# Integration and Opposition -- A comparative study on the design techniques of Suzhou Railway Station and Jiaxing Railway Station in the face of history and culture

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**Abstract.** Dating back to ancient times, all fields in China have experienced a process of development from nothing to something and now to rapid advancements in their respective fields. With the new concept of high-quality development put forward in the 14th Five-Year Plan, China has further shifted its focus from high-speed development to high-quality development. In the field of architectural design, architects pay more attention to the application and expression of history and culture, so as to make buildings have more cultural connotations. However, many designs are often inarticulate, and the phenomenon of "aphasia" in architecture emerges one after another. Therefore, it is very important to further explore the techniques in architectural design so as to learn about the history and culture of the past, but also to see the new interpretations of the future. Through the study of a large number of architectural cases both at home and abroad, combined with the urban character and historical and cultural background of the city where the building is located, two design techniques -- "integration" and "opposition" -- are summarized in the application of historical culture to contemporary architectural design. From the perspective of history and culture, through the comparative analysis of architectural cases -- Cui Kai's Suzhou Railway Station and Ma Yansong's Jiaxing Railway Station, this paper probes into the "integration" and "opposition" of the application of history and culture in modern architectural design, providing a new thinking direction for the reference of history and culture in contemporary architectural design.

**Keywords:** New Jiangnan architecture; Regional architecture; Fusion and opposition; Suzhou Railway Station; Jiaxing Railway Station;

## 1 Introduction

The 14th Five-Year Plan [1] in the Chinese architectural field has set off a wave of emphasis on high-quality architectural design -- showing the history and culture in the contemporary architecture with high quality. However, due to the inadequate interpretation and improper interpretation of history and culture by some architectural designers, there have been a lot of artificial buildings that seek novelty, blindly imitate antiquity and violate ecology. In linguistics, this phenomenon is called "aphasia" [2].


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The phenomenon of "aphasia" in architecture has been emerging at home and abroad since ancient times. The Fangyuan Building in Shenyang (FIG. 1a), built in 1995, is a parody of the shape of ancient copper coins, which is stiff and boring. The Elephant Building in Bangkok (FIG. 1b), completed in 1997, looks like a pixelated elephant with a stilted approach; Guangzhou Sunac Theater (FIG. 1c), which was completed in 2019, is a far-fetched collage of Chinese elements. The Seattle Experience Music Museum (FIG. 1d), completed in 2000, has a rough, haptic, disorganized look. To solve the architectural "aphasia" chaos has become a top priority.

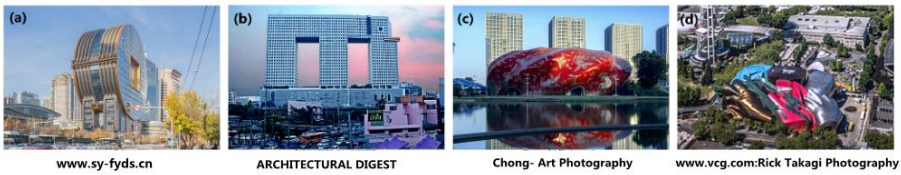


**Fig. 1.** (a) Fangyuan Building in Shenyang; (b) Elephant Building in Bangkok; (c) Sunac Grand Theater in Guangzhou; (d) Seattle Experience Music Museum

Jiangnan traditional architecture is an important part of Chinese traditional architecture, and Jiangnan gardens and ancient towns have a high status in the field of Chinese architectural culture. [3] From the perspective of history and culture, there are two problems in the architectural design of Jiangnan area. On the one hand, Jiangnan area has a long history and culture with distinct regional characteristics. How to successfully integrate the history and culture into the contemporary architectural design of Jiangnan area has become a major problem. On the other hand, as one of the economic and cultural centers, South of the Yangtze River is prosperous in economy and technology, and the architecture pursues the sense of modernity, science and technology and the sense of the future. How to distance the history and culture from the characteristics of today's architectural times and highlight the tension of time and space has become another major problem facing the architectural design of South of the Yangtze River.

## 2 Contemporary architectural design respects historical and cultural design techniques

Nowadays cities are developing in the direction of diversification. Sociologist Louis Wass put forward the concept of "Urbanism" in Urbanism as a Way of Life, believing that cities have certain characteristics, thus forming a unique urban culture [4]. Urban culture guides urban development and forms its unique urban character. [5] In architectural design, according to the differences of urban character in different cities where different buildings are located, two design techniques respecting history and culture -- "integration" and "opposition" -- are summarized in contemporary architectural design.

### 2.1 Fusion

In the application and expression of historical culture in contemporary architectural design, the new interpretation of cultural connotation and spirit is integrated with the characteristics of the current times into a whole that not only has historical and cultural characteristics but also reflects the characteristics of contemporary architecture. This design technique is called "fusion".

In 1978, the Italian Square in New Orleans, designed by Charles Moore, was completed in the United States (FIG. 2a). Charles sought a meeting point between the modern and classical architectural languages, and intermixed the modern features of the American style with the historical and cultural elements of Italy, such as maps, temples, pillars and bell towers, into the square design. It reshapes the living atmosphere of Italy, which is both old and new, traditional and avant-garde, showing the essence of post-modernism design. Moore does not blindly attach history to his design, but always pays attention to current cultural trends and integrates historical elements into them [6]. In 2006, Suzhou Museum (FIG. 2b) designed by Ieoh Ming Pei was completed in China. It uses geometric forms, light and shadow to design, and adopts the iconic symbol of Jiangnan architecture -- pink walls and black tiles as the overall architectural style, which is elegant and elegant. As mentioned by Ieoh Ming Pei in the Complete Works of Ieoh Ming Pei, "Architecture is the integration of art and history" [7]. In the design of Suzhou Museum, Pei made innovations in traditional architecture and showed them together with history and culture in the building, which made the building itself organically integrate with the surrounding old buildings. From 2002 to 2007, the first and second phase of Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art designed by Wang Shu was completed successively (FIG. 2c). The design drew inspiration from traditional Chinese landscape painting and used a large number of old bricks and tiles of different ages to form a space-time axis running through the ancient and the modern, realizing the translation of historical architectural language into contemporary architecture. The Pritzker Prize recognized Wang's work as being able to rise above controversy and evolve into an architecture rooted in its historical context that is timeless and even global. In 2011, the Goyuan Wooded Museum designed by Yengo Kuma was established in Japan (FIG. 2d). It combines traditional Japanese aesthetics with contemporary architectural elements, using a large amount of wood and Dougong peanuts traditional form, making the buildings both modern aesthetic and historical and cultural content. Just like Kuma's concept of "negative architecture", conducive to harmony between buildings and natural landscapes [8].


**Fig. 2.** (a) Piazza Italia in New Orleans; (b) Suzhou Museum; (c) Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art; (d) Goyuan Mu Bridge Museum;

## 2.2 Opposition

The historical old buildings are preserved, restored and maintained. On this basis, a building full of modern sense is built, which respects the historical status of the old buildings and emphasizes the historical significance of the traditional buildings. The new and old are in stark and straightforward contrast in the same time and space, with rich time and space layers.

In 1989, the Glass Pyramid of the Louvre Museum in France designed by Ieoh Ming Pei was completed (FIG. 3a). The old stone buildings around the site are in sharp contrast to the modern glass pyramid with its intermediate geometry. "A transparent pyramid would pay enough homage to the heavy presence of the old palace by reflecting the brown stone of the surrounding building." Pei noted [9]; In 2011, the Military History Museum of Dresden in Germany was redesigned by architect Daniel Libeskind (FIG. 3b). An extremely sharp and pure form made up of steel frame structure, concrete, steel grille and glass with sharp angles is inserted into the old museum building. According to Libeskind, the tension and subversion generated by the contrast between the heavy traditional architecture and the sharp new form are inevitably endowed with symbols of history and culture. He has taught courses related to architectural history and theory in many universities to help people realize the connection between the past, the present and the future in architecture, hoping to express the concept of historical continuity and permanence through architecture [10]. In 2013, Investcorp Building, the Middle East Center of St. Anthony's College, designed by Zaha Hadid, was completed in the UK (FIG. 3c). The design fully respects the original building and natural environment, maintains the discrete character of the college building while introducing the features of modern architecture. The new building and the surrounding old buildings form a sharp contrast between the new and the old, the present and the ancient. Conveys the past, present and future evolution of the college, university and city. Zaha's architectural forms challenge traditional architectural types and subvert traditional modes, but her design concept can make the fastest adaptation to various environments, which is a deeper progress [11]. In 2020, the French Museum of Contemporary Art (FIG. 3d), designed by Tadao Ando, has been renovated. The scheme protects the historical integrity of the original monumental building, and a cylindrical concrete structure is inserted inside it, where the modernism presented by the concrete material collides with the classicism of the original building. Tadao Ando, in his book Tadao Ando, said: "The 'renovation' I am thinking about is not simply leaving old buildings or replacing them with new ones, but creating a state of coexistence between old and new buildings." [12]


**Fig. 3.** (a) Glass Pyramid of Louvre in France; (b) Military History Museum in Dresden;(c) Investcorp Building; (d) Museum of Contemporary Art in France;

### 2.3 Philosophical foundation of "unity of Heaven and man" and "separation of heaven and man"

Through the analysis and study of domestic and foreign architectural cases, it is found that the "integration" design technique is more common in domestic and foreign architectural design, while the "opposition" design technique is more common in Western architectural design, which is relatively rare in China. This may be related to the different philosophical foundation of Chinese and Western architecture. The design concept of Chinese architecture is influenced by the philosophy of Lao Zhuang, and pays attention to the "unity of nature and man". Advocate integration into nature; Western architecture emphasizes the independence of the objective world, the separation of nature and man, and the dual coexistence [13]. Under the influence of different design concepts caused by different philosophical foundations, Chinese architectural design is more inclined to "integration" when drawing on history and culture, while Western architectural design is more inclined to "opposition".

## 3 The comparison between the architectural design of Suzhou Railway Station and Jiaxing Railway Station in the face of historical culture and traditional architectural design techniques

Jiangnan has prosperous economy and culture, developed transportation and large population flow. As the gate of a city, railway station carries the regional culture and historical heritage of a region and influences the first impression of a city. Therefore, successful expression of history and culture is particularly important in the architectural design of railway station. Suzhou and Jiaxing are typical cities in the South of the Yangtze River. In the process of development, the cities in the South of the Yangtze River pay attention to tradition and culture and pay attention to the future and economy, which are respectively reflected in Suzhou and Jiaxing. As a result, the two cities have very different urban personalities, which leads to the different design techniques in the architectural design of the two cities in the face of history and culture. Taking Suzhou Railway Station and Jiaxing Railway Station as examples, this paper compares and analyzes the application of history and culture in the architectural design of railway stations in southern China.

### 3.1 Historical background comparison

Suzhou Railway Station is adjacent to the commercial and financial center of Pingjiang New City in the north and the scenic belt of the Ancient Moat River in the south. The ancient city of Gusu can be seen through the gate of the gate on the other side of the Moat River in the south square of Suzhou Railway Station (FIG. 4), which is of great historical significance. Jiaxing Railway Station project is an old station renovation project. It is located in the core of Nanhu District, the main city of Jiaxing and the old city

center, near South Lake and People's Park (FIG. 5). The original Jiaxing Railway Station has an irreplaceable historical position as the historical witness of the great meeting of the Communist Party of China. The two railway station projects are located in the Jiangnan region, with similar climatic conditions, and are located in important geographical locations of great historical significance in the city. In the design process, they face a common problem -- how to make the history and the modern dialogue.

"One side of the soil and water to nourish one side of the people", Suzhou mountain warm water soft, thus raised Suzhou gentle Wan easygoing. Suzhou people's life is concentrated in the "beautiful, fine, fine, soft, warm, slow", the architectural style is also warm and elegant. With a history of more than 2,000 years, Suzhou has never forgotten its original intention. Under the background of reform and innovation, it still sticks to the original appearance of the ancient city. Therefore, Suzhou architectural design must point to "integration" when paying attention to history and culture.

The architectural style of Jiaxing, which is also located in the South of the Yangtze River, is similar to that of Suzhou, with a gentle and implicit temperament typical of the South of the Yangtze River. Different from Suzhou, in recent years, Jiaxing aims to actively build itself into an "important central city of the Yangtze River Delta urban agglomeration", pursuing innovation and vitality. In the field of architecture, it pursues "intelligent construction" and "green building" and actively participates in architectural transformation [14]. Therefore, Jiaxing architectural design must point to "opposition" when it focuses on history and culture.


**Fig. 4.** Aerial view of Suzhou Railway Station


**Fig. 5.** Aerial view of Jiaxing Railway Station;

### 3.2 Comparison of design concepts

Suzhou and Jiaxing have different urban personalities, so the starting points and architectural design concepts of the designers selected for the corresponding cities are also completely different.

Suzhou Railway Station takes "people-oriented and flow-oriented" as the design concept [15]. Cui Kai, the designer, pursues the design concept of "drawing lessons from the international architectural trend and attaching importance to the inheritance and innovation of regional culture, striving to explore the path of architectural design creation with Chinese local characteristics" and emphasizes "based on the local" [16]. In 2014, Cui Kai's Studio was renamed the "Local Design Research Center". In the design of Suzhou Railway Station, he referred to the Suzhou Museum [17] designed by Ieoh Ming Pei's predecessors and adopted the design technique of "inheritance + innovation": Combining traditional elements, historical culture, innovative ideas and innovative methods, the architectural design conceals the concrete horse-head wall of folk houses in the South of the Yangtze River, and transforms it into an abstract geometric sense of scattered. The traditional architectural elements are interpreted by modern architectural methods, and the classical and graceful urban character of Suzhou is expressed as the "fusion" of architectural design techniques (FIG. 6).

The design of Jiaxing Railway Station is based on the concept of "forest station, urban oasis" [18]. Different from Suzhou Railway Station, the design method of "inheritance + innovation" is adopted: combining traditional architectural forms, historical culture, innovative ideas and innovative methods, the architectural design is carried out. 1. Restore and respect the scale of the old station building to establish a very modern new station building, realizing the cross-space dialogue between the new and old buildings (FIG. 7). Designer Ma Yansong believes: "Good architecture first has cultural desirability", "architecture needs to consider humanistic, natural environment and other factors, from big cities to small cities to new cities, China needs to build a lot of cultural architecture, to avoid the embarrassment of a thousand cities". [19] In the design of Jiaxing Railway Station, he expressed the urban character of Jiaxing's innovative vitality as the "opposition" in design techniques.


**Fig. 6.** Suzhou Railway Station building.


**Fig. 7.** Jiaxing Railway Station: new and old station building.

### 3.3 Comparison of site design

Suzhou railway station site design pursuit of taste. Suzhou Railway Station has two squares in the north and the south. The north square is connected to the commercial and financial center of Pingjiang New City in the north. The South Square is adjacent to the ancient moat scenic belt in the south, which is more ornamental than the North square. It has quite the artistic conception of "taking the quiet from the noisy". It draws on the typical landscape elements of Suzhou gardens -- the corridor. In the design of the site, the landscape wall, lounge corridor, pool, bamboo forest and other square landscapes are arranged on both sides along the north-south central axis, and the unique courtyard form of Suzhou and garden elements such as corridor, bridge, water and stone are integrated into the square space to realize the transition between buildings, squares and people (FIG. 8).

The site design of Jiaxing Railway station pursues practicality. The north square in front of the station is dominated by the north-south spiritual axis of the old station buildings. Trees are planted on both sides. When grown, the tree canopy will be connected to cover the whole north square. The new building and the old station house are connected through trees, squares and parks, thus achieving integration while contrasting the old and the new. The South Square in front of the railway station will be the main public space for humanity and commerce in Jiaxing Railway Station area. It is shaped like a rolling green hill, containing seven buildings carrying the functions of humanity and commerce and a large area of central lawn for outdoor activities. The seven buildings scattered above and below the green hill look like green rings floating on the earth, which is very futuristic (FIG. 9).

The two projects focus on "taste" and "practicality" respectively in the site design: Suzhou Railway Station focuses on the expression of "classical", "artistic conception", "taste", the classical garden art with modern techniques to show incisively and vividly; Jiaxing Railway Station site design focuses on the embodiment of "green", "modern", "function", become a highlight of contemporary site design, conducive to the realization of sustainable development of architecture.


**Fig. 8.** Landscape of Suzhou Railway Station


**Fig. 9.** Square of Jiaxing Railway Station

### 3.4 Overall Layout Comparison

Suzhou Railway Station and Jiaxing Railway Station in the overall layout of the concept and design techniques are similar but different.

Suzhou Railway Station as a whole is symmetrical along the north-south central axis. The layout of station buildings is "two floors on the ground + one floor underground", which fully respects the historical style of the block where it is located and conforms to the architectural scale of the ancient city of Gusu to the south (FIG. 10a). The streamline processing mode of "advancing and coming out" is adopted, which effectively improves the efficiency of traffic transfer. Parking lots and commercial areas are placed underground, saving land space above ground level; The space layout of the South square draws on the typical courtyard space of traditional Suzhou gardens. Several internal courtyards of different sizes are interspersed between different station rooms, forming a space sequence of courtyards with large and small sizes, which plays a role in ventilation, lighting and functional separation while highlighting the artistic conception of Suzhou gardens.

The whole Jiaxing Railway Station runs through the north-south central axis dominated by the old station buildings: the new modern station buildings all sink, and the restored old station buildings become the highest point of the whole railway station and

the center of gravity of the whole project (FIG. 10b). The layout of the new station is "one floor on the ground + multiple floors underground", which fully respects the scale of the old station. The main traffic and commercial functions are placed underground, leaving a large amount of public space on the ground. Expand the ground park, reshape the oasis near the lake, return nature to citizens and tourists.

Both projects are located in historically significant areas and adopt the traditional Chinese architectural layout with the north-south central axis running through the whole layout, controlling the building height and fully respecting the surrounding traditional architectural scale. But the former is a "fusion" of tradition and innovation with traditional charm of new buildings, new sites along the trend of the surrounding ancient city, to express respect for the history and culture; The latter takes the reconstruction of the old station buildings as the core, maintains the scale of the old station buildings, builds the new station buildings with a very modern sense along with the trend, and conveys the respect of the new technology to the history and culture with the trend of "opposition".

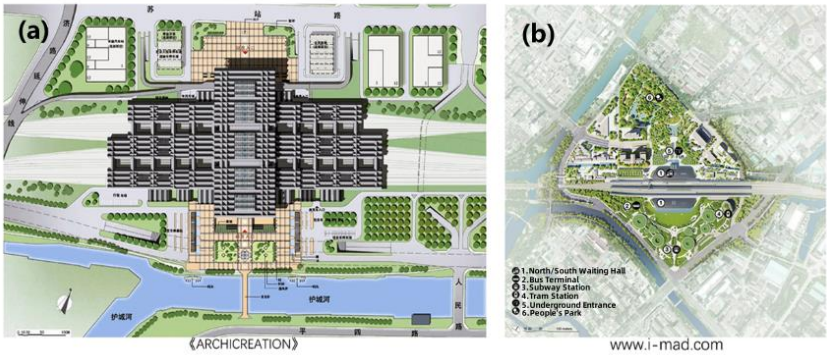


**Fig. 10.** (a) General Plan of Suzhou Railway Station;(b) General plan of Jiaxing Railway Station.

### 3.5 Comparison of structure and material selection

The design of Suzhou Railway Station gives a new interpretation to the traditional history and culture of Jiangnan. It replaces the traditional brick and tile roof of Suzhou with the roof composed of geometric shapes, and adopts the diamond-shaped truss system of two-way steel structure, which gets rid of the restriction of building structure due to the special shape of brick and tile roof, solves the problem of large span, and embodies the charm of traditional Suzhou architecture. The exterior wall of the building draws on the artistic conception of traditional Windows in Suzhou and integrates with contemporary innovative techniques. The dark wood mesh metal curtain wall is set. The white diamond-shaped ceiling in the interior is inlaid with dark wood-colored structural components, and the rigid structure forms are interwoven with the traditional wood frame structure forms. The "new" and "old" coexist, and the space layers are rich. The whole building features pink walls and black tiles, wood-colored window grille,

dark gray sashes and window frames, which are antique, fresh and elegant, a new interpretation of the traditional architectural symbols of Suzhou and a continuation of the modern Chinese style of Ieoh Ming Pei's Suzhou Museum (FIG. 11).

Jiaxing Railway Station makes a sharp contrast between the "old" and "new" buildings in the same time and space. The rebuilt station house retains the original style of the Republic of China and the clean brick wall materials, and adopts the reinforced concrete structure instead of the original brick and wood structure, which restores the appearance of the historical old station house and improves the safety and functionality of the building. The facade is mainly made of black brick, and the lines and doors and Windows are made of red brick. The top of the new station building is covered with a hyperbolic curved roof, and the outside is covered with long-span steel slanted columns and all-glass curtain walls. The waiting hall, ceiling and tunnel walls are all covered with anodized aluminum honeycomb panels, which can effectively absorb sound and reduce noise. The overall form and function of the new station house have a very modern and scientific sense, which is opposed to the architectural style and historical culture of the Republic of China retained by the traditional old station house (FIG. 12).


**Fig. 11.** Interior effect of Suzhou Railway Station


**Fig. 12.** Interior scene of Jiaxing Railway Station

### 3.6 Lighting Comparison

Suzhou Railway Station carried out "inheritance + innovation" on the lighting design of traditional buildings in the South of the Yangtze River. It retained the sloping elements of ancient buildings in Suzhou for creation, and took away the spirit of shape. The large roof adapted to the geometric texture to form many lighting patios, which

solved the problems of building ventilation and lighting. Drawing on the typical Windows of Suzhou gardens, the exterior walls of the building are set with a large area of dark wood mesh metal curtain wall to increase the entry of natural light and create a good light and shadow effect (FIG. 13a). The lighting design of Suzhou Railway station focuses on inheritance and "fusion" in expression.

In terms of lighting design, Jiaxing Railway Station also carries out "inheritance + innovation" on the traditional lighting methods of buildings in Jiangnan area: The roof of the new station adopts large-span steel slanted columns and all-glass curtain walls to fully introduce natural light; The photovoltaic building materials are laid and the photovoltaic modules are combined with the glass curtain wall to realize the "BIPV photovoltaic building integration", which is low carbon and environmental protection. The top skylight is provided with electric shading curtain, which indirectly adjusts the temperature in the station through opening and closing. Many patios and sunken courtyards inspired by the architecture of the Jiangnan region are designed to facilitate the entry of natural light (FIG. 13b). The lighting design of Jiaxing Railway Station focuses on innovation and expression on "opposition".


**Fig. 13.** (a) Lighting Effect of Suzhou Railway Station;(b) Indoor lighting scene of Jiaxing Railway Station

## 4 Conclusion

At present, with the improvement of living standards, people pay more and more attention to the filling of spiritual culture, the significance of historical cultural connotation is more and more significant. [20] In view of the local unique historical and cultural background and urban character, combined with the early stage of architectural design, this paper explores two completely different architectural design techniques -- "integration" and "opposition" -- in the face of history and culture in the railway stations of Suzhou and Jiaxing, two typical cities in Jiangnan region, so as to guide the learning trend of history and culture and make modern architecture richer in cultural heritage. Give the city more cultural connotation. [21] In addition, the limitations of the two architectural design techniques can be interpreted and adjusted according to different design conditions. At the same time, more historical and cultural design techniques

need to be further explored to enrich the architecture with more cultural connotations, so as to effectively promote the high-quality development of the architectural industry.

## 5 Quotation

(1) LouisWirth (1897-1952), a student of Parker, was one of the representatives of the Chicago School, and is widely recognized as the founder of urban sociology.

(2) In 2012, Wang Shu became the first Chinese winner of the Pritzker Prize. The award speech for Wang Shu mentioned that "his works transcend controversy and evolve into an architecture rooted in its historical background, timeless and even universal".

(3) In 2016, French billionaire Francois Pinault reached an agreement with the city government to lease the Paris Stock Exchange for 50 years, inviting Ando to be the architect of a project to transform the neoclassical building into a landmark contemporary art museum, the Pinault Private Collection.

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