

Harbin to Hanoi

The Colonial Built Environment in Asia,
1840 to 1940

Edited by Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsépine



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Contents

Contributors	ix
Illustrations	xi
Acknowledgements	xv
1. Introduction	1
<i>Victor Zatsepine and Laura Victoir</i>	
2. Russia, Railways, and Urban Development in Manchuria, 1896–1930	17
<i>Victor Zatsepine</i>	
3. Beans to Banners: The Evolving Architecture of Prewar Changchun	37
<i>Bill Sewell</i>	
4. France, Brossard Mopin, and Manchukuo	59
<i>David Tucker</i>	
5. International Concessions and the Modernization of Tianjin	83
<i>Zhang Chang and Liu Yue</i>	
6. Mapping Colonial Space: The Planning and Building of Qingdao by German Colonial Authorities, 1897–1914	103
<i>Klaus Mühlhahn</i>	
7. The Architecture of Risk: Urban Space and Uncertainty in Shanghai, 1843–74	129
<i>Cole Roskam</i>	
8. Fabricating Justice: Conflict and Contradiction in the Making of the Hong Kong Supreme Court, 1898–1912	151
<i>G. A. Bremner</i>	

9.	Making Space for Higher Education in Colonial Hong Kong, 1887–1913	181
	<i>Peter Cunich</i>	
10.	Colonial Hanoi: Urban Space in Public Discourse	207
	<i>Lisa Drummond</i>	
11.	Hygienic Colonial Residences in Hanoi	231
	<i>Laura Victoir</i>	
12.	Domesticating the Suburbs: Architectural Production and Exchanges in Hanoi during the Late French Colonial Era	251
	<i>Danielle Labbé, Caroline Herbelin, and Quang-Vinh Dao</i>	
13.	Afterword	273
	Index	277

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Illustrations

Table

3.1	Japanese and Chinese demographic change in Changchun and Manchuria	40
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Figures

4.1	Department of Foreign Affairs	75
5.1	Tianjin's Concessions, 1930s	87
5.2–5.4	Wu Songping's villa, photographs taken by Rolf Geyling in the mid-1930s	96–97
8.1	Final design of the Hong Kong Supreme Court by Aston Webb and E. Ingress Bell exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1908	152
8.2	King Charles Block, Royal Naval Hospital, Greenwich (1662), by John Webb	155
8.3	Original design for Houghton Hall, Norfolk (1722), by Colen Campbell from <i>Vitruvius Britannicus</i> (1715–25)	155
8.4	Webb and Bell's plan for the Hong Kong Supreme Court (1908). A centralized plan based around the "large" courtroom.	156
8.5	The Prince's Building (1899–1904) (left) and the Queen's Building (1890s) (right) were located opposite the new law courts across the public garden (Statue Square).	162
8.6	The harbor front in the early 1890s showing "compradoric" style merchant premises	163

8.7	Statue Square showing the new Supreme Court (upper right) and the Queen Victoria Memorial (upper left). The Hongkong Club can be seen in the background behind the law courts.	165
8.8	Site plan showing relative location of significant buildings and spaces in and around Statue Square	166
8.9	Detail from Gustave Doré's <i>The New Zealander</i> (1872)	170
9.1	The University of Sydney's splendid Gothic revival Main Quad was set within a large "park" on the edge of the city, a significant departure from the cramped urban sites of most universities in Britain.	184
9.2	The Alice Memorial Hospital (1887), in which the Hong Kong College of Medicine operated until its closure in 1915.	187
9.3	The Tai Ping Shan Cleared Area after the demolitions following the bubonic plague of 1894. Sir Frederick Lugard's new university was offered a site at the east end of this new urban open space, as shown in this photograph.	190
9.4	The University of Hong Kong's Main Building near completion in early 1912. The University looked across Victoria Harbor to the Chinese mainland and the nation it sought to "modernize."	195
9.5	The Main Building as completed in 1912	200
9.6	The University of Hong Kong's Main Building soon after completion in 1912, which dominated the West Point area and the waterfront district of Sai Ying Pun.	202
12.1	Delimitation of the New Indigenous Quarter	257
12.2	Model of affordable housings presented during the Municipal Council of Hanoi on November 30, 1936	262
12.3	Axonometric representation of a typical tube-house from the old merchant city of Hanoi	262
12.4	Original plan of the house located at 93 Trieu Viet Vuong Street	265
12.5	New indigenous houses built in the 1940s (photographed in 2005)	266

Plates

- 1 Harbin's Railway Station
- 2 Harbin's Kitaiskaya Street
- 3 Russian map of Harbin, showing its major districts: Old Harbin, Majiagou, New Town, Pristan, and Fujiadian
- 4 Bank of Korea, 1920
- 5 Changchun Telephone Company
- 6 State Council
- 7 Public Security, later Manchukuo Military Headquarters
- 8 Supreme Court
- 9 Jimmu Den
- 10 Bank of Manchukuo
- 11 Daikyō Building
- 12 Tokyo Kaijō Building
- 13 Tianjin map by War Office of British Government, 1927
- 14 Map of Qingdao, Qingdao, 1911. Published by Adolf Hautf.
- 15 Shanghai, 1870 (*Chong xiu Shanghai xian zhi*, 1882)
- 16 Shanghai, 1855 (J.W. Maclellan, *The Story of Shanghai: From the Opening of the Port to Foreign Trade*, 1889)
- 17 Russell and Company compound, Shanghai, 1870s (Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA)
- 18 Guandi Temple with *zhaoqiang* fender, Shanghai, 1870 (*Chong xiu Shanghai xian zhi*, 1882)
- 19 The Shanghai Bund, 1860s (Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA)
- 20–21 Plan of the Ningbo pagoda district in Shanghai, undated (Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Nantes, 635PO/B/63)
- 22 Central Criminal Courts, Old Bailey, London (1900–06), by Edward Mountford
- 23 The Victoria Memorial, Kolkata (1904–21), by William Emerson
- 24 The tower of the University of Hong Kong's Main Building as originally designed with its elaborate scheme of decoration. It was emblematic of the University's role as a beacon of Western modernity for China.

1

Introduction

Victor Zatssepine and Laura Victoir

This volume is the result of a discussion between its editors, both historians of empires, about the possibility of comparing the experiences of imperial European powers and Japan in the Pacific region during the period of time between the First Opium War (1839–42) and the Second World War (1939–45). This foreign intrusion and presence generated a large amount of material evidence on the eastern coast of the Asian continent. As a result, several Asian cities had entire districts designed and built by imperial powers. Several generations of Europeans, Russians, and Japanese moved to the colonies, treaty ports, and leased territories of Asia in search of economic gain, adventure, or government positions. The histories of individual imperial powers and colonial cities in different regions of Asia have been studied in great detail.¹ However, the relationship between the built environment and history of colonialism and imperialism in Asia still deserves much needed cross-disciplinary attention. We came to realize how little dialogue exists between historians in different areas of study, not to mention the lack of scholarship comparing British, French, Russian, German, and Japanese imperialism, colonial practice, and built forms in Asia.

The purpose of this book is to use the built environment to analyze the multiple experiences of colonial powers in China and northern Indochina. The colonial built environment can be viewed on several levels: as an expression of imperial aspirations, a manifestation of colonial power, a tool in the mission to civilize, a re-creation of a home away from home, or simply as a place to live and work for the colonizers and the colonized. The built environment is also a tangible artifact, one that had real impact on the daily life of those who resided and toiled there.² Yet, the colonial space and structures, as they are presented to

us in their physical forms today, tell only a very limited story of the people and powers behind them. The buildings themselves do not explain the process of designing, financing, and choosing the location, or legal arrangements involving land purchase, lease, and taxation. We learn little or nothing about the lives of construction workers, about the controversies and conflicts resulting from disruption of traditional life, for example the damage caused by European railways to rural trade, local *fengshui*, or ancestral temples. While diplomatic historians have analyzed different forms of European imperial expansion in Asia, such as gunboat diplomacy, military invasion, and opium trade, much remains unknown about everyday life in the colonies and treaty ports in Asia, and especially about interactions between Europeans and local populations.

This volume brings together scholars working in city planning, architecture, and Asian and imperial history, to provide a more detailed picture of how colonization worked both at the top and at the bottom levels of society, and how it was expressed in stone, iron, and concrete. We show that the process of creating the colonial built environment was multilayered, complicated, and unpredictable. Our volume demonstrates that the relationship between the colonizers and colonized and the built environment transformed over time: the structures changed tenants, functions, surroundings, and even ownership. Some buildings were expanded, while others were destroyed or replaced with new ones, reflecting the emergence of new forces, historical circumstances, and preferences. Colonial built environments in Asia have outlived the empires that founded them to create lives of their own.

This book explores three main themes: the first one is the interaction between colonial powers. We reject the idea that each empire or state had a purely unique colonial agenda, policy, or practice. Royal family ties and common interests of European powers in Asia created the need to negotiate and co-operate on issues ranging from diplomacy and military affairs to sharing space and services in the colonial setting. European empires and Japan went through common experiences in establishing and defending their spheres of influence. Their relations were further strengthened by the logic of international trade. They interchanged ideas, technology, resources, and housing arrangements. As European communities in Asia grew, the partnership between

them became more complex, both on official and non-official levels. Expanding global trade and economies linked colonial enclaves with each other and the rest of the world. This book strives to underline how, in the colonial world, global and local forces coexisted, as well as the necessity for colonizers to both compete and co-operate with one another. At the same time, the colonial enterprise was diverse and heterogeneous. This volume stresses the regional diversity of the colonial built form found from Harbin to Hanoi. The chapters in the volume attest to the variety inherent in colonial projects.

The second theme of this book is the adaptations and accommodations made between different sides in the process of colonization. This volume examines the elite as well as other actors of colonization, such as entrepreneurs and minor colonial officials, whose geographic distance from the European metropolis allowed them flexibility in dealing with local society in both formal and informal ways. We aim to dispel traditional assumptions about indigenous societies as only victims of colonization by demonstrating abilities to learn from, work within, and challenge their assigned roles in the colonization process. Despite the unequal treaties, extraterritorial rights, as well as endemic racism and segregation, there also existed dialogue and interaction between the colonizers and the colonized.

The colonial built environment is most misleading in its visual expression of self-confidence and grandeur, as it attempts to conceal the risks and anxieties associated with living in colonial settings. Our third theme is the uncertainties of colonial and semi-colonial regimes. We recognize that colonialism should be viewed on different scales. Micro-studies demonstrate that the colonial enterprise was a messy, unpredictable, and often dangerous affair.³ While imposing colonial buildings epitomized metropolitan power, confidence, and prestige, the reality on the ground was often lawless, unpleasant, and dangerous. During times of peace, the colonizers were concerned about disease and natural disasters. Their reliance on local labor was accompanied by the possibility of insubordination, desertion, or revolt. Local authorities were another source of conflict. Moreover, the case studies in this volume illustrate that during the high tide of imperialism, starting from the late-nineteenth century, the fear of rebellion and war was constant and real. We illustrate that the official versions of empire building gloss over the precariousness of colonial life.

This collection brings together case studies about the regions where the concentration of Western and, later, Japanese influence, money, and people were at its maximum. We examine urban colonial places and the urban aspects of colonization, such as city planning, infrastructure, and spatial arrangements. We do not discuss the countryside, where the majority of local populations in East Asia lived, as their encounters with the urban centers were limited. This volume does not discuss the Portuguese in Macau, for by the mid-nineteenth century their influence both in Europe and in this region was limited. We do not include discussion of the United States' activities in China. Even though the United States was involved in colonial practices in the Caribbean and the Pacific during this period, it did not have formal colonies or spheres of influence in China or Vietnam although American missionaries, traders, and entrepreneurs did participate in colonial life in these places, and American-designed buildings testified to this.⁴ Japanese imperial expansion in coastal China can be considered part of this story because of its ability to adopt and adapt earlier European colonial models and integrate them into its own expansionist policies in Asia, as Bill Sewell demonstrates in his chapter.

We go beyond one geographic region and the fixed notions of Northeast, East, and Southeast Asia to examine the coast bordering the South and East China Seas. Here, full-scale colonization started later than in other parts of the world; the intensity of colonial projects reached its peak in the late nineteenth century and endured much longer, as in the case of Hong Kong. It is difficult to draw borders between East and Southeast Asia on the coast of the South China Sea: both geographic regions have similar natural conditions, their indigenous populations and cultures are mixed, and they were affected by Confucian culture. In addition, it is there that French, Portuguese, and British colonial projects and influence overlapped. Instead, we examine a long geographic belt, a north-to-south axis extending from Northeast China to Northern Vietnam, which best represents the diversity of Imperial Russian, German, Japanese, British, and French colonization projects. Along this belt, regional variations were most pronounced in topography and climate, posing different challenges to the colonizers. Proximity to the ocean, in Hong Kong for example, meant exposure to typhoons. Living near mighty rivers, like in Harbin, Shanghai and

Hanoi, meant dealing with seasonal floods. Building on mountainous Hong Kong Island was complicated by hazards of landslides, lack of water, and poisonous snakes. Cold places like Manchuria required solid building materials and heating during long winters. Unbearable summer heat and humidity, paired with cool winters, were part of life in the subtropical climate of South China and Tonkin.

Encounters between the colonizers and local populations also depended on the choice of geographic location. Some places had well-established local populations. For example, recent scholarship emphasizes that Shanghai was a trading center on the Yangtze River since the thirteenth century, becoming a major cotton and silk production center during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).⁵ Hanoi's history goes back to 1010 when it became a capital of the Ly dynasty (1009–1225).⁶ Other colonial cities were built from scratch. Harbin was nothing more than a small village when Imperial Russia started to build the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria in 1896. When the British established Hong Kong as their colony in 1842, they found a handful of fishing settlements with a population of some 5,600 people.⁷ As the British discovered in Hong Kong's New Territories or the Russians and Japanese in what is now Northeast China, building on a sparsely populated location often proved to be an advantage to the colonizers as they did not have to deal with strong resentment from settled local communities with established traditions. New settlements and cities also made it easy to attract cheap labor from neighboring areas.

The places discussed in this volume had access to the sea: either direct, via rivers or, eventually, by railway. European and Japanese colonizing powers all came from the sea (with the exception of the Russians) with the purpose of establishing permanent outposts, first on the coast and later with their sights inland. Proximity to the sea allowed them to exploit local economies and resources for the purpose of colonial and international trade. These cities became colonial seaports and trading hubs and were connected by networks of merchant and military ships, government offices, industries, railways, banks, hotels, and churches. Once the colonizers settled in, they built houses, schools, hospitals, factories, sports facilities, parks, and cemeteries. The natural outcome of their presence was small enclaves of Europe and Japan in Asian urban centers, where they invested money and technology and practiced different forms of government and authority.

The events covered in this volume span a period of one hundred years and begin with the First Opium War, starting with the arrival of the British Navy, which signaled the end of the Canton trade system (1760–1842) and the opening of China's treaty ports. It concludes with the advent of China's Resistance War (1937–45), which crippled European aspirations of semi-colonial control in China. The century saw an unprecedented growth of treaty ports and spheres of influence on China's coast, the expansion of Imperial Britain's colonial influence in Hong Kong, and of Imperial France in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The length of colonial and semi-colonial presence in Asia varied among the different imperial powers. British colonial rule in Hong Kong lasted from 1842 to 1997. French colonial rule in Tonkin lasted from the 1880s until 1954, with the last decade marked by the bloody French-Indochina War, which resulted in Vietnam's independence and division between the north and the south. Imperial Russia's colonial claims in China span from 1860, when it annexed Qing territory north of the Amur River and east of the Ussuri River, until the end of the Romanov dynasty in 1917. From 1860 to 1895, Imperial Russia did not expand further into China. After this lacuna, Russia claimed Manchuria as its exclusive sphere of influence until 1905, when it lost South Manchuria to Japanese influence after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. The extensive railway network was the most important legacy of Imperial Russian and Japanese presence in Manchuria. In addition, the Soviet Union kept a naval presence in Dalian from 1945 until the early 1950s.

The Imperial German presence in China was the shortest of all the colonial powers, with Germany staking claim to parts of Shandong province from 1897 to 1914. Yet it was this imperialist presence that triggered one of the most forceful anti-foreign movements, the Boxer Rebellion, which briefly threatened all external imperial powers in China in 1900, and which was brutally suppressed by the Eight Allied Forces of Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Germany, the United States, Russia, and Japan. During World War I (1914–18), Germany lost its possessions in Shandong to Japan, which controlled these areas until 1922. Even as a latecomer to China, in less than seventeen years, Imperial Germany had built a strong colonial enclave centered in the city of Qingdao. But it was Imperial Japan that posed

the greatest threat to China's sovereignty and to the European powers in Asia. Imperial Japan's colonial rule in China lasted from 1895, when it colonized Taiwan (Formosa), to 1945. From 1905 Japan occupied South Manchuria, and in 1931, the rest of Manchuria, establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo. As a result of Japan's war with China from 1937 to 1945, most of China's coast was occupied by Japanese troops and several puppet regimes were set up. Japan's quest for empire in East Asia became the ultimate challenge to the imperial claims of European powers, weakening their influence in China and uniting different forces within Chinese society. These forces of resistance and nationalism became crucial in terminating Japanese and European colonial rule. Most damage to the colonial built environment (in the period covered by this study) was done in the early years of China's Resistance War against Japan (1937-45), when Japan systematically bombed China's coastal cities.

The built environments in the locations discussed in this volume were the products of different forms of colonial and semi-colonial rule. British Hong Kong and French Cochinchina had status of full colonies, whereas France considered the remaining parts of the Indochinese Union (Annam, Tonkin, Cambodia, and Laos) as protectorates.⁸ European powers established a semi-colonial presence in China through unequal treaties following the First Opium War by granting themselves treaty ports, leased territories, legation quarters, foreign settlements,⁹ as well as railway and natural resource concessions. The combination of these arrangements allowed European powers to create their own competing spheres of influence in different parts of China. These powers were rarely bound by early treaties and agreements, and took advantage of opportunities to claim more territory and rights. For example, in Tianjin, the original British Concession covering 76 acres in 1860 increased to 588 acres in 1903. Ultimately, its total area was nearly half of all the territory of foreign concessions in town.¹⁰

We use the term "colonial" to describe European presence on the China coast, most of which was never formally colonized, because the European presence was based on unequal treaties and power dynamics. Edifices, railways, and roads were built by local coolie labor, without regard to the needs or desires of the local authority. They were often built in defiance of local laws, indigenous forms, spatial arrangements, and traditions.

While the European presence in Vietnam and China was not guaranteed to exist in perpetuity, the colonial built environment became a permanent claim over space. European powers, and later Japan, designed new urban districts and cities on a grand scale, with the amenities of modern European civilization. In doing so, they did not shy away from destroying or relocating existing local settlements, temples, and cemeteries and displacing indigenous populations. Once the railways, cities and buildings were complete, it was very difficult to physically remove them, even though some attempts by the native population to destroy them were an inevitable part of the colonial experience. For example, the Chinese Eastern Railway was completed by Imperial Russia in 1903 as planned, despite the destruction of its lines by Chinese Boxers in 1900. With very few exceptions, colonial buildings became fixed landmarks in the treaty ports and imperial cities, and remained long after the external powers left. For example, the grand and well-preserved architecture of Shanghai's Bund remains a living monument to the city's semi-colonial cosmopolitan past.

Technological improvements in construction methods and materials from Europe and the United States appeared in Asia after the First World War. Reinforced concrete became widely used in constructing colonial, government, and private buildings. New advancements like central heating, piped water and sewage, and electricity and telegraphs became more widespread. European-style buildings became appreciated in China, Indochina, and across Asia by the privileged; the colonial style of architecture was imitated by reform-minded officials and local elites as newly found symbols of wealth and power. For example, in colonial Hong Kong, the prominent Eurasian Robert Ho Tung was the only non-European permitted to live in the exclusive Peak District in a European-style mansion.¹¹ Many members of the Nationalist government in China (1928–49), despite its patriotic stance, appreciated the colonial built environment for its practical and aesthetic value. For example, Chiang Kai-shek, head of the Nationalist government in China, chose to get married and reside in Shanghai's former colonial mansions.

The Chapters

The chapters are organized geographically, moving south along the Chinese coast, from Harbin to Hanoi. Victor Zatsepine's chapter, "Russia, Railways, and Urban Development in Manchuria, 1896–1930," examines differences between Russia's civilian and military colonization projects in Manchuria, and discusses the planning and establishment of Manchuria's railways and new cities. It demonstrates that Imperial Russia's economic colonization in Harbin was more successful than its military claim over Port Arthur. Harbin became Russia's semi-colonial outpost with a flourishing urban space and a sizable Russian population. In contrast, Russia's fortress of Port Arthur did not flourish and eventually became a source of conflict with Japan. Even Russia's defeat by Japan in 1905 and its withdrawal from Northeast China did not stop Russian and Soviet participation in urban growth and industrial development in northern Manchuria, which continued after the revolution of 1917.

Bill Sewell's chapter, "Beans to Banners: The Evolving Architecture of Prewar Changchun," analyzes the emergence of Changchun, a city in southern Manchuria, as an expression of Japanese colonial ambition. Like Imperial Russia, Japan built railroads to extend its influence in Manchuria, developing Changchun as a railway town from 1905 to 1931. Sewell demonstrates that Japan saw Changchun as its own response to the European influence in Asia. Changchun's early architecture was inspired by European traditions, while its later styles incorporated Japanese nationalist ideals. From 1932 to 1945, Changchun served as the capital of the puppet state of Manchukuo, yet Japan failed to deliver the promise of modernity to the Chinese subjects there.

David Tucker's chapter, "France, Brossard Mopin, and Manchukuo," analyzes French commercial interest in the development of Manchukuo's infrastructure. Despite the fact that France did not recognize Manchukuo, French businesses were eager to invest there. French consortium Brossard Mopin, discussed in this chapter, offered to finance the construction of Manchukuo's capital in Changchun and to design some of its buildings. Japanese military and civilian authorities in Manchukuo were divided about the scope of French investment, but they used it anyway during the early years of Manchukuo.

Zhang Chang and Liu Yue's chapter, "International Concessions and the Modernization of Tianjin," studies Tianjin's foreign concessions and their influence on local municipal governance. The authors emphasize the uniqueness of Tianjin as the city with the largest number of foreign concessions in Asia. These concessions became places where the built environment and its European management served as a model for Chinese municipal authorities in their quest for reforms and self-governance. Tianjin's status as a trading hub and a fast-growing metropolis ensured a constant flow of ideas from Europe and from other treaty ports like Shanghai. Zhang and Liu demonstrate that in architecture, the dialogue between Chinese and European cultures was reflected in an eclectic style shared by both the Europeans and the Chinese. For example, after the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Chinese government officials and entrepreneurs residing in Tianjin designed their grand mansions in the European style. At the same time, however, they preserved their distance from Europeans and maintained much of their traditional way of life.

Klaus Mühlhahn's chapter, "Mapping Colonial Space: The Planning and Building of Qingdao by German Colonial Authorities, 1897–1914," describes Germany's quest to define its sphere of influence in East Asia with the occupation of the area around Jiaozhou Bay and the establishment of Qingdao city from 1897 to 1914. The leasehold, ceded by the Qing government for a period of ninety-nine years, was under the sole control of the German navy. Like Port Arthur, early Qingdao was highly militarized. From the very beginning, colonial naval commanders attempted to instate rigid control over urban space, an effort that was marked by violence and racial inequality. However, despite the demonstration of firm colonial power, Germany eventually had to accommodate a growing Chinese population and its needs.

As the chapters above illustrate, violence played a fundamental role in establishing colonial space in Asia. European and Japanese military authorities struggled to maintain their upper hand in political and administrative life in these cities. Cole Roskam's chapter, "The Architecture of Risk: Urban Space and Uncertainty in Shanghai, 1843–74," further develops this theme of violence ingrained in colonial cities, while exploring the notions of risk and uncertainty in Shanghai between 1842 and 1870 for both the colonizers and the colonized. Shanghai's foreign and Chinese communities had to deal with specific

and inter-related risks, and created architectural and spatial strategies aimed at segregation, security, and stability.

The next two chapters deal with two particular buildings in Hong Kong, where colonial authority was established early and was long lasting. G. A. Bremner's chapter, "Fabricating Justice: Conflict and Contradiction in the Making of the Hong Kong Supreme Court, 1898–1912," looks at how this structure, which was meant to represent the ideas of British nationhood, identity, and justice, also became a source of conflict. Bremner highlights the political tension that existed between Whitehall and Hong Kong over its design and construction, and explores the inconsistencies of extending colonial British "rule of law" to the local Chinese population.

Peter Cunich's chapter, "Making Space for Higher Education in Colonial Hong Kong, 1887–1913," examines the arena carved out for tertiary studies in a city where land for construction was limited. He examines the local and metropolitan forces that affected its conceptualization and construction, as well as contemporary trends in establishing new universities around the world. The University of Hong Kong (1910–12) was created to act as a beacon of Western modernity for the rest of China, and was indicative of the amalgamated world created by colonialism: the project of a Parsee merchant and funded by opium money, it was located between the boundaries of the European and Chinese parts of town, delimiting geographic space and bridging two cultures. Bremner and Cunich both agree that Hong Kong's colonial authorities were often at odds with London, and attest to the real power enjoyed by the colonists, and not the metropole.

The last three chapters deal with French Indochina, in particular the capital city of Hanoi. Despite having a presence in places like Shanghai and Tianjin, the French built their Asian colonial base in Indochina—Hanoi was intended to be France's answer to British Hong Kong—and, like other colonial cities, they had to deal with similar sets of concerns. Lisa Drummond's chapter, "Colonial Hanoi: Urban Space in Public Discourse," is about French anxieties over their exotic surroundings in Hanoi. She examines the newspaper *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, which reflected French views about the city, its public spaces, and its people. She demonstrates links between the realities of living in a colonial city and the vision to transform its perceived backwardness and the practical measures to turn it into a livable European city.

Laura Victoir's article, "Hygienic Colonial Residences in Hanoi," explores how the French medical community weighed in on constructing salubrious housing in Hanoi. The threat of disease was ever-present in the colonial setting. Enormous efforts on the part of home governments and international medical communities were taken in order to reduce its incidence, as evidenced by the works of Philip D. Curtin and David Arnold.¹² Victoir's work traces the evolution of medical thought on the origins of disease and its vectors, and looks at how architecture was used as a tool to promote health. French guidebooks on tropical and colonial hygiene provide unique insight into the private, domestic space of imperial life.

The early decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of Vietnamese and Chinese bourgeoisies, who were exposed to European culture, educated in European traditions, and worked in colonial administration and commerce. These new local elites became a new force, which demanded recognition and space. They ultimately challenged European power in colonies and treaty ports. Danielle Labbé, Caroline Herbelin, and Quang-Vinh Dao's article, "Domesticating the Suburbs: Architectural Production and Exchanges in Hanoi during the Late French Colonial Era," explores how local and exogenous housing cultures, professional training institutions, and French colonial urbanism came together in Hanoi during that period. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Hanoi witnessed intense cultural exchanges in the fields of art and architecture. One of Hanoi's suburbs, called the "New Indigenous Quarter," became an architectural laboratory where French-trained Vietnamese architects reinvented Hanoi's housing forms to suit the tastes of an emerging Vietnamese middle-class. This chapter reconsiders the ability of the Vietnamese to learn from the French and negotiate colonial space, and echoes Cunich's discussion of training the indigenous elite for use in the colonial administration.

This volume pays close attention to Hong Kong and Hanoi not only because they were formal colonies, but also because the lines separating European and non-European societies were more pronounced there than in other places. The case studies in the volume scrutinize and examine the built environment on both the macro and micro levels, giving not just a fuller picture of the challenges of colonialism

but also the variations of experiences on the ground, which were found in the daily interactions between people who lived in particular urban settings. Both dimensions are important for a more balanced understanding of what occurred.

Furthermore, the volume moves beyond British-centered narratives of colonial presences in East and Southeast Asia by emphasizing the independent role of other European powers and Japan. British influence on China's coast was severely challenged to the north beyond Shanghai and to the south beyond Hong Kong. Just as the British, Germans, Japanese, French, and Russians competed for spheres of influence, they were in constant communication with each other and were well informed about each other's trade, diplomacy, and military activities. For example, Britain joined forces with France during the Second Opium War, while American and British interests amalgamated in the Shanghai International Settlement in the 1860s. The foreign powers became even closer when the Boxer Rebellion threatened their legation quarters in Beijing and their presence in northern China. Finally, Russian, British, French, German, and American firms co-operated very closely in their banking and financial arrangements. Our multilingual sources challenge the traditional reliance on English-language sources to paint the picture of foreign presence on China's coast.¹³

A closer look at the colonial built environment invites re-evaluation of the complex arrangements, which are often reduced to simplistic post-colonial terms of the "colonizer" and the "colonized." This volume invites further investigation of tensions and ambiguities within colonial structures and between colonial agents. It also demonstrates the ability of the "colonized" to adapt, reformulate, and, ultimately, challenge spatial arrangements imposed by the different colonial powers. Moreover, the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized was not a one-way street; it was a constant negotiation. This relationship was in constant flux and has to be understood only by paying attention to the specific historical moment, geographic location, type of colonial project, and the people involved. The advantage of focusing on the colonial built environment is that it exposes multiple layers of empire making and of conquest, both ideological and real.

Notes

1. See, for example, Johnathan A. Farris, "Thirteen Factories of Canton: An Architecture of Sino-Western Collaboration and Confrontation," in *Buildings and Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 14 (Fall 2007): 66–83; Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Brenda S. A. Yeoh, *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); William S. Logan, *Hanoi: Biography of a City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); Edward Denison and Guang Yuren, *Building Shanghai: The Story of China's Gateway* (West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2006); Nicola Cooper, *France in Indochina* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 2001); David Wolff, *To the Harbin Station: The Liberal Alternative in Russian Manchuria, 1898–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Koshizawa Akira, *Manshūkoku no shuto keikaku: Tōkyō no genzai to mirai o tou* (Tōkyō: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1988).
2. For instance, Anthony King argued that the built environment, apart from being a representation of social order, also shaped society and its culture. Anthony King, "Urbanism, Colonialism and the World-Economy," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 4 (1992): 1.
3. See, for example, James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 26–27.
4. However, US traders did take part in the opium trade and benefited from separate unequal treaties with China, the earliest one signed in 1844. They were involved in the construction of the International Settlement in Shanghai and were part of the Eight Allied forces in Tianjin and Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion. American architects were also crucial in introducing Western architectural traditions to China. See, for example, Jeffrey W. Cody, *Building in China: Henry K. Murphy's "Adaptive Architecture," 1914–1935* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2001).
5. Wang Manjun, Huang Wei, and Feng Jieyin, *Memory of Shanghai* (Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaotong University Press, 2010), 6–9.
6. William S. Logan, *Hanoi: Biography of a City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 15.
7. Joseph S. P. Ting and Nai-kwan Wong, *City of Victoria* (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1994), 9.
8. Cooper, *France in Indochina*, 5.

9. For a discussion on the distinction between concessions and settlements, see F. C. Jones, *Shanghai and Tientsin: With Special Reference to Foreign Interests* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 118.
10. Jones, *Shanghai and Tientsin*, 131.
11. Non-Europeans were excluded from living on the Peak by the Hill District Reservation Ordinance of 1904. See Jean Gittins, *Stanley: Behind Barbed Wire* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1982), 12.
12. Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Philip D. Curtin, *Disease and Empire: The Health of European Troops in the Conquest of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David Arnold, ed. *Warm Climates and Western Medicine: The Emergence of Tropical Medicine, C. 1500–1900* (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996); David Arnold, "Introduction: Disease, Medicine and Empire," in *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies*, ed. David Arnold (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
13. For example, the most recent book by British historian Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832–1914*, relies mostly on English-language sources to describe Western expansion in China.

13

Afterword

The European built form in Asia was a colonial enterprise from the very beginning—an expression of imperial aspirations in challenging environments. Once the gun smoke cleared, the diplomats, traders, and sovereign agents used the built form to send a clear message of new order: a court representing European justice, the government house on a hill representing power, the banks representing financial might, and hospitals representing progress, along with schools, parks, and churches.

The cities explored in this volume involved different forms of foreign authority—formal colonies, treaty ports, leased territories, concessions, and settlements, yet they were all based on unequal treaties. “Colonial” dominance was both real and symbolic. Real, because it carried social, legal, military, and economic privilege. Symbolic, because it visually expressed “superior” European presence, and the urban forms and architectural styles that came with it. It was also idealistic—some urban spaces were seen as a *tabula rasa*, upon which modern plans could be imposed in order to avoid the problems plaguing European cities. Yet the reality was more complicated and the foundations of these colonial enterprises were shaky, as they were dependent on the acquiescence of the local populations. Risk and insecurity were integral parts of these colonial projects. The threat of revolt from local populations was real too, making it necessary to keep gunboats and a regular police force. Moreover, the process of building and maintaining these colonial forms was complicated because each location presented different sets of obstacles: geographic, climatic, and logistic.

The large span of time covered in this volume was necessary to present the constantly shifting face of colonialism. The early entrance of France and Britain gave them enormous, but not exclusive, influence.

The colonial experience on the China coast cannot be measured solely by the standards of French and British experience or models. As the articles in this volume demonstrate, Russia and Germany, despite being latecomers to this region, were able to create their own enclaves and cultures in a short period of time. Japan was later able to build on various European experiences to pave the way for its own empire in this region. Railroads were crucial built forms used by these powers to expand their influence into the interior, becoming the foundation for the growth of new towns, industry, and trade.

China and Vietnam also underwent changes. In 1911, the Qing dynasty collapsed in China, and the new republic was left fragmented due to rivalries among the northern and southern governments and the warlords. Local developments forced European powers to renegotiate previous terms with emerging new forces. Wealth was increasingly shared, making it possible for Chinese and Vietnamese elites and merchants to move closer to the places once reserved for Europeans and renegotiate the terms of trading, banking, and sharing of labor and resources. There were also a growing number of Western-educated professionals who understood how to operate in this particular environment. Between the two world wars, these treaty ports were becoming increasingly cosmopolitan, and conflict ceded ground to dialogue and interdependence. This was reflected in more diverse architecture, best expressed in the emergence of eclectic styles. New alliances, unthinkable in the past, were formed: for example, when a wealthy Chinese merchant hired a Western architect, or when a hybrid building designed by a French-trained Vietnamese architect was erected. New buildings reflected the changing tastes of emerging international bourgeoisie and new wealth. Yet, these changes were not uniform—colonial attitudes remained strong in Hong Kong, French Indochina, and the treaty ports.

All of this changed during World War II. When the Japanese invaded the continent, their hegemonic plans included reshaping the European urban enclaves to their own preference. They presented the notion of pan-Asian brotherhood to the Asian populations; yet, their actions were nothing more than the replacement of one form of colonialism with another. Japan's reliance on military force and violence triggered anti-imperial sentiments among the indigenous peoples, contributing to growing nationalism, which shook the foundation of colonial rule

across Asia after World War II. These different, competing colonialisms left their permanent marks in the cities discussed in this volume; their material layers have to be uncovered and further explained.

The fate of the colonial built environment in the twentieth century has its own controversies. While losing its original significance a long time ago, it had practical and aesthetic qualities that appealed to local governments, banks, and corporations. Despite sporadic outbursts of nationalism and anger over a colonial past, the local governments and elites still prefer to house their offices in such surroundings. Moreover, in places like Dalian and Harbin, the commercial value of these built forms have created demand for new apartments, boutique hotels, shopping malls, villas, and even historical theme parks built in pseudo-colonial styles.

The advocates of preservation of colonial architectural heritage argue that the future generations should remember colonial history and at the same time appreciate the architectural value of the remaining colonial built forms. In the old districts of Harbin, Qingdao, Shanghai, and Tianjin, major colonial buildings were given a face-lift, serving both as administrative and office spaces as well as tourist attractions. In Changchun, the former palace of the supreme ruler of Manchukuo, Henry Puyi, was lavishly renovated to become an important museum of Japanese colonialism in China. Yet, other colonial buildings did not survive the test of time; many have been destroyed to clear land for new urban development, while others were left to their own fate. The conflict between the rapidly rising price of land and the value of heritage buildings is easily found in Hong Kong Island, where the government is struggling to determine the fate of the British colonial police headquarters. Another example can be found in Shanghai, which during the last decade became a battleground between real estate companies and landowners, resulting in the disappearance of many colonial villas. At the same time, the Bund with its former banks and the famous Peace Hotel still remained a postcard view of Shanghai.

For historians of European and Japanese imperialism in Asia, the battle for the meaning of the colonial built environment is not over yet. Nationalistic narratives of imperialism tend to simplify the accounts of everyday experience and of individual activities. Colonial built forms cannot be understood on their own terms: they need to be placed in

concrete historical circumstances, and any human activity surrounding them thus scrutinized. Otherwise, they remain silent symbols of a colonial past, mere skeletons without flesh and soul, devoid of the stories of human drama behind them. People who planned, built, and lived in these settings provide a more powerful testimony to the uneasy relationship between imperial powers and Asian societies.

Index

- Aiga Kensuke, 47
Alcock, Rutherford, 135
Alice Memorial Hospital (Hong Kong), 186–88
Anh Sang (The Light) Association, 255
art deco style, 264–65
art nouveau style, 22, 24–25, 42–43
attic, use for ventilation, 239
Ayukawa Yoshisuke, 63
- Baikov, Nikolai Appolonovich, 21
Baker, Herbert, 154, 163
Baojia system, 118
bathroom, 240, 244
Bauhaus, 253
Beaux-Arts style, 197
Beiyang University, 99
Belilios, Emanuel, 186–88, 203
Bert, Paul, 211, 214, 223–24
Bhabha, Homi, 266
Blake, Sir Henry Arthur, 167, 169, 173
Bomford, Sir Gerald, 196
Boxer Rebellion, 6, 13,
 and the China Eastern Railway
 (CER), 8, 26–27
 and Tianjin, 86, 91–92, 98–99
 German reaction to, 117
Boxer Protocol, 93, 99
Brossard Mopin, 9, 59, 71–78
brothel, 43, 192–93
Brydon, John, 156–57
- Bryer, Alfred, 193, 195–96
bubonic plague, 22, 188–90, 235–36
- Cantlie, James, 188
Canton Christian College, 201
Canton system of trade, 6, 132
Chamberlain, Joseph, 159–60, 164
Changchun, 9, 39, 51, 64–66, 76, 275.
 See also Xinjing, Shinkyō
 city planning, 37, 46, 49–51
 as an imperial city, 37–8, 46–50
 as a railway city, 40–41
 buildings, 42–50
 modernity, 52
Chater, Sir Catchick Paul, 165–7, 172, 195
Chinese bourgeoisie, 12, 32, 173
Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), 5, 8,
 18–22, 25–28, 30–33, 39
Claudel, Henry, 63–64
colonial villa, 96, 113, 121, 224, 251,
 264, 266, 275
“Compradoric” style of architecture,
 162–63
 picture of, 163
Confucian philosophy and culture, 4,
 46, 48, 119, 255
*Congrès International d’Architecture
 Moderne* (CIAM), 254
Crusen, Georg, 116
Cunningham, Edward, 138

- Dalian, 6, 18, 39–41, 90, 105, 275. *See also* Dalny
 City Hall, 42
 post office, 44
 Dalny (*Dairen*), 18–19, 23–25, 39, 72
 Japanese occupation of, 28–30, 33
 De Certeau, Michel, 267
 Detring, Gustav, 98
- eclecticism in architecture, 42, 95–98
École des Beaux-Arts d'Indochine
 (EBAI), Architecture Section,
 251–56, 263–67
École Française d'Extrême-Orient
 (EFEO), 253
 Edwardian Baroque, 153–54, 156–58,
 174
 electricity, installation of, 8, 24, 259
 Emerson, William, 154, 157
 Erzberger, Mathias, 103
 extraterritoriality, 52, 129
- family housing, for Europeans, 112,
 244–46
 female infanticide, 213
fengshui, 2, 131, 137, 142, 190. *See also*
 geomancy and *kanyu*
 Fengtian, 26, 41. *See also* Shenyang
 and Mukden
 Fontanier, Henry, 88
 Fortune, Robert, description of
 Shanghai in 1846, 134
 Foster, Sir Norman, 151
 Freemasons, 136
 French banks in Asia, 71–72, 74–75, 91
 Fukuzawa Yukichi, 41–42, 46
- garden
 private, 96, 139, 240–43, 263–64
 public, 24, 132, 160–61, 164, 192, 223
 geomancy, 133, 137. *See also* *fengshui*
 and *kanyu*
 Geyling, Rolf, 96
 Goodman, Sir William, 167–68, 172
 Gourou, Pierre, 253
 Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity
 Sphere, 47, 52
 Gropius, Walter, 253
- Hanoi, 5, 9, 11–12, 71
 architects, 251–56, 263–68
 climate, 209, 214, 234
 disease, 209–11, 214–18, 236
 French Concession, 223, 225
 housing, 239–46, 257–67
 municipal council, 213, 222, 259–61
 New Indigenous Quarter, 256–68
Service des Bâtiments Civils, 252, 255
Service Municipal d'Architecture, 255
 urban improvements, 218–25, 256–60
 Harbin, 3–5, 23–24, 27, 39, 43, 71–73, 275
 after the Russo-Japanese War, 30–33
 and the China Eastern Railway
 (CER), 20–23, 30–33
 description, 17
 development of city, 17, 20–23
 during the Russo-Japanese War, 28
 map of, *see* Plate 3
 Hart, Sir Robert, 98
 Hébrard, Ernest, 225, 254, 265
 Hoàng Nhu Tiếp, 254
 Ho Kai, 191
 Hong Kong, 4–8, 11–13, 33, 105, 110,
 113, 135, 274
 education, 181–82, 186–89. *See also*
 University of Hong Kong
 Mid-Levels district, 185, 190–91
 Peak district, 8, 185
 Red-light district, 192–93
 Sai Ying Pun (West Point), 187, 191,
 193
 picture of, 202
 Shek Tong Tsui, 192
 Tai Ping Shan, 188–92
 picture of, 190

- Hong Kong College of Medicine, 186–91, 199
- Hong Kong Legislative Council, 151, 159–60
- Hong Kong Supreme Court, 11, 151–52
 construction of, 170–71
 designing of, 158–64
 picture of, 152, 156
 style, 153–58, 163
 symbolism of, 164–70, 172–75
- Hong Kong Technical Institute, 186–87, 189
- Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), 151, 161, 165
 map of, 166
- Hongkong Club, 159, 162, 165, 169
 map of, 166
- huiguan* (native-place) organizations, 131–32
- human trafficking, 213–14
- Ichida Kichijirō, 42
- Imperial Customs Service in Peking, 98
- “Indochinese style” of architecture, 256
- insurance (fire, marine), 133, 135
- International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, 215
- Journal of Manchurian Architecture*, 41, 45–46
- kanyu*, 131. *See also* *fengshui* and geomancy
- Kiaochow (Jiaozhou)
 as a leasehold, 103–4, 122
 the Chinese population of, 117–20
 under control of German navy, 107–11, 114
- King Edward VII College of Medicine (Singapore), 199
- Koiso Kuniaki, 64, 66–69
- Komai Tokuzō, 67
- Koshizawa Akira, 76
- Kruze, Arthur, 254
- land reclamation, 159, 164, 189, 222
- latrine (buckets), 216–17, 240, 262
- Le Corbusier, 254
- Leigh and Orange Architectural Firm, 195
- Li Hongzhang, 19, 23, 92, 98
- Lugard, Sir Frederick, 169, 188–94, 197–99
- Lüshun, 18, 39. *See also* Port Arthur
- Lutyens, Edwin, 154
- Lyautey, Hubert, 68–69
- Lyautey, Pierre, 68
- malaria, 231, 235–37
- Manchukuo, 7, 9, 37, 49–52, 59–78
 and League of Nations, 61–63
 Foreign Ministry building, 69, 73–78
 Japanese occupation of, 45–47
- Manchuria, 5–7, 17–32, 38–52, 59–77
 architecture, 77–8
 railways, 18–23
 Russian expansion, 17–18, 21–28, 39–40
 Soviet presence, 31–32, 45, 74
 Russian émigrés, 30–32
- Maspero, Henri, 253
- Matsumuro Shigemitsu, 41–42, 44–45
- miasmatic theory, 215, 236–7
- modernist architecture, 95, 254, 263
- Mody, Hormusjee, 189–93, 195–98
- mosquito, 236, 240
- Moyrand, André, 69–71
- Mukden, 26, 29, 41, 71. *See also* Fengtian and Shenyang
- Murphy, Henry, 200–1
- Mus, Paul, 253
- Nanking University, 201
- Nazi architecture, 49, 52
- Nethersole Hospital (Hong Kong), 188, 191
- Nguyễn Cao Luyệt, 254–55
- Nguyễn Gia Đức, 254
- Nhật Linh, 255

- opium, 2, 11, 50, 189, 198
 Opium War, the First, 1, 6–7, 129, 134, 173
 Opium War, the Second, 13, 83, 86–87, 92, 139, 173
 outbuildings, 240, 243
- paillotte*, 214, 222–23, 241, 259
 Palladian (Anglo-Palladian) architectural style, 153, 155, 168
 Pasteur, Louis, 231, 236
 Peking Union Medical College, 201
 Piggott, Sir Francis, 169–70
 Pineau, Louis-Georges, 225, 254
 Pope-Hennessy, Sir John, 186
 Port Arthur, 9–10, 18–20, 23–25, 28–30, 33, 39, 105. *See also* Lüshun
 preventative medicine, 233, 235
 prostitution, 104, 114, 213
 Puyi, Henry Aixin-Gioro, 46–47, 275
- Qingdao, 6, 10, 90, 103–5, 275
 and the German Navy, 108–11
 building density, 112, 114
 Chinese population, 117–22
 civilian administration, 114–17
 map of, *see* Plate 14
 urban planning, 112–14
 Qingdao-Jinan Railway, 108
 Queen's College (Hong Kong), 186
- rabies, 209–12
 Risley, Sir Herbert, 196
 Robinson, Sir William, 166
 Rosendahl, Carl, 110
 Royal United Services Institute (London), 158
 Russell and Company, 138
 Russian Orthodox church, 25
 Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), 28–30
- Sakatani Ki-ichi, 67–68
 segregation, 3, 11, 112–13, 115, 120, 264
- servants, 99, 135, 240, 244, 257
 Shandong Mining Company, 111
 Shandong Railway Company, 111
 Shanghai, 4–5, 8, 10–11, 13, 33, 40, 71–72, 83, 86, 94–95, 106, 113, 159, 275
 and geomancy, 130–34
 and risk, 130, 136–40
 and Tianjin, 84, 90, 100
 British Settlement, 135, 138, 142
 City God Temple, 131–32
See Plate 15
 civic administration, 136
 Daotai, 138–39
 French Concession, 129, 137, 141–42
 Guandi Temple, 137
See Plate 18
 International Settlement, 13, 106, 138–42
 maps of, *see* Plates 15 and 16
 municipal council, 137–38, 140, 142
 Shenyang, 41, 59, 71–72. *See also* Fengtian and Mukden
 Shinkyō, *See* Changchun
 shophouse, 261
 Sino-German College (Qingdao), 112, 119
 South Manchuria Railway (SMR), 18–19, 23, 26–29, 65–66, 69–75
 design of Changchun, 41–45
 Soviet Union, 6, 9, 18, 32, 51
 architecture, 52
 invasion of northern Manchuria (1929), 45
 troops in Manchuria (1945), 74
 Sino-Soviet agreement (1924), 31–32
 St. Paul's Cathedral (London), 154
 Stessel, Anatoly Mikhailovich, 28–29
 Sun Yat-sen, 46
 sunlight, 216, 239–41
Syndicat pour l'étude et la réalisation d'entreprises au Mandchoukouo (SEREM), 69–71

- Taiping Rebellion, 136–37
Tardieu, Victor, 252–53
Tianjin, 7, 10–11, 33, 71–72, 275
 administration, 92–95
 and Shanghai, 84, 90, 94, 100
 British Concession, 86–87, 90–91
 French Concession, 71, 90–91, 95
 map of, 87. *See also* Plate 13
 municipal council, 86, 90–91, 93, 98
 urban development, 83–92
 Zizhulin, 84
Tianjin Massacre (1870), 87–88
Tirpitz, Alfred von, 108–10
toilets, 91, 240
Treaty of Nanjing (1842), 129
Treaty of Peking (1860), 83
Treaty of Portsmouth (1905), 30, 39
Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), 19
Treaty of Tianjin (1858), 87
Truppel, Oskar, 110, 118–19
tube-house, 261–64
Tung Wah Hospital (Hong Kong),
 186, 188

university campus planning, 182–83,
 190, 194, 200–2
University of Hong Kong
 design of, 195–98
 location of, 189–95
 mission, 198–99, 201

Van der Rohe, Mies, 253
ventilation, 234, 238–40, 263
verandah, 141, 155, 160, 239–41,
 243–44, 265
Victoria & Albert Museum (London), 158
Virgitti, Henri, 261, 263

Wang Shaofu, 133
Webb and Bell architectural firm, 154,
 157–62, 168, 170
Webb, Aston, thoughts about public
 architecture, 157–58
Witte, Sergei Iul'evich, 18–20, 27, 32
Women, 27, 98, 114, 213, 217, 221, 244–46
Wren, Sir Christopher, 154, 156–57
Wu Songping, 96–97

Xinjing. *See* Changchun
Xinjing, Shinkyō, 45–51, 64–5

Yale-in-China (Changsha), 201
Yamato Hotel (Changchun), 42–43
Yenching University, 201
Yosano Akiko, 17
Young, Carl Walter, 63–64
Yuan Shikai, 92–95, 117
Yuki Seitarō, 67

Zhou Fu, 117–18
Zhu Bingshi, 140