

Education on Classical Architecture and Architectural Practice in Taiwan

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Abstract

Classical architectural elements in Taiwan were first used by the Japanese colonizers between 1895 and 1945 as symbols of westernization and advance. Education on architecture opened to Taiwanese from 1920s, and a few Taiwanese architects continued to practice the classical style after the Japanese left Taiwan. Postwar competitions among Taiwanese students show that the classical style was still taught, but was rarely practiced after 1950s. The government of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) rarely promoted architectural style of western antiquity, as the American aid to the government resulted in a preference to American culture. Also the poor economy of Taiwan resulted to a construction that was mainly functional and frugal. Additionally, architects influenced by contemporary styles, such as modernism and post-modernism, took charge of most building projects in Taiwan, changing the trend of architectural style. The new architecture departments established in universities in the 1960s and in 1990s played an important role in protecting cultural heritage and appreciating and preserving monuments of the Japanese colonial period, many of which include classical elements. As they continue to teach the history of architecture they also enable access to various styles, through which the classicism and the classical elements in the post-modernism are revisited, especially as the rapid changes of the 1980s and 1990s in economy and politics made Taiwan a society much more open to diverse values and cultures. Rich Taiwanese and the elite consider European antiquities as symbols of wealth and status, and consequently classical elements started to decorate a considerable number of buildings constructed recently.

Keywords: Classical Architecture, Education, Taiwan, Japanese Colonial Period, Modern Architecture

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Classical architecture, the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome, is influential in the West and the contemporary East. Its use in Europe can be seen since the Middle Ages (Martindale & Watkin, 2017; Harvey, 1996; Fleming, Honour and Pevsner, 1998a);¹ whilst in Taiwan it is associated with Japanese colonial policy and with an openness of politics and culture in the last few decades. Education about classical architecture started in the Japanese colonial period and is still taught regularly in architecture departments in both colleges and universities. Architectural practices that use classical elements were also initiated by the colonial Japanese. This was fashionable in the late 18th and 19th centuries and became a doctrine for Japanese architects. In Taiwan the trend declined after World War II but has been revived in the past decade, adorning luxurious hotels and apartments. Education about classical architecture and architectural practice was initially closely related in the Japanese colonial period, but the two have since become less connected.

This paper is in debt to scholars such as Li Cian-Lan (李乾朗), Fu Chao-Ching (傅朝卿) and their students, who studied architecture in the Japanese colonial period. This paper adds information on both education and recent development in architectural practice. Since the archives of architecture departments contain personal information and are protected from public viewing, this study analyzes materials released online and information provided by a few alumni. The Department of Architecture in the National Cheng Kung University provides images of student works online, and I was able to ask architects Mr. Han Pao-Teh (漢寶德), a prominent figure in Taiwan, and Mr. Ruan Yun-Je (阮允哲), who has practiced in Taiwan and China, for assistance. Studies on reception of classical architecture in Taiwan have great scope for

1 For example, the Mausoleum of Theodoric built in c. 520 in Ravenna, Italy.

development.

1 Architectural Practice in the Japanese Colonial Period

Education about Classical architecture was introduced by the Japanese, who colonized Taiwan between 1895 and 1945. Japan was keen to emulate the popular fashions of Europe and the United States. It started colonizing Taiwan in 1895, which was ceded by the Qing Dynasty of China (Spence, 1999, pp. 26-263) to Japan after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) (Jansen, Chu, Okamoto & Oh, 1979). Since the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) the Japanese government had a policy of wholesale westernization, which transformed their systems of education, industrialization, transportation, health and sanitation (Beasley, 1973; Liao & Wang, 2006). In addition, Japan also promoted western art and literature in Taiwan. A group of young architects were sent to Taiwan to improve the appearance of cities and towns to the Japanese perspective. As a result of the trends in Japan, these architects chose to emulate fashionable styles, such as Neo-Classicism.

Neo-Classicism differs from its ancient counterpart. Rather, it was a movement against the Baroque and Rococo architecture that was popular in Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Lemerle & Pauwels, c. 2008; Blunt & Swaan, 1988, c. 1978). These latter two styles used curvaceous forms and complex plans extensively to create the feeling of motion and sensuality (Fleming, Honour & Pevsner, 1998). Neo-Classicism arose as a counter-movement. Its proponents desired to return to the principles of nature and reason seen in the architecture of the classical world. It made use of Roman domes and arches, and the architectural elements of Greek and Roman orders, including Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Composite and Tuscan orders (Adam, 1991). Their perfection of form and proportion, and their clarity of an overall plan and elevation recalled J. J. Winckelmann's remark on classical art as possessing a 'noble simplicity and sedate grandeur' (*edle Einfalt und stille Größe*) (1765, pp. 30-39). Winckelmann encouraged people to imitate these aspects and successfully transformed public taste with his

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publications (Wiencke, 2009).² His work helped Neo-Classicism spread widely in Europe, the United States, and throughout the world.

In addition to Neo-Classicism, architectural styles associated with classical elements include the Beaux-Arts style and the historicism. The latter strictly follows the spirit and the principles of notable styles in history, such as those of Greek, Byzantine and Renaissance architecture. In the middle of the 19th century, Japan encountered and explored western architectural styles. In 1876, the Japanese government invited a British architect, Josiah Conder (1852-1920), to Japan in order to serve as a governmental advisor and professor of architecture at the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo. Conder was a graduate of the University of London and had worked in the office of the Gothic architect William Burges (1827-1881). His work adapted and combined different European architectural styles, and he was awarded Soane Medal in 1876. A year later the Royal Institute of British Architects recommended him to the Japanese government for the post of architectural advisor (“Josiah Conder”, 2017; Ruxton, c. 2005, vol. 1, p. 33, n. 34).³

In the Imperial College of Engineering, Conder taught British Neo-Classicism and the style of late Renaissance. One of his first students, Tatsuno Kingo (辰野金吾, 1854-1919), subsequently became an influential architect in Japan, both by his teaching in the University of Tokyo and by his own independent architectural practice (“Tatsuno Kingo”, 2013; “Tatsuno, Kingo 辰野金吾 (1854-1919)”, 2013).⁴ His style, the Tatsuno style, is related to historical eclecticism in contemporary Europe and was popular in Japanese colonies (B. Sewell, 2004, p. 222).

Between 1895 and 1945 several of Conder’s and Tatsuno’s followers went to Taiwan. They include Hukuda Togo (福田東吾, 1855-1917), Nomura Ichirou (野村一郎, 1868-1942), Moriyama Matsunosuke (森山松之助, 1869-1949), and Ide Kaoru (井手薫, 1879-1944) (C.-L. Li, 2008,

² For example, Winckelmann’s *Gedenken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks, 1765), and *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (History of the Art of Antiquity, 1764). See Leppmann, 1971.

³ See Finn, 1991; Crook, 1981a, 1981b.

⁴ See Stewart, 2002.

pp. 143-57). These architects were enthusiastic in practicing western styles in this new colony and adapted Greek columns and entablatures, and Roman arches and domes into their work. The addition of the tower, which became a prominent feature in the classical architecture of Taiwan, is, however, characteristic of Christian architecture originated from the Middle Ages (Fu, 2009; Heinle & Leonhardt, 1989, pp. 114-207).



Figure 1

The old Taichung City Hall, with arches and Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns, built in the Japanese colonial period between 1912-1934.

These architect's works were public and government buildings, many of which are still in use today (Figure 1). They included train stations, post offices, museums, markets, hospitals, courts, schools and banks (C.-L. Li, 2008, p.146). More famously, the Taipei Guest House, likely built by Hukuda and Nomura, combines the Baroque style with Greek Doric and Ionic decorative elements and Roman arches (Fu, 2009, pp. 184-191). In addition to this building, Nomura designed the National Taiwan Museum, whose entrance is similar to the façade of a Greek Doric temple, and is connected via a Roman dome, partially imitating the Pantheon in Rome. Another Japanese architect, Moriyama designed

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the Taiwan Sutokufu, which is now used as the Presidential Office Building (Jun-Ming Huang, 2004). In the Japanese colonial period these buildings were outstanding among the common houses, and they represented an aesthetic taste which the colonial government conducted (C.-L. Li, 2008, p. 146). In parallel, this echoed the movement of the Taiwan Culture Association (臺灣文化協會) (S.-H. Huang, 2008). Founded in 1920 by Taiwanese medical doctor Chiang Wei-shui (蔣渭水, 1891-1931), the association promoted social and cultural reforms and world trendy life styles (H.-X. Huang, 2006, pp. 56-67).

The popularity of classical elements was also due to the materials and structures it incorporated, as these particularly suited the Taiwanese climate (C.-L. Li, 2008, pp. 154-55). The weather is humid throughout the year, with especially hot summers and tropical storms, typhoons. The classical colonnade helps to maintain dry and cool spaces and functions like a storey over the sidewalk, a characteristic feature of local architecture in Taiwan and southern China. Stone, brick and concrete are more durable than the more traditional timber previously used in Japanese architecture. In the first issue of the *Journal of Taiwanese Architecture Institute* (臺灣建築會誌, 1929), Ide Kaoru (H.-C. Lin, c. 2004; J.-J. Huang, 1995), the manager of the construction section of the Taiwan Sutokufu (總督府營繕課課長) between 1919 and 1944, said that architecture should adapt to the climate, and that timber was not suitable in Taiwan as termites would set in. His own works often combined the classical colonnade with the local Taiwanese style (C.-L. Li, 2008, 205-8).

2 Education on Architecture before 1945

In 1923, after twenty-eight years of colonization, the first architecture department was established in the Taipei Prefecture at the Taipei First Industrial School, the forerunner of the National Taipei University of Technology. Before this time, no local education had affected contemporary building work. Architectural education was a new academic field, and architectural practice had been conducted by people

trained in Japan. Establishment of the department was probably due to the need of architects for intensive construction projects, as well as the result of changes in colonial policy. In this year, the Taiwanese and Japanese students in this school studied together for the first time; before the Taiwanese were discriminated and given a different education. This was a milestone of the colonization, and many Taiwanese who benefited from it later played an important role in the society (“Da shi ji”, 2014).

In 1944 the Tainan Technical College, the forerunner of the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, first offered a bachelors-degree programme in architecture (“Zhanlan shuoming”, 2013). It has become an important institution of teaching and research, and several alumni are leading architects in Taiwan. Classical architecture was one of the architectural theories taught (J.-H. Chen, 2013), and in the Japanese colonial period the teaching was related to architectural practice in contemporary Taiwan. Early students’ works in the rendering course show drawings of classical architecture and styles derived from it (“~45 ji”, 2013). They include two illustrations of the Taiwan Governor Museum, now the National Taiwan Museum.⁵ There are also drawings of the Classical orders, which represent the column and entablature of an order, and show the attributes of a building. One is of the Composite order,⁶ and another two appear to represent the Doric order of the Parthenon.⁷ It appears that teaching and learning was in part conducted through close observation and imitation of existing classical or related examples.

A few students attended the programme of the Tainan Technical College; for example, five who registered in 1944 graduated in 1949 (“Lishi yan ge”, 2012). Such an education was not popular and appeared to be offered only to the elite. Though taught classical and related styles, and with a practical knowledge of their uses, graduates from the programme did not design such kind of building or decorative element themselves. Those buildings in Taiwan are works of colonial Japanese, or of

5 By Fuyong Yongnan (富永勇男) and Tujing Zhuosan (土井卓三).

6 By Wu Su Yung (吳世榮).

7 By H. K. Kao (高煥庚) and Zuiten Ruin (梁瑞庭).

Taiwanese technicians who studied in Japan (J.-H. Chen, 2013).⁸ When the first architects trained in Taiwan eventually started to practice, the architectural fashion was shifting. Upon new political circumstances, classical and related styles were gradually becoming out of favour.

3 Postwar Architectural Practice and Education

Japan lost in World War II and terminated its colonization of Taiwan in 1945. Most Japanese left, and in 1949 the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) fled to Taiwan after they were defeated in the Chinese Civil War. This political change significantly affected Taiwan. From 1949 to 1987, for thirty-eight years, the KMT government imposed martial law in Taiwan, suspending normal civil rights, and suppressing the activities of many of the Taiwanese elite who had received a Japanese education (Roy, 2003, pp. 55-104).

Upon political and cultural turbulence between 1945 and 1980s, Taiwan experienced a few events, trends and movements that led to a review and revival of architecture with classical decorations. Since 1990s many buildings by colonial Japanese received protection from the government, and classical decorations have been more widely used on recent architecture. This would not be possible without the history after the World War II, which may not appear to be directly relevant at the first glance but brought seeds that grew and attracted new concepts favouring later developments. For example, the major style after 1945 is the modernism, which does not necessarily relate to classical elements, but the modernism's sources include the USA, who continuously influenced Taiwan and since 1960s channeled the concept of preserving cultural heritage. The protection of Japanese colonial buildings by the Taiwan government followed this context.

The postwar architectural education and practice largely focused on the style of the modernism, but there are some exceptions. The drawings by students known to us are rarely related to classical architecture, but Han

8 See note 3.

Pao-Teh (1934-2014) rendered a classical monument (“47 ji”, 2013). He later became one of the most influential architects in Taiwan. Likewise, few buildings were built with classical elements and principles around this period (C.-L. Li, 2008, pp. 203-4). The tomb of Fu Si-nian (傅斯年) (Wang, 2013), the president of the National Taiwan University between 1949 and 1950, is similar to a Greek temple of the Doric order. The architect was possibly a Japan-trained Taiwanese as reasons mentioned above, but we do not know his name. This is among the last works of such kind in Taiwan before 1950s.

Postwar Taiwan was influenced by the modernism, the post-modernism and other recent styles in Europe, Japan, and the USA (C.-L. Li, 2008, pp. 205-8; Curtis, 1996). Chinese and Taiwanese architects studying in the last two places gained greater access to the movement and designed their works accordingly. The impact of American architecture was the strongest. The American government provided military force and financial aid to Taiwan since the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, and the USA has become Taiwan’s most important ally. The American culture was poured into the country. Short of financial resources, the KMT government preferred architecture that was economic and function-oriented. Therefore, the modernism suited these criteria well.

Buildings of the modernism increased as time went by, and this was parallel to economic growth, which laid a foundation for further development of the country. Between 1953 and 1977 Taiwan’s production rate grew rapidly --- about 18.1% per year (Z.-M. Chen, 2010, 161), and people were gradually able to afford a better life. In the 1960s a few of the architects educated in the USA took charge of important building projects, such as those by Chang Chao Kang (張肇康, 1922-1992), Chang Chang-Hwa (張昌華, 1908-), Chen Qikuan (陳其寬, 1921-2007) and Ieoh Ming Pei (貝聿銘, 1917-), (Chang, 2001; C.-L. Li, 2008, pp. 205-8). The latter, the 1983 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, and Chen Qikuan, together built the Tunghai University (Jian-Ming Huang, 2002; Hu & Kuo, 2008). Architects with a Japanese background, such as Wu Ming-Shiou (吳明修, 1934-) (“Wu ming xiu”, 2008), and Tange Kenzo (丹下健三, 1913-2005) (Kuan & Lippit, 2012), the winner

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of the 1987 Pritzker Architecture Prize, also contributed their works. In 1964 Tange built the Sacred Heart High School for Girls in Taiwan, which combines the Brutalism of Le Corbusier (1887-1965) and the Metabolism promoted by contemporary Japanese architects (Frampton, 2001; Koolhaas & Obrist, 2011; C.-L. Li, 2008, p. 208).

Tange was a leading figure of the post-modernism, so were some other architects in the West and Japan. There was a great concern on the post-modernism between the late 1970s and the early 1990s. Architects can draw together elements of a wide range of styles in history and can combine them without limitation. Classical elements are used in several notable buildings and can be seen as a re-visit to the classicism. The modernism and the post-modernism transformed the appearance of towns and cities and affected the teaching of architecture. Buildings have increasingly become higher as a symbol of advance, which many Taiwanese liked to embrace. This is also connected to economic growth and symbolized this success. An improving economy provided potential for different lives.

Education is equally important for Taiwanese to develop themselves. It is noticeable that the higher education became increasingly popular. In the 1960s four new architecture departments were established, in the Tunghai University, in the Feng Chia University, in the Chung Yuan Christian University, and in the Tamkang University. Again in the 1990s and after, the National Taipei University of Technology, the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, the Chaoyang University, the National United University, the National Quemoy University, the Huafan University, the Ming Chuan University, the Shih Chien University, the Hwa Hsia University of Technology, the China University of Science and Technology, the China University of Technology, the Kao Yuan University, and a few other universities set up departments or graduate institutes of architecture or related subjects. Many were originally vocational schools and some of them still focus on practical aspects of construction work, as the department of the National United University does. Comprehensive universities, on the other hand, usually have more theoretical courses, such as those on history of architecture and on cultural heritage. Some of the departments

in comprehensive universities however have also paid close attention on practical aspects of construction work, such as the department in the Tamkang University. Generally, however, in recent years architecture departments of different origins have provided similar courses. Currently there are twenty-eight departments and graduate institutes related to architecture, a high number for a country of Taiwan's relative size.

At least in the past ten years or so, departments of architecture have focused on contemporary theories and on new methods and materials of construction. Styles associated with classical architecture are taught in a few courses, such as in the 'History of Western Architecture' and 'History of Contemporary Architecture'. A few architecture departments involved in a movement that encouraged appreciation of classicism and related styles and contributed to a revival of classical features.

In late 1960s there was an awareness of conserving historical monuments, promoted by architects, researchers in folklore, and overseas Chinese communities (C.-L. Li, 2008, 208-12). In architecture departments in universities, teaching staff and students participated in measuring, illustrating, preserving and conserving historical buildings. This movement was initiated in the USA and was stimulated by the fact that they could not win the Vietnam War (1954-1975) (Murry, 2005). Americans were re-evaluating the Third World, reconsidering traditions, and putting questions on the modernism. Having appreciated their most important ally, the Taiwanese followed trends in the USA and were reconsidering the value of old buildings. Below are two historical instances, Lin An Tai Historical House and Taoyuan Shrine. Although one is Chinese Min-Nan style and the other is Japanese traditional style, they nevertheless had repercussions to the re-assessment and revival of classical elements.

Lin An Tai Historical House (You, 2011), more than 200 years old, was the first to draw attention on the issue. In a project to expand a road, it was taken apart, but under the petitions of scholars and experts it was rebuilt on another site (Ma, 2009). There was serious debate on this event, which laid the foundation of preserving historical monuments

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and led to the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act that was passed in 1982 (H.-C. Lin, 2009a). This helped re-assessment of the buildings by the Japanese colonizers.

They were rarely considered to be preserved by the Taiwan government until 1990s. One reason was that they were recently built and could not be regarded as 'historical'. At the beginning, the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act was only applied to buildings more than a hundred years old. Another factor was that followers of the KMT government disliked them as they were built by an enemy in the World War II and were thus regarded shameful. In the 1980s, the Taoyuan Shrine, which was built by Japanese colonizers in 1938, aroused heated debate on whether it should be preserved or not (Z.-Y. Li, 1992; S.-J. Huang, 2009). There were opinions not to demolish buildings by Japanese because they were historical evidence. There were also opinions that fine architecture built within a hundred years may be preserved. Taoyuan Shrine was eventually preserved under the pressure of public opinion, and since 1994 it has been a protected monument. The Cultural Heritage Preservation Act was revised in the 1990s and more buildings are assigned as historic, including many public and official buildings by Japanese colonizers (C.-L. Li, 2008, pp. 213-4; H.-C. Lin, 2009b).

Taiwan changed swiftly in the 1980s and 1990s. After Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975, his son Chiang Ching-kuo (1910-1988) succeeded as the president of Taiwan. He adopted several important political improvements before his death in 1988. In 1987 the government abolished martial law and lifted the ban on political parties. From 1988 onwards, there are no longer restrictions on newspaper licensing. Lee Teng-hui (1923-) succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo and became the first Taiwanese president who was born in the island itself. He too made political improvement. In 2000 for the first time an opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party, won the presidential election. These democratic movements largely affected people's judgment on historical events. The Taiwanese people can voice and gain access to different opinions, particularly those of opponents to the KMT party and the suppressed Taiwanese elites who received Japanese education. Re-

considering the value of Japanese architecture decorated with classical elements reflects the re-assessment of the Japanese colonial period.

The political changes in 1980s and 1990s coincided with an economic boom, which resulted from several efforts (Z.-M. Chen, 2010). After the 1950s Japan and the USA helped Taiwan to recover from the damage of World War II. The USA provided more than 1.5 billion US dollars in total between 1951 and 1965. The KMT government fostered private companies and adopted land reform to help the economy. People gained profit from industry and trade, and in the 1960s a number of universities established departments or sub-faculties of European languages and literature, in order to support the needs of business and cultural exchange (“Yange”, 2012; “Xi suo”, 2013).

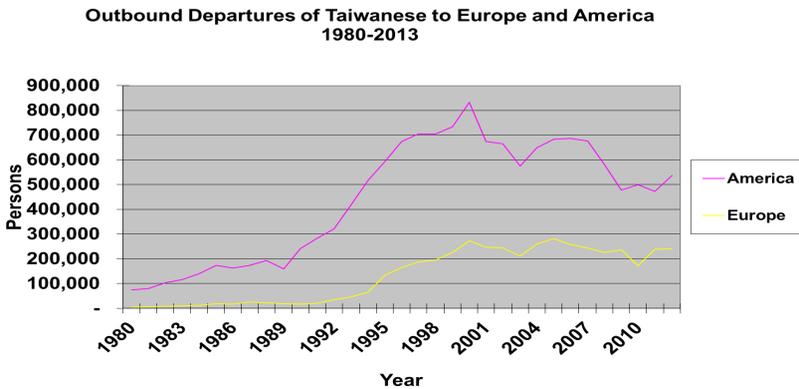


Chart 1

Since about 1980 more and more Taiwanese have been able to experience other cultures through traveling and studying abroad. The government lifted the ban on overseas tourism in 1979 (“Guanguang”, 2010). Subsequently, outbound departures to Europe and the USA increased, especially noticeable in the 1990s (“Outbound”, n.d.)(Chart 1). Likewise, more people have studied abroad, and the number increased over a hundred times between 1950 and 2013 (Chart 2) (“Chuguo”, n.d.; Y.-T.

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Lin, 2003, p. 288). Taiwanese society has become more open to diverse values. Reception of foreign cultures can be exemplified in the revival of classical architectural elements. These are admired by many Taiwanese for their elegance, which is often regarded as an attribute to Europe.

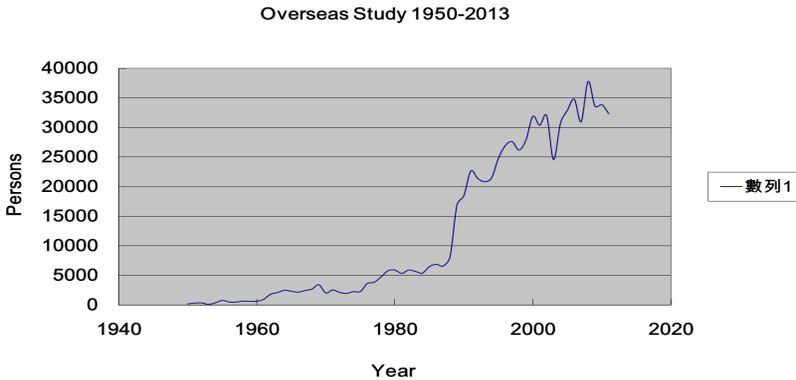


Chart 2

Since the late 1990s many newly-built hotels and luxurious apartments are decorated with classical architectural elements. There are elements of classical orders (Figures 2-4) and semi-circular arches, which were widely used in Roman architecture. Arches and voussoirs may be incised for decoration. A single column may be erected nearby a building to mark an entrance.

Although classical architecture is taught in university architecture departments, the trend for classical architecture seems to be driven by the architects of those luxurious buildings, who use classical elements to attract rich customers. Such decoration requires skills of carving and costs extra money which rich people are willing to pay. It is associated with wealth, and may be used to boast a fine taste. Collecting works of art are popular activities of the wealthy as a demonstration of their fortune and to compete amongst themselves. This is a way to establish their social status. In contrast to luxurious hotels and apartments,



Figure 2

Ionic capitals with double volutes decorate a modern building. Taipei, Taiwan.



Figure 3

A building decorated with a classical pattern of dentils, a series of small square blocks. Taipei, Taiwan.

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factories and commercial buildings are relatively simple, essentially based on functional concerns and economical.⁹

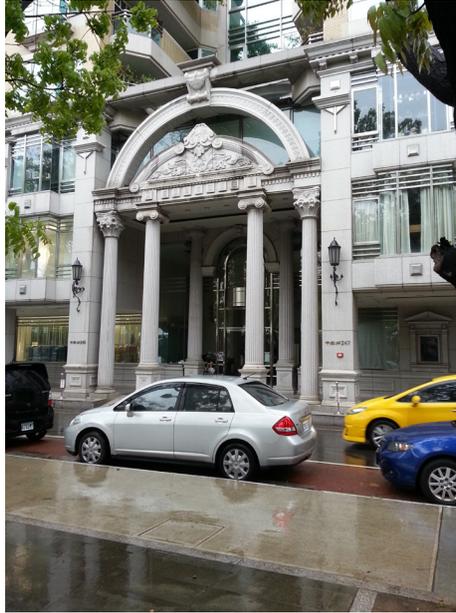


Figure 4

An entrance of a building with dentils, Ionic and Corinthian columns.
Taichung, Taiwan.

Taiwanese architects who made use of classical architectural elements in their works did not design them themselves, despite universities teaching these elements and encouraging its study in drawing of such features.¹⁰ The classical elements in recent buildings were mostly ready-made in Fujian province, China. Masons were given photographs or drawings of classical columns and entablatures, and they carved accordingly. Drawings may not be of ancient examples, but may be by a modern Chinese designer. Taiwanese architects may pick up ready-

⁹ For example, buildings by the H.C.C.H. Corporation (HCCH & Associates Architects Planners & Engineers三大聯合建築師事務所), except residential buildings such as the Palace mentioned below (Zuo pin ji, 2013).

¹⁰ I am grateful to architects Mr. Han Pao-Teh and Mr. Ruan Yun-Je for this information.

made pieces from masonry companies, or they may ask a masonry company to design classical elements particularly for their buildings. The principles to select or design include whether the decorations look grand, luxurious, or worthy, as targeted customers usually prefer complex columns and entablatures.¹¹ Chinese masons often altered the form and proportion of the classical element. This is mostly because masons did not see sufficient ancient examples and, as such, have not realized the subtle difference between the originals and their copies. It is also possible that such alterations to the forms and proportions are made in order to suit modern structures given that most concern a simplification of the classical elements.

In general, it may be fair to say that the revival of classical architectural elements since the late 1990s is not a return to the spirit of nature and reason of the classicism. The revival is to adorn buildings of simple geometric forms with additions of complex decorations. This may testify that the modernism is still the center of concern and that classical arches, domes, columns and patterns of entablature are merely superficial decorations. This is a reflection of the attitude of the current architectural education.

5 Conclusion

Classical architecture was introduced to Taiwan by Japanese colonizers, who aimed to westernize and modernize this island, following the national policy since the Meiji period. The first departments of architecture were established during the colonial period, and classical architecture was one of the main subjects of teaching. Buildings with classical elements were designed and constructed by the Japanese, or by Taiwanese architects trained in Japan.

The postwar architectural trend includes the modernism, the post-modernism and other contemporary styles, which are developed in

¹¹ I am grateful to architect Mr Ruan Yun-Je for the information on masonry companies in Fujian province, China.

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Europe, Japan and the USA. Architects only occasionally design with classical elements, and departments of architecture apparently include the classicism in just a few courses. Nevertheless, the post-modernism provides another opportunity to re-visit the classicism. Among various sources of contemporary styles, the USA has been one of Taiwan's strongest allies, and architects trained in modernism there took charge of important projects in Taiwan.

Inspired by the USA, since 1960s Taiwanese have gradually been aware of the value of historical buildings. The government passed the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act in 1982, and in 1990s it assigned many buildings by Japanese colonizers as historic. From about 2000, there have been luxurious hotels and residential apartments that are decorated with classical architectural elements, which symbolize wealth and a fine taste. Taiwanese architects, though taught classical architecture in universities, did not design these classical elements. It is the Chinese who made or designed these for the Taiwanese.

Education on classical architecture has varied since the Japanese colonial period. The Japanese were the most serious in their teaching and practice of classical architecture, and some Taiwanese trained in Japan inherited the skill. Although classical architecture was still taught, architects rarely designed buildings with such decorations between 1950s and 1990s. Recent revival shows that the classical architectural elements are often altered, and that both architects and the customers do not seem to realize the subtleness of the original forms and proportions. It appears that the Taiwanese today are some way away from appreciating authentic classical architecture, and that classical architectural elements are subsidiary decorations of modern buildings. This in itself is a reflection of the recent architectural education in Taiwan.

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