

Conservation Policy for the Catholic Community in Hakodate, Japan: Comprehension of *Gothique Tatamisé* and its Conservation

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Abstract

Hakodate in Hokkaido is one of the three port-cities which were designated as foreign trade ports in the middle of the 19th century when Japanese Shogunate government was forced to open its close-the-nation policy by the pressure of American/European countries. Ezochi (actual Hakodate), then, received a quantity of foreign population, including Russians, Chinese, Frenchmen, British, and Danes, which gave the city the feature of an international trading city. Christianity was accepted here although the official religious policy was anti-Christian as seen in the case of persecution against hidden Christians in Nagasaki between 1860's and 70'. Catholics and Russian Orthodox were two dominating communities with the presence of symbolic church architecture. The temporary reign between 1868-69 by Keraï, rebels against the new Mikado government with the participation of French officers (last samurai), induced the establishment of Catholic monasteries for the exploitation of uncultivated Hokkaido. The construction of religious architecture such as churches and monasteries as well as schools and orphanages was the iconic works among the Catholics. The Church of Sainte-Marie-de-l'Immaculée-Conception in the historical quarter within the heart of the city was first constructed in 1867 by the Mission étrangère de Paris (MEP), but reconstructed several times due to the damages by fires. The conservation of these religious architecture and quarters has been strong concern among the citizens in Hakodate. Authenticity is now a crucial issue as the buildings have to be the subject to the actual building code and the fire protection measures.

Keywords: Hakodate, Catholic community, MEP, historical quarter, port city