

# **A Geographical Anatomy of Aerial photos: The Impact of City Evacuation Zones in Taipei during the World War II on Street Development**

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The establishment of “city evacuation zones”, which were initially designed to prevent fire-spreading caused by aerial bombing during the World War II (hereafter WWII), marked an important event in Taipei’s history. The Taiwan Sotokufu in Japanese era established these city evacuation zones hastily in 1944-1945 to quarantine the areas with high concentration of Japanese wooden houses as they were easily burned out by aerial bombing. While these city evacuation zones originally were not part of the city development plan, they survive after the war and leave a mark on city’s landscape. Nevertheless, prior studies pay relative little attention to the role of these city evacuation zones in Taipei’s development. Using the aerial photos taken by the US air force during and after the war, this study identifies several city evacuation zones in Taipei. Their locations, and relations to urban development, can be classified as three types: (1) zones that established by broadening existing streets, (2) zones that established by relying on initially-planned streets, (3) zones that located on a non-initially planned roads where requiring urgent evacuation due to high concentration of wooden houses. After WWII, most of these city evacuation zones were not immediately converted to city streets. Consequently, numerous squatter houses were built on these zones. In particular, the famous Long-Cyuan St. and Yuang-Huang Taiwanese food stalls were based on one of the city evacuation zones. The north-south Jin-Shan S. Rd, and the Shih-Da Rd. (near NTNU with a unique long-shape park) are also heritage of the city evacuation zones. Although most of the city evacuation zones become wide streets and most Japanese wooden houses have disappeared, city evacuation zones still shape today’s street patterns in Taipei which can be viewed as a war heritage under the concept of “noncombustible city” for the air defenses during the WWII.

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