

OBSERVING THE FRAME OF CREATIVE CLUSTERS/GROUPS

A Case Study of Historic Districts in Tainan City

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Introduction

A. The Rise of Creative City

Over the past few years, the concept of “creative city” has been a popular topic. In 2004, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization also launched the “creative cities network”, and divided it into seven categories: media arts, literature, crafts, folk art, music, gastronomy, film, and design. Currently, 116 cities from 54 countries have officially become members of the network. The transition from historical districts to creative streets may have been quietly taking shape.

B. The Creative Atmosphere of Taiwan

Historical districts preserve the traces of history in the process of urban development, and form a “cultural life circle” with rich cultural connotations built by local residents in Taiwan. With rich historical and cultural elements, these creative talents, on the one hand, come here to absorb original cultural nutrition and to immerse themselves in this historical environment, bringing about various historical experience activities and technologies; on the other hand, they aim to seek opportunities from this nutrient to settle down, thereby promoting the development of all kinds of creative activities and shaping the industrial pattern in such creative streets.

Problems and objectives

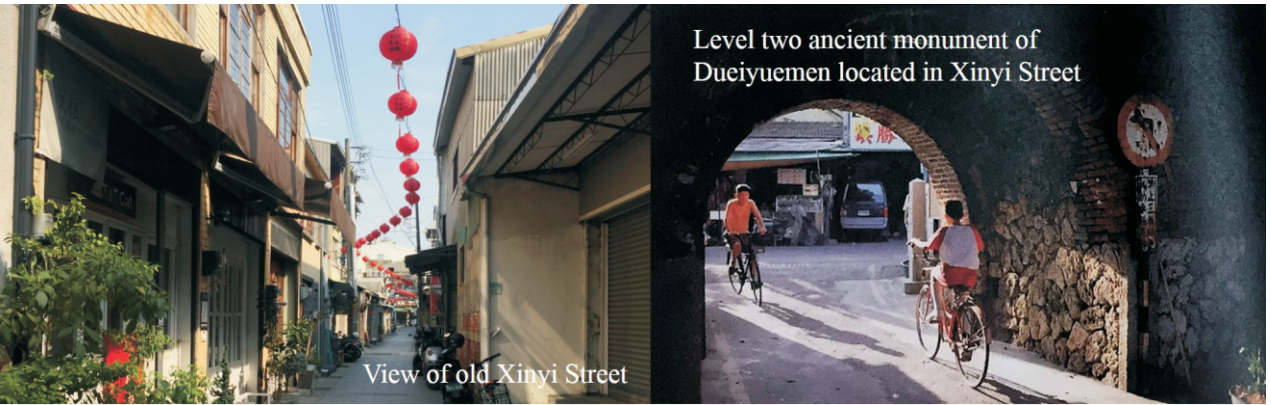
This study selects “Old Five Channels Cultural Zone of Tainan in Taiwan” as the subject. Old five channels zone is an East Asian harbor commercial and trade center in the 17th century, with its cultural connotation being mainly civil economic activities in the form of “Harbor Street”. Some old channels and buildings, including harbors, wharfs, Mazu Temple, dark streets, official roads, post offices, southern Fujian-style old houses and other content are rarely retained. In all ages, old five channels cultural zone has always been a special place where the common people can develop freely. Although it has experienced changes in the Qing dynasty, the Japanese rule, and the Republic of China, it all played a culturally-leading role.

This study observes that there are still several historic buildings and cultural spaces in the existing old five channels cultural zone, giving rise to various economic activities and creative management teams and shaping a special kind of symbiotic relationship. However, due to urban renewal and over-commercialization, Taiwan's old streets have been damaged. As a result, **innovation and development of historic blocks focus more on economic development and tourism industry, and fail to put emphasis on the application of cultural innovation.** Therefore, the creative atmosphere in the old streets cannot be demonstrated effectively. **This study observes the process of shaping and development of creative clusters/groups and proposes some phenomena.**

Methodology

A. Case Selection

The street view of Xinyi Street site in Tainan, Taiwan.

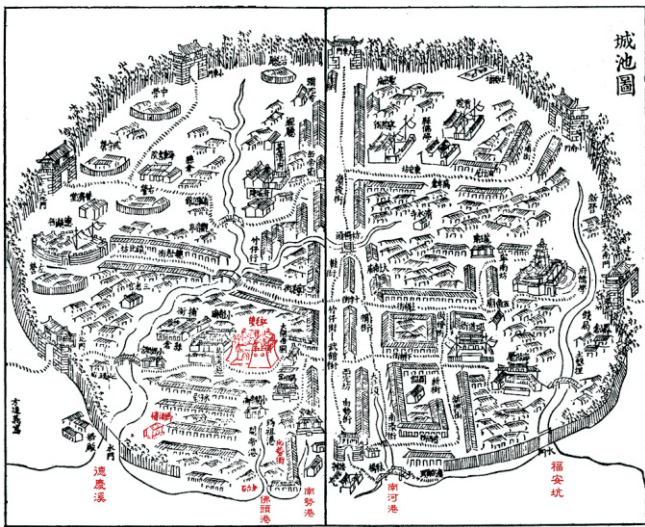


B. Interview and Street Issue Publication

Interviewing four persons living in Xinyi Street Site in the Street Issues.

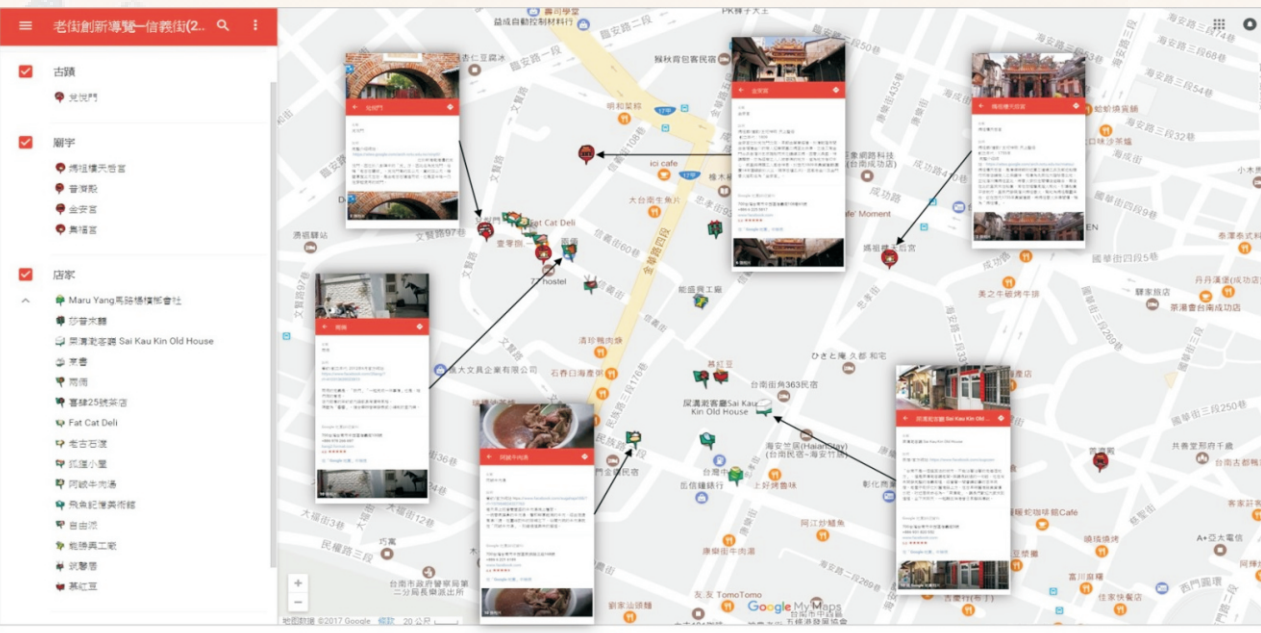
- “**Maru Yang Betel Nuts Company**” that has spared no effort to maintain the old houses and has also been operating the betel nut stalls in local area for more than 30 years. Maru Yang, the owner of betel nuts store, has already become an important cultural figure in the area.
- “**Nang Cheyn Shin Factory**”, a group of young people full of enthusiasm and ideals to study in a unique way and to develop with local people.
- “**Zhu Xin Ju**”, which currently provides catering services, is attracted by local old houses.
- “**Surprise**”, a hand-made cultural and creative shop that uses various digital manufacturing tools to develop products.

This study collaborates with creative merchants to publish the “Street Issue” to connect creative communities of Xinyi Street, and apply digital interactive technologies, such as QR Code, augmented reality technology, to the contents of Street Journal.



Results

Xinyi Street has attracted an increasing number of creative talents here to create local creative atmosphere and add more and more creative vitality atmosphere to the original strong historical and cultural atmosphere, blurring the boundaries between ancient historical tones and emerging creative thinking.



Red icon:
Historic Locations

Green icon:
Residents and Newcomer Stores

Creative clusters are dynamic, and changes of creative talents are also vibrant. This interaction process and results of new group of residents and local residents are determining the future direction of this historical block with fast speed and great influence.