Glocalization of the "World as One" Cosmopolitan Community: Recreation of U.S. MAAG and Culture Confusion in the "Neo-Taichung"

Kuo-Liang Chang¹ Jui-Yang Kao² Shang-chia Chiou³

Abstract

Glocalization has made the status of “community” as important as that of state or society, and this kind of effect has helped cities in Taiwan being put in a unique situation find a new way. Utilizing the philosophy of “the world as one,” the “Cosmopolitan Community” fully incorporates the diversity that international metropolises share and finds a new energy that helps achieve break-through between the orientation of urban development and multiculturalism. Based on the Documentary Review and Depth Interview, The remaining dependents quarters of “U.S. MAAG” in Taichung (there were 23 buildings originally but only 4 at the moment) – the exotic communities that are rich in the U.S. military culture, are reexamined in the wish of determining a way to achieve both cultural preservation and economic development by saving the “cultural heritages.” Although Taichung’s U.S. MAAG are not at a same status as the “Historic Buildings” in Taipei when compared to other cities (e.g., Pingtung and Hsinchu), proposals regarding their preservation have been made nonetheless. In the near future Neo-Taichung Municipality will become an international metropolis that is under the direct jurisdiction of the central government. The philosophy of “the world as one” is not only the best way to manifest the culture confusion ability of the Chinese society but also allows us to promote multiculturalism and get in touch with the world. By fully utilizing the concept of a “Cosmopolitan Community,” the negative elements in the concept of a state or a society are avoided, and an innovative thinking that goes beyond the socioeconomic barrier can also be achieved, making this concept the best way for the Neo-Taichung Municipality to achieve sustainable development.
Key words: the World as One, Cosmopolitan Community, U.S. MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group), Cultural Heritage, the American military dependents' quarters, the CCD (Comprehensive Community Development).

1. Introduction

Due to its unique history, buildings in Taiwan have diverse architectural styles, and recent discussions in Taiwan on residence, architecture, and space are mostly on traditional and contemporary housing styles rather than on foreign houses built in Taiwan. There are, however, quite a few American houses in Taiwan that were built during the period of U.S. military assistance, and a number of them are still used by the Taiwanese locals as of today. For example, the American military dependents' quarters (also referred to hereinafter as "the Quarters") in Shan-zhai-hou, Yangmingshan, Taipei City, were built as a community designed to satisfy the life-styles of American military dependents; as a product of unique era and situation, this community features an exotic spatial design and life style. American military dependents' quarters can also be found in Taichung, Hsinchu, Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Pingtung. Such as environmental changes, urbanization, socioeconomic transitions, and change of interest, some of these American Military Dependents' Quarters have been abandoned, put into other uses, or even dismantled. This study’s purpose is to preserve the cultural heritage while they still exist and examine its influences, considering their exotic architectural style and previous, foreign lifestyle is different from that of the locals. The compiled findings will surely reveal what has not yet been discovered in Taiwan’s architectural history. As stated above, this empirical study aim to:
1. Understand how American military dependents' quarters were built and used.
2. Use the “Cosmopolitan Community” concept to examine how these buildings can be preserved and put in use for the municipality of Neo-Taichung.
3. Learn to know the Quarters interacted with the surrounding neighbors and developed into a unique community.

2. Methodology

This study is divided into three stages:
(1). Literature Review and Depth Interviews.
(2). On-site mapping and the morphological analysis of community.

(3). The interpretation with the “Cosmopolitan Community” to the transformation of the culture form. Case-study survey and interview are adopted primarily on the key points to be addressed as seen below.

2-1. Literature Review and Depth Interviews to historic materials

The historic changes of the American military dependents' quarters are analyzed by understanding why they were built and how they have changed. Literatures, historic materials, and interviews are the primary methods utilized to understand these two aspects and are gathered in the following manner:

(1). Gathering literatures and historic materials: including the information, pictures, blue prints, theses, and local historic materials regarding the Quarters in Tuku Neighborhood, Taichung City.

(2). Pictures: Including those of urban planning, terrain, the era of Japanese dominance, and fortresses.

(3). Historic materials: On the local changes, the construction of the buildings, official publications, relevant theses, and information through newspapers and websites.

(4). Interviews with relevant individuals: Including residents, tenants, nearby residents and seniors, and owners of the buildings.

(5). Field observation and recording: Focus on the Quarters and record the changes that have taken place, talk to the individuals relevant to the interviews and the local seniors, and take pictures for the purpose of studying the changes.

2-2. On-site Mapping and the Morphological Analysis of Community

Information on the Quarters’ architectural styles and design is gathered from historic materials, visiting the actual buildings, and in-depth interviews. The focus is on discussing the Quarters’ architectural styles and related facilities, designers’ thoughts and considerations, the process of transition, and what design-beliefs were provided by the U.S.

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1 Tuku-zai (meaning “a mud container” in Chinese) was named so because this area was consisted of mostly rice paddies, and farming families have rice-storage containers known as “Tuku,” an oval-shaped container weaved of bamboo, with four legs, and covered in a mixture of mud and cow manure. Back in the old days, such containers were seen almost everywhere, and the place was thus named so. This area was called Tuku Village in the Ching Dynasty; it was renamed to Tuku during Japanese Occupancy and Tuku Neighborhood after Taiwan’s Restoration.
MAAG. The needed information and how it is gathered are explained below.

(1). Gathering historic materials

Gather pictures and literatures relevant to these Quarters and information on American houses and communities.

A. Pictures: Gathered photos of on the Quarters, including the dismantled ones, from local seniors. Photos include the original designs and blueprints of the Quarters, old photos, and community maps.

B. Historic materials: On the design of the Quarters.

(2). On-site surveying and drawing

Map the Quarters and their immediate surroundings. Three of the Quarters in Tuku Neighborhood, Taichung City, have been measured and mapped. Details of the mapping include:

Buildings’ feature: Floor plan, cross section, structure, and material shown on a 1/100-scaled map with photos. The items measured and mapped are:

A. Floor plan: The front and back yard, entrance, exit, garage, hallway, living room, den, kitchen, bedroom, storage, and bathroom.

B. Photos of buildings: All sides, style of roof, featured elements, material, closure, decoration, and other details.

C. Cross section: Spatial relation and sequence.

D. Relevant facilities: The septic tank and sewage system.

(3). Gathering historic materials

This focuses on the Quarters’ interactions with and influences on the local environment, including how the locals’ opinions on the Quarters, the opinions of tenants on the Quarters and the surrounding, the influences of the Quarters on the local gathering, and the influences of the exotic life style on the local counterpart. The types of information and how they are gathered are explained below.

A. Gathering Historic Materials

The literatures are on the history of the Tuku Community, major events taken place in the Quarters, and real-estate related information such as the history of Taichung City, the locals, theses on urban development and landscape changes, and news coverage.

B. Interviewing Related Individuals

Local residents, seniors, and building owners were interviewed for
research purposes. Types of respondents and questions are as follows:

a. Residents and tenants: Questions include how the Quarters interacted with and influenced the locals, how the security systems work, and their opinions on the Quarters.

b. Locals and seniors: Their opinions on the Quarters during the U.S. military assistance, the interactions, and the influences of exotic life styles on the locals.

2-3. Interpretation with the Cosmopolitan Community

Scrutinizing those 23 "the Quarters" buildings since 1959, apparently different from the urban planning until 1945 Japan-occupied period, it fully presents the American planning idea of “the garden city” with the suburb house of one-storey design. Then, Tuku village surrounded with rice paddies, visual impact of that architectural style and Japan-occupied opened out the “world community” of different Chinese jointly. Such space form has influenced the near district of Taichung with shape imitation. After to 1970s, Tuku community faces the expanding of urban land consolidation in Taichung, "the Quarters" also gives up with the relation change between international and Sino-U.S. relationship, and slough off into the dispersed “transnational community” that assembled the U.S. left in Taiwan. It leaves the street name like Road American village, Street Sino-America, and Street China-America, and recreation place of American Army Joint logistics Club. In 1980s, with peripheral Tuku community contacting “Fine-Arts Museum”, “Cultural Center”, and the “Fine-Arts Garden Avenue” opened up, the place assumes an artistic corner of Taichung, the high FAR with mixing use forces the one-storey house type to face removing and reconstruction, perhaps remaining 9 buildings will only 4 leave. Conjuncture of promoting in Neo-Taichung municipality, these already survived 40-year historical buildings have become one of the indelible images of city, the concept of “cosmopolitan community” that via an inherent “one family” from China, perhaps an opportunity of integrating the whole new world with Neo-Taichung.

3. History of the Forming of the Quarters in Taichung

The Korean War broke out on June 25th, 1950, and caused the U.S. to restore their much-needed assistance, followed by financial assistance, to
Taiwan for cross-strait security. During the U.S. assistance, Taiwan relied on the Americans not only financially but also militarily. The focus in terms of the organization and staffing is the training and consultation services provided by the “U.S. MAAG,” which controlled the military operations of the Taiwanese Government. The financial assistance to Taiwan was officially terminated in June, 1965. The U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group/Republic of China on Taiwan (referred to hereafter as the MAAG) was officially founded on May 1, 1951. As an American supportive organization in Taiwan, the members of this organization were military officers, and the Quarters were thus constructed as a way to ensure they and their dependents are well looked-after during their stay in Taiwan. Arrangements with the Taiwanese Government were made to provide the officers with what was needed, and the construction and access of their dependents’ quarters were implemented in accordance with the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty. Locations throughout the three places with the highest number of U.S. MAAG staff were determined for building the dependents’ quarters.

Figure 1: U.S. Military Activities in Central Taiwan
4. Transnational Community of the Quarters in Taichung

4.1 Location and History of the Dependents’ Quarters in Taichung

The Quarters in Taichung is located in Tuku Neighborhood, West District, Taichung City (Figure 1). The districts previously known as “Meiji” and “Yamato” in the era of Japanese Occupancy were combined and renamed to the “West District” after Taiwan’s Restoration (Figure 2). Small rivers such as Lu River, Liu River, Mei River, Ma-yuan-tou River, and Tuku River scatter throughout this area (Figure 3). The West District is a lowland close to the heart of the Central District where the City Hall and City Council are located. Primary activities here are of education, followed by industrial and commercial activities, and most of the farmlands here have been turned into residential and commercial areas due to urbanization. After Taiwan’s Restoration in 1945, this area flourished and became the City’s political and educational center. Farmlands were turned into buildings due to zoning and urbanization. New immigrants moved in and transformed the original cultural and natural landscapes.

Figure 2 : Location of the American military dependents quarters in Taichung
Figure 3 : Hydrological Distribution (source: University of Texas library web site)
4.2 Urban Planning

This District is adjacent to the city center, and most of its farmlands have disappeared due to urban planning(Figure 8). Enjoying many of the government’s cultural/educational facilities which are located right here, this District features central, provincial, and municipal agencies as well as 52 schools. West District is thus known as the educational district of Taichung City, featuring education and followed by industrial and commercial activities.
and agricultural activities. The urban planning around the Quarters on Wu-cyuan W. Rd. is shown below (Figure 9).

**Figure 8**: Rezoning of different regions in Taichung City in different decades. (photo from City government)

**Figure 9**: Map of Urban Planning around the Quarters in Taichung City (photo from Taichung City's E-maps)

**Figure 10**: Map of Taichung City in the 1954 (photo from Taiwan Fortress)

**Figure 11**: Rezoning in the 1970s. (photo from City Government)

### 4.3 History of the Access to the Quarters in Taichung

The permit issued for the Quarters in Taichung indicates that upon its completion in 1959 (Figure 12), the purpose of the establishment was to provide the U.S. military officers and their dependants stationed in Taiwan a place to live (Figure 13, 15). From the interviews it is revealed that most of the officers were junior officers and colonels, who later left Taiwan when the U.S. assistance to and relation with Taiwan were terminated. The titles of these buildings were then transferred to the Bank of Taiwan and accessed by its high-level personnel or rented out. With the economic and financial development, more and more restaurants opened up in the establishment. After the Bank of Taiwan was privatized, the buildings were also rented out and turned into well-known restaurants. After the lease expired, the Bank of
Taiwan retrieved and sold the land to financial groups and construction companies, on which several high-rises were building within several years, completely changing the landscape and terrain of the community.

4.4 The Influences of American Quarters in Tuku, Taichung, on the Locals

The members of MAAG and their dependents started moving into the Quarters in the 1950s; with the increasing number of Americans, several streets were renamed as a result(Figure 9). Examples include “Meicun Rd.” (meaning “an American village”), “Zhongmei St.” and “Huamei St.” (suggesting the “friendship between Taiwan and the U.S.”), and “Meiqiao New Village.” These locations became an “international community where Taiwanese and Americans lived together and shaped a unique, exotic atmosphere in their surroundings.” (Figure 16)

The collective housing style of Tuku's Quarters from 1959 to 1970 (Figure.17) influenced the nearby architectural styles (Figure.18). The Quarters, however, are significantly different from Taiwan's traditional three-section compound and feature spacious design, large windows, dedicated garages, and dedicate front and backyards. Since Americans were able to pay more for rent, thus several similar-styled buildings were constructed at that time and were either sold to the locals or leased to Americans.
5. Cosmopolitan Community of the Quarters in Taichung

5.1. Matching the Spatial Texture in Urban Design

(1) The threat caused by the reconstruction of high-volume rate mix-uses buildings:

Almost fifty years have gone by since the Quarters in Tuku Neighborhood were completed in 1959. Through a series of urban development and environmental changes, the rural regions are now filled with real estate development and more residents. As a result, the Quarters have been reconstructed, sold, and dismantled, leaving only 9 buildings intact in 2010 (five will be dismantled shortly) and surrounded by buildings with 10 stories or more. From the urban design perspective, the Quarters are actually able to act as a buffer for the pressure on the landscape placed by the high-rises.

(2) Street Scales

The Quarters in Tuku is a complete neighborhood with checker-flagged patterns on the walkways and streets. Within each unit there are 9 sub-units on average, and nearby facilities including baseball fields, swimming pools, and basketball courts. There are also walkways that connect the units together. The Quarters’ roads are mainly connected to the outside via Wu-cyuan W. Rd., which has the greatest width and serves as the main access. Within the area, the sub-access lines that form the traffic network include Tsun-chung St., Zhongmei St., Wu-cyuan W. 6th St., and Wu-cyuan W. 5th St.
5.2. Stimulating the Richness and Features of the Heart of the Artistic City

(1). Expanding Taichung art and culture center

In the earlier days the Quarters was a mysterious place to the local Tuku residents. After the diplomatic ties between Taiwan and the U.S. were severed, the ownership of the Quarters was returned to the Bank of Taiwan which then leased the property to the general public. The Quarters is surrounded by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, parks, Art Gallery Green Parkway, and Taichung City Culture Center, making this area the center of recreation and art and culture. If the Quarters can be leased to Tuku Community’s Development Association, the space can be transformed into an art and culture center which forms a greater artistic community with the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts and Taichung City Culture Center, providing the community with more features and increasing the community’s artistic depth.

(2). Opinions from other participants

To Taichung’s real estate market, the Quarters’ location is the cream of the crop thanks to the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung City Culture Center, the urban green zone (Art Gallery Green Parkway), blue zone (Meichuan and Mayuantou River), and the convenient traffic network (such as the provincial highways and Taichung-Changhua Expressway. Financial groups and development companies are heavily investing in this area, and the Bank of Taiwan has continued to auction the Quarters away. As for how the
Quarters should be maintained and used, Tuku Community’s Development Association, officials (the Department of Urban Development and the Cultural Affairs Bureau), and the land owner (Bank of Taiwan) have different opinions and grounds. Tuku Community’s Development Association mainly wishes to turn the Quarters into a feature of community development. The landscape has been quickly changed by the auctioning of the Quarters and the nearby, new high-rises, and the locals wish to maintain the Quarters as they are. Activities such as the seminar on the history of U.S. military in Taiwan, “Reviewing World War II,” and community art fences help the local Tuku residents understand the history of their land, and the location and history of the Quarters gives the community that sense of identification. It is also wished that instead of being dismantled, the Quarters can be preserved and leased to the Association and turned into an art and culture center that joins the nearby National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung City Culture Center, and Art Gallery Green Parkway.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau is still observing and considering whether the Quarters should be dismantled or maintained. The land of the Quarters is of official use in the urban planning, and its owner is the Bank of Taiwan. Though the Bureau supports the Association’s wish of leasing the Quarters, they are conservative in this matter and expect the Association to lease the property through standard procedures. The Department of Urban Development supports the Association in this issue and is willing to provide consultation and assistance in its leasing, operation, and development. Bank of Taiwan, the owner of the Quarters, wishes to completely sell it off.

(3). Spatial strategies for maintaining the hardware

The hardware refers to the Quarters buildings. Given factors such as the ownership, economic gains, and urban development, it is difficult for old buildings to be maintained, while they are worth to be maintained from the cultural and historic perspective, and a solution is thus called for when there is a conflict between the two. Here the method of “trading land for land and switching the spatial right” is proposed. By trading for another land of equal value or the access right, the original buildings and area can be maintained as they are, allowing their preservation and economic gains. (Figure 21, 22)
(4). Turning into an art and culture center:

Through leasing and spatial transformation, the Quarters can be turned into an art and culture center, an American culture museum, or a community activity center. Through the public’s participation and management, the locals have a stronger sense of participation, and staff cost can be also kept low by recruiting volunteers. The Association can be put in charge of the operation and financial balancing, allowing better use of the Quarters, preserving the history of American military in Taiwan, and turning into a local feature that promotes the interactions between the two countries.

5.3. Globalization and Localization of Taichung as a Metropolis

(1). The merger of Taichung City and Taichung County Government in 2010 to respond to globalization:

Due to globalization, it is necessary for the Taichung City and County to merge and become a single authority in order for this area to expand and become an important node in the international business network. In other words, the Taichung Metropolis must quickly improve its competitive edge and become a global city in order to face the challenges posed by global competitions and major international cities. On Dec. 25th, 2010, Taichung
County will be merged with Taichung City, and the new “Taichung City” is expected to enjoy the following benefits:

a. Relevant constructions will effectively allow better planning and implementations, sharing of resources, and promote the development of central Taiwan.

b. Through the merger, the City’s competitiveness will be improved and enjoy better economy that promotes the entire country’s economic development.

c. The merger will improve the locals’ income level and standard of living, reduce the gap between urban and rural settings, increase land values, and even facilitate tax revenues.

d. The merger will improve the connections between Taichung and other Asian Pacific cities and regions and give the former the condition to become a global city.

(2). Preservation of cultural assets and local features:

Different from other cities is that Taichung City used to have numerous American military activities such as the Quarters and clubs (some clubs are still open in nearby areas). Under the American cultural influence, the Community may adopt the strategy of cultural preservation by preserving this piece of history and turning into a local feature. Under the trend of globalization, it is inevitable for local cultures to be influenced by foreign ones, but globalization does not mean “homogeneity.” It is therefore ever more important to preserve our own features and improve our competitive edge – goals that can be reached by accepting foreign cultures and working with the world.

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