

## Life of the Architecture

The Presidential and Vice Presidential Artifacts Museum used to be the Communications Bureau affiliated to Taiwan Governor-General's Office during the Japanese ruling period. Designed by Moriyama Matsunosuke, this building was completed in 1924. The Communications Bureau was in charge of supervising and planning Taiwan's post service, telecommunication, savings, agiotage, postal insurance, postal annuity, and aviation. As headquarters of postal and telecom affairs in Taiwan, it was of grave importance at the time.

The Bureau of Transportation under Taiwan Provincial Administration Executive Office took over the transportation business from Governor-General's Office after World War II. Housing in the same building, the Committee of Posts and Telecom was set up on November 1, 1945 to takeover the original postal and telecom network. On May 5, 1946, Taiwan Post and Telecommunications Administration Bureau was instituted to facilitate centralized management of postal and telecom business. Since 1949, this authority was divided into the Post Administration and Telecommunications Administration, yet both were still located in this building. Later on, as both institutions moved out, this building gradually became the home of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications. It was on May 4, 1998 that Taipei City Government appointed this building as a municipal historic site. With the consent the Executive Yuan, the Academia Historica took over this building from the Ministry of Transport and Communications in 2006, so as to promoting presidential and vice-presidential artifacts task. On December 20 of the same year, the Academia Historica officially registered as the managing authority of this building. The move-in was completed and the opening ceremony was held in April 2010.

### Architectural features:

#### 1. Earthquake-proof and fire-proof

As a result of Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, the increasing emphasis on earthquake resistance and fire prevention was reflected in the design of this building. With broadness in building area, the architecture is of a three-section compound. Both the floor slabs and the roof are constructed with reinforced concrete. Iron beams are installed cross the inside space, and the building is of lower height.

## 2. Transition to modern architecture

The building features a reduction in exterior contour with a low-slope but flat roof. Unlike protrusive porch that is frequently seen in government buildings of the time, the arched main entrance reminds the viewer with a sense of simplicity and stability. Nevertheless, classical elements are still applied in the detail, such as corbel, Ionic and composite columns. It is reasonable to argue that this building represents a turning point from classicism to modernism in Taiwan's architectural history.

## 3. Novel equipments in Japanese ruling period

### (1) Fire-proof and anti-theft roller shutter windows

During this time, sensitive documents were stored in the west-wing offices that featured iron window frame soldered with roller shutters. This design is ideal with respect to fire prevention, and the louver boards, when pulled down and locked to the lower frame of the window after office hour, can block out unwanted intrusion.

### (2) Fire fighting utilities

Located on each of the east and west wings are two hydrants that penetrate through the first, second and third floors. Specialized indoor fire-control water supply system is respectively and directly connected to waterworks network, so as to ensure stable water pressure in case of fire. This design is also found in the Governor-General's Office, the Railway Department, and the Monopoly Bureau.

### (3) Vault

Located on the third floor of the east wing is a large-scaled vault with the door reaching a height of 181 cm, weight of 90.5 cm, and thickness of 15.5 cm. The vault was used to house properties and documents. Vents were also set on the wall.

### (4) Electric bell

In order to promote the awareness of time among the public, the Governor-General's Office ordered many official buildings to hang electric bell on the outside wall. This building at the time also had an electric bell on the exterior wall of the east wing (overlooking Boai Road).

## Presidents and Overseas Chinese

Inside the "Presidents and Overseas Chinese" exhibition hall are an O-shaped round table and a large C-shaped seat, signifying the acronym of "Overseas Chinese." Sitting on the C-shaped seats you may watch video records of Presidents receiving overseas Chinese delegates and distinguished Chinese. Displayed on the O-shaped table are Academia Historica's collection of 28 documents and 72 photos related to overseas Chinese between 1931 and 2009. Besides the well-known notion of "Overseas Chinese as the Mother of the Revolution," these records also reveal how overseas Chinese contributed to our nation in the war against Japanese invasion, post-war reconstruction, in the establishment of democracy, the development of Taiwan, and the government's overseas Chinese affairs.

Just before the explosion of Anti-Japanese War, the government had been encouraging domestic investment by overseas Chinese. Further on October 1938, regulations for subsidizing and awarding of such were promulgated. With a supporting vote of 2,430, Chiang Kai-shek inaugurated in 1948 as the first President after the implementation of the Constitution. Congratulatory telegrams snowed in from overseas Chinese associations. After the Government relocated to Taiwan in 1949, the Anti-Communist movement was in full swing. In 1952, Mr. Chiang Ching-kuo organized the "China Youth Corps" and the "Workshop on returning overseas Chinese youth for military service." On October 21 of the same year, 307 overseas Chinese delegates from around the world attended "The 1st Global Conference on Overseas Compatriot Affairs" chaired by President Chiang Kai-shek in Overseas Chinese Garden of Bei-tou. It was concluded in this meeting to assign October 21 as the "Overseas Chinese Day" and to set up a permanent institution for the consolidation of overseas Chinese; thus the "Federation of Overseas Chinese Associations" was established. On September 1st 1955, the "Global Conference of Overseas Chinese on Education and Culture" was held in Taipei Zhongshan Hall. It is also noteworthy that overseas Chinese have been credited for the triggering of economic development in Taiwan; this view can be supported by Mandarin Crown Hotel, Asiaworld Plaza Hotel, Bank of Overseas Chinese, United World Chinese Commercial Bank, and thousands of other enterprises with overseas Chinese investment.