

Analysis on Qingdao Courtyard Architecture from a Cross-cultural Perspective

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Abstract: *Liyuan, an architecture style in North China, especially in Qingdao, Shandong province, refers to a kind of local house that is the product of combining traditional Chinese architecture style with Western style. With the acceleration of globalization, courtyard architecture, as an important medium of cross-cultural communication, has also played an active role in promoting the cultural exchange between East and West. This paper takes Qingdao Liyuan houses as an example to analyze Chinese and Western cultures. It first introduces what is Liyuan house. Next, it discusses the contribution of Chinese and German culture in Liyuan houses and how Liyuan turn to influence local people and people living here and uses it as an entry point to explain the cross-cultural integration circle formed in Qingdao during the German occupation period.*

Keywords: *Liyuan Houses; Courtyard Architecture; Cultural Circle; International Communication; Cross-cultural*

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the increasingly frequent cross-cultural interactions around the world, more and more researchers have begun to pay attention to the complex and subtle interactions between traditional Chinese architecture and Western architecture. In this context, the Liyuan has gradually been re-examined from historical, architectural, and cultural perspectives, and presented as a special form of historical and cultural heritage. In the process of modernization of modern Chinese cities, the courtyard-style house is one of the most important links in the transformation of urban spatial organization from closed to open.

Before the early 20th century, houses in Shandong area were mostly in a closed pattern, so the living space was isolated from the outside to a certain extent. After the early 20th century, Liyuan flourished in line with the development of economy and cultural integration. It had become a representative and typical feature of Qingdao's urban development and cultural landscape. Therefore, the study of the urban spatial organization form under the cross-cultural communication and its various forms, distinctive features, cultural connotation and historical significance can provide a reference for cultural research. In this paper, I will take Liyuan as an example to illustrate the intercultural communication and the interaction between culture and architecture, as well as the cultural integration in Qingdao, the birthplace of Liyuan.

2. Liyuan House

2.1. The Definition of Liyuan

“Liyuan” is an architectural style that combines the Chinese courtyard and the Western commercial and residential architectural styles. Most of them are built parallel to the street and are organized by enclosing inwardly oriented courtyard spaces, with a central yard and 2 to 3 stories of buildings. The courtyard is closed to the outside world, and generally, only one or a few access points are set up along the street, so the internal yard has good security for the residents and increases the opportunity for neighborhood interaction.

2.2. The Type of Liyuan

There are two types of Liyuan according to their function and layout^[1].

The first type is a combination of commercial and residential courtyards, with commercial stores on the first floor and residences on the second floor, with residences entering the house through the doorway to the yard and walking upstairs. The second type is a purely residential courtyard, where there is no commercial store on the first floor, and the entrances to the rooms of the first and second-floor residents are facing the inner yard.

2.3. The Formation of Liyuan in Qingdao

Germany occupied Qingdao between 1897 and 1914. According to Jiao'ao Zhi, "Jiaozhou Bay has a wide sea and deep water, and its location is suitable, as it is the gateway to the Yellow Sea and area of the Central Plains, so it is a natural commercial area." After the Juye Incident in 1897, Germany occupied the Jiaozhou Bay area and began its eight-year colonial rule in Qingdao. Germany invaded Jiaozhou Bay in 1897 and forced the Qing government to sign the Treaty of Jiao'ao Concession in the following year to obtain colonial privileges. In 1900, the German colonial authorities drew up the initial urban plan of Qingdao, trying to make it a German military base, a port of commerce and trade, and a colonial administrative and economic center in the Far East. The Germans built a city with a typical Western architectural and cultural concept, exactly following the European model of a town.

Qingdao was divided into two areas: the outside world was Li-cun and the inside world was Qingdao, and Qingdao was divided into two areas for Europeans and Chinese, separating the Chinese from the Europeans, with the Europeans occupying the best part of the residential area, i.e. Qingdao district, and most of the important buildings in the city were concentrated in this colonial administrative center, economic and trade area and garden residential area. The Chinese residential and commercial area is known as the Dabaodao district, with the towns of Taitung and Taisi^[2]. The architecture in the two different areas has a very different look. The Chinese architecture of this period was concentrated in the area north of Dabaodao, Taitung, Taisi, and Xiaogang Wharf, with main residences and small stores, and the quality of construction was significantly inferior to that of Qingdao district. In the Baodao district, two- and three-story buildings with distinctive Liyuan architecture appeared along the streets.

3. Comparison of Chinese and German Traditional Residential Building

3.1. Dwellings

Residential buildings, or dwellings, are the most primitive and basic type of building. The first requirement of it is to meet the needs of human life and production. Life production cannot be separated from people, and people are the main body of residential use. People live in a society, with different thoughts and cultures. Therefore, residential buildings are inseparable from society, culture and nation.

Traditional dwellings are closely related to people's lives. According to their habits, production needs, economic capabilities, national preferences and aesthetic concepts, people in each region design and build dwellings according to local conditions and materials^[3].

It can be seen that the construction of residential houses is influenced by the cultural environment, which in turn will shape the local cultural environment and change people's lifestyles to a certain extent.

3.2. The Traditional Residential Building in Qingdao

3.2.1. Traditional Residential Building

According to the topography, climate characteristics, ethnic and religious factors, the traditional architecture of northern China is mainly single bungalows. This kind of bungalow has a flat roof, a hoarded roof and a sloping earth roof and earth wall, but fewer grass and brick houses with a sloping roof. Its plane is usually horizontal rectangular, divided into 3-5 rooms, the door is mostly open in the middle. The structure is mainly of wooden structure with beams and pillars bearing the weight. Because the winter temperature in the region is below freezing point. In order to prevent cold insulation, the

depth of the room is not large which can tighten the internal space; the roof and exterior walls are also extremely thick^[4].

In addition, common residences in the north include the quadrangle courtyard^[5]. The courtyard is arranged in the north-south direction along the street, and houses are built around the courtyard, with five main houses sitting in the north and facing south, three east and three west wings, five south inverted seats, and the second east inverted seat with a large door, and the first one for storing sundries. The courtyard has a waist wall and waist door to divide the whole courtyard into two parts, the front courtyard is small and is a secondary courtyard, while the backyard is the main living and living space. Large houses are formed by several quadrangles connected horizontally or vertically to form a set of courtyards. Each courtyard is connected by a canal or a side door, which enriches the spatial level and keeps the privacy of each courtyard.

3.2.2. The Culture Embodied in Residential Building

Chinese residential houses are the feedback of traditional Confucianism^[6].

The courtyard house is the basic type of Chinese residence, which has an early origin of at least 2,000 years and is in the prime position of Chinese residential houses.

The typical courtyard pattern is a hierarchical sequence of courtyards, generally divided into two courtyards at the front and back, in accordance with the family concept of Chinese Confucianism. The pattern of the courtyard has a clear axis, reflecting the philosophical idea of squareness and rigor, and showing the gradual hierarchy in the combination of architectural groups. The center ward aggregation of the family combination, the four sides of the house are open to the direction of the courtyard, the hall is the core of family life, and the family is in harmony and happiness.

The layout of the courtyard is subject to the ancient view of the correspondence between heaven and earth, and combined with the adaptation of feudal patriarchal rituals, the houses and courtyards are symmetrically arranged according to the north-south vertical axis. The courtyard is a closed house, with only one gate to the outside, and the door is closed to call itself heaven and earth, which has strong privacy and is ideal for exclusive living.

The courtyard is the architectural feedback of our ancient closed self-sufficient small farmer economy.

3.3. The Traditional Residential Building in German

3.3.1. Traditional Residential Building

Most of the traditional German vernacular houses are built with the main façade of the hill wall, and the date of construction is carved on the front panel of the door arch of the main hill wall. The decorative theme of the Middle Rhine region is expressed in fine handicraft drawings. The façade has several doors that allow access to the living room, the stables and the dairy barn^[7].

The dwellings in Western European countries are built in the form of buildings, basically three to five stories high, facing the street. Each resident lives on one or several floors, and each family member has his or her own room, so privacy is relatively high. The living room, bedroom, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and other functional areas in the apartment are clearly and distinctly divided. The exterior walls of Western apartments are often made of granite with axe-cut stone as the base and skirt. The exterior walls are mostly painted white and yellow, but there is no restriction on the use of other colors.

3.3.2. Western Culture Embodied in Residential Buildings

From the Greek era, the social relationship of clans was destroyed, which, together with its unique economic development and regional characteristics, gave it a personality that advocated adventure and freedom. With the changes in the development of Western history, individual values came to dominate Western society, and personal values began to flare outward rather than be bound by the organization of family groups. With the Renaissance and the Reformation, the value of individualism became increasingly prominent, and many works of art with distinctive personalities and individual spirits are the concrete expression of Western individualistic values.

4. Cultural Integration in Intercultural Communication

Only a few years after the Germans built Qingdao as planned, the initial designed line of the

Chinese and European districts began to blur, and the idea of building Dabaodao as a Chinese town was not achieved. In addition, Europeans living in Qingdao had different objectives for the local population. Different groups of merchants competed with each other for commercial opportunities and resources. The vibrant economic activity of the new colony quickly attracted immigrants from all over China. Within the first few months of the German occupation of Qingdao, the population had increased fivefold. Located in the more central part of the city, Dabaodao became the most popular place to live and work.

Dabaodao was not entirely part of the German area, nor was it completely isolated from it; it was inhabited by both Chinese and Europeans; the Liyuan was a Chinese building, but was heavily influenced by German architecture and was designed and built in part by German architects. Therefore, the Dabaodao district, represented by Liyuan, has become an area where East meets West.

4.1. Business Culture Shock

Traditional business culture only sees business as a means of survival or a money-making machine, while Western business culture sees business as a pursuit and a value^[8]. Based on its geographical environment, China has developed a strong agrarian culture and a "conservative" mindset over thousands of years. Under the impact of Western commercial civilization, the small peasant economy gradually collapsed and China moved toward urbanization. In this process, the lizards were born, fusing Chinese and Western cultures. The lizards firstly facilitated the trading of goods by German merchants in Qingdao, and secondly brought more Chinese people into commercial activities, including the buying and selling of goods and cultural activities. Our traditional commercial culture was initially forced to make changes in form, but eventually it was integrated and absorbed, generating great energy from its core.

4.2. Material and Spiritual Culture

The courtyard was a commercial and residential structure, with the first floor open to the street for commercial activities. Merchants and workers could live close to each other. The population living in the Liyuan was relatively dense, and most of the population came from various industries and different classes, providing great potential for a commercial environment. During this period, many tea houses, liquor stores, restaurants, chess and card rooms were opened, as well as various stores, restaurants, barber stores, etc. This was the commercial prosperity brought about by Liyuan houses, which enriched people's material culture.

Also, Liyuan brought strangers closer together, and with a large population living there, there was a need for some recreational activities in their leisure time. This atmosphere provided many folk artists with the conditions to make a living by dropping around neighbors, and Qingdao's famous Pichaiyuan, with its bookstore, simple theater and stage, became the most lively place. These artists mostly performed Mao cadence, Liu cadence, Shandong Qinshu and Shandong Allegro. At the same time, many of the lyceum ticket enthusiasts also formed their own ticket clubs, such as "Jihou Li" in the New Year and festivals out of the stilts "running play"; "Guangxing Li" Yushun tea house book reviews, and so on. A number of Liyuan are also famous for this.

4.3. The Integrated Culture Circle

"The exchange and spread between heterogeneous cultures is the driving force of cultural development." The exchange and integration of Chinese and Western cultures were created in the Dabaodao district, forming a new kind of integrated cultural circle. The foreign culture and the native culture instead reached a unified culture through their respective expansion. The colonial activities broke the boundaries caused by geographical distance and placed two different and distinct cultures in the same space and time. In this way, the cultural mobility and dissemination of the integrated culture circle became more and more frequent, mostly through the interactions of people and trade; and transportation and communication connected people who embodied different cultural styles, and the cultural mobility and dissemination became the most common and basic form of cultural integration. Under the impact of multiple values, the integrated culture circle will spontaneously penetrate and expand. The influence of this integrated culture circle will not only be limited to the area where Chinese and Europeans live together, but will continue to expand outward to the point of influencing the cultures of both countries.

5. Conclusion

Churchill once said: people shape the environment and the environment in turn shapes people. In the context of German colonization, the cultural exchange between the East and the West, and the demographic and economic needs, the architecture of the courtyard was born. The people of Qingdao living in Dabaodao changed their way of living in a single-story flat building with families living together and instead lived with their neighbors in a more compact Liyuan house. Moreover, the first floor facing the street was used as various stores for economic activities, which led to the development of the local economy. Compared to traditional Chinese residential buildings, the courtyard building has expanded the social function of traditional residential buildings, breaking through the class concept and the inherent architectural form, and taking a big step forward to modern architecture. The impact of Liyuan was not only for Qingdao, but it also had far-reaching significance for the Chinese and Western cultural exchange and international communication afterward.

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