

## **RESEARCH ON MEANINGS OF WAR MONUMENTALITY DIFFERENCES:**

*By the Cases Investigated the Purpose of Monument Erection in Kinmen Island and Gettysburg, U.S.A.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Monumental Architecture signifies the buildings and monuments themselves in situ together with deeper associations which correspond with specific event, and it perpetually and characteristically changes over time and space. This research has started the exploration of the consequences of the two Civil Wars- Battles in Kinmen and the Battle at Gettysburg. They both have shaped two different monumentalities over time and space. War Monumentality holds and shapes in its spirit of place, intangible meanings and associations exposed by actual causes, consequences, and the extent of events to form cultural heritages.

Through this paper's argument it is possible to give rise to a singular hypothesis to memorials/monuments and to add further insight into the public ambitions behind war monumentality. In conclusion, this study asserts that although the war monuments are a consequence of Civil Wars *per se*, these are nevertheless represent dialectical spirit of places by what they commemorate.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 PURPOSE AND AIM**

Monumentality has been embedded with diversities of meanings in different era. The differences that emerge from the role they play are to be clarified by monument erection in each epoch. Since the ancient meanings of monumentality that presents imperial power and triumph of

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kings. The meaning of monumentality has changed dramatically after series of war, republican of the Third Reich, and the revolution during twentieth century. The meanings of monuments and their meanings monumentality has been defined and redefined radically of their changing courses. To research on Monumentality of “War monument” need to look into the historical axis that navigates better understanding of their monumental meanings differentiated by their course of the event (war or battle), national identities, geological settings, and the end “result”.

Inspiring notions were raised to address that monumentality had faced challenges by questioning the eternal quality and its stable meanings under the title of “Monumentality and City” in *The Harvard Architecture Review* in 1984. The ambiguity of the statement of contemporary war memorial would turn celebratory and triumphalist into acts of civil based transformation. Therefore, this paper starts to rethink meanings of monumentality derives from war memorial between different nations, result and identified status.

## 1.2 SCOPE AND RESEARCH METHODS

Making clarification of the background and process of civil wars, and to analyze the courses of defeat and defeated would be a first step to explore spiritual quality of “Zeitgeist” in order to investigating the monumentality of civil wars. Two comparative studies of the civil wars-between Taiwan and China, and one of the American Civil War (Battle of Gettysburg) as cases to raise diverse commemorate means and differences in civil/official monumentality expresses mourning value by memorial erection, which shows how much the official commemoration willing to remember and to share the result with the public.

## 2. Definition and Meaning of Monumentality and Memorial

Issue of monumentality and monumental phenomenon has represented in history symbolically. Monumentality and city used to constitute eternal quality that establish a firm spirit over every era.

### 2.1 TRANSFORMATIONS OF MONUMENTALITY AND MEMORIAL IN HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Material form (relics, artifacts, and monumental architecture) are

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as construction of public expectation in cities. Ritual spaces that constituted by politics and society, monuments in civil spaces just as a symbolic sign of “loci” with historical meanings. Notions of monument originated at the concept of that as human creation; in addition, it is expected to be realized by future generations of its original “specific purpose” of human behavior or event. Before the breaking out of First World War, attitude towards historical building is to monumentalize them just like an isolated tombstone erected in the park. After deaths and destructions coursed by the First World War, “living monuments” has been constructed in order to satisfy needs of memory- libraries and museums, to provide instant needs of society.

Architectural historian Giedion, S., architect Sert, J. L. and artist Léger, F. (1943) addressed “Nine Points on Monumentality”, emphasized on the role that monument acts and its meanings. Monuments ought to transform collective human strength to “symbol” in order to satisfy external needs, most importantly, to express collective power- feels and thoughts. Most of the Nine Points raised and defined was its “eternity”, and also had to present meanings of an endless epoch. Only to seek “commemorative value”, enable to reveal the “epochal spirit”. Riegl, A. categorized monument to “intentional” and “unintentional” monument, the former indicates monument was constructed to meet proprietor’s original intentions that remind certain past; and the latter indicates that monument were not constructed to meet their original intentions.

Giedion, S. (1981) regards monumentality to that social symbolic concepts of inner live revealed by people’s external needs, people has impulsion to create monumental symbol as to express the “reminding thing”, to be delivered to future generations. Mumford, L. also addressed that monument should emerges changes of character, from expressing monumental power to democratic spirit that carries. This “power” is seen as a collective power. Analysis from the above, the key aspects that influence monumental meanings are that monument should be placed in public realm, and be a response of epochal meaning. Start from here, we know that it would be inappropriate to judge whether one building (or a place) be monumental only by its scale. Therefore, the premier principle to measure monumentality of a building (or a place) should depend on specific site, place, and peoples’ historical value. While this study has

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started to clarify monumental conception, peoples' internal need is a preferable point of view raised by Giedion, S., and that war monumentality is unnecessary to talk about its volume, classical language and ornament; but to reveal social conception and "Zeitgeist" by use of abstract form.

### **3. War Memorial Erection and its Monumentality**

#### 3.1 TWO WARS IN KINMEN AND THEIR MONUMENTAL MEANING

The 823 Kinmen war and the Battle of Gu-ning-tou are the key wars in Kinmen. Differ from the turning point to united nation that Battle of Gettysburg occurs; wars in Kinmen were under the confrontation between Taiwan and China for more than 50 years. Therefore, monumentality to Kinmen inhabitant is merely to project national triumph. Inhabitant lived in a shared "military-civilian's family", they lived in a homeland of battlefield that to be "Anti-Communist" and "Anti-Soviet Union". Thus, it is a passive living model to suit memory of "Period of Military Rule". In that period war monumentality stayed at a national level. Monumentality in Kinmen has undergoing in an opposition status over course of time. In addition, the "commemorative purpose" is not shared by inhabitants and soldiers and it is constructed under absolute power of military control.

##### *3.1.1 Intentional and Unintentional Monument of Kinmen Wars*

###### A. Battle of Gu-ning-tou:

Battle of Gu-ning-tou was a battle fought over Kinmen in the Taiwan Strait during the Chinese Civil War in 1949. The historical significance that the battle presents can be seen as a key to protect Taiwan from being taken by Communists. Under the attention on the end result of triumph, the intentional monument emphasized on victory and basis on commemorating soldiers, from the memorial of "unknown hero" erected four years after the war till the War Museum establish in 1984, are intended to evoke drastic sacrifice. Figure1, Figure2. In spite of the unintentional monuments- the Bei-shan Mansion, war as relics, can only be few of the closest war monuments represent life of "inhabitants on battlefield". Unfortunately, part of the mansion had under reconstruction,

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to a more “complete” and “newer” state includes repairing of bullet holes, which has lost its original state- intentional evidence of authentic meaning of war.\_Figure3, Figure4\_



*Figure1. The monument of unknown hero.*



*Figure2. the War Museum.*



*Figure3. Bullet holes on the exterior of Bei-shan Mansion.*

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*Figure4. Left side of the Bei-shan Mansion has been rebuilt.*

#### B. Battle of 823:

Battle of 823-also called “the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis” began on the 23 of August, 1958. More than 480,000 artilleries launched by PRC during the 44 days. Contribution to the victory was the defense works such as strongly pre-built tunnels reduced army lost. Thus, they were key unintentional monuments to the victory. Besides the unintentional monumental landscape, its monumentality also emerged from the intentional war memorials.

It is worth to start from the erection of commemorative monuments to investigate monumental meaning especially after certain period of time that drastic event occurs. In 1968 the 823 Memorial situated in Gin-hu County, till the Hu-jing-tou History of Military Museum constructed in 1989. During the period of 20 years, war monumentality of Kinmen has been built by over 10 years of memorizing to war memory, to a non- instant commemoration. No matter how drastic the war was, its end result of triumph as the basis of official commemoration. Figure5

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Figure5. The Hu-jing-tou History of Military Museum.

*3.1.2 Monumentality after Declaration of Martial Law and Ended of  
 Military Affair*

Kinmen suffered 43 years of military control based on the factor of “security of the whole island”. Inhabitants of Kinmen could only allow taking concreted responsibility without offering any point of views. During the time under threaten shadow of “emancipation Taiwan peacefully” and “unifying peacefully”. Hence, two side of the Strait continuously remained “cold war with opposition” and always prepared for war. Island of Kinmen had not separated from military control. Consequently, it is more complicated in monumental meanings comparing with other battlefields that commemorating purely by their celebrate triumphs. As mentioned earlier, monumentality of the nation is in higher hierarchy compare with the inhabitants of Kinmen. The exhibit of historical records emphasize as a framework of national identity and the construction of official legitimate authority towards monumentality. The most obvious living- with- war memory is the defense facilities found allover the Island of Kinmen, such as the engraved slogans on cement of nearly every exterior wall of habitants’ houses, and the attitude that stamps in everybody’s mind.\_Figure 6\_Unfortunately, most of the evidence (unintentional monument) has been vanished- engraved cement was dislodged for renovation, and the defense installations along sea shore were also dismantled. Unavoidable, the – Bei- shan Mansion shows the violence of war by countless bullet holes on the wall, were filled up, the “anti- airborne pole” were also removed for the reason of remaining traffic safety. Hence, the truly presenting of public monumentality of

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Kinmen has gradually disappearing, and it has displaced by architectural intentional monuments.



*Figure6. The Hu-jing-tou History of Military Museum.*

### 3.2 MONUMENTS AND MONUMENTALITY OF AMERICAN CIVIL WAR- THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

The Battle of Gettysburg (1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1863) was not only one of the most effective and as a turning point of American Civil War, but it also had the most casualties of all. Monumentality that revealed was mainly from its democracy, and the inscription of eventual history has enhanced by tangible and intangible monument erection.

#### A. Tangible Monument of the Battle of Gettysburg

There are two tangible war monuments. One is the Gettysburg National Military Park, which has more than 1,000 monuments/ sites; and the other one is were Abraham Lincoln wrote the “Gettysburg Address”.

#### B. Intangible Monument of the Battle of Gettysburg

One of the intangible monuments is the “Gettysburg Address” known as the greatest speech of American history. It has redefined the civil war for not only fight for union but also for freedom, it is for American people “only”. The other intangible monument is the “National Identity” that constructed after the war. Ironically, the emerging of both national identity and memory constructed after violent war, especially when the fundamental issue becomes most discussed discourse, the historical significance realized by the construction and reconstruction of their original characteristics.

#### C. Anniversary of Civil War- Reenactments as an act of



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### Commemoration

Comparing with two civil wars in Kinmen, monumentality that expressed by Battle of Gettysburg has, gone far beyond opposition of two sides (the North and the South). Therefore, the detailed record about war has been activated by ordinary American people (not the veterans), by joining in the reenactment every year. The “re” enactment has also “re” enforce construction of monumentality. \_Figure 7\_



*Figure7. “Gettysburg National Military Park”, United States Department of National Park Service, 2004, Gettysburg.*

### 3.3 FACTORS THAT DIFFERENTIATE MONUMENTALITY

Monumental meaning would depend on national, cultural, spiritual symbol and commemorative purpose differences to perform diversity of epochal monumentality. Factors that differentiate monumentality can be discussed from several aspects, which are: To discuss commemorative purpose of public meaning; Monument reaction and role it plays resulting diverse of monumentality; Different monumentality expressed by events of different nation/ culture;

Every group in the society has their shared experienced and destiny. Monumentality is also providing different group their own narratives. In order to express diverse monumental meaning, has to investigate the monumentality of public monuments of each era. To conclude from above study, monumentality would also excrete different meaning by whether the veterans have still alive or not.

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#### 4. Conclusion

This study has discovered that monumentality should be constructed at the basis of the spirit of specific site and setting, which also presents upon principle of historical value, memory and aesthetic. It also defined by abstract aspects of “Zeitgeist” and social concepts for representational symbolic meanings and continuous necessity of epochal spirit of place.

Island of Kinmen is as a political deal of Taiwan and China. Its monumentality has undergoing dynamic changes since the last civil war. Safety of Taiwan has benefited by the victory as an end result, whereas, the monumentality belongs to country and not people. Instead, construction of war monumentality for inhabitant is by conservation of unintentional monuments. Opposed to it, by the case of the monumentality of Gettysburg is of both nation and people, and remains stable monumentality.

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