

Constructions of National Identity: A Tale of Twin Capital Building in Early Post-war Taiwan

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between governmental politics and architectural practices in physical and ideological post-war reconstruction of Taiwan, which reclaimed political sovereignty from the Japanese colonial government in 1945 and soon turned into a quasi-country in 1949 as a result of the Chinese Civil War. Through a historical reading of the two precincts of power of the nationalist government in Taiwan – Jhong-Sing New Village (JSNV) and Taipei – the article illustrates how shifts in political orientation were reflected in spatial facts and how modernism and urbanism were politicized as exemplary representations of modernity.

Introduction

Politics is prone to be disguised within architecture just as architecture tends to insinuate itself into politics. From the distant past to the present day, the built environment has been an effective propaganda vehicle for the demonstration of power and the formation of identity. Particularly for newly established political regimes, architecture and urban planning have often played a constructive role in the legitimization of new authority, be it theocracy, monarchy or republic, and regardless of their variation in preferred materials and styles. Moving into the twentieth century, doubt arose over the role of modern architecture in forging national identity by visual and spatial means. Hilde Heynen questioned whether architectural monuments built in the last century, compared with the late eighteenth and nineteenth, could effectively perform as a 'power-radiating' or 'image-generating' device to represent the modern states (Heynen 1999a: 369; Heynen 1999b). Opposed to her view, this article explores the relationship between governmental politics and architectural practices in the physical and ideological construction of post-war Taiwan. Beginning with an overview of the post-war conditions of Taiwan, the article gives a historical account of the role of architectural practices in Taiwan in the visualization and concretization of identity of the Chinese Nationalist Party (also known as the Kuomintang, KMT, 國民黨), which established the Republic of China on the island after its crushing defeat by

the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. It reviews the two precincts of power where the nationalist government shifted between two contradictory forms of symbolism in order to establish the legitimacy of the new Republic – the provincial government seat Zhong-Sing New Village (中興新村, JSNV) in the 1950s and the national capital Taipei in the 1960s. These two cases, contradictory in nature, vividly illustrate how the shift in political orientation was reflected in spatial facts and how modernism and urbanism were politicized as exemplary representations of modernity. This essay – exploring the broad theme of the architecture-politics relationship through examining case studies in depth – is not exhaustive, yet it seeks to develop a new insight into architectural politics in post-war Taiwan.

Post-1949 Taiwan: The One-Province Nation-State

As a newly formed quasi-nation seeking a new republican identity to mark itself off from the colonial past, as a capitalist society performing some socialist practices and as an allegedly democratic polity under military dictatorship, post-1949 Taiwan is chosen here to exemplify the inter-dependent relationship between politics and architecture in the state-driven project of nation-building. As an offshore island of China, Taiwan used to be a very sparsely inhabited land. It was not until the Chinese imperial government claimed it from Dutch and Spanish colonial rule in the seventeenth century that more and more Chinese emigrated from the mainland. In the late nineteenth century, the Chinese Qing government finally realized the strategic importance of the island's location for maritime trade and then, in 1886, lifted its status to a province and established the Taipei Prefecture in the new capital, Taipei. This official political bond between China and the island, however, did not last long. Less than a decade later, in 1895, the island was ceded to the Japanese Empire and remained under colonial rule until the end of World War II. The cross-strait cultural ties and communications were thereafter more or less cut for five decades. After the war, the so-called retrocession of Taiwan to the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1945 and, most importantly, the nationalist government's relocation of the Republic of China (ROC) to the island in 1949, essentially transformed this former colony into a republican nation.

As part of the post-war aftermath and the Cold War conflict, the island and the mainland seemingly shared the fate of Germany, Korea, and Vietnam, where the Great Powers imposed separation upon a united entity and created two rival states in order to resolve irreconcilable conflict and establish temporary peace – by dividing Germany into the communist East and the capitalist West in 1949, and splitting both Korea and Vietnam into the communist North and capitalist South respectively in 1953 and 1954. The separation of Taiwan from China took place around the same time. However, unlike the three cases cited above, Taiwan, the previous colony of Japan, was not 'part of China' in the interwar period nor in the pre-war years. Instead of dividing an existing single territorial nation into two states as a result of World War II, the Great Powers restored Taiwan to China – the island and the mainland were 'reunited' in 1945 (C.H. Wang 2005).

The reunification, such as it was, did not last long. Taiwan and China soon met the same fate as the three divided countries. In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party defeated the Chinese Nationalist Party in the Civil War and, as a result, the

communists took control over, and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. On the other hand, the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek withdrew the troops from the mainland and relocated the Republic of China (ROC) to Taiwan. With the arrival of the nationalist government, Taiwan for the very first time achieved its political independence and absolute sovereignty and became a quasi-country – as ‘this time a nation *per se* resided in the island’ (Lo 1996: 66).

This event not only marked a turning point in the history of Taiwan but also shuffled the centre-periphery status of the island in the perceptions of different subjects. For four centuries, Taiwan had been a marginal island either unclaimed or governed by an ‘absentee government’ that resided distantly on the ‘mainland’ – of the Chinese Continent or the Japanese Archipelago (Lo 1996: 139). After the nationalist government fled to Taiwan, the relativity of centre and periphery, intriguingly, was diametrically opposite *vis-à-vis* the different standpoints – of the nationalist government or Taiwan natives.

The dialectic of centre-periphery was complicated. For the Nationalists the centre was exiled to the periphery, but for the Taiwanese the peripheral island now was centralized as a nation... And it was an instant nation. (Lo 1996: 65-66)

When the nationalist government was marginalized to the island, the immediate situation it found itself in was the dis-identification of Taiwanese and its status of being a minority regime. Early on, the Taiwan natives – descendants of immigrants from the seventeenth century onwards and other non-Han minorities – confronted difficulty in identifying themselves with the new immigrants (so-called ‘mainlanders’) and regarded the new authority from the mainland as an invader, albeit with some shared cultural roots. For the natives, their identity as Chinese had become too vague to recall, since their familial and cultural ties with the motherland had been suspended by the Japanese government for half a century. Furthermore, in the last decade of colonial rule, the Taiwanese were the objects in the Japanese colonist moral crusade, *Kōminka*, which aimed to ‘civilize’ and systematically transform Taiwanese into loyal ‘imperial subjects of the Japanese empire’. During World War II while the Japanese government invaded China with the intention of extending its control over East Asia, many Taiwanese were recruited to serve (in) the Japanese Imperial Army and fight against the Chinese. Given the past five decades, being Chinese had become a rather abstract concept for many Taiwanese (Lo 1996; Brown 2004). This dis-identification was further worsened by a series of far-reaching destructive effects of the nationalist government’s move to Taiwan: inflation, corruption, large-scale immigration and unexpectedly sharp differences in culture and language between Taiwanese and mainlanders. In fact, at that time the mainlanders made up only one quarter of the overall population of the island and a third in the capital, Taipei. Accordingly, the nationalist government was regarded as an alien ‘minority regime’ and faced peculiar ‘ethnic conflicts’. However, with its nation-scale military might – consisting of 600,000 soldiers and including the army, navy, and air force – and in declaring martial law, suspending democratic elections, executing rebels and suppressing uprisings, it eventually secured its ruling status and stabilized domestic unrest (Dai 1985; Brown 2004).

Ironically, although the autonomous status of nation had been afforded to Taiwan, temporarily residing the 'nation-state' – the ROC – on the island, the nationalist government maintained their claim on China. Taiwan was consequently charged with being the 'defensive stronghold' and 'the base from which to reconquer the mainland'. Just as the Nationalist leader Chiang's naming of 'Taiwan as "province", "base", and "model" and [the] identification of Chinese on the mainland as "our compatriots"', the new authority constantly 'constituted the people of Taiwan as sojourners on an island whose sole purpose was to be developed well enough so that the ROC military would be able to retake the mainland at some point in the future' (Benda 2001).

Considering that the nationalist government used to preside over 35 provinces yet now was trapped in one covering only 1/300 of the total area of China, its ambivalence toward Taiwan was perfectly understandable. Intriguingly, while its power was not even remotely comparable to its zenith in the 1920s and 1930s, the fabrication that it remained sovereign over the mainland and represented 'the whole of China' was forcefully defended and campaigned to the degree that fiction was taken as truth (C.H. Wang 2005; Chang 2007). In the mass media of the 1950s, the image of the ROC was intentionally distinguished from that of Taiwan Province. Chang Bi-Yu (2007) has examined the maps in elementary geography textbooks in early post-war Taiwan and points out the marginal, subsidiary status of Taiwan in the mind of the Nationalists. She writes:

The peripheral image of Taiwan was reinforced in the ROC Map, dangling on the right-hand bottom corner, marginalised like a fragment dripping from the great fertile land. The great land of China was the centre of the map. The gaze of map-users was drawn...towards 'our Homeland' – the true China. (Chang 2007: 4)

She concludes that the nationalist government wittingly constructed its own version of 'homeland' in post-war education. Indeed, for the nationalist government, the 'imagined community' of the ROC amounted to one billion people inhabiting both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The 'imagined homeland' – the fictional version of 'the territories of the ROC' that the national government deliberately sustained – was equivalent to those of the Qing Dynasty before it had been overthrown by the Republic in 1912. The territories claimed by the nationalist government were massively out of proportion to its *de facto* territories.

To keep up this fiction, the island was governed in accordance with the 1947 constitution, written before the nationalist government retreated to Taiwan. Among all the paradoxical consequences this fiction caused, the ambiguity between the central and provincial governments in the government structure perhaps was the most illogical, or even preposterous. In 1949, all the institutions and the entire system of the Republic were transferred to the island and continued to function as 'normally' as before. The National Assembly retained the seats of the representatives for all the mainland provinces that were, in point of fact, under communist rule. What is more absurd is the four-level government structure – the central, provincial, county/city and village/township – was also deliberately retained, despite the fact Taiwan was the only province actually under the jurisdiction of the ROC. The subsequent contradiction involved extensive overlap between the highest office of local government, the Taiwan Provincial

Government (TPG), and the highest executive branch of the nation, the Executive Yuan (P.H. Wang 1989). Pinning all their hopes on regaining control of the mainland, and as part of the claim that it was the sole legitimate representative of China, the nationalist government was loathe to streamline the 'province'-level governments. The existence of the 'provinces', on the contrary, was recognized to be of great necessity and was emphasized, because it symbolized the validity of the 'imagined homeland', which served as a constant reminder to the people on the island of the mission to retake the mainland (Y.W. Wang 2003).

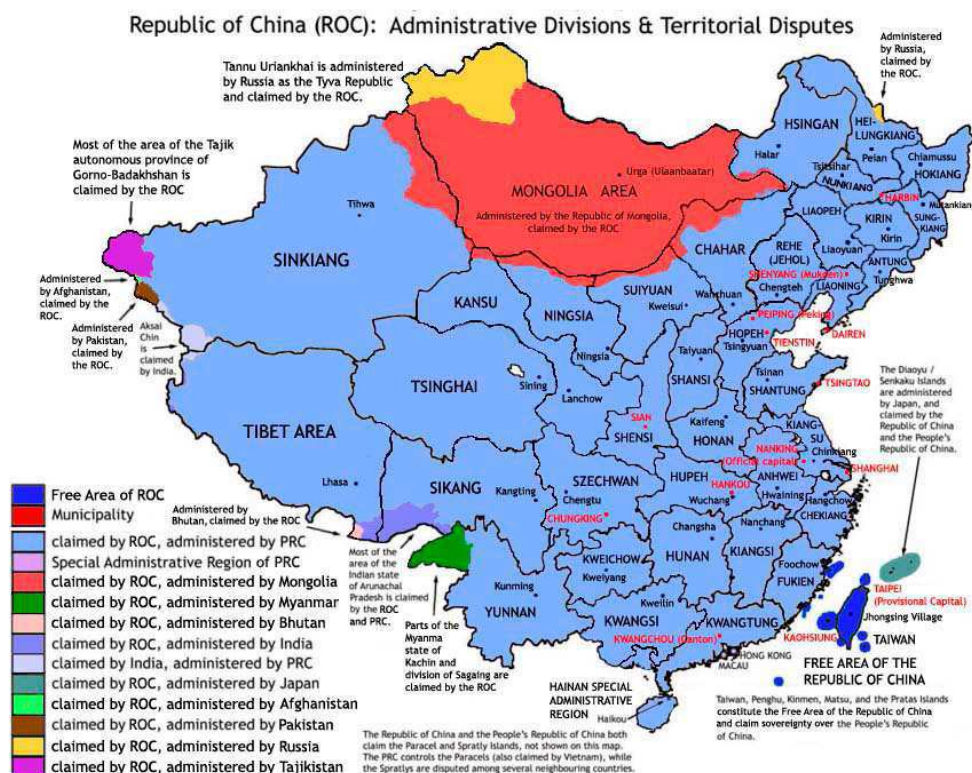


Fig. 1: Territories occupied and claimed by the nationalist government. The royal blue colour represents the de facto territories while the rest mostly are claimed.

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Model Province, Modern Provincial Government Seat

Residing on the island permanently was one of the scenarios that the nationalist government least wanted to see. Paradoxically, this sojourner government could only count on the 'defensive stronghold' Taiwan to launch attacks on the communists and recover the lost 'homeland' China. To raise morale and solidarity to fight against communist China, it prioritized two main tasks: first, the reconstruction and enhancement of basic infrastructure and, second, the acceleration of local identification with the ROC. The ambiguity of its thought-to-be-short stay in Taiwan eventually came to be the catalyst for the modernization of the island in the 1950s. Arguably, the most prominent example of the ROC's

ambivalence about Taiwan was the building of the new administrative centre of the Taiwan Provincial Government (TPG) – Jhong-Sing New Village (中興新村, JSNV; historically transliterated as Chung-Hsing New Village).

Since...the Taiwan Provincial Government has decided to relocate to Central Taiwan, the local populace of the cities and counties in the Taichung Region (台中地區) has been thrilled at the prospect of rapid development in the near future...Public attention is focused particularly on two small towns, Wufeng (霧峰) and Caotun (草屯). These two outlying areas, away from the main [North-South] railway route, are going to be the provincial government seat – the political centre of Taiwan Province...There is no doubt that the residing here of the provincial government will stimulate tremendous growth in the economy of the Taichung Region. (*The China Daily News* 1956; translated by the authors)

It was the largest construction and probably the greatest historical event in 1950s Taiwan. Since its establishment in 1945 the TPG had been situated in the age-old political centre of the island, Taipei City, which had been the seat of the Taipei Prefecture of the Qing Dynasty in the late nineteenth century and also the capital of the Japanese colonial Government in the first half of the twentieth century (1895-1945). After the Nationalists relocated the Central Government of the ROC to Taipei, the city was then given a dual identity – being the provincial capital and the national ‘provisional’ capital of the government in exile. The move of the TPG seat was fairly controversial at the time, since the provincial government played the major role in dealing with ‘affairs of state’.

In the 1950s, to reinforce the fictional vision of the vast ‘imagined homeland’ and to dilute the paradoxical ambiguity between the central and provincial governments in the four-level hierarchy of the administrative system, the nationalist government delegated considerable power to the TPG and empowered it to the extent that it was virtually in charge of ‘national’ affairs. The provincial government, performing as the leading governing body, dealt with a wide range of ‘nation-wide’ matters, ranging from education to economics, except defence and foreign affairs. A common refrain among former employees of the TPG is ‘[t]he provincial government was supreme!’ (Y.W. Wang 2003: 36). Various instances indeed indicate that the TPG occupied the role of supreme authority: the official currency of the ROC (New Taiwan Dollar) was issued by the province-operated Bank of Taiwan; several types of goods and supplies of services, such as tobacco, liquor, salt, sugar, electricity, water, gas, and telecommunication, were all monopolized by either province-operated or provincial cooperative enterprises. Of significance, however, was that all the public institutional buildings and large-scaled constructions launched in the 1950s – from museums, schools, hospitals to the building of the road network – were carried out by the TPG and the word ‘Provincial’ appeared in the naming of all the buildings. Given the fact that more than 99 per cent of the territory of the country was governed by the provincial government, it can be argued that the construction of JSNV was the making of a quasi national capital of the one-province state. (Y.W. Wang 2003).

The authority justified the decision on relocation – wherever it was explained in press releases, the government reports or the replies to the Taiwan Provincial Assembly’s questions – by referring to ‘wartime preparation’, and a ‘long-term

evacuation' of the provincial government when the country was preparing for a counter-attack against the communists (*Taiwan Shin Sheng [Daily News]* 1955; Secretariat of Taiwan Provincial Assembly 1959; Construction Department, 1960). In the end, the new government seat was situated at the foot of a mountain in Nantou (南投), the only landlocked county on the island, and far away from the western coastal plain where the majority of the population lived. To a certain extent, the designated site – alongside a mountain range and nearly at the geographical centre of the island – seemed to be a well thought-out decision, based on air-defence considerations and the geographical advantages of administering the island from the centre. Nonetheless, it was an outlying area away from existing urban areas and transport infrastructures and certainly not easily accessible (Y.W. Wang 2003).

Within a year, the new government seat built from scratch had the embryonic form of a self-contained settlement, despite the difficulty in developing a tract of virgin land and carrying out construction at a previously uninhabited site. The initial construction was completed in 1957, covered an area of 105 hectares and consisted of an office building district, a community centre district and two neighbourhood units laid out with single-storey semi-detached and terraced houses with a population of 1,000 dwelling units and a density of 100 people per hectare.

With 4,500 government employees and dependants moving in and the provincial agencies beginning working on the new site on 1 July, the JSNV was officially declared as the pivotal locus of administration of the Taiwan Province. Afterwards, the second-phase construction in the 1960s extended an area of 74 hectares to the south of the site, including an office building district and a neighbourhood unit – with 720 dwelling units in two-storey houses and a density of 125 people per hectare, adding a population of 3,600 people to the total. The two-phase construction constituted the major area that has been generally perceived as the JSNV.

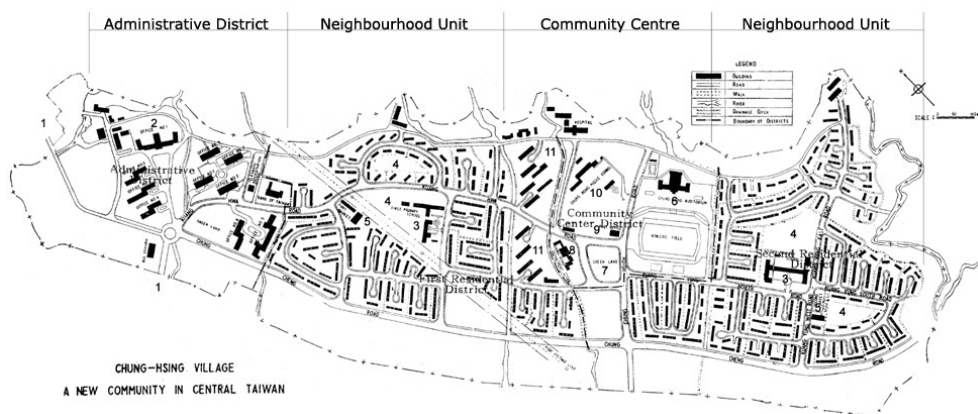


Fig. 2: First Phrase Construction in 1957. Source: Construction Department (1960) ©



Fig. 3: The neighbourhood unit © Chinese Taipei Film Archive. The image is taken from news footage, 'The Prosperous JSNV' (欣欣向榮的中興新村), available at digitalarcives.tw (數位典藏聯合目錄), available at <http://catalog.ndap.org.tw/?URN=3250995>. Accessed 25 January 2009.

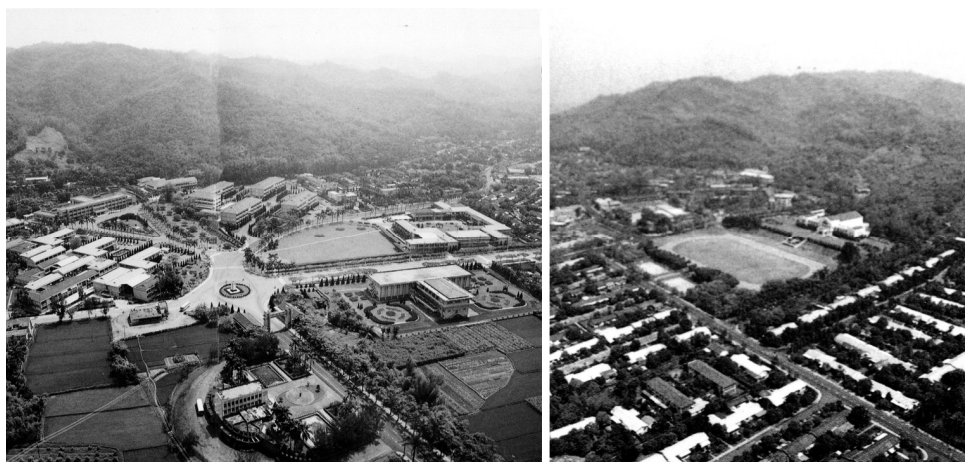


Fig. 4: Left: the administrative district; right: the community central district and the Zhong-Sing Assembly Hall (1959). Source: Yu (1984) ©

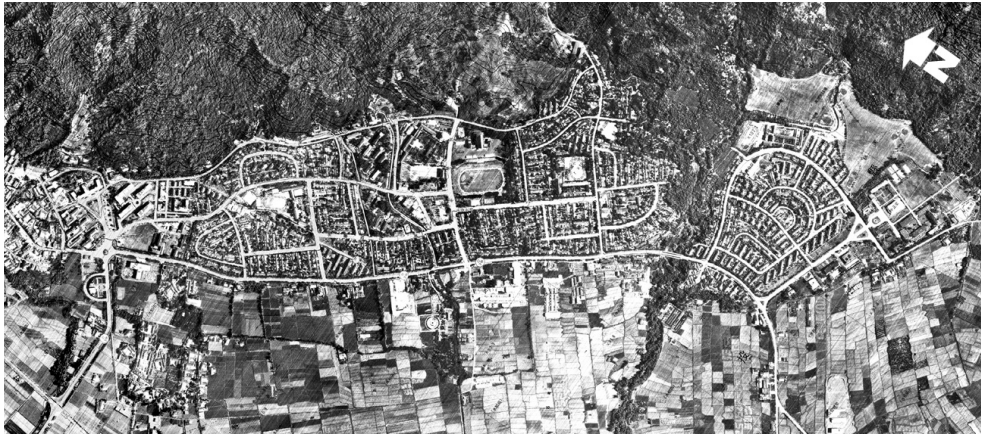


Fig. 5: Aerial photo of the JSNV taken in 1976 shows the range of the two-phase construction © Forestry Bureau, Taiwan Provincial Government 1976

Perhaps surprisingly, several typical morphological features of British suburban towns were recognizable in the layout of the JSNV. The strap-shaped site was set in a green belt, with a stretch of forest on the mountainside in the east and a vast tract of rice fields to the west. Land-use zoning, neighbourhood division and a wide range of modern facilities were all integrated into the plan; houses standing on large sites with front and rear gardens, tree-lined boulevards and picturesque vistas of winding streets created pleasant views. As to the provision of employment, it would never be a matter of concern in this purpose-built complex that exclusively accommodated government employees. Based on the concept of decentralizing an urban population into a self-contained settlement, an all-inclusive environment with amenities for daily living was created. As one of the planners proudly stated, '[a]t that time, Jhong-Sing New Village was arguably a model of planning' in Taiwan (Words of Liu Yung-Mao, the Vice-Director of the Construction Department and also the chairman of the *ad hoc* construction committee. Quoted in Lu and Institute of Modern History 2000: 87).

In the creation of this new government seat, the planners' reference to the British postwar New Town Programme – or its antecedent, the Garden City movement – was rather casual and not remotely conscientious. It goes beyond the scope of this essay to give an account tracing the historical background, professional milieus, and the importation of planning practices from Britain to Taiwan. Likewise, in view of the fact that the origin of the Garden City Movement, the subsequent experiments of the concept in the UK and the evolution of worldwide emulations and derivatives in the twentieth century have been popular topics addressed by a significant volume of literature, they are not intended to be encompassed in this essay (Buder 1990; Ward 1992; Hall and Ward 1998; Meacham 1998; Miller 2002). Yet it may be worth noting that, from its outset, the advent of the Garden City Movement at the turn of the twentieth century was for the purpose of social and economic reform, and it drew inspiration from Ebenezer Howard's seminal texts, especially a reprinted version of his 1902 work *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. Howard's vision of a planned city set in the beautiful, unspoiled countryside, was of a self-contained settlement that enabled the nourishment of a self-governing community with residents from all social classes

communally holding property ownership. It was genuinely believed that, by means of decentralizing urban development, the dreadful living conditions and urban problems in the overpopulated industrial cities would be resolved. The subsequent UK government initiatives – the interwar municipalization of housing supply, ‘Homes for Heroes’, and in the post-war nationalization of housing estate schemes, New Towns – were all intended to tackle the issues of affordable housing and demography (Swenarton 1981; Hardy 1991). The transplantation of the British New Town model into early post-war Taiwan, nonetheless, had very little to do with such reformist ideology but more with architectural and planning morphology.

	1st stage of construction	2nd stage of construction
Year	1956-1957	1962-1970
Consists of	an administrative district a community centre district 2 neighbourhood units	an administrative district a neighbourhood unit
Area	105 hectares (260 acres)	74 hectares (183 acres)
Population	1,000 dwelling units (4,500 people)	720 dwelling units (3,600 people)
Density	100 people/hectare (100 m ² /person)	125 people/hectare (80 m ² /person)
Height	one-storey houses	one- or two-storey houses

Table 1: Briefs of the two phase construction.
(Construction Department 1960; Y.W. Wang 2003)

There appear to be two factors that explain why the government seat was envisaged as a ‘New Town’ – or in the words of the pioneer planners of post-war Taiwan, a ‘Garden City’. The first factor can be deduced from the remote location of the new political ‘centre’. As the new TPG headquarters would be set up in a far-off and unexploited area, a self-contained model intertwining the functions of working and living was the most suitable. The second and probably the foremost explanation is that, in the post-war years, while the experiences of new town development in Western Europe and North America were widely exported to developing countries, the significance of this planning model had become internationally renowned and appeared to be a worldwide trend (Blair 1983). Since the model had been widely adopted in various countries and proven influential, the novice planners in Taiwan were driven by both necessity and enthusiasm to be part of this international movement (P.H. Wang 1989; Y.W. Wang 2003). Their remarks about the JSNV reveal that it was the success and prestige of the New Towns in the UK that inspired emulation. The remote location was justified by the authorities with the excuses of air-defence concern and administrative efficiency, and the employment of English suburban morphology seemed to be the *dilettante* planners’ longing for keeping pace with international

trends. However, an underlying factor that crucially conditioned the establishment of JSNV but was not made explicit by the authorities was the nationalist government's political orientation and ambivalence towards Taiwan.

As one of the 1950s political slogans goes, 'Construct Taiwan as a model province of the Three Principles of the People' – the 'Three Principles' being nationalism, democracy, and social well-being. Thus one of the most noticeable political orientations was to modernize Taiwan as a model province of China. It was intended to make a perceivable contrast in living conditions between the capitalist and communist societies on both sides of the straits (Y.W. Wang 2003). With financial aid and technological support from the United States, the construction campaign was stepped up and first was aimed at the improvement of sanitation, transport infrastructure and public services. Consequently, the JSNV, was built under the banner of 'Set an exemplary model demonstrating the town-country construction and planning in our country advancing into a new epoch' (Construction Department 1960); this was 'an official model of modern community' (P.H. Wang 1989). Although the building of this modern community was neither effectual enough to create a better society for all nor conducive to the emergence

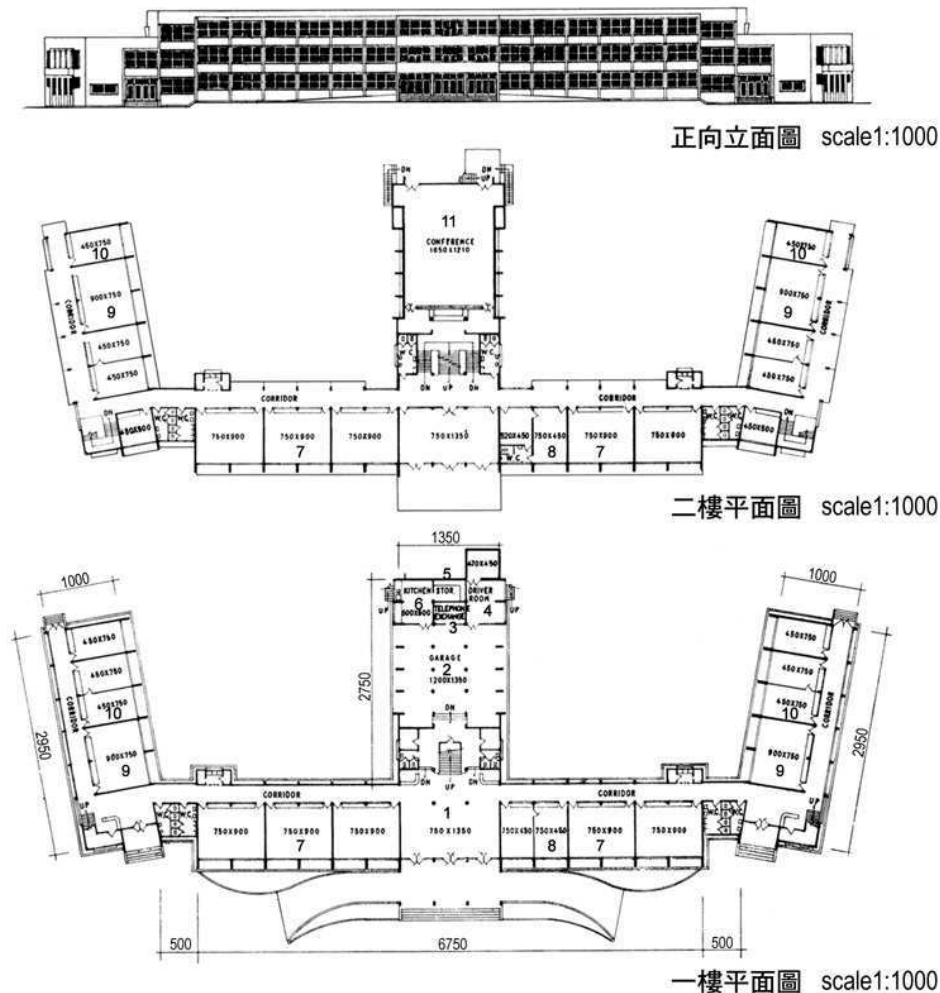


Fig. 6: The main office building of the TPG. Source: Construction Department (1960) ©

of other new towns for ordinary people, it certainly was capable of serving as a sample, a visible vision of the living environment that the populace in Taiwan, or even mainland China, would have in the foreseeable future – provided that the regions were under nationalist government rule.

As the representative governing body of the Republic, the TPG presented itself as a modern government organization and its new seat also exhibited a modern image, as a clear marker of the Republic's desire for modernity. The Western Paradigms – the International Style in architecture and the New Town development in planning – were imported and employed in the new government seat. Office buildings were designed in a modern idiom and excluded the use of traditional expressions. However monotonous and expressionless they looked, the simplified form, the absence of ornamentation, and, most importantly, the solidity of reinforced concrete and the whiteness of painted walls represented the rational, efficient, economical, and thus the modern.

The proposed masterplan of the provincial 'DC' – an interchangeable term with 'government district' in Taiwan – was a model that responded pragmatically to the residential needs of the government employee community as well as symbolically to the 'Model Taiwan' policy. Replacing the imperialistic expressions and high-minded characteristics of the traditional political centres in the past was the Garden City model – which resonated with the legitimization of the relocation of the TPG seat in two ways: de-centralization and de-symbolization.

De-centralization, the main component of both Garden City and New Town concepts, can be interpreted literally and metaphorically in the case of the JSNV. In addition to its original interpretation – de-centralizing the rapid urban development from large cities by the building of new satellite towns – de-centralization was liberally interpreted, or incompletely understood, by the JSNV planners as the creating of a seminal urban core to engender the formation of a new metropolitan area. The planners believed the JSNV would facilitate the development of a new conurbation and that the new government seat would join together the nearby towns and grow to a size equivalent to the city of Taichung in three decades (Construction Department 1960). Metaphorically, de-centralization can also be referred to the division of the sole political pivot into the twin-cored configuration that, on the one hand, geographically differentiated the provincial government from the central and, on the other, to disperse the prime targets of communist attack and reduce the possible risk. Whereas it was contended that 'a new administrative district accommodating all agencies of the TPG should be established at the centre point of Taiwan' in order to 'increase convenience and efficiency to the government operation' (Construction Department 1960), the new seat was located virtually in the middle of nowhere. Following numerous precedents in history and abroad, a neutral site untainted by any previous regime and not encumbered with any political identity was selected. There were optimistic expectations that a better government leadership would dwell and the spirit of the 'nation' would renew itself while the nationalist government was 'temporarily' confined to the island.

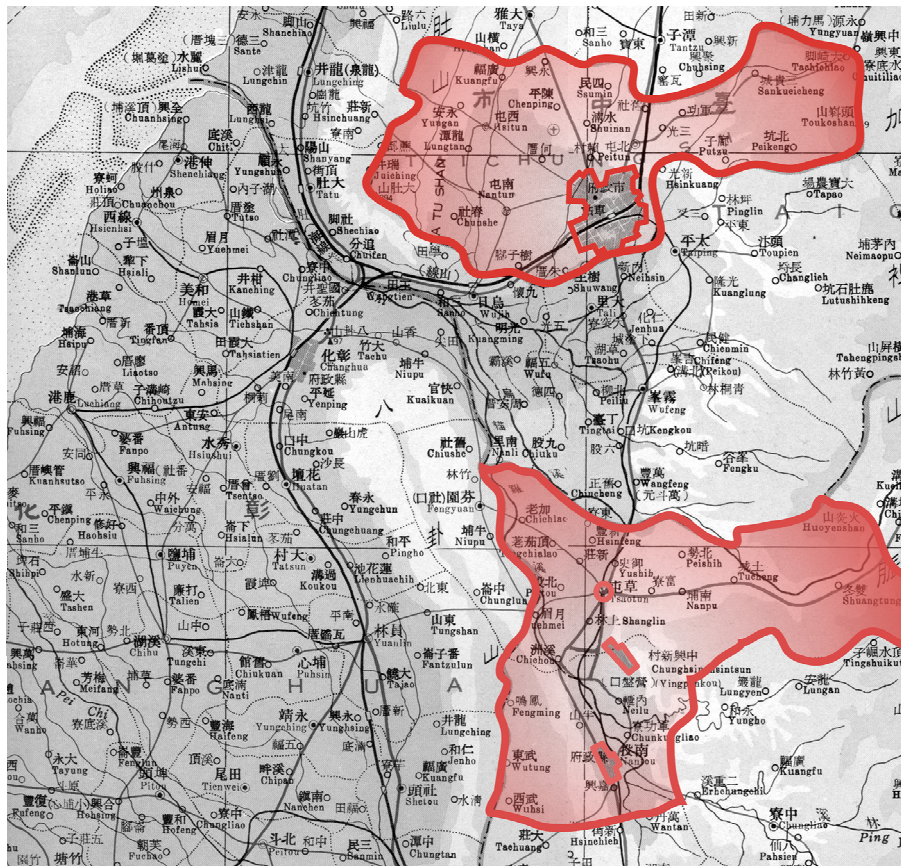


Fig. 7: The upper marked area was the central city area and the extent of the administrative area of Taichung City, while the lower was the anticipated area of the conurbation with the JSNV as the core joined by Caotun and Nantou. Source: Y.W. Wang (2003) ©

De-symbolizing the existence of authoritarianism and totalitarianism may also serve as an explanation as to why the so-called 'Garden City' model was utilized in the layout of a new political centre. As the nationalist government imposed martial law upon the island, the building of the new TPG seat appeared to be an opportunity to dilute the image of the nationalists as a totalitarian regime. While the nationalist government, as the minority regime on the former Japanese colony, needed to consolidate the validity of its rule, the TPG, as the representative governing body of the nationalists, played the key role in gaining support from the populace at a time when conflict between mainlanders and Taiwanese was on-going. Although the needs of employee housing was essential, it was not necessarily accomplished by an English residential model. A few alternatives of planned cities, such as the Modernist projects exemplified in Chandigarh and Brasilia could have been the templates for the building of a new government complex in Taiwan. As likely as not, the English suburban morphological characteristics were applied to the JSNV since the provincial government, as such, was a local authority and the atmosphere in its seat should, therefore, be charged with harmony and amiability rather than majesty and grandeur. The Garden City model, with its genial yet distinctive character, was

employed to replace the conventional expressions of colonial architecture and to de-symbolize the existence of a totalitarian regime. At the time that the nationalist government aspired to renew itself and present images of prosperity to dilute the depression and poverty of post-war reality, the JSNV, as the seat of the local government, was an emblematic site performing the ritual of the 'autonomy of a local self-government entity (地方自治)' and, as a demonstration of modern town planning, was an embodiment of the ideal vision of the future the nationalists pledged to offer.

Yet there is a discernable ambiguity in the interpretation of de-symbolism, since every act of de-symbolization inevitably ends with a certain enhancement to symbolization. De-symbolization, indeed, is not an end in itself but a process of re-signifying practices, in which existing codified signs are reformatted, given new interpretations and re-codified into a new signification system. In other words, de-symbolism inescapably involves re-codification and, in the case of the JSNV, its modernist architecture and mundane morphological layout had become the new mask of the modern state – that played a role in codifying new signs, destabilizing original meanings, and ultimately constructing a new signification structure. Moulded by a planning paradigm derived from the West, the JSNV was created and embedded in both the social and political landscape of Taiwan. This quasi-national capital was established as an icon of the Republic, ostensibly representing an advanced, progressive, capitalist society, justly dressing up the realities of political authoritarianism and socioeconomic totalitarianism. Yet from the moment the symbolic status of the JSNV was established, its ultimate fate was simultaneously sealed. Western Modernist architectural expressions in 1950s Taiwan were utilized as a symbol of the modern state, a tool taken up strategically, yet soon forsaken once it had served its purpose. Moving on to the second decade of post-independence, state representative modernism took on a new look totally contrary to the previous one.

Imaged Homeland, Nostalgic National Capital

In contrast to the Taichung Region gaining considerable impetus for development from the relocation of the TPG, the capital Taipei as the age-old political and economic centre of the island maintained its exuberant vitality and momentum after the move. Following the massive political refugee flow in the late 1940s and early 1950s – that added almost 2 million mainlanders to Taiwan's population, which stood at just more than 6 million in 1945 after the Japanese retreated – Taipei sustained constant and considerable population growth in the 1960s as a result of rural-to-urban migration. The population of the capital was originally around 200,000 after the war and then rapidly increased and exceeded one million in 1966. The city, accordingly, in 1967 was elevated to the status of Direct-Controlled Municipality under the jurisdiction of the Central Government. This status was the highest level of local authority in government organization and equal to that of the provinces. In other words, Taipei henceforth was centrally administered by the Executive Yuan and no longer by the provincial government (Hsu 1989; Lo 1996; Li 1999). The rise of Taipei in status, consequently, was visually materialized and visibly reflected in its cityscape. To be worthy of the name of the 'national' capital of the ROC, impressive edifices capped with

Chinese palace-like roofs – exhibiting a kind of regional modernism with distinctive expressions that greatly differed from modernist approaches in the 1950s – began to appear in Taipei.

From the late 1950s to the 1960s, there appeared a change of tendency in the ways the nationalist government exerted its autocratic authority and visual control over the capital Taipei: from de-Japanization to Sinicization (Yang 1993). In the early years after the nationalists' takeover of Taiwan, most of the colonial public buildings with European classical styles – the Japanese interpretation of European architecture – were retained and used as office buildings by the TPG agencies. Some buildings with distinctive Japanese roofs or at eye-catching sites were demolished. Examples of these are the Taiwan Shrine (臺灣神社) and the Chien-Kung Shrine (建功神社), which were built for the enshrinement and worship of the spirits of the Japanese state religion, *Shintō*, and were destroyed in 1944 and 1945 respectively. The Taiwan Huguo Shrine (臺灣護國神社) and the Commodity Exhibit Hall of the Governor's Office (總督府商品陳列館), situated at a prominent location in the street plan of the capital, were respectively reconstructed and converted in the mid-1960s and both given a style resembling traditional Chinese architecture (L.F. Wang *et al.* 1985; Lo 1996).

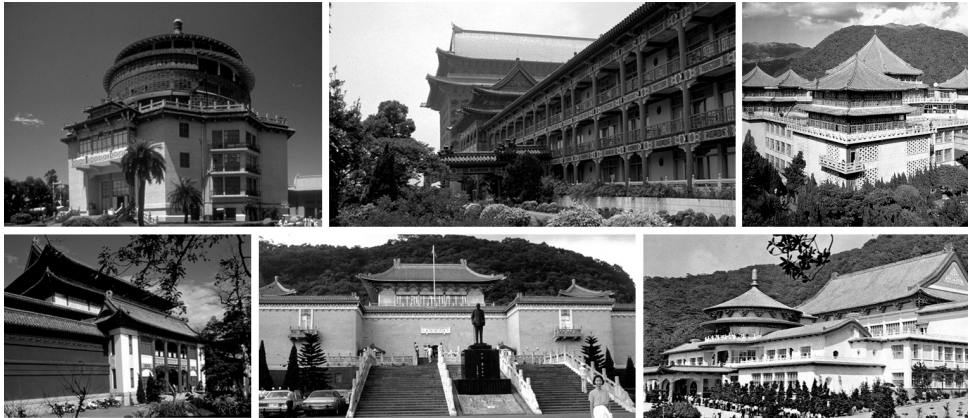


Fig. 8: The National Science Education Centre (1959), Grand Hotel (1961), Chinese Cultural University (1962), National Historical Museum (1964), National Palace Museum (1965), and Chung-Shan Hall (1966) © Kuo Choa-Lee

At a time when the possibility of retrieving the mainland became more and more remote, Sinicization gradually took the place of de-Japanization and became predominant. As the economy remained in recession and private property developers and contractors barely existed, most building projects were launched by the public sector. From the early 1960s onwards, the newly-built structures tended towards monolithic ostentatious palace forms, such as the National Central Library (中央圖書館, 1955; the former site of the Chien-Kung Shrine), the National Science Education Centre (國立科學館, 1959), the Grand Hotel (圓山大飯店, 1961; the former site of the Taiwan Shrine), the Chinese Cultural University (中國文化大學, 1962), the National Historical Museum (國家歷史博物館, 1964; converted from the Commodity Exhibit Hall), the National Palace Museum (故宮博物院, 1965) and the Chung-Shan Hall (中山樓, 1966) (L.F. Wang *et al.* 1985; Fu

1995). These magnificent buildings erected in the capital were titled with the word 'National', in complete contrast to the 1950s public buildings built by the provincial government that were all given a modern look and the word 'Provincial' in their naming.

Sharing some typical characteristics, this batch of buildings all exhibited the intent to imitate Chinese architectural formalism, mimicking forms and motifs of traditional timber-framed structures with reinforced concrete. They also showed the ambition to integrate the character of Chinese architecture with the distinguishing features of Beaux Arts architecture; for instance, the perfect symmetry, hierarchical space, and maximized mass with the insertion of void spaces, such as courtyards. The architectural historian Kuo Chao-Lee contends the language used in these buildings was highly conservative and monumental and expressed a stylistic confusion between Chinese tradition and Western modernity (Kuo 1985; 1992). Indeed, apart from the visual incongruity between the formalism of timber structures and the materiality of reinforced concrete, these traditional-looking buildings incorporated Western fittings and fixtures and spatial layout, and most of them were also given a 'modern' function – such as science education centres, museums, libraries, universities, and hotels. (L.F. Wang *et al.* 1985; Kuo 1992; Lo 1996).

The trend of the Sinic Revival reached its climax in the mid-1960s as a result of a series of 'national' events propagandized by the nationalist government and, most crucially, the launch of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution in mainland China (1966-1976). In 1965, the centenary of the national father Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's birthday was celebrated in a grand manner and, in the following year, the new National Assembly Building, an elaborate structure of impressive size and rich in motifs signifying Chinese classical architecture, was completed and named after his pseudonym as the Chung-Shan Hall (中山樓). In 1967, the Committee for the Promotion of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance (中華文化復興委員會) was established. As its name plainly indicated, this committee was set up to revive Chinese culture as an official statement to counteract the Cultural Revolution initiated by the Chinese communists on 16 May 1966 (Fu 1995; Lo 1996). Henceforth, the nationalist government took a dramatic turn in its cultural policy and deliberately promoted the Cultural Renaissance Movement. Ancient Chinese literature, society and ethics, citizenship and morality, and Chinese philosophical concepts and personalities such as Confucianism and Taoism, were added into the curricula of schools at various levels. Artefacts and artworks of ancient China were enthusiastically collected and preserved in the national museums. Architectural practices also responded to this trend and shared no less degree of enthusiasm. Exemplary cases are the Taipei Martyrs Shrine (臺北忠烈祠, 1969), the Taichung Martyrs Shrine (台中忠烈祠, 1970), the high-rise addition to the Grand Hotel (圓山大飯店第二期工程, 1971), the National Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館, 1972), the Confucian Temples in Taipei (臺北孔廟, 1972), Taichung (台中孔廟, 1975), and Koahsiung (高雄孔廟, 1976), the National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂, 1976) and the National Theater and Concert Hall (國家歌劇院及音樂廳, 1980). These projects, which were mostly competition winners, authentically reflected the nationalist government's intention to create cultural symbols of the nation-state, in terms of both the style and function (L.F. Wang *et al.* 1985; Fu 1995).



Fig. 9: Taipei Martyrs Shrine (1969), Grand Hotel Addition (1971), National Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall (1972), National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (1976) and National Theater and Concert Hall (1980) © Kuo Choa-Lee.

The polychrome embellishment and colossal mass of these buildings were highly visible in the cityscape and therefore enhanced their would-be monumental qualities. Most of them were situated in an open space and responded very little to their immediate urban contexts. As Lo Shih-Wei points out (1996: 141), buildings in the Sinic Revival style were often ‘a loose composition...in a specific field, or in a condensed gathering into a single body, result[ing] in an “object”...located in an open space’, which was totally different from ‘the *proché* principle’ of the Japanese colonial architecture that was filled ‘with void space to obtain the maximum volume when seen from outside’. In terms of defining urban space, [w]hat the Japanese built were more “urban moments”, while those built [in Sinic Revival] were just “monuments-in-urban-space”.

The cultural policies of 1960s Taiwan were apparently a deliberate counterbalance to the Cultural Revolution in China. In his division of the post-war cultural policies into three periods – cultural reunification (1945-1967), cultural renaissances (1967-1977) and cultural reconstruction (from 1977 onwards) – Allen Chun (1996a) regards the Cultural Revolution as the decisive factor that drove Taiwan from the first period into the second. Before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, in the period of *cultural reunification*, ‘the need to reconsolidate Chinese culture by purging Japanese influences...and suppressing any movements towards local Taiwanese cultural expression’ characterized the Nationalists’ cultural policies during this period (Chun 1996a: 55). The most illustrative instance was the imposition of Standard Mandarin as the single permitted language for both daily conversation and mass communication; the use of Japanese and Taiwanese were strictly banned from mass media broadcasting and publishing. On the other hand, the focus of government policies was strategically put on modernization and industrial development, in tune with the ‘Model Taiwan’ policies in the 1950s. Given the state of war and the sojourn mindset of the nationalist government, ‘culture here was never part of an explicit programme of political reconstruction’ (Chun 1996a: 56).

Following the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the period of *cultural renaissance* saw Taiwan enter into a new era showing tremendous appreciation

of the cultural inheritance of Chinese tradition. The promotion of the Cultural Renaissance Movement was 'a systematic effort to redefine the content' and 'to cultivate a large-scale societal consciousness' of traditional Chinese culture (Chun 1996a: 56). In sharp contrast to its mainland counterpart, the nationalist government projected itself as the guardian of traditional Chinese culture, despite struggling to find iconic symbols to represent the nation-state with a sense of 'Chineseness'. The movement it propagandized and embarked on was essentially a programme to '(re)nationalize Taiwan' by reviving traditional Chinese culture, i.e. 'nationalize Chinese culture...where no such culture (of the nation) previously existed' (Chun 1994: 54; Chun 1996a). Chun reiterates:

In retrospect, the writing of culture by the state clearly went beyond the strategic deployment of master symbols and the rhetoric of nostalgia. (Chun 1996a: 57)

By invoking 'tradition', the authorities appeared to resuscitate elements of the past, but they were clearly inventing tradition (by virtue of their selectivity). The government in effect played an active role (as author) in writing culture. (Chun 1994: 54)

Among various notions associated with the term *culture*, here it primarily refers to its political implications and/or pervasiveness as an embodiment of nationalist ideology through everyday life. In the political dimension, culture is not just *constructed* or *imagined* but often comes to be 'authorized and institutionalized' as its 'factual substance' is often much more insignificant than 'the rhetorical forms it takes' (Chun 1996b: 114-115).

It was in the period of 'cultural renaissance' in reaction to the Cultural Revolution that the Sinic Revival assumed supremacy in architectural production in Taiwan. However, such a revival of interest in traditional architecture can be traced back to the mainland in the 1920s-1930s when the nationalist government first enjoyed a short period of peace and prosperity after it overthrew the imperial Qing government and established the Republic in 1912. A few church-related hospitals and college buildings were built in this style. Kuo (1992) suggests the revival primarily was sparked by the 4 May Student Movement in 1919 when China encountered the invasion of Western imperialism and searched for its new identity in the 'modern' time. The term 'Chinese Renaissance' was often used to describe the search for Sinicism in all aspects of cultural productions and activities, including the search for modern Chinese architecture. In line with Kuo's view, Chun (1994: 53) states:

the struggle of nationalism which began with the collapse of the Chinese imperial system and has continued to be fought to the present day essentially involved the construction of a set of conscious ideological or mythological beliefs which could be used to cultivate a sense of societal self-esteem as a form of resistance to the West.

In the 1920s, the first decade of the newly established ROC, the palace style enjoyed growing popularity with politicians and was utilized as a vehicle to

campaign *against* the assimilation of Western culture as well as *for* the formulation of an identity for the modern nation-state. A case in point was the Mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen (中山陵, 1925-1929) in Nanjing, which integrated traditional imperial tombs into the materiality of modern architecture. Yet the most prominent case was arguably 'the Reconstruction Project of the New Capital Nanjing' (南京首都計畫, 1929), which was the nationalists' unrealized capital-building project conceived in its heyday on the mainland. The project included more than two hundred institutional buildings in the Sinic Revival style yet was only partially realized due to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. The Chinese Renaissance style on the 1920s-1930s mainland, as Kuo (1992: 217) contends, was 'the metaphor of architectural formality from the new "Republic"'.

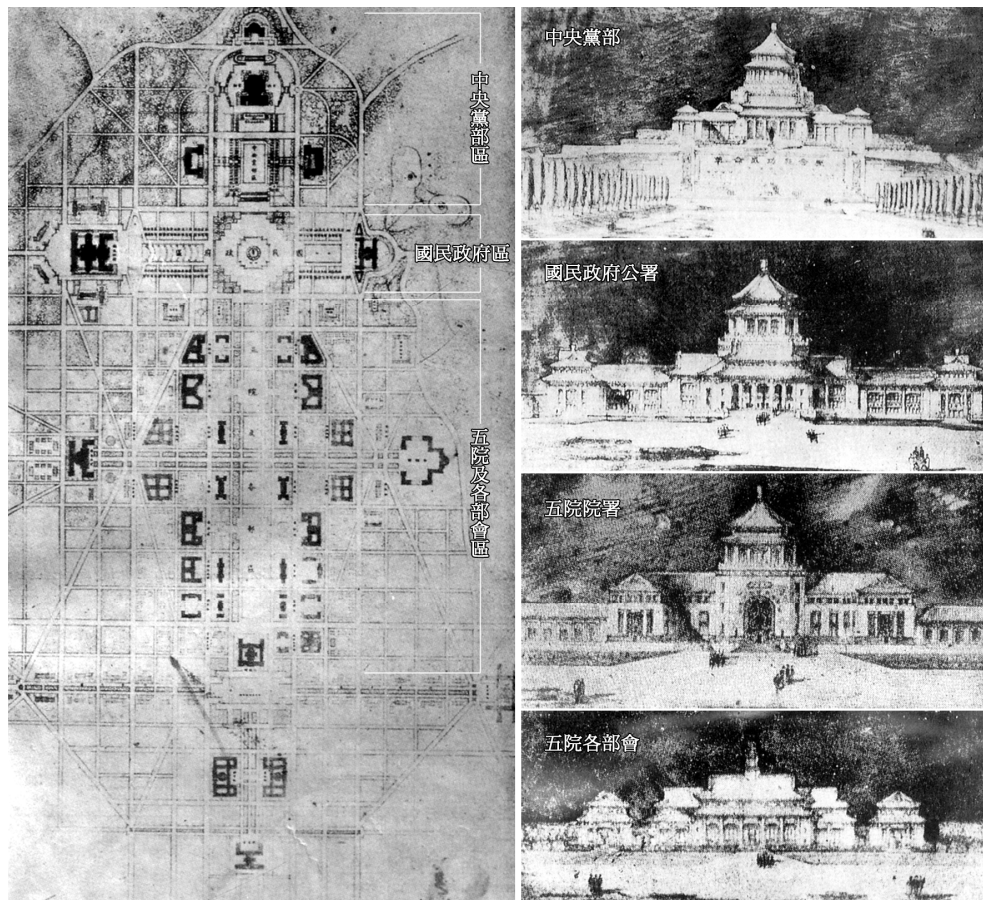


Fig. 10: The Reconstruction Project of the New Capital Nanjing (1929) ©

The use of culture to arouse a heightened sense of societal consciousness was the fundamental strategy of the nationalist government in the ideological battle with its chief opponents at two different points of time: Western imperialism from the 1920s to 1930s and the Chinese communists in the 1960s. In the interwar period, the use of culture and the revival of tradition were instigated to fight against the assimilation of Western culture and various invasions of foreign

countries. Yet in post-war Taiwan, they were 'a specific response to the threat of communism posed by mainland China...[T]he invoking of tradition represented an ideologically conservative response to the radical visions of a Communist national polity...[The] changing constructions of traditional culture throughout the postwar period had to reflect, more importantly, changing utopian visions of a modern Nationalist polity' (Chun 1994: 53). In fact, what had been constructed and manifested in the 1960s cityscape of Taipei was the very antithesis of the communist government's construction of national identity in the 1960s. There were two key events: the Ten Great Constructions for the tenth anniversary of the PRC in 1959 and the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

As part of Mao's proposal for the 'Great Leap Forward' (1958-1960) into modernization through mass production, a grandiose construction project was launched in Beijing, in which ten majestic public buildings were swiftly erected within a time limit of ten months – by the deadline of 1 October 1959, the tenth national anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Gong *et al.* 1989; Fu 1995; Macfarquhar *et al.* 1997). The 'Ten Great Constructions' exhibited a mixture of styles – modernist, traditionalist and Stalinist. The Chinese People's Revolutionary Military Museum (中國人民革命軍事博物館, 1959) featured some typical characteristics of Soviet architecture. The Great Hall of the People (人民大會堂, 1959) and the Beijing Railway Station (北京火車站, 1959) were built in the so-called 'Sino-Soviet' style, in which the Stalinist style was refined by replacing Gothic steeples with Chinese ceramic roofs. Other buildings, such as the Ethnic Cultural Palace (民族文化宮, 1959) and the National Agriculture Exhibition Hall (全國農業展覽館, 1959), incorporated expressions of Chinese traditional architecture with aspects of Western modernism. Despite the mixture of styles, the Ten Great Constructions, with the immense scale and commemorative expressions, transformed Beijing into the Chinese communist capital.



Fig. 11: The Ten Great Constructions in Beijing. Clockwise from top left: Great Hall of the People (1959), National Museum of China (1959), Ethnic Cultural Palace (1959), Beijing Railway Station (1959), Chinese People's Revolutionary Military Museum (1959) © Kuo Choa-Lee

Following the large-scale capital building project in Beijing, the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 further fired the nationalist government with enthusiasm for the Sinic proper. During the decade-long unrest, intellectuals were attacked, sent to rural labor camps or killed in order to rid China of 'bourgeois'

influences; education was halted as schools were closed and university entrance exams were cancelled; ancient sites and historical buildings suffered devastating damage; antiques, books, paintings, and anything associated with 'old ways of thinking' were wiped out. To counteract the communist government's attempt to eradicate traditional Chinese culture, the nationalist government vigorously upheld the traditional values of Chinese culture on the island.

The revival of Sinicism in architecture in Taiwan was employed as an official representation of the ideological construction of national identity in multiple ways. First, massive concrete Sinic edifices were erected to dilute the distinctive character of the colonial cityscape featuring stone architecture. Moreover, the reproduction of orthodox palace forms with traditional façades served different purposes for different subjects. For the Taiwanese natives, these buildings were potent showpieces to demonstrate how impressive the historic buildings were in the imperial cities on the mainland. For the mainlanders, they were a set of substitutes, comforting their nostalgia for their homeland across the straits. For all the people on the island, they served as a reminder that the mission of 'Counterattack the communists! Reconquer the mainland! Rescue China!' had yet to be accomplished. More importantly, the employment of the imperial palace style, instead of vernacular dwelling types of the ordinary people, implied that the Sinic Revival had more to do with the ancient capital, Beijing. Lo (1996: 141) argues that:

Through diverse interpretations and applications throughout history, [the palace style] had become a cultural icon employed in complicated constructions of large scale. And due to its being a fundamental schemata [sic] deeply embedded in the Chinese mind for generations, it became ritualized and symbolized, and then specially dedicated to the status of the empire of the nation.

Palace styles were, therefore, subtly apprehended as metaphors for validating the orthodoxy of the nation in Taiwan or, as Yang Tsung-Rong (1993) contends, the cultural construction of the nation. It was a means for the nationalist government to re-appropriate the status of Taiwan – the temporarily centralized periphery – and 'to symbolize the central status of Taipei as the capital of the nation rather than a center only on the local level', however 'provisional' it would be (Lo 1996: 67).

Sites Depicting the Janus-Faced Visionary Nation-scapes

Since ancient times, architectural representations have been conceived as an effective tool for the legitimization of new regimes and the consolidation of political power. Even in the last century, modern architecture exhibited no less capability to generate new symbolic representation. Its role in identity formation has always been recognized and utilized and, perhaps, will be *ad infinitum*. We have seen, and will continue to witness, a constant return to the belief that architectural representations can instill something more than just the visual into people. As Lawrence Vale states:

For many powerful regimes in the twentieth century as before...architectural and urbanistic authoritarianism has retained its appeal. Whatever the sweeping promise of architectural modernism, this century will also be remembered for its rearguard actions. Sponsors of new construction...have continued to lay claim to power through appropriating the image, metaphors, or ordering principles of past architectural styles. (Vale 1999: 392)

As a symbolic landmark in the post-war reconstruction, the JSNV symbolized the commencement of a new epoch initiated by the nationalist government. It was also a perfect embodiment of the hasty assimilation of local elite intellectuals into Western cultures. With the arrival of the nationalist government and its geopolitical dependency on the US, the process of modernization in post-war Taiwan was driven and accelerated by both internal aspiration and external force. In the endeavour to create an image of an advanced, progressive capitalist society on the island, the new authority directed the development of Taiwan towards a model of 'Modern Province'. While the nationalist government distanced itself from domestic affairs and devoted itself to making preparations for the civil war, the TPG was granted total supremacy to govern the island and 'province-wide' matters. Propelled by fear of air raids and in the name of administrative efficiency, a new headquarters for the provincial government was established in the heart of the island. Built from scratch was the most modern, well-equipped 'new village' to date. This modern yet tranquil-looking 'new village', as a visible showpiece of modern habitation, was created to project a positive image of the nationalist government as a reformer and, also, to portray the provincial government as an incarnation of autonomy and modesty that a 'local' government was supposed to be. Certainly, here the word *modern* does not refer only to sheer *newness* but mainly denotes the *Western, imported and foreign*. The abstract language of modern architecture, which was supposed to be liberated from metaphorical expression and symbolization, was used as a rhetorical device and a propaganda vehicle to represent a prosperous future. The JSNV, the making of a quasi-national capital, reflected the tottering regime's very desire to nourish a new identity of the 'one-province' state after its crushing defeat by the communists in China proper.

On the other hand, in the search for a new type of architecture that was modern yet distinctly Chinese, palace-style architecture was introduced to the island, translating the ambiguous and indistinct 'national' past into tangible forms and accessible places. In the quest for modern Chinese architecture, the necessity of reinterpreting Sinicism arose. Imitating, extracting or reinventing traditional forms were the typical approaches to stylizing modern buildings with rhetorical representations of Chineseness. However, to create contemporary edifices evoking majesty and grandeur for the 'temporary' national capital, it was the Chinese monumental tradition which was chosen to be incorporated into contemporary construction and technology in preference to the vernacular. These buildings became political emblems, enhancing the blurred image of the 'nation' when the in-exile nationalist government no longer had control over the mainland. In post-war Taiwan, palace-style architecture served triple purposes, functioning as a dilutant to counterbalance the Japanese colonial cityscape of stone buildings; as a declaration to legitimize the validity of the nationalist government's

rule; and as an implement to counteract the effects of communist ideology. The introduction of the palace style to the island, nonetheless, accentuated the culturally and politically peripheral position of Taiwan and connoted its cultural impoverishment. The Sinic Revival can be charged with the promotion of a nostalgic national myth at the expense of the indigenous culture of Taiwanese natives and their societal self-awareness. As the adopted traditional styles were chosen from a variety of eras instead of a single period to glorify a particular regime, the expression of collective identity of the nation-state implies that the 'imagined community' of the state was based on a homogeneous and harmonized cultural entity – whereby the visual presentation of orthodox Chinese culture could be consolidated and the problematic model of the one-province nation-state would be veiled.

Both the JSNV and Taipei were of strategic importance in the construction and promotion of national identity. While the former presented itself as a sort of pseudo-Western modern architecture that was rid of ornamentation and based on systemized techniques and standardized production, the latter reasserted tradition and communicated with the public by means of literal interpretations. Despite the use of different metaphors and symbolism, both were located fairly and squarely within the authorized schemata of national modernism. The intent to create highly legible expressions of national identity was explicit. If the expressions embodied in the two cases are related to a wider geographical and cultural context, the intention to vie with the communists, the nationalists' old rival, was overt.

In a historical account mainly centred upon the contradictory visions of state representational modernism, some collateral information on these two dominant architectural trends was inevitably left out from this essay's selective discussion. In the case of the JSNV, despite the modernist approaches and universal rhetoric, the constructional techniques and structural details of the buildings, as well as the morphological arrangement of street layouts, were hardly 'genuinely modern' and the links with traditional practices or customs were often omnipresent. Likewise, neither does this review intend to degrade the role of palace-style buildings and their surrounding fields as civil facilities and public spaces, although this aspect was barely addressed. The conception of *modern Chinese architecture* itself is a substantial topic, and the evolution of this concept, from symbolism and vernacularism in the past to regionalism or post-modernism nowadays, has also shown the tremendous complexity of the topic. On this account, this essay avoided talking in terms of these 'isms' and the various issues that go with them. Consequently, due credit may not be fairly given to the projects and the architects who pioneered the conception, such as Lu Yu-Jun (盧毓駿), Wang Da-Hong (王大閎), Chang Chao-Kang (張肇康), Yu Yueh-Chen (虞曰鎮), Yang Cho-Cheng (楊卓成) and Hsiu Tse-Lan (修澤蘭) to name but a few.

In the pursuit of a new monumentality to represent the Republic, the JSNV and the capital Taipei worked toward the same goal yet in opposite directions. Whereas the politically charged modernism and urbanism of the JSNV were interpreted in abstract terms, Sinic architecture in Taipei was either derived from or reinvented traditional styles. Whereas both were the imagined and invented space of the nation and important sites for the depiction of national unity, they also revealed the ambiguous and contradictory nature of modern nationalism.

Perhaps, the two-faced god in Roman mythology, Janus, is in some way analogous to the paradox that was inherent in the nationalist government's conflicting visions of national identity. As the god of gates and being presented with two faces looking in opposite directions, Janus was also known as a figure composed from two polarities or contrasts in the progression from the past to the future, or in the transition from one vision to another. The contradictory interpretations of national modernism in post-war Taiwan were successively, or even simultaneously, abstract and literal, imagined and material. 'Especially subtle, powerful, and common are buildings that reinforce a belief that people's ties to a heroic past or a promising future are their important identities' (Murray Edelman 1995, quoted from Vale 1999: 392). The formation of national identity relied on the construction of visions of an idealized future as much as building politically strategic connections to a glorified past.

Acknowledgements

This article was first presented at the PhD research conference, *Telling Places: Narrative and Identity in Art and Architecture*, organized by the Bartlett School of Architecture and the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, in London on 4-5 December 2007. The authors would like to thank Professor Adrian Forty for his insightful comments at the Conference. Thanks are also due to the two anonymous referees for giving critical and constructive recommendations.

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