

# Continuous Innovative Design in Cultivating Vivacity of Culture

## Transformations in the Development of Regional Cultural Heritage in Taiwan

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### Abstract

Presentations of cultural heritage are not only to show their context by static characteristics, but also to exhibit the thorough relationships among human beings, historical culture, and related locality. Local people nowadays are always engaged in protecting research of professional historical resources, and otherwise promoting new opportunities of popularizing to the public. In other words, such a special situation on conservative research could be re-defined within innovative interpretation by some types of “mixed-use”. To cultivate the new-designed environment should be based on the foundation of the old-designed thinking. Whatever old or new environment ought to be built under the highly constructed framework of values in regional resources. By careful manipulation, some regions could recover and innovate from the existed. Surely such a research project is urgently of great worth about the crucial development in some areas in the near future.

**Key words:** *conservative design, value, cultural heritage, the vivacity of culture*

### 1. Introduction

In architecture mix and match, the most important thing is “self”, which is to take one’s own ethnic history and culture as a starting point. In addition, one must stay clear-headed and conscious when facing foreign cultures. --“*Ethnicity of Architecture*”

The term “Mix and Match” was firstly introduced in a Japanese fashion magazine “*ZIPPER*” in 2001. In fact, the term has already been widely adopted in various fields. It is a complicated issue about how not to comprehend this concept superficially; after all, Chinese and foreign cultures often differ in their respective ways of thinking. In environment or space design, mix and match means more than just the appearance of architecture; to grasp the thoughts and ideals of the term is far more important. Mix and match should be based on cultural thinking methods and thorough understanding of differences; in addition, it should also go beyond the mere mixture of new and old forms. Otherwise, mix and match will only result in homogenous or heterogeneous degeneration.

In Taiwan’s newly-amended “Cultural Heritage Preservation Law” published in February, 2005, “cultural heritage” refers to assets with historic, cultural, art, and scientific values which are assigned and registered. Cultural heritage presents not only static trace of time but also the relation among people, history, and lands. Studies of cultural heritages concern professional research related to histories and also promotion and

popularization of relevant issues to the general public. Hence, the studies of cultural heritages can also be regarded as a new way of explaining “mix and match”.

## **2. Research Purposes**

Relation among people, environment, and lands considers situations, phenomena, features, implicit meanings about people’s different activities at different lands. Environment for continuing traditions mostly manifests in humanities and histories, and it stresses its interaction with people in different cultures.

### **2.1. Distinguishes between Tradition and Oldness**

**2.1.1.** Oldness focuses on vertical thinking of history while tradition goes beyond vertical time frames and concerns horizontal thinking of present.

**2.1.2.** To decide between preserving oldness and renovating is a necessary process of passing down experiences. The process will continue and has nothing to do with success or failure.

**2.1.3.** Tradition excludes rigid material meanings and has stronger sense regarding space. It contains broader a concept of historic contexts and adopts “rolling” operation.

**2.1.4.** Tradition is a “unique concept” generating from a cultural background. It has a concept of goal.

**2.1.5.** Tradition adapts to the autonomy of modern life. It stresses the active idea of living for the moment.

**2.1.6.** Tradition has a stronger sense of “adaptive” development.

### **2.2. Communication with and Interpretation of Environment**

Environment functions as a method of memorizing- particularly collective memory. Environment provides the most appropriate settings and contexts to arouse emotions, explanation, behavior, measures, etc. Therefore, it is fair to say that the establishment of environment guides behavior patterns since environment commensurate with behavior. The broader meaning regarding communication with and interpretation of environment is not limited to person to person communication but also includes the relation between objects and persons. “World Dictionaries and Encyclopedia” (1996, vol. 13) defines “interpretation” as “further explanation of a certain phenomenon...it is similar to ‘explanation’ or ‘explication’, but it carries more philosophical sense. It is regarded that there is some sort of noumenon or structure behind a phenomenon, and its real meaning can only be uncovered through intuitions or philosophical thinking.” Environment itself makes interpretation on the go. In addition to conveying information, its interpretation put more emphasis on inspiration. Through interpretation, audience can communicate with environment, ecology, cultures, and histories, and the process of communication brings about experiential inspiration of sense and sensibility and further influences behavior and attitudes. The process is beneficial for cultural preservation and development.

### **2.3. “Culture” as a Way of Communicating with the Content of Traditional Environment**

There is a wide variety of definitions of “culture”. Generally, culture includes folk customs, languages, ways of living, and even abstract concepts of values and ideologies. Culture requires appropriate passing-downs, adjustments, and communications. Valid communication is determined by message-conveying agents such as people, matters, time, locations, and things. These agents attract message receivers with appropriate methods and are oriented by the goal of triggering interests.

Through different cultural immersions, culture, like habits, is cultivated in a certain context, and context is based on meaning. One deciphers by following threads that are meaningful, and s/he has different behavior within different contexts. Therefore, in research about sense, context becomes a worth considering issue.

### **3. Research Structure**

#### **3.1. Explanation of Environment**

##### **3.1.1. Comprehension and creation**

Environment construction is to create a “comprehensive grounding for life” and to develop, coordinate, and communicate. Any activities relevant to “maintenance, gestation, innovation” of residences and living locations can be regarded as “environment construction”. It is a very broad concept. The above-mentioned activities accumulate and then become local cultural activities.

##### **3.1.2. The concept of spiritual environment: From “Interpreting Location” to “Exploring Location”**

Spiritual environment is a direct and indirect symbol presenting the quality of a society. It is a dynamic cultural force which pushes people to look forward, seize the present, and pursue ideals. In addition to the pursuit of completion, the value of constructing spiritual environment should be measured with quality and standard. It is the characteristics and expectations at formal and cognitive level that matters, not the existence or numbers of facilities in a location.

#### **3.2. Opportunities for Innovation of Traditional Environment**

Innovation of traditional environment should start from consensus among the public. It should be rich with characteristics and activities. In addition to be historically or culturally significant, the innovation should be relevant to local values, such as developed local traditions or local life rules. Besides, “characteristics” which disappear during the process of modernization and economic growth are also important to the innovation of traditional environment. Content of a traditional environment includes:

**3.2.1.** Traditional environment as a spiritual symbol of a nation or a region: It can awake the public’s historical awareness, strengthen self-esteem and confidence, influence social value concepts of the public, and cultivate honors and cooperation of groups.

**3.2.2.** Traditional environment as wisdoms of ancestors: It helps to preserve and facilitate cultural level of a society and stimulate creativity.

**3.2.3.** Traditional environment is a “cultural property” taking up a large space. It usually refers to architecture, landscapes, and historical sites with special historic or art values.

### **4. Literature Review**

#### **4.1. British Experience**

The British government has realized long ago that it is not an easy task to preserve historic heritages. Therefore, it has been developing management systems, organizations, and regulations since late 19<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to preserve its cultural heritages. It exerted official power to strengthen the efforts of preserving, maintaining, and reusing its cultural heritages. It has established a series of systems and policy guidance to recognize and manage historical heritages, listed buildings, historical quarters, and conservation areas. Generally, there were three stages in the historic heritage preservation development of England. With regard to the range of conservation, the development expanded from spots, lines, to areas, and its focus progressed from preservation (restricting invasive changes), conservation (dealing with necessary changes), to sustainable conservation. In addition, local governments invested a great deal of resources in creating historic images and reviving local economics. Such efforts have given new values of utilization to featured historical industry and assets of local areas. Local governments particularly stressed the planning of reuse and systems for sustainable management.

Specialty books about preservation of historical quarters published by England in recently years show that criterion used to determine whether an area should be preserved or not has expanded from one value to value for continuity of cultural memory/heritage value, and economic and commercial value. Realizing the significance of historic heritages to social cultures and built environment, England spares no efforts in recognition and preservation of historic heritages.

#### **4.2. Taiwan Experience**

Taiwan's cultural heritage preservation development has undergone the four stages: the promulgation of "Law for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Attractions" (1922-1945), "Law for the Preservation of Cultural Properties" (1945-1982), "Cultural Heritage Preservation Law" (1982-2005), and "Cultural Heritage Preservation Law" (2005-). Among the four regulations, "Law for the Preservation of Cultural Properties" has never been implemented.

##### **4.2.1. Significant events during the development are as follows**

- (1). Taiwan 921 earthquake cultural heritage preservation action: importance of the preservation of historic buildings.
- (2). Amendment of Cultural Heritage Preservation Law in 2005: making the Law more inclusive and comprehensive; specifically defining affair rights
- (3). Introduction of the concept of community cultural heritages and guardianship network in 2005: changing concepts of values, establishing civic culture
- (4). Implementation of "Regional Cultural Heritage Environmental Preservation and Adaptive Development Project" in 2006: establishing a new mode for local cultural heritage integration

##### **4.2.2. Current Status and Characteristics of Taiwan's Cultural Heritage Preservation**

- (1). Due to the soundness of civil servant system and the implementation of "Cultural Heritage Preservation Law", management of legal affairs regarding cultural heritage preservation becomes more mature and stable.
- (2). Thanks to promotions supported by competent authorities and educational institutions and community totality construction, cultural heritage preservation has become a bottom-up activity. There is a higher level of consensus among the public toward cultural preservation, and the number of conflicts over preservation has significantly reduced. Nevertheless, the combination of community construction (promoted by Council of Cultural Affairs), township and village renovation (promoted by Construction and Planning Agency), and featured shopping centers (promoted by Ministry of Economic Affairs) has incurred concerns about the introduction of too many commercial events and uneven qualities.
- (3). Materials and skills required for preservation have improved due to the accumulation and exchange of experiences. However, issues about tender invitation system of repair projects and the passing-down of craftsmanship have always been difficult problems. Regarding this, it is necessary to set up a competent institution and a sound platform for exchange.
- (4). Equal attention to preservation and reuse has become trendy; however, there is still room for improvement regarding the coordination, designs, and sustainable management of projects of these two areas. Additionally, over commercialization of some reuses may hurt the values of cultural heritages.
- (5). Taiwan's cultural heritage preservation in earlier times focused on cases with specialty. Recently, the course has been switched to the preservation of popular culture. Such switch is consistent with the World Heritage's stress

on universal value.

#### **4.2.3. The Future of Taiwan's Cultural Heritage Preservation**

Concepts that are in the focus of attention and being promoted gradually are as follows:

- (1). Taiwan's culture is featured by Austronesian, Dutch, Spanish, Han Chinese, Western, and Japanese cultural elements. In the past, only the preservation of Han Chinese culture was valued. Recently, people start to respect cultural diversity and culture mix.
- (2). In the past, preservation stressed too much on "integrity", "orthodoxy", or "arts" (or the so-called "aesthetic viewpoints"), making the results of repairs become over imaginary, unreal, or even hurting the features of local cultures. Now the core value of preservation focuses on authenticity of cultural heritages.
- (3). Previously, only tangible cultural properties were repaired. Now, people start to value the representation of intangible cultural heritages.
- (4). Previously, cultural heritage recondition cared only the preservation of individuality. Now the attention extends to the social aspect in an attempt to construct a social environment with various facilities.
- (5). Fundamental works such as preservation of scientific research, compilation of historic data and cultural heritage information, and cultivation of professionals are improving.

#### **4.3. International Literature Review Regarding the Preservation of Traditional Environment:**

4.3.1. With the promotion of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) was established in Rome in 1957. The Center is committed to promoting technological intelligence of cultural property preservation, research, and cultivating property repair researchers and professionals.

4.3.2. A research project implemented in 1963 aimed to explore the feasibility of using international measures to prevent cultural properties from being harmed by public or private construction works.

4.3.3. An non-governmental consulting organization was established in Paris. In addition to continuously providing direct services in its regional branches in Latin America and South Asia, the NGO also offers new techniques, knowledge, and publications about historic site preservation.

#### **4.4 Literature Review Regarding Embedding Culture into Life**

Culture is the presentation of life and support of interpersonal communications. Through mutual understandings, people will respect other countries and in the meantime, strengthen identification of own cultures. Cultural exchanges allow different ethnic groups and races to construct closer ties with one another and to realize the ideal of globalization and cultural diversity. German scholar Stefan Hradil defined milieu as a sum of environmental factors which action takers face, such as nature, society, and minds. Influenced by these factors, action takers structure specific ways of living for themselves. Cultural milieu is defined as (Xin Wan-jiao) a milieu and its system marked off based on different cultural activities conducted by people living in it; people in this milieu carry out cultural activities with local features different from those of others.

#### **4.5. Key Points about Placing Material Values upon Culture**

Using "culture" to emphasize product uniqueness, increase product values, or create new values has become a contemporary trend. The cause of such trend comes from the emergence of regional uniqueness, local industry powered by cultures, and promotions of cultural creation industry. Culture is one of the effective tools for creating values (Lin Hui-chen, 2006).

#### **4.6. Key Points about Creating Technique-based Cultural Value**

Japan's Cultural Asset Preservation Act was amended in 1997. The amendment adopts techniques are about rebuilding a cultural relic another site. 20 to 30 years after the rebuilding, the cultural relic will be built again at the original site. The attempt is to ensure continuous passing-down of manpower and preservation resources such as techniques, rituals, construction methods, and craftsmen. Such practice is worth considering as a reference.

#### **5. Methodologies**

This study adopts literature analysis and case study as its methodology. Case study includes criteria assessment, and it uses "checklist of criteria", which is also known as "checklist method" or "criteria comparison table". The method is to list and categorize data based on several assessment criteria so as to present characteristics of each project. The columns of the table stand for various alternative projects while the rows refer to various assessment criteria.

The expression can be divided into "indicator's approach" and "ordinal approach".

##### **5.1.Indicator's Approach:**

Indicator's approach requires a set of assessment criteria. Assessment results are summarized and tabulated for analysis. Strengths and weakness are labeled with A to D as reference for decision makers. Specific indicators cover local indicator, time indicator, identification indicator, uniqueness indicator, art indicator, technique indicator, regeneration indicator, and collection and research indicator.

##### **5.2. Ordinal Approach:**

Ordinal approach starts with designing a set of assessment criteria for each case, and then it puts all projects into sequences based on their extents of compliance with each criterion. Finally, the approach puts all projects into orders according to their performances of each criterion before deciding which project should be adopted. This approach uses ordinal scale (or hierarchical scale), so it can not decide which project to be adopted by summation; it can only make rough assessment.

Procedures of project implementation and assessment results determine the sequencing of the projects. The criteria include the extent of project ideal compliance, the extent of preservation of historic resources, the extent of alignment between active reuse and civic life, and the content of environment cultivation and sustainability.

#### **6. Analyses and Discussion**

Traditional heritages carry historical significance and humanism and art values. They mirror the living styles and attitudes of ancestors, and to people nowadays, they are important resources for enriching life. Quality and quantity of traditional heritages are indicators which tell the extents of cultivation or advancement of a nation or an ethnic group. Regarding this, advanced countries in the world try all they can to preserve and maintain these heritages.

##### **6.1. Distinguish between Traditional Environment and Regional Cultural Heritages:**

The goal of Taiwan's "Cultural Heritage Preservation Law" is to "preserve" and enrich civilians' spiritual life and advocate culture. From Taiwan's characteristics and cultural backgrounds, there are six areas concerned by this Law: antiques, relics, folk arts, folk customs and related cultural relics, natural and cultural landscapes, and historic buildings, and all areas include tangible and intangible heritages. The coexistence of diverse cultures in a local society creates "locations" for various activities and a comprehensive grounding for life. Visiting and tourism bring about opportunities of diverse "exchanges" (in Japanese it means tourism) to community management.

Together these activities structure the circulation of local economy and construct a gibber local social system for common environmental management.

## **6.2 Causes of Issues**

### **6-2-1 Issue about Development Crisis**

(1). Economic development: Economic expansion has increased the demand for space and environment. Many buildings with historic or art values are then dismantled for bigger and more modern structures, resulting in bigger obstacles to the exploration of historic contexts.

(2). Contempt of spiritual meanings: In the pursuit of material civilization, many traditional cultural heritages are despised as something primitive, outdated, and products of colonialism. These heritages are then discarded and disvalued.

(3). Absence of core values: In the implementation of “constructing traditional environment”, there are often conflicts among users or failures to arouse more public concerns. Therefore, it is rather difficult to upgrade groundings of local environment or life and to realize local public welfares and stable life. More recognition is needed from the public.

(4). Needs for Restriction and Advanced Aesthetic Standard

Currently, heritage preservation in Taiwan concerns only the restoration of historic buildings but fails coordinate and match the buildings and their surroundings; therefore, there is no improvement regarding holistic landscape quality and planning.

### **6.2.2. Issue about Homogeneity and Heterogeneity:**

(1) Homogeneity: There are usually strong relevance between designs of space and activities; therefore, they require “complementarity” or “interdependency”. For example, there are strong complementarity between wholesaling and retailing in business activities or among up-,mid-, and downstream units in industrial activities. Both homogeneity and heterogeneity are featured with complementarity and mutual supporting, and it is especially true in the trend of “globalization”. Globalization makes cross border exchanges closer, but it may result in the crisis of cultural homogenization.

(2) Heterogeneity: Some activities are exclusive, which generate “externalities”. Under such circumstance, affected by externalities, original land uses and activities produce changes of quality or quantity. Such effects are known as “third-party effects” or “spillover effect”. Hence, when it comes to the selection of location, it is necessary to separate or isolate land use with exclusiveness to avoid undermining land use efficacy.

### **6.2.3. How to Cope with the Issues:**

(1) Meanings of the Preservation of Traditional Environment:

(A). Improve Recognition of Life Quality: The preservation of traditional environment utilizes exiting resources of a region for cross-regional or divers cooperation. Such cooperation improves living environment and active functions of a region, and it further realizes sustainable improvement of life quality.

(B). Make Specific Stage Goals: It is certainly necessary to make specific contents or goals for realizing public welfares. Only with clear goals can regulations complying public welfares be made and can such regulations be recognized by the public.

(C). Realize Public Welfares for Local Societies: The preservation of traditional environment should be based on local societies with the aim to actualize public welfares. By stimulating communities to express their vitality

and charisma, different generations or people with different concepts of values can harmonize with each other to ensure the fulfillment of each individual and create local environmental values for well-being.

(D). Protect Individual Well-being: Under minimum requirement, each local society can decide by itself the regulations about how to realize public welfares. The fulfillment of self and public welfares is possible by maximizing the utilization of individual property right.

(2). Generally, the preservation of cultural heritages with universal values has the following basic conditions:

Administrative organization and system: Completion of appropriate legislation, suitable budget allocation, personnel training, nationwide service system, and extension education programs.

(3). Popularization of the Concept of Civic Culture:

Cultural milieu is a space for common public memory and an activity location for common believes. Local cultural characteristics and activity features should be combined and incorporated into living environment to improve cultural life space. It has become an important indicator for the development of civic culture and cultural benefits.

(4). Expand and Reserve Traditional Environment. Create Hierarchy System for Preservation Zones:

Take traditional environment as the grounding and expand related geological surveys. Incorporate cultural and historical resources to create local cultural features, promote historic buildings and traditional cultural spaces in communities, design surrounding environment, and develop local aesthetic features.

#### **6.2.4. Transformation**

The preservation of traditional cultural heritages should steer toward the professional development of passing-on, protection, research, and exploration. Such development, along with traditional environment protection design, is to protect traditional environment with new regional design. In essence it is an interpretation of time and space which must follow the principles of integrity, dynamics, regionalism, diversity, and biology. Take Japan as an example, its “preservation district for historic buildings” is a long-term strategy covering preservation procedures, mechanisms, and local sustainable management.

#### **6.2.5. Seize Key Opportunities**

The preservation of cultural heritage faces debates and conflicts regarding diverse values. What should be preserved are not some mere plots but a whole story and its extension consisted of these plots. These plots have power over the public in the past and inspire people nowadays and give them expectation and imagination about the future. The procedure of evolvement includes: reality, transition, disappearance, preservation, reflection, values, actions, verification, alternations, etc.

### **7. Conclusion**

#### **7.1. Shift of Strategy: The present is history to the future**

#### **7.2. Principles for Operation**

The term “construction” in “environment construction” means more than “constructing” or “producing”. It is a long process of careful planning, nurturing, and cultivating. It constructs not only a “material” environment but also a “social” environment. It is not about creating something brand-new but to renovate existing things.

**7.2.1.** Principle of establishing and cultivating “cultural heritage database”: Historic culture needs to be enriched with continuous cultivation, which is just like providing nutrition to the roots of a growing tree. The collection, compilation, research, passing-on, exhibition, promotion, and digitalization of database it the key source of cultural heritage preservation.

**7.2.2.** Principle of localization and globalization: flexible use of exiting diverse (social, material, cultural, natural, historic) resources and local potentials. Set roots locally and reach out globally.

**7.2.3.** Principle of historic context of location: Conducts cultivated over long periods at each location are foundation stones of life, which are fundamental to the formation of a society and space. “Local cultures” are like genes of a society. Previous cases and experiences prove that as long as local cultures are used well, favorable outcomes will follow, and it should start with awaking the genes of a society. It calls for creating history for a local society and in the mean time promoting such history.

**7.2.4.** Principle of individual inspiration and unique creativeness: Environment construction should be based on ideas of local residents. The ideas should be accumulated and preserved in a bottom-up manner so as to continuously improve the development of local society and to stimulate uniqueness and creativity. The aim of design is to catch public attention and enrich people’s life. As stated by Mr. Shiro Nakamura, executive creative director and brand managing director of Nissan Motor Co., Ltd, “Building a strong brand is the key to the uniqueness of Nissan car designs”. Nissan car designs are featured by a 3-C concept: creative, clear, and consistent.

**7.2.5.** Principle of mutual integration, coordination, and interaction: Such process is called “mutual editing” or “mutual design”. Environment construction is structured from within a local community in a bottom-up manner. Community construction is guided by common and continuous organizational framework and techniques which support the concept of space. If a type of drama is lack of performers, even if it has a large amount of audio-visual data, it will not be counted as Culture-Vivante. Therefore, Japan’s practice of using legislation to protect artists should be learnt. Related regulations should be made to protect these so-called “treasures of mankind” to recognize their values in passing down arts and traditional artistry. In the past, artists burdened the task of passing down artistry alone and overlooked the cooperation with support personnel. Now, in addition to artistry “preservers” (artists), artistry “preserving teams” (other performers or support personnel) should be included into the entire process.

**7.2.6.** Principle of inter-industrial integration for mutual benefits and co-existence: It should develop over long-period and in a gradual manner to gain supports and engagement of individuals in a local society. It requires continuous circulation of resources, assets, and talents in a local area to ensure sustainable local construction. With the help of in-depth local identification and a streamlined mechanism, sustainable local construction and environment aesthetics will become possible.

**7.2.7.** Principle of mutual connection: It is an important trend to connect various subjects to form a large environmental construction project. Each stage of the project should be specialized for mutual connection.

**7.2.8.** Principle of sustainability: Design is an art which triggers emotions; arts are a type of cultural consonance. Consonance originates from continuous circulation of changes which are collective, cheerful, charming, and creative. It goes through the stages of demonstration, regeneration, innovation, and cohesion. In other words, to improve the regeneration values of culture is an efficient opportunity for developing tangible and intangible added-values of civic life.

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