

variety of ornamental details conveyed the Chinese associations of the building.

Other Congregationalist Churches followed the example of the Chinese Christian Church, and like the public schools, proved to be a leading force in promoting the “brotherhood of man.” The Makiki Christian Church, which had been organized in 1904 by Reverend Takie Okumura commenced building a new church in 1931. Reverend Okumura, an important leader in the assimilation of the Japanese into Hawai‘i’s society, instructed architect Hego Fuchino to draw plans in the form of a shogun’s castle. The minister and architect used photographs of such buildings in Japan to develop the final design, which evolved to resemble the spectacular Himeji Castle. When the plans were presented to the Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association for approval several of the members questioned the wisdom of housing a church in a fortress associated with militarism and war. The Reverend Okumura explained that in Japan the castle was a place of defense, used to provide protection and peace. He also noted that the earliest known building constructed for Christian worship in Japan was the Tamon Castle. His proposed plans were approved and the Reverend Okumura applauded for striving to “preserve the good heritage of the Japanese and Christianize it.” At the time the building was erected Japan and China were at war. As a gesture of good will to indicate that the animosity between the two nations did not extend to Hawai‘i, all materials for the building were purchased from City Mill, whose president was K. A. Chung.

The Korean Christian Church, which was organized in 1918 by Dr. Syngman Rhee, hired Yuk Tong Char in 1938 to design its imposing edifice, the facade of which was inspired by the Kwang Wha Mun gate in Seoul. Char had previously received the commission for the 1937 Hilo Chinese Church. The plan for the Hawai‘i Island church follows, in a vernacular manner, the Gibbsian prototypical New England church; however, such decorative elements as the up-turned eaves of the building and steeple, window treatment, and octagonal columns all relate to Chinese traditions.

The Church of the Crossroads also adopted Asian motifs in its 1934-1937 building complex designed by Claude Stiehl. In addition to a red columned connecting colonnade, reminiscent of the Summer Palace outside Beijing, the complex of four buildings features two Japanese influenced buildings, art deco stylized tropical floral ornamentation, and carved panels in the lectern and pulpit which represent Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. This church had been formed in 1923, as Hawai‘i’s first interracial congregation by students from McKinley High School and Mid-Pacific Institute, a private school started by the Congregational Church, which by 1910 boasted of having 300 students from 10 different races.

In another endeavor to foster interracial harmony, Theodore Richards, platted in Kane‘ohe the Kokokahi (one blood) subdivision in 1927, as a “Christian inter-racial community.” Sited in a small valley on the Windward side of O‘ahu, this development focused on a Y.W.C.A. at its ocean end and

## The Battle of the Marquee

Honolulu’s 1922 Hawai‘i Theatre, recently re-opened after a 12-year, \$31 million renovation, continues to generate controversy over the fate of its marquee. The neo-classical Beaux Arts theatre, listed on both the State and National Registers, originally featured a very simple exterior canopy. After several modifications, it was entirely replaced in the mid-1930s by an elaborate art deco marquee featuring the largest neon display in the islands. Inside, the lobbies likewise were done over in a “tropical deco” style, with Hawaiian floral and foliage designs, Polynesian geometric patterns, and various Asian elements, all crafted by local artisans.



*Hawai‘i Theatre, March, 1941. Author’s collection.*

The interior deco was demolished early in the course of the renovations and the marquee met the same fate recently, in ill-advised decisions by those in charge to return the theatre to its “opening day” appearance, ignoring the changes in the building over its 75-year history.

The SHPO has insisted that if the 1930s marquee is not replicated, the theatre organization is liable for return of the approximately \$14 million in public taxpayer funds provided them.

The battle continues with no resolution to date.

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