

# A Story of Nobility in Colonial Urban Asia: Victorian Influence and the Red House in Taipei

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**Abstract** As a stylistic form of representing the past, the Gothic Revival emerged as a reaction to the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, by establishing a sense of morality in architecture and urbanism. Its rise and development in the High Victorian period therefore represented a form of social nobility to the profession. This paper examines the construction of nobility in British architectural history and its implantation and evolution in the urban East. The Red House and its located city, Taipei, in Taiwan, in which inscribed its modern urban history and development on the building, is selected as a case. This study surveys the interplay between the moral/colonial nobility mentioned above and the de facto social circumstances in post-war urban Taipei, and as such describes the spatiotemporal trajectory of Victorian influence on urban Asia, from colonial times to the present.

**Keywords** Nobility, Colonialism, Victorian Influence, Colonial Urban Asia, Architectural and Urban Representation, Taipei

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## 1. Introduction: The 19th Century Represented in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Different forms of representation have highlighted underlying concepts of the past in different disciplines. For instance, in history, the idea of historicism pronounces the historicity of history. In biology, the concept of heterochrony is identifiable when comparing characteristics of different species in the same time of their lives. In architecture, forms, contents and styles sketch the character of architectural representations of the past. According to Frank Ankersmit's interpretation of representation, architecture, as a form of representation, is essentially a process of depiction which represents reality [1]. However, this process, as a way of historiography in spatial practice, raises concerns about the distinction between the past and history. Alun Munslow has indicated that history is the product of how one writes as well as what one writes [2]. Therefore, architecture is sketched as

a historiographic text representing different intentions of "writing" history beyond the authorship and a sense of constructing an impersonal built object. This is evident from the reconstruction of the tradition (which Munslow describes as a contextualist standpoint), to a new definition of the past (in a similar sense, say, an "explanationist" standpoint) and to the current state of the deconstruction of history reflecting a variety of consciousness (a "heteroglossian" perspective). Especially the last standpoint transits the theory of architectural/artistic historiography away from a conventional manner. Michel Foucault has a celebrated contestation exemplifying this concept in *This is not a pipe* (1968) that "the drawing representing the pipe is not the pipe itself ... Do not look overhead for a true pipe. This is a pipe dream. It is the drawing within the painting, firmly and rigorously outlined, that must be accepted as a manifest truth" [3]. Foucault pinpoints a fact that a painting of a pipe is not simply a pipe; it is an image of a pipe, i.e. there is no original site of meaning. Meaning is always potentially in play across the interconnected discourse, e.g. symbolic and ideological meanings could be seen as founded upon relations of oppositions (such as morphine as medication for pain versus morphine as an addictive drug). A further implication; however, was often presented beyond the texts themselves. An awareness of "difference" therefore encouraged a reading in terms of dominant and marginalised meanings. In architectural history, the Gothic style is one example.

The word "Gothic" originally referred to medieval European tribes. Later the term was applied pejoratively by Renaissance critics to thirteenth-century architectural styles. In this application, there is the implication of an alternative aesthetic idiom that counters or offends mainstream classical styles along with their attendant middle-class norms of taste and morality. However; when the classical styles shifted from the dominant positions in the narratives of architectural history, the Gothic – once only a form of middle-class morality – also lost its pejorative connotation, especially in the 19th century. Instead, the Gothic (or Gothic Revival) represented a relatively immaculate (or utopian) form of morality in the complicated and industrialised modern context, which shows the nature of history that can be understood only when it is viewed not solely and simply as

an objectivised empiricist enterprise [2].

The Victorian era (1837-1901) falls into three periods, often described as the Early Victorian, High Victorian and late Victorian phases. Architectural styles during the Victorian era however show a relative complexity across each period. Among the various styles, the rise and fall of the Gothic Revival and the Queen Anne Revival (which was born of the former) are significant in a non-European context and have left an enduring legacy. The Gothic Revival is often regarded as the crucial discourse representing the moral consciousness in the modern movement of architecture. Therefore the popularity of the Gothic Revival in the nineteenth century marked itself as a form of nobility in the European built world. This constructed “spirit” was brought to Imperial Japan during the Meiji age, and was transferred to an idea of national nobility. The Queen Anne Revival, while departing from Gothic, influenced Japanese colonial architecture not only in spirit but in style. This paper is interested in the “implantation” of this mainly Victorian influence and its architectural extension into early twentieth century colonisation particularly in Asia, the foothold of Imperial Japan, and a future story down to the present. More precisely, this paper intends to explore the imagery of Victorian architecture in a colonial context and its continuous story into the twenty-first century as an intertextual narrative of reconstructing, constructing and deconstructing forms of morality in architectural historiography and practice. Julia Kristeva once argued that, “any text is the absorption and transformation of another” [4]. In the paper, architectural form, content and style, as the representational texts in the context of architectural history, are analysed in terms of different ways of speaking history.

It is like Roland Barthes’s description - “a little formalism turns one away from history ... a lot brings one back to it” [5], form as a representation itself could be abundantly contextualised in history. Michael J. Lewis has suggested that when Gothic Revival is read as a text in a modern context it is almost always positioned as “essential” [6]. Yet the “essential” will never be unearthed if the examination only focuses on stylistic fads. The implications of style, context, patronage and use, which echo the cultural and social scenarios of the present, are the real points that need to be explored.



**Figure 1.** The Red House Today (taken by the author).

This study attempts to decode this sophisticated translation by analysing the Victorian influence deployed by

Imperial Japan in colonial Asia, and it strategically selects the Red House in Taipei (Figure 1) as the analytical focus. The nobility of morality established in Western society and the style born of it will be reshaped by an encounter with colonisation in the East.

## 2. An Imagery of Victorian Influence in Quasi-Colonial Taiwan

The Red House can be analysed on two levels: the first is to look at it as a Victorian building in Taiwan; and the second is to look at the building’s role in the past of quasi-colonial Taiwan.

### 2.1. The Red House: A Representation of Taiwan’s History

The Red House was built in 1908 by Japanese architect Kondo Juro, who was working within the Prefectural Civil Engineering Office in Taiwan’s *Sotokufu* (Governor-General’s office). Kondo received his architectural training at Tokyo Imperial University, where he acquired knowledge about western architectural styles from his British supervisor Josiah Condor, who worked with Tokyo Imperial University for 47 years, mainly teaching western architectural methods[7]. Kondo joined the Prefectural Civil Engineering Office in 1906 and the Red House is his first design work in Taiwan. The building comprises an octagonal structure (well known today as the Octagon Building), a cruciform building and the adjacent North-South square.

The Red House functioned as Taiwan’s first government-built public market when the octagon and cruciform buildings were constructed in 1908. The ground floor of the Red House at that time was a department store, and the first floor was a market for second-hand goods and souvenirs. Surrounding the octagon building was the market place called Shinkicho Market, which had developed at the end of the Manchu Ching period in the 1890s. In 1928, the market area was rebuilt and renamed Ximen market; a row of shops was also built at that time. Two years later the function of the octagon building changed to a restaurant and tea house, the cruciform building remained a market. In 1941, the first floor of the octagon building became a play space where entertainment equipment for Japanese children was provided. In 1945, Taipei city encountered heavy bombing from the US Air Force; the first floor of the Red House then became a mess hall for Japanese soldiers. After 1945 the Chinese Nationalist government took over as ruling power and in 1948 the Red House was reopened and run by a Green Gang mobster, Chen Hui Wen, as a space for a Shanghai operatic troupe mainly performing Beijing Opera. In 1953, the function of the troupe changed to reflect the Nationalist government’s political propaganda, performing Anti-Communist Opera and two years later, the playlist had once again changed to Shaoxing Opera. In 1963 the Red

House was turned into a movie theatre screening second-run movies. At that time, the Red House was one of the leading movie theatres in Taipei. In the 1980s, the Red House lost its competitiveness as a cinema with the establishment of surrounding commercial cinemas and gradually it became a place screening pornography. In 1994, the NGOs such as the Le Shan Foundation and local academics suggested that the Red House be regenerated as a case of Community Development. The aim was to gather ideas from administrators, professionals, artists and neighbourhood residents as to a possible future new use. In 1997, the building was officially designated as a Class 3 historical site but simultaneously the building's regeneration project halted.

During the period of considering the reuse of the Red House, Taipei city mayor Chen Shui-bian promoted a plan to run the building as a film museum, which would mainly screen artistic films and documentaries. However, the cruciform building was destroyed by fire in 2000 and the plan was postponed until 2001. In that year, a new city mayor, Ma Ying-jeou, and his Commissioner of Department of Cultural Affairs, Lung Ying Tai decided to change the function of the Red House, to turn it into a theatre, funded by government and run privately, commencing in 2002. The Red House has been run by the Taipei City Government and Taipei Culture Foundation since 2007. In short, the Red House reflects the history of a building that established a noble hierarchy in the neighbourhood (a public market) then experienced its pauperisation in the city (a porn cinema) and now today exhibits a quotidian status as a community centre.

The Red House combined Western as well as Japanese architectural styles and methods against the backdrop of Japan's *Meiji Ishin* (1868-1912). William H. Coaldrake has given a precise description of the Western architectural impact on Japanese architecture during the *Meiji* period: "The architectural achievement of the Meiji period is a direct measure of the determination of the leaders of government and industry to modernise their nation along Western lines, as well as a yard-stick of their ability to mobilise and manage human and material resources in the construction of new buildings and cities. The key to this success was a coherent programme in Western architectural training and the selective use of competent foreign experts in the key professions of architecture and engineering"[8].

In the late 1880s, as Japan's first colony and its southernmost base as well as a demonstration of its *Nanyang* colonisation, Taiwanese architecture of the time was influenced by *Meiji Ishin*. In order to become a modernised country, Japan in this *Ishin* (renewal) dramatically changed its political and social structure. More precisely, this was a modernisation by westernising the military, capitalising society and industrialising manufacturing. At the beginning, because of the lack of modern techniques and people with specialist abilities, many students were sent to study overseas and many foreign professionals were invited to participate in Japan's social and urban development. Within the architectural

profession, British architect Josiah Conder (1852-1920), who worked with British Gothicist and architect William Burges before his arrival in Japan, played a crucial role in training first generation native Japanese architects in western architectural methods. Most of this first group of Japanese architects who worked in the Prefectural Civil Engineering Office of Taiwan *Sotokufu* (including Kondo Juro, the designer of the Red House) were educated by Conder. The Red House, therefore, is a complete example of Japanese-Western eclecticism.

## 2.2. The Victorian Red House

The Red House is a Victorian building that arose within Taiwan's quasi-colonial context. Looking at such a work today, it is necessary to have a sophisticated understanding of the surrounding social and cultural circumstances of its creation. This is especially so given the location of Taiwan, a site far from the origins of Victorian architecture. The Victorian context and its correlation with Taiwan need exploration. Such an exploration must focus on two associated architectural styles, the Gothic Revival and Queen Anne Revival, and subsequently seek to understand their influence on Imperial Japan and its then colony, Taiwan. A family tree shows the relationships between the architects involved in this context.

### 2.2.1. The Gothic Revival, the Queen Anne Revival and The Tatsuno style

Often regarded as a pursuit of taste and morality in the history of architecture, the Gothic Revival to some extent plays a spatiotemporal role in responding to the cultural dislocation and anxiety about identity caused by the Industrial Revolution. In other words, the Gothic Revival is the story of Western civilisation's confrontation with modernity[6]. Apart from aesthetic taste, asymmetrical composition and an increase in archaeological knowledge are two points of morality generally linked with Gothic Revival thinking. Irregularity and the principles of contrast as an aspect of picturesque theory are two of the Gothic Revival's pivotal characteristics. The platform of the Middle Ages, the religious datum point of both A. W. N. Pugin and the Ecclesiological Society, forms another intention behind the Gothic Revival. For the moral consideration of architecture, A. W. N. Pugin proposed two great rules in *The true principles of pointed or Christian Architecture* (first published in 1841) that: first, there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction or propriety and secondly, all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building[9]. For Pugin, decoration was "to enhance and give meaning to the building though an expression of its material structure"[10].

Pugin's architectural thinking exercised much influence over British architecture and architectural theory. It formed the foundations of Victorian architecture, evident from many Victorian Gothicists' building works. William Burges was

one of those followers in Britain's Victorian age, a time which represented immense change since industrialisation stimulated numerous English architects to seek appropriate architectural styles to define a "new" Britain. As a result, Gothic architecture which had originated from a Christian Europe and in its clear use of strong materials and flexible space for craftsmanship presented in various English geometrical and polychromatic applications, suggested a proper schema to be applied as a national style for Britain. Surprisingly, Burges's reinterpretation of medieval imagery was itself partly inspired by Japanese art. Ironically, Burges's developed Gothic Revival which would then constitute Britain's "national style", was then implanted in another nation, Imperial Japan.

While the Gothic styles dominated church architecture, particularly between 1810 and 1860, its application across all other building types was less pervasive. As a result, the so-called "Queen Anne" manner emerged in the 1870s almost as a necessity i.e. to design for the secular world[11]. Deborah Weiner has described this transfer in Britain as follows, "in the 1870s a number of architects trained in the offices of prominent Gothic Revival architects designed buildings which partook of the new vocabulary"[12]. This departure from the Gothic reached its peak during the 1860s and 1870s. Unlike church design as the primary means of the Gothicism, Queen Anne Revival architects dealt with secular buildings such as houses, schools and town halls. Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912) one of those Victorian architects trained in Gothic thinking, was a key participant in the transfer, developing his career into the Edwardian era. Shaw began practice in the 1860s with Eden Nesfield (1835-1888). At that time, both were producing Gothic works but soon moved onto the Queen Anne style. The Queen Anne Revival borrowed from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century English vernacular architecture. The details of this style, which adopted native English domestic forms, as analysed by James Stevens Curl, were not High Gothic at all[13]. Shaw's representative Queen Anne buildings were the New Zealand Chambers, London (1872) and New Scotland Yard, London (1887). Shaw's later focus in practice moved toward the Classical Baroque style in large commercial buildings. Nikolaus Pevsner has suggested that Shaw kept almost entirely away from large-scale or commercial building until he was 55 years old[14]. That is to say, the character and main forms of the Queen Anne Revival were not only secular but most of the time domestic and vernacular. Interestingly, this form of "new" English architecture was later translated into the base of Japanese colonial architecture as a nationalised eclecticism.

In looking at the implantation of the Victorian era on Imperial Japan, especially through the introduction of the Gothic Revival and Queen Anne Revival, Burges and Conder's influence cannot be overlooked. In his admiration for Japanese art, Burges believed that the construction of a Gothic morality through medieval society and ecclesiological space was echoed in the juxtaposed ornamental members of Japanese art, which spoke of

morality and space in silence[6]. This was most likely the initial motif connecting the Victorian Gothic Revival to Japan in its *Meiji* restoration. *Meiji Ishin* occurred in Japan in the 1860s by pursuing the fruits of the remarkable Industrial and Economic Revolution in the West. As a visual and direct representation, architecture became an essential state apparatus for demonstrating the outcomes of modernisation and differentiating the hierarchy of the empire's authority in space. Among these *Meiji* westernised buildings, the Classical and Gothic languages were adopted as the ordering tools of Japanese hierarchical power. At the first level, the Classical language, especially Neo-Baroque forms along with the materiality of stone, were applied to represent the highest power, that of racial nobility. *Akasaka* Palace in Tokyo (1899-1909) is one such example. At a second level, red brick buildings with steel or timber frames presented along with High Victorian architectural languages were chosen to represent Japanese authority in public space. This practice was followed even at the lowest level of westernised building: structures of timber frames and weatherboards. The use of brick and steel, among these westernised buildings, played an increasing role both in the *Meiji* restoration and in the role of Victorian influence in colonial Asia. Pragmatically, brick and steel were the materials which represented the results of industrialisation because of their productive competitiveness, ease of making and quick erection. Symbolically, brick and steel were initially imported from England. This suggested the physical embodiment of knowledge and modernity gained from the West. Tokyo Station (1914) is one such significant example in Japan. The Red House in Taiwan, once a colony of the Japanese Empire, to a certain extent, is another witness of this implantation of cultural politics and aesthetic nobility.

With regard to this Victorian influence, the relationship between William Burges and Josiah Conder and their influence on Tatsuno Kingo, one of the outstanding first generation Western-trained Japanese architects educated by Conder, is crucial. Conder came to Japan in 1877 after two years of working in the Burges's office. He was invited to Japan by the government of the Japanese Empire and brought profound changes to Japanese architecture which were spread across its pan-pacific colonies by instruction in Gothic Revival thinking as a form of spatial nobility in new Japan. Apart from the nationalist imagery and aesthetic similarity between the Gothic Revival and Japanese culture, William Coaldrake suggests two reasons to explain why Conder was invited to Japan[8]. The first apparently connects to the relationship between Burges and Conder's skills and knowledge of the Venetian Gothic inherited from his experience working with Burges's firm. Secondly, the honour of winning the Soane Prize in 1875, the year after Conder entered Burges's firm, inspired the Japanese Imperial government's confidence in his western architectural training.

In Japan, Conder experimented with the so-called Hindu-Saracenic style, in reality an orientalisising version of the Venetian Gothic made popular in British India. The Ueno

Imperial Museum in Tokyo was one of Conder's works and a group of his students adopted this idea. TatsunoKingo, the designer of Tokyo Station, was one of these students, educated under Conder's direction at Tokyo Imperial University. After his graduation, Tatsuno went to London working with T. Roger Smith, Conder's uncle, from 1880 and he transferred to Burges's office in 1881. Burges however died suddenly in 1881 during Tatsuno's stay. As a result, Tatsuno spent a year after 1882 travelling in France and Italy. Significantly, he brought the idea of the Queen Anne Revival back to Japan afterwards. At that time, the two favourite styles of *Meiji* Western architecture were the Renaissance and Baroque, particularly based on German influence[15]. The works of one of the first generation Japanese western trained architects, YorinakaTsumaki, attest to this influence. This also influenced Tatsuno's later eclectic approach to architecture. In 1885, Tatsuno was appointed to a post at Tokyo Imperial University and he subsequently took over Conder's position as the departmental head of architecture after Conder's retirement in 1888. Thus the Victorian influence was handed from Burges, via Conder to a native architect in Imperial Japan, TatsunoKingo.

Residues of Conder's Hindu-Saracenic plus the High Victorian Gothic and the German Renaissance were eventually merged becoming Tatsuno's "eclectic personality"[16]. Tatsuno's favourite mature style was an idiosyncratic red brick idiom trimmed with white stone. To call this "Queen Anne", argues Dallas Finn, is close but inadequate[15]. Its inspiration surely came from the style of the Queen Anne with emphasis on red brick and white stone, but Tatsuno also absorbed simultaneously his Gothic experience and the German classical influence in Imperial Japan. As a result, his eclectic approach developed a unique style, the so-called "*Tatsuno Style*": Tokyo Station is the typical example. This "personality" soon influenced architectural evolution in Japan and in its colonies.

Tatsuno's influence on Japanese colonial architecture, as an indicator of the implantation of Victorian influence, cannot be overlooked. Taking Taiwan as the example, another first generation Japanese architect trained by Conder, the designer of the Red House, Kondo Juro, is one of the *Tatsuno Style*'s colonial architects. The Red House was built in 1908, and completed six years earlier than Tokyo Station. Apart from its style, the initial spirit of constructing the Red House in the centre of Taipei was an attempt to establish the nobility and monumentality of the expanding Japanese Empire. These forms of constructed nobility and monumentality, interestingly, were no less than the symbolic hierarchy of a *Shinto shrine* (and in actual fact there was a shrine constructed beside the Red House, which is discussed later in this paper). The only difference is that the nobility and monumentality of the Red House adopted through Victorian influence were not established for God, but on behalf of empire. In other words, it was for the Japanese community who lived in the core district of the colony. This core district was made functionally visible and highlighted

by a growing empire's declaration of ruling authority, dominant modernity and powerful coloniality (combined with at times an implied racism). The initial essence of adopting the Gothic spirit, from this standpoint, was associated with a new age and a new context, transcending the historical context of the European Gothic idiom.

While the history of the Red House is evidence of the existence of Victorian influence in Taiwan, this constructed "spirit" in Taiwan stands for a crucial position in colonial Asia and at its postcolonial stage, which is never sufficient if one examines only the building's origin and external form registered at the level of the object. The quasi-colonial context of Taiwan after WWII (i.e. after the Japanese left in 1945 and with the establishment of the Nationalist government, itself a form of "colonial" rule from the ROC), conferred another form of nobility upon the Red House, through the nationalist ideology of Taiwan's new rule. However the building subsequently suffered pauperisation, then was "remade" to reflect quotidian necessities. It became a local community centre in the early 2000s. By discussing the "architectural" Red House as well as the "urban story" of the Red House, the building as an object and its social, cultural and political context along with its public reception in history constitute a spatiotemporal discourse of variable powers in this case study history of Asian colonisation.

### 3. In a City of Variable Powers

The Red House as a building in itself is insufficient to address the representative signification and identity of post-martial-law cultural politics. The concept of difference (a thing always has more than one supplement) [17]has transformed a way of interacting with history here in the discussion, particularly as a reflection on Taiwan's post-Martial Law spatial practices. This section analyses the history of the city where the Red House is located in order to clarify the connection and correlation between the building itself as an individual text and the city as its corresponding context. More importantly, this section explores the question of how a city's historical texture and pragmatic presence interact and integrate with the building as a barometer of cultural political identity in post-Martial Law Taiwan.

#### 3.1. Power and Colonisation

After the city area of Taipei was roughly defined in 1879, the city's urban form was developed by different ruling powers. The architectural representations of these powers highlight this phenomenon of change. The most distinctive example can be found in the changes and adoption of political powers between the Taiwan *Sotokufu* (the Governor-General's office of Taiwan, 1919-1945) and the Presidential Office after WWII (since 1949), especially since both authorities were housed in the same building, designed by another *Tatsuno Style* Japanese architect who worked in

the *Sotokufu*, Nagano Uheiji. Like Kondo and his Red House, Nagano and the Taiwan *Sotokufu* also attest to Japanese colonial architecture in Taiwan implanting Victorian philosophy, both in spirit and style.

### 3.2. The City of Taipei

The name of “Taipei” at its very beginning was the indicator (from its *Han* initials) of a tribe’s geographical location on northern Taiwan. That is to say, the word “Taipei” referred initially to an area on northern Taiwan. Before 1875 the location today known as Taipei City, used the name *Monga*, which was one of Taiwan’s three major settlements at the time. Before Taipei was officially designated an administrative city in 1920 by the Japanese Empire, there were several social and political forces involved, including earlier colonial powers such as the Dutch and the Spanish. Yet, basically, industrial westernisation did not exist in Taiwan before Japanese rule began in 1895.

In 1875, the area of today’s Taipei was officially established as the Taipei Prefecture and in 1879 the Manchu Ching Empire established the wall and five gates defining a district containing all the prefectural buildings called the “Inner City”. Today’s central city area was roughly sketched by this “Inner City” and two other major footholds, Tataocheng and *Monga*. These three major settlements were known as the “Three Cities Area” (later known simply as Taipei). The Red House, built in 1908, was located right at the centre of the West Gate area of the “Inner City”. The layout of the “Inner City” was initially based on a traditional southern Chinese city plan and had a consideration of its *fengshui* (geomantic omen).

However, changes to political powers over the decades turned this city into a hybrid and paradoxical presentation. In 1895, the Ching Empire signed the Treaty of *Shimonoseki* (also known as the Treaty of Maguan) ceding Taiwan to Japan. The “Three Cities Area” was chosen by the Japanese as the Taiwan colony’s political centre and the city was renamed *Taihoku* City (from 1895 to 1945). *Taihoku* City was officially announced as an administrative city in 1920. This year therefore marked Taipei City becoming a modern city area. The “Inner City”, during the Japanese period, was only to house those “pure” Japanese who directly settled in Taipei from the Japanese mainland. At that time, the “Inner City” area was re-zoned and the existing street naming system was replaced by a block naming system. That is, in the “Inner City” area, main streets had no detailed names but only blocks in typical Japanese *Machi* habit.

The Red House was built in this period within the newly planned *XimenMachi* area. The Japanese in 1900 and 1905 re-zoned the “Three Cities Area” in preparation for the founding of *Taihoku* City. The West Gate area of the “Inner City” (also known since 1900 as the area of *XimenMachi*), during the Manchu Ching rule was a poor area, comprised of nothing but farms and a cemetery. Yet, this area was located right in the middle of the “Three Cities Area”, and it blocked the connection and integration of the three major settlements.

The Japanese therefore re-zoned *XimenMachi* with detailed blocks and started to develop it. The Japanese government first dismantled the existing wall and constructed a new boulevard called Ring Garden Boulevard (also known as Three Lines Boulevard indicating the modernised wide boulevard along with two median strips) along the line of the original wall. In order to make the environment correspond to this new western style boulevard, the new government planned to dismantle not only the walls but also the five existing city gates. Nonetheless, strong resistance from the public eventually forced the new ruling power to cancel the plan. The West Gate, therefore, was the only gate that was demolished in the re-zoning city plan in the Japanese colonial period.

*XimenMachi*, after the re-zoning, was reconstructed as *Taihoku* City’s entertainment centre. The city was reconstructed following ideas of Japanese-Westernised urbanisation and most of the commercial functions were collected in the area. The location of the Red House, before it was built, was a public market area in the middle of *XimenMachi* called *Shinkicho* Market. The market had been rebuilt in 1908 as Taiwan’s first government-built public market. The newly constructed market area included a *Shinto* shrine built alongside the octagon building. The *Shinto* shrine was built to protect the Japanese people who were doing business in Taiwan and there is also a saying that this shrine was built to repel evil spirits since the site of the market was a public cemetery. The shrine was destroyed by United States bombing in 1945 and no longer exists. However, a reconstructed image of the shrine today has become a key element in the revitalisation of the Red House as a community cultural centre, and it stands along with the Red House as a critical marker of change in historical reception, witnessing the site’s interaction with ideological nobility, symbolic pauperisation and today’s quotidian community function.

In 1945, the Nationalist government (KMT) took over as the ruling power of Taiwan. The city of *Taihoku* once again changed hands and was officially renamed Taipei City. Inevitably, the spatial formation of the city was also changed by the new political power. The KMT government in 1947 committed to a replanning programme by Shanghai architect, Chen Ting Pang. The purpose of this replanning was to remove the existing Japanese block naming system in order to efface Japanese presence as well as to promote the KMT’s Greater China doctrine. The urban reform this time, unlike Imperial Japan’s purpose of modernisation, was full of nationalist and nostalgic consideration. Chen overlapped a map of the ROC Chinese mainland onto Taipei City and, based on the “Inner City” area as the centre, sketched a miniature of the ROC on the top of the city. Interestingly, because the Japanese set up the block names replacing the street names set in the Ching period, Chen was therefore able to easily apply the geographical miniature to the void roads and streets of Taipei City in 1947. If the “Inner City” area is read as the centre of the ROC, the major names of the provinces and cities in the mainland can be easily traced

from the corresponding geographical locations.

On the other hand, the city's physical expansion in the immediate post-war years also impacted upon the city fabric and the cultural politics of architecture in Taipei City. The Japanese had applied westernised city planning to *Taihoku* City's development and the gridded sub-areas can be roughly read from the later street plan of Taipei City in the last decade of its Japanese rule. During the 1950s to 1960s, the KMT government started to build up the east part of the city based on the initial grid street network which the Japanese had left. The "Inner City" area, as the consequence of the expansion, ultimately shifted to become a marginal, old district no longer the focus of the city and the crowded entertainment.

#### 4. From Noble Hierarchy to Daily Communitarianism

Due to the expansion towards the east and the rapid development of the urban landscape, the spatial representations of Taipei City in the 1990s presented a modern-traditional paradox. Likewise, *XimenMachi* was also impacted by saturated residential density and the transfer of the city centre away from it. It became an outdated and neglected area. The Red House, previously one of the area's distinctive landmarks, eventually fell into disuse within an environment where there was a lack of public security and sanitation. This situation of urban pauperisation continued unnoticed until 1994. The official announcement of the Community Development Cultural Policy in 1994 can be regarded as the motif through which this disused historical site and neglected district was identified and revitalised. After such a colourful history the area of *XimenMachi* would never have recovered and the Red House eventually would have been demolished had there not been an awakening consciousness in the 1990s, which urged the populace to preserve and to restore this cultural locale. Community Development has been a key motivating force behind social regeneration in the post-martial-law era. The adaptive reuse of the Red House in fact reflected the urban crises and popular anxiety in Taiwan in the 1990s.

Taipei City experienced massive urban expansion and population growth in the 1970s and 1980s. This phenomenon increased the necessity for greater public infrastructure and a demand amongst city residents for not only higher living quality but also community identity. However, the lack of public participation and the repressed social atmosphere of the time could not ameliorate this emerging social anxiety. Therefore a form of cultural and spatial chaos and heterogeneity framed the social political context of the time. The emergence of the Community Development movement acted as a representation of the social reflection and mobilisation. This social reflection has, to a certain extent, reversed the chaos and heterogeneity from negativity to positivity, primarily through community and professional

engagement with reconsidering the site's use and historic fabric. The once reflective spatial darkness of social heterogeneity was recognised and even renovated as a positive space of multiplicity.

The plaza of the Red House today, which is defined by a steel structure implying the shape and the location of the once existing *Shinto* shrine, not only creates a spatial landmark for public gatherings, but also reconnects the past of the Red House as an object of constructed nobility to the contemporary setting. The Red House today is successful as a centre of community and fashion within Taipei City. It also indicates the revival of a cultural centre within Taipei, evidencing the origins of the city and its remarkable character of variable past powers, far from the nationalist imposition of the martial law period. The Japanese past, from a cultural political perspective, is a historical fact which cannot be neglected. This presents a change in the view of Taiwan's colonial past today, from the adoption of a political bias to quotidian cultural communication. Even though the past may have been bloody and negative, yet its communication with the present can, on the contrary, be neutral, even culturally contributing to society and the built environment. As a western architectural implantation in colonial Asia, the moral nobility of the Gothic is once again "revived" after the renovation of the Red House, and the original quality of social hierarchy has been transfigured into a day-to-day quality under the current spatial context of community.

#### 5. Conclusion: Changing Reception in History

In retrospect, the Queen Anne Revival, which was born of the Gothic Revival, at first glance appears to move away from the morality and consciousness constructed by the Gothic Revival. Weiner observed this by looking at Richard Norman Shaw's career: "There was no theory upon which the Queen Anne Revival was based as there had been for the Gothic Revival. Norman Shaw felt no necessity to write a justification of his architecture"[12]. However, this is obviously not a consensual reception. In Britain, young architects in the late Victorian era like J. J. Stevenson and T. G Jackson still attempted to attest to the weight of the Gothic Revival as a tradition of their generation. They endeavoured to link the "style" Queen Anne to the "spirit" of Gothic. In Imperial Japan and subsequently in colonised Taiwan, the Queen Anne Style and a form of morality constructed by Gothic spirit was eclectically merged for nationalistic reasons into the *Tatsuno* Style. This formal and "noble" implantation, from Victorian influence to Japanese colonisation, has composed a special story in Taiwan. This story depicts different conventions of different contexts to which a particular subject relates, and which the public, having internalised such features from the experience of the subject itself, brings to the corresponding version of history.

For a long time, the imposition of the KMT government's political ideology was the ascendant discourse in Taiwan's various architectural representations. Therefore, other cultural forms in this "construction" of discourse became a "difference". The city of Taipei, the place of the KMT's central political foothold in Taiwan, was inevitably presented as the typical form under this tendency. The spatial witnesses of these variable powers, except the "orthodox" objects of "Chinese-ness", all seemed to face sedimentation, a sinking to the bottom of society. As a consequence, years of neglect had marginalised these "other" historical objects and simplified the character of the city as an iconic ROC capital among its territories. This difference (or "other") which was only affiliated with or excluded from the ascendant discourse during the Martial Law period has been re-noticed or revitalised in the present designating the forms of representation that produce post-Martial Law Taiwan's culturally and historically located meanings.

Under this philosophy, Taipei and its architectural representation are typical as a construction of history that faithfully inscribed Taiwan's colourful past. However, as an examination of the past's reception as history, the Red House reveals a challenge. It is now widely recognised that historical facts can never disappear but can only be concealed. The intentionally neglected or forgotten spatial evolution, following the lessons from various architectural changes, ultimately needs to address regeneration once a social context has been changed. Pure symbolic representation, constructed as the typical face of post-WWII spatial identity in Taiwan, therefore faced a real conundrum when the dictatorship was terminated. The longstanding standpoint of "seeing the world from Taipei" is no longer universal and unassailable. As Alun Munslow pinpoints, history changes due to the realisation that history is a constituted narrative discourse written by the historian in the here and now [2].

The success of renovation projects like the Red House, which had been purposely forgotten in post-war Taiwanese society, attests to this regeneration as their undeniable identity forms key parts of Taiwan's spatial essence. On the other hand, as an example of the imagery of Victorian influence in colonial Asia, the story of the Red House is witness to the interaction of the moral consciousness of architecture, which originated in western civilisation and was appropriated by Asian colonisation. The everyday face of the environment constructed from history and the actual lands of Taiwan have today been recognised as significant which had in both its colonial and Martial Law ages hitherto been represented and contextualised as an object of pure

political symbolism.

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