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The Role of Historical Streets and Mixed-Era Buildings in Shaping Urban Identity and Quality: A Case Study of Zhongshan North-South Road, Taipei City

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ABSTRACT

Streets are essential to urban transportation and are key to shaping a city's identity and quality. In large urban settings, unique features are often captured in streets that blend historical and contemporary elements. However, modern urban planning frequently emphasizes the quantity of public facilities over the quality of urban life, potentially overlooking the importance of urban identity. This research argues that mixed-era buildings and historical streets, such as Zhongshan North-South Road in Taipei City, should be seen not as obstacles to development but as vital elements that enhance urban identity and quality. Zhongshan North-South Road, which has evolved through significant historical periods, including the Japanese colonial era and the Cold War, serves as a case study to demonstrate the influence of historical streets on urban vitality. The study underscores the importance of urban regeneration that values historical elements, providing insights into how mixed-era locations contribute to a unique urban environment value and serve as a reference for historical urban preservation.

1. Introduction

Every capital city has an international area akin to Zhongshan North-South Road

The unique characteristics of Zhongshan North-South Road also represent Republic of China in Taiwan's international destiny

Streets are multifaceted arteries of urban life, acting as catalysts for development, conservation, history, and identity. Serving as vital conduits for transportation, they shape urban layouts, influencing land use patterns and accessibility while also embodying cultural heritage and architectural heritages [15]. Historic streetscapes are repositories of urban history, reflecting past social, economic, and cultural dynamics, while also contributing to the collective identity and sense of place within cities. Preserving and revitalizing streetscapes not only conserves tangible urban heritage but also fosters social interaction, community cohesion, and a vibrant urban fabric, essential elements for sustainable and livable cities [20].

The allure of a street transcends mere transportation and human connections. When numerous stories unfold on a street, its significance becomes multi-faceted. This is especially true when the street

has endured periods of colonization, martial law, and the Cold War, elevating its importance to the realm of international relations, as seen in Taipei's Zhongshan North-South Road [16][23]. Its historical layers intertwine, revealing narratives of struggle, resilience, and diplomatic maneuvering. From being a conduit for colonial governance to a symbol of national identity during martial law, and now a testament to diplomatic history in the Cold War's aftermath, Zhongshan North-South Road embodies Taiwan's complex journey on the global stage [23].

Originally situated on the urban fringe in the late 19th century, this road's significance grew with increasing population and its scenic beauty. Influenced by Japanese introduction of Western urban planning concepts like boulevards, Zhongshan North-South Road (then known as Chokushi Kaidō during Japanese Colonial Period) [11] became a crucial thoroughfare for hosting foreign dignitaries. After the departure of the Japanese, this road became a key throughway for US military and other countries' diplomatic facilities. Until the Republic of China faced diplomatic isolation from many countries, it carried the unique history of international diplomacy and diplomatic ruptures [6][8][13].

Today, as Zhongshan North-South Road continues to traverse the urban landscape of Taipei, it serves as a testament to the ebb and flow of history—a conduit through which the past converges with the present, forging a tapestry of cultural continuity amidst the vicissitudes of time.

2. Methodology

When analyzing street spaces from the perspective of cultural heritage value, Riegl's [18] suggests that historical assessments is necessary. Therefore, this study employed two methods. Firstly, a historical literature review was conducted to understand the development of the streets. Secondly, the research used mapping to pinpoint relevant international facility locations through chronological maps, particularly those involving international relations such as governor's offices, Japanese shrines, embassies, military bases and other sites related to international affairs. By employing mapping and density of diplomatic facilities by points on historical maps, the significance of these locations was explored the value of the streets and to offer urban planning recommendations for historical preservation, as well as to interpret the special findings through mappings and density of points [22].

This study begins with the history of a street, utilizing historical landmarks as analytical tools. By utilizing the Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Map (<https://gissrv4.sinica.edu.tw/>) as base map, all diplomatic facilities are plotted according to different time points and sorted chronologically, forming a dynamic timeline of diplomatic facility changes over time. Finally, all relevant diplomatic facility points are overlaid to observe which areas have the most concentrated or dispersed points, the proximity of the most concentrated locations to certain regions, and their changing trends. By cross-referencing historical literature data, recommendations for historical space preservation with a focus on diplomatic history are provided.

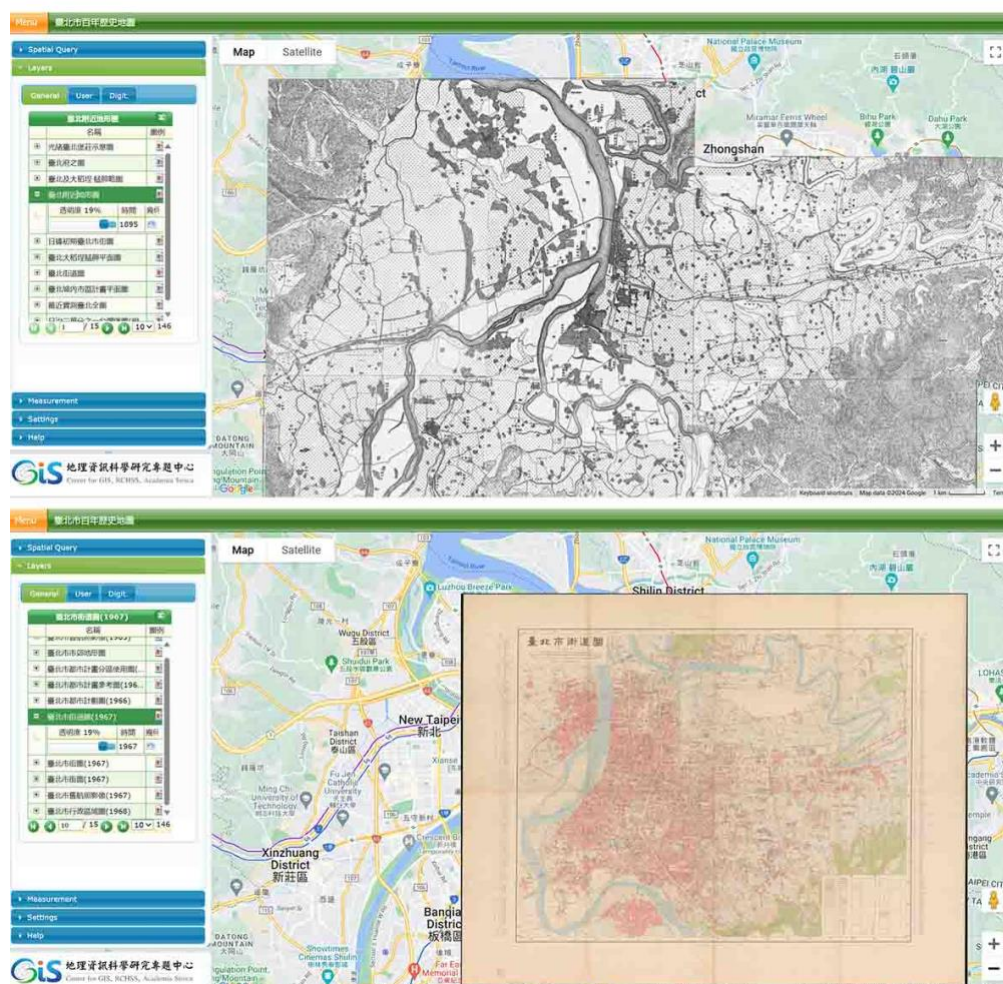


Fig. 1. The screen of Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Map. On the left side of the Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Maps, there is a time option that displays different maps for different years. This image shows the historical maps for 1895 (top) and 1967 (bottom). *Source: author*

The Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Maps is a website service established by the Center for Geographic Information Science Research of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at Academia Sinica, utilizing the "Digital Archive Project of Maps and Remote Sensing Images." It accumulates a large amount of map data of Taiwan and integrates it with the Google Maps interface. The scientific and comprehensive mapping of Taiwan began during the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945), when the Japanese meticulously mapped Taiwan's resources for precise control, thus becoming an important resource for Taiwan's current research.

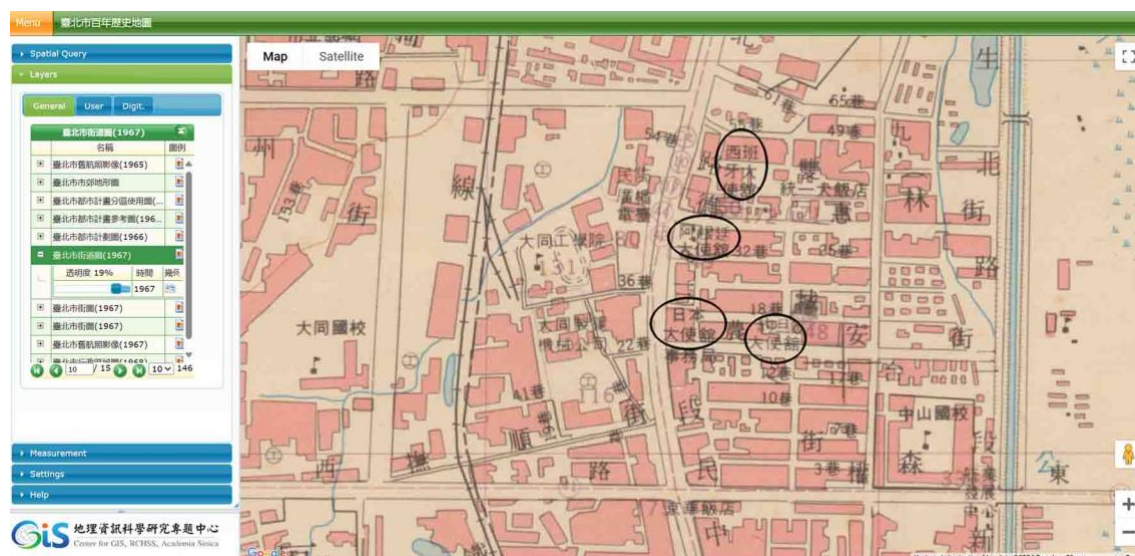


Fig. 2. Using the 1967 map as a sample, zooming in will reveal and mark the locations of diplomatic facilities. This allows for the identification of diplomatic facilities along Zhongshan North-South Road in 1967. *Source: author*

This study analyzes historical maps to plot the locations of former diplomatic institutions and uses spatial point analysis to compare the differences in point density across different periods, revealing the changes in the Republic of China's foreign policy. Throughout the research, we integrate the diplomatic history of the Republic of China and reference Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to conduct spatial distribution analysis. The aim is to demonstrate the significance of specific historical regions through the density and location of diplomatic institutions and to analyze the spatial characteristics of international relations.

3. Historical Background

1.1 City Wall Border and Long-Ton Garden (-1901)

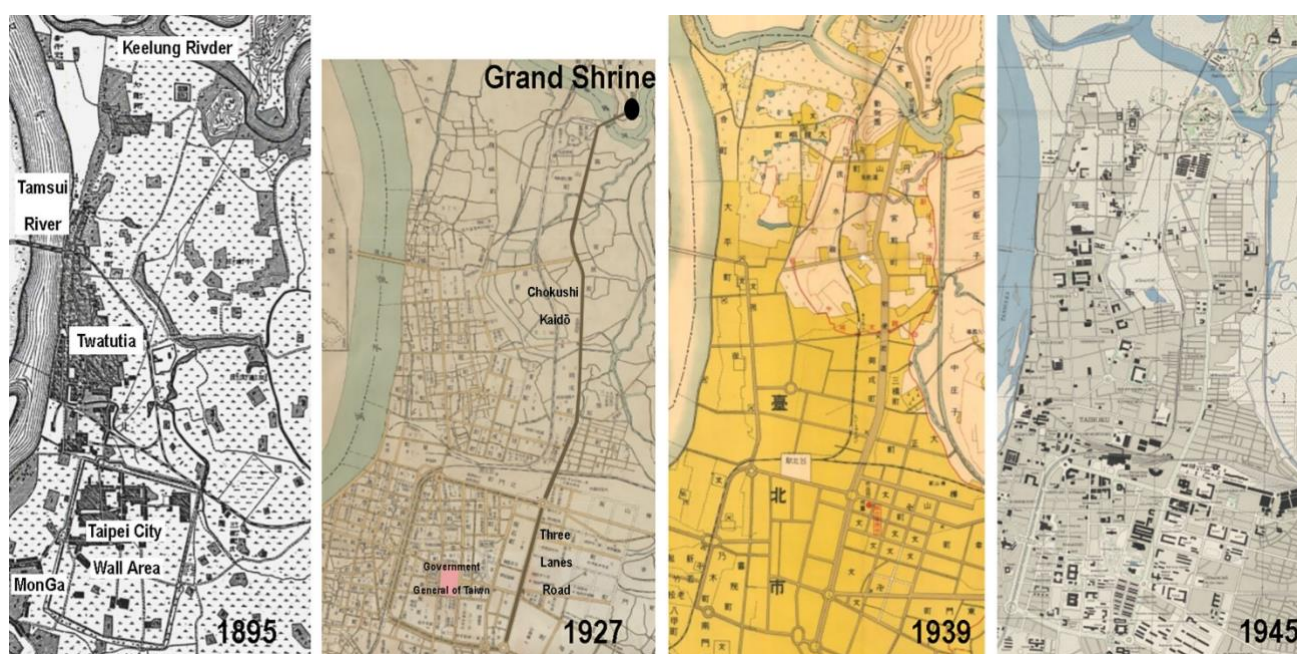


Fig. 3. The change of Zhongshan North-South Road and its surrounding from chronological maps. It can be seen that the population development toward east side of Taipei. *Source: Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Maps*

The narrative of Zhongshan North-South Road can be traced back to the late 19th century, towards the end of the Qing Dynasty [13]. In the late 19th century, Taipei was not yet the capital city, with the central area being along the Danshui River, encompassing Twatutia and Monga. The Tamsui River was a crucial transportation route before land transportation flourished in Taipei. From 1895, maps drawn by the Japanese shortly after their arrival in Taiwan indicate that the most densely populated area was along the banks of the Tamsui River. In contrast to the prosperity of Twatutia and Monga, the area around the Road was practically suburban [11].

In 1884, the construction of Taipei city wall was completed, situated between the bustling districts of Twatutia and Monga. The consideration of the wall locations is: on one hand, it was based on Feng Shui principles, and on the other hand, it was to control the two most densely populated and commercially prosperous areas of Taipei [13]. Even the official buildings at that time were constructed in alignment with the prosperous western half. Along the eastern side of Taipei city wall, where Zhongshan North-South Road begins, buildings were not densely packed. Fields near the Keelung River were prevalent, and the hills on the northern bank of the Keelung River, where the modern-day Grand Hotel stands, were admired for their beauty, known as Long-Tong (dragon's hole or the head of dragon). The head of the dragon, symbolizing the Long-Tong, started from these hills [10].

1.2 Chokushi Kaidō (ちゅうしかいどう/Imperial Envoy Road) and Three Lane Road (1901-1949)

During the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945), Japanese after Meiji Restoration who were learning Western urban planning concepts implemented them in Taiwan. When the Japanese arrived in 1895 in Taiwan, they initially implemented Taiwan's hygiene policies because the sanitary environment in Taiwan was in urgent need of improvement at that time. Due to numerous anti-Japanese movements in southern Taiwan when the Japanese first arrived, they were concerned that such movements might also occur in Taiwan [8]. Therefore, most Japanese settlers initially concentrated within Taipei City for transportation and security considerations, making Taipei the capital of Taiwan. It wasn't until the Japanese established good relations with the gentry of Taipei that the population of Taipei gradually expanded from three settlements (Twatutia, Monga, and Taipei city wall area) into the metropolitan area of Greater Taipei [10]. In 1900, the planning of urban areas in Taichung and Taipei was first initiated. The administrative system was changed in 1920, and from 1920 onwards, urban planning was expanded [8]. Until now, in Taiwan's major cities, one can see that the planning methods introduced by the Japanese are still being followed, just by observing the layout of the streets.

On October 27, 1901, the Taiwan Shrine held a ceremony to enshrine the ancestral spirit, inviting the Chokushi deity from Japan and planting 600 acacia trees along the route. As the urban population grew, the city walls became an obstacle to urban spatial development. Therefore, in 1904, the Taipei City walls were demolished, and the original route of the old Taipei City was converted into so called Three Lanes Road [8][13]. Trees were planted on the streets to allow for vehicular traffic, following the concept of a boulevard. At that time, Zhongshan North-South Road was also known as the East Three Lands Road [13]. According to Chang's research (2008), the design of the East Three Lands Road was planned by Gotō Shinpei (1857-1929), the head of civil affairs during the Japanese colonial period in Taiwan. He referenced Berlin's Unter den Linden boulevard and designed a straight tree-lined avenue. Since then, this road has not only been a route to the shrine but also a symbol of political and power connections between the Governor-General's Office and the shrine [2][11].

In 1923, Japanese Crown Prince Hirohito (later Emperor Shōwa) visited Taiwan. To welcome the Crown Prince and complete the grand shrine visit, in commemoration of the Crown Prince's visit, this

road was also known as Chokushi Kaidō (Imperial Envoy Road), located on the Zhongshan North Road [6][2].

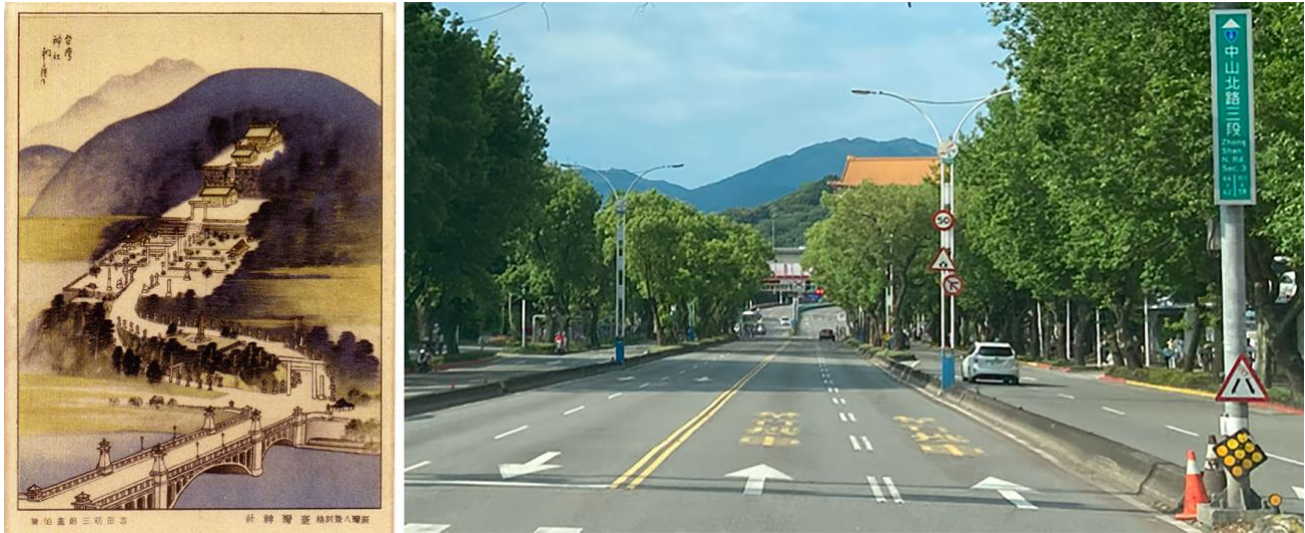


Fig. 4. (Left) A famous drawing from the view Chokushi Kaidō to Japanese shrine by Hatsusaburō Yoshida. *Source: Taiwan Cultural Memory Bank.* (Right) Zhongshan North Road the view to Grand Hotel (only its roof can be seen). *Source: Author*

1.3. Zhongshan North-South Road (1949-)

When Taiwan ended its period of Japanese colonization in 1945, a 1945 map of Taipei City drawn by the U.S. military reveals several notable features along the Three Lanes Road to Chokushi Kaidō stretch. The area includes the Taiwan Governor-General's Office, official residences, and some public facilities such as hospitals and schools. Additionally, it encompasses the U.S. Consulate, a mental hospital, parks, and a zoo [13]. These features paint a vivid picture of the urban landscape during that transitional period, reflecting the intersection of colonial legacy, emerging post-war governance, and the influence of international actors. As Taipei began to redefine its identity in the aftermath of World War II, this area became a microcosm of the city's aspirations, challenges, and evolving connections with the wider world [21][23].

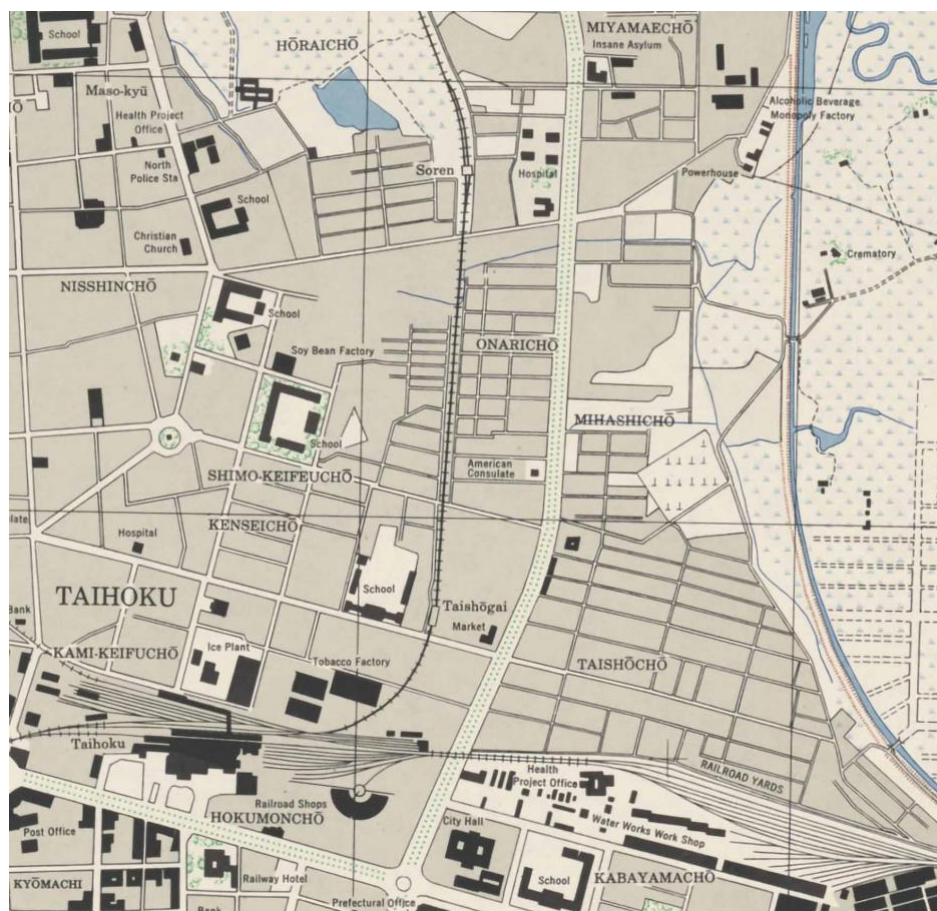


Fig. 5. Part of Zhongshan North Road on the Taipei map drawn by the U.S. military in 1945. *Source: Taiwan Hundred-Year Map*

However, after the Kuomintang (KMT) government took control of Taiwan in 1947, there was a negative attitude toward Japanese culture. As a result, Chokushi Kaidō was renamed Zhongshan North-South Road in honour of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China (ROC). Despite Dr. Sun Yat-sen having visited Taiwan only three times, and during a period when Taiwan was still Japanese colonial period, his contribution to the democratic revolution is symbolic [14].

Zhongshan North-South Road also served as the route from the Presidential Office to Chiang Kai-shek's residence. For national security reasons, numerous underground facilities were constructed along this road to conceal security personnel and ensure the safety of the president. Additionally, the construction of underground passages replaced the need for pedestrian bridges, explaining why almost every intersection on Zhongshan North Road has an underground passage but no pedestrian bridge [16].

Following the 228 Incident in 1949, Taiwan entered a period of martial law that lasted until its lifting in 1987. During this time, significant international events occurred. Notably, in 1971, the ROC was forced to withdraw from the United Nations, leading to the cessation of diplomatic relations with many countries [14]. Currently, the ROC maintains diplomatic relations with only 12 countries in Taiwan [3].

In 1952, the Grand Hotel was completed on the site of the former Taiwan Shinto Shrine. This building, located at the foot of Zhongshan Road and halfway up the hillside, features a large Chinese-style roof typical of northern China, symbolizing the urgent representation of Chinese legitimacy for international status during the Chiang Kai-shek era. The Grand Hotel is a popular destination for tourists because it contains a secret passage intended for Chiang Kai-shek's escape [14].

Looking at a map from 1960, the northern section of Zhongshan Road was densely populated with foreign embassies and facilities. These included the Spanish Embassy, Argentine Embassy, Japanese

Embassy, Guatemala Embassy, Vietnamese Embassy, the legation of Venezuela, the United States Taiwan Defense Command (USTDC), and Headquarters Support Activity, Taipei (HSA) [14]. The concentration of international units also led to the development of various Western-related industries, such as bars. As a child, my impression of that area was that if you wanted to practice English, you should head to the bars there.

From Hatsusaburō Yoshida's drawing, it can be seen that along the Chokushi Kaidō to the Japanese Shrine, one must cross a bridge called the Meiji Bridge. When the Kuomintang (KMT) government came to Taiwan, the bridge was in very good condition. In 2002, Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou, under the guise of restoration, dismantled the bridge, promising to reassemble it in the future [14]. However, it has now become individual components lying on the banks of the Keelung River.

Due to Taiwan's severe labour shortages caused by declining birth rates, many international workers have come to Taiwan for employment, with the majority hailing from Southeast Asia. Zhongshan North Road, retaining American culture, and featuring predominantly English-language masses at the Catholic church, St. Christopher, along the road, has become a hub for Filipino Catholics, thus transforming Zhongshan North Road into "Little Philippines [14]." This shift represents a change in the social demographic structure.



Fig. 6. A shop in "Little Philippines". *Source:* <https://kingcar.org.tw/achievement/501435> (15th Aug. 2024)

4. Literature Review

The literature review will be divided into three parts: researches focusing on Zhongshan North-South Road, discussing the historical urban landscape and its preservation, and exploring the analysis methods of historical urban landscapes.

Meng, F.-Z. [16] divided into five stages: the Qing Dynasty period, the Japanese colonial period, the period of American aid, the period of dependence development, and the period of restructuring. Through an examination of these periods, we can see that the historical changes in the spatial layout of Zhongshan North Road are not only a microcosm of the production process of Taiwanese society but also the result of dominant forces shaping urban space. The historical and political significance of Zhongshan North Road is obvious, but he did not conduct an in-depth analysis of a specific spatial theme. Therefore, this study will analyze the power significance of Zhongshan North Road and interpret and propose preservation suggestions for the historical urban landscape from the perspective of international relations spatial theme.

Yin, P.N. [23] points that Zhongshan North Road has plenty of space of representation significant. She explores the regional differences in postcolonial discourse and the issues faced in different regions,

especially in the context of Third World countries post-independence. She emphasizes the multifaceted nature of colonial relationships, including oppression between nations and ethnic groups, as well as the potential for colonial relationships based on different factors such as class, gender, and sexual orientation. Using Taiwan's Zhongshan North Road as an example, the article examines the area's development from the Japanese colonial period to the present day, revealing how colonial experiences are reflected in this region [23]. At the same time, the article points out that without collective consciousness cleansing and reflection on colonial psychological states and cognitive structures, the framework of colonial operations remains deeply ingrained in every aspect of daily life and may give rise to new forms of colonial domination. The focus of the article is on presenting the complexity of postcolonial experiences and how they can be understood and explored through localized observations [23].

From a review of historical literature, it can be understood that authors recognize the unique power dynamics along Zhongshan North-South Road, resulting in its representative landscape. However, regarding how to reproduce or utilize preservation methods to allow people to remember or reflect amidst rapidly changing international situations and population movements, historical-type articles do not specifically focus on this aspect. Therefore, the research turns to focus the urban analysis methods to find the appropriate historical urban preservation criteria [23].

Cohen, N. [4] uses case studies and practical approaches to highlight significant historical landmarks and areas, providing recommendations for the preservation of regions or buildings. In the article, he emphasizes the importance of clarity regarding the purpose of preservation, with tools and analytical methods serving as aids. Therefore, this research method also aligns with the spirit of historical preservation. Faced with rapid urban development, a street of international historical significance may acquire new meanings, leading to the forgetting of its old significance [4]. Especially when this street holds a rich, irreplaceable history of the Republic of China's diplomacy, it is therefore highly deserving of preservation.

UNESCO [20] points out that a city is an organic and dynamic entity. Therefore, when conducting historical urban preservation, it is necessary to consider not only its original appearance but also the changes in its social structure. Zhongshan North Road is a typical dynamic historical street, transitioning from the colonial period to the Republic of China era to its current status as "Little Philippines [14]." In addressing preservation issues, this study believes that everyone who utilizes this space should understand the street's past and collectively envision its future with the new community.

Hubel references Riegl's [9] [18] perspective to explain the value of heritage, emphasizing that the value of cultural heritage lies in its historical significance. According to Riegl, old objects do not necessarily possess cultural heritage value; historical research and documentation are required to establish their heritage value [18]. Additionally, Hubel and Riegl [9] [18] also stress the importance of art value, suggesting that the foundation of heritage value is supported by both historical and artistic significance. Their analysis, rooted in art history research methods, primarily focuses on the value of artifacts or buildings. However, when it comes to analyzing the historical value of large-scale urban environments, such as the "ensemble" concept mentioned by Riegl—where a group of buildings forms a collective entity—their research is still lacking. Therefore, this study attempts to enhance the understanding of urban historical value through urban analysis methods.

The preservation of historical urban landscapes in the face of modern development pressures has been a subject of growing concern in urban studies and heritage conservation literature. Scholars have emphasized the importance of adopting holistic approaches that consider both natural and cultural values when assessing the vulnerability of urban heritage sites. Aysegula K.-T. [1] aims to assess the vulnerability of Konuralp's urban legacy under socio-economic pressures and propose strategies to integrate urban heritage values using the historical urban landscape approach. Urban conservation is viewed as a pivotal tool for managing change within the broader planning framework. The research employs survey methods and remote sensing techniques to examine the historical urban landscape of Konuralp in Turkey, particularly focusing on landscape character changes between 1982 and 2015.

Morphology is one of the crucial tools in urban development analysis. Lilley [12], using the map of Coventry from medieval England as a case study, analyzed the plans from the 12th to 13th centuries. Through this analysis, insights into the geography and urban development patterns of the area were gained, pinpointing certain urban textures that have since disappeared. The analysis revealed the characteristics of streets and other areas of use during the medieval period, contributing significantly to urban archaeology. This study references Lilley's mapping method, marking out locations relevant to diplomatic history, and providing recommendations for preservation areas based on their density. One of the analysis methods for historical urban landscape [22] also can be used for the preservation in diplomatic urban spaces [19]. While not attempting to describe the development patterns of a specific street like Zhongshan North-South Road, insights into the characteristics of diplomatic facilities within urban streets can still be gleaned from the mapping, particularly regarding the significance for the diplomatic history of the Republic of China.

5. Assessment by Mapping the locations of Diplomatic Facilities

In urban design, diplomatic facilities, although not considered public facilities, hold special significance due to their locations [12] [19][22]. The selection of these locations reflects spatial needs, such as the surrounding environment and hospitality requirements when receiving international guests. Some embassies also exhibit clustering characteristics, turning the area into an enclave within the city. Particularly around the time of the Republic of China's leaving from the United Nations in 1971, changes in embassy spaces can provide insights into their diplomatic significance [3].

This study shows historical urban landscapes from the perspective of diplomatic facilities, aiming to highlight significant historical sites related to international relations along Zhongshan Road, especially Zhongshan North Road. Focusing on Zhongshan North Road, we use historical maps of Taipei as a base, marking diplomatic facilities along the road. Through analysis of the density of diplomatic facility locations and their proximity to public spaces, as well as the spatial characteristics of their surroundings, we aim to provide urban design recommendations based on these features in modern maps [22].

We collected historical maps from different time periods that indicated the locations of diplomatic facilities. These maps include the Taipei map drawn by the US military in 1945, the presence of the US military advisory group and the zoo as green area along the Keelung River in 1957. The Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Map also marks the locations of diplomatic facilities, including those along the southern end of the Keelung River until the 1980s. Notably, the US military advisory group on the west side of Zhongshan North Road was converted into the Joint Logistics Foreign Affairs Club in 1980. While this study focuses solely on the locations marked on the maps, which may overlook other diplomatic facilities, it still provides a broad understanding of the interactions and spatial changes of diplomatic facilities in the Republic of China [14]. In addition to historical maps, this study also identifies and lists the addresses of diplomatic facilities with confirmed locations, marking these points on the map.

Table 1

Diplomatic Facilities on Zhongshan North-South Road in the 1960s

Facilities	Nation	Time	Address
Legation	USA	1949	No. 18, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Embassy	France	1951	No. 5, Ln. 275, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Embassy	Japan	1951	No. 109, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Legation	Venezuela	1952	No. 103, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Consulate	Costa Rica	1954	No. 66, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Legation	Spain	1954	No. 49, Section 3, Zhongshan N Road
Consulate	Cuba	1957	No. 1, Section 4, Zhongshan N Rd
Consulate	Argentina	1958	No. 45, Section 3, Zhongshan N Road
Embassy	Ecuador	1958	No. 1, Section 4, Zhongshan N Rd
Legation	Vietnam	1958	No. 109, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Legation	Turkey	1959	No. 28, Section 2, Zhongshan N Road
Embassy	Guatemala	1960	No. 34, Ln. 53, Section 1, Zhongshan N Road

Source: Yin [23]

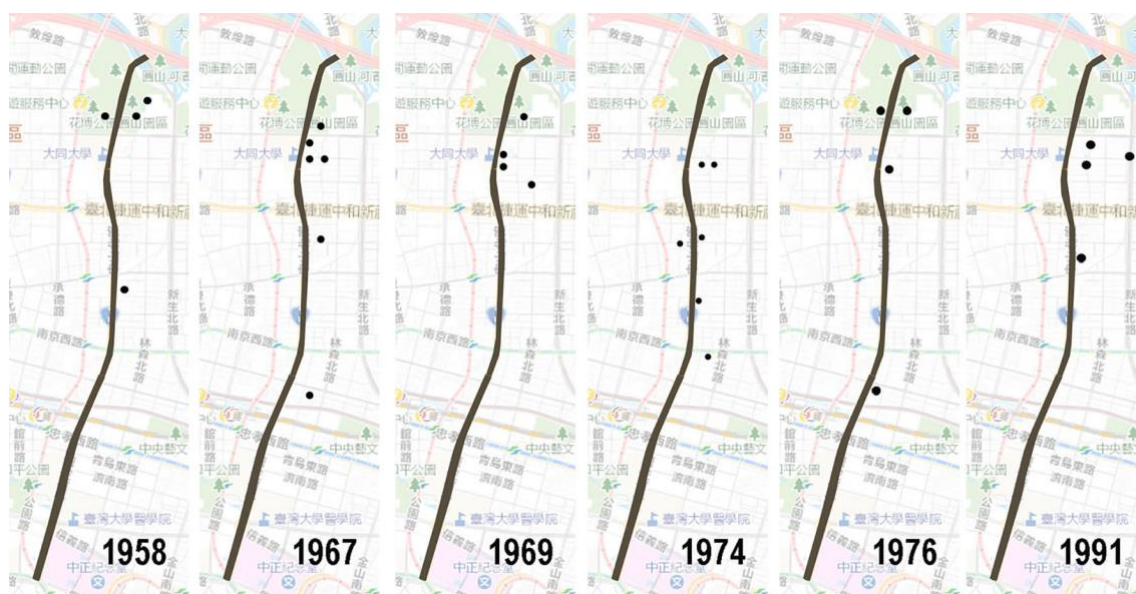


Fig. 7. The chronological change of diplomatic facility locations on Zhongshan Road, especially on Zhongshan North Road close to the former US military in the south side of Keelung River. Source: Ground map: Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Map. Location Points: Author



Fig. 8. The stack of all the diplomatic facility locations on Zhongshan Road.
Source: Ground map: Taiwan Hundred-Year Historical Map. Location Points: Author

These points also represent different diplomatic facilities in different periods:

- i. In 1958, along the route from north to south on the map, there were a children's playground, the Japanese ambassador's residence, and the Japanese embassy office.
- ii. In 1967, there were the Spanish legation office, the Argentine Consulate, the Japanese embassy, the Jordanian embassy, the Turkish legation, the Venezuelan legation, and the Panamanian embassy.
- iii. In 1969, there were the Argentine embassy, the Spanish embassy, and the Thai embassy.
- iv. In 1974, there were the Jordanian embassy, the Thai embassy, the Venezuelan embassy, the Consulate General of South Africa, the Consulate General of Malaysia, and the Bolivian embassy. Additionally, many hotels and airlines were also located on this road.
- v. In 1976, there were the Panamanian embassy and the Jordanian embassy.
- vi. In 1991, there were the Consulate of Nauru, the Economic and Cultural Office of the Philippines, the Panamanian embassy, and the Commercial Representation Office of Sweden.

The significance of Zhongshan Road began when the Japanese designated it as Chokushi Kaidō, making it an important symbol of international political space [2]. After World War II, the Republic of China held a significant position in the United Nations, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, when the number of diplomatic facilities on Zhongshan North Road increased rapidly [14]. These diplomatic facilities represented a time when the Republic of China was formally recognized by the international community. Ironically, after the Republic of China withdrew from the United Nations in 1971, these diplomatic facilities quickly left or were converted into economic offices. The rise and fall of diplomatic missions on Zhongshan North Road symbolize the Republic of China's transition from diplomatic prominence to the awkwardness of losing international recognition [3][5].

If we overlay all these points together, we can see that these diplomatic facilities are quite concentrated on the south bank of the Keelung River, in the green space of the American military zone. From the spatial relationship, it can be inferred that the diplomatic relations between the Republic of China and the United States are closely related [3]. Therefore, embassy establishments also tend to be adjacent to facilities related to the United States as much as possible. On the other hand, the area from Zhongshan North Road to Round Mountain is a place of beautiful scenery. For the establishment of embassies, it is also the best choice in terms of natural environment.

The overlaying of historical points reveals two messages. One is that the density of the points can infer the strength of diplomatic relations [19], while on the other hand, it can serve as the basis for urban historical preservation. In terms of spatial power, the Republic of China's diplomacy relied heavily on assistance from the United States, a fact supported by historical evidences [3] and spatial analysis. Concerning urban historical preservation, Zhongshan North Road and the green space on the eastern side of the Keelung River up to the first street northward can be considered the core area of the Republic of China's diplomatic history to demonstrate [23].

Another finding is that most of these diplomatic facilities are located on the east side of Zhongshan North Road, possibly due to excessive density on the west side. Meanwhile, museum buildings tend to be situated closer to the east side, where they can acquire relatively more spacious areas [16].



Fig. 9. Taipei Fine Art Museum. *Source: Taipei Fine Art Museum*

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

During the Qing Dynasty, Zhongshan North-South Road marked the eastern edge of Taipei's city walls. However, during the Japanese colonial period, due to the exceptional beauty of Round Mountain and the necessity of urban planning, Zhongshan North-South Road became a politically and religiously significant route. Widening the road to facilitate vehicular traffic and serve as a showcase for important events was a consideration [2] [6][13][14].

Following the end of the Japanese colonial period and the renaming of the road to Zhongshan North-South Road [7], it not only commemorated Dr. Sun Yat-sen but also signified the transformation of Taiwanese identity into Chinese identity. In addition to renaming the road and transforming the Japanese shrine into the Chinese-style Grand Hotel, Zhongshan North-South Road also served as a route for Chiang Kai-shek's interactions with the US military and as evidence of the consolidation of the Republic of China's diplomatic ties with the United States [14]. After the withdrawal of the US military, the area was converted into a popular green park and art museum, making it difficult to recall the diplomatic history of the Japanese colonial period and the Republic of China.

Diplomatically, the Republic of China reached its peak in the 1960s, despite its withdrawal from the United Nations, maintaining diplomatic relations with some countries. However, the embassies of these countries are no longer located on Zhongshan North Road, and traces of past diplomatic facilities can only be identified through historical maps [19].

Today, due to the influence of American culture brought by the former US military presence and the influx of Filipino workers, Zhongshan North Road has become a gathering place for Filipinos, known as "Little Philippines" [14] which implies the international heritage value of this street.

These changes illustrate that the significance of this road has continuously evolved. However, it is difficult to find traces of the political and religious relics of the Japanese colonial period or the diplomatic history with the Republic of China. Therefore, this study utilizes historical overlays to highlight the spatial representation of the Republic of China's diplomatic peak period, yielding preliminary results. The findings indicate that the densest concentration of diplomatic facilities along Zhongshan North Road is near the Keelung River, including the green spaces on the south bank of the Keelung River, which were once US military bases and nearby diplomatic facilities, especially embassies.

From the perspective of preserving the historical urban landscape, these irreplaceable diplomatic facilities represent international relations and the once glorious Republic of China, deserving commemoration in the history of international relations. Therefore, after collecting historical materials and spatial analysis, this study recommends that the streets near the Keelung River on Zhongshan North Road must be identifiable and memorable, as their significance cannot be replaced.

On the other hand, the former US military base now houses the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. The museum not only embodies aesthetics but also serves as an important venue for historical education. Therefore, it is suggested that the museum occasionally organize Taipei urban history exhibitions and

incorporate English-guided tours led by Filipino immigrants. This would allow more people who frequent Zhongshan North-South Road to better understand the history and future prospects of this place.

This study is a preliminary exploration that combines international relations with the value of cultural heritage, using Zhongshan Road, a location of international significance, for historical and spatial analysis. Although this research primarily focuses on the analysis of historical space and does not delve deeply into the complexities of international relations, it still provides new perspectives and directions for the field. The study hopes that future research will further explore this viewpoint, placing cultural diplomacy at the core to expand the scope of international relations studies. Additionally, it anticipates that the value of cultural heritage preservation will be interpreted through broader and more diverse analytical methods, thereby deepening its significance within the context of international relations.

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