

Influence of Foreign Religions on Urban Culture in Harbin in the Early 20th Century

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Abstract

Religious lifestyle is the lifestyle of religious believers who restrict their behaviors according to the provisions of religious teachings. It can be regarded as a special combination of social groups -- the lifestyle of religious believers. At the same time, it has one side consistent with secular life style. In 1898, the construction of the Middle East Railway opened a huge "social revolution" for Harbin, China, which rapidly rose from a traditional natural village to a modern metropolis in Northeast Asia within a short period of one or two decades. As the city opened its own port for trade, a large number of immigrants from Russia, Japan, the United States, France, Britain, Germany and other countries poured into the city. The Middle East Railway became the carrier of migration of immigrants, and immigrants became the media for the spread of religious beliefs. Foreign religions were brought to Harbin, which formed a special and main content of Harbin life style.

Key words: Immigrants; Religion; Harbin

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1. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PLACES OF PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS

The Russian Orthodox Church entered Harbin almost at the same time as the Middle East Railway construction

crew. In July 1898, The Vladivostok Russian Orthodox priest Jarovsky followed the second guard team of middle Eastern railway into Harbin, then held a prayer ceremony for road construction technicians in a tent. In 1898, in order to meet the religious needs of railway builders, the Middle East Railway Engineering Bureau set up a simple St. Nicholas Church in Xixiangfang Street. On May 24, 1899, "The church was consecrated by Jarovsky, the first Orthodox priest who came with the convoy." (Ochevitch, 2010) On December 5, 1900, priest Jarovsky consecrated the completion of the church. Churches were built almost every few years, sometimes several churches in a single year.

In 1917, a church named "Peter Paul" was built at No.10 Liaoyang Street, Nangang District, Harbin. In the 1950s, the head of the church was Gutlin, and the members were all Russian, but there were only a few believers, even more than 100 people.

90% of Poles are Catholic. Poles make up a large proportion of Harbin's expatriate population. At first, polish immigrants were mostly engineers and technicians recruited for the Middle East railway. Later, some industrial and commercial enterprises came to Harbin to invest and set up factories. Catholic Poles, feeling the inconvenience of religious life, applied to the Polish Catholic Church to set up their own church in Harbin. Father Antony Matchock was appointed by the church, came to Harbin to invite donations, and applied for a free land from the Middle East Railway Administration bureau. After a year, St. Stanislav Church was completed on the No. 47 Dazhi Street, Nangang District. In 1922, the polish immigrants has nearly 3000 people in Harbin, Nangang Poland's Catholic church was not enough. The priest Antony Lesevich applied to the Middle East Railway Authority for permission to obtain a land between the Medicine Street and the Commerce Street, and the Church of St. Yosofada was built with donations from The Polish immigrants. Harbin's two Polish Catholic churches,

both under the leadership of the Polish Immaculate Church, have their own parishes in Harbin.

There are two Protestant Lutheran churches in Harbin: one is the “Lutheran Church” built in 1912, located at No.50 Dazhi Street, Nangang District, presided over by the German Lutheran priest Jatana; The second was the Lutheran Church, founded in 1922 on Yuyang Street.

There were more than 20,000 Jews in Harbin, most of whom were Russian Jews, but also Polish, Czech and Romanian Jews. Because of the large number of Jewish immigrants, Harbin has 4 Jewish synagogues.

The Islamic mosque in Harbin was founded in 1905 in Paodui Street, Daoli District, and its members were mostly Russian nationals or stateless Tatars. Its membership peaked in the 1930s, but declined year by year, from 250 in 1949 to over 40 in 1960.

Armenian religion is also known as Armeenism, and its teachings are largely the same as Orthodox. They have a church in Harbin, the members are Soviet (Russian) Armenians, there are some Iranian immigrants, followers are less.

2. MAJOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS, CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES IN THE IMMIGRANT’S COMMUNITY

During the “Yasak War” during the reign of Emperor Kangxi, “nearly 100 Roshas were captured”. The Qing regime allowed their Orthodox faith and allocated their houses to be used as temples, which was called “Roshas temple”. In 1695, Archbishop Ignatia of Siberia issued a ecclesiastical certificate from Topolsk, which was officially recognized (Gann, 1980). During the construction of the Middle East railway, the Eastern Orthodox churches in Harbin and northern Manchuria were administered by the Beijing Missionary Corps. In 1907, the Vatican petitioned Emperor Nicholas II of Russia to put the Manchurian Church under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Vladivostok, which was approved. The archdiocese archbishop Yevsey came to Harbin specially to inspect the new religious territory. After 1917, Harbin’s Orthodox church grew rapidly. The administrator of the Middle East railway put forward an official document to the patriarch of the diocese to prepare for the establishment of a new parish. On June 14, 1922, Archbishop Nefotti sent official letter No. 1 to Mikhail, bishop of Primorsky and Vladivostok, informing Mikhail that he had assumed the office of bishop of an independent diocese and inviting him to establish religious ties with him. In fact, On June 2, Nefotti began to administer the diocese, so this day is considered to be the actual founding date of Harbin diocese. The permanent body responsible for the daily affairs of religion in the diocese is the Holy

Council, which originally consisted of five members. The diocese also has a supervisory committee, which oversees diocesan revenues and church property.

After the founding of Harbin Jewish Association in 1903, Harbin’s first Jewish synagogue was also founded. The Harbin Jewish Religious Association invited Levin from Russia to be the first full-time rabbi of community religious activities. In 1906, Rabbi Gashkal presided over the general Synagogue of Harbin. In 1913, Aaron Moses Kiselev took over as rabbi. The rabbi is responsible for all religious affairs in the synagogue and undertakes various traditional Jewish ceremonies and activities. Rabbi Kiselev has performed many bar mitzvahs and weddings.

During the period when the Russian Orthodox Church was in Harbin, the church set up the following charitable organizations in succession in order to adopt orphans and those who lost the ability to work: in 1920, the Yvel Religious Association contributed to the establishment of the orphanage named “Russian Home”; In 1923, the Olga Orphanage was opened by the Convent of Vladimir; In 1929, a nursing home named NeFotti was built at No. 12 Lanhantun Street in Harbin. In 1934, Yvel church opened the Serafim people’s canteen and set up 4 orphanages in each district of Harbin city. Since 1934, the city of Harbin had a theology department, and a religious school was opened on January 1, 1939.

After the association and prayer house were established, Harbin Jewish community also established a number of social welfare organizations, including educational, cultural, medical, funeral and other institutions. In 1907 and 1921, Harbin Jewish Religious Association established the first primary school and the Jewish Poor and Sick Relief Association. The number of children enrolled in primary school increased from 26 to 70 in the following year and 100 in 1909. The school attaches great importance to the religious and cultural education of the Jewish nation and offers Courses in Hebrew. In 1917, Harbin Jewish Middle School was founded. The Jewish Poor and Sick Relief Association solved the medical treatment problem of Jews along Harbin and the Middle East railway.

As one of the means of missionary work, The Christian sect vigorously developed medical and health undertakings in Harbin, treating diseases for believers, and all the funds for opening hospitals were borne by the church. In 1902, Hsu Kesin, a British doctor, founded Presbyterian Hospital in Xigeng Hutong. In 1910, the British doctor Yukesin opened a missionary hospital in Hulan. In 1923, the Christian Baptist Church rented a two-story building on 13th Street in Zhengyang and established the Purdue Hospital. In 1932, the YMCA and the Church jointly formed a medical service team to rescue the wounded in the suburbs; In 1939, In order to save the critical patients in Harbin, Wesley Society set up the prisoners’ sanatorium.

In order to solve the problem of children going to school, The Christian sect also established 4 kindergartens, 10 primary schools and 2 middle schools in Harbin. They are: in 1926, Simon Lutheran Church founded the Notre Dame Kindergarten; In 1936, the Christian Baptist Church founded the Chongde Kindergarten on Sixth Street. In 1938, Wesley Church established Xinmin Kindergarten by decision of the board of directors. In 1950, the Songjiang Independence Association established the Haiyan Kindergarten at 5 Nanma Road. The most famous primary schools are: Xiangfang Sanyu Primary School founded by Zhang Zicai, Sun Chengzhai and Che Juchang of Lutheran Society in 1912; In 1915, Sanyu Primary School for boys was founded in Baozhang Street by Wu Baixiang and Zhao Chantang, members of Christian Lutheran Church. In 1923, the Lutheran Society established the Baoji Street Sanyu Girls' School. In 1930, the Baptist Church established the Peide Primary School on 11th Street, Zhengyang district. In 1933, the school moved to Changchun Street, and was renamed Chongde Primary School. In addition, Hulan Guangyu Middle School was founded in 1909 by Sun Wenbin, a Scottish Presbyterian minister. In 1920, the Lutheran Church of Christ added a commercial middle school on the basis of Sanyu Primary School.

The Catholic Church has established missionary schools, shepherd hospitals, charity clinics and actively preached. In 1916, the Polish Catholic Church of Harbin founded the Polish Primary School and the Polish Secondary School. In 1926, when the plague was prevalent in the northeast, the Franciscan sisters built the shepherd hospital to treat poor citizens free of charge.

3. SPLENDID RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS IN HARBIN

A very important part in the urban landscape of Harbin is the magnificent and exquisite religious buildings belonging to different denominations, which is also a cultural symbol with rich connotations of Harbin's famous historical and cultural city. Among the religious buildings in various forms, there are tall spires and beautiful domes. The builders of different faiths have carefully designed and constructed with the worship of god, recording the development history of religious architecture art in Harbin for decades. Although the religious buildings that survived the passage of time are increasingly rare, and some have lost their original purpose, the existence of these buildings gives Harbin a strong exotic flavor to the greatest extent. The main existing religious buildings are: St. Sophia Church, St. Eville Church, Jewish New synagogue, Arab Mosque, Turkish Mosque, Temple of Bliss and so on (Shi, 1984).

3.1 Orthodox Church

There were more than 30 Orthodox churches, theological seminaries, monasteries and other religious places in

Harbin in history, of which only 5 still exist today. Russian Orthodox churches are accustomed to make a lot of work on the roof. Large churches mostly use dome or tent roof, while small churches often use octagonal tower, which highlights the representation of the church in a simple form and has a strong Russian characteristic. These Eastern Orthodox buildings are places for the spiritual cohesion of the Russian immigrants in Harbin, with exquisite construction techniques and luxurious interior decoration, all of which are rare fine works of religious architecture art. Unfortunately, most of these fine works of religious architecture no longer exist. Some cultural relics and murals left in the few remaining churches can be vaguely seen in the past glory, these relics fully show that the Orthodox church was an important center of social and cultural activities of Russian immigrants in Harbin.

3.2 Christian Churches and Church Activities

There is a Gothic building near Churin Company in East Dazhi Street of Nangang district. It is Christian Lutheran Church, also known as Christian Chapel. Lutheran Church is one of the two churches built by German expatriates in Harbin (the other is located in Yuyang Street, Nangang district, built in 1924). It is also the largest Christian church for immigrants in Harbin, and is now one of the main Christian churches in Harbin. The Lutheran Church was built in 1914 by the German, with land allocated by the Middle East Railway administration, and construction materials donated by parishioners. In October 1916, the church was completed, with an area of 227 square meters and a capacity of more than 700 people.

3.3 Catholic Church

Catholics are mainly divided by nationality into Chinese, Polish and Russian, but there are also foreigners from more than a dozen countries such as Italy, France, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Korea and stateless. St. Stanislaw Church was the most beautiful cathedral in Harbin at that time. The main building area is 492.48 square meters, it was a typical Gothic style of architecture, designed and supervised by Nicholas Alexanderovich Kazi-Keilley, a famous engineer of the Middle East railway at that time. The grand foundation stone laying ceremony was held on October 7, 1906, and the church was opened on August 1, 1909. The first floor of the building is a church, the second floor is a choir, equipped with organ, its followers up to 2000 people. Completed in 1925, St. Yosofada Church is a wooden structure, including a chapel, baptismal room, flat brick house, etc., with an area of about 320 square meters, including 180 square meters for the church and 140 square meters for the residence (Shi, 1984). Other Catholic churches in Harbin are Daowai Catholic Church (No. 4, Nanxun Street, 1901), Franciscan Sisters (1911, Liudao Street), St. Nicholas Catholic Church, (No. 78, Majiagou Street, 1928), and The Sisters of Ursula (1928), and the Catholic Church of Shanghao (No. 34 Yanfu Street, 1932), etc.

3.4 Mosque of Islam

At the beginning of the 20th century, the number of Muslims scattered in Heilongjiang province for livelihood, business and other reasons increased sharply, and settled in Xiangfang and Daowai districts in Harbin. As early as 1904, "Turkic-Tartar National Association" was established in Harbin. In order to provide a convenient place for Muslims to worship, the people selected prestigious elders to build a mosque. The Islamic buildings in Harbin are mainly Halal East Temple (1897, Daowai District), Xiangfang Mosque (1905, Xiangfang District), Alien Mosque (1906, Daoli District), Guxiang Mosque (1913, Guxiang District), Muslim West Temple (1917, Daowai District), Muslim East Women's Temple (1928, Daowai District), Muslim West Women's Temple (1929), etc. The existing Islamic architecture in Harbin is famous for the Muslim East Temple and the alien mosque. The establishment of the mosque marked the official beginning of Islamic religious life in Harbin.

3.5 Synagogue

In the early 20th century, The Jews established the largest religious activity center in the Far East in Harbin, gradually forming a religious place led by the Jewish Religious Society, two synagogues and a Jewish prayer house. Judaism is the spiritual basis for Jewish survival and development, and religious life has become an important way of life for most Jews. On Saturdays and festivals, they hold religious activities in synagogues or prayer houses to maintain national faith and spirit. There are currently two Jewish synagogues in Harbin, the first General Synagogue (also known as the old Synagogue) built by Harbin Jewish Religious Society in 1907. In

1921, Harbin Jews donated money to build the second Synagogue (also known as the new synagogue).

In order to facilitate the religious activities of the Jews living in Nangang District, Harbin Jews raised money to build a prayer hall at No. 8 Xiaoshu Street in 1918. The prayer hall property area of 851 square meters, the property area of 172 square meters. The first president was Jatlovisky, who died in 1940 and was succeeded by Turley. Turley died in 1949 and was succeeded by Yager Gurenic, who had moved to Harbin in 1918 (Qu, 2014). The establishment of three Jewish synagogues laid the foundation for the basic pattern of Harbin Jewish religious venues. After the 1920s, the Jewish diaspora community in Harbin became increasingly stable and its religious life became increasingly active. Both the Harbin Synagogue and the New Synagogue have choirs, who chant prayers and hold prayer activities during the festival, and the Jewish children's choir performs.

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