Lost Architecture of the East frontier

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Abstract. This article talks about lost or destroyed objects that were built at early stages of colonization of the eastern frontier of the Russian Empire. The classification proposed by the author will include three categories: temporary wooden architecture with elements of a "national style" that decorated public spaces (arches, verandas, awnings, landing stages, carved facade decorations of educational institutions, railway stations, etc.); residential buildings of Russian and Ukrainian settlers; dachas, trading posts, estates and castles created by foreign and westernized Russian entrepreneurs (Yankovsky, Startsev, F. Geck, etc). The conclusion says that it is important to reproduce not only individual objects, but the lifestyle of the first colonists who reproduced European civilization patterns “in the wilds of the Ussuri Krai”. The empirical base of the study consists of materials of the expeditions, historical photographs and memoirs.

1. Introduction

During recent years (2017-19) the hope to reanimate the Far Eastern economy through the development of the tourism industry has captured the minds of representatives of the City administration and various settlements as well as private entrepreneurs.

The idea of the commercial potential of the “memorial place”, an example of Irkutsk neighbors who actively exploit not only the Baikal brand, but also the image of the Siberian merchant city, provokes an ever more active search for a convincing architectural and spatial design of the “Far Eastern legend”, primarily for tourists from South-Eastern Asia (South Korea, Japan, and PRC). There is less focus is on domestic tourism, although the successful experience of the historic landscape park "Emerald Valley" located 40 km from the city of Ussuriysk and the “Holdomi” tourist center (Solnechny village near Komsomolsk-on-Amur) built in the style of "New-Russian-Wooden" indicates a sufficient capacity of this segment in the tourism industry.

Local architecture is considered today as a commercial attraction, there is a hectic construction of “regional identity” and local “cultural codes”, the very mention of which, due to the complete devaluation of terms, has been considered a bad taste. We will try to find a balance between trends in new urbanism and professional academic discourse.

Considering the process of Russian colonization of the eastern territories as a part of the global project of Modern style, we strive to identify parallels and find analogies to trace the main stages of the architectural design of the Eastern frontier and to design the Far Eastern style on the basis of key patterns. By “frontier architecture” the project participants primarily mean the garrison and railway red-brick buildings of the 1860-1930s.
2. Typology

The theme of the reception of "garrison" architecture in modern suburbia was revealed earlier in the articles [1] and the training manual [2], and this text deals with the wooden architecture of the frontier, which is the most vulnerable element of the cultural landscape. Three categories of lost wooden buildings of the late XIX - early XX century are highlighted:

1. Cottages, manors and castles built by foreign and Westernized Russian entrepreneurs (Yankovsky, Startsev, F. Heck, etc.)

2. Temporary wooden architecture with elements of national and colonial style which decorated public spaces (arches, verandas, sheds, landing stages, carved facade decorations of educational institutions, railway stations, etc.)

3. Vernacular residential architecture (homes of aborigines and cabins of immigrants, which served as prototypes for low-rise buildings 1920-50's.)

Source base of research. Almost all the objects of the first and second categories were destroyed, and the villages of the first settlers were scattered in remote parts of a huge region and inaccessible, so our concept is based on the analysis of historical photographs and testimonies of contemporaries. Today there are two parallel “Far Eastern texts” in the regional cultural field: the memoirs of Westernized colonization of Primorye’s memoirs (primarily memories of Dattan, Brinnerov Yankovsky and Eleonora Pei, which describe everyday practices of expatriates and cosmopolitan merchants in an alien socio-cultural environment) and however a large body of notes of researchers from the Far East who were in the public service and clearly understand their mission of “land preservation”. The main “state” (imperial) Far Eastern text is without a doubt the diaries, guidebooks and travelogues of Vladimir Klavdievich Arsenyev.

We rely on his evidences in an attempt to reconstruct the vernacular houses of the aborigines and settlers. Two completely different worlds open up to readers of Far Eastern texts: the bourgeois city of the modern era, country estates and colonial factories are confronted by a deaf archaic village, hamlets and pastures, lost in taiga thickets, the element of the true vernacular architecture, the main principle of one was rigid functionalism. In the conditions of eternal survival the aesthetics of this architecture came down to optimization of the heat loss.

However judging by the archival photos at the first stage of colonization the Khabarovsk administration tried to integrate elements of the “Russian style” into the urban environment [2].

Judging from the photographs at the early stage of the development of Primorsky Krai, civilian (residential and public) architecture repeatedly used techniques that were not typical at all for the traditional provincial architecture of the Russian Imperial colonial style. Typical example of the colonial style two-storied wooden building of the telegraph station which was built in the 1870s.

3. Vernacular housing

Assuming that by the middle of the 19th century when the first carriages of immigrants from Chernigov, Poltava, Astrakhan, Voronezh and other small and Great Russian provinces reached Primorsky Krai two types of vernacular houses were built in the Eastern territories - yurts, dugouts, huts and log bridges often installed on stilts to protect from floods and wild animals, as well as Chinese and Koreans mud and clay “fangzi”. A professional description of the aboriginal and typical Korean fan dwellings can be found at V.K. Arsenyev’s stories, whose travel diaries combine ethnographic accuracy, the tenacious look of a reconnaissance officer and impeccable literary style. Arsenyev mentions a typical yurt (3 m long, 1.5 m high), folded "of cedar bark and covered with dry grass ... its entrance was covered with bark" [5, Chapter 27 "K. Iman"] and many “fangzi”, by the way he separates the "animal fangzi" (what the Russians call "winter quarters") and the village ones. His classic travelogue “Across the Ussuri Territory” begins with a description of the valley of the Glass Pad, which is called so because of the small piece of glass was inserted in the window of the “Chinese animal fangzi”. Since there was not a single glass factory in the Ussuriysk so glass was especially valued. In the depths of mountains and forests, it was some kind of exchange unit "[5, Chapter 1 “Glass Pad ”, 21]. In Chapter 3, "The Hunting for Boars," Arsenyev describes the "animal fangzi": "a
small building with mud walls, covered with the bark. There was a small vegetable garden near “fangzi”, on the left was a small wooden place of worship facing towards the south as usual. The interior of the “fangzi” is rough” [5, p. 25].

It cannot be said that the settlers began to develop the perfect desert in terms of sustainable architectural traditions; on the contrary, native camp sites were scattered along the river banks, Korean, Chinese villages and scattered fanzy were scattered along the conditional, not exactly marked border in the wilds of the Ussuri Krai. Another extensive quotation from V.K. Arsenyev is “Koreans live in farms. Their fancies are scattered at a considerable distance from each other and each is in the middle of its fields and gardens. That is why a small Korean village quite often occupies a space of several square kilometers. Returning back to the camp, I entered into one of the fangzi. Its thin walls were plastered with clay inside and outside. In the fangzi there were three doors with lattice windows glued in with paper. Thatched sloped roof was covered with a net woven from dry grass. Korean fangzi are all the same. There is a clay khan (heating system) inside. It occupies more than half of the room. Under this khan there are chimneys, which heat the floors in the rooms and spreading heat throughout the house. Smoke passages brought out in a large hollow tree, replacing the pipe. In one half of the fangzi, where the khans are located people are placed, in the other half with a dirt floor there are chickens, horses and cattle. The living half is divided by board partitions into separate rooms, covered with clean mats. In one room there are women with children, in the other - men and guests.” [5, Chapter 4. The incident in the Korean village. Page 44]. All of the above did not correspond to the traditional East Slavic way of life, when the whole family, all generations and domestic animals, birds, cattle offspring lived in the same room, crowding around the Russian oven with flooring.

Unlike the Koreans who was clearly supportive to Arsenyev, the Chinese caused him a strong dislike for the brutal exploitation of the natives (Arsenyev writes directly about slavery). As for the Chinese buildings there was mentioned “huge, amazing in size, buildings of Hanshin factory with a variety of services and workers” that stood in 1901-7. On the river Iman (Hanshin - Chinese vodka mixed with opium). According to Arsenyev, “strictly speaking, every Chinese fangzi has a small Hanshin factory, each fangzi has a mash pit and a primitive tool for distilling alcohol from bread sourdough” [6, p. 180]. In the wilds of the Ussuri taiga, Arsenyev often met Chinese "dugouts-fangzi similar to the animal’s lair," where the Chinese, he said, live in perfect savages.

Let us try to find out whether the presence of two vernacular traditions affected to the formation of typical housing for immigrants, whether they borrowed construction methods of Aboriginal people ideally corresponding to the monsoon climate of Primorsky Krai or stubbornly reproduced the basic patterns of the metropolis. Not being a historian and possessing extremely superficial knowledge about the first wave of colonization of the eastern territories, the author suggests that this movement was not homogeneous: there are three stages (overland, before the opening of “Dobroflot” flights from Odessa, sea and rail) and at least five groups with their own distinct cultural identity: Cossacks, Ukrainan, Northern Russians, Siberians and Old Believers, the latter being exiled from the Arkhangelsk province to the east under Catherine II and lived in Buryatia from the 1750s. After the revolution, several families of Old Believers moved to Manchuria founded Romanovka village there, where the traditional mode was reproduced until the end of the 1930s. Thanks to a series of well-known photographs (the author of the text saw an exhibition dedicated to Romanovka at Knevichi International Airport, Vladivostok in December 2018), it is possible to reconstruct the building skills of the eastern “family” Old Believers. In Primorsky Krai to this day several Old Believers villages have survived, the most famous of which is Dersu. Comparing the existing buildings of Dersu and the image of Romanovka, preserved in the photographs, it is possible to identify the degree of stability of the tradition of erecting vernacular housing of Old Believers. Arsenyev experienced complex feelings towards the Old Believers: on the one hand, he directly called them “the best population on the coast of the sea”, noting that the buildings in the villages of the Old Believers are strong and reliable, in the upper rooms that they live there soberly and prosperously. However, being a Russian officer, Arsenyev said bitterly that “undergoing persecution everywhere, they eventually ceased to feel like Russians and lost their love for their homeland” [6, 168]. (Further, the author shares his conviction
that in the event of a new war with the Japanese, the Old Believers would supply the enemy forage and horses. Most of the Old Believers (from Western Siberia, European Russia and Vladivostok) in 1908 were in the valley of the r. Amagu. They moved there from the valley of the Takem River, dissatisfied with the influx of Russian immigrants, with whom they did not want to live side by side. However, the Old Believers did not want to rebuild at the new place, fearing that the administration would confiscate their land and property in favor of Orthodox settlers.

According to Arsenyev “despite the fact that they have been living for 7 years already, they don’t have any good houses, they live in shacks ... so it’s not a pity to quit and go further north”. Primorsky’s Old Believers were not engaged in farming, and bought sable skins from the natives. They had close contacts with the Japanese, Chinese and Koreans, and transferred everything they had into money rather than investing in construction. Arsenyev sadly noted that “the Old Believers are friendlier to the Chinese than to the Russians. They willingly live alongside the first and hate Orthodox migrants. They willingly let the Chinese into their homes and are unhappy if the Russians come ... they should be careful about the information given [6, p. 158].

Ukrainians went to the Far East from Poltava, Kiev and Chernigov provinces and settled mainly in Primorye, where the climate is much milder and the soil is more fertile than in the Amur region. From 1883 to 1916, more than 276 thousand people migrated from Ukraine to Primorye and the Amur region, 57% of all migrants [7]. The construction methods, depending on the location of the outcome, probably differed, but this difference is less noticeable than the differences between the wooden architecture of the North Russian and the Central Russian provinces, from which North Russians migrated. All these "cultural codes" did not mix, on the contrary - by building up villages and streets, local societies persistently reproduced techniques typical for their "small homeland". Ukrainians built hut-huts or huts under hipped thatch / battens roofs, Russians - log huts under gabled roofs, and the size of the buildings, their spatial composition was different significantly, depending on the location of the outcome.

Russian in the Ussuri region at the first stage of colonization (mid XIX century) settled a narrow strip along the Amur river, then along the valley. Ussuri on the lower sides reaches of its tributaries, near Lake Khanka, in the coastal region of the South Ussuri region and distant patches near the mouths of rivers, carrying their waters to the east in the Sea of Japan. The absence of Russians “in the middle part of the country and in the vast northern regions” is explained by the fact that there are no lands suitable for agriculture. One of the first Russian villages was Perm (20 yards), founded by people from the village of Novinki in 1859. New villages were flooded all the time, so the settlers left the barely inhabited place and went to another place. Because of the floods, the inhabitants left the village of Fundin in 1864, and in 1879 Arzamazovka and moved to the large village of Shkotovo. Not less floods and floods were displaced to the settlers by the Honghuzi, who burned the villages to the ground (it was mentioned by V.K. Arsenyev, who writes that the village of Shkotovo in 1868 burned the Hunhuzes [5, p. 10]. Olympiad Vasilyeva recalls that in 1868 the Manza destroyed the village of Nikolskoye to the ground [ 8, p. 39]).

Arsenyev noted a significant difference in lifestyles in taiga villages, along the coasts, in Primorye and in villages along the Amur. According to Arsenyev, complete isolation of the first Russian immigrants and life among constant deprivations and dangers contributed to the formation of “friendly communities” that are not related to “political unrest and unrest”. The political nature of the inhabitants of the village of Permskoe, their sobriety, patriarchal nature and the thirst for self-education pleasantly amazed Arsenyev (“they are all sedate, polite, attentive to outsiders, always sober, live together and their families are not separated” [6, p.155]. Immigrants living along the coast, on the contrary seemed to him extremely unreliable: "In general, one cannot rely on these people. They are indifferent to the lost campaign, but they are very sensitive to any unrest, are interested in them and do not hesitate to say, “Everyone has taken possession.” probably it was said about Ukrainian immigrants.

Russian inhabitants of the northern part of the Ussuri region (inhabitants of Khabarovsk, Amur villages, the Imperial harbor and villages in the bay of de Kastri) evoke the least sympathy of
Arsenyev. According to Arsenyev, Russians who live along the Amur do not engage in tillage, do not keep vegetable gardens; live by fishing and preparing firewood for steamboats. Arsenyev hoped that when the settlers catch all the fish and cut down the entire forest, they will finally be forced to take up grain farming and gardening, but for now “the poverty is such that in the villages on the Amur River (Troitskoye, Vyatskoye, Innokenteevskoe, etc.), bread cannot be bought for any money. There is nothing to think about to find fodder for even cavalry and infantry platoon in these villages” [6, p.165]. The custom of the Amur peasants "having sold fish and finished the supply of firewood to buy the most limited amount of flour for themselves, but they would drink all the rest money" deeply grieves Arsenyev, who sternly notes that “restless drunkenness will continue in the village until all the money has been spent. In moral terms, they are incomparably lower than the immigrants remaining in the South Ussuri region. Laziness, debauchery, drunkenness are common not only among adults, but also among teenagers.” All this correlates with the Khabarovsk rating mentioned in the introduction, as the most unhappy city in Russia. Apparently, the patterns of behavior laid down initially formed the notorious cultural code, which had a detrimental effect on the formation of the habitat.

In 1906 there were about 300,000 Russians in the eastern territories; the overwhelming majority lived in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Nikolsk-Ussuriisk and Nikolayevsk. [6, p.154]. In Chapter 5, “The Lower Current of the River Lefu” in his travel book Arsenyev describes the Russian village of Khalcedon, inhabited by old-timers who had a hundred tithes. In the middle of the village was a wide street, the houses stood apart. “I entered the first hut. It cannot be said that the yard was clean, it cannot be said that it was also clean in the house. The garbage, the scattered things, the lurching fence, the door torn from the hinges, the washstand blackened by time and dirt.” However, further mentioned are windows with double frames in four glasses. Two frames escaped mosquitoes in the huts laid out smoke-houses and slept in the mosquito nets”[5, p. 41].

Since 1907, the resettlement to the Ussuri region has greatly increased and the Russian villages began to crowd out the Chinese (“the truth of the village is poor, unfinished”). The Russians went deeper and deeper into the Sikhote-Alian taiga. According to Arsenyev, the valley of the Tetyukha River (since 1972, the Rudnaya River) has become a real cultural center. “The zinc, silver-lead mines attracted a mass of people there. Stone houses, railroads, electric lighting, all this appeared in some three years.” From 1907, resettlement to the Ussuri region increased greatly and Russian villages began to crowd out the Chinese (“true villages are poor, undeveloped.” a real cultural center. The Birnera zinc and silver-lead mines attracted a lot of people there. Stone houses, railroads, electric lighting, all this appeared in some three years). One more colonizer is mentioned: forest industrialist Glasser, who brought Russian lumberjacks to the Sankhobe River settled in fangzi, taken away from the Chinese in 1907. Infected by the gold rush, these "adventurers" scattered across the mountains and valleys. But in the winter they came to Vladivostok for the benefit for immigrants “They first of all bought vodka for the money they received!” They didn’t know how they would go on to live, what to do or what to drink. It could not be otherwise: only two elements will go to such an isolated area due to distant terrain: 1) Old Believers and 2) adventure seekers, gold. Easy money. The first live in the northern part of the coast, from the bay of Dzhigit, the second south of the bay of Terney. Quite different is observed in the Old Believers. They are sober, careful people, all live in great prosperity, one can say riches (it is remembered that each of them has an expensive Mosin rifle, very expensive Zeiss binoculars, flashlights and so on ..

Not less important than the Old Believers, Ukrainians and the Northern Russians seem to be the fourth group of immigrants - the indigenous Siberians. In Eastern Siberia by the middle of the 19th century a completely mature, stable culture developed, derived from Central Russian civilization, but having characteristic features (Westernization exiled Poles and Decembrists acted as Westernization), thanks to which Siberian cities and villages cannot be confused with historical Russian settlements in historical photographs. Irkutsk merchants played no less a role in the history of the eastern territories than German merchants, their merciless competition provoked the rapid development of the architecture of trading houses, which turned into real palaces and towers by the beginning of the 20th century. However not less important was the tradition of erecting a Siberian cabin, optimally adapted
to the wild frosts, not familiar to the inhabitants of the central and especially the Ukrainian provinces. But, the main role in the colonization of the eastern territories was assigned to the Cossacks. This topic has been well studied by professional historians who view the Cossacks as a “local ethno-estate group of Eastern Slavic peoples” with their own traditional household culture consisting of two interrelated, but fairly independent “worlds”, in fact two cultures - military and civil ”[9-12]. The Far Eastern (Amur and Ussuri Cossacks were formed primarily from Baikal Cossacks and were replenished in the 90s of the 19th century by the “immigrants from the Don, Orenburg, Ural, Kuban, Terek Cossack troops and peasants of various provinces.” Thus the Cossacks brought from 5 other local cultures that tried to take root in the eastern territories. All the actors involved in the development of the eastern territories had a common feature which is a sense of temporality, randomness and insecurity, which affected the general structure and character of the construction.

Figure 1. The era of the Soviet colonization of Birobidzhan, not earlier than 1927, that survived without change of the hut. Private sector located in the railway exclusion zone. Photo: April 2019.

Arsenyev (like many other contemporaries describing the characteristics of the colonization of the eastern territories) wrote that “almost all the peasants and very many private landowners do not cultivate the land themselves, but donate them to the Chinese. Usually, the Russian host himself goes to work somewhere on the side, leaving the Chinese to manage the land as he pleases. The yellow-faced tenant immediately builds fangzis, hires workers and starts to manage. Looking at such a borrowing, it seems that a piece of China, along with buildings, gardens and people, was taken from somewhere under Chief and transferred entirely to Russian territory ”[5, p. 179]. The memoirs of the beginning of the 20th century often mention the sequence of housing construction immigrants: dugout-barrack hut [3]. Since the coastal rivers are widely flooded, the settlers waited for several years, identifying the flooded areas and rebuilt in more convenient / safe areas. In large regional centers - Khabarovsk and Vladivostok, it is difficult to find huts that retain the authentic look, but in Birobidzhan (Jewish Autonomous Region), during a field study (April 2019), private-sector arrays with survived of log dwellings were found (Fig. 1), which allow reconstructing the three stages of the development of a wooden individual house: “village” - “settlement” - “city”. The spatial composition and dimensions of the dwelling defined by the log module, remain unchanged, the main differences are related to the facade decoration, which is completely absent at the “village” stage (Fig. 1, a), which appears in the “handicraft” version at the “settlement” stage (Fig. 1, b) and acquiring unexpected connotations of Art Deco at the “city” stage (Fig. 1, c).

A is the earliest, primitive version of the hut - a log cabin under a gable roof, covered with a beam, with wired gables, the complete absence of decor. Similarly, such huts can be seen in the photographs in the Local History Museum of Birobidzhan in the exhibition dedicated to the first settlers who settled in the village. Smidovich and Amurzet (Amur Earthen Jewish Partnership); b - four-wall block, covered with a gable slate roof, with a cut for a passage, cutting into a paw, corners for isolation are decorated with boards, windows with trim are conditionally “snake” motif and shutters pediment with a dormer window sewn in herringbone. The transitional stage from the tough functionalism of the village hut of the first settlers to a more civilized, “suburban” housing, with signs of some comfort
(cold canopy that does not give living space) and primitive aesthetics (trim) testifying to the spiritual needs that have appeared; c - the later, “urban” type of an individual house, which differs from the classical hut-frame by covering with boards and elements of “architectural” decor (a rhombic pattern on the blades that make up the corners of the house, geometrical decor of the plat bands, shutters with panels).

Unlike the first and the second categories of the objects under consideration, whose cultural field is completely destroyed, housing as the basic is the most stable and archaic form of the vernacular, it is reproduced with little or without any change to this day. The importance of preserving the original matrix in the collective subconscious is indicated, for example by the logos of dairy products produced in the region. The logo of the brand "Seryshevsky", (village Seryshevo, Amur region) presents a typical small hut with three windows on the facade; rectangular in plan, the building is blocked by a gable roof, over which hangs a large larch. A laconic building devoid of decor is a generalized and immediately recognizable image of the main residential unit of the Amur Region. The Far Eastern vernacular housing is represented more mythological on the logo of the products under the logo “Farmers' Compound” (Blagoveshchensk, Amur Region). It should be noted that on the packaging of products manufactured under the brand "Native Side" (Komsomolsk-on-Amur), there are depicted recognizable wooden hulls of Holdomi ski resort. This object of the tourism industry is well known to the inhabitants of the region for the uninitiated audience is read as a wealthy farm houses: with balconies on the entire width of the facade and high semi-gables. The choice of the camp site is logically explained by the absence in the industrial Komsomolsk tradition of village farmsteads and huts - the city was initially built up in barracks. Holdomi construction is a typical project of “lengthening” of historical optics - the construction of large-scale historical scenery, allegedly actualizing the spirit of the place.

4. Conclusions
According to the statement of the author of the article, the actualization of the historical heritage of the colonial era, like any heroic narrative, can have convincing commercial prospects, and the reconstruction of individual objects and fragments of buildings from the 1860s-1930s. It can bring benefits to the appearance of the post-Soviet Far Eastern settlements. This is especially true of Khabarovsk, whose residents, according to a survey conducted in April 2019, feel most miserable in all of Russia.

This sad fact testifies to the fact that Khabarovsk citizens have lack of understanding of the space in which they live. Perhaps the artificial extension of historical optics and the inclusion of Khabarovsk in a large historical narrative will somewhat brighten up the existence of the inhabitants of the regional center. Vladivostok controversy is ranked first in the country in terms of happiness. Suppose that the origins of such a polar self-awareness of residents of two Far Eastern cities located 900 km from each other are determined by the notorious cultural codes established 150 years ago, when Vladivostok, having received the status of free port, began to be built up by an excellent North-European modern and noble Boz-art, and Khabarovsk, being a railway settlement, was content with the barracks of the bridge builders.

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