



National Museum of Taiwan History | Guide Book



# INTRODUCTION

## OUR LAND, OUR PEOPLE, THE STORY OF TAIWAN

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SUGGESTED POINTS	30 MINUTES
	60 MINUTES
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"Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan" contains rich information about Taiwan history. We provide 30, 60, and 90 minutes suggested routes. For more detail, please refer to related information in this book.

Audio guide is available in the Museum. Visitors who would like to have this service, can borrow the devices at the Museum Box Office, or access the digital guide system of the museum through the QR Codes in the exhibition hall.

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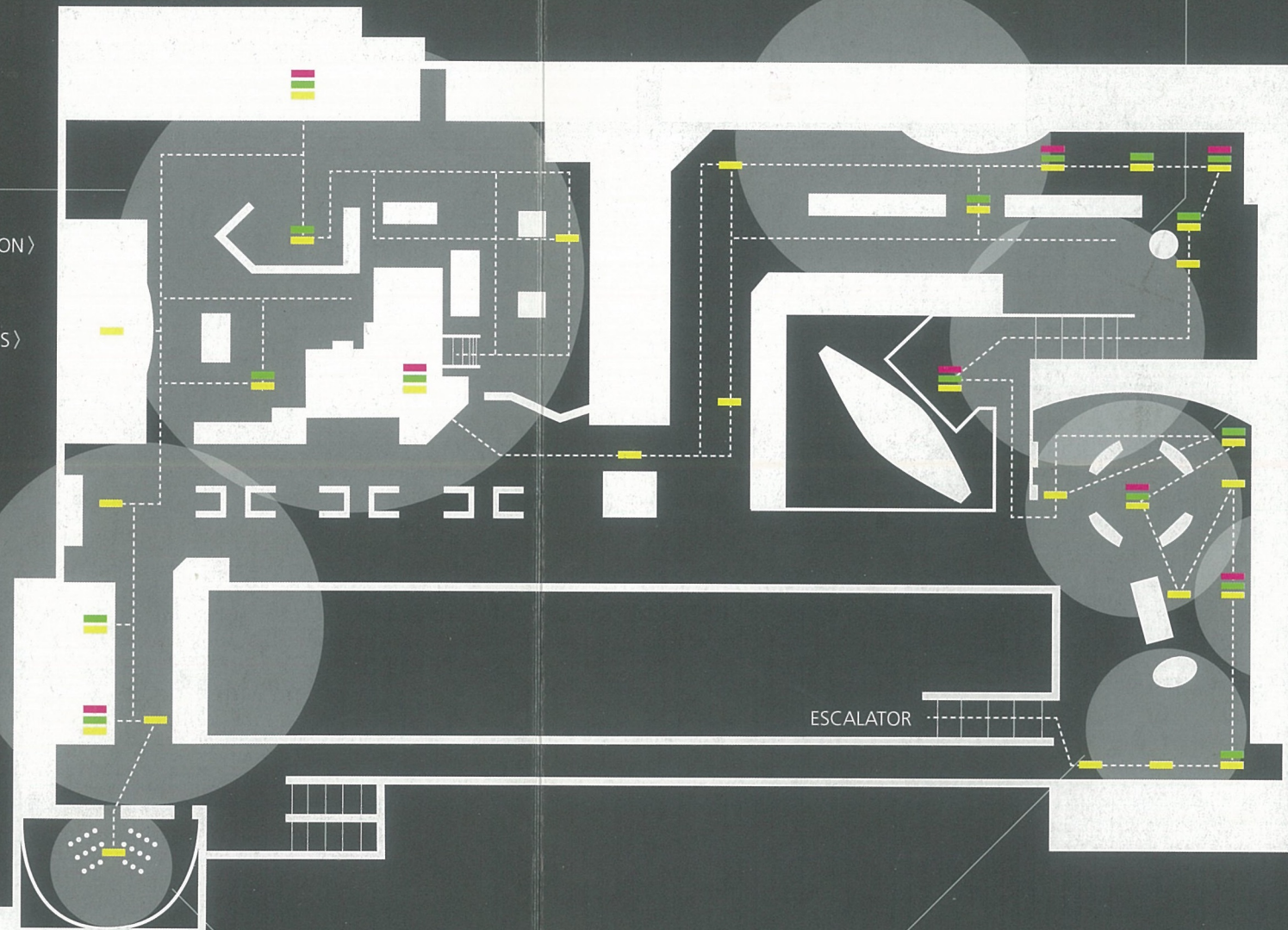
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# OUR LAND

THE STORY OF TAIWAN

# OUR PEOPLE

National Museum of Taiwan History | Guide Book

# STORY OF THE LAND. STORY OF THE PEOPLE

On October 29, 2011, the grand opening was held of the National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH). The aim and responsibility of the NMTH is to carry out research on and promote the history of Taiwan. Consequently, the permanent exhibition of the museum is called "Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan". This exhibition tells the general history of Taiwan, including the stories of the land and people in different eras.

The contents of history are vast and immeasurable, and there are many ways to interpret them, and it is thus impossible that a single hall or individual exhibition can tell the whole story. Among the various viewpoints and materials available to it, the NMTH has adopted a perspective that it is hoped can closely represent personal concerns of visitors, as well as reflect the multicultural nature of the different ethnic groups in Taiwan. The two cores of "Our Land, Our People: the Story of Taiwan" are "land" and "people", which together weave the story of the exhibition. There are more than two hundred models of people of various ethnicities, sexes, and professions in this exhibition, and these help to tell the experiences of the immigrants who came to Taiwan in different eras. By telling the story of Taiwan in this way, it is hoped that visitors can enjoy learning about the interactions among different groups of people and various cultures, and thus get to know how the culture of Taiwan has developed. We also hope that visitors can see the links between the past and present in this exhibition, and further develop an awareness of what it means to be Taiwanese, and in doing so learn to respect and cherish the hard-won multicultural society that has flourished on this island.



One of the objectives of the NMTH is to combine history with the present, and to draw history out of its often dry academic context and into the everyday lives of ordinary people, and thus this museum is intended to be an archive that visitors can freely access. In this way, people could both increase their self-awareness of what it means to live in Taiwan, as well as learn from their ancestors to build a better future. The NMTH has a mission to a museum for everyone, and with the use of attractive exhibitions and educational activities, we hope that history loses its image of abstractedness and mystery, and that visitors can experience the intimate connections between the present and the past in a fascinating and friendly environment.

This book focuses on the permanent exhibition of the museum, and also includes introductions to the park, buildings, theaters, and other facilities at this location. For the visitors that are at the museum, this book provides a suggested route for their visit, and provides in-depth texts and illustrations to aid their understanding of the story of Taiwan. For visitors who desire to learn more about the history of Taiwan, this book is a way to take the museum home, and thus learn more about the contents of the exhibition at your leisure.

Director of the National Museum of Taiwan History

*Li-Cheng Lu*

October 8, 2012





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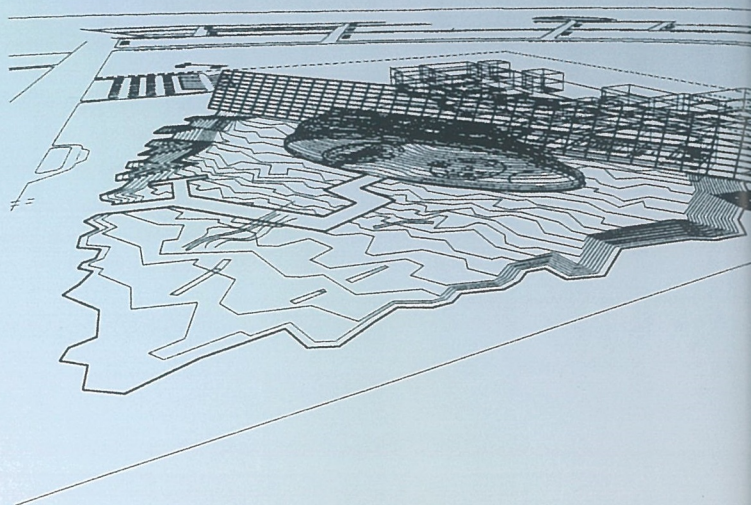
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EPOCHAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NMTH  
THE PURSUIT OF COLLECTIVE ETHNIC IDENTITY IN TAIWAN



HSUEH-YI CHIEN







The construction of the NMTH and its future sustainability signify our hope of building a site that will guard our ancestors' spirits and the collective souls of the Taiwanese people. It is thus not only a place to keep the records of our history, but also a reflection of our hope for the times to come. Consequently, in addition to its pragmatic functions, the architecture of the NMTH also attempts to convey an inner spirit and to search for a shared value of life and affection for history. By the use of architecture, we can also tell stories about Taiwan. By way of integrating the buildings into the exhibitions in the museum, we aim to uncover the commonalities among different ethnic groups.







## DESIGN THEMES

### SAILING

"Sailing" refers to the adventures of the immigrants who challenged fate and sailed across the sea to get to Taiwan. Sailing across the sea is more than a geographical movement, it is also a spiritual cleansing and baptism. With the strength of migration flowing in our blood and vitality reborn through the movement of the waves, we look back to the experiences of early immigrants for the fundamental spiritual source of our existence, and with this prepare a promising, hopeful future for the following generations.

"Sailing" is the first image we used for the design of the National Museum of Taiwan History, and it appears before entering the museum. The vast scene of waves is composed of the water stage in the front yard along with the murmuring cascade. The ladder-shaped wall of the cascade is made from black terrazzo, and together with the white waves these two components signify the treacherous "Black Ditch", which was once another name for the Taiwan Strait. Walking through this scene brings a feeling of being surrounded by huge waves, as if one were part of the early immigrants' adventure of sailing across the sea.





## SANDBANKS

There are many lagoons along the coastal areas in western Taiwan, and also many sandbanks. In the past, the sea extended all the way to the Chi-kan Tower, and Anping was located on one of the small sandbanks in the water. The inland sea between them was called "Taijiang". Besides the island Anping was on, there were seven other sandbanks to its left, and these were called the first to seventh *Kuenshen* (meaning the whale's back in Chinese, which is what they resembled). The last sandbank was located near the estuary of Erren River (the Fresh River), which is between today's Sicao and Wanli in Tainan City. These sandbanks were the early immigrants' first impressions of Taiwan. In the scene of "Sailing", a stage surrounded by sandbanks and green land appears from the water, showing Taiwan as a small island in the sea, looking like a whale's back.

## CLOUD WALL

Behind "Sailing" and "Sandbank" is a mysterious wall which separates the main building of the museum from the scene in front, and gives a pure image to the front yard of the museum. Between the ocean and the sky, the sudden appearance of the sandbanks indicated that Taiwan was already in reach. We can assume that this was the moment when these immigrants were touched by the vitality of life, and realized that their journey would soon be over.

The "Cloud Wall" is located in front of the main structures representing "Integration", and functions as the background to the early immigrants' action of "Sailing". The "Cloud Wall" is a wall of solar panels about 150 meters long and 17.72 meters tall, supported by a hexagon-shaped steel tube 150 meters long. With the blue silicon chips, the solar panels reflect the sky and clouds, and symbolizes the sky and ocean of these immigrants' adventure when they sailed across the sea. In addition, this green energy facility has become a landmark of the Museum and joins the stories of the past with the present and the future environmental technology and concepts—giving a promise of sustainable future for generations to come.

The "Cloud Wall" is able to generate 230 kilowatts of electricity every year, and can reduce carbon dioxide emission by 145 tons. This structure was given the first degree of recognition in the "Solar Top" program in 2006 carried out by the Taiwanese Bureau of Energy. The wall of solar panels tilts southward, and serves as a shield against the sun for the buildings behind it. The hexagon-shaped steel tube acts as a transparent tunnel, and visitors could weave through the lights and shadows of the tunnel path, and thus get a general view of the theme of "Integration" and review "Sailing" at the entrance.



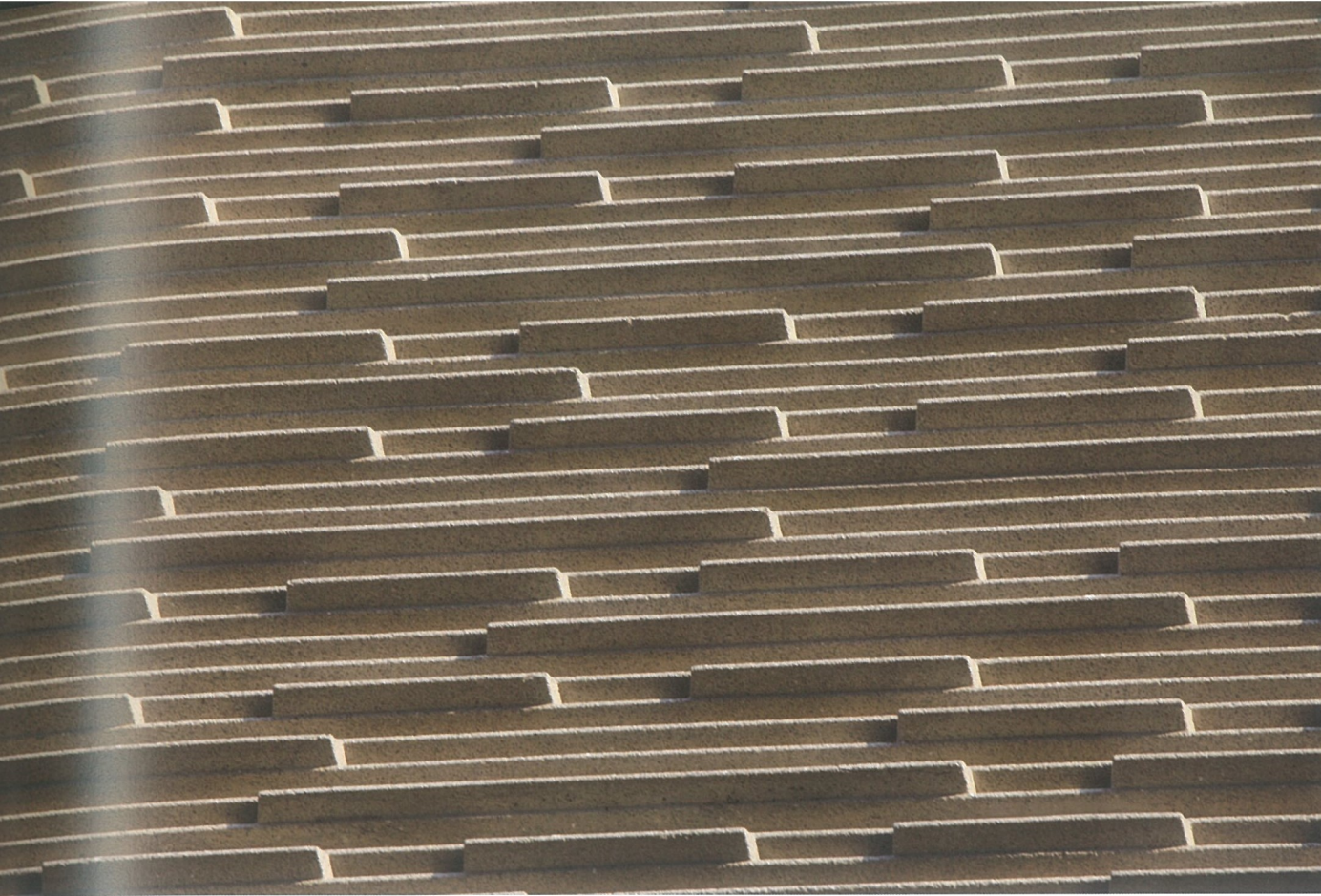
## INTEGRATION

Taiwan is a settlers' society with many ethnic groups live together, being rich in cultural assets as well as conflicts. As a national museum, the NMTH shoulders the responsibility of harmonizing different ethnic groups to uncover the evolution of the collective personality of Taiwan. The museum thus aims to increase understanding and respect among diverse cultures and different ethnic groups by exhibitions that reflect the reality of their diverse and shared histories.

The NMTH also seeks an image of its own, and this should be able to transcend the boundaries of time, space, and ethnicity. In order that the historical form and the abstract elements of space can be represented, the NMTH avoids arbitrary or partial forms and symbols and interprets history from an objective and open-ended perspective. Being responsive to the mission of the NMTH, and to reveal the sense of crossing different times, the building materials used for the museum are drawn from those that can be found in different cultures and historical eras, including primordial rocks and traditional bricks. In addition, traditional architectural elements—such as *Heyuan* (compound), *Ting* (yard), and *Lang* (hallway)—have been embedded into the basic spatial form of the structures. The resulting compound offers a structure that is not only simple, but also flexible enough to meet any future arrangements.







For the part of the building used for storage, the outer walls are made of pre-cast concrete panels (P.C. board). The surface of the walls is decorated with pre-cast G.R.C. (glass-fiber reinforced cement) boards, and the texture is a simulation of the stone house of the indigenous people. To simulate the texture of a stone house, we added gravel and shale powder to the concrete and sand blasted the surface. These G.R.C. boards were later integrated into the pre-stressed P.C. plate structure, and then applied to the surface of the buildings. As for the design of the Exhibition and Education Building, we applied gravel of bricks into bricklike boards as its surface to echo the traditional architecture of the Minnan people.

The main structure of this building is the tri-directional pre-stressed P.C. board structure in the middle level, along with some P.C. pillars. The R.C. wall and braced frames at the bottom support the whole structure, and form a spacious atrium at the 1st floor of the building. The atrium produced by the braced frames resembles the stilt houses of indigenous people. The reason for raising the building in this way is to avoid floods, as the museum is located on the former site of the Taijiang Inland Sea, and thus the land is flat in this area and prone to flooding. Consequently, building this crucial part of the museum on stilts is both pragmatic and culturally significant. With this, it is also composed of the elements of the stilt-houses and stone houses of different cultures, and, combined with the Minnan brick house appearance of the Exhibition and Education Building, makes the museum architecture itself a symbol of the mixed culture of Taiwan.



## MUSEUM PARK

### A STAGE FOR HISTORY AND A BASE FOR DREAMS

The National Museum of Taiwan History is located in Annan District in the northwestern part of Tainan City. This area was once a part of the “Taijiang Inland Sea”, which was an important location for trade and traffic in earlier periods. Before the Dutch arrived, there were already sea merchants doing business here. Afterward, in the Dutch era, the Zheng Family period, and in the early years of the Qing Dynasty, Taijiang Inland Sea was the major point of sea access for *Taiwanfu* (present-day Tainan City), the biggest city of Taiwan during the 17th to 19th centuries. Later, as a result of silting and the re-channeling of various rivers, the waters gradually became the low-lying land that can be seen around today's Annan District. The NMTH chose this historic site as its location to keep documenting and enhance the development of the stories of this land and its people, in the hope that in addition to experiencing the vigor and energy of the history of Taiwan through historical materials and exhibitions, the change from sea to land of this location will convey on an even bigger scale the transformations over time that have affected this island.

The Museum Park of the NMTH is 20 hectares, and aside from the parts assigned for exhibition buildings and public activities, about 10 hectares of green land and wetland have been preserved. In these areas of the park, by building retention lakes, the NMTH has been able to maintain and cultivate a diverse ecological system, making the Museum Park a place where culture encounters nature.

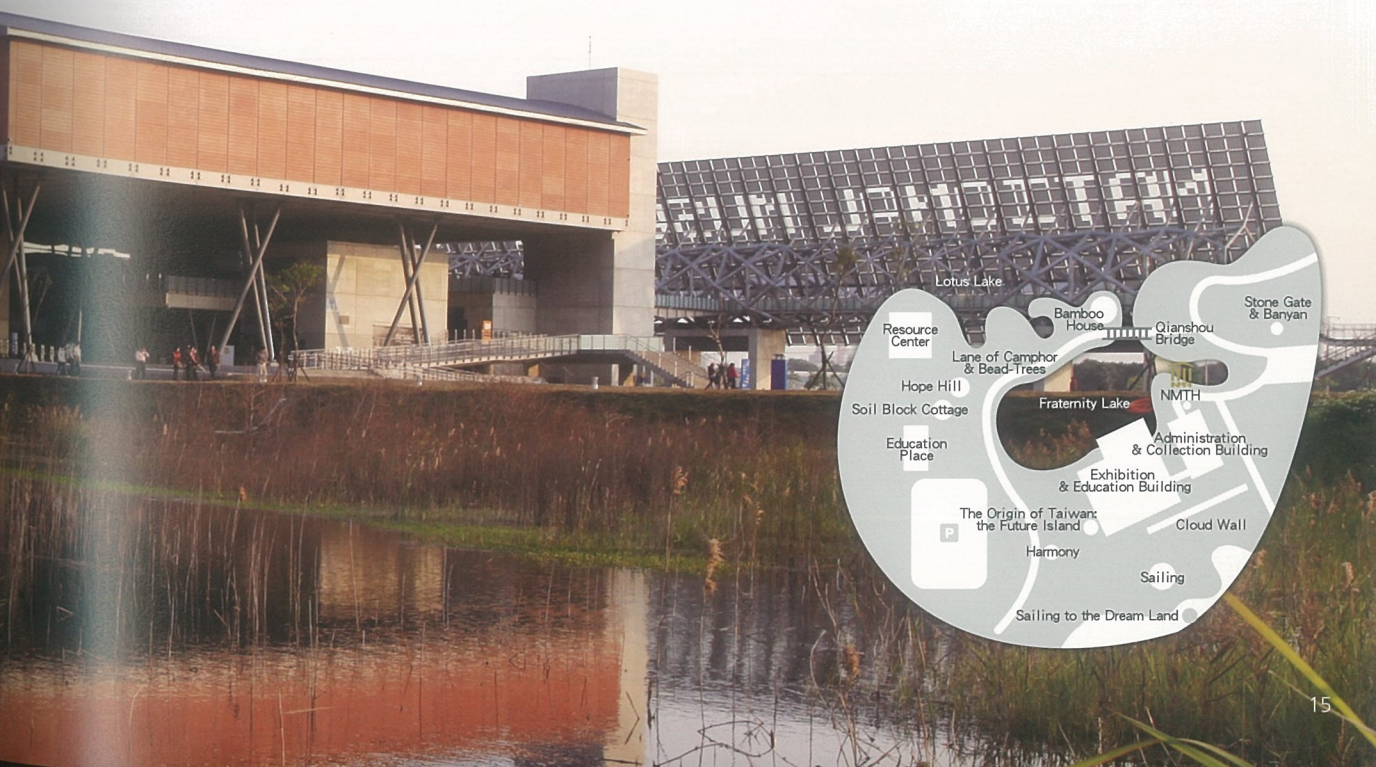




The Museum Park was built according to four precepts: "Performance", "Knowledge", "Folklore", and "Nature", each presenting a different part of the diverse nature and culture of Taiwan. "Performance" refers to the architecture at the grand plaza at the entrance of the museum, within which the story of Taiwan is told, from the early immigrants sailing across the Taiwan Strait to the cultural integration of all the peoples on the island. "Knowledge" represents the exhibitions inside the museum buildings, while "Folklore" is mainly represented by the "Education Place (Happy Kaleidoscope)", which shows the links between childhood fun and Taiwanese country life. The last precept, "Nature", is about Taiwan's natural landscapes, and is represented by the wetland and ecological preservation efforts seen in the park.

The beautiful scenery, spacious green lands and the facilities of the museum attract many people on weekends, who come here for outings, and to relax or visit the exhibitions, making the park bustling and full of excitement. The Museum, in short, has become a place for relaxation, exercising, and learning for many members of the surrounding communities.

Now, let us walk on the pavement beside Fraternity Lake and take a look at the cultural and natural scenes of the Museum Park.





## DESIGN OF THE FORECOURT AND MAIN STRUCTURE

The forecourt and main structures of the museum were designed to reflect four aspects of the Taiwanese experience—Sailing, Sandbanks, Cloud Wall, and Integration. In this way, when entering the park, visitors can already start to feel the atmosphere of the stories of Taiwan. First, visitors go along a trail which cuts into the water in front of the Museum, and while the water on both sides flows at eye-level, forming a scene of boundless water, similar to that seen by the early immigrants when they sailed across the Taiwan Strait.

After this, visitors walk pass several sandbanks rising from the water, and arrive at the spacious blue Cloud Wall, signifying the feelings of hope that the immigrants had when they succeeded in crossing the sea and reaching Taiwan. Behind the Cloud Wall are the main buildings of the Museum, which are a mixture of the various architectural features of the different ethnic groups in Taiwan, representing the integration of the cultural assets of the groups, and thus the development of a multicultural landscape.

## PUBLIC ART WORKS

The three pieces of public art in the Museum Park were designed by the artist Tao Ya-Lun, following the idea of "A Narrative on Taiwan's History", and these open up a conversation between past and present, individual and ethnic groups, and culture and nature.

The first work, "Sailing to the Dream Land", is a piece of kinetic art located next to the forecourt, and shares and responds to the ideas of "Sailing" and "Sandbanks". By employing the images of lined up oars, it constructs an invisible giant boat, indicating both crossing the Taiwan Strait in the past and sailing towards the future.

"Harmony" is a spherical sculpture, formed by a combination of various lines and patterns standing for the features of the Taiwanese historical experience, and demonstrating the ideal of sharing, understanding and mutual tolerance between the various peoples and cultures of Taiwan.

"The Origin Taiwan: the Future Island" removes all of the artificial marks people have left on the land, and returns Taiwan back to its pure state of ancient times. This art work makes it possible for visitors to see the long lost natural appearance of this island, and also to feel the need to improve and protect its current environment.





## HOPE HILL

When following the pavement along Fraternity Lake counterclockwise, a small hill can be seen in a distance, this is the Hope Hill. It is said that during the construction of the NMTH, one could stand on this hill and feel hope due to the building of a new institution belonging to all the Taiwanese people. Therefore, this area was called Hope Hill. Annan District, where the museum is located, was once the Taijiang Inland Sea, and thus the land is low and flat. Consequently, Hope Hill, rising up to 22 meters, is also the highest point in Annan. When on the top of the hill, the surrounding landscapes are all within your view, including details of the Museum Park, the Southern Taiwan Science Park (STSP) and National Freeway Number 1 in the surrounding area. The large-leaved banyan tree providing shade for visitors is known as the "Tree of Hope", it was planted along with the other trees in the park during the earlier years of the site's construction, and thus it has witnessed the development of the NMTH.

## SOIL BLOCK COTTAGE

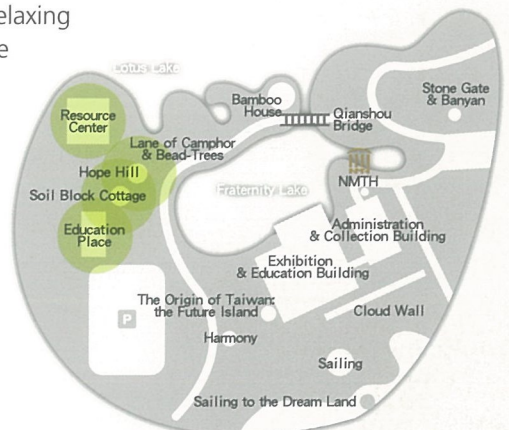
In front of Hope Hill, there is a soil block cottage (*Tujiaocuo*) copied from the early dwellings in Taiwan. Soil block cottages like this were quite common in the Han Chinese villages of the past. At that time, bricks and tiles were expensive, and common people could not afford these materials. As a result, they found materials from local sources and built houses by themselves. The main material of a *Tujiaocuo* is soil blocks. A soil block is made mainly of soil, straw, chaff and some other materials. When making a block, water is added to these materials and then thoroughly mixed. After this, the lump is then put into a wooden frame and compacted using the feet. After it has dried, it is removed from the frame and dried by the sun and wind. When a block is completely dry, it is ready to be used in construction. Generally, the frame of the roof of a *Tujiaocuo* is made of bamboos and covered with straw or red tiles. Sometimes the walls are coated with lime to make them waterproof and more attractive. Due to the use of these materials, a *Tujiaocuo* is cool in the summer, warm in winter, and cheap to build.

## EDUCATION PLACE—HAPPY KALEIDOSCOPE

South of Hope Hill is the Happy Kaleidoscope, also known as the Children's Dream Factory, which represents the dimension of Taiwanese Folklore. The design is based on the notion of childlike fun and combines three major elements—dreams, inspirations, and Taiwan. Through the use of displays, relaxing spaces, facilities and related educational activities, we hope that visitors can enjoy this half-outdoor space as a place for happily learning about and experiencing the ecological spaces of Taiwan.

## RESOURCE CENTER

The Resource Center is in the northwestern corner of the park, and across from the Happy Kaleidoscope. It is used for volunteer training and also holds small exhibitions or other activities from time to time.





## LANE OF CAMPHOR TREES AND BEAD-TREES

Walking down from Hope Hill, you can follow a scenic route: the Lane of Camphor Trees and Bead-trees, which is lined by two indigenous species of trees with historic significance. The pavement is a popular place for strolling and observing birds and plants, starting from the Resource Center and reaching all the way to *Qianshou* Bridge (Bridge of Hand in Hand) at the intersection of Lotus Lake and Fraternity Lake.

The bead-tree, also known as the cape lilac and chinaberry, is indigenous to Taiwan. It is called "*Kulian*" in Chinese due its bitter bark and fruit. But because "*Ku*" also means pain and suffering in Chinese, the tree is not favored by the Han Chinese. However, because of its distinct changes over different seasons, the bead-tree plays an important role as a plant of seasonal significance in the traditional cultures of the some indigenous groups, as well as the Hakka people. In addition to this, the yellow fruits that the bead-trees produce in winter are an important food source for birds. Camphor trees are commonly seen in the mountains of Taiwan. They have been important economic plants since the latter years of the Qing Dynasty, because camphor could be extracted from them. The camphor industry was not only an important commercial activity in Taiwan, but also resulted in the development of the foot hill areas.

## QIANSHOU BRIDGE

*Qianshou* Bridge crosses the intersection of Lotus Lake and Fraternity Lake. Together with the bamboo house, the bridge has become a popular site for taking photographs, strolling, and observing birds. Standing on this arch-shaped bridge, you can see both Lotus Lake and Fraternity Lake, watch the water plants sway with the winds, and the water birds step on the lily pads in search for food.

Lotus Lake and Fraternity Lake are in fact part of a wetland preservation area. By planting indigenous plants and using ecological-engineered methods, this area can prevent floods and preserve biological diversity. The core concepts used in developing this area are minimal disturbance, natural maintenance, and diverse species. In this way, we hope it can serve as a place where people can have easy access to learning about the ecological system and indigenous species of Taiwan. In recent years, the preservation of the wetland has been quite successful, and attracted many rare migrant and permanent birds. If you look on the surface of the lakes, you can probably see many water birds, such as Moorhens, Little Grebes, Egret and Little Egrets, Teals, Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Little Ringed Plovers, and Black-winged Stilts. You might also run into Magpies, Cattle Egrets or other birds inside the museum park, and Ring-necked Pheasants have also been observed. In order to introduce the ecological system of the park to the public, and to inculcate the importance of preserving and regenerating the natural environment, NMTH arranges guide tours for visitors, and volunteers will lead them to learn about the plants, animals, and environmental facilities of this area, as well as its successful preservation and regeneration.





## BAMBOO HOUSE

At the end of the Lane of Camphor trees and Bead-trees, next to the Qianshou Bridge, is a bamboo house standing on the bank of Lotus Lake. Under the invitation of the NMTH, famous artisans—Li Qingde\*, Li Fan, and Li Yang (brothers of the Li family)—instructed young students and volunteers in the building of this hut according to traditional techniques. The frame of the hut is made of bamboo, and its roof is made of straw. A bamboo house of this kind is light, and can easily be carried around. Before its dike was completed in 1939, the Cengwen River often flooded when there was heavy rain. Local residents thus built houses like this that could be easily moved to avoid the waters. This bamboo house is thus an embodiment of the NMTH's efforts to preserve the life experiences of the local people. Also, by inviting students and volunteers to participate in the construction of the house, we hope that this particular construction technique will not vanish as time passes by.

*\*In this guide book, the family names of Chinese are put in front of their given name according to the Chinese traditional custom.*





## THE STONE GATE AND THE OLD BANYAN

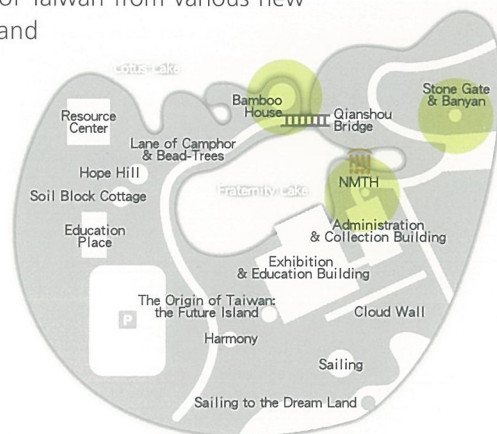
After seeing the wetland and understanding its functions of preventing flooding and maintaining biological diversity, we can go forward to take a closer look at a combination of culture and nature. Nearby the staff parking lot is a Chinese banyan growing on a stone gate. This banyan and the gate were originally located in Yingju 3rd village, a military dependents' village in Yongkang District. The old tree and the gate were moved to this spot because the village was going to be relocated. With the tenacity of its kind, the old banyan is tightly coiled around the stone gate, and became one with it. Like an old man who will not easily succumb to hardship, the banyan firmly embraces its past, even though this makes its life harder. However, from another perspective, the oneness of the banyan and the gate symbolizes the efforts of the National Museum of Taiwan History—to combine the natural environment with cultural aspects, and although the two may seem to be opposing elements, together they complement each other.

## LOGO OF NMTH

Passing the banyan with its aerial roots swinging in the wind, the path leads us back to the main buildings of the museum. In front of the Administration and Collection Building, there is a small garden where the logo of the museum stands. Standing in front of the building that represents the multicultural nature of Taiwan, and facing the natural environment of the Museum Park, this logo signifies that the NMTH has been built based on the abundant cultural assets of Taiwan, and the energetic and hopeful drive to the future of all the Taiwanese people.

The logo of the NMTH combines the architectural images of the stilts of the Administration and Collection Building and the Exhibition and Education Building, and the English acronym of the National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH). The four stilts also represent the four main purposes of the museum: research, collection, exhibition and public service. The logo's vertical integration and its expansive impression convey the wishes of the NMTH—to inherit and pass down the history of Taiwan, and to build a multicultural and harmonious society.

The golden dust color of the logo represents quietness and calm, and embodies the senses of simplicity and steadiness that make up Taiwanese tradition. On the other hand, the geometric shape of the logo represents a modern sense of conciseness. The style of the logo thus mixes the past and present, and communicates the main mission of the museum—that as a museum of a new century, the NMTH will devote itself to the development and recording of the history of Taiwan from various new perspectives, in order to both inherit from the past and inspire the future.





# THE DESIGNING CONCEPT OF THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

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MING-TA CHEN

