new ideological face, and city plans and buildings had to make reference to the political context of building socialism and fighting against capitalism alongside with the Soviet. The Japanese pinned the ideals of pan-Asianism and ethnical harmony behind the façade of the Developing Asia buildings, while in the PRC, buildings with central or corner towers embodied “the magnificent, upward force of socialist society, the onward-forging lifestyle of Chinese people and their abundant, many-sided
joy of living".\textsuperscript{24}  

Socialist realism also demonstrated itself in other vocabularies. For example, the Kangde Building was smoothly surfaced, while the factories had porticos fronted by simplified classical columns, which elements were widely used in the FAW and differed from colonial buildings remarkably. (Fig 5-6) Many factories had attached tall columns with little decoration as for porticos of factories or simply as punctuation for a long smooth façade. Besides, important factories and public buildings were surmounted with red stars. The most exotic building of the FAW was its cistern with obvious Russian influence. (Fig 5-7) They display a rapid move toward richness of form and monumentality. In this way, a modernist classicism has been adjusted to the basic concepts of socialist realism.

The FAW, China’s first automobile construction factory, began operations a year ahead of schedule. In July of 1956 right before the third anniversary of its inauguration, the FAW manufactured 4-ton trucks of the make “jiefang” (liberation), and excited workers held a carnival for celebration.\textsuperscript{25} (Fig 5-8) As the factory newspaper claimed, this was not only an offering to Chairman Mao himself on the eve of the third anniversary of laying the founding stone, but also marked an end to the humiliated history of China’s inability of producing vehicles, and it showed the bright future of the FFYP that would achieve its objectives ahead of time.\textsuperscript{26}

![Fig 5-6](source: photo by the author in 2009)  
Fig 5-6  the assembling factory of the FAW  
Source: photo by the author in 2009

![Fig 5-7](source: photo by the author in 2009)  
Fig 5-7  the FAW cistern  
Source: photo by the author in 2009

Building the FAW in Changchun answered Mao’s call for changing previous consumption cities into production centers by means of socialist urban planning which aimed at the correction of “the ills inherited from the era of capitalism”. The FAW soon became a national symbol of the FFYP and the achievement of Chinese socialism, effectively substituting for Changchun’s unpleasant association of with colonial rule.


\textsuperscript{25} Changchun shi dang’an guan (Changchun Municipal Archive) (ed.). \textit{Changchun shi dashi ji} (chronicle of Changchun, 1948-1977).

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Automobile Workers}. 1956-7-1.
while using similar architectural elements. Concurrent with the FAW, a number of universities and factories were established or relocated to Changchun, signaling the new age of urban development of the city. But the construction of the FAW, the largest industrial project of the FFYP, was undoubtedly the most conspicuous achievement in Changchun and also the symbol of the increasingly growing working class, and regional and national newspapers had kept reporting every achievement it gained in the following decades. (Fig 5-9)

An early industrial plant of the PRC, the FAW was also one of the first Chinese socialist work units, or danwei, that assumed multiple functions: industrial production, housing, day-care, transporting, education, entertainment, sports, bath, etc., as an essential means for population regulation and settlement control. Amongst these functions, housing provision within a danwei was unique in that it was turned into the community organizer of Chinese socialism, and housing design as a form of spatial interventions was expected to facilitate the transition to socialism. Next, I will turn to the non-production sector of the FAW to illustrate the way in which people lived in the danwei and used the space.

III. The FAW Residential Compound

Before an elaboration of the characteristics of Chinese danwei system and its social function, I will first discuss in this section the principles of Chinese socialist housing design, i.e., standardization of design and collective lifestyle made possible by the design, and how different building types in the FAW constituted a self-contained workers’ community.
**Principles of Housing Design in the FFYP**

Stalinist planners had consciously appropriated radical architectural program to enhance communal living, including the policy to site new housing within close proximity of the factories and industrial complexes where the occupants were to work. The expressed reason for this was to minimize the length of the journey to work, hence the effect to focus social and cultural life around the workplace. This outcome was further augmented by the involvement of individual enterprises in the provision of housing as encouraged by the state.\(^{28}\) In 1953 when the CCP was ready to launch its own socialist construction drive, Soviet experts were on hand to pass on the results of many years’ experience in design standardization, and their Chinese counterparts were about to follow closely the path to socialist transition established by the Soviet Union.

Centralization and standardization of the design processes were favored in socialist countries because they allowed for the coordinated and efficient deployment of technical resources. Centralization meant that design expertise could be concentrated and design tasks coordinated so as to achieve finished designs as efficiently as possible, while standardization ensured that identical design standards could be applied throughout the nation rapidly. Thus, once designs had been formulated centrally, they could simply be distributed around the country wherever required to match the demands of rapid industrialization. In this way, one basic design could be utilized in the construction of dozens of factories, offices, or schools. As early as in May 1952, a central organ in charge of producing and supervising standard designs was established and changed its name into the General Design Office the next year.\(^{29}\)

The importance of standardization was most pronounced in the area of urban housing. Although there were many different types of factory and institution, and each required a certain degree of specialization in design, the housing that was to be built alongside the factory or institution need not be specialized and could conform to universal national standards. With the FFYP calling for the construction of huge amount of urban housing to accommodate workers in rapid industrialization, the potential benefits from standardizing design and systematizing the construction process were readily apparent. It was also politically important because unity and standardization in architecture was seen as reflecting an overall unity in ideological stance. Because smaller apartments and more public facilities not only reduced construction costs but also promoted the collective life, politically standardization of housing design reflected an increasingly explicit commitment to the ideals of socialist collective.

The basic principles developed by the Soviet Union for the construction of urban housing centered on economy, simplicity, and the industrialization of the construction.

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\(^{28}\) David Bray argues that the outcome of communal life was not an intended outcome under Stalinism but was dictated by limited social resources, hence shared facilities in communal housing such as kitchens and toilets. See David Bray, *Social Space and Governance in Urban China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, p.91.

\(^{29}\) For the development of this institution, including change of its name and institutional connections, see David Bray, p. 132. The FFYP called for the construction of thirty-one tractor factories, each to be located at key points throughout the country to serve regional agriculture. All were built according to the same standard design developed by the General Design Office in consultation with the First Ministry of Machinery.
process. In practical terms, this translated to the design of simple standard housing units that could be reproduced in large numbers as rapidly as possible. In China, with the advent of the FFYP, traditional single-story residential compounds were no longer apposite for socialist industrialization; instead, they were to be superseded by large planned developments of multiple-story housing blocks clustered in ordered formations around the rapidly emerging urban industries in which the growing number of urban workers would labor.

From the Soviet experience in design and construction, Chinese construction authorities adapted and developed two basic forms of housing suited to mass production: the first was a simple dormitory style consisting of individual rooms opening off long corridors with shared toilet, washing, and cooking facilities; the second was apartment style that combined two or more rooms to form an independent residence. Either in dormitory-style and apartment-style housing, a set of rooms were arranged along corridors that radiated from one stairwell. Housing space that shared an entrance and stairwell consisted of a unit, or danyuan. These units could be reproduced side-by-side as many times as required for any given housing development. (Fig 5-10) The dormitory form was ideal for institutions such as schools, colleges, and the military, as well as for any enterprise that employed large numbers of unmarried workers. Each room in such dormitory buildings would generally house more than one person, often as many as eight to twelve students at a high school, university, or college. The apartment form was intended for the housing of family groups. Both housing forms were employed in FAW’s residential compound.

To facilitate this kind of collective-oriented lifestyle, Chinese architects suggested grouping two or three housing blocks that enclosed an internal courtyard together to form small compounds within the larger residential compound. Even though this meant that some buildings would face east instead of south, the architect considered the principle of collectivity to override the issue of sunshine. By establishing a number of smaller compounds (formed by the grouping of buildings) within the danwei
compound, the plan allowed for certain aspects of social life to be carried out on a smaller, more practical scale of collectivity.

Designed as such, it is apparent that collective life within the danwei was arranged at a number of different levels. At the most basic level of collectivity, every three to five families shared toilets and kitchens within each basic housing unit (danyuan). At the next level, each two to three buildings shared facilities like playgrounds in the internal courtyard, laundries, bicycle sheds, and open space for recreation. Third, small compounds that formed distinctive residential areas provided larger public space such as sports ground, canteens, medical clinics, bathhouses, etc. Finally, at the danwei level, all residents shared facilities like central park, meeting halls, stadiums, kindergartens, and primary schools. Despite different composition and buildings types, the overriding objective of these housing compounds as part of Chinese danwei was identical: the production of proletarian subjects with no contamination of capitalist individualism and materialism. Therefore, the unique combination of standardized housing and domestic spatial arrangement played a crucial role in the transition to socialism.

The collective housing idea had already existed in China for decades, as in the recent practice by the KMT and Japanese colonial regime. However, using standardized design in housing compounds with expectation to enhance collectivism and class sentiment was institutionally novel in the PRC, and danwei housing were built on an unprecedented scale to translate ritual, political and class relationships into spatial terms through arrangement of daily life. Embodying new political ideology and lifestyle, these residential estates was to be the centerpieces of the new socialist society.

**Buildings in FAW's Residential Sector**

A lesson learned by the CCP from the deficiencies of the Soviet model of industrialization was to avoid overemphasis of opening new factories at the cost of improving workers’ livelihood standard. Therefore, the construction of housing, groceries, and other auxiliary facilities of residential compounds started in concurrency with the construction of the factories of the FAW. After the Russian-produced general plan was sent to China in April 1953, the Eastern China Industrial Architectural Design Institute in Shanghai (ECIA) was commissioned by the state to render the plan of FAW’s residential and auxiliary buildings.

In the residential area, the ECIA took charge of what was called “specific planning” (xiangxi guihua), including the design of apartments and dormitories, gardening, water supply and sewage, transportation. Based on the general plan (zongti...
(guihua) produced by Soviet experts, the specific plan worked on the layout of residential and other buildings and was completed in the summer of 1954. The housing project started immediately. When FAW’s main factories were built up in succession, workers also moved into the new apartments in 1955. By 1956, a total floor area of 320,000 square meters was completed. According to 6 square meters per capita in the specific plan, the newly built area was able to house approximately 50,000 people. The factory and residential compounds consisted of the first modern and grandiose “automobile town” of the PRC.

The ECIA plan followed the principle that residential and industrial areas should be located close enough so that the journey to work takes no more than thirty minutes by bus or bicycle, the chief modes of daily travel. The FAW under construction hence was divided into factory area (production sector) and residential area (non-production sector), and the two parts altogether constituted a unique institution of Chinese socialism, that is, work unit (danwei). As scholars have revealed, danwei was featured by a lifetime social welfare system from cradle to grave, and a network of relationships encompassing work, home, neighborhood, and social and political membership. Moreover, Chinese danwei became actively engaged in forming new urban communities on a large scale, hence promoted urbanization and modernization under Maoism. The FAW factory community was one of the first examples with a complete set of facilities that embraced collective life.

The FAW residential area consists of three parts: central garden and plaza, Chinese style blocks, and Western style blocks. (Fig 5-11) The planning reflected the norms of Soviet socialism in building new towns: axial symmetry, regularity and clarity of the relationship between the principal and the subordinate, uniformity of style and height, etc. Its land uses were primarily residential and recreational (with two shops on the tower’s ground-floor), in contrast to the mix of land uses often found in the West since the Industrial Revolution.

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32 “Because all units contributed to fulfilling the general plan produced by the Russian experts, the specific plan had thus been proceeding smoothly.” See Wang Huabin. “Wo men dui dongbei mouchang juzhuqu guihua sheji gongzuo de jiancha” (self-criticism of the planning and design of a residential area in the Northeast). Jianzhu xuebao (Architectural Journal): 1955(2).
33 Automobile Workers. 1954-12-24
34 The figures come from Yang Zhaoyuan. Changchun Jianzhuzhi caogao (Manuscript of Gazetteer of Architecture in Changchun). The standard in the Soviet Union was 9 sq meters, while “acceding to the current situations in China, this standard is not realistic”. The standard for the FAW housing was set at 6 sq meters, which “still proved high”. See Wang Huabin. “Wo men dui dongbei mouchang juzhuqu guihua sheji gongzuo de jiancha” (self-criticism of the planning and design of a residential area in the Northeast). Jianzhu xuebao (Architectural Journal): 1955(2); also Wang Huabin. “jiji chuangzuo, nuli tigao zhuzhai sheji sheji shuiqing” (actively practice and improve the skill of housing design). Jianzhu xuebao (Architectural Journal): 1962(2).
35 Unlike the United States, where the best housing is almost invariably located some distance away from industrial districts, and the quality of housing usually be-comes better with increasing distance from the city center, in Chinese cities the quality of housing does not vary significantly over space and virtually no single family houses are constructed. See Ma.
The general demeanor of the site was attractive and inviting. The central park (Gongqingtuan Park) and Yingchun Plaza was located at the center of the residential area. Framed by sloping roofed apartment buildings, the park included a small pond, trees, walkways and benches for the pedestrians. The landscaping made the site much greener than typical tenements and provided opportunities for children to play while remaining under the watchful eyes of adult users of the park. The axis of the park strung up a series of small plazas, forming the largest shared public park and a spacious recreation place for all residents. Apartments surrounding the central park are heightened and carefully decorated, especially on the roof, to enrich the silhouettes of the central area.37

Residential blocks (jiefang) are the basic elements for the organization of the residential area. In FAW’s residential area, Chinese style apartment blocks sandwiched the central park, while the Western style apartment blocks are located diagonally away across the main street. Each block is unique, but all have a distinct axis to regulate the layout. Apartment buildings are laid on the four edges of each block along streets. Service facilities such as power distribution station and daycare center were placed inside the block. Part from buildings, playground, green space, parking space and storage area are also included inside the block. Geometry and symmetry dominated the plan of each block, showing the strong order of space.

Western style blocks consisted of three-storied apartment buildings with a Western pediment as the most distinctive ornament. In order to receive sunshine, a

Chinese living habit, most apartment buildings were aligned to North-South axis, hence a rectangular shape of the blocks. Windows, balconies and flower-stands of the apartments were well decorated, though balconies and flower-stands on the façade accord to aesthetic more than functional need. The clay sculptures of western emblazonry on the pediment and above the doors of housing units further accentuate the foreignness of the buildings. (Fig 5-12) Inside the block, some of the ground units of the apartment buildings were designed as daycares or residential management offices.

The Chinese blocks, on the other hand, are not only larger and higher, but also richer and more varied in housing shape and the silhouettes as a whole. The Western style apartment buildings are relatively small in that each contains three to five housing units while the Chinese style apartment building consists of as many as sixteen units. Unlike the Western style blocks, apartment buildings in the Chinese style blocks form a square in plan, and are laid surrounding the central park. Buildings in the Chinese style blocks have at least four stories, and the exceptions of five stories are given to those flanking the central park. The towered and hip-roofed apartments, instead of standing alone, formed part of a larger composition and created a visual reference point in the skyline. (Fig 5-13)

Several roof styles appeared in different locations in these blocks: hip roofs in general, extruded towers facing the central plaza, and gable and hip roofs used for special buildings such as the hotel for Russian experts. (Fig 5-14) Despite the variety of roof styles, the roofed towers on the top of two buildings that flanked the entrance of the central park were the most distinctive examples. (Fig 5-15) these towers were used for residences, while the ground floor of the two buildings were used for shops. Building bases, much higher than the Western style apartments, are richly decorated in combination of the undulating topography of the area, hence the facade is divided into three parts in the classical manner. Combined with decorative screens on exterior walls, the balcony became a vigorous element enriching the façade, although distribution of the balconies was governed by considerations of architectural effect rather than consideration for the function inside. In order to match the silhouettes of the apartment buildings, the eight electric distribution stations inside these blocks were also crowned with sloping roofs.38 (Fig 5-16)

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38 The project was reproached due to costly construction as such, “and the decoration on the electric station cost ten more yuan per square meter for the whole proejct”. See Feng Yunshan (ed), “yi qi de sanci fanlangfei douzheng” (The three campaigns of anti-waste in the FAW). quanguo zhengxiewenshi he xuexi weiyuanhui (Political consultancy and research committee of China) (ed.), yi qi chuangjian fazhan licheng (establishment and development of the First Automobile Works). Beijing: Chinese Culture and History Press, 2009, p. 157-158.
Apartments were composed of several cellular housing units (*danyuan*). Each unit consists of a staircase shared by multiple independent apartments. Apartments had comfort facilities equipped kitchens, large bathrooms and central heating but were unnecessarily large and did not receive sufficient sunlight. The collective-oriented lifestyle in design practice brought about a crucial transformation in the basic housing unit of *danyuan*. Initially the *danyuan* was simply a collection of independent apartments that shared an entrance and stairwell. During the mid-1950s, however, political and economic developments resulted in the *danyuan* becoming an integrated collectivized residential unit. Moreover, the transformation of the *danyuan* into collectivized living space showed one aspect of a much larger project, for the *danyuan* housing unit was merely one element within a larger collective entity: the *danwei*. In this spirit, Chinese architects gained confidence to see themselves as political agents to apply spatial design to facilitate the transition to communism.

The idea behind such large apartments was to plan for future comfort, but for the time being, two families would have to share one apartment. Each housing unit was
designed according to standard architectural components and modules, and apartment buildings were assembled by a few such units, hence lots of variation in length and form. The FAW housing was also called a new model that was “constructed based on the principles of standard design for workers” by the government. As illustrated in Fig 5-17, rooms were designed deep and narrow, yet comfortable proportioned to form a danyuan, with concern for heat conservation. There are eight apartments in one of the housing units, among which two comprising two bed-rooms and a kitchen and a bathroom, others were single room with no kitchens. Three families shared a three-bedroom apartment, “a temporary measure to alleviate housing shortage.” (Fig 5-17)

Gardens and green spaces inside the blocks play out the role to supplement the symmetrical residential plan. (Fig. 18) However, the geometrical layout of the inside gardens sometimes impeded inhabitants from reaching their destination easily, given the large scale the square residential blocks. Public green spaces including the central park, tree-lined avenues, traffic parks, etc., are equally distributed in the residential plan, reflecting the egalitarian ideal of socialism. Like park system of the colonial times, all green spaces are connected with one another in prevention of fire expansion. An elementary school and a kindergarten are situated on both sides of the central park. (see Fig. 22) The easy access to public green spaces guaranteed the safety of children when they walked between their homes and schools, the application of another Soviet planning norm.

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Chapter 5  Building Changchun Automobile Town

According to the Soviet residential planning theories, auxiliary facilities such as dining halls, public baths, workers’ club, auditorium hall and alike were situated in the center of the residential area. Socialist content also included reading rooms for the perusal of newspapers and magazines, kindergartens and nursery schools to educate the children and enable their mothers to go out to work, sports centers and stadium facilities marking the new role of sport in the life of the community, and rest homes for deserving workers. Nonetheless, there was no centralized commercial area in the residential area, while “groceries should be placed in independent buildings or on the ground floor of apartments along the main streets”. As such, the ground floors of the two towered apartment buildings facing the central plaza were used for shops. (see Fig. 15) The integration of commercial space in workers’ estates and in ordinary urban neighborhoods provided convenient service for inhabitants on the one side, as equal distribution of social resources was a keystone of socialist planning. In this vein, the polarization of rich commercial districts and slums could be eliminated. But on the other side, it also implied that commercial activities were no more the excluding priority and Chinese urban communities were much more self-contained than their counterparts in the West.

Aside from daycares, banks, shops that were integrated with apartment buildings, canteens and bathrooms that were shared by all residents of the danwei, as well as facilities of higher standard such as the reception center, hotels, the stadium, worker’s clubs, teaching buildings, etc, were built up. These free-standing buildings were crowned with gable and hip roofs with exquisite Chinese decorations on eaves and pediments in response to the general style of apartment buildings. However, they differed from apartments in lower height (two or three stories) and smaller volume, which helped inhabitants and visitors orient themselves in the residential area. (Fig 5-19) These facilities were distributed around residential blocks, further facilitating socialist collectivism, and the configuration of housing became a political determinant of consciousness and behavior that accorded with party line.

Fig 5-19  FAW’s two-storied dining hall, now used as the FAW Archive
Source: photo by the author in 2009

41 Huadong jianzhu gongcheng shejiyuan. “chengshi zhuzhaiqu de guihua he jianzhu” (the planning and design for urban housing compounds). Jianzhu xuebao (Architectural Journal): 1958(1)
42 In the factory newspaper, Automobile Workers, it was reported that dinning halls and reception center were regarded as landmarks for inhabitants to orient themselves.
The various kinds of buildings and their percentage of the floor area constructed can be seen from the two tables below. (Table 5.1, 5.2)

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<tr>
<th>Table 5.1  Building categories and land used(^{43})</th>
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<td>Category of buildings</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<th>Table 5.2  Floor area of residential blocks and average density(^{44})</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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The relatively high standard which incurred harsh criticism in the campaign against waste in the construction industry in late 1954 reflected the avid pursuit of the socialist modern of Chinese architects. More importantly, the enthusiasm of professionals as exemplified in unflinching diversification of housing form and decorations showed that Chinese architects increasingly saw themselves as political activists whose spatial interventions must facilitate the transition to socialism. Although severely austerity in housing design as a physical embodiment of the slogan “production first, life later” dominated Chinese urban landscape for more than two decades since the mid-1950s, the early experiment of the FFYP projects provided antithesis to urban uniformity and standardization recognized as paramount planning principles. Like that in the colonial period, the content and form of the modern was not a constant, and we will see how housing design was affected considerably by political movements in the next section.

**Architects and Experiment of Non-Standardization**

The whole FAW residential project, as an integral part of the FAW of in the FFYP, was undertaken under the auspices of the state. The chief architect of this project was Wang Huabin, the chief architect of the ECIA at the time. Wang was born in 1907 in Fuzhou, Fujian province, and like many preeminent contemporary architects he

\(^{43}\) Huadong gongye jianzhu sheji yuan (ECIA). “dongbei mouchang juzhuqu xiangxi guihua sheji de neirong jieshao” (A Brief of the content of a residential area of a Northeastern factory). Architectural Journal: 1955(2)

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
graduated from Tsinghua University and studied at the University of Pennsylvania during 1928-1931. After his return to China, he had worked in Shanghai for most of his career before Communist takeover, serving as a practicing architect and a dean professor of architecture school in two universities. In his own words, Wang admitted that his “major interest exists in reforming Chinese architecture,” and his specialty was house design and housing planning. He worked in the Housing Bureau of Central Trust in the KMT government for three years (1946-1949), and was promoted to the chief of the bureau in 1949, hence knowledgeable of housing issues and design.

The Eastern China Industrial Architectural Design Institute (ECIA) that took charge of this project was established in 1952 in Shanghai, and was one of the first design institutions of the PRC. A number of well-known Shanghai-based architects who had gained their fame during the Nanjing regime worked in the ECIA, including Zhuang Jun, Chen Zhi, Zhao Shen and Wang Huabin. As architectural activity such as housing provision formed an indispensable part of central planning, once it had been subsumed by the five-year plans and had come to be dominated entirely by big state-sponsored commissions, there was no longer any room for private architectural practices.

However, the initiatives and enthusiasm of architects cannot be overlooked, especially in the FAW project. Under Wang’s leadership, the FAW residential project embodied the way in which diversified architectural forms contributed to building socialism and embodied advantage of socialism. Wang admitted that “in the façade of the housing blocks (of the FAW residential area), our attention had been primarily laid on the treatment of roofs, in an attempt to achieve varied form of the roof.” Roof styles, as discussed in previous pages, were regarded as the most distinguishing element of national form with many expressions, such as towers and various hipped roofs. (Fig 5-20) In addition to roof styles, important positions on the façade such as balconies, windows, doors, decorative screen walls, etc. that appeared on the main façade or on end walls with more consideration to formal need had numerous forms of ornamentation with scare repetition. (Fig 5-21) It is obvious how much enthusiasm and hard work architects had put into this project to produce blueprints for these irregular architectural components.

The enthusiasm of the ECIA architects was omnipresent during the first years of Maoism, and architects were also earnest to fulfill their part in industrialization and modernization that would eventually turn China into “a strong and wealthy state,” which was the pursuit of many generations of Chinese intellectuals. Wang’s view of formal diversity was enthusiastically shared by his fellow architects. Aware of that the FAW

45 Hujiang University (1933-1939) and Hangchow University (1939-1949). After the Sino-Japanese War broke out, the school of architecture at Hujiang University was incorporated into Hangchow University, where Wang served as a dean professor till 1949.
47 A brief 50-year history of ECIA is available online at http://www.abbs.com.cn/ecadi/2.htm.
was the most important plant of the FFYP and was crucial to building Chinese socialism, architects of the ECIA devoted themselves to this exciting project. As Israel Epstein, a Polish writer who had lived and worked in the PRC since the 1930s, had written, “we all felt impelled by the same spirit [of building Chinese socialism during the 1950s]. That is collective struggle toward the accomplished goals, with no care for fame or private interest. People who had not participated in this collective work can hardly know such feeling.”

Fig 5-20 details of the sloping roofed apartments
Source: by courtesy of the FAW Archival (Left), and photo by the author in 2009 (Right)

In the meantime, diversification exceeded single buildings and was also demonstrated in the general plan of FAW’s livelihood area. The most distinct example

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49 Author of Unfinished Revolution of China, Israel Epstein was a naturalized Chinese journalist and author and also a member of the Communist Party of China. Quoted from Gu Baozi. “yiqujihua chutai qianhou” (The preparations and consequences of the first FYP). Xiangchao. 2009/2.
is that, at an intersect of three main streets, the buildings at the four corners were decorated with similar motifs such as extruded towers, high bases with capped edges, etc. However, the plans of the four buildings were different from one another. (Fig 5-22)

Fig 5-22 the different forms in plan of the four residential apartment buildings, while their appearance was similar featured by the same architectural elements (roof style, base, etc.)
Source: by courtesy of the FAW Archival (Left), and photo by the author in 2009 (Right)

Wang Huabin was a supporter of architectural modeling, and earnestly publicized the 3M modular system in China in the fifties and sixties. He argued that modular system contributed to pre-fabrication and fast construction, which “corresponds to what the central government called for building socialism with greater, faster, better and more economical results”. Nevertheless, what Wang opposed was an over-standardization that dictated a rigid prescription of housing design and left out architects’ motivation to provide variations of composition and decoration.

It was not entirely fortuitous that the push for standardization coincided with the economic austerity drive and the political call for an increase in the speed of collectivization. Standardization in design, particularly in the area of urban housing, played a major role in rapid industrialization to increase collectivization. However, the overwhelming concern for economy and speed of construction resulted in monochromic urban spaces throughout Chinese cities. On the contrary, Wang was aware of the deficiencies of overemphasizing standardization at the very beginning of the FFYP and became an ardent proponent of diversifying layout and architectural forms based on standard units. He argued for the necessity of architectural diversity in an essay,

“As the form of housing architecture is simple in itself, the aesthetics of housing compounds depends on how space is compartmented, organized,

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50 The basic module is 10 centimeters, marked as “M”. 3M refers to the use of 30 centimeters as the modulus to promote prefabricated construction. See Wang Huabin. “Jianzhu moshu shulie de tantao” (Discussion of architectural modular sequence). Jianzhu xuebao (Architectural Journal): 1961(10): 5-10.
51 Ibid. p.10
and beautified. ... The combination of wholeness and diversity of housing compounds is a good solution to enhance the artistic standard of housing design. ... A certain extent of diversity of architectural forms can supplement the integrity of the whole plan, which will grant vivid and novel impression to the people.”

The FAW’s residential compound best materialized Wang Huabin’s view of diversification of housing form in organic combination with standardized design. The richness of composition, housing form and decoration demonstrated the enthusiasm and confidence of contemporary architects to play an instrumental role in the transition to socialism through spatial intervention.

By 1955, a good portion of housing buildings had been built up. However, the project was behind schedule because of too many irregular components, and construction cost exceeded the original budget by one million yuan.53 Worst of all, as Khrushchev came to power and cultural policy changed in the aftermath of Stalin’s death in 1953, de-Stalinization was to mean rejecting extravagant monumentalism that was the hallmark of Stalinist nationalist style. Instead of flaunting the might of the state, Soviet architecture began to concentrate on more practical and immediate concerns, such as addressing the urban housing crisis that had become increasingly critical in the latter years of Stalin’s rule.

The same reproach swept China beginning in late 1954 that targeted at costly “national form” in construction,54 and the FAW residential project stood for the main target of criticism. On March 7, 1955, an editorial appeared on the CCP’s official newspaper People’s Daily criticized the high construction cost of the FAW’s residential project: “(the architects) ignored the prepared standardized design drawing, but tried all means to design (these parts) by themselves”.55 Earlier on, the Ministry of Construction and Engineering convened a national conference in Beijing to launch the anti-waste campaign in construction. The attempts to develop a Chinese national style to represent the new regime were now accused of practicing “bourgeois formalism” and attempted to launch a “classical revival” in the guise of national style. The conference concluded that, given the state of the national economy, aesthetics could only be considered secondary to

54 The first major political intervention into the arena of urban planning and construction began in late 1954, when Premier Zhou Enlai publicly criticized the construction industry for “wasting the limited resources of the state.” Through 1955 this campaign gained momentum as it targeted a number of key figures accused of adhering to extravagant standards in architecture, building, and urban planning. In 1955, Li Fuchun (vice-premier and chairman of the State Planning Commission) reported: “For several years, we have neglected the difference between two kinds of standards, productive and nonproductive construction. Standards for nonproductive construction were set far too high for the level of our country’s economic development .... In construction of new industrial cities, too, there were many cases in which standards were set too high, modernization was sought too quickly, or the appearances of cities was over-emphasized.” Quoted in Koshizawa Akira. “China’s Urban Planning”. The Developing Economies: Volume 16, Issue 1, March 1978. See also David Bray. Social Space and Governance in Urban China. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p.130.
55 A criticism of the costly construction. See “zhongdian gongcheng de teshuhua (Specialization of projects with priority)”. People’s Daily. 1955-3-7
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the principles of economics and utility.

Wang Huabin, chief architect of the project, published his essay on *Architectural Journal* about his reflections on the mistakes, in which he self-criticized his “idealistic design conceptions that only took Chinese roofs as national form,” hence the budget excess.  

While much of the debate centered on questions of architectural style, there was also criticism of norms and standards set by the Soviet advisers in the areas of housing and urban planning. In this essay, Wang confessed that while these standards may have been suited to the Soviet Union, they were too high for China given its inferior economic circumstances: “although the ratio of 6 sq meters per person instead of 9 sq meters that is the minimum to meet Soviet sanitary requirement was adopted, planning density can be increased without breaching sanitation and fire protection requirements.”

In June 1955 the CCP Central Committee issued a range of directives concerning measures to be adopted in order to reduce the costs of the construction industry. The People’s Daily later reported that costs for construction of nonproduction-related buildings would be reduced even further. Significant economies were achieved through the abandonment of all internal and external ornamentation.  

Roofs that had previously been designed with traditional eaves and gables were flattened, balconies were dispensed with, and arches were eliminated. Despite this overtly political focus, the anti-waste campaign also led to reappraisals of more mundane issues such as the standards adopted in design and construction. The resultant buildings were severely austere in appearance and provided visual proof of the relentless shift of resources from consumption to production that marked this period, and a mediocre outlook of collective housing had dominated Chinese urban landscape for the next few decades.

However, the experiment of planning the FAW residential area displayed the attempt of an alternative path to the socialist modern embodied in architectural representation and the new way of life. Large sloping roofs and traditional decorative motifs featured apartment compounds as a whole, but that did not mean architecture was entirely subordinated to tradition. Housing unit that met daily needs and modular system that realized mass construction were undergirded in housing design, not to mention the goal to facilitate collective working and living. Still less that it was to look old-fashioned. The architecture of a national form would certainly not be called modernist, but it would be new, and above all, was based on tradition and allied with “socialist content,” a content inserted in the form.

As has been seen, spatial formation of the FAW’s housing compound stipulated


59 The cost per square meter for construction of offices and university classrooms was to be reduced from 100 yuan to 45-70 yuan, while that for housing was to be reduced from 90 yuan to 20-60 yuan. See David Bray, pp.94-95.
the new way of life which created proletarian subjects. In regard to architect’s place in social transformation, unlike, Chinese architects and urban planners saw themselves as technicians in the service of a primarily political project rather than revolutionary vanguards in the West, and were willing to align with the CCP-led government as long as the government was able to get rid of humiliation imposed by the foreigners. As they saw it, their task was to design spaces, buildings, and cities that would reproduce and reinforce the political, social, and productive relationships demanded by socialism. As exemplified in the enthusiasm of building the FAW housing compounds, Chinese architects entrusted themselves as political activists whose work made for the transition to socialism.

The FAW was just one of the many examples of community building for industrializing projects in the FFYP, but perhaps was the most conspicuous one. By the mid-1950s, more and more Western architects and theorists reflected on and reproached the absoluteness and monochrome of modernism. It was under totally different circumstances that Chinese professionals rejected modernism and proposed an alternative that looked back to their own tradition. Despite different cultural and socio-economic circumstances, methodologies of anti-standardizing everything and diversifying architectural form had been attempted in parallel on both sides of the Cold War in the mid-1950s.

IV. Living the Chinese Danwei: Socialist Life in the FAW

Transforming urban landscape and urban life fundamentally, the FAW was nothing more than a typical large state-managed danwei built under Maoism. As has been revealed, the danwei as a key social institution of Chinese socialism was delegated responsibility in a number of vital areas of social, economic, and political organization, including areas such as the provision of welfare, material support and housing, management of trade unions, employment and worker education, etc. Given the role played by the danwei within the overall strategies of urban governance as the foundation of urban management, it is less surprising that it would also become the locus of urban infrastructure.

Generally, a Chinese danwei formed a network of relationships encompassing work, home, neighborhood, and social and political membership. The minute planning that went into the production of collective-oriented spaces shows that collectivism was not merely an abstract political ideal promoted by CCP authorities. Rather, it was a principle that informed a whole range of daily practices within the danwei. Likewise, it is abundantly apparent that the principle of collectivity was not only reflected in the symbolic form of the danwei compound but was also invested to a very practical degree within the everyday spaces around which danwei life revolved.

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The profound social change brought about by Chinese danwei can be read in the writing of Edgar Snow, a friend of many high ranking CCP officials and the author of Red Star over China published in 1937 who was invited by Chairman Mao to visit China in 1970. He wrote about people’s life and work in cities that he saw in the Northeast:

All the factories I saw operated nurseries, clinics, hospitals, rest homes and part-time schools; all had clubs, theaters, drama teams and bands. Housing varied from miles of newly built cheap brick apartments with modern plumbing (some with shower baths and private toilets) to ramshackle tenement structures. “Clubs” and theaters might be in buildings specially constructed for the purpose or in old converted houses or shops. Where the service was not covered by the welfare fund (as in state factories) the cost of nursery care (including noon meal) varied from six to ten yuan a month. Nurseries and kindergartens were sometimes well housed in former homes of the rich.

... In large factories I saw what might be called “milking stations” to which working mothers came at regular intervals to breastfeed their babies - whom they carried home at the end of the day. A nurse or two or baby-sitters cared for the infants while the mothers, nearby, operated machines.

... The workers were paid a 'norm-wage' in accordance with their “grade” and also received variable bonuses for over-norm piecework production. There was an eight-hour day and a six-day week in most state factories I saw. Plants worked two or three shifts. Housewives working in municipally owned shops as a rule spent only four to six hours on bench work and two to three hours in spare-time schools learning characters and Marxism.61

It is obvious that many faces of daily life such as food preparation, child care, laundries, and other social activities were organized communally within danwei. Through the communal style of organization, workers ate in collective canteens, socialized in public recreation areas, and attended lectures and discussion groups in communal meeting halls. While the danwei constituted the basic unit of collective identification, danwei members undertook many of their daily activities among smaller collective groupings that were divided according to age rather than family ties. Under these conditions every aspect of daily life was to be given a collective context and undertaken within a space that had been specifically designed to bolster that very principle of collectivity. At every turn the communal values of socialism were to be reinforced in lived practice. For example, on the domestic level, shared toilet, washing, and cooking facilities in apartments facilitated communal life, while children were divided into a number of different age groups and played in the internal courtyard of

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residential blocks. (Fig 5-23)

With the advent of the new urban management of *danwei*, the functions of the factory, workers’ club, and communal house were unified in one spatial form. These new sociospatial arrangements were designed not simply with the aim of increasing labor productivity, but rather they were seen as the foundation for revolutionary social and cultural transformation. Indeed, these new living environments were envisaged as playing a major role in the forging of new proletarian subjects. Through this conjunction of a collectivized spatial form with a regularized schedule of collective activity, it was hoped that the new way of life under Chinese socialism would improve labor productivity and create model proletarian subjects. In this way, bourgeois values and ways of life would inexorably be stripped away and replaced by a collectivized daily practice appropriate to the principles of socialism.

In addition to promotion of collectivism, Chinese *danwei* also afforded the issues of the distribution of material supply and mass mobilization. The provision of material safety net was another important factor in establishing legitimacy for the new regime in the cities, and an urban household registry system was adopted to enmesh workers within the socioeconomic structures of the new regime. In the FAW, like in many other *danwei*, workers were grouped to study political situations for several hours in the afternoon of a working day, and huge banners were hung on the wall of apartments that no one would miss. (Fig 5-24) The regime of planning adopted by the CCP-led government ensured that the urban *danwei*, which had already become a basic unit of political organization, was rapidly transformed into the basic unit of economic planning as well as the primary site for political education and mobilization.

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62 David Bray, p.103
Proletarian education was another principal goal to secure working-class commitment to political and productive goals in the urban factories. The most common method adopted to pursue this task was the establishment of after-hours classes for factory workers at their places of work. As a worker recalls the enthusiasm of young workers for study at the FAW,

When the FAW was established, there were about 18,000 employees, nearly all of whom were young people. ... The newly built FAW was the world of young people who were vigorous and earnest to devote to socialist construction. ... The factory provided various kinds of after-hour classes for workers, and organized a group of qualified teachers for this purpose. Young people put most of their time after work for study. After off duty at 5 o’clock in the afternoon, young singles hurried to the dining hall for a meal and ran to the Educational Building to attend evening school there. People of the night shift took class at 6 o’clock in the morning.63

Labor was important both as a material and as a spiritual prerequisite to socialism. As David Bray notes, danwei space was designed to represent the centrality of collective labor and egalitarian social relationships that exemplified the socialist ideal.64 As for the spatial layout of the FAW compound and collective life organized within it, it not only underscored the primacy of the socialist state and the CCP, but also reinforced the significance of labor to socialist practice. It was hoped that socialism could be achieved through an improvement in the material conditions or life, which could be brought about only through productive labor and the production of proletarian consciousness that emerged out of participation in collective labor. Within the danwei

64 David Bray, p.125
compound, daily life revolved around the demands of labor, be it production of material goods, knowledge, recreation or information. (Fig 5-25)

The FAW became well-known immediately after it was completed and the “Liberation”-make trucks aroused pride as well as curiosity amongst Chinese people. In February of 1958, Chairman Mao came to the FAW on a factory inspection tour. In the following few years, many high-ranking Communist officials, including Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen etc., and social celebrities visited the FAW.65

Amongst many visitors to the FAW, one was special. Puyi, the abdicated emperor of Manchukuo who had been imprisoned in a hinterland city in the Northeast until 1959, recorded his visit to the FAW in 1957 in an organized tourist-study group:

Every time when I heard “Liberation” make automobiles, I could not help feeling proud and excited. … Upon our arrival at the Auto City, I first saw endless rows of modern factories, department stores, hospitals, clubs, dinning halls, and workers’ housing – indeed magnificent! Besides, wide roads paved with asphalt and all kinds of vehicles indicate that this is a new, modern city. … I think it is very appropriate to call it an “Auto City”.

… We were also showed to various welfare facilities for the workers of the FAW. The first place we visited was an educational building, which contained in it all levels of after-hours classes from de-illiteracy to college level courses. A total of 12,000 workers are working and studying in this building. Next we visited a hospital that serves the FAW, … Then we were showed to a kindergarten.66

In the end of the dairy of the trip to his former imperial capital, Puyi concluded that the colonial remainders were totally eliminated by sweeping socialist construction, especially for the newly built automobile city that marked the profound change of Changchun as a socialist industrial center.

65 For articles that record these visits by Mao and others, see essays collected in The Committee of Culture and History of Changchun’s Political Consultancy ed. “qiche gongye zhixing” (Preeminent figures in the FAW), in Cultural and Historical Material of Changchun. 1991(1); see also Culture and History Commission of the National Political Consultancy ed. Yiqi chuangjian fazhan licheng (the establishment and development of the FAW). Beijing: China’s Culture and History Press, 2007.
As mentioned, the extravagant decoration and various form of FAW’s housing compound incurred harsh criticism in the anti-waste campaign of 1954-1955. Paradoxically, it was the careful design and well-equipped housing compound that helped FAW workers identify with the new factory community. Modern equipments such as kitchen, bath, and all-day hot water supply inside apartment improved livelihood standards of the workers who felt proud of working in the FAW, while daycare, elementary schools and dinning halls enhanced collective living and social solidarity leveled at socialism.67

The negative utopias of collective life in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc has been described by dissents as a hellish communal existence or “a deep individual alienation growing out of meaningless construction work and barrack existence.”68 The example of the FAW residential compounds provided a counter argument to such generalization. In 2001, a popular Chinese situation comedy “A Family in the Northeast” (dongbei yijiaren) was screened on TV, and the whole story was based on a portion of the FAW residential area. Through the family’s daily life in the late 1990s and the way in which family members’ recalled of the early years of the FAW, the housing compounds were the arena of vivid community life that provided security and helped form collective identity amongst the inhabitants.

V. Conclusions

In this chapter I elucidated the construction of a Chinese danwei, i.e., the FAW and its housing compound. The FAW was one of the largest projects in the FFYP, also one of the earliest socialist danwei in the PRC, an emblem of Chinese socialism under Mao’s rein. I have illustrated that the socialist modern was conditioned by political circumstances developments and how housing design was affected by political movements, which resulted in a remarkable degree of uniformity in danwei spatial form. The standardization of spatial forms reflecting both the demands of economic austerity and the growing political move toward collectivization became a norm of the spatial formation of danwei and dominated urban Chinese landscape for decades. But the FAW compound demonstrated several qualities falling short of standardization. First, the production and livelihood sectors of the FAW were designed by Soviet and Chinese professionals, respectively. Second, Chinese architects such as Wang Huabin played an active role in diversifying housing forms and decorations.

As the CCP regarded the Soviet model of planning and socialist realism the correct direction of building Chinese socialism, the Soviet influence was obvious. The factories of the FAW were designed by Soviet architects with Stalinist socialist realism.

67 Hot water supply was the most modern facet of all benefits, even judged from today’s standard in Changchun. As there is a thermal electric power plant in the FAW, vaporized water was carried out through piping system from the factories and was circulated in residential apartments, which made hot water supply possible in the early 1950s. see sushequ reshui de gongying wenti (hot water supply in housing compounds). Qiche gongren (Automobile workers). 1956-6-21(4).

Two recent concepts that defined socialist realism were unmistaken in shaping the built environment of the FAW: the ensemble and the silhouette. The FAW made a telling example of urban development in the spirit of socialist realism, above all on account of the combination of national form and socialist content. Here the concepts of classical architecture and classical town planning still held sway, from the ornament, the architectural detail, and the facade via the street, the square, and the block, to the factory community as an artistic entity.

The richness of housing appearance, on the other hand, showed architects’ enthusiasm in building Chinese socialism. I have argued that Chinese architects were confident to see themselves as political activists to facilitate social change through spatial intervention. Indeed, collectivization was realized on several levels: from the domestic danyuan unit that shared many livelihood facilities, to residential blocks, and eventually the arena for this radical new social formation was to be the danwei compound. As has been made manifest, the shift to communism was premised on both the collectivization of living space and the unification of everyday life and productive labor into one collectivized whole.

In the study of the FAW, a specific and representative danwei, I have shown that FAW was both a product of and an enabler of centrally determined policies to restore production and create proletarian subjects. From the case of the FAW, it is clear that danwei was the site at which policy and strategy imperatives came face to face with complex social and cultural practices. The spatial arrangement of the FAW aimed to facilitate collectivization, organize and mobilize the population, enmesh the workers in the social structure, and seek to produce a space in which both the productive and the spiritual effects of labor could be nurtured. Through the account of socialist life that many inhabitants and visitors have written about, profound social change was taking place in Changchun in the 1950s, and the former colonial capital city was superseded by a socialist industrial city. The FAW was an emblem of the “great victory of Maoism,” the victory not only over former colonial cruelty, but also over the capitalist world and capitalist manner of production. Despite its ephemeral experiment, it showed the path of achieving the socialist modern that surpassed its competitors.

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Chapter 6   Conclusions

What I have aimed to demonstrate in the previous pages is that the built environment of Changchun offers visual interpretation to the idiosyncracies of Japanese colonial practices in Manchukuo and Communist modernizing projects, and uncovers connections between the two. The realm of architecture and city planning is not only essential for understanding the political and cultural development of the culminating period of Chinese nation-state building, but that the built environment has also played a central and critical role in shaping the norms and forms of the country’s society, culture and politics.

Though each of the previous chapters has had its own theme and focus, the study as a whole has had three main objectives. The first, and most important, has been to demonstrate the urban region of present-day Changchun came into formation during these culminating years of political turbulence, and reveal connections between the colonial past and socialist “present”. I have focused on competitions in architectural representation that projected a construction of the time and space of the nation. At the same time, the shaping of the built environment is also a writing of the history of the nation. I aim to write a political history of architecture and urban design of Changchun which recognizes its colonial precedents.

The second objective has been to demonstrate how the ideals of the Kingly Way (such as cultural independence, ethnic harmony, respect for the king, “following the way of heaven and bringing peace to the people,” etc.) and socialism (socialist equality, centralization and standardization of the design) found distinct demonstration in naming and building the capital colonial city, hence demonstrating qualities differing from the Western notion of modernity.

Finally, my aim has been to reveal how social identity was formed through everyday life in urban space. The material environment, as Lefebvre has pointed out, is both the product of, and the condition of, the possibility of social relations by which identities are formed and transformed. Under socialism, identity was articulated in terms of class rather than through native place or lineage ties; thus it was the act of labor itself that determined subject identity. I have used a unique example of the First Automobile Works compounds to show urban management under Chinese socialism.

The themes of these chapters – Manchukuo’s pan-Asian ideology and its manifestation in city planning and architecture, the change of worshipping deities that reflected Japanese changing colonial policies, the reconstruction of the city in the lines of Chinese socialism, and the making of the first danwei, i.e. the First Automobile Works – are all conditions best conveyed through the experiments of redefining and competing the modern. In this sense, some connections between the two regimes are inevitable.

But in the present scholarship on Manchukuo, serious studies of relationships between Japanese colonial past and socialist present are largely missing for combined reasons. The purposes of the dissertation have been anchored by an overall objective to fill up this vacancy from the perspective of urban construction and urban life. A
considerable portion of this dissertation has examined the oppressive nature of Japanese colonialism and the discrepancies between Manchukuo’s pan-Asian ideology and Japan’s paternal practices in the city. I examined in Chapter Three the nature of Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo from the perspective of rituals and public pageantries, by using Yamamuro’s analogy of the client state to a hybrid beast of chimera. I hope this dissertation may be part of a larger project to objectively reevaluate the colonial past and guide contemporary preservation of the colonial legacies to boost rising tourism.

In the following pages, I first readdress the issues of new imperialism, nationalism, Chinese socialism, and the topic of architecture and spatial politics and the formation of collective subjectivity. In the final section, I return to my personal story in Changchun and the current situation of architectural preservation.

**Competing the Modern: Anti-Capitalism and Anti-Imperialism**

This dissertation has unfolded a proliferation of competing formulations of the modern in Changchun’s urban history, some inspired by Western creations but more competing with Western concerns. In the competition for the dominance of the world, Japanese colonialism in Manchukuo and Chinese socialism both represented massive anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist qualities.

Vastly numerically less than Chinese and technologically inferior to Soviet and American military power, the Japanese resorted to whatever means they could to protect their economic and emotional investments in Manchukuo. The fear of an imminent war and anxiety of legitimacy crisis in Manchukuo had normalized Japanese competition with the West, the Nationalists, and the Communists. On global level, ambitiously building Changchun as a modern city to justify the colonial rule, the Japanese constantly consulted indigenous sources to compete with, and overcome, the Western vision of the modern in city planning and architecture. The idea of competing the modern culminated in Manchukuo’s Tenth Anniversary ceremonies including the 1942 Greater East Asian Exposition in Changchun, which aimed at mass mobilization in the war against the West. On continental level, as I mentioned in Chapter One, the three major principles of the Kingly Way, i.e. following the way of heaven and bringing peace to the people, the principle of people as the basis of the state, and ethnic harmony were exactly the antithesis of one the Three Principles of the People, the state ideology of the Nationalist regime. On domestic level, these factors surely contributed to the nature of the founding ideals and institutions of the state of Manchukuo: they competed with, rather than complemented, one another.

The overarching goal to compete with and to overcome the West in approaching to a new modern society reappeared in the built environment under Chinese socialist regime. Like its colonial precedent, socialist urban design and architecture were conceived as a positive counter-image to the alleged decadent Western metropolis, and aimed to assert social, moral and political superiority of the socialist state. Not unlike the colonial experiments, providing both justification and a program for socialist
activities, visions of the modern galvanized the urban construction of Changchun into divergent courses of action, each course demonstrating rival definitions of the modern.

Duara Prasenjit had identified two pillars upon which the ideals of anti-imperialist movement were built: the discourse of alternative civilizations and socialism, responding to the two major driving forces in shaping Changchun’s urban form. The view that emerged from the first discourse was fully developed by the Japanese into pan-Asianism. Pan-Asianism, expressed as shared Asian ideals and common history (especially against Western imperialism), spoke to the new conceptualization of global domination through a return to East Asian traditions which self-consciously embedded an opposition to the modern Western or Westernized state.

In this discourse, the world could be saved from materialist greed and technological destructiveness by combining the spiritual and moral qualities of other civilizations, i.e. Confucian in this case. By this token, three sometimes combined approaches made these civilizations valid. One was to find elements similar to European civilization within these societies: Confucian rationality, Buddhist humanism, Hindu logic, etc. Another found the opposite of the West in alternative civilizations such as “spiritual” as opposed to “material,” “ethical” as opposed to “decadent,” communal as opposed to individual. In Manchukuo, the most important doctrine of statist pan-Asianism was the “kingly way,” or wangdao, a Confucian historical notion of rulership based on moral example in contrast to the Western hegemonic way. Finally, these new nations would synthesize or harmonize these binaries and Western materialism would be balanced by Eastern spirituality and modernity revived. A cliché of Manchukuo’s official documents was that the West represented science and material culture and the East or East Asian civilizations represented the hope for spiritual and moral regeneration of the world.

More importantly, the Japanese colonial rule in Manchukuo embodied a new pattern of power relations, so called New Imperialism, which differs from traditional forms of Western colonialism. In Manchukuo, a simple model of economic exploitation, utilizing existing modes of production and colonial difference, was supplemented by high levels of investment, the development of new modes of mobilization and identity production, and a rhetoric of brotherhood and regional autarky. It may also be argued that East Asian development represented a new or emergent moment in imperialist ideology when, in response to rising anti-imperialist movement, the relationship with the colony was re-thought. The colony was to be viewed less as an object of exploitation than as a dependent partner that could be economically strengthened through investments and infrastructure-building and mobilized in the global competition for wealth and power. In this vein, it is easy to understand why the Manchukuo regime advocated modernization and carried out one of the most comprehensive modernization programs in Asia outside of Japan, and a grandiose plan was made possible to Changchun. Manchukuo not only became a model for later additions to the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, but also heralded the Soviet Eastern bloc and the American empire since the 1950s.
Chapter 6 Conclusions

The second pillar of the anti-imperialist movement is socialism that prescribed socialist equality and state and party command over society. Under the leadership of the CCP, China adopted the socialist program that reflected the socialist ideals of equality, market restrictions and state re-distribution programs as the alternative to the imperialist capitalism under which it had suffered. Following the Soviet model and with the Soviet aids, the CCP developed an integrated plan for nation’s economic construction in 1953. The Chinese development along the Soviet model of five-year plans seemed the only logical choice after the failure of Kuomintang attempts at reform along Western lines, and became part of the competition of the camp socialist countries against the capitalist West.

I have argued that the ideals of Japanese pan-Asianism and Chinese socialism all found distinct demonstrations in Changchun’s urban construction. Both ideologies were designed to restrict significantly the penetration of “Western” moral, cultural, and political ideas into society. Thus they both contained elements of alternative experiments to capitalism which self-consciously embedded an opposition to the modern Western or Westernized states. I argued that this anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric of competition determined the continuities in the built environment from the colonial buildup to the socialist reconstruction in the built environment, despite totally different ideologies.

The difference between the two regimes, as exemplified in the physical environment, is of course distinct. For example, as I mentioned in previous chapters, new buildings under Maoism resembled colonial Developing Asian style in the abundance of traditional decoration, such as extruding pavilions as focal point, large sloping roofs and modern space beneath them, exquisite ornaments such as simplified brackets, etc. However, the colonial towers were a combination of both Chinese and Western elements, i.e. a combination of sloping roof and modified column order. The socialist towers, on the other side, a focal point as well, entailed Chinese decorative motifs alone. Under the colonial rule, Chinese culture was not self-explanatorily spontaneous or innocuous, and was cautiously alienated from national independence. Therefore, the most distinct difference between developing-Asian and socialist realism exists in the use of traditional decoration in relation to Chinese nationalism.

Nationalism has been characterized by citizenship, equality and development. In this sense, Yamamuro Shin’ichi regards Manchukuo “a military garrison state without a citizenry,” because citizenship was to be equal without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or race. Pan-Asianism had emerged as an ideology incorporating Japan’s curious role as both victim and victimizer in the imperialist game; and that ideology permitted the Japanese the conceit that it was obliged to lead the Asian nations against the West. Such claims were, however, belied by the vigorous nationalism of these Asian peoples against the Japanese. Discrimination was manifest in examples that I have examined such as the disillusionment of the puppet emperor, Kendai students and common inhabitants of Changchun.

Socialist decolonization, on the other hand, represented not only the legal
sovereignty, but a movement for moral justice and political solidarity against imperialism and capitalism. Based on Leninist rhetoric of liberation and egalitarianism, Chinese socialism refers to an emancipatory ideology which claimed to liberate the nation and humanity itself. Although often in tension with the celebration of Asian traditionalism, Chinese socialism contained national elements in the built environment and basic traditional value in urban governance.

For example, *danwei* was a distinct invention of Chinese socialism and was the foundation of urban management and the basis for a distinctly socialist strategy of governance. While the Communist trade unions certainly rejected the rigid hierarchical differentiations embodied by the traditional family, they were often portrayed as being like a family for the workers. David Bray charts out how *danwei* space (in its archetypal form) was arranged according to a highly symbolic order, just like the Confucian family home except for reverse of symbolic buildings along the axis. In this, the image of the family was again ever present. It is noteworthy that one of the most important means through which the Manchukuo state sought to restrict westernization was by the disciplining of the family and gender roles within the family.

The subtle connections between the colonial past and socialist present and the processes through which the new system came to underpin a new revolutionary “science” of population and economy certainly need more exploration. Past colonial relations of power and techniques of urban governance, as post-colonial studies have shown, linger in the post-colonial period, “which has already had a certain duration (and still continue) in any nation that was involved in imperialism either as the colonizer or the colonized.”

The next section, which is a recent story about the Changchun preservation project, shows what confusing outcomes could be when such a study is missing at a time when the colonial past can no longer be simply let to sink from memory and sight as before.

**Mapping the Past**

In September 2005, after the planning project for Changchun had been initiated for one year, Changchun’s Planning Bureau convened a forum discussion on preservation strategies and cultural orientation of the city’s Japanese colonial legacies. The forum was made possible for several reasons, but the most practical one was to reduce conflict between professors from Tsinghua and local planning officials, and hoped to achieve some compromise on the ongoing preservation project as a guideline for the future.

For the Tsinghua team that had been working on this project for a year, Japanese colonial buildings were visible evidence of Japanese exploitative and oppressive colonial practices. In preceding cases, a few of these buildings had been preserved and changed into so-called educational base of patriotism, such as the former 731 Unit complex in the outskirts of Harbin. For Changchun, as the former colonial capital, a scheme of two corridors of national humiliation along Renmin Street (previous Datong Street, and then

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Stalin Street until 1996) and Xinmin Street (previous Shuntian Street) where most colonial buildings congregated, was proposed. In the first proposal, it was suggested that some eleven colonial buildings of minor importance “can be replaced by new buildings in different styles that differ from their colonial predecessors,” as colonial building style was not desired any more. In fact, some professors from the Tsinghua team were very much annoyed by the coarse imitation of colonial Developing Asia in new buildings across the city as Changchun was undergoing rapid urban renewal.

In a time when large-scale demolition was thought necessary for new urban construction, local planning officials, aware of the fate of Viceroy House in Seoul a decade ago, were also worried if the proposal were passed then many colonial buildings were doomed. But the local officials and professional were most resistant to the idea of “national humiliation corridors”. They argued all colonial buildings had already undergone socialist transformation and could serve the people and the city better. In order to persuade outsiders, the chief of Planning Bureau convened the forum that invited local people from many other walks: historical scholars, artists, journalists, novelists, archivists, and officials, besides the Tsinghua group and local planners.

There was heated debate during the one-day forum, and local professionals unanimously agreed on stricter regulations to preserve colonial buildings. They did admit, though, new buildings should no longer imitate colonial aesthetics. Both sides, however, agreed on the achievements of the First Five-Year-Plan, especially the First Automobile Works.

As a result of the forum, the Tsinghua team increased the number of buildings to be preserved, of which all Japanese colonial buildings remained while quite a few buildings of pre-colonial and socialist times were added. Specific regulations of the preservation of colonial buildings were also spelt out – it was because a debated example of the preservation of former Minister of Foreign Affairs that led the Tsinghua team to the conclusion that total demolition could be better than inappropriate preservation.

Looking back upon the debate on the forum, I came to realize reasons behind local enthusiasm to preserve colonial buildings. Changchun, unlike other major cities in the Northeast such as Harbin, Shenyang and Dalian, had almost nothing left before the twentieth century, and the present urban structure was inherited from Japanese colonial period. In Harbin and Dalian, as the terminus of Eastern Ching Railway, the Russian imprint was ostensible, while Shenyang has been honored as a political center of national significance at least from the Qing. In this vein, the preservation of Japanese colonial buildings, many of which were important institutional buildings of high standard, were crucial to distinguish Changchun from other cities, and earned a unique urban image that helped boost tourism. All these factors converged at a time when rapid urban construction and renewal were underway and urban managers were more and more conscious of cultural value and uniqueness of their cities to attract investment and tourists. This was also the same time when literary works and historical research on Japanese colonialism in Manchuria were brought to surface.
In retrospect, I think an absence of serious study of the connection as well as difference between the two regimes can best explain the conflicting opinions. In the final report, however, the difference between Japanese colonialism and Chinese socialism was articulated in terms of ideological and political concerns more than architectural and social effects. This suggests that to get around current international dilemmas, not only Japanese but also Chinese would do well to reconsider recent history in a way that includes more nuanced definitions of the modern.
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